



Spring Is a Season of Action

by MARK WIERMAN, TPC Board President

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 Visit tallpinesconservancy.org
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Dear Friends,

Spring on conserved land is one of the most hopeful sights in Southeast Wisconsin. Fields are being prepared for planting. Prairie shoots are pushing up through last year's burn. Creeks run high with snowmelt, carrying life downstream. Everything is in motion.

At Tall Pines Conservancy, we feel that same sense of motion – and urgency.

As I step into the role of Board President, I do so at a pivotal moment for our organization. More landowners than ever are reaching out to explore permanent protection of their farms and natural areas. Families want to know their land will remain productive. Communities want to protect clean water and open space. The demand for our work is real – and growing.

At the same time, public conservation funding is uncertain and, in many cases, shrinking. Many of our projects rely on partnerships and matching funds. When public dollars decline, private support becomes even more essential.

Today, we have a backlog of conservation projects waiting for funding – acres of farmland that could remain in production, woods that could continue filtering water, and landscapes that

could remain part of the fabric of our community. The opportunity is here. The question is whether we can act in time.

Spring reminds us that some moments cannot be postponed. You plant when the ground is ready. You protect land when the opportunity exists.

I am inspired by the commitment of this community and the momentum we are building together. Because of you, Tall Pines has permanently protected thousands of acres and continues to steward them with care.

But there is more to do – and the window is open now.

I invite you to read this issue with an eye toward what is possible. Share your voice through a brief Supporter Survey – your input will help guide Tall Pines' next chapter. And if you are able, I hope you will consider making a spring gift to help us meet this moment. ▲

With gratitude and determination,

Mark Wierman
 Board President, Tall Pines Conservancy





Now ... Explore Nature Your Way

by BETH HOEFER-JEZO, TPC Associate Director

The satisfying crunch of leaves under your feet as you trek the challenging terrain of your favorite trail. The soothing sound of water as your paddle glides your kayak along the river. The exhilaration of crossing the finish line of your first 5K.

There are many ways to experience and enjoy land conservation. For some, that connection comes through hiking, paddling, or running – immersing yourself in the outdoors through movement and adventure. But those experiences aren't the perfect fit for everyone.

That's why, in addition to favorite events like the OWPP Paddle and our inaugural Conservation Chase, we've launched a monthly series called Third Thursdays, sponsored by Bank Five Nine. These gatherings are smaller in scale and focused on a specific topic, offering a more relaxed and engaging way to connect with the land.

In May, you can discover how restoring a creek to its original course improves water quality downstream. Our June gathering at Ravnsholme is already sold out, but the series continues in July with an opportunity for you to explore a hidden jewel of a passive park. In August, visit a local farm to learn how robotic milking technology enhances both efficiency and animal well-being. And in September, join us for a special visit to Ashborne – an Eschweiler property, where you'll experience firsthand how this remarkable landscape inspired the work of prominent local architect Alexander Eschweiler.

CONSERVATION CHASE

SAT., May 16 • Lapham Peak State Park

This walk, run, or ruck event celebrates the protection of the nearby, Tall Pines owned, K. Redmond Family Preserve. An event for all ages and abilities that encourages you to enjoy Lapham Peak's beloved trails while supporting local land conservation. Check out the online silent auction at tallpinesconservancy.org.

Register at: runsignup.com/Race/WI/Delafield/ConservationChase



11TH ANNUAL OWPP PADDLE

SAT., June 27 • 9:30am

Oconomowoc River

A guided journey through the upper reaches of the Oconomowoc River watershed with a visit to Friess Lake. Launching at the Wild Marsh Launch, the morning will conclude with lunch at the Friess Lake Fire Hall. Connect with others who care about protecting our lakes and streams. Register today for this free event at conomowocwatershed.com.

