



A community partner protecting land, water, and quality
of life through conservation, stewardship,
and nature connections

Newsletter

July 2025

SUMMER CURRENTS

This spring, I traveled to Madison—my hometown—for the Wisconsin Land Trust Conference, eager to learn from neighbors. After the six-hour drive, I arrived at my parents' house and wandered into the woods behind it to stretch my legs.

When my parents first moved to Madison, they chose a home outside of town so their kids could grow up as “outside kids.” Stepping onto the bridge over Six-Mile Creek, I was transported back to childhood—watching my brother bowfish for bullhead suckers, building forts, testing the ice in winter. It’s where I first fell in love with the outdoors, and standing there again reminded me why Keweenaw Land Trust’s mission and work matters.



Top: My parents' “back yard.” Bottom: My brother, Izaak, and I as little “outside kids.”

I wonder if your love of nature—or that of someone you know—was sparked on a KLT property. I’m grateful to work alongside a staff, Board, and community that channels that love into protecting the Keweenaw. Whether standing in the spray of Jacob’s Falls or hiking through the ferns at Paavola Wetlands, I often imagine a moment like that igniting someone’s lifelong bond with nature.

Envision the generations yet to come who will have opportunities to fall in love with nature at the places we work to protect together. Help us ensure that the “outside kids” of the future find their spark. Whether you join us for a Stewardship Work Day to help keep our lands accessible, join us for an event, or make a gift to support our mission, every form of support helps us progress towards our mission of protection and celebration of beloved outdoor places.

Yours in conservation and connection,

B Lauer, Executive Director

AT THE EDGE OF THE FALLS

AN UNEXPECTED LISTING, A FLOOD OF CONCERN, AND THE FIGHT TO KEEP JACOB'S FALLS PUBLIC FOREVER

On a gray November morning in 2024, Jacob's Falls—one of the Keweenaw's most iconic waterfalls—appeared for sale. By Thanksgiving weekend, the news had spread. KLT staff's inboxes overflowed, voicemails piled up, and members asked the same question: Can KLT save it?

The odds weren't good.

KLT's Land Protection Fund exists for moments like this, but it couldn't match the open-market pace or price. Offers were likely already in. With the falls just feet from the road, the risk of development loomed.

Days later, a lifeline appeared.

A conservation-minded friend of KLT placed a private offer, hoping to hand the opportunity to KLT if everything aligned.

Now we had momentum, a willing seller, and a mechanism—but not yet the funds.

To our surprise, a Wisconsin family—eager to help conserve the Keweenaw—saw the listing and called to ask about KLT's hopes for the site.

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KLT photo

That conversation became a generous pledge, and suddenly a purchase was within reach. To close the remaining gap, KLT turned to donors who had supported the adjoining Jacob's Creek acquisition. Two of them stepped forward again—leveraging their earlier investment and bringing the purchase to fruition.

In January 2025, KLT closed on Jacob's Falls.

Reflecting on the whirlwind, with the falls newly protected and forever public, KLT Board member and Keweenaw County resident Buddy Wylie said what many were thinking: “How do you buy a waterfall? It's like buying a rainbow!”

It felt that way to us, too. The outpouring—timely, passionate, generous—was nothing short of magical: a pot of gold not at the end of the rainbow, but running through it.

Jacob's Falls will be managed as part of the Jacob's Creek Nature Area. The Falls parcel serves as a vital link in conserved land, connecting Jacob's Creek Nature Area to trails stewarded by the Society of St. John.

Next time you're driving north to Copper Harbor, south to Hancock, or stopping for jellies at the Jampot, pause at KLT's rainbow—Jacob's Falls. Stand still, breathe deep, and remember: this place was saved because a community chose to protect the irreplaceable.

KLT extends heartfelt gratitude to the generous supporters who made the protection of Jacob's Falls and the broader Jacob's Creek Nature Area possible: The Carls Foundation, siblings Melissa and Phil Lewis, and two anonymous donors. We are also deeply thankful to a conservation-minded interim buyer, who wishes to remain anonymous, and to a family currently residing in Wisconsin, but with strong ties to the UP, whose generosity helped bring this vision to life. Conservation is powered not just by institutions, but by individuals moved to act.



