

Gathering Waters: Announces the winners of Wisconsin's 2019 Land Conservation Leadership Awards

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These leaders helped protect special places for people to enjoy as they live, work and play in Wisconsin.

(August 1, 2019 – Madison, Wis.)—Gathering Waters: Wisconsin's Alliance for Land Trusts is pleased to announce the winners of Wisconsin's 2019 Land Conservation Leadership Awards: Chambers Island Nature Preserve Executive Committee, Ben Niemann, Bryan Pierce, The Yawkey Lumber Company and Landmark Conservancy.

Wisconsin's Land Conservation Leadership Awards recognize individuals, land trusts and other organizations that show outstanding commitment and leadership in helping to protect the state's land, water, wildlife and way of life.

"This year's nomination pool was incredibly competitive," said Mike Carlson, Executive Director of Gathering Waters. "And we are pleased to announce the 2019 Land Conservation Leadership Award winners."

Conservationist of the Year – Chambers Island Nature Preserve Executive Committee

The Chambers Island Nature Preserve Executive Committee is made up of four

women who care deeply about Door County's Chambers Island: Mary Brevard, Suzanne Fletcher, Barbara Frank and Mary Jane Rintelman. Appreciating what a unique ecological-gem the island is, the executive committee set out to create a thousand-acre preserve. With a vision, plan and unmatched resolve, the committee members demonstrated commitment and leadership. By the end of 2019, the Chambers Island Nature Preserve will permanently protect 850 acres because of their efforts.

Harold "Bud" Jordahl Lifetime Achievement Award - Ben Niemann

Ben Niemann of Sawyer County has been improving conservation practices and outcomes in Wisconsin for over 50 years. A true pioneer, Ben used his background as a landscape architect and Director of Land Information and Computer Graphic Facility (LICGF), to harness the power of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to make informed decisions about land use, planning and conservation. The application of these technologies has preserved innumerable acres throughout the state, including his most notable project, the establishment of the Lower Wisconsin Riverway.

Harold "Bud" Jordahl Lifetime Achievement Award - Bryan Pierce

Bryan Pierce of northern Wisconsin has built a conservation legacy throughout Vilas, Oneida, Forest, Florence, Iron, Price and northern Langlade Counties. He was a founding member of the Northwoods Land Trust (NWLTL) in 2001 and went on to lead the organization for 18 years. His approach centered on sustainability, community cooperation, long-term planning and integrity. Under Bryan's leadership, Northwoods Land Trust protected over 13,000 acres of forestland and 70 miles of shoreline.

Land Legacy Award - The Yawkey Lumber Company

The Yawkey Lumber Company of Oneida County made one of the most valuable and sizable gifts to a land trust in Wisconsin history. In 2018, the company's shareholders, all great-grandchildren of the late Cyrus C. Yawkey, donated 431 acres of land, including woodlands, wetlands, islands, wildlife habitat and 4.4 miles of natural shoreline on Lake Katherine to the Northwoods Land Trust. The total appraised value of the Hazelhurst property was over \$12 million at the time of the donation. The property's natural shorelines and old-growth forests are now protected and available for people to view, explore and enjoy.

Land Trust of the Year - Landmark Conservancy

Landmark Conservancy, serving 20 counties in western and northwestern Wisconsin was born of a 2018 merger between two nationally accredited land trusts: West Wisconsin Land Trust and Bayfield Regional Conservancy. The birth of Landmark Conservancy is an example of what teamwork and collaboration can achieve.

“The successful merger of two strong land trusts is impressive when one thinks of all the dynamics involved in bringing together two distinct organizations,” said Carlson. “With the combined knowledge and expertise of the staff, Landmark Conservancy will continue to protect and preserve land that provides clean water, healthy soils, habitat for wildlife, sustainable food sources and spaces for public enjoyment. This is an incredible accomplishment worth honoring and celebrating.”

Event Details

Gathering Waters will honor the achievements of these land conservation leaders at its 2019 Annual Land Conservation Leadership Award Celebration. The ceremony will take place at 5:30 p.m. on September 26, 2019, at the Monona Terrace in Madison, Wisconsin. The event which is open to the public brings together hundreds of land trust leaders, supporters and volunteers from all areas of the state.

The evening will include a raffle, string quartet, savory hors d'oeuvres, desserts and other surprises in honor of Gathering Waters' 25th Anniversary. The Land Conservation Leadership Awards Celebration is also one of more than 30 Wisconsin Land Trust Days events.

Registration is required. There is a charge of \$60 per person; \$100 per couple. For more information or to register, visit gatheringwaters.org/ac.

The mission of Gathering Waters: Wisconsin's Alliance for Land Trusts is to help land trusts, landowners and communities protect the places that make Wisconsin special.