BUS TO THE BARNS

SAT., August 8

Climb aboard for an unforgettable evening of great food, great company, and rustic charm at our first ever Bus to the Barns. Enjoy special local treats with stops at several local barns. Sit back, enjoy the scenery, and savor a unique experience while supporting the farm conservation work of TPC. Register at tallpinesconservancy.org.

We currently have Third Thursdays scheduled through December, so we encourage you to explore the upcoming events and find one that sparks your interest! [Scan the QR code to receive all details and to register.](#) ▲



may 21 **Tours of Mason & Cottonwood Creeks**
5pm-7pm | This guided stream walk, led by OWPP, provides an up-close look at how restoring streams benefits the entire watershed.

july 16 **Twilight Prairie Walk at Oconomowoc River Conservancy Park** | 7pm-9pm | Explore the prairie and discover how the land changes as daylight fades.

aug 20 **Zwieg Maple Acres Farm Tour** | 4pm-6pm
Discover its rich history and learn how robotic milking has enhanced the health, comfort, and care of the farm's beloved dairy herd.

sept 17 **Ashborne-An Eschweiler Architecture Tour**
4pm-6pm | Experience a once-in-a-lifetime tour of the famed architect's summer home.

Get to Know TPC Board President Mark Wierman



Mark joined the TPC board ... In 2018, quickly stepping into leadership roles as Board Treasurer and Chair of the Finance Committee – positions he held until December of 2025.

His professional background ... Reflects an impressive 40-year career in the banking industry. Mark currently serves as President of Ixonia Bank.

His family includes ... Wife Debbie, three daughters and seven (soon to be eight) grandchildren.

Mark lives in ... Oconomowoc, and has called Lake Country area home for more than 30 years.

In his free time ... Mark enjoys golf, both cross-country and downhill skiing, and spending as much time as possible recreating in the outdoors – including at the family cabin in the north woods of Wisconsin.

He was inspired to join the TPC board ... Because of a deep concern for the rapid loss of land and natural spaces. He's energized by the progress being made to protect vital land and water resources and is committed to continuing this important work.

Right Now at Tall Pines Conservancy

The momentum is building – and so is the opportunity.

- 24 projects pending
- 3,500 acres of land in our protection backlog
- \$6 million needed to bring these efforts to life

Impact to Date

- 3,400 acres permanently protected, including:
- 2,200 acres of prime farmland
- 600 acres of woodland
- 600 acres of wetlands and waterways

Looking Ahead

- 7,000 acres protected by 2030
- More opportunities for youth engagement and education
- Greater access to outdoor spaces and recreation
- Support for next generation and first time farmers



In Partnership with OWPP & FFLC

- 3,500+ acres under agricultural conservation practices
- 15,000+ feet of streambank stabilized
- 15+ acres of wetlands restored
- 9,000 lbs/year reduction in phosphorus runoff

Right now, we are seeing unprecedented interest from landowners and communities who want to protect land, restore critical habitats, improve water quality, and expand outdoor access.

That momentum is exciting – but it also creates urgency.

To meet this moment, we need your support more than ever.

We cannot do this work alone. Your contribution – at any level – directly advances land protection, restoration, and access for our communities, ensuring these landscapes endure for generations to come.

Together, we can shape the future of conservation in our region. ▲

While not in agriculture ... Mark places a priority on farmland conservation. While not in agriculture, his roots run deep – both of his parents grew up on farms in Sheboygan County, shaping his appreciation for the land.

Mark is very active in his community ... As he currently serves on the YMCA Pabst Farms Board of Directors and the Marquette Business School Advisory Board, and has previously contributed his time and leadership to organizations including Ausblick and the Wisconsin Bankers Association. ▲

Silent Auction May 11–May 21



Check out all the amazing items up for bid!

Impact Snapshot: Because of You

by PAUL MEUER, TPC Land Protection Manager | Photos by: JESSICA MYSLIWSKI, TPC Stewardship Coordinator

Because of you, 2025 and the start of 2026 has been full of meaningful growth, lasting impact, and continued momentum for Tall Pines Conservancy.

