



# Nashotah House

THEOLOGICAL  
SEMINARY

Forming Leaders in the Anglican Tradition Since 1842

## NEWS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Historic Agreement Builds and Preserves

NASHOTAH, WISCONSIN, (January 20, 2016) – An agreement between the Faye Gehl Conservation Foundation and Nashotah House Theological Seminary this week will ensure the existence of historic agricultural land in the Lake Country area while preserving the mission of a treasured theological institution.

According to Mr. John Gehl and the Very Reverend Steven Peay, Dean & President of Nashotah House, “We wish to be good stewards of the land by preserving it.” This agreement maximizes stewardship of the land while preserving a rich relationship between the historic farm and the seminarians during the critical years of their education at Nashotah House.

The farm is made up of approximately 260 acres located adjacent to Nashotah House in Nashotah, Wisconsin. It has been owned and operated by Nashotah House since 1842. According to Gehl, the Faye Gehl Conservation Foundation and Gehl Farmland Investments LLC are committed to saving agricultural land in the Lake Country area. Gehl’s family came to the area sixty-three years ago. Since then, as more and more agricultural land became developed, the family decided to do whatever they could to preserve as much open space as possible. To date they have protected over 700 acres in the area.

Gehl’s motivations fit well with those of the Nashotah House Board of Directors. Gehl says the intention is to improve soil health by planting multiple crops, including cover crops, eventually

converting a portion of the land to pasture and finally to put a conservation easement on the agricultural portion of the land so it can never be developed, thus keeping the land as open space forever.

According to Dean Peay, for many years the farm and school supported each other. In recent years, the farm has been rented out and portions of it used by renters to plant corn and soybeans. "Given the rigors of theological education, we are no longer able to support the farm *and* our educational mission" he said. "But under this new agreement, Mr. Gehl is open to including our students in the work of the farm, which was a part of Nashotah House's original mission."

When the Nashotah House was founded, its mantra was "Ora et Labora", that is "Pray and Work". There is a rhythm to farming and nature that ties it to religion. This tie reminds us "How insignificant we are compared to the wonder of nature and the transcendence of God." This arrangement allows the Seminary to continue this original relationship to the land. The rhythm encourages attention to detail and a disciplined approach to life.

"The land deserves to be restored," Peay said. "The last time the House was able to work the land was in the 1960's. We are blessed and grateful by this opportunity. It allows us to enter into a partnership that will enable the House to return to that critical part of its original mission while ensuring that the land is cared for using the latest conservation efforts available," Peay continued "Instead of creating more housing subdivisions, we believe the preservation of open space is important for Nashotah House, the region and the country."

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Founded in 1842, Nashotah House is a recognized seminary for the Episcopal Church. Its mission is to educate the highest quality of leaders both ordained and lay, for the mission of the Church.