



THE WILLOW TIMES



The Newsletter of the Caledonia Conservancy

Spring 2024

Kindness Carries On

Recently, a bouquet arrived at Judy Rehbein's doorstep, expressing gratitude for allowing local riders to use her indoor arena. Judy is often described as modest, humble, exceptionally intelligent, and a natural with numbers. But above all, she is known for her kindness. And it seems kindness runs in the family, as her sister Jo Ellen shares this trait and shares Judy's love for animals.

Their compassion for their community was recently demonstrated by their decision to sell and donate cherished land to the Conservancy. While Judy is passionate about horses, Jo Ellen's interests lie in alpacas, sheep, a bearded dragon, dogs, and angora goats, whose wool she spins. Both sisters enjoy weaving.

The Rehbein sisters' connection to Caledonia runs deep. They relocated here 48 years ago when their parents bought a local farm. Their father



Judy enjoyed the ROW (right-of-way) view between the ears of her horse Gibson.

cherished farm life, instilling in his daughters a love for the land and its preservation. Judy recalls her dad planting maples and oaks around their farm area on the ROW and how he enjoyed finding pussy willows there for them to decorate with. He just liked the ROW and walking along it and wanted to take care of it.

Judy, having served on the Conservancy Preservation committee, understood the significance of preserving the "spine" of the area trail network. After their stepmother passed away, Judy and Jo Ellen found themselves with land to decide the fate of. Ultimately, they decided to keep it public through the Conservancy, ensuring that they and future generations could continue to enjoy it.

Judy's parents' legacy of stewardship and appreciation for nature lives on in their commitment to preserving the land. When it came time to sell the land, they could've put an easement on it. They could have looked for the highest bidder. They could have held out for gold knowing how much the piece meant to the Conservancy. Their action spoke volumes about character and priorities.

Going through her mom's things, Judy once found old receipts for a doctor's house call at \$7, an \$18 bill for their poodle covering two shots, medication, and food. Her mom saved EVERYTHING; her dad lovingly tended the land for future generations who'd enjoy the trees that wouldn't mature in his lifetime. I think we can see where their character comes from. We're grateful and glad they settled here and are leaving their mark!

CC Event Calendar

Trail Work Crew:

2nd Saturday of the Month
 April-October
 Meets 8:45 A.M.
 King's Corner
 4815 5 Mile Rd.
 (5 Mile & Hwy 31)

Bird Walk:

Rick Fare - leader
 May 4, 2024
 8:00 A.M.
 Trout Pond Prairie

Flower Walk:

Afternoon with Kay McClland
 May 11, 2024
 (Time & place will be in email sent out near the date.)

ETS Obstacle Event:

June 15, 2024
 Kathryn Scheer's Senne Farm
 1655 County Road V
 Sturtevant, WI

Mane Event:

August 24, 2024
 Neubauer Farm
 5551 Short Road, Racine, WI

ETS Obstacle Event:

September 21, 2024
 Libby & Kjell Erlandsson's
 Scania Lochiel Farm
 6208 Hwy 31, Racine, WI

Conservancy Fall Festival:

Date TBD
 Picnic at Drs. Palmer Farm
 7930 Botting Rd. Racine, WI

CC Online Auction:

April & November



President's Message

Happy Spring Everybody,

As we leave one of our mildest winters and enter spring I want to take this time to thank our past president, Kjell Erlandsson, for his leadership in steering the ship and using his technological and financial skills in how the Conservancy operates today.

Many of you know me. My wife Jennifer and I moved to Caledonia 43 years ago so she would be able to have her own barn. I figured this wouldn't last long. I was wrong.

This year the Conservancy celebrates its 30-year anniversary. It was an idea conceived by local neighbors to organize and preserve the trails that sprawled through the neighborhood. Today we have grown to more than 300 acres and offer programs such as School to Nature and Kids Corner (that's in King's Corner). I am sure the founding fathers could never imagine how their little idea would grow.

Speaking of acres. The Conservancy has made a land purchase of 20



acres from Judy and her sister Joellen Rehbein. They generously donated 13 acres of the Right Of Way, making a total of 33 acres. This is the last piece in the puzzle that gives us full ownership of the right of way between 7 Mile / County Line Road. Make sure you thank Judy if you see her.

We made it to 30 years. This wouldn't have happened without our sponsors and donors and the endless hours our volunteers give. Let's go for 30 more years!

Best regards,
Greg Berg

New Board Members



Jennifer Kanter

WELCOME BACK! To valued board member Jennifer Kanter!!

