

MILEWSKI NATURE FUND



Annual Report

**THE MILEWSKI NATURE FUND INC**



Partnered with  
Gauldet Gallery and  
the Chicago  
Architecture Biennial  
with the Installation  
*Beyond Wood*

Managed 10 acres  
of pollinator habitat  
as part of MNF's  
partnership with  
Milewski Farm's  
buffer zone project

Created the  
concept for the  
MNF Learning  
Center to connect  
with the Walking  
Education Trails  
(WET)

## Letter from MNF's Board President

Letter to the Memorial Nature Fund Inc's Supporters,

This past year was a life-changing and a life-affirming year. Many of the ways we live and work are being renewed to better fit our 21st Century understandings. This includes agriculture and conservation. With your help it's time to respect the past and embrace the future by working with the Milewski Nature Fund Inc. (MNF) to find a true balance between the use and conservation of natural resources.

The demolition of our iconic Milewski barn—MNF's trademarked logo—by a Derecho surely marks a transition. I choose the word "demolished" since one of the definitions of demolish is to "overthrow, overturn, bring to an end" which certainly has been occurring on the Milewski Farm since my parents, Lenard & Elizabeth Milewski, purchased the property in 1972 after my grandfather, who I am the namesake of, passed away. My family's work on the farm has been focused on "giving back to nature". So, half the land has been given to nature and she has been busy creating a wildlife sanctuary under our stewardship, and now a sugar maple and evergreen forest provide us all a chance to learn.

MNF's mission is to educate about a balance between use of our natural resources and conservation of them. Using our resources through recreation and agriculture can be done in sustainable ways. Conservation of our resources can be done with acknowledgement that we live in the 21st Century.

### Conservation Work on land and in water

- MNF partners** with the Milewski Farm to manage the part of the farm dad wanted to "give back to nature" can be seen from a simple trail through a robust, nature planted forest.
- MNF partners** with the Milewski Farm to manage the oxbow lake formed by dad recognizing the natural oxbow qualities of this section of the South Branch of the Eau Claire River which flows through our farm.
- MNF supports** the migratory birds which use the lake. Birds like Canada Geese, Sandhill Cranes, Great Blue Herons, 8 different kinds of ducks (and counting) are just some of the wonders to be seen.
- MNF protects** animals like foxes, fishers, beavers and more are harder to see but their presence (and homes) have now been documented for over 10 years.
- MNF works** on a nature trail to share these wonders with others is taking shape.
- Our work in crop rotation and its importance in keeping soil viable

Partnered with Galaudet Gallery and the Chicago Architecture Biennial with the Installation *One Sacred Moment with You*

Continued damn restoration along the south fork of the Eau Claire River to protect the Lenny Lake ecosystem

Explored Carbon Recapture Techniques for Agricultural Producers and as a revenue stream

Participated in “Low Rise Housing Ideas for Sustainability” with Circles, Squares and Triangles presentation

### Sustainable Agricultural Management

- MNF partners with Wisconsin farmers to implement best agricultural practices for our changing world
- MNF installs buffer zones to protect waterways, fields, plantings and people has been extensive and is now entering a new phase of management
- MNF researches historical soil testing and how to use soil tests to better agricultural harvests
- Our work in tillage practices as a way to reduce weed and pests through non-chemical management

### Recreation in Nature

- We are planning a trip to Yellowstone, the Badlands and the Black Hills and a much-needed soak in Glenwood Springs
- We also want to find more recreational opportunities on the Milewski Farm.

