



Madison Land Conservation Trust

Your gift will help make sure Madison's wood thrushes have a home to return to when they come back next spring.



Dear Neighbor,

Can you imagine how it would feel if the early signs of spring you look forward to each year simply didn't arrive?

Maybe for you, the end of winter is signaled by a purple crocus poking its head through the snow, or the particular rich scent of the soil in the garden as the temperature begins to climb, or the first time you notice that the sun is up before you are.

For me it's the first time I hear the call of the wood thrush, coming through the woods of the Indian Shelters Trail property right near my house.

But without your generosity to the Madison Land Conservation Trust, that sound of spring could disappear from our spring and summer "soundtrack."

If you know your bird songs, I'm sure you'll agree with me that the song of the wood thrush is one of the most beautiful sounds in nature.

Even if you don't recognize it, you've undoubtedly heard it countless times. It's often described as "flute-like," probably thanks to the wood thrush's amazing ability to sing two notes at once. For me, it defines the sound of spring and summer in Madison.

This incredible little bird, only seven or eight inches long, travels more than 2,000 miles from Central America to New England each spring. She returns here to build a nest and raise a family in the very same patch of woods where she settled the previous year.

But development—new homes, paved roads, power lines, for example—is rapidly encroaching on her habitat. And next spring, or the year after, **she**

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could return from her exhausting, transcontinental flight to find that her home has disappeared.

In fact, during the last 50 years, this has actually happened to millions of wood thrushes. And the tragic consequence of lost habitat is a **significant loss of life**. The wood thrush population has declined by approximately 50% since the mid-1960s.

These beautiful, reclusive birds need you to protect them.

The 1,700+ acres of woodlands and wetlands conserved by the MLCT are home to many species of animals. And like the threatened wood thrush, they depend on your donations to protect their homes and nesting grounds.

It's your generous gifts that enable us to acquire and maintain these properties. And to make it so easy for any of us Madison residents to take a walk on one of our 20 trails and experience a little bit of what our natural area was like before it was developed.

And it's your generous gifts that make it possible for us to show our kids and grandkids why it's essential that we continue to protect the stunning song of the wood thrush.

Looking forward to the signs of spring!



Ben Diebold, President

P.S. Please make your gift to the Madison Land Conservation Trust today. (An envelope is enclosed, or give online at: **madisonlandtrust.org/make-a-donation**.) The wood thrushes will begin their return journey before you know it—and we want to make sure their homes are here to welcome them in early May.

P.P.S. As always, your donation is tax deductible—**send it before December 31** to get your tax benefit this year.