Photo by Eran Lanese

ROOTS IN THE GROUND, EYES ON THE HORIZON

KLT'S MOST AMBITIOUS FIELD SEASON OF STEWARDSHIP IS UNDERWAY

A SEASON OF CARE

KLT has made great strides in expanding our portfolio of protected lands in recent years. As our mission statement emphasizes, stewardship of these lands is a core pillar of our work. We've stepped up our efforts to ensure our care and management of these special places keeps pace with our land protection successes.

With an ambitious lineup of projects, our stewardship team is currently in the field, focusing on trail improvements, updated signage, and enhancing the visitor experience at our nature areas. This is in addition to our ongoing responsibilities: monitoring all 20 conservation easements and 28 nature areas, maintaining and repairing cabins, and managing invasive species and ecological restoration efforts. With so much important work ahead, we're grateful for the support of an incredible network of funders—and a stellar team leading the charge. If you'd like to help out, check out our upcoming events section on page 6.

IN MEMORY: HONORING JIM BELOTE AND PAAVOLA WETLANDS

We honor the memory of James D. Belote, who passed away on December 11, 2024, with deep gratitude and admiration. Jim and his wife, Linda, were devoted stewards of the Paavola Wetlands Nature Area, caring for the land, its native plants, and the wildlife that call it home. Through their quiet dedication, they helped shape Paavola into the sanctuary it is today. In Jim's memory, many heartfelt tributes have been made—each one reflecting the profound impact he had on this special place and the community that surrounds it. All gifts made to KLT in Jim's name are directed towards supporting ongoing stewardship at Paavola. This summer, our Stewardship team and volunteers have spent countless hours clearing Jim and Linda's favorite trails. Next time you take a stroll through Paavola Wetlands and find yourself at a scenic outlook, pause to thank the man who's vision shaped the view in front of you.



Jim Belote

FUEL FOR THE WORK: TWO GRANTS, ONE MISSION

This summer of stewardship is only possible with strong community support. KLT is deeply grateful to have received two local grants that make this work achievable.



The Keweenaw Community Foundation awarded us a Copper Shores Community Recreation Grant to restore ADA compliance at Paavola Wetlands and Boston Pond, ensuring accessible parking and trails for all.



KEWEENAW

We're also thrilled to receive a Destination Grant from Visit Keweenaw, which will support several projects—especially at our newest Nature Areas, Boston Creek and Jacob's Falls—enhancing them as welcoming spaces for both residents and visitors to enjoy the Keweenaw's natural beauty.

RETURNING STRENGTH, NEW ENERGY: GROWING OUR TEAM



*Jill Fisher,
Stewardship Manager*



*John Frye,
Land Program Specialist*



*Elam Maurer,
Stewardship Intern*



*Henry Louniboss,
Stewardship Intern*



*Pat Toczydlowski,
Land Protection Specialist*

Taking care of KLT's protected lands is no small task, but our dynamic, growing team is helping us achieve our stewardship goals. With more hands and better systems in place, we're increasing our capacity to maintain trails, improve public access, and monitor conservation lands with care and consistency.

Our Stewardship Manager, Jill Fisher, and Land Protection Specialist, Pat Toczydlowski, continue to lead the charge, planning and coordinating a packed season of projects across KLT's protected lands. Supporting this work is our Land Program Specialist, John Frye, who splits time between the field and remote work—helping with conservation easement monitoring and guiding our transition to a new land management platform, Landscape. This summer, we're also joined by two dedicated stewardship interns, Elam Maurer and Henry Louniboss, who are leading trail improvements, boosting on-site signage, and ensuring that key work gets done across KLT's nature areas. Together, this team is making a big impact.

HANDS ON HELP: THIRD THURSDAY WORK DAYS

Our expanded stewardship team has consistent work days planned throughout the summer season: Join us on the third Thursday of each month to help steward our lands! For the most up-to-date information, check the events page of our website at: keweenawlandtrust.org/upcoming-events.



