

## 2018 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

Live music and refreshments at the Flagstad Farm.  
 Saturday, July 28, 2018 • 6-9 PM  
 All ages and guests are welcome.

# Deer Lake Conservancy Report



Summer Edition



JULY 2018

## ENJOY OUR TRAILS

Deer Lake Conservancy trails not only offer a place for you and your family to get exercise and fresh air, they also provide a good way to learn about the Conservancy story. The first Conservancy trail was established on the Upper Rock Creek property to allow public access for greater understanding of Conservancy projects. We added more trails as additional properties were acquired, and the trails quickly became recreational assets for our members. Membership increased with appreciation of the trails and the water quality work the Conservancy accomplished.

With an incredible investment of time and energy in trail development over the years, we now offer 4 ½ miles of trails through our conservation areas. Our newest additions are the Lower Rock Creek and the Johnson Preserve trails. The Lower Rock Creek trail system has two entrances marked with signs on Northpoint Road; one entrance has a grassy parking

area. The trail follows the east ridge of Rock Creek along an old glacial outflow to Deer Lake. A trail spur takes you to our most recent conservation project – a sedimentation basin described later in this newsletter. Another branch of the trail travels along the west side of Rock Creek to the lake. The Lower Rock Creek area is 32 acres, and the trails cover 0.7 miles.

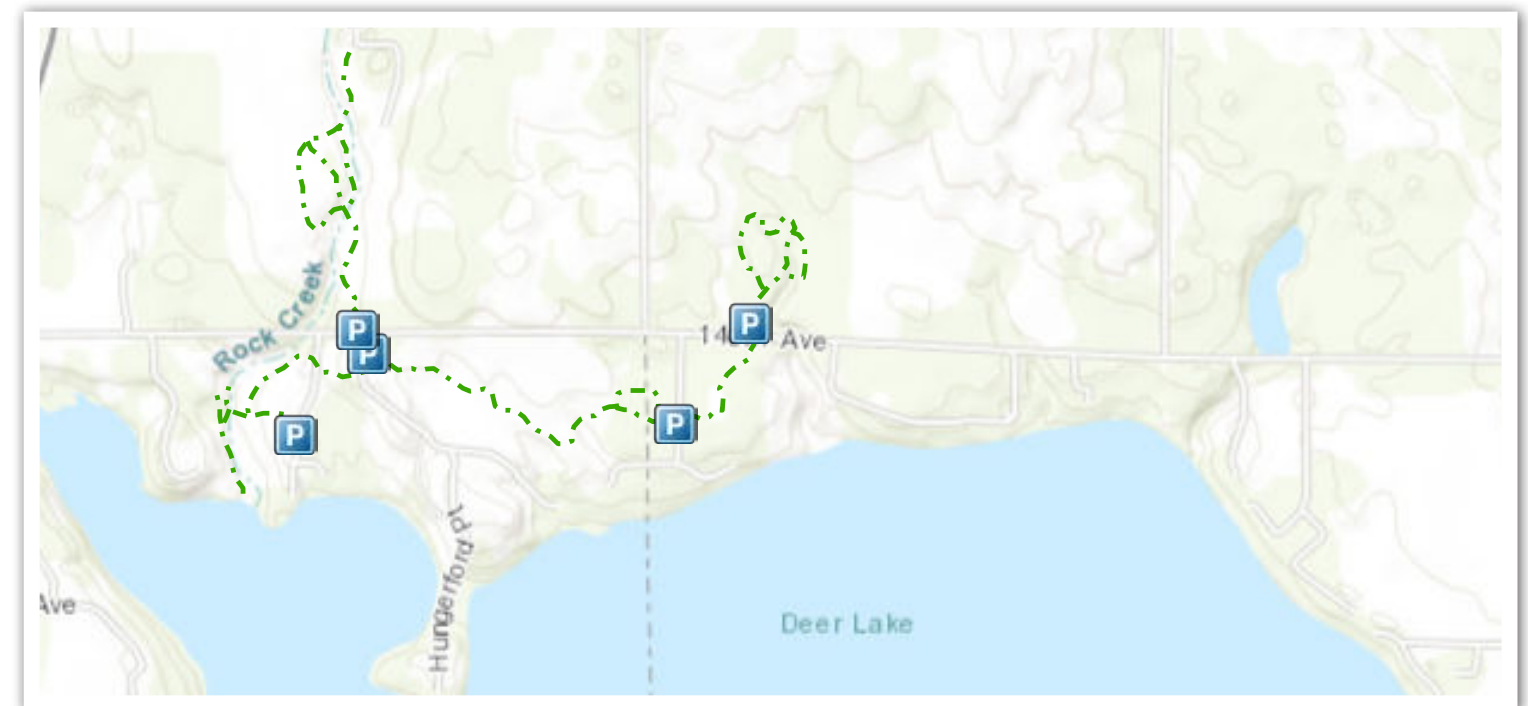
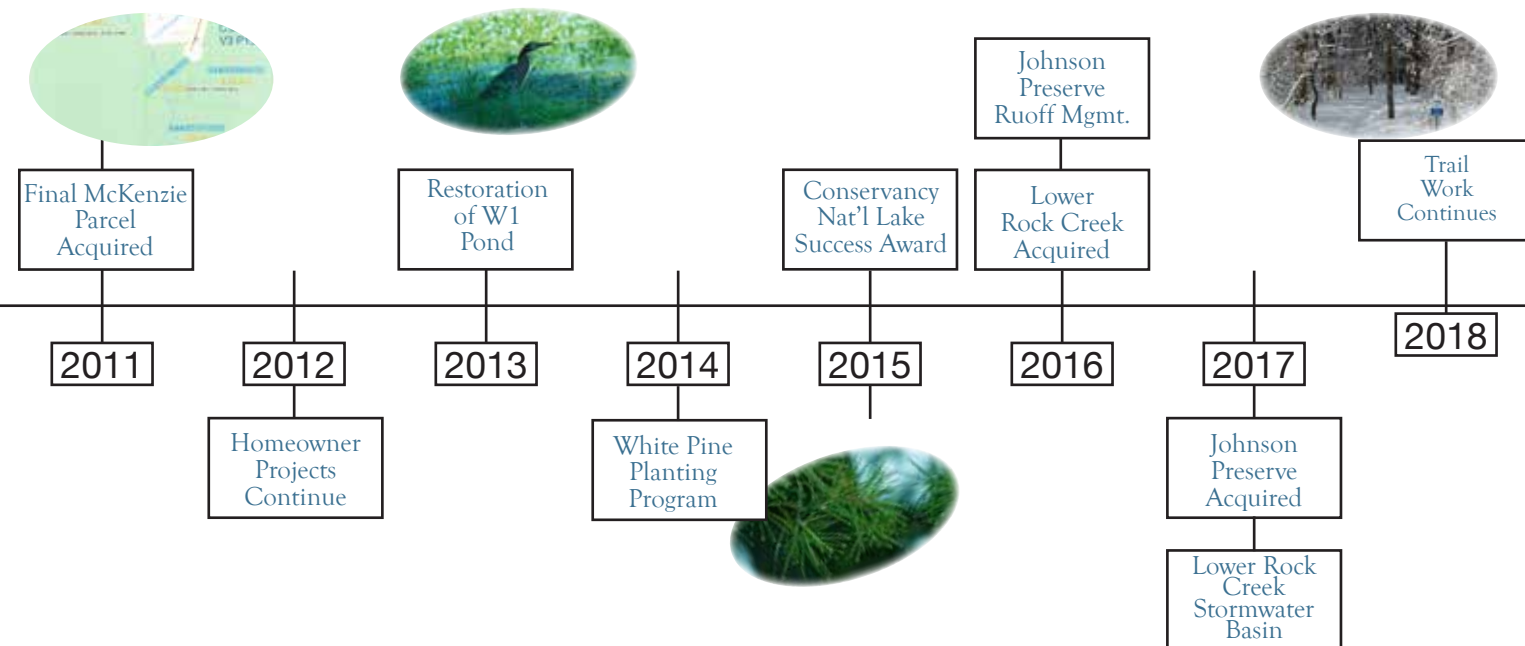
The Johnson Preserve trails now link the Rock Creek trail system to the Dry Creek trails. Two access points along Hungerford Point Road are marked, one with parking. The trail winds 1.15 miles through a hardwood forest, past several ponds, across Anderson Lane, through the woods, then across 140th Avenue to the Dry Creek Conservation Area. The Johnson Preserve is 95 acres with 451 feet of lakefront including two lagoons frequented by great blue herons.



