

# Vilas County

## A Place of Solitude



### Background

The Epperson property was purchased by Keith Epperson in the 1950's as a retreat from his busy life in Milwaukee, Wis. It includes 200 acres of forestland surrounding 120-acre Erickson Lake in Arbor Vitae.

Keith's son, Peter, is now majority owner of the recreation property and says the ultimate goal is to keep the land in the family. Reflecting on his childhood at the cabin, he stated "...biking through the forest, learning about the land and all the nooks and crannies, everything you can imagine about this property I have pretty much traveled it, learned it and developed an incredible passion for it."

### Highlights

Peter first heard about the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) from a local Technical Service Provider. The taxes had increased significantly so the family decided to enroll the land in the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Managed Forest Law. This prompted working with NRCS to develop a forest management plan, trails and landings for the upcoming timber harvest and create wildlife habitat through the Environmental Quality Incentive Program and the Conservation Stewardship Program.

The Epperson family built bird houses, loon nesting boxes and osprey platforms together, which increased their conservation ethic and, in turn, love of the northern Wisconsin wildlife. They haven't seen an osprey yet, but there are now multiple loons nesting around the lake.

The most recent project taken on by the Epperson's was one of the first Fish and Wildlife Habitat Management Plans in Wisconsin. The plan was recently completed and Peter is excited to create more habitat on their property including openings for forage and creation of young forest habitat.

For more information about NRCS Forestry opportunities, visit [www.wi.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.wi.nrcs.usda.gov) or contact your local NRCS Service Center.



(Above) A beautiful view of Erickson Lake. (Below) Healthy forest stands on the Epperson property.

