

2020 FALL/WINTER

# THE CANOPY

The Official Seno K/RLT Conservancy  
Newsletter



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## SENO K/RLT CONSERVANCY

**"FOSTERING A MUTUALLY  
BENEFICIAL RELATIONSHIP  
BETWEEN THE LAND THE WATER  
AND THE PEOPLE."**

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# STEWARDSHIP: HARDWOOD TREE THINNING

BY MARK LESKO



Volunteer Ben Lesko cutting black cherry tree marked by DNR Forester for removal (2019)



October 2020 view of thinned hard (sugar) maple woodlands at Seno K/RLT

The Seno K/RLT Conservancy, Inc. (Seno K/RLT) owns 127 acres of managed forests and prairies at the Burlington, Wisconsin location.

Approximately 80 of those acres are enrolled in the State of Wisconsin Managed Forest Law (MFL) Program. Once enrolled in MFL, the Wisconsin DNR foresters prescribe recommended and mandatory management practices to ensure maximum productivity in the forests. In this case, productivity is measured in future timber product potential from enrolled acreage. The trees for pulp (paper products) and timber (lumber) have to come from somewhere. And in Wisconsin, managed forests are renewable and healthy forests. In 2018, it was recommended that Seno K/RLT perform thinning on 40 acres of our woodlands, to ensure the best quality trees remain. These trees are considered "poletimber", insufficient diameter for lumber products. We applied for and received a grant from the Wisconsin Forest Land Grant Program (WFLGP), whereby the WI DNR would match our expenses (50% matching) not to exceed \$4400. We were given two years to complete this work, and got off to a great start in winter of 2019/2020.

Fortunately, we have a cadre of capable and willing volunteers who help us with land management. Our volunteers are trained in

basic chainsaw safety before they start work, and while working, they must use personal protective equipment (chainsaw safety chaps/pants, leather work boots, leather gloves, helmet, hearing protection, and eye protection). Volunteers who cut wood get to keep the trees as firewood. Thanks to an estate monetary gift, we began hosting chainsaw safety classes each year, beginning in September 2019. As of October 2020, 50% of the targeted thinning has been completed. We are grateful for the efforts of the following volunteers: Mark Lesko, Ben Lesko, Aaron DeGrave, Jesse Nino, and Brandon Smith. We expect to complete this work in winter 2020/2021.

## HONORING JAMES HELLER



WWOA Foundation Board (1996) :back row left to right-Bill Seybold, Mike Hildebrandt, Norm Anderson, Jim Heller, Rachel Jordan. Center standing-President Clyde Samsel, Dick Hall. Seated left to right-Nancy Bozek (WWOA Executive Director), Dr. Elvira Seno, Randy Cooper (DNR Forester)

In 2018, Seno K/RLT Conservancy, Inc. was notified that a generous gift would be forthcoming from the Estate of James Heller. James (Jim) was one of the original WWOA Foundation Board members and served as treasurer from 1995 until he retired from the Board in 2020. According to Jerry Lapidakis (retired DNR Forester) and Jim's Contemporary of the WWOA Foundation, Jim was instrumental in developing and managing a sound financial policy for the organization. He also played a key role in implementing Dr. Elvira Seno's dream that her donated property be conserved and used for forestry and related natural resources education. Jim made several anonymous monetary donations along with donations of stock throughout his tenure on the WWOA Foundation Board. He initially donated \$7,300 toward renovation of the old Barn which became known as Seno Woodland Education Center. His donations continued from his personal Foundation at a level of \$2,000/yr. even after WWOA Foundation merged with Kenosha/Racine Land Trust to form Seno K/RLT Conservancy. Like a truly unselfish philanthropist, Jim never wanted his name revealed or any credit for his donations. The bottom line is that Seno K/RLT could not have achieved its current strong fiscal posture and milestones without Jim's support and the gift from his estate.