## 2018 ANNUAL MEETING

Please join us for our Annual Meeting  
 Saturday, July 14th  
 9:00 a.m.  
 Trollhaugen Convention Center

## DEER LAKE CONSERVANCY PROJECT TIMELINE, CONTINUED.



## BUCKTHORN CONTROL

The Deer Lake Conservancy began buckthorn control projects in 2010, and our work continues to this day. This long-term effort points to the invasive character and tenacity of this non-native shrub originally planted to create thick ornamental hedges. Buckthorn has since spread rapidly throughout the region including in many forested areas around Deer Lake. Buckthorn is able to out-compete native trees and shrubs by over-growing and shading them out. It also limits light to the understory leading to bare soil and erosion. Initial steps in DLC buckthorn control included removal of the large seed producing trees, some of which were more than 30 feet high.

Our current focus for buckthorn control is at the newly acquired Johnson Preserve. In 2017 treatment occurred along 140th Avenue, Hungerford Point Road, and Anderson Lane. Bayview Drive and areas along Rock Creek were treated in 2016. Initial stages of buckthorn removal are not so pretty. You may see dead woody vegetation (the treated buckthorn before it is cut) and bare understory. Eventually these areas will recover when additional light results in new understory growth of ferns and native woodland plants.

The Conservancy received a 50% Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Managed Forest grant for buckthorn control through the Polk County Forestry Department in 2017, and a 2018 application is pending.

