

NEWS



A newsletter for landowners of properties protected with conservation easements

2020 Monitoring Season Update: COVID-19

Typically, this space is dedicated for the announcement to our landowners that the annual volunteer monitor training sessions have been completed and the upcoming monitoring season is underway. In part, that's true but 2020 is shaping up to be a year unlike any other. The COVID-19 pandemic has forced us to make several significant changes to Land Trust operations. Our offices in St. Paul and Duluth are currently closed and staff is working from home. We had to cancel half of the volunteer monitor training sessions. We are making the necessary adjustments, including moving monitoring meetings and trainings online. Our resolve to continue the important work of the Land Trust is as strong as ever.

annual monitoring obligations through in person visits. Starting this year, a limited number of properties (around 15%) will be monitored using satellite imagery as opposed to an in person visit. Conducting monitoring visits remotely is a standard practice in the land trust community, and is one which we anticipate will complement and, in some ways, augment our traditional ground monitoring.

You're probably already familiar with satellite imagery if you have used platforms such as Google Earth. The imagery we will be reviewing is very similar and comes from satellites that collect imagery all over the world during continuous orbits of Earth. This high-resolution imagery will be from the current year (i.e., 2020 imagery for 2020 monitoring) and will fill an existing need for more current imagery of our protected properties. Although certain changes are more readily observed on the ground, other

Changes are also in store for monitoring visits this year. The first change relates to how we safely interact during the pandemic, and more specifically in-person contact between monitors and landowners. For the safety of both our landowners and monitors, all monitoring visits will be conducted by an unaccompanied monitor until further notice. Monitors will still contact you to schedule their

visit to ensure you are aware of the visit, as well as to both ask the usual questions of you and to relay any questions or concerns that you might have. This may be an especially difficult change for some, as many of you have forged close relationships with staff and volunteers over many years. Speaking from a monitor's perspective, the chance to meet with landowners is a highlight of the monitoring experience, but we must be vigilant and prioritize the collective health and well-being of everyone at this time. If you have any concerns about these changes, please let us know. Although the pandemic is changing our lives, the Land Trust still strives to monitor all of our protected properties once a year.

Remote Monitoring by Satellites

Long before COVID-19 reared its head, the Land Trust had been at work to implement a second change to our monitoring program. To date, the Land Trust has fulfilled its



A volunteer monitor steps up to scan the landscape.

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QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS?

CONTACT THE STEWARDSHIP STAFF!

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Satellite imagery of MLT protected property in Pine County. Inset: DigitalGlobe's Quickbird-2 Satellite



changes such as boundaries, buffers, and landscape level changes are better seen from a birds-eye view. A few things to note about remote monitoring:

- Staff will be in touch with all landowners whose properties will be monitored remotely to address routine easement-related questions and concerns
- Staff will continue to visit each property in person every 5 years, at a minimum
- Dynamic events, including changes in ownership, new building or land management activity will typically prompt in-person visits

Remote monitoring provides the Land Trust with a back-up monitoring option for properties currently assigned to volunteers who might no longer feel comfortable doing site visits due to their own heightened risk factors. Remote monitoring will serve to lessen the carbon footprint of the Land Trust – it's estimated that we will eliminate at least 10,000 miles driven this year as a result.

Whether your property is visited by one of our monitors or monitored remotely this year, we will miss seeing you all in person during the monitoring visits and eagerly look forward to seeing you in 2021! Please direct any questions about 2020 monitoring plans to Director of Conservation Stewardship Sue Steinwall ssteinwall@mnland.org / (651) 917-6280 or Stewardship Program Manager Andrew Moe amoe@mnland.org / (651) 917-6293.



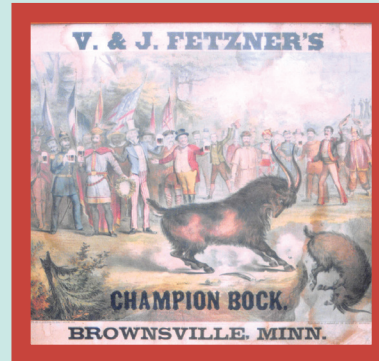
Protected Forever sign in Cass County.

GOOD CONSERVATION - IT'S ALSO ABOUT BEER



While each of the Minnesota Land Trust's nearly 600 properties protected by conservation easements are unique, there's one property in southeast Minnesota that also has important historic and cultural features worthy of preservation, according to the conservation easement itself. In that case, it's the ruins of an old brewery, complete with its beer cave.

The 21-acre property, located just outside Brownsville in Houston County, has been protected since 2005 when Greta Lockhart donated a conservation easement to the Land Trust. Greta passed away in 2014 and the property is now lovingly stewarded by Patty Burfield and Michelle Smith. The property features a steep bluff, woods, pines, and a small pasture. Wildcat Creek runs near the northern border of the property and a spring-fed creek crosses at the south. That steep bluff's potential as a future cave and the abundance of spring water may have attracted brothers Valentine and John Fetzner to the property in 1871, when they developed the



A poster advertising "Champion Bock" brewed at the V. & J. Fetzner Brewery on property in Houston County now protected by a MLT conservation easement.

property as a brewery. Besides, the only other brewery in town at the time was reportedly having trouble keeping up with demand, according to a 1919 history of Houston County.

