

The future of the forest is in our hands!

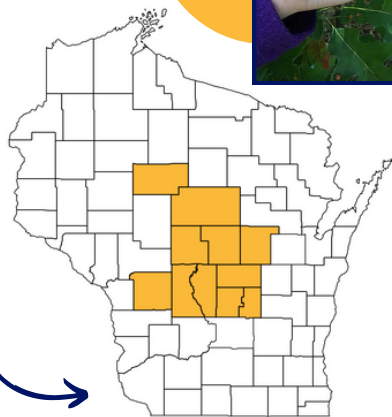


Golden Sands
Resource Conservation
& Development Council, Inc.

What is Golden Sands RC&D?

Golden Sands RC&D is a regional conservation 501(c)3 nonprofit. We work in 12 counties in central Wisconsin. Our goal is to make central Wisconsin a better place to work and live by promoting clean water, healthy forests, abundant wildlife, and sustainable agriculture.

Our service area includes Taylor, Marathon, Wood, Portage, Waupaca, Monroe, Juneau, Adams, Waushara, Marquette, Green Lake, and Columbia counties.



What is a demonstration forest?

Demonstration forests were established to teach landowners the importance of land stewardship and strategies to enhance woodland productivity and wildlife habitat. These forests are privately-owned properties to showcase different management strategies.

More about this forest

Scan the QR code below to see more about this demo forest or to learn about our cost-share programs, landowner opportunities and more.



**Thank you to our
Demonstration
Forest sponsor!**



<https://www.goldensandsrcd.org/demonstration-forests>
(715) 343-6215

This organization is an equal opportunity provider.

Marathon County Peterson Woodland





Peterson Woodland

Ecological Landscape of WI: Forest Transition



The Peterson Woodland is located in Marathon County at the headwaters of the Big Sandy Creek. 40 acres of the property was purchased by Ben Peterson and his wife, Melissa, in 2016 and they purchased the adjacent 120 acres from his father, Dan, in 2024. All 160 acres of the property are currently under the Managed Forest Law Program.

In 2020, during the pandemic, Ben and his family built a home on the land and moved to the property fulltime. The Petersons wanted to provide their children the opportunity to play outdoors and learn to appreciate the land and nature as they did when they were growing up. Together the family cooperatively manages the adjacent wooded parcels for all to enjoy.



Ben Peterson logging on the Peterson Woodland.

Since purchasing the property, the family has developed 7 miles of trails from old logging roads which weave through various hardwood stands and pockets of hemlock and other conifers. The trails are used by the family for hiking and UTV riding during the summer and snowshoeing and cross country skiing in the winter. With the help of their Snapshot Wisconsin trail camera through the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, the Petersons have discovered all kinds of wildlife within their property including porcupine, black bear, fisher, mink, raccoons, grouse, and lots of other birds.



The Peterson family.

They've witnessed four different species of woodpecker on the property, including the large Pileated woodpecker.

Along with just viewing wildlife, the property is also used for hunting by Ben and his father, which is another important value they have in mind when managing the property.

With the bountiful maple trees on their property and custom sugar shack that Ben built in 2017, the Petersons spend a lot of their time collecting maple sap. Every year, they produce 15 gallons of maple syrup, which requires tons of sap! The Petersons love to share their syrup with family and friends during their pancake brunch gatherings.

Although the property hasn't been in the family long, it is already an important part of their lives and their future. They view their contribution to the land as a legacy to pass on to their children and future generations.

For more information about the Peterson Woodland and other demo forest sites, visit

<https://www.goldensandsrfd.org/demonstration-forests>

The Petersons and their effort towards the development of Peterson Woodland demonstrates that people have the power to leave lasting marks on their ecosystem and community.