Together, we protected more land, restored critical habitats, and expanded opportunities for people to connect with the outdoors, all while strengthening old partnerships and forging new ones that make this work possible.

Land Protection That Lasts Forever

This year, Tall Pines Conservancy continued its mission of permanently protecting the landscapes that define our region. Through conservation easements and preserves, we permanently protected more land, safeguarding prime farmland, woodlands, wetlands, and waterways for future generations. Each protected acre represents a story of legacy and a shared commitment to conservation.

This includes the 83-acre K. Redmond Family Preserve (tallpinesconservancy.org/redmond-preserve) located just south of Lapham Peak, which will now serve as a publicly accessible space for outdoor recreation and enjoyment of nature.

This also includes the Eschweiler/Cornell Lake conservation easement, located just off Kettle Moraine Scenic Drive in Chenequa, a generous commitment from Carl and Mary Eschweiler to permanently protect the natural beauty of Lake Country.

Or the nearly 18 acres in Dousman permanently protected through a conservation easement along the Bark River, creating a legacy of conservation by Robert and Danielle Leonard.

We have many more success stories and special places to share, and many more to come!

Restoring Rare and Resilient Landscapes

We advanced restoration efforts across several preserves, improving ecological health and biodiversity. From creating pollinator habitat at Ravensholme on the River, to enhancing wetlands with the Oconomowoc Watershed Protection Program (OWPP), and continuing work with American Bird Conservancy (ABC) to restore rare oak savanna systems – one of the most threatened ecosystems in the world – these efforts are helping to rebuild habitat, support pollinators, and improve water quality throughout the watershed.



Volunteers help build hiking trails at our publicly accessible Saeger Preserve in Lac La Belle. TPC is fundraising to build a boardwalk to connect the trail system across a wetland and improve access for all users.

People Power: Volunteers Making a Difference

Our work simply wouldn't be possible without the incredible dedication of our volunteers. This year, community members showed up in a big way – participating in habitat restoration workdays, seed collection, invasive species removal, and stewardship activities across our preserves. Their hands-on efforts directly contributed to healthier landscapes and stronger community connections to the land.



Erik Joost with the Oconomowoc Watershed Protection Program and Paul Meuer, Land Protection Manager with TPC, lead a tour of the newly completed Cottonwood Creek Restoration project, which significantly improves water quality and reduces phosphorous in downstream Lac La Belle.



A student from Adeline Montessori School collects seeds for processing and storage in a seed bank, a collaborative project with Waukesha County Land Conservancy (WCLC).

Engaging Our Community

Through outreach events, guided hikes, and educational programming, we connected with hundreds of community members in 2025. From birding events and conservation workshops to family-friendly outdoor experiences, these gatherings continue to inspire curiosity, stewardship, and a deeper appreciation for the natural world.

This year, we launched our Third Thursday event series, providing fun and casual tours of protected properties throughout the region, and sharing stories of the

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A Farm Worth Fighting For

by PAUL MEUER, TPC Land Protection Manager and SCOTT BOVEE, Landowner Partner

For Scott Bovee, protecting his family's farm wasn't just a good idea, it was a responsibility.

It started, as many meaningful things do, with a simple conversation. A connection through church led to another, and then another. A name shared. A phone call made. A story told and retold to anyone who might have an answer.

"I was up against a brick wall," Scott recalls. *"People don't know that people like you exist."*

Before finding Tall Pines Conservancy, Scott had already begun searching for a way to ensure the future of his land. Conversations with attorneys led to dead ends. One option suggested donating the property, but at the potential cost of losing the very buildings and character that defined it.

That wasn't acceptable, because for Scott Bovee, this wasn't just about land, it was about legacy.

Rooted in Eagle's Earliest Days

The story of the Bovee Farm stretches back to the very beginnings of Eagle.