“For the past 10 years, I have owned and operated a horse boarding facility, Walk Trot n Kanter Farm, here in Caledonia. I am married (Kirk) with 3 grown children (Tyler, Kyle and

Autumn). I am also blessed by 4 grandchildren with one more on the way. We have horses, goats, chickens and mini donkeys. My first and foremost passion is trail riding on our beautiful trails. I also enjoy boating, camping, reading and love cycle rides with my hubby.

I have a wide range of volunteer experience. From 2016 to 2021, I served on the Caledonia Conservancy Board. During my term, I was the Treasurer, Holiday Fundraising Chair and Outreach Committee member. Even after my Board term was complete, I continued to successfully run the silent online auction. I have additional nonprofit experience as well. I was a member of the Brown Deer Junior Woman's Club for almost

Wiseup on Etree

Our locally famous Facebook ETREE group is where to go to be in the know!

You can post to help our neighborhood with anything from describing a trail danger, adoptable kittens, loose horse and lost dog alerts. You can post details of wildlife sightings, important village issues, neighborhood rides, events, and generally anything local of interest to our horse-and-nature-loving community.

Started 30+ years ago by Libby Cameron to help connect our nature loving community Etree has grown to over 1,200 readers. ETREE's name came from the thought of electronic messages spreading out like the branches of a tree. Just search Caledonia Etree on Facebook, answer the questions and you're in!

10 years. I served as President and Treasurer during my years there. I was a Sunday School Teacher for over 10 years.

I have a degree in Business Management and a Master's Degree in Human Resources. I am currently a Property Manager for Bieck Management, where I manage over 20 apartment communities.

I look forward to coming back on the Caledonia Conservancy Board. Even though my love for the Caledonia Conservancy started with our trail system, I quickly learned that we must value ALL the green space the Caledonia Conservancy has worked to protect.”

Story Continued on p. 3 >



New Board Members (contd. from p. 2)

WELCOME New board member! We are thrilled Dr. Steve Ryder has welcomed the opportunity to serve on the CC board.

“I have always taken a great interest in nature and conservation and feel I could contribute to the Conservancy’s mission.

I was born and raised in Racine, having lived in Caledonia most of my upbringing. I have been blessed with a very close and supportive family and most of us remain in the area. I graduated from Horlick High school as the top graduating male in 1984 (tough to beat out the girls!) and always was very involved in athletics and other activities. I moved away to complete my medical and surgical training before returning to town to start practice in 1996. Michelle and I have been married for 16 years and have a blended family with 5 children ranging in age from 26-37. After more than 10 years of planning, we broke ground on the construction of our



Dr. Steve and Michelle Ryder

dream home on 6 Mile Road in 2020. We moved in officially in 2022, though the projects and fine tuning continue without fail. We absolutely love the connection to nature we feel in our home and around the property. Without organizations like the Caledonia Conservancy and like-minded individuals, I fear all our descendants would know is sidewalks and subdivisions. I would like to help contribute in whatever small way possible toward maintaining natural spaces and experiences.”

Landowner Thank You

Thank You cookie boxes were given to the landowners who allow trails on their property. Did you know our trail system includes trails through more than 70 privately owned parcels?! The boxes are a heartfelt gesture to say we are all deeply grateful for our local landowners generosity. THANK YOU to the many volunteers who gladly stepped up to make this project possible!

Bakers: Dina Parker, Libby Cameron, Marcia Werner, Sandy DeWalt, Karla Nelson, Donna Weinzatl, Jill Baranowski, Tracy Larson, Deb Hollis, Marci Christopherson, Barb Hugier, Connie Szablewski, Diane Wolff, Suzi Zierten, Terri Kiriaki, Sally Pankonen, and Michelle Luczak.

Cookie box assembly team: Barb Hugier, Connie Szablewski, Chris Hoffmann, Lynn Muza, Tracy Larson.

Delivery drivers: Fran Martin, Deb Palmer, Joe Kiriaki, Barb Hugier, Sandy DeWalt, Karla Nelson, Barb Vandaloo, Jo Stys, Cathy Kortendick, Wendy McCalvy, Rachel Trobaugh, Marcia and Tom Buhler.

Organizers: Tracy Larson and Sandy DeWalt.



Cathy Kortendick makes a cookie box delivery to landowner Mike Benben.

