

Pioneer Heritage Conservation Trust

P.O. Box 337, Evansville, MN 56326

Learn more about us at www.phctrust.org

Email address—pioneerhct@gmail.com

\$1,500 Scholarship Recipients



Shane Zierden

Shane Zierden graduated from Kennedy Secondary School in Fergus Falls in 2024. Shane is currently attending the University of North Dakota majoring in Fishery and Wildlife Biology, and also Mechanical Engineering. Once Shane was introduced to hunting and fishing, he found that he loved the experience of being outdoors and enjoying nature even if not shooting anything. He wants to be sure kids are able to enjoy the outdoors for many years to come. Shane has a particular interest in prairie restoration work.

Holden Truax

Holden Truax graduated from Parkers Prairie High School in 2024. Holden has enjoyed hunting since his childhood. He has always had a deep passion for the outdoors and protecting our environment. He is especially interested in wildlife habitat improvement. Holden is currently enrolled at Central Lakes College in Brainerd, majoring in Natural Resources. His plans include continuing his education to obtain a four-year degree in Natural Resources. He hopes to eventually work in Wildlife Management or Parks and Trails.

Elliot Kent

Elliot Kent graduated from Alexandria Area High School in 2025. He plans to attend Bethel University in the fall of 2025

and major in Environmental Science. Elliot has a passion for fishing and wants to use his education to help improve the water quality of our lakes, streams, and rivers. He feels that the continued development of new technologies can be applied to help solve water quality problems. He someday hopes to work with local communities, farmers, and watersheds in his pursuit to improve the quality of our water.

Carter Sonnenberg

Carter Sonnenberg lives in Ottertail County and graduated from Frazee High School in 2025. Carter plans to attend Itaska Community College and major in Natural Resources/Forestry. Carter grew up around the outdoors hunting, fishing and just being in the woods. He is fascinated with how forests regenerate. He hopes to someday find a job with the MN Department of Natural Resources and eventually own his own land management business.

Brady McCrory

Brady McCrory graduated from Minnewaska High School in 2025. He plans to attend Valley City State University and major in Fisheries and Wildlife Science. Brady loves to hunt and fish. His goal is to become a fish biologist with a goal of protecting and sustaining the natural ecosystem for both animals and fish. He says he has always wanted to study the different fish of the world and learn how they live and survive.

Scholarships are open to students who currently are attending a college/university or will be attending as a full-time student with a major in one of the following fields: Wildlife, Conservation, or Natural Resources. PHCT will award a one-time \$1,500 scholarship. Applicants must be a resident of Douglas, Pope, Grant or Otter Tail Counties.

If you know of someone that is eligible please make sure they submit an application by

May 31, 2026



Every winter/spring, PHCT members re-roll duck nests that are then planted throughout Douglas, Pope, Grant, and Ottertail counties!



Approximately 860 kids attended the Alexandria Youth Outdoor Activity Day this past fall!



PHCT members assisted youth with rolling of hen nests at Alexandria Youth Day August 24, 2025 at the Alexandria Shooting Park.



It is estimated that approximately 60% of planted nests are utilized every year with evidence of hatched eggs. The duck nests are often planted in early spring when there is ice still on ponds/sloughs allowing PHCT members to safely implant into the body of water. These nests provide a safe



and concealed spot for birds to lay, incubate, and protect their eggs during the mating season.





Bruce Freske named the 2025 PHCT Habitat Conservationist of the Year Award

Bruce Freske grew up in western Minnesota and graduated from the U of M in Minnesota with a bachelor's degree in wildlife biology.

Prior to his retirement and his tenure as district manager for the USFWS in Morris, Minnesota, Bruce was manager at the Mattamuskeet National Refuge Complex in North Carolina. He also worked in Kansas, Nebraska, Illinois, and Wisconsin. Cumulatively, Bruce spent a total of 37 years serving the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

During his 15 years in Morris, Bruce and his team acquired over 5,000 acres of wildlife habitat for his district!

Bruce and staff have partnered and worked with the Trust on wild rice transplantations, wetland enhancements, native prairie restorations, soil sampling, and pollinator (wild flower) projects.