The Bovee family were among the earliest settlers in the area, arriving from New York in the early 1840s and helping establish what would become the agricultural backbone of the community. Eagle, Wisconsin itself was, for generations, defined by working farms like theirs.

One of Scott's ancestors, Marvin H. Bovee, was part of that first wave of pioneers who settled and farmed the land beginning in 1843. But his legacy extends beyond agriculture.



Scott Bovee stands in front of the barn that he restored and maintains, proudly bearing his family's name and the date the farm was established. Ancient oaks with sprawling branches dot the landscape, many likely in excess of 200 years old.

Photo Credit: Paul Meuer, Tall Pines Conservancy

As a member of the Wisconsin State Senate, Marvin Bovee played a role in one of the state's most defining moments; the abolition of capital

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Impact Snapshot: Because of You... (from PAGE 4)

land, history, and natural features that make this all worth protecting. Visit our website to see more information on upcoming events and we look forward to having you join us!



TPC's first event in the Third Thursday series featured sunset views overlooking the Fox River and a bonfire celebrating the Spring Equinox at Ravensholme on the River. The series continues throughout the year and features fun and unique tours of protected land throughout the region.

Stronger Together Through Partnership

Collaboration remains at the heart of our impact. Through partnerships with local, state, and federal programs, as well as organizations like OWPP and Farmers for Lake Country (FFLC), we expanded conservation practices on working lands, improved water quality, and supported landowners in implementing sustainable solutions.

We also strengthened our partnerships with other conservation groups and land trusts, including establishing a seed bank with Waukesha County Land Conservancy (WCLC) to support future restoration projects. Funding for this collaborative project was made possible through the Kettle Moraine Garden Club (KMGC).

We are always looking for ways to grow and strengthen our partnerships, knowing that working together is the best way to achieve our goals. If you know a group that you think we should be engaged with, please connect us, and we look forward to growing our meaningful collaborations.

As we reflect on this past year, one thing is clear: none of this would be possible without you.

Your support fuels every acre protected, every habitat restored, and every person inspired to care for the land.

Because of you, conservation is happening – right here, right now.

And together, we're just getting started. ▲

Stewardship Spotlight: The Start of Forever at Ravensholme & Beyond

written/photo by JESSICA MYSLIWSKI,
TPC Stewardship Coordinator

While crucial, land protection is just the beginning. As users of the land, we have a reciprocal relationship with it, meaning we must nourish the land in return through stewardship. Stewardship is an ongoing endeavor, a commitment we've made for all of our easements and owned properties. In this spring's Stewardship Spotlight, we'd like to highlight the ecological restoration work completed at Ravensholme on the River this past winter and ways you can be a steward this spring.

With a grant from the American Bird Conservancy, we hired Kettle Moraine Land Stewards to remove invasive buckthorn from the oak ecosystem along the Fox River at Ravensholme. Through hard work and a passion for restoration, the crew was able to clear 11 acres of buckthorn in just a couple of weeks – an impressive accomplishment to say the least! The property was a symphony of saws as most of the crew spent their days chainsawing and brush cutting buckthorn while a forestry mower with a grapple attachment clenched the downfall and placed it onto burn piles. Volunteers also cleared brush by hand in areas the machinery could not traverse.

Before restoration, movement through some portions of the woodland was almost impossible with the dense brush. The soil was lifeless, and the lower limbs of legacy oaks were dwindling from lack of sunlight. Thankfully, the brush removal has transformed the space. Staff have already seen more birds enjoying the liberated woodland as they glide amongst the towering oaks,



Before and after restoration images of the woodland area at Ravensholme.

uninhibited by an invasive understory. Large shagbark hickory trees and white oaks of varying ages also became visible. Native plants and wildflowers such as shooting star, buttercup, Indian tobacco, Pennsylvania sedge, and evening primrose were uncovered, planting seeds of hope for the recovery of this special ecosystem.

