



Spring 2020

# Scenic Views

A newsletter from the Milwaukee Area Land Conservancy

For the Love of the Land

## Our Mission

To preserve and protect valuable land and water resources for the benefit of the public, as well as for the wildlife dependent on these resources, in order to maintain quality of life, biological diversity, and natural scenic beauty for future generations.

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## Give While You Shop!

With so many of us shopping online, there's a new way to give to MALC by using Smile Amazon! Just go to smile.amazon.com, search for Milwaukee Area Land Conservancy and set it as your organization of choice when shopping at Smile Amazon. For every purchase you make, Amazon will donate a percentage of their receipts to MALC, without any cost to you! Deposits are made monthly to the MALC bank account and are used to help maintain the places we save.

## Conservation Easements Good Medicine in These Times

By Linda Frank

It's very much a time of worry for our own health and safety. But, have you noticed also a new sense of connectedness and appreciation, of care and concern for others, and perhaps for the natural world that nurtures us? Isn't it more palpable in these times? It's what I'm feeling as I write this introduction on the topic of conservation easements—one of the tools landowners use to preserve and protect their land. This may sound quirky, but even the words of the federal tax regulations strike me as beautiful—transfer of an interest in land for “protection of a significant natural habitat where a fish, wildlife, or plant community, or similar ecosystem normally lives.” It's not the type of language we normally see in a real estate conveyance document, but a transfer for conservation purposes is special and such language is at the “heart” of the agreement. Most arrangements for land conservation we encounter are either for the protection of significant wildlife habitats or natural plant communities; or are for the preservation of open space that provides physical or visual scenic enjoyment to the public. These landscapes in Milwaukee County commonly contain woodlands, wetlands, sedge meadows and/or prairie grasslands.

Landowners use conservation easements to permanently protect or restore the natural beauty of their property while continuing to own and enjoy the land. It's an alternative to an outright

conveyance of the land. And, the landowner can still qualify for an income tax deduction based on the value of the gift of the easement. MALC, like other land conservancies, will consider accepting a conservation easement that is in line with our mission and requirements. MALC then accepts the responsibility to monitor and enforce protections on the land, ensuring that any future use of the property, any construction or introduction of structures, is within the bounds of what is contemplated under the terms of the easement. A tax deductible cash donation is typically made by the landowner as well, to assist the land trust with funding for carrying out its responsibilities undertaken.

All grants of conservation easements must meet standard requirements, while at the same time, each property is unique, and the protections sought for each parcel may be somewhat unique. The language of the agreement is important for capturing the intent of the landowner and the land trust with this permanent arrangement. In view of this, the Wisconsin land trust community has come together with a desire to collaborate in drafting a conservation easement template for Wisconsin, to provide new guidance to the parties in writing an agreement that meets their needs. I and several other lawyers, along with land trust practitioners, are working together on this project, and look forward to providing this new tool to the land trust community.



## Dear MALC Supporters,

Yes, it's one crisis on top of another—a health crisis on top of a climate crisis, on top of a mass extinction crisis. All reasons for us to come together and spread a little more love in our world.

I admit that I have been preoccupied for years with the crisis of climate change. (Did you hear—with all of us at home, greenhouse gas emissions are down!). And, where do we look for climate change mitigation? We focus on energy demand and energy production—installing energy efficient lighting, heating and appliances, closing coal plants, building wind turbines, installing solar arrays, getting around on foot, bike or bus, buying an electric vehicle or plug-in hybrid, installing an electric heat pump. These are all critically important strategies for reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

But, often overlooked or underappreciated, is the impact of planting trees and green spaces; preserving and restoring forests and prairies. Recent years have seen a growing acknowledgement, in the United Nations reports on climate and in other important scientific studies, of the

huge role of tropical forests, temperate forests, prairie grasslands, and other natural ecosystems, in carbon sequestration. We sacrifice these ecosystems at great peril. And yet, climate change poses an existential crisis, but the issue is broader and climate change is part of a larger imbalance. To quote Charles Eisenstein in *Climate, a New Story*:

*Earth is a complex living system whose homeostatic maintenance depends on the robust interaction of every living and nonliving subsystem... the biggest threat to life on earth is not fossil fuel emissions, but the loss of forests, soil, wetlands, and marine ecosystems.*

Our mission is to protect and restore these ecosystems in our community. Together, we can work at restoring balance.

With warmest regards,

**Linda Frank**  
MALC President



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## MALC Supporter Profile: John & Martha Lunz

John and Martha Lunz' connection to Milwaukee conservation predates MALC's formation. Originally from Tulsa, OK, Martha came to Milwaukee to study History & Philosophy at Marquette University, where she met Milwaukee native & US Navy veteran John, who was then pursuing a Master's in Electrical Engineering.

Moving their family to Glendale in 1978, Martha developed a connection with one of MALC's founders, Richard Barloga, later contacting him to conduct a botanical inventory of Sidney Woods, a naturally

diverse, 3.4 acre woods a few blocks from their home. With assistance from neighbor Monica McKee and MALC co-founder Kristen Wilhelm, they initially suggested and helped coordinate the MALC acquisition of Sidney Woods.