## PROPERTY VALUES AND WATER QUALITY

Lake property is clearly aesthetically pleasing and economically desirable. It is also well-established that property values are tightly linked to lake water quality. For example, Bemidji State University conducted a comprehensive study of 2000 lake home sales between 1966 and 2001. The value of each home sale was compared to the clarity of the lake at the time of sale. They found that a 3 foot increase in clarity resulted in a \$427 increase in the sale price for every foot of lakeshore. Interestingly, there was a greater economic penalty for declines in water quality. A 3 feet decrease in clarity caused a \$500 decrease in the sale price per foot of lakefront. A 2017 UW- Eau Claire study of water clarity and home values on 20 Northern Wisconsin lakes estimated that a 3 foot improvement in water clarity would produce a 9-16% improvement in property value on lakes with the lowest clarity. Good lake management practices and water quality improvements not only ensure enhanced and safe recreational opportunities, they also protect and grow the lake property owner's investment.

On Deer Lake, reduction in phosphorus loading from the watersheds has resulted in average summer water clarity increases of about 10 feet since the late 1990s. To keep the momentum of watershed reduction moving closer to our goal, we need every Deer Lake property owner to consider reducing the impact of runoff from their property to the lake. With our current DNR grant expiring at the end of this year, we need more interested landowners to support another grant application for runoff reduction projects in our direct drainage (waterfront) area. Free waterfront site visits are available to assess runoff from your property and investigate options for improving runoff quality from your property.

## LOWER ROCK CREEK STORMWATER BASIN

The Conservancy has worked for 20 years on the restoration of Rock Creek, the largest source of spring water flowing into the lake. The Conservancy now owns all of the land along Rock Creek from the springs themselves (the McKenzie acquisitions in 2009 and 2011), through the creek bed along the Upper Rock Creek trail (acquired in 1998), to the Lower Rock Creek area (acquired in 2016). Member donations, along with grants from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, have made protection of our most important source of spring water flowing into the lake possible.



*Earthen dam creates a pond - as viewed from the trail*

**FREE  
WATERFRONT  
SITE VISITS  
AVAILABLE**

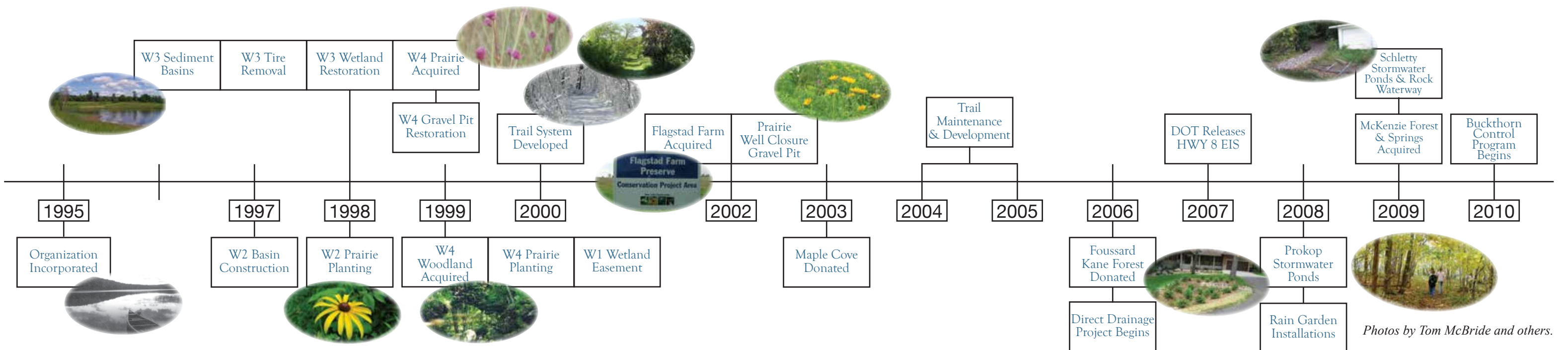
Contact Cheryl at:  
Harmony Environmental  
harmonyenv@amerytel.net  
715.268.9992

An important element of the Rock Creek restoration was the installation of a large stormwater control structure on the west fork of Lower Rock Creek late in 2017. The drainage area that flows to this structure, known as watershed 5, drains 1,649 acres along Highway 35 north of 140th Avenue and enters Rock Creek south of 140th Avenue. The drainage area is mostly agricultural, so runoff can contain significant amounts of phosphorus and nitrates that used to flow unchecked to Rock Creek and into the lake. Until the Conservancy acquired the Lower Rock Creek property, we had no way to control agricultural runoff from watershed 5.

With this project we estimate a 62% reduction of watershed phosphorus loading from 1996 when baseline measurements were made! - very close to our 65% reduction goal.

## DEER LAKE CONSERVANCY PROJECT TIMELINE

For more information on projects, see our *Deer Lake Conservancy Conservation Project Tour Guide*



*Photos by Tom McBride and others.*