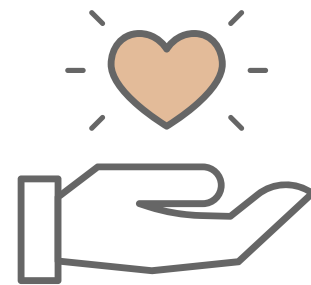
A special note of appreciation is extended to the Heller Family. Seno K/RLT will honor Jim's support, generosity, and memory with a new outdoor pavilion (The James Heller Memorial Pavilion).

**IN ADDITION,  
THE FOLLOWING IMPROVEMENTS WERE MADE POSSIBLE BY  
JAMES HELLER'S ESTATE:**

- Parking lot lighting (2019)
- New roof on a shed housing the seedling tree cooler (2019)
- New pole barn lighting (2019)
- Purchase of a Polaris Ranger UTV for volunteer field work (2019)
- Gravel resurfacing of all parking lots and lanes (2020)
- New roof on storage building (scheduled for 2021)
- Annual Chainsaw Safety Training (initiated September 2019)



Summer 2019 roof replacement  
(this roof had 2 layers of asphalt shingles  
over cedar shakes)



*thank  
you*



Sept 2019 Chainsaw Safety Class (Level I)  
taught by Nathan Stanford, Forest Safety Instruction

# GET TO KNOW OUR SENO STAFF



## Stacy Santiago - Land Protection Administrator



Stacy Santiago is Seno K/RLT Conservancy's new Land Protection Administrator and first full-time employee. Stacy came on board in summer of 2019 after graduating from the University of Wisconsin Parkside in May 2019 with a Bachelors in Biological Sciences. She spent her final semester at Parkside working with Seno K/RLT to create a restoration plan for a portion of our Woodland Center property to restore it to its original oak savanna state and followed up to seek to assist Seno K/RLT further after falling in love with the landscape at the Seno Woodland Center. Stacy loves botanizing, baking, Star Wars, and binge-watching cooking shows in her spare time. She is a staunch believer in making conservation inclusive, long candle-lit baths, and the right to make mistakes. She is excited about doing work she loves and is passionate about, and you'll likely meet her out on easement monitoring visits or via Seno K/RLT's social media.



Stacy Santiago (She/Her/Hers)

## Nancy Carlson - Educator



Nancy Carlson (She/Her/Hers)

Nancy is an award-winning naturalist/educator with 15 years of experience in environmental education. She has been recognized throughout the State of Wisconsin for her excellence in connecting children to the natural world. In addition, Nancy brings with her many years of successful grant-writing skills. Nancy's role for Seno K/RLT is to develop and deliver environmental education while building partnerships in Racine and Kenosha Counties. She will be leading our educational programs and coordinating operations with other local environmental groups to generate new learning opportunities. Her passion for the environment and her natural ability to connect with kids makes her an ideal person to be leading our environmental education programs. In her spare time, Nancy enjoys kayaking, gardening, traveling, snowshoeing, and walks in nature. Nancy is eager to be part of the Seno K/RLT family and looks forward to growing our environmental education vision for future generations.

# A FEW WORDS FROM OUR PRESIDENT

## Ronald Rasmussen

After reading the above article by Mark Lesko (Board Secretary), I hope you'll have gained some appreciation for what goes into a significant part of our mission, that is, both the doing and teaching Forestry. Harvesting trees in the midst of a growing climate crisis would seem anathema. But, what we are doing is actually promoting carbon storage by culling many smaller or diseased trees with stunted growth, thereby giving the larger adjacent trees the opportunity to flourish and increase carbon storage. Eventually, the larger trees will be sustainably harvested bringing revenue to Seno K/RLT to support management of our



woodlands, trails, and education programs. For every tree we harvest we plant two or more seedlings, with the end result being a sustainable forestry operation. Many seem surprised when I tell them that the wood used to build their houses, the wood to build their furniture, the wood to make the paper documents in their filing cabinets all continue to store carbon long after the memory of those requisite trees has vanished.

