

GreenseamsSM Project Preserves Historic Parcel in Menomonee Watershed

By Jess Hrobar
The Conservation Fund

During the early 1840's, a landmark inn was built in the City of Brookfield by Talbot Dousman. The Greek revival structure functioned as a stagecoach inn to accommodate travelers arriving at the intersection of Bluemound and Watertown Plank Roads. As farmers made their way towards Milwaukee to deliver grain to the breweries, they had to pay a toll at the inn and referred to it as the "Halfway House," due to its location halfway between Waukesha and Milwaukee.

The house was moved in 1981 to its present site at 1075 Pilgrim Parkway, a few acres north of where it originally stood. John Behling donated the building to the Elmbrook Historical Society, who restored the inn with the help of volunteers. It is now listed on the National Register of Historical Places as the Dousman Stagecoach Inn Museum. The rest of the original property is still in marsh and agriculture, a rare place in a rapidly developing suburb.

Jeffrey "Ace" Vollmer is John Behling's grandson, who worked the land along with his grandmother, Mabel (pictured left, circa 1953). Ace knew the property needed to be preserved after analysis by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) concluded that water runoff would become a problem if the land were to be developed. After discussions



COURTESY OF ACE VOLLMER



COURTESY OF PAT MULLIGAN

with the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District (MMSD), Ace and his family decided to sell their land to the GreenseamsSM Program. The WDNR Stewardship Fund, a state funded conservation land acquisition program, contributed grant money to assist in the purchase of this historic property, along with funds from MMSD. MMSD will hold a conservation easement on the land in perpetuity, preventing any

future development.

The GreenseamsSM Program

GreenseamsSM is an innovative flood management program that permanently protects key lands containing water absorbing soils. Currently the program has acquired 67 properties in the Milwaukee Metropolitan area, totaling 2,034 acres. The program makes voluntary purchases of undeveloped, privately owned properties in areas expected to have major growth in the next 20 years, creating valuable open space along streams, shorelines and wetlands. MMSD hired The Conservation Fund (TCF) to run GreenseamsSM. TCF is a national non-profit conservation organization that forges partnerships to protect America's legacy of land and water resources throughout the country. All the land acquired through the program will remain undeveloped, while protecting water and providing the ability to store rain and melting snow.

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