

STORIES
of
PRESERVING LAND
in
LAKE COUNTY

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"We simply preserved
what our parents poured
their lives into for
42 years."

—Flora Milne



"Mom and Dad began restoring the natural areas on this property as soon as they acquired it. Dad was a farm boy at heart and never tired of contemplating water quality. Mom was an avid birder and botanist. Burning the prairie became an annual family festival, and we all took part in the war on invasive species the way some families participate in yachting or deep-sea snorkelling."

After their parents passed away, Marcia, Flora and Bonnie Milne worked with the Liberty Prairie Conservancy to understand their options for preserving the farm, woods and prairie of their childhood home. They ultimately placed a conservation easement on most of the property to prevent development and to protect the stream and rare plants. Knowing the Conservancy would safeguard the easement into the future, they had the peace of mind needed to put the land up for sale.



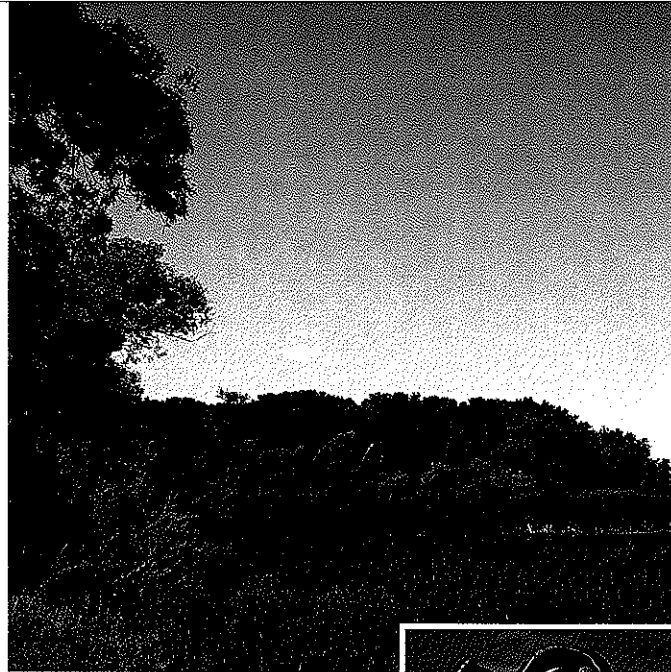
"As soon as Sue and I
bought this place, we
knew we'd never want
to see it developed."

—Searle Wadley



"We named it Wadley Wing Haven because of the birds. Cranes, bitterns. Even black terns. The conservation easement protects it while lowering our taxes. When this land passes on to its next owners, they'll be able to build a small boardwalk but not much else. We thank the Liberty Prairie Conservancy for enabling us to do what we know was best for this land."

Sue and Searle Wadley retained both ownership and privacy when they preserved 100 acres of oak woodland and marsh through a conservation easement customized to their needs. They receive tax deductions because of the public benefits their land provides. Wildlife habitat, floodplain protection and a scenic view from the road are just a few of the many public benefits of preserved open space.



"We and our children rode our horses; fished, hunted, skated and cross-country skied. We raised sheep and cattle and harvested our own hay."



—Anonymous

"We have enjoyed the Farm for over 52 years. It has been a wonderful experience and has instilled an appreciation of open space and love of the outdoors that now carries on to the next generation."

There is a lovely spot in Lake County where a spirited family savors their farm and marsh. Safeguarding that land was more appealing to them than developing it, so they placed a conservation easement on the property with the Liberty Prairie Conservancy. Wildlife habitat, water resources, scenic views and air quality all benefit from this civic-minded action. The Liberty Prairie Conservancy will watch over the property and work with future landowners so they understand and abide by the easement's provisions. The Conservancy will also honor the request from this family—and any others—for anonymity.



"This is important. I love this land."
—Marshall Field



"This farm has been good to Jamee and I. We have such wonderful memories of our girls growing up here. Whether they were on the back of a horse or out on the prairie, they seem to have spent most of their time outside. Depending on a person's situation, a conservation easement can be a smart tool to use when managing a real estate portfolio and protecting your family's land. It's worked well for us."

Retaining both ownership and privacy, Marshall Field partnered with the Liberty Prairie Conservancy to place a conservation easement on a portion of his beloved Lake County farm.



"Mrs. Casey's farmhouse seemed familiar and comforting. It even smelled like my Grandma's home. We shared some pie I had baked with apples from Al's orchard."



—Steve Barg,
Liberty Prairie
Conservancy

"Two years later she called and asked if the Liberty Prairie Conservancy would be interested in buying her farm. We immediately dove in and raised the money. We worked hard to honor the family's wishes—they had owned the land since the Civil War. And I knew for a fact there was at least one 14-inch pike cavorting in the stream at the bottom of the hill."

When a property meets certain criteria, the Liberty Prairie Conservancy may be interested in purchasing it, as was the case with the 145-year-old Casey Farm. Its deep history, extraordinary stream and unique location between two trails made it a high priority for protection. Plans call for the trails to be connected.



"I spent much of my boyhood time bicycling up and down the gravel roads, fishing for bullheads in the nearby Des Plaines River, hanging around the dairy farm and helping with the haying."



—Strachan
Donnelley

"How practically can human communities and individuals fit and live well within nature? We cannot do this alone, even with our loyal, talented, conservationist colleagues. However . . . we can work unflaggingly to promote effective cultures of conservation and help to spread their influence to an ever widening circle of communities regional, national, and global. Is there really any other moral and civic alternative?"

Mr. Donnelley grew up in Lake County and eventually founded the esteemed Center for Humans and Nature. He led the Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Foundation in protecting three parcels of farmland near his boyhood home. With tailor-made conservation easements, the foundation prohibited development but allowed farming to continue. It then donated the properties to the Liberty Prairie Conservancy.



Photo: Kim Karpales

Would you like to preserve the rural or natural character of your land? Most people are surprised to learn about the variety of options—and tax benefits—available.

- Conservation easement—Retain ownership and privacy but limit development by yourself and future owners of the land. Tailored to your desires, this is the most popular method of land preservation.
- Land donation—Outright donations, donations by will, and donations with reserved life estate are options that allow you to continue to live on the site and receive tax benefits.
- Sale of property to a conservation organization—Landowners may sell at fair market value, a reduced value (which offers tax benefits), or in installments.
- Illinois Nature Preserve—If your land is of high ecological value, you may wish to continue to own it but protect it through the state's nature preserve system. Real estate taxes on these lands are \$1 per acre.

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