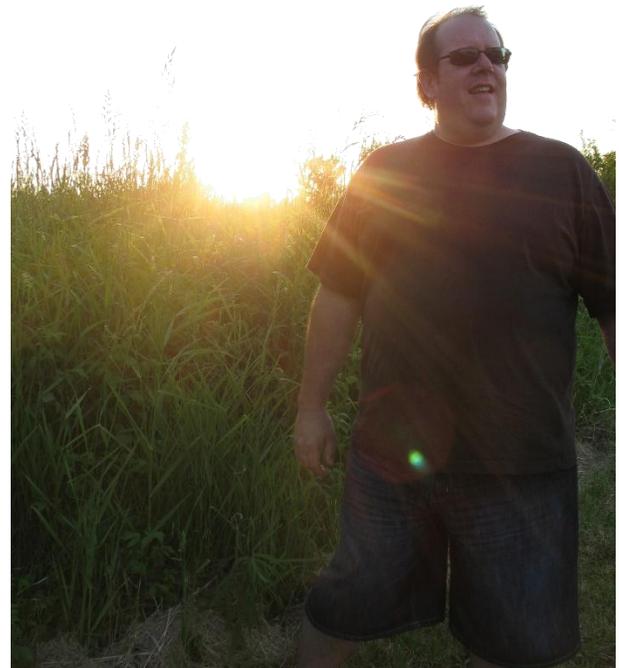
Work on an MNF Learning Center has begun with preliminary talks about structures, placement and costs. The MNF Learning Center will be used for education, research and observation.

We have more to share with you and our hope is you find something in the work we do which inspires you to join our work through volunteering, donations or other ways you create to assist us. Just as the prayer we read before each meeting says, “Let me walk in beauty, and make my eyes ever behold the red and purple sunset” and the glorious dawn skies.

With Respect and Gratitude



Michael Milewski, MNF Board President



# Hard Work Pays Off!

Our continuous, patient and meaningful work is strategically organized with our partners to provide the best results using the best practices.

Our educational work is focused



**Give back  
to Nature  
Forest**

**MNF  
and the  
Arts**

**Farming  
for the  
Future**





on 7 key programs

**History  
Happens  
Today**

**Walking  
Education  
Trails**

**MNF  
Learning  
Center**

**Water  
is  
Life**



# Give back to Nature Forest



**MNF's "Give Back to Nature" Forest** takes a quote from the inspiration for MNF, Lenard Milewski, and makes it a key piece in the work to find a balance between use of our natural resources and conservation of them.

The **"Give Back to Nature" Forest** has key projects at work to make this 20 acre forest an innovation hub for research, wildlife and recreation.

## ❖ **1000 Tree Program**

MNF has started to simply count the number of trees within this forest creating a Nature inventory of species, age, location to guide their work.

❖ **Specialty Forest Food Products** like raspberries, elderberries and maple syrup are possible within in this established forest



Elderberry Flowers in the Elderberry Patch,



Raspberries which enjoy growing under tree canopy

❖ **Specialty Forest Decorative Foliage** Simply managing the forest will create another revenue stream.

❖ **Forest Framing** utilizes the shade and plant interaction a forest creates to cultivate crops needing shade. Different types of teas and mushrooms and other fruits and vegetables



Above are Sugar Maples waiting to give their sap as maple syrup  
Below a bottle of *Give Back to Nature Maple Syrup*



To the left is the Lady Alice Apple Trees



# MNF and the Arts

## Beyond Wood--a land acknowledgement

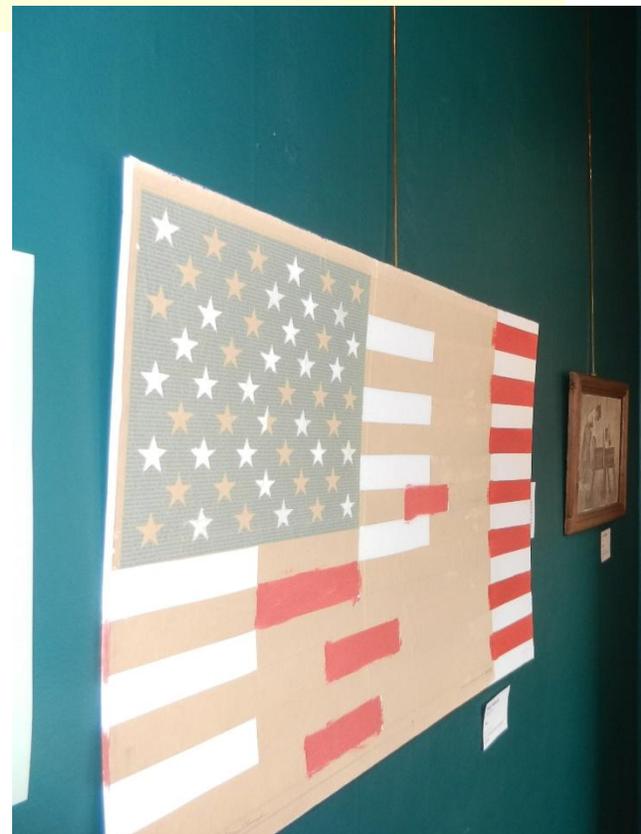
MNF partners with Galaudet Gallery and the 2021 Chicago Architecture Biennial with their installation "Beyond Wood:" In September and October, the partners activate these curated assemblages exposing new archetypes from demolished barns deconstructing centuries of hierarchies to build equality for all life.