We're so grateful for everyone who made this initial phase of restoration possible. This team effort was just the beginning of our goal to protect and steward this land for future generations.

Want to be a stewardship volunteer this spring/summer and leave a lasting legacy on the land and for future generations? Check out our opportunities below. ▲

TRAIL MAINTENANCE WORKSHOPS

Monday, May 11 • 9a–noon
Saeger Creek Preserve



AGROFORESTRY WORKSHOPS

Monday, May 18 • 9a–noon
Ravensholme Farm Preserve



*Groups or individuals interested in scheduling a workday outside of these dates are encouraged to contact our Stewardship Coordinator, jessica@tallpinesconservancy.org

Adding a Fresh Perspective New Board Member Erik Gardner

Tall Pines Conservancy is pleased to welcome Erik Gardner as its newest board member.



Erik is a seasoned attorney and strategic advisor with extensive experience guiding organizations through complex legal, commercial, and strategic matters. He brings these creative problem-solving skills and a sense of enthusiasm and urgency to his role on the board, as well as his position as co-chair of the Development Committee.

A native of Lake Country, Erik recently fulfilled his goal of returning to his hometown with his family of five. He and his family value time spent outdoors and share a deep commitment to protecting the land around us for future generations—including the farms and waterways that are so vital to Wisconsin.

"I'm honored to support the conservancy's mission to preserve natural spaces and strengthen stewardship of the places we call home."

We are excited to have Erik join our leadership team and look forward to the impact he will make in protecting land for future generations. ▲

A Farm Worth Fighting For... (from PAGE 5)

punishment following the Abolition of the death penalty in Wisconsin. Wisconsin became the first state in the nation to permanently outlaw the death penalty, reflecting a deep commitment to justice and human dignity.

That legacy, of stewardship, conviction, and doing what is right for the long term, still echoes through the Bovee family today. For Scott, that history isn't distant, it's personal.

Generations in the Ground

The Bovee Farm has been in the family for generations. It's a place shaped by hard work, perseverance, and deep-rooted connection.

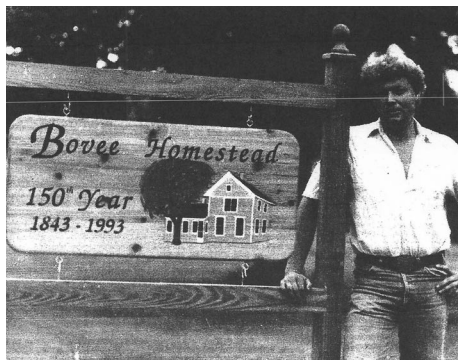
"So much hard work was put into the place," Scott says. "I just wish my family had been here to see what has been done. Our ancestors would be so proud."

Over time, Scott has invested in restoring the farm, steadily, intentionally, honoring those who came before him while preparing for those who may come after.

When asked what he hopes the farm looks like 100 years from now, his answer is simple: *"I hope it remains as a farm and not that different than how I left it."*

A Changing Landscape

Scott has witnessed firsthand the transformation of the surrounding landscape. *"Growing up, you'd see tractors go by all day long. Now you barely see it."*



Scott Bovee is the sixth generation of a family that began farming in Eagle in 1843. Pictured here in 1993 celebrating 150 years of family stewardship of the land, which today is now closer to 200 years. Although he knows the land may not be owned by the family forever, he intends to honor his family's legacy by protecting the land with Tall Pines Conservancy.

Photo Credit: Eagle Historical Society, Courtesy of Scott Bovee

Farms have grown larger, fewer, and farther between. Development has crept in. Subdivisions have replaced fields.

He remembers a neighboring farm. After the owner passed, it was sold and subdivided. *"Now you see in the new subdivisions where they're watering grass instead of food."*

To Scott, that change represents something permanent. *"Once farmland is gone, it's gone for good."*

More Than Property

The pressure to sell is real, and constant. *"I've had people approach me already,"* Scott says. *"I get a lot of people asking why I don't just sell and move onto a cruise ship."* He's also been approached about converting the land into a solar farm.