You may have noticed the statement on the cover page: "Seno K/RLT Conservancy Fostering a Mutually Beneficial Relationship Between The Land, The Water And The People", while Land and Water also includes all non-human species in those habitats. This is a bold statement of our vision for the natural world. I like to think of it as a triangular equilibrium where everything benefits when nothing is out of whack. Take the example above of sustainably harvesting trees to meet people's needs. You might be amazed to learn how beneficial healthy forests are for soil, for those critters and plants living in the understory, and for clean water by way of less soil erosion and more efficient filtration of ground water. Take the example of the Amazon rain forest. Need I say more? Overall, I think there is little doubt the triangular equilibrium has shifted too far in the direction of people. We remain optimistic that our education programs, our sustainable conservation efforts, and land preservation through easements and property ownership will help add balance to that triangular equilibrium.

Now a few words about the people and foundations in this Newsletter. The take away message from Mark's article on Jim Heller, is that philanthropy in the form of a large donation helps us move forward at a faster pace. Stacy's and Nancy's bios speak volumes. I've been working with both of them for more than a year and they are both amazing. Chuck Haubrich's name is in oversized letters on the last page for good reason. Many of you know him as an icon who helped lead both Seno and the Kenosha/Racine land Trust prior to and after the merger of the two. His very generous philanthropy will always be much appreciated. He retired from the Board in mid-year 2019 and his expertise is often missed. The two Foundations, LUMW and Gaylord & Dorothy Donnelley, deserve major recognition for supporting us generously.

I've greatly exceeded what might be called a few words, and failed to abide by one of my favorite quotes: "There's a great power in words, if you don't hitch too many of them together." Josh Billings, American Humorist

# SPECIAL THANKS TO:

**CHARLES HAUBRICH**

**The LUMW Foundation**



**GAYLORD AND  
DOROTHY DONNELLEY  
FOUNDATION**

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[www.senokrlt.org](http://www.senokrlt.org)

# BECOME A MEMBER OR MAKE A DONATION

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Every donation towards the Seno K/RLT Conservancy is used to support our mission of providing environmental education, promoting sustainable management of forests, wetlands, prairies, and wildlife as well as opportunities for permanent preservation of these lands. We are a registered 501(c)3 non-profit education organization and land trust. All dues and donations are tax deductible under IRS rules.

### Your Information

Name:(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Membership Level (Please check one)

\_\_\_\_ Individual .....\$25

\_\_\_\_ Family ..... \$40

\_\_\_\_ Forestry Friend .....\$100

\_\_\_\_ Land Protector .....\$500

\_\_\_\_ Patron ..... \$1000

\_\_\_\_ Benefactor .....\$5000

\_\_\_\_ Other amount .....\$

All dues and donations are tax deductible under IRS rules.

We also accept donations via PayPal on our website.

Make your check payable to Seno K/RLT Conservancy and send with this form to:

Seno K/RLT Conservancy  
3606 Dyer Lake Road  
Burlington, WI 53105

# A POEM TO GET US ALL THROUGH DIFFICULT TIMES

by Johnny Ray Ryder, Jr.

## "The Oak Tree"



*A* mighty wind blew night and day.  
 It stole the oak tree's leaves away,  
 Then snapped its boughs  
 and pulled its bark  
 until the oak was tired and stark.  
 But still the oak tree held its ground  
 while other trees fell all around...

*T*he weary wind gave up and spoke,  
 "How can you still be standing, Oak?"  
 The oak tree said, "I know that you  
 can break each branch of mine in two,  
 carry every leaf away,  
 shake my limbs, and make me sway.  
 But I have roots stretched in the earth,  
 growing stronger since my birth.  
 You'll never touch them, for you see,  
 they are the deepest part of me.  
 Until today, I wasn't sure  
 of just how much I could endure.  
 But now I've found, with thanks to you,

*I'm stronger than  
 I ever knew."*