**Beyond Wood** Installation  
#1 with Michael Milewski



## One Sacred Moment...Poem Slip Installation

MNF supports its Executive Director Vicki Milewski and her participation in the 2021 Chicago Architecture Biennial with an art installation of poem slips from her 24-part poem Through words, motion, sound and color, **One Sacred Moment** immobilizes an intensity of life working with tress and wind, color and words.



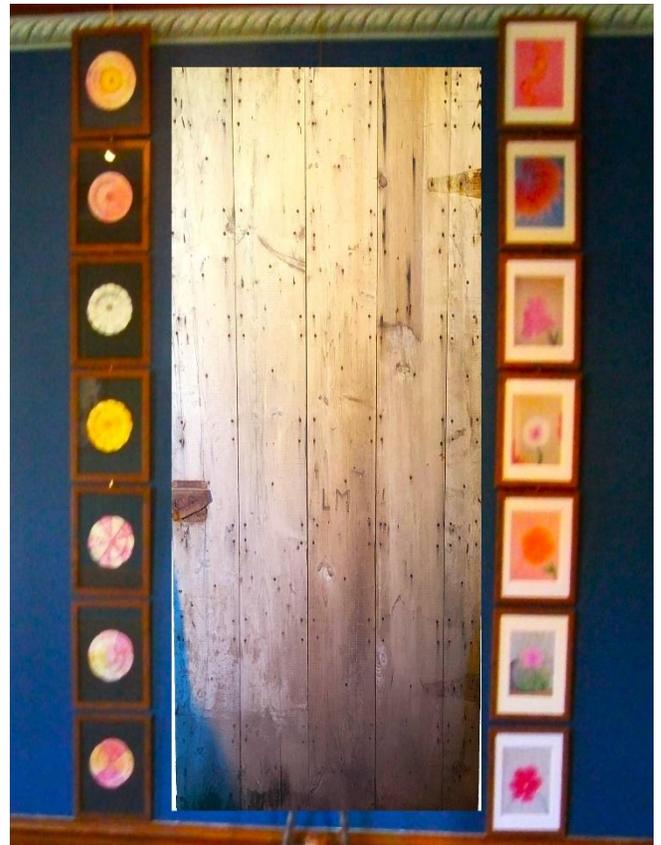


*One Sacred Moment* Installation #6

## Art can Educate

MNF believes art is a full partner in any education and so endeavors to create forward thinking art exhibits with an environmental twist.

MNF believes art can educate working with professional artists, curators, galleries and museums; MNF mounts meaningful and fun art exhibits which have garnered praise and thousands of visitors.



To the Left and Above  
*Beyond Wood* Installations #2 & #3



*One Sacred Moment* Installation #3

# Farming for the Future



## **CROP is Carbon Recapture Outreach Program**

Future climate forecasting is integrated in field management strategies. Understanding how the climate is changing in the future will help farmers as much as the local daily weather forecast plays into daily work scheduling.

Participating in carbon sequestration and other mitigation efforts could produce additional revenue streams for farmers as well as improve the quality of their agricultural output.

