



Deer Lake Conservancy  
 P.O. Box 1139  
 St. Croix Falls, Wisconsin 54024

# Deer Lake Conservancy Report



Summer Edition



JULY 2017



## 2017 Annual Meeting

Please join us for  
 our Annual Meeting

Saturday, July 8th  
 9:00 a.m.  
 Trollhaugen  
 Convention Center

## Celebrating Two Critical Property Acquisitions for Deer Lake

We are pleased to announce that two critical property acquisitions on the north side of Deer Lake were completed this past year. The Conservancy purchased the 32-acre Lower Rock Creek property in August 2016. We finalized negotiations and purchased the 95-acre Gustav and Elizabeth Johnson Preserve in June 2017. Each property provides important opportunities for water quality improvement and preservation and links existing

Conservancy properties to greatly expand the trail system. The map below shows their location relative to other Conservancy properties and the intermittent streams that flow from watersheds to the lake. With these acquisitions, Conservancy holdings total 295 acres in strategic watershed areas around Deer Lake. Both new acquisitions were identified as priorities in the Conservancy's 2010 Strategic Plan.

## 2017 CONSERVANCY OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

- Phillip Foussard, President
- Jim Miller, Vice President
- Tom Pesek, Secretary/Treasurer
- Mark Boyken
- Tom McBride
- John Patterson
- John Wright



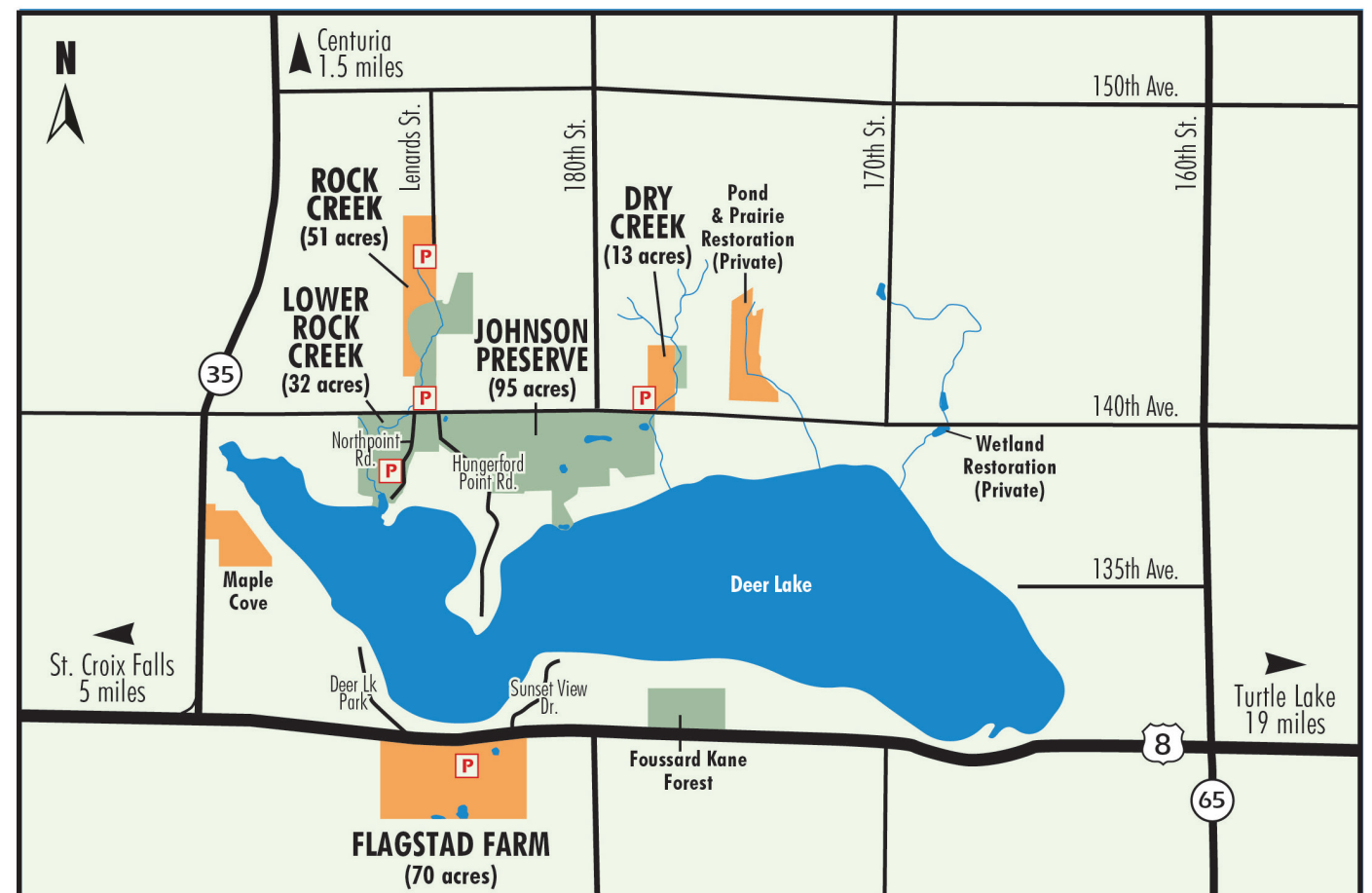
## Annual Flagstad Farm Celebration

Hosted by the Deer Lake Conservancy and the  
 Deer Lake Improvement Association

Join your Deer Lake friends and neighbors for live music  
 and refreshments at the Flagstad Farm.