Sharing an interest in environmental education, John and Martha are both

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John Lunz

## MALC Thanks Our 2019 Supporters and Contributors

Amazon Smile  
Marilyn & Curtis Bolton  
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Paul Ryan  
Richard Krueger  
John Sanborn  
Kristin Schultheis  
Southeastern Wisconsin Invasive Species Consortium



# Milwaukee Area Land Conservancy 2019 Consolidated Financial Report

## Assets

MALC continues to take a balanced approach to its asset management by maintaining funds in long term reserves, property specific dedicated funds and liquid cash on hand. This approach provides MALC with the agility to respond to conservation or acquisition opportunities today while planning for the future. With over \$1.1 Million dollars in land under management, MALC continues to be a major land conservation organization in southeastern Wisconsin.

## Income

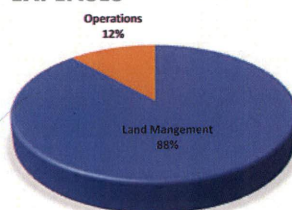
The land conservancy's income from 2019 was largely in the form of a grant from Southeastern Wisconsin Invasive Species Consortium which was used to support our continuing efforts at scientific study and conservation of our Sidney Woods property. We extend our thanks to the

Wisconsin Invasive Species Consortium for supporting our work. Other sources include annual assessments established to provide conservation funds from neighboring homeowner's associations in subdivisions adjacent to our conservation lands, as well as the generous donations from individuals and businesses. Additionally, MALC supplements donations and grants with volunteer labor by MALC staff and conservation workers.

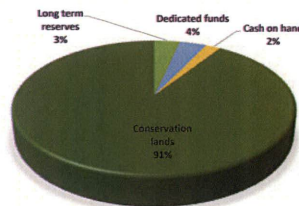
## Expenses

MALC maintains low operating costs by relying on an all-volunteer board and other active volunteers who work in the field and office to restore and conserve the lands entrusted to our care. Eighty-Eight percent of our expenses are directly related to land management. The remaining operational costs go to communications, dues and memberships, insurance and supplies.

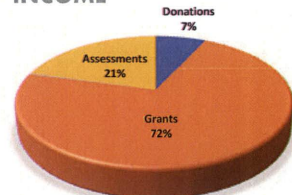
## EXPENSES



## MALC ASSETS



## INCOME



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concerned with promoting preservation of native plant communities, including the monitoring and management of invasive species.

In addition to supporting MALC and volunteering with several local stewardship groups, John is an active member of the Milwaukee Environmental Consortium (MEC), the Invasive Plant Association of Wisconsin (IPAW), the SE Wisconsin Invasive Species Consortium (SEWISC) and the Milwaukee North Chapter of Wild Ones. Sometimes

hosting meetings in their home, attendees are often treated to samples of John's cooking. And, if that wasn't enough, he is also an avid reader and currently training to run a marathon!

With gratitude and respect, we would like to recognize John and Martha's decades of dedication and ongoing contributions to local land and resource conservation. We thank them for their support and wish them both many more years of health and happiness.

YES! I would like to help the Milwaukee Area Land Conservancy preserve and restore beautiful places for the public's enjoyment. Enclosed is my tax deductible gift.

\_\_\_ \$25 \_\_\_ \$50 \_\_\_ \$100 \_\_\_ \$200 \_\_\_ Other

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

**Mail this form with your check to:** **For additional information:**

Milwaukee Area Land Conservancy  
P.O. Box 320304  
Franklin, Wisconsin 53132

email: [MALC@mkeconservancy.org](mailto:MALC@mkeconservancy.org)  
[www.mkeconservancy.org](http://www.mkeconservancy.org)  
Phone: 414-377-3851

MALC accepts donations online. See the donation page of our website at: [mkeconservancy.org](http://mkeconservancy.org)



Print your name as you would like it to appear in our newsletter acknowledging our supporters. If you choose to be listed as anonymous, place the letter "A" after your name.

Contributions will be applied to land acquisition, stewardship, and operating expenses to help carry out our mission. MALC is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Contributions are tax deductible as allowed by law.





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## Scenic Views

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### Gathering Waters Land Trust Days

After a period of wet and windy weather, Friday, September 13, 2019, turned out to be a beautiful late summer day, perfect for a field trip through Fitzsimmons Woods in the City of Franklin, as part of Gathering Waters Land Trust Days.

Hosted by MALC president Linda Frank, the event attracted 13 guests. Expertise on the natural features of the woods was provided Dr. Gary Casper and by MALC members, Howard Aprill (also of the



Learning about the varied flora and fauna in Franklin's Fitzsimmons Woods.

Wehr Nature Center) and Dr. Lawrence Leitner.

Salient features of the flora and fauna of the woods were discussed, including the importance of vernal ponds and the link between wildlife diversity and a mature hardwood forest. Maximizing forest interior, minimizing disturbance, and invasive species control were pointed out as important aspects of maintaining natural areas within a rapidly urbanizing landscape.