In appreciation of his tireless passion for wildlife habitat preservation, we honor Bruce Freske with the PHCT 2025 Habitat Conservationist of the Year!

CPL GRANTS

PHCT continues to administer several Conservation Partners Legacy Grants. Please visit www.dnr.state.mn.us/grants/habitat/cpl

- 2012 Wetland Water Level Management—Pope
- 2013 Wild Rice Transplantation—Douglas, Pope, Grant
- 2013 Invasive Cattail Control -Stevens
- 2014 389G-1 Prairie Restoration -Pope
- 2014 Wild Rice Transplantation II—Otter Tail & Grant
- 2015 Wild Rice Transp. III -OT, Douglas, Pope and Grant
- 2015 Seasonal Wetlands Cattail Control-Stevens
- 2016 Seasonal Wetlands Cattail II-OT, Pope, Traverse
- 2016 Seasonal Wetlands Cattail Control III - Stevens
- 2017 Seasonal Wetlands Cattail Control IV -Meeker, Stearns, Kandiyohi
- 2016 Seasonal Wetlands Cattail Control V— Douglas
- 2018 Seasonal Wetlands Cattail Control VI –Traverse
- 2020 Seasonal Wetlands Cattail Control VII - Grant
- 2021 Seasonal Wetlands Cattail Control VIII— Pope
- 2021 Seasonal Wetlands Cattail Control IX— Kandiyohi
- 2021 Pollinator Plot Establishment—Stevens
- 2023 -Small Wetlands Enhancement I—OT, Grant
- 2024 Soil Pesticide Residual Sampling—Big Stone, Pope, Traverse, Swift, Lac Que Parle, Stevens
- 2024 Seasonal Wetlands Cattail Control X—OT, Grant
- 2024 Seasonal Wetlands Cattail Control XI— Pope, Doug
- 2025 Seasonal Wetlands Cattail Control XII - Pope , Douglas
- 2025 Seasonal Wetlands Cattail Control XIII -Grant, Ottertail

Thinking of joining Pioneer Heritage Conservation Trust? Please fill out the form on the bottom of the back page and mail it along with your check to PHCT.

Already a member? *Please take a look at the date on the mailing address label on this newsletter*

If it is prior to today's date, please consider renewing now. **Thank you for your membership!**

You are invited to attend the meetings for the Pioneer Heritage Conservation Trust

PHCT meets the 2nd Monday of March, June, September & December at 7:00 PM.

The meetings are held at

The Military House

304 South Gran Street in Evansville, MN

2025-2026 Officers and Directors

Mike Nemmers	President & Director, Pope Co.
Roger Knapp	Vice President & Director, Douglas Co.
Andy Bye	Secretary & Director, Grant Co.
Rick Paulsen	Treasurer
Craig DeJong	Director, Pope Co.
Larry Hanson	Director, Douglas Co.
Kerry Zimmerman	Director, Grant Co.
Ty Bentrup	Director at Large, Douglas Co. & Newsletter Editor
Ray Norrgard	Director, Otter Tail Co.
Brady Weispfennig	Director, Otter Tail Co.

Pioneer Heritage Conservation

Trust

Box 337,

Evansville, MN 56326

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Our time on earth is brief, yet the land goes on forever, carrying with it the marks of each succeeding landowner. As fleeting trespassers on land that belongs to future generations, we must touch the land gently, caring for it as true stewards, so that those who assess our record will see our love and respect for the land and life. (Robert B. Oetting)

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PIONEER HERITAGE CONSERVATION TRUST MEMBERSHIP FORM

Please make your check payable to PHCT.
Mail to PHCT, PO Box 337, Evansville, MN 56326

Donations are tax deductible under IRS Code Sec. 501(c)3

All information is for the use of PHCT only.

____ New membership ____ Renewal membership Your check number Amount \$ _____
 _____ \$30 Annual _____ \$100 Four years _____ \$500 Life _____ \$1000 Heritage _____ Other Gift

Name (s): _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ Home

Phone: (_____) _____ E-Mail: _____ Cell Phone: (_____) _____