But for Scott, the value of the land isn't measured in offers. *"Like my dad said, 'that soil is my blood.'"*

His concerns extend beyond his own property. Looking across the region, he sees fewer active farms and growing uncertainty.

"Where are we going to get our food from?" he asks.

A Future Worth Protecting

Today, the Bovee Farm is leased to a local farmer, ensuring it remains in agricultural production. Scott hopes that continues long into the future, whether through his family or someone else willing to carry the responsibility forward.

"I made it clear what I would like to see done with it," he says. *"But if somebody else ends up with it, I just want them to keep in mind what was here and what is here."*

That vision, of continuity, stewardship, and respect, is exactly what conservation is meant to secure, and what Tall Pines Conservancy works to protect for future generations.

Why It Matters

Farms like the Bovee property are becoming increasingly rare. As development pressure intensifies, the window to protect working lands narrows.

But places like this are more than acreage, they are living connections to the earliest days of our communities, shaped by generations who worked the land, and by individuals who helped shape the values we still hold today.

Through partnership with Tall Pines Conservancy, there is now a path forward, one that honors the past while safeguarding the future.

Because some places, like the Bovee Farm, are worth fighting for. ▲

Help Us Meet This Moment

Spring is a Season of Action – Conservation Cannot Wait.

Across Southeast Wisconsin, fields are being prepared for planting, prairies are beginning to emerge, and waterways are carrying the energy of a new season. At the same time, Tall Pines Conservancy is seeing unprecedented demand from landowners who want to permanently protect their farms and natural areas.

These opportunities are real – and they're time-sensitive.

Today, we have a growing number of conservation projects awaiting funding. These are working farms that could remain productive for generations, natural areas that protect clean water, and landscapes that define the character of our communities. But with public conservation funding increasingly uncertain, the ability to act depends more than ever on private support.

This is a moment where community leadership matters.

Because of supporters like you, Tall Pines Conservancy has already protected thousands of acres and continues to steward them with care. Together, we have built momentum. Now, we must carry it forward.

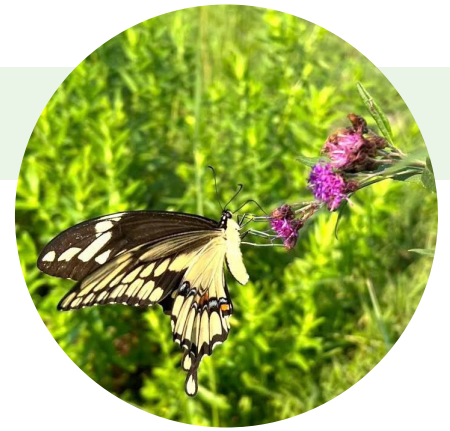
As we plan the next chapter of our work, we want to hear from you.

Two powerful ways you can help us meet this moment:

1. Make a Spring Gift. Your donation will directly support land protection and stewardship at a time when opportunities are urgent and resources are limited.

2. Complete Our Supporter Survey Using the Enclosed Form and Envelope or Online. Your input will help shape our priorities, advocacy efforts, and community programs in the years ahead.

Together, your voice and your generosity help ensure that the lands we value today remain protected, productive, and vibrant for generations to come. ▲



Take Action Now! Visit: tallpinesconservancy.org/shape-the-future to make a spring gift and take the supporter survey.

Visit Us! tallpinesconservancy.org Join Our Community!   

Supporter Survey



Share Your VOICE

WAYS TO TAKE ACTION THIS SPRING
 JOIN THE INAUGURAL CONSERVATION CHASE
 LANDOWNERS PROTECTING LOCAL FARMS
 STORIES ON HOW YOU IMPACT TPC
 NEW EVENTS & WORKSHOPS
 inside this issue



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