The Connection Campaign

The Conservancy announces our first ever capital campaign. This is to raise money for the continuation of our goal of securing the Right-Of-Way (ROW) greenspace trail. This has been a goal of the Conservancy since our founding. Eager contributors have already given \$17,599. in donations, and \$2000 more in pledge commitments. The goal is \$150,000 to pay off the Rehbein acquisition, and we are on our way! We will be sending out a formal request to people with more information on how you can help; please explore if your company matches this kind of donation.

This particular piece of land connects us with the 135 mile Oak Leaf Trail System and is a vital conduit for everyone from horseback riders to other nature enthusiasts. From our inception our goal has been to link CC lands along the ROW “spine” (as locals call it), to provide a permanent path of preservation and protection for future generations to enjoy. If it’s ever important to preserve open space, the time is now when development is devouring land. Once the land is gone, we won’t get it back. Celebrate the Connection Campaign and please donate towards the goal!



School to Nature Report

The Caledonia Conservancy's School To Nature (S2N) Program is starting its 14th year of providing an opportunity for area 4th and 6th grade students to learn about some of the wildlife found in Caledonia. We have had over 10,000 students visit 2 of our parcels since the program began. The 6th graders do a lesson in Tabor Woods about LIFE IN A FALLEN TREE and study what happens to a tree once it dies and falls to the ground. The 4th graders visit Trout Ponds/Prairie to study the 4 habitats found there: Pond, Prairie, River and Woods.

In both programs we highlight the importance of nature in our lives and

encourage the students to look for the plants and animals found there. We also talk about the need to take care of our environment and some of the things that we can all do on a daily basis, such as turning off the light switch when you're not in a room or turning off the water when brushing your teeth. Small changes in our behavior can have a big impact when many people participate.

The S2N program is always looking for adults to volunteer and if you are interested and would like more information please contact Jill Baranowski at 262-930-2043 or jcbaranowski@sbcglobal.net.



One of our 6th grade S2N students examining a small frog she found in Tabor Woods.

Stewardship Report

Winter is our quiet time of the year. Our monthly meetings are put on hold for December and January, but of course trees still keep falling and blocking the trails. Luckily, we have volunteers that have been with us for years, and also new volunteers that contacted the CC saying they would like to help! Kyle Worzala and Rob Bertzyk are both new and have gone out to take down trees that have fallen on the trails. If you do see a tree down and you cannot move it out of the way, please take a picture of it. Send it to me at my email below. Don't forget to tell me where the tree is on the trail and what property it is on.

Our monthly trail cleanings will be starting on the second Saturday of each month on April 13 and go until October. We meet at the King's Corner parking area 4813 5 Mile

Road. At 8:45, we divide up into groups and go out to work until about 11:30-12:00. If you cannot make a Saturday, please let me know and we can find a place for you to work at a time that fits your schedule.

Volunteers are the heart of stewardship and we cannot do our best without help. We are proud to have 322 acres of land protected with all but one having horse and walking trails on them. Trees fall, bridges need to be replaced, invasive plants removed and the list always has fresh goals. Volunteering is a nice way to see these wonderful protected areas and meet others who love nature.

Any questions or want to help? Give me, Sandy DeWalt, stewardship chairperson, a call at 262-909-4440 or email me at sdewalt@wi.rr.com. I look forward to hearing from you.



Rob Bertzyk working hard to keep trails open.



Equestrian Committee Report

The Caledonia Conservancy Equestrian Committee exists as a voice of the CC horse community. Members of the committee come from various horse backgrounds with over 150 years of horse experience behind us!! The committee includes Donna Weinzatl, Tracy Larson, Sue Jensen, Elizabeth Cameron and Michelle Luczak. Our goal is to assist riders with any questions or concerns they may have regarding the trail system. Additionally, our members chair the trail tag program, landowner thank yous, the CC Calendar fundraiser, host “learn the trails” rides, as well as orchestrating potential trail benefits or addressing issues that may appear. If you’d like to reach out to the committee, please email us at equestriancommittee.cc@gmail.com.



A happy mud-splattered Sue Jensen and her Sherman after a great jumping ride with the neighborhood King’s Crazies about 1990?

King’s Corner Spring Report

Patient plans at King’s Corner are moving right along, but execution is slow because the weather won’t cooperate. An environmental company has been hired to remove more invasive species and dead trees in the wooded area, but frozen or very dry ground is necessary to get their equipment in. We need patience. We are in discussion about a wheelchair path from the parking area to the Children’s Center. It needs to be separate from horse trails for safety and to protect the trail surface. If anyone reading this has an interest in this, we encourage you to contact us, and bless you if you can help with funding.

