



Star Prairie Land Preservation Trust, Inc.

Volume 7 • First Edition

A NEWSLETTER FOR OUR FRIENDS

October 2009

ACTIVITY UPDATES



McMurtrie Education Reports

Osceola Middle School

On October 7th, the Osceola Middle School continued its annual visit to the McMurtrie Preserve for an environmental education field day. One hundred and fifty 7th graders came to play and learn about the preserve and our natural environment. SPLPT board members and St. Croix County Land & Water Conservation Department employees led six stations where students took water samples to learn about water quality, tested the soil for the nutrients plants need to survive, touched local rocks, examined animal skulls, experienced predator/prey relationships in a game, and saw the different ecosystems of the preserve on a nature hike. This is one of the highlights of the 7th graders' year, and they really enjoy learning out in nature!



Water Action Volunteers Training

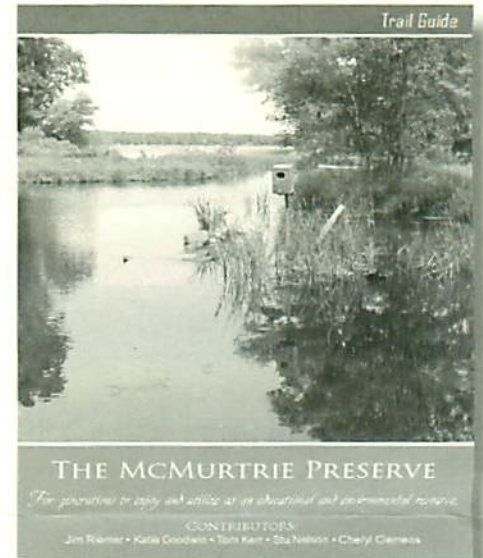
Water Action Volunteers (WAV) is a statewide program for Wisconsin citizens who want to learn about and improve the quality of Wisconsin's streams and rivers. The program is coordinated through a partnership between the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and the University of Wisconsin – Cooperative Extension. Twelve future stream samplers attended a training session at the McMurtrie Preserve on June 14th. These volunteers got in the water and learned how to sample for the tests of the WAV program: temperature, dissolved oxygen, stream flow, and transparency. These samples are taken monthly between April and October by most WAV citizen monitors. Volunteer monitors also assess the aquatic and streamside habitat once in the spring, and the stream's macroinvertebrate community in the spring and fall. These new volunteer samplers can now act for their local stream by compiling long-term data that can be used by the WI DNR and others. Interested in learning more or becoming a Water Action Volunteer? Contact Aleisha Miller, St. Croix County Information & Education Specialist at 715-684-2874 x. 125.





New Interpretive Guide Available!

Thanks to a grant from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, a new interpretive guide is available for visitors to the preserve. The full-color guide leads visitors along the trails, pointing out and explaining natural features along the way. Guides are available to use on your visit to the preserve. Contact Mike Reiter, education chair, for more details at 715-246-6643 or mikesal@frontiernet.net.



Polk County Schools !

Help is available to get to the preserve!

The Star Prairie Land Preservation Trust received a \$500 Operation Round-Up grant from Polk-Burnett Charities, Inc. This grant will be used to provide five \$100 scholarships to cover bus costs to the McMurtrie Preserve. Schools in Polk and Burnett Counties are eligible for these scholarships. As school budgets get tighter, this is a way for schools to still get outside and experience the environmental education programs we provide at the McMurtrie Preserve.

New Richmond High School Service Learning Day

Susan Bull (ne Schottler) brought her homeroom to the preserve for Service Learning Day, Friday May 14th. Land trust volunteers put the kids to work installing trail signage posts and fence posts, getting the parking area ready for visitors, and cleaning-up around the preserve. Thank you New Richmond High School students!

We Need your Help! Please consider volunteering at the preserve!

- Assist with McMurtrie Preserve Educational Events
- Host Preserve Open Houses

Interested? Please contact Mike Reiter, education chair, for more details at 715-246-6643 or mikesal@frontiernet.net.

SPECIAL THANKS



Thanks to the St. Croix Valley Community Foundation . . .