## **Land Management Best Practices Programs**

Some of the practices MNF supports and implements on farms across the country are:

- ❖ Crop rotation which is multi-year planned
- ❖ Low to medium tillage with angle tillage and cultivation
- ❖ Decadal Field Management
- ❖ Green Manures
- ❖ Resist Direct Accept

Using these and other practices create healthy soils and better preparation for extreme weather events.





## Silvopastures

This practice creates a robust pasturing system which employs agronomic principals, typically including introduced or native pasture grasses, fertilization and nitrogen-fixing legumes (green manure for the pasture), and rotational grazing systems that employ short grazing periods that maximize vegetative plant growth and harvest.

Silvopastures also encourages tree and bush planting to create windbreaks and shade for livestock



Above  
Harvesting Corn on the Milewski Farm

Below  
Wisconsin Dairy Farmer on the Milewski Farm  
showing his son how to bring home the hay



# History Happens Today

Old Order Mennonite Horse  
and Buggy 2022



## Structural History

MNF participates in the Historic Preservation Movement which seeks to reconstruct historic buildings and properties either in a physical state such as doing reconstruction projects on antique buildings or through a research-based model which seeks to capture the benefit of history wherever it is found.

MNF is a certified Historic Structure and Property preparer of Historic Structure Reports which is a multi-year project detailing a historic property from origin to transformation

## Agricultural History

Just as MNF supports in the field practices to contribute to sustainable farming, there is also the research which gives farmers an up-close look at where their farms have been and how they performed.

Looking at decades old soil surveys allows some farmers to see what the Organic Materials content was compared to today along with other routine chemicals found in soil.

Often such looks into the past give farmers solutions to problems they have today.

Lenard  
Milewski  
Haying on the  
Milewski  
Farm around  
1940



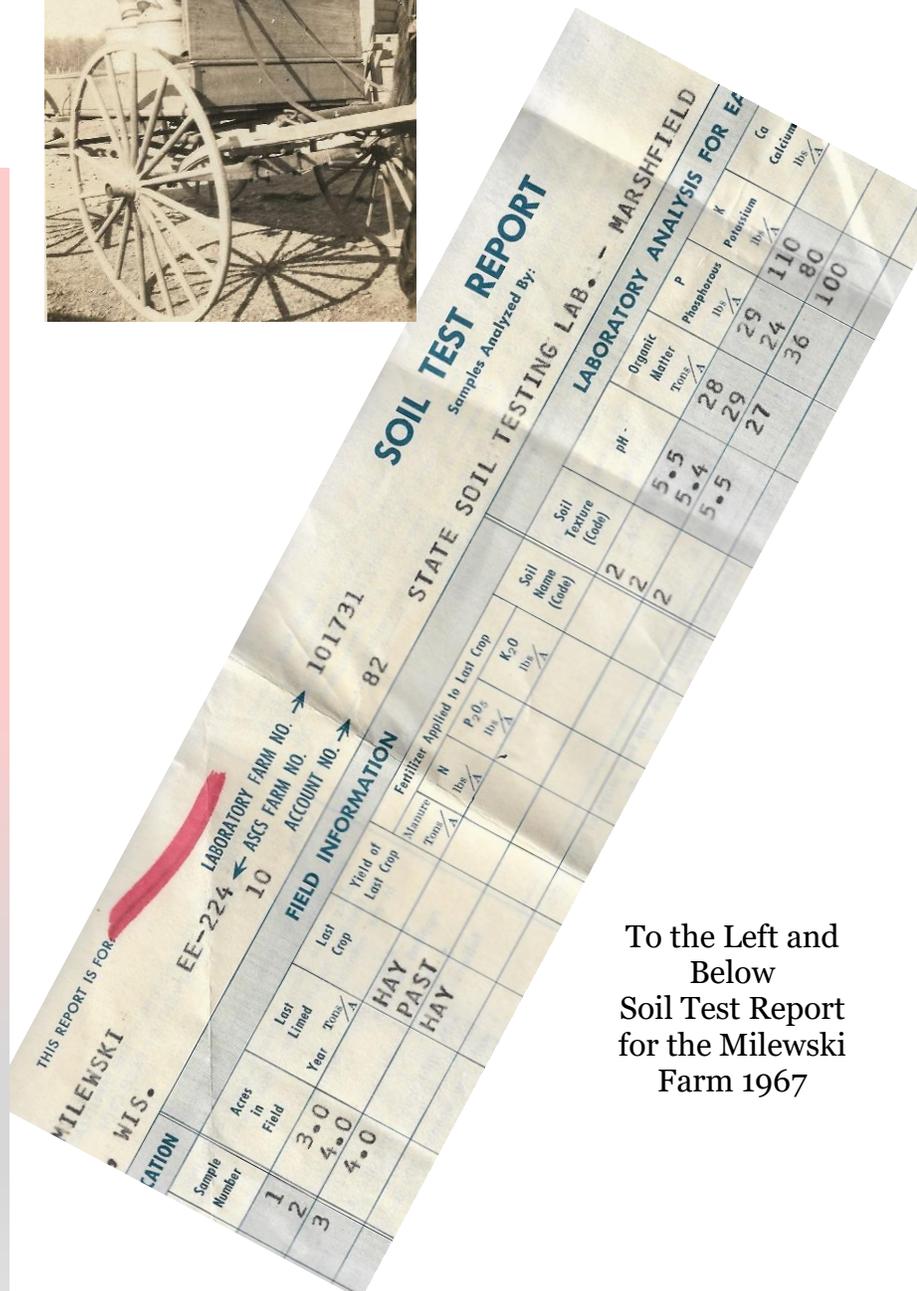
Lenard Milewski with his mother Jeanette Milewski around 1930