KLT photo

Homestead trail at Paavola Wetlands



KLT photo

Jill and Elam place temporary sign at Jacob's Falls

Upcoming Events



Portage Lake Community Paddle*

Saturday, August 16th | 2pm-6pm
Meet at Sandy Bottom Park in
Dollar Bay



Third Thursday Volunteer Work Day

Thursday, August 21st | 9am-12pm
& 5:30pm-8:30pm
Location TBD



KLTea Time

Friday, September 5th | 4-6pm
KLT Office



Third Thursday Volunteer Work Day

Thursday, August 21st | 9am-12pm
& 5:30pm-8:30pm
Boston Creek Nature Area



Farm, Field, Forest to Table*

Sunday, September 28th | 4-7pm
Paavola Wetlands Nature Area

*registration required



Photo by Sarah Kuhl

To learn more...

Visit the “Upcoming Events” page on our website for detailed descriptions of all events and registration forms.

<https://kweenawlandtrust.org/upcoming-events>



KLT Staff

- B Lauer, Executive Director
- Pat Toczydlowski, Project Specialist
- Jill Fisher, Botanist & Stewardship Manager
- Carolyn Meingast, Office Manager
- John Frye, Land Program Specialist
- Tiff DeGroot, Outreach & Volunteer Coordinator
- Elam Maurer, Stewardship Intern
- Henry Louniboss, Stewardship Intern
- Curtis Perala, Marsin Property Manager



KLT Board of Directors

- Nancy Langston, President (Chassell)
- Lou Vencato, Vice President (Hancock)
- Stan Vitton, Treasurer (Hancock)
- Alex Hirzel, Secretary (Hancock)
- Mike Abbott (Atlantic Mine)
- Haley Goodreau (Hancock)
- Mare Grohowski (Hancock)
- Calvin Koski (L'Anse)
- Evan Lanese (Hancock)
- Jim Northey (Atlantic Mine)
- Jamie Robertson (Allouez)
- Buddy Wylie (Eagle River)



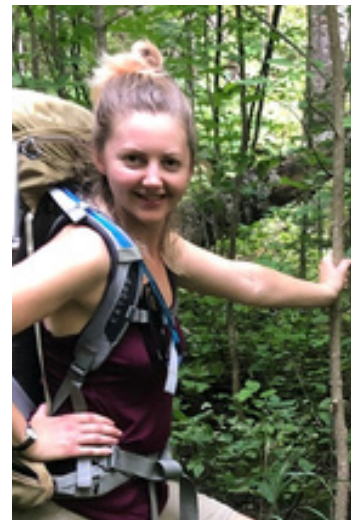
Above and right: KLT Board and Staff bundled up but enthusiastic, volunteering at the Copper Dog 150.

WELCOME TO THE KLTeam

Join us in welcoming our newest staff member, Tiff DeGroot! Tiff is joining KLT as the Volunteer and Outreach Coordinator, leading our suite of engaging programs and building meaningful opportunities for you to get involved.

Tiff first discovered KLT after moving to the Keweenaw in 2019 and noticing that many of her favorite hiking spots featured KLT signage. Six years later, she is thrilled to help connect more people with our conservation and community work.

She earned her Ph.D. in Forest Science from MTU in 2024, where she studied central African mammals and taught in the classroom and the field. She also brings a wealth of nonprofit marketing experience. Tiff is excited to use these skills to help KLT protect the lands and waters of the Keweenaw!



Tiff DeGroot on a backpacking trip in Keweenaw County.

Tiff will add critical capacity to our staff, helping us engage more deeply with our membership, introducing our mission to a broader audience through captivating stories and fun events, and ensuring that volunteers feel empowered and supported. We are incredibly grateful for her energy and talents!

ALREADY A MEMBER? THANK YOU! NOT YET?
JOIN OR RENEW TO KEEP THE KEWEENAW
PROTECTED AND
ACCESSIBLE!

RENEW NOW!

Scan to renew online



DONATE TO BECOME A MEMBER OR RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP

Your membership is valid for one year from the date your contribution is made.

Name _____ Phone _____

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CHOOSE YOUR MEMBERSHIP GIVING LEVEL (JOIN OR RENEW)

☐ \$20 Student Membership

☐ \$50 Supporter

☐ \$100 Guardian

☐ \$250 Steward

☐ \$500 Champion

☐ \$1000 Giving Circle

☐ I am interested in
receiving
information about
planned giving

☐ Other \$ _____

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KLT respects your privacy and confidentiality. We do not sell your data and respect requests for anonymity.

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