Saturday, July 29, 2017 • 6-9 PM  
 PRAIRIE TOURS!!

See the best view of Deer Lake!  
 All ages and guests are welcome.



Scale 1" = approx. 1/3 mile





## Project Updates

### GUSTAV AND ELIZABETH JOHNSON PRESERVE UPDATE

The Johnson Preserve had been in the Andersen family for over 75 years. Gustav and Elizabeth Johnson were former owner Julian Andersen's grandparents. With this important family legacy in his hands, Julian very carefully negotiated permanent protection of the property with Conservancy representatives. To provide an extra layer of protection, Mr. Andersen donated a conservation easement to the West Wisconsin Land Trust. As holder of the conservation easement, the Land Trust will be a partner in the protection and management of this property. With the conservation easement in place, acquisition costs were very reasonable for the Conservancy and its members.

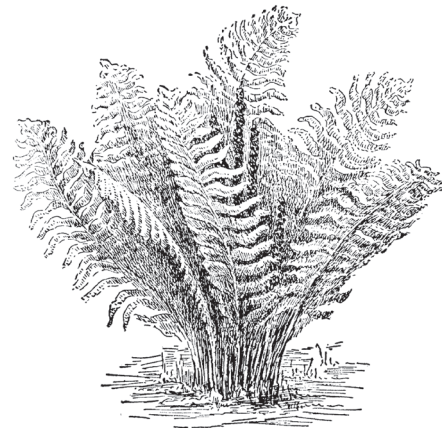


A Land Management Plan guides the use of the property. The Preserve consists of a mature hardwood forest with small, temporary wetlands, ponds, undeveloped lakeshore, and former pasture-land with conifer groves, shrub thickets, and grassy openings. The plan calls for management in a natural state to support habitat for the diverse plants and animals found in the Preserve. Control of invasive species such as buckthorn will further improve habitat here. A 2014 bird inventory found red shouldered hawk, listed as a Threatened species in Wisconsin, along with 35 additional species including red-eyed vireo, wood thrush, osprey, and scarlet tanager. Open pools of water throughout the property enhance bird and amphibian diversity.

A 2014 plant survey also yielded interesting results. The diverse habitats harbor over 200 plant species including an especially good array of forest wildflowers, ferns, grasses, and sedges.

The Preserve's wetland ponds and shallow wet depressions not only provide important habitat, they also capture significant watershed runoff, preventing delivery of sediments and nutrients to the lake and allowing infiltration to recharge the springs which feed the lake.

A non-motorized trail system is already laid out, and trail improvements will be made in coming years. The trail provides a link to the Rock Creek trails to the west and the Dry Creek trails to the east. The terrain is surprisingly varied and there are stunning woodland and open field views from the trail.



### WATER QUALITY PROJECT COMPLETED ON THE JOHNSON PRESERVE

With permission of the former owner and adjacent property owners, measures were installed in the fall of 2016 to slow water flow from ponds on the eastern edge of the Johnson Preserve which receive agricultural runoff from north of 140th Avenue. The resulting ponding area allows runoff water to settle and release slowly to reduce significant erosion along an intermittent stream channel which flows to Dry Creek then directly to Deer Lake. A Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources grant paid 75% of the cost of this installation.



*The riser pipe shown above holds back runoff water creating a temporary ponding area above the driveway.*



*Rock check dams, below the culvert on the opposite side of the driveway, further slow the water preventing erosion in streams that flow to Deer Lake.*

### LOWER ROCK CREEK PROPERTY

Lower Rock Creek is another gem of an addition to the Conservancy's holdings. Rock Creek, the stream with the most consistent flow to Deer Lake and the source of off-lake spring water, flows through the property. There is also a feeder stream that collects water from agricultural fields and joins Rock Creek on the property.

The Lower Rock Creek property provides the opportunity to meet the Deer Lake Conservancy's goal of 65% reduction of watershed total phosphorus loading since 1996, building upon years of progress in other watersheds. The Conservancy is working with the Polk County Land and Water Resources engineer to develop plans for a basin to hold and clean this flow prior to release to Rock Creek and the lake. This project will be 75% funded by an existing Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources grant. A second grant already awarded to the Conservancy will pay 75% of property acquisition costs once administrative steps are completed.

Trails provide Deer Lake residents and the public an opportunity to see this beautiful property. Trail improvements will continue in coming years.

