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**Kenosha/Racine Land Trust
Article for the JT Community Newsletter**

K/RLT Shares Conservation Subdivision Experiences with Town of Randall

Nancy Pierce and Chuck Haubrich met with the Land Use Plan committee in the western Kenosha County Town of Randall to share K/RLT experiences with conservation subdivisions. As part of an effort to maintain its rural atmosphere, Randall adopted a land division ordinance which allows one home for every five acres being developed. However, their intent was not to have all five acre lots, but rather one to two acre lots and the remainder of the land kept in larger contiguous areas which could be farmed or restored to natural habitat. Randall included such conservation development as the preferred option in their Land Division Ordinance and is now revising its Land Use Plan to further support their goal of remaining rural.

Nancy and Chuck reviewed K/RLT's positive experiences with conservation easements in ten Caledonia, Dover, and Yorkville subdivisions. Many features of these conservation subdivisions help in marketing and selling the lots, even while about 60% of the land is permanently preserved.

Pluses for marketing and selling conservation subdivision lots include:

- Most people do not want the expense and time it takes to maintain five acres; one to two acre lots are preferred
- Smaller lots mean less lawn mowing and thus more peace and quiet; many people move to the country to escape the din of the city
- Large adjacent natural areas increase wildlife viewing opportunities, especially for birds; about one third of people in the US describe themselves as avid bird watchers

Benefits of conservation development to the environment include:

- Smaller yards and large natural areas reduce water runoff and resulting flooding and erosion; reduced runoff also minimizes pesticide and fertilizer carried into nearby streams, wetland, and lakes
- Restored and maintained wetlands help recharge ground water; given the rapidly falling water tables in Racine and Kenosha Counties, recharge areas are becoming increasingly important
- Large, contiguous natural areas are wildlife friendly; conventional development severely fragments the land, greatly reducing its quality as wildlife habitat

First Conservation Subdivision in Town of Yorkville

K/RLT accepted its first conservation easement in the Town of Yorkville, which passed a mandatory conservation subdivision ordinance about two years ago. The development, called Wooded Waters, will contain 24 homes on 120 acres and have 77 acres of permanently protected open space. Since the open land includes a nine acre man made

pond and several acres of wetlands and mature woods, a detailed stewardship plan has been written to ensure the development has minimal impact on these areas.

Protecting the Welke Family Farm

Dale and Scott Welke recently contacted K/RLT about options for preserving their family farm. They were raised in Rochester, and although have moved away, are close enough to farm on weekends. This year they are raising soybeans. In addition, trees grow on the steeper hills and considerable wetlands and ponds have been preserved.

After the crops are planted and growing, Scott has time to restore antique John Deere tractors. He has several finished and is working on a couple more.

Dale and Scott's maternal great, great, great grandfather, Calvin Earle, purchased the 162 acre farm (130 acres remain) in an 1840 land grant from the US government. They still have a copy of the grant.

Six generations have farmed the land, but, unfortunately, prospects are not promising for a seventh. So Dale and Scott are starting to consider options for the future. One thing for sure, they have a close connection with the land and do not want to see it destroyed by development. K/RLT is providing information on how a conservation easement could be used to permanently protect it.

K/RLT Signs onto Eagle Lake Restoration Project

In a letter to the Eagle Lake Management District, K/RLT strongly endorsed a recent DNR plan to restore the ecology of Eagle Lake. Quoting the letter: "One of the goals of K/RLT is to protect and restore natural areas such as Eagle Lake; hence our support for your initiative."

Since the Land Trust holds a conservation easement on 10 acres of mature forest near the lake, we are especially interested in seeing it improved. Our easement ensures that a healthy forest will be maintained and thus continue to help control runoff in this area of the shore. K/RLT will help recruit volunteers for the project.

If you are concerned about preserving your family farm, would like to help with the Eagle Lake restoration, or are interested in helping K/RLT protect other open spaces and natural areas, please consider becoming a member. To obtain membership information, including our Spring/Summer Newsletter and brochure, write to the land trust at P.O. Box 085153, Racine, WI 53408-5153 or call us at 262-552-6861. Additional information is available on the web at www.krlt.org.

Chuck Haubrich is president of the Kenosha/Racine Land Trust, president of the Seno Woodland Education Center, and treasurer of Gathering Waters Conservancy, the Wisconsin land trust coalition.