## Archival History

MNF keeps seeking the best practices in archival management which includes paper, digital, as well as tools, possibly machinery and other pieces which would create a resource for current and future farmers and others.

Finding the right organizational methods for archives like MNF's Soil Management Charts requires more than the charts themselves but also weather reports, harvesting parameters, tillage and nutrient management practices in order to provide a whole picture into the soil's past, present and future.



To the Left and Below Soil Test Report for the Milewski Farm 1967



Mennonite Buggy Parking 2019

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE  
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE  
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN

COMPILED BY:  
AGRICULTURAL RECORDS COOPERATIVE  
8-16-67

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, SEE YOUR COUNTY AGENT

SAMPLE	CORRECTIVE RECOMMENDATION FOR EACH SAMPLE				
	Mg Magnesium lbs/A	B Boron lbs/A	Mn Manganese lbs/A	Plant Nutrients	
				OXIDE basis P <sub>2</sub> O <sub>5</sub> + K <sub>2</sub> O lbs/A lbs/A	ELEMENTAL basis P + K lbs/A lbs/A
5				60+180	26+150
6				60+240	26+200
5				60+180	26+150

# Walking Education Trails



Milkweed in a buffer zone on the Milewski Farm

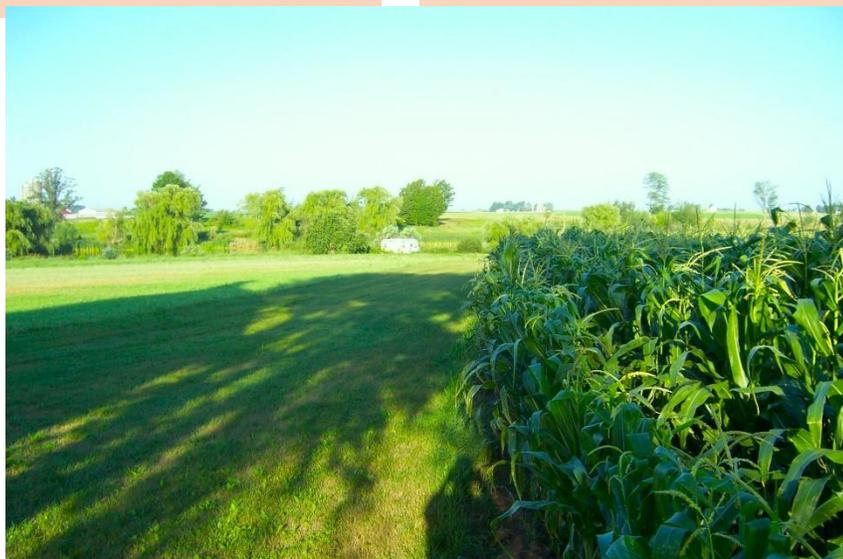
## MNF's Walking Education Trails

MNF's most popular project is our Walking Education Trails (WET). The trails pass through agricultural fields, the "Give Back to Nature" Forest and they cross the South Branch of the Eau Claire River. Planned updates to the trails include signage identifying plants and work done as well as more plantings and betterment of the trail. Our goal is to have an entire loop around the farm! Right now, the trails run for almost 3 miles.

## Buffer Zones and Pollinators

When MNF first devised their buffer zone program it was to protect the waterways and food production done alongside the traditional agricultural fields. But it became clear that these plantings could become a haven for pollinators so after decades of focused work on the buffers' plantings there are so many pollinators one might think there is no problem with pollinators! Milkweed, thistle, wild flowers and more entice the pollinators and leaving the zones in place give them a place to over winter.

Part of MNF's  
Walking  
Education Trail  
with corn  
growing on one  
side





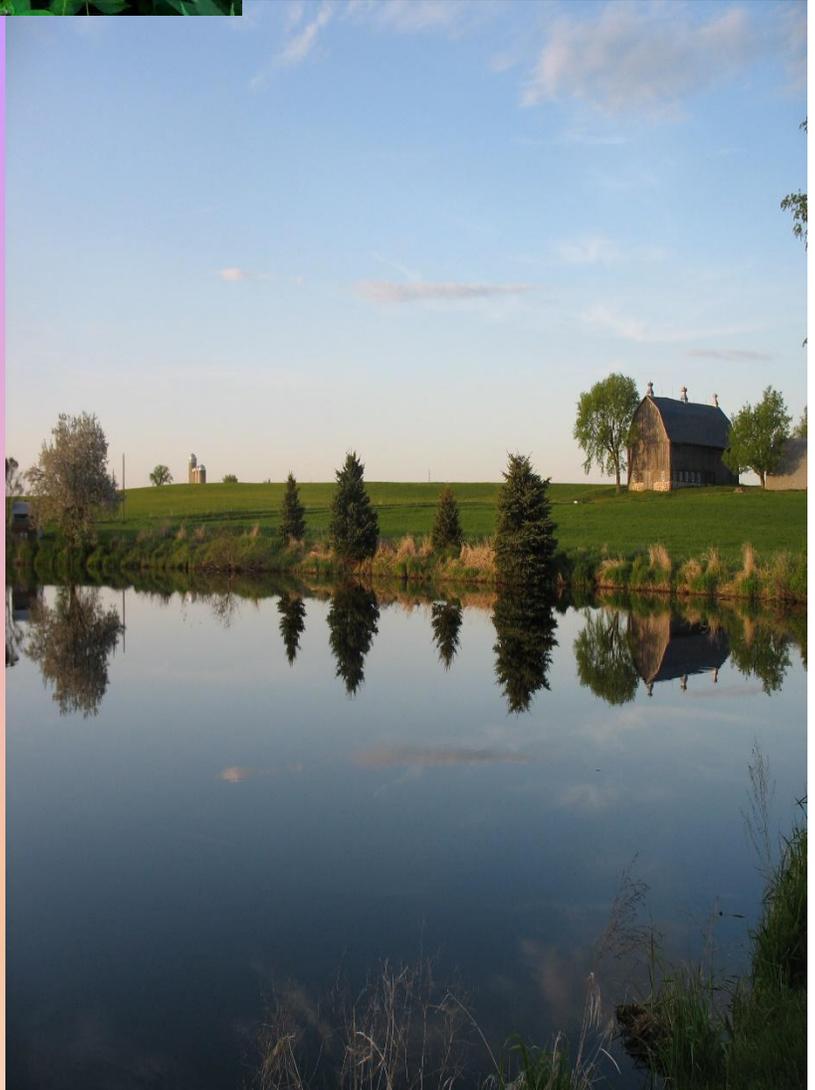
Flax in a buffer zone on the Milewski Farm