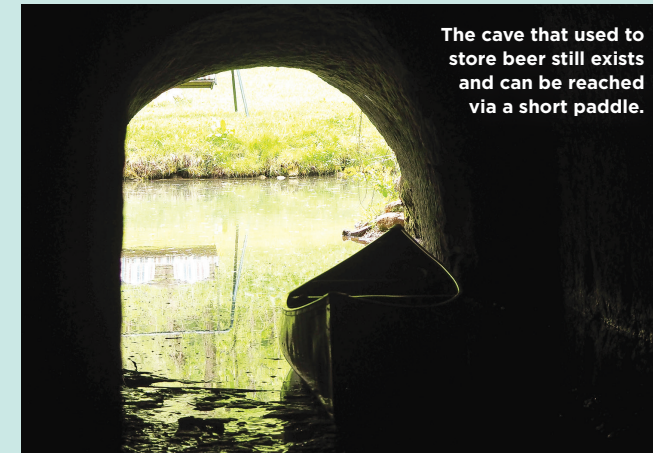
The Fetzners ran their brewery for nearly 30 years before selling it so that they could retire. The brewery, first known as the V. & J. Fetzner Brewery and later at the Brownsville Bluff Brewery, stayed in operation until 1910, when the establishment burned and was never rebuilt. Greta Lockhart, who granted the conservation easement to the Land Trust, built a home at the property in the 1990s. At first

glance, you'll swear the house is one of the original brewery buildings. Patty and Michelle are equally proud of their property's heritage and tell folks, including their Hip Camp guests, that you can still see the brewery's foundation walls and even hops growing at the property. They will gladly paddle you across a small pond to visit the beer cave, which was used to refrigerate barrels of beer produced at the brewery.

Patty and Michelle also point out that there's trout in the spring-fed creek and pond. As it turns out, Valentine Fetzner not only brewed beer and reportedly kept bees at his nearby farm, but may have been one of Houston County's early conservationists. In

the 1875 first annual Report on Fish Culture, the state Fish Commissioners reported that it had delivered 5,000 brook trout to one V. Fetzner to stock the streams of Houston County.

The beer cave is still there as are the brewery's foundation walls. The hops in the field and the trout in nearby creeks may also trace their roots back to the work of the Fetzners. So, the next time you hoist a



The cave that used to store beer still exists and can be reached via a short paddle.

cold one (the best refreshment after threshing, according to the Brownsville News, circa 1900s) think of Valentine and John Fetzner. Be sure to also toast Greta Lockhart, Patty Burfield, and Michelle Smith for their great love of this unique protected property.

2019 Landowner of the Year

Those who were lucky enough to join us at our Treasured Places event last September can attest to the beauty that abounds on Jeanne Kingston's property in Washington County. Nestled against William O'Brien State Park, Jeanne's land provides important habitat to complement the more than 1,600 acres in the park. From a restored prairie to woods and wetland, her land is a haven for wildlife on land and water, including brook trout in Old Mill Stream, which passes through the property. In addition, it is home to rescued horses and animals that she cares for, as well as monarchs that she raises and releases. For years Jeanne has welcomed school groups to learn about nature, and even hosted a crew from TPT to shoot footage about the Land Trust.

It was our honor to present Jeanne with the Landowner of the Year award at Treasured Places. On behalf of everyone at the Land Trust, thank you to Jeanne and to all our landowners who have protected their land in perpetuity! We hope that Treasured Places will return again in Fall 2020 — sign up for our email newsletter for the latest updates at www.mnland.org.



2019 Landowner of the Year Jeanne Kingston welcoming guests to her property during the 2019 Treasured Places event.

STEWARDSHIP & CONSERVATION BY THE NUMBERS



1,400+ Volunteer hours in 2019

613

Sites Monitored in 2019



54 COUNTIES with a Conservation Easement

60,052 Total Acres Protected



1,868,932 Total Feet of Shoreline Protected

92 VOLUNTEER MONITORS

50% of Sites Monitored by Volunteers / 45% by Staff / 5% by Contractors



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A Lasting Legacy

Whether it was going on your first fishing trip, spotting a rare bird, or just enjoying a quiet walk in the woods — chances are some of your fondest memories were made outdoors enjoying the land and waters that make Minnesota so unique.

As you plan for your future, you can ensure those experiences exist for the next generation of Minnesotans, and build in them the same connection to the outdoors that you have. By making a planned gift or qualified charitable distribution from a retirement account that reflects your love for our state's natural places, you help preserve those places, and those experiences — forever.

Explore planned giving options online at mmland.org/planned-giving or call Director of Development and Communications Alex Tsatsoulis at 651-917-6289 to discuss today.

ROSLYNN LONG



Live stream May 28
Register before the event
at mmland.org

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**A BENEFIT TO SUPPORT THE
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FAMILIES ACROSS THE STATE**

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even if you don't have
a computer.
Call 651-647-9590.

**DID YOU
RECEIVE
OUR
E-NEWS-
LETTER?**

Last November we published the first of what will be a second annual communication to our landowners,

only instead of a print publication like the one you are reading, the fall newsletter will be sent electronically. Unfortunately, that means many of you did not receive this communication because we are either lacking your current e-mail address or any e-mail address at all, so we are putting out the call to our landowners: please update us with your e-mail address! Not only will you receive the fall e-newsletter, but we also use e-mail to schedule monitoring visits, inform you about available land management resources in your area, and quickly answer any questions or concerns regarding your conservation easement. To provide a new or updated e-mail address, please contact Stewardship Associate Amie Schiller at aschiller@mmland.org or 651-917-6288.