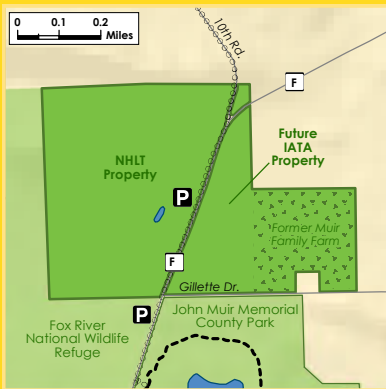
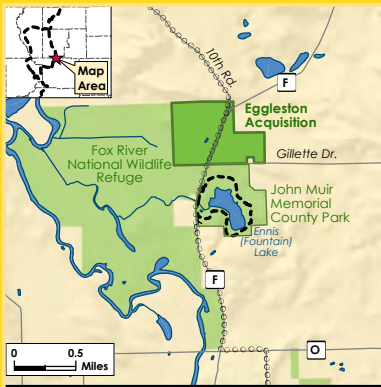


# LAND CONSERVATION highlights

## Alliance Helps Secure Protection for Landmark Muir/Eggleston Property

KEVIN THUSIUS

Director of Land Conservation



Attendees of the property dedication got to explore the area on their choice of several tours, including this one led by retired DNR conservation biologist Mark Martin. Photo by Brant Erickson ([www.BrantErickson.com](http://www.BrantErickson.com)).

If you're an Ice Age Trail Alliance member, add this to the list of things you tell your friends about your organization: "We helped protect John Muir's boyhood farm."

Muir, founder of the Sierra Club and "Father of Our National Park System", is often associated with the Sierra Nevada, Alaska, and other dramatic landscapes out west. However, sandwiched between his infancy in Scotland and his adult years in California, Muir spent a good chunk of his boyhood among the prairies, glacial lakes, and woodlands of his family's homestead in Marquette County.

In 1849, when John Muir was 10 years old, his father Daniel purchased a 320-acre farm in Marquette County. A 38-acre portion of the original Muir farm was recently acquired by the Natural Heritage Land Trust (NHLT) as part of larger acquisition. Another 60 acres of the Muir farm is already protected as part of John Muir Memorial County Park, which hosts an Ice Age Trail segment that circumnavigates Ennis Lake (known to the Muir family as Fountain Lake).

The late Bessie McGwin Eggleston and her family worked cooperatively with NHLT and many other dedicated conservation organizations to permanently protect the 198-acre Eggleston family farm. The land was properly dedicated during a damp but pleasant June day.

In the coming months, the Ice Age Trail Alliance will take ownership of the eastern 78 acres of the former Eggleston property. Already plans are in place to begin transforming some of the agricultural fields to prairie and woodlands. West of County Road F, the land will be given to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) in the



At the property dedication in June, more than 200 attendees enjoyed historical perspectives from Kathleen McGwin (left), niece of former owner Bessie Eggleston, and an enlightening oration from former Congressman Tom Petri. Photos by Bill Pielsticker.

next few years to be incorporated into the Fox River National Wildlife Refuge.

As part of their centennial celebration in 2016, the National Park Service is working with the Alliance and the Wisconsin Friends of John Muir to organize a celebration on the former-Muir/Eggleston property. Stay tuned for details.

This project was an exercise in partnerships. The acquisition would not have been possible without the conservation-minded McGwin family and the tireless efforts of the Natural Heritage Land Trust who worked for years to bring the partners together for this complicated transaction.

Funding for the property came from the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program, USFWS Fox River/Green Bay Natural Resource Damages Assessment Program, The Conservation Fund, Northeast Wisconsin Land Trust, Greater Green Bay Community Foundation, and many generous members of Natural Heritage Land Trust, Wisconsin Friends of John Muir, and John Muir Chapter of the Sierra Club.