## MNF Learning Center

The Learning Center will be the base for all MNF Walking Education Trail activities:

- ❖ A place where walkers can see the trail and be given before education activations
- ❖ A place with a washroom and running water, seating and tabling, 21st Century audio visual resources
- ❖ A place where walkers can be given after walking education information.

This is only one use for the MNF Learning Center but it is a good one!



Part of MNF's Walking Education Trail with Lenny Lake on one side



Above View of Lenny Lake from MNF's Walking Education Trail

# MNF Learning Center



Lenny Lake

## MNF's Learning Center

MNF's Learning Center is a welcoming place we can hold classes, meetings and a room we can use to observe Wisconsin's natural world through the seasons.

The Learning Center will hold MNF's Libraries:

MNF's Seed Library

MNF's Reference Library

## MNF's Learning Center

The Learning Center will be open for the public and for their scheduled events:

A reading Room will have open to the public hours

MNF events and activities will be free of charge whenever possible

The public can schedule to use the Learning Center for education, community-based events and other activities deemed appropriate for our community.

The former Milewski Farm barn site of the new MNF Learning Center

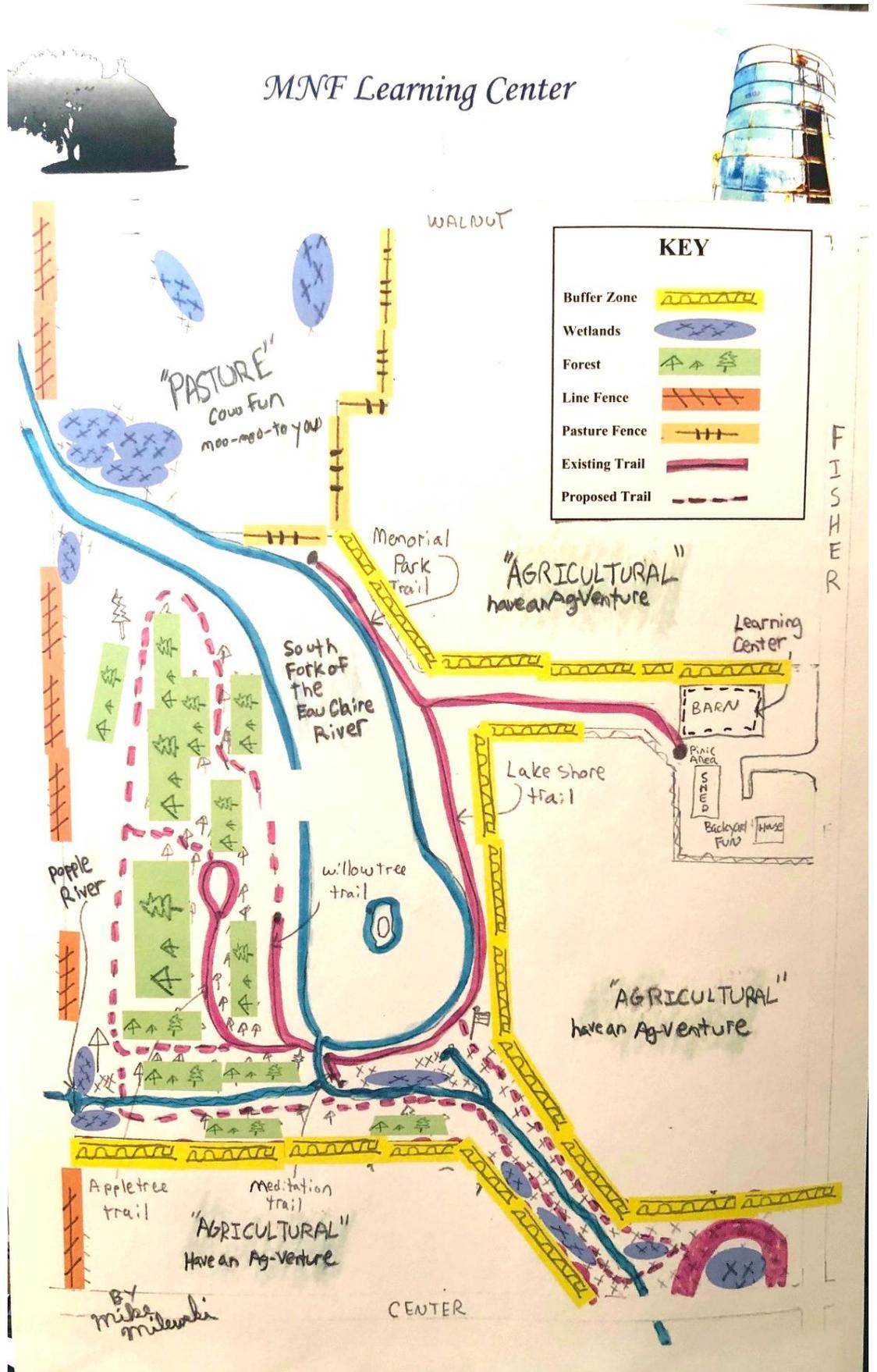


Illustration of  
MNF's Learning  
Center and  
Walking  
Education Trail

**MNF's Learning  
Center**

MNF's Learning  
Center will also  
hold archives of  
documents, images,  
tools etc. pertaining  
to the work we do  
in agriculture,  
forestry,  
conservation,  
waterways and  
more.

MNF is creating  
this space with  
respect for history  
and windows which  
look out onto the  
present as we plan  
together for the  
future



**Water  
is  
Life**



### **Lenny Lake**

The inspiration for founding MNF is Lenard Milewski who saw the natural boundaries of an oxbow lake on the Milewski Farm and worked for over two decades to make the lake a reality for beauty and a full ecosystem for migratory birds and other wild life. MNF has named the lake Lenny Lake in his honor. Each year there is maintenance and work to be done to keep the lake viable but this spring fed lake always helps!

