

For Immediate Release

West Bend Ornithologist Honored for a Lifetime of Conservation Achievement

MADISON, September 13, 2010 –Dr. Noel Cutright, a well known and accomplished ornithologist from West Bend, will be honored for a life time of conservation achievement by Gathering Waters conservancy, a statewide land conservation organization.

“In a long career of both paid and volunteer leadership positions, Dr. Cutright has used his scientific expertise and leadership to influence lasting land conservation of some very special places,” says Gathering Waters Executive Director Mike Strigel.

Cutright served as senior terrestrial ecologist for We Energies for more than 30 years. In that position he coordinated habitat protection measures for endangered peregrine falcons among many other species.

“Dr. Cutright is one of those rare people whose vocation and avocation are the same,” says Kris Krause, Vice President – Environmental at We Energies and former co-worker of Dr. Cutright, who is now retired.

In addition to that “day job” he is the editor of the seminal *Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Wisconsin*, has been president of the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology and founded the Riveredge Bird Club.

A frequent public speaker on birds and bird habitat, “Dr. Cutright is one of Wisconsin’s citizen scientists, in the tradition of Aldo Leopold, whose knowledge and conservation ethic have influenced many people and touched several truly extraordinary projects,” says Strigel. “We’re very pleased to be able to honor that kind of contribution to Wisconsin conservation.”

The list of projects and programs that credit his leadership are many, indeed.

In 2004, he undertook a rigorous 30 day monitoring venture: he hiked 24 miles each day inventorying avian habitat and populations in a four state region. Through a website that allowed bird enthusiasts to track his efforts, Cutright raised more than \$52,000 to establish a permanent fund for bird habitat protection.

As president of the Riveredge Bird Club, Cutright was a leading contributor of funds to help the Ozaukee Washington Land Trust purchase the former Squires Country Club in the Town of Belgium, transforming a golf course into a nature preserve and crucial migratory bird “stop over” along the Great Lakes flyway.

Dr. Cutright has been a 30+ year contributor to the North American Breeding Bird Survey, a coordinated effort among citizen naturalists nationwide to collect data that informs environmental policy.

“Dr. Cutright’s legacy is larger than bird monitoring and tracking,” says Krause, “he has fledged a generation of bird enthusiasts, has reminded us that birds are a bellwether of overall environmental health, and that strategic land management and land conservation can reverse trends of avian population decline, even as our communities grow.”

Gathering Waters Conservancy has bestowed Land Conservation Leadership Awards since 2004. The organization is the statewide service center for non-profit land trusts, and annually honors organizations, policy makers and individuals for notable contributions to lasting land conservation in the state.

For registration information visit www.gatheringwaters.org/awards.

Gathering Waters Conservancy's mission is to help land trusts, landowners and communities protect the places that make Wisconsin special. Our goal is to increase the amount of protected land in the state through private voluntary action. We strengthen Wisconsin land trusts through direct technical assistance, government relations and outreach.

We Energies serves more than 1.1 million electric customers in Wisconsin and Michigan's Upper Peninsula and more than 1 million natural gas customers in Wisconsin. We Energies is the trade name of Wisconsin Electric Power Company and Wisconsin Gas LLC, the principal utility subsidiaries of Wisconsin Energy Corporation (NYSE: WEC). Visit the We Energies website at www.we-energies.com. Learn more about Wisconsin Energy Corporation by visiting www.wisconsinenergy.com.

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