With the support of a grant from the Foundation, the Star Prairie Land Preservation Trust board updated our strategic plan. The plan will guide the work of the land trust through 2014. We are excited about continuing the important work of the land trust by implementing the goals found in the strategic plan:

1. Preserve environmentally sensitive land to protect water quality and wildlife habitat for future generations.
2. Foster land stewardship through education, engaging a broad spectrum of active citizens.
3. Have adequate financial resources to carry out the mission.
4. Organizational structure and systems allow for effective, efficient, and transparent operations.
5. Be recognized as a leader in land preservation and environmental education.

Valerie Hogan, of Growth Strategies, Inc. facilitated board input and wrote the plan.

UPCOMING EVENTS



Paul and Sherril Schottler Family

Preserves a Family Tradition, Farmland, and Open Space

Does your family enjoy the annual tradition of cutting a Christmas tree? Do you value the scenic beauty of an undeveloped lake or the open space of prairie and farm fields? If so, you can thank Paul and Sherrill Schottler, owners of St. Croix Valley Trees in rural Somerset. They recently placed a conservation easement on their 162-acre rural Somerset farm that assures the Christmas tree farm, agricultural land, lake, and prairie will remain intact and undeveloped for future generations.



Paul and Sherrill Schottler enjoying a rare moment of rest on their tree farm north of Somerset, WI.

You may ask yourself, why would somebody do this? The following quote from the Schottler's answers that question.... "The land, this farm, tells us what we must do and when we must do it. We see the land as our home, not a place we live upon but a place we live with. Our land home is not a thing to be used to our advantage but a place on earth where our body finds use and our soul and spirit find peace."

The land trust sponsored a celebration honoring the Paul and Sherrill Schottler Family and their gift to the community at their farm on the evening of June 24th. The event included farm tours, a strawberry shortcake social, and the easement dedication. Over the past decade, there have been numerous efforts by Pierce, Polk, and St. Croix County individuals and agencies to provide information and education to landowners and public officials about the need to protect farmland and open space. This event was intended to capture the momentum of these efforts by providing an opportunity to gain valuable insight from local landowners and to share thoughts and ideas with fellow citizens.

Schottler Conservation Easement Facts:

- The entire 160-acre farm must remain as one parcel into the future.
- Agricultural uses are allowed to continue on the farm.
- The 20-acre farmstead zone accommodates current and future agriculturally related activities.
- No development is allowed except for one additional residence within the farmstead zone.
- Ownership is retained by the Schottlers who will continue to pay real estate taxes on their farm.
- Easement conditions apply to the Schottlers and to subsequent owners.
- The Schottlers donated the easement to the Star Prairie Land Preservation Trust which is responsible to enforce easement conditions.
- The value of the donation of the easement can be used as an income tax deduction for up to the next 16 years.



Paul leads a farm tour on his tractor.

UPCOMING EVENTS



You Are Cordially Invited

To a Holiday Gathering
At the Schottler Family Christmas Tree Farm
Monday, December 7, 2009
beginning at 4:00 p.m.

Twinkly lights and (hopefully) snow-covered trees ...
Hot chocolate and cookies... Wagon rides... will welcome visitors
To this beautiful Christmas tree farm dressed up for the season.

The Schottler Tree Farm is preserved as agricultural land and
open space by a conservation easement held by
the Star Prairie Land Preservation Trust.

We welcome land trust members and their guests.
This event is open to the public



Directions: From Hwy 35/64. Exit to
Somerset. At the downtown stoplight in
Somerset, turn north on County Road I for
5-1/2 miles. Turn left on 50th Street, and then
left on Rice Lake Road for 1/4 mile.



Join Us!!!

Please send membership enrollment to:
SPLPT, P.O. Box 88, Star Prairie, WI 54026

Visit our website at:
starprairielandtrust.org

Renewals paid from now through the end of the year will go toward 2010 membership.

NOTE: Your mailing label indicates when your SPLPT membership expires!

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Annual Membership Category

Please check one

- Individual @\$20 each
- Business/Organization \$100

- Additional donation \$ _____
- Jack Hayes Memorial Fund
\$ _____