The ugly ground up by Hwy 31 was seeded in prairie last year—the whole front prairie got seeded two years ago. Not much is showing yet. The word is patience. During March most of that prairie area and the wetland was turned black by a burn in order to stimulate our flowers to appear.



A large barred owl surveys his domain in the Cameron-Erlandsson section of Tabor Woods.

Courtesy Trail Use Reminders

The Conservancy helps spread local customs information with the common goal of keeping our generous landowners happy and the trails open.

- Slow down when passing horses on the road to ensure safety. They are as unpredictable as deer!
- When encountering riders on trails, speak up and KEEP talking to reassure the horses.
- Dogs must always be on a leash if encountering a horse.
- Familiarize yourself with trail maps to avoid trespassing and respect privacy. Riders wear hardhats on private land trails.
- Do not ride on wet trails and always stay on the edges of fields.
- Follow the tradition of riding close to the wooded edge on the Milwaukee County Oak Leaf trail to prevent conflict with other trail users.
- Remember that trail use is a GIFT, not a right. Thank you for observing these customs and helping to spread the word.



2023 Donors

CONSERVANCY PRESERVERS

(\$2000 +)

Eastham, Robin
Erlandsson, Kjell & Libby Cameron
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Please donate by going to Caledoniaconservancy.org
or mail your contribution to the
Caledonia Conservancy,
PO Box 044714, Racine, WI 53404-7015.



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2023 Memorial Donations

Kathleen Cecchini, *in memory of her father, David Zich*
Geraldine McGinnin, *in memory of Jack Weidensee*
Deana Sulwer, *in memory of her brother, Jack Weidensee*
Sandy & Bill DeWalt, *in memory of Ruth Mainland*
Julie Nurse, *in memory of Penny Griffiths*
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Kimberly Kind Bauer & Joe Bauer, *in memory of Chuck Kind*
Barb Hugier, *in memory of Whitney, Daughter of Eric Roberson*

2023 In-Kind Donations

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Erlandsson, Kjell
Hugier, Barb
Kiriaki, Joe
Kunesh, Zari
Palmer, Deb & Rick
Roberson, Eric
Tollaksen, Patty
Ziarten, Suzi

****No donation list would be complete without saying a special THANK YOU to volunteer Zari Kunesh! She does the layout for this newsletter and pulls all the pieces of the puzzle together. Without her we wouldn't be lookin' near as good, and organized communication makes such a difference!****



Admin Happenings

Administration may not be the sexiest part of most organizations, but its role is undeniably crucial for their proper function and longevity. We're pleased to share a couple of recent initiatives that will shape our work going forward.

Firstly, we have engaged a new outside accounting firm, Perfect Balance Accounting Services LLC, to handle our accounting needs. They are a local business. Laura DeGroot is the principal and founder; she opened the business in 2010. They employ a staff of six accountants plus supporting administrative staff. Laura is a horse enthusiast and competes in equine sports events across the region.

We are now doing most of the bookkeeping ourselves, and our outside accountants' main focus is

on bank accounts reconciliation and filing of government forms. They also handle the payroll for our staff of one, and which formerly was handled by a separate payroll service. Having external accountants onboard is particularly important for a small organization like ours, ensuring meticulous oversight of our finances and banking operations.

Our accounting system is now fully on stream and automatically sends out appropriate financial reports to our committee volunteers to support them in their budgeting and decision making.

Secondly, we are working on bringing a cloud-based file system online. An IT group of volunteers is working on this project and making progress. We are setting up the overall file

structure and will have the top level "infrastructure files", such as bylaws, policies and procedures, and board minutes assembled online before the end of April. We will then set up permissions--such as View, Download, Edit and Upload--for our volunteers and committee members.

This IT project aligns with our goal of streamlining operations, enhancing transparency with our volunteers, and transitioning from paper to electronic records.

In essence, these administrative enhancements are pivotal for our organization's efficiency and fiscal responsibility. We're committed to ensuring that our administrative arm remains agile and cost-effective, supporting our broader mission effectively.

Mane Event Coming Up



Riders should be on the lookout this year for any Dala ponies that have escaped into the route!

Mark your calendars for August 24! Spectators and riders, we'd love to see you at the 22nd annual Mane Event. It's a 2-3 hour team scavenger hunt on horseback following a marked trail route open especially for the ride. Great prizes contribute to a very popular event. There's always yummy food (I go for the rice krispy bars!) with a chance to mingle in the lovely setting and see which horse and rider teams turn out to traverse our countryside. The Sara Neubauer family hosts the event at their charmingly picturesque private farm on Short Road. Their barn manager Sally Smith always has the historic grounds looking beautiful.