### **Eau Claire River**

Over 100 years ago the river which flows through Lenny Lake was used to bring logs down from the Northwoods and into Eau Claire, Wi for milling and further transport. This section of the South Branch of the Eau Claire River has a section MNF protects along with the property owners which has been unaltered since then. The major winding river seen from satellite views is a testament to keeping things wild!





## **A Bridge**

The Founder of MNF, Elizabeth Galaudet Milewski, dreamed of a bridge over the river so that it would be easier to reach the “Give Back to Nature” Forest. After years of damn repairs and other needed work it is almost time to realize that dream.

It is because of forward thinking people who love nature that our work continues. Join MNF in any way you would like to keep this work moving forward!



Views of Lenny Lake





## The Milewski Nature Fund Partners

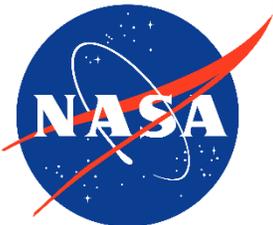
The Milewski Nature Fund (MNF) is a U.S. Code Title 26 Section 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, registered with the State of Wisconsin.  
Gifts are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.



**Weather Ready Nation Weather Ambassador  
For the National Oceanic and  
Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)**



**NASA Planetary Defender**



**NASA Museum and Informal Education  
Alliance Member**





## The Milewski Nature Fund Partners



**Chicago Conservation Corp Leader Accredited**



**Shop with us on ebay!  
100% of purchases are for MNF!**

**<https://www.ebay.com/usr/naturesfuture>**



**Green Schools Champion**

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MNF works to find a balance  
between use and conservation  
of our natural resource come  
join us!

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Thorp, WI 54771

MNF is  
Learning from the past  
Practicing in the present  
To educate for the future

<https://memorialnaturefund.wixsite.com/tmnf>