CALEDONIA  CONSERVANCY

**ROOTED IN THE CONSERVATION
AND PRESERVATION OF
CALEDONIA FOR
30 YEARS.**



Donation How & Whys

Fran Martin says “Being over 70 ½ I’m happy that instead of writing a check we allocate donations to the conservancy out of our required minimum distributions from our retirement plans. Doing that reduces our taxable income and is a win for us and a win for the Conservancy!”

You might want to check with your tax expert to see if you can do what the Martins do. Most taxpayers under current rules take standardized deductions instead of itemizing deductions because they are more favorable and itemized deductions phase out as income gets higher. Using

distributions from retirement plans is a neat way of getting tax benefits from charitable donations nevertheless and getting more charity for your Dollar. Thank you, Fran, for this insight.

If you wish to donate, please visit: caledoniaconservancy.org/donate



Donate and Get Trail Map & Tags

Nature, fresh air and sunshine awaits!

In preparation for the outdoor season remember to get your annual Trail Tag.

The Caledonia Conservancy stewards over 300 acres of greenspace within Caledonia, which includes over 30 miles of hiking and equestrian trails. Trail maintenance, such as mowing, brush and tree clearing, hardscape upkeep, and signage, are never ending tasks.

Whether you are a horseback rider, hiker or dog walker, please consider supporting the trails through an annual Trail Tag. The suggested donation for a Trail Tag is \$35 (or more) - a good investment for trails that will last for generations!

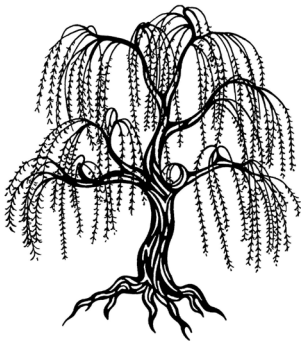
Additionally, we request your help in volunteering for one (or more) of our trail clean-up days. These are held on the second Saturday of the month, April-October.

For more information and to get a trail tag, visit the Caledonia Conservancy website at www.caledoniaconservancy.org.



CALEDONIA CONSERVANCY

Caledonia Conservancy
PO Box 044714
Racine, WI 53404-7015
www.caledoniaconservancy.org



Thank you- Volunteers & Supporters!

VISION:

Building community by connecting people to Caledonia's trails and greenspace.

MISSION:

The Caledonia Conservancy is committed to preserving land for future use. We connect people to nature education, enhancing quality of life through public access to equestrian and recreational trails. We strive to build a sustainable community through conservation, stewardship, education, outreach and partnerships with neighborhoods, schools, businesses and government.

Link to view maps of our properties:

caledoniaconservancy.org/maps

Caledonia Conservancy Committee Chairs

<i>Executive</i> Greg Berg	<i>Finance</i> Dave Klokowski	<i>Preservation</i> Greg Berg	<i>School to Nature</i> Jill Baranowski	<i>Stewardship</i> Sandy DeWalt	<i>King's Corner</i> Wendy McCalvy
<i>Outreach</i> Dr. Deb Palmer & Patty Tollaksen	<i>Equestrian</i> Libby Cameron & Michelle Luczak	<i>I.T.</i> Kjell Erlandsson	<i>Children's Learning Center</i> Barb Hugier		

Board of Directors

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- Follow us on Instagram
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- Email our Executive Director, Suzi Zierten at suzi.caledoniaconservancy@gmail.com
- Phone 262-498-4993
- Write to the editor, Libby Cameron, at elcam4@gmail.com
- Visit our webpage: www.caledoniaconservancy.org

Addresses for CC Public Access Lands

McCalvy Tabor Woods & Cameron Erlandsson Tabor Woods
5131 Tabor Road, Racine, WI 53402

Gordon Tabor Woods
5118 Pine Tree Circle, Racine, WI 53402

King's Corner (Ehrlich)
4813 Five Mile Road, Racine, WI 53402

Neighborhood Central Walk
1934 4 1/2 Mile Road, Racine, WI 53402

Short Road Trail Head/Lorence Woods
6111 Short Road, Racine, WI 53402

Trout Ponds/Prairie
4819 4 Mile Road, Racine, WI 53402

Toni's Trails
4810 Four Mile Road, Racine, WI 53402