



Keeping Nature Nearby
Fall 2007



Saving Lost Lake: A Campaign to Expand Muskegon State Park

The Land Conservancy of West Michigan is embarking on a campaign to raise \$230,000 and help the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) acquire one of the last, large natural properties adjacent to Muskegon State Park. By doing so, we will protect an ecological and recreational treasure to be used and enjoyed by the public for generations to come.

Just to the east of Muskegon State Park is a 64-acre property owned by the Mierendorf family. At its western edge is the crown jewel of the property, a beautiful small lake known as "Lost Lake." The southern half of the lake is within the State Park, but the northern half is privately owned by the Mierendorf family. Cross-country skiers and hikers have created a trail that circles Lost Lake, including the portion owned by the Mierendorfs, to enjoy the scenic view and connect with other park trails.

For years the DNR wanted to add the Mierendorf's property to Muskegon State Park, but they were unable to reach an agreement with the owners - until the Land Conservancy of West Michigan stepped in. Using our newly created Land Acquisition Fund, we paid for an independent appraisal and helped the owners and the State come to agreement on a purchase price. The DNR then sought and received funding from the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund - but competition from other State projects limited the funds to only half of the property's value.

The Mierendorf family wanted to dispose of their property in one transaction and they needed to lock in a buyer sooner than the Natural Resources Trust Fund grant funds would be available. The Land Conservancy's board of directors agreed that all of the land deserved to be protected and included in the State Park, so they gave the go-ahead for the Land Conservancy to secure an option on the entire 64 acres with a commitment to raise half of the purchase price.

The Land Conservancy expects to transfer the option to purchase the first half of the property to the DNR in the fall of 2007. The option to purchase the remainder must be exercised by August 31, 2008.

For more information about Lost Lake and the Mierendorf property, please see page 3. To find out how you can support the Campaign to Protect Lost Lake, contact Julie Stoneman or Peter Homeyer at the Land Conservancy at 616-451-9476 or lcwm@naturenearby.org.



Sneak-Peek of Lost Lake! Sunday, October 21, 2007, 2 pm to 3 pm

Join us for a naturalist-guided hike of the Mierendorf property. Explore the forests, wetlands, and lake and learn why this parcel is such an important addition to Muskegon State Park.

Directions: Business US 31 north of Muskegon to M 120 north. West on Lake Avenue (first stoplight after power plant), west on Ruddiman. Ruddiman becomes Memorial Drive. Turn north on North Peterson Road, west on Kern Street, south on Pierce Road. Meet at the end of Pierce Road.



Mission

To keep nature nearby, the Land Conservancy of West Michigan permanently protects natural and scenic lands.

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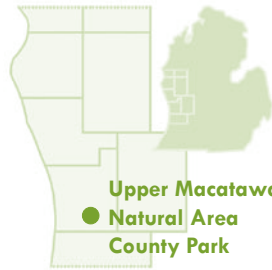
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The Land Conservancy of West Michigan is a recognized 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. All contributions are tax deductible to the full extent of the law.

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Upper Macatawa Conservation Easement Expanded



Another successful partnership project with Ottawa County Parks resulted in the preservation and restoration of an additional 90 acres of land at the Upper Macatawa Natural Area County Park.

This brings the total acreage protected by a Land Conservancy conservation easement to 414 acres.

The new conservation easement land is distributed in five parcels along the river and is adjacent to land we protected with a conservation easement in 2005. All of the conservation easement land in the Upper Macatawa restricts development activities to creating and maintaining park facilities and to restoring the natural Macatawa River corridor to improve water quality and wildlife habitat.

The Land Conservancy's ability to create and hold a conservation easement for this area made it possible for Ottawa County Parks to match grant funds that were used to put meanders back into the stream and to create and restore wetlands along the stream.

Before Ottawa County began the Upper Macatawa project, the river was heavily impacted by cattle grazing, row crops, and manure spreading that contributed significant amounts of sediment, nitrogen, and phosphorus into the river just upstream from Lake Macatawa. These uses, along with the tiles and drains installed by the farmers, created a much greater flooding problem each year since there was little opportunity for rainfall to percolate through the ground instead of running off directly into the river.

Although it is still a work in progress, the park does have trails, including one paved trail to be completed this fall, and two parking lots, one of which is on 76th Avenue just south of Byron Road and east of I-196.

The Land Conservancy is pleased to be one of the partners for this project and to have contributed to this remarkable and ongoing restoration effort. We look forward to watching this river corridor and the park improve each year.

Conservation Easement Guide

Please contact us at 616-451-9476 for a copy of our new brochure that explains the state and federal tax benefits available to donors of conservation easements.



90 acres have been added to the Upper Macatawa Natural Area near Holland. *Photo: Danielle Fogel*

Underwriting for this newsletter generously provided by:



With more than 180 attorneys in Grand Rapids, Metro Detroit, Holland, and Muskegon, Warner Norcross is one of Michigan's leading providers of legal services.



An Ecological and Recreational Treasure: *Lost Lake and the Mierendorf Property*



The Land Conservancy of West Michigan is currently helping the Michigan Department of Natural Resources acquire one of the last, large natural properties adjacent to Muskegon State Park. Please see the article on page 1 for details.

The 64-acres adjacent to Muskegon State Park is primarily wooded, with small ravines and a creek on the east half with rolling uplands and a mixed-hardwood-pine forest, mostly beech, oak, maple, and with small groves of hemlock. There are small ridges in the south and east portion of the parcel and a ravine with low-lying areas along a creek that flows into Muskegon Lake. To the west is “Lost Lake” and its emergent

wetlands, truly the ecological jewel of the property. Trails, used by hikers and cross country skiers, link the property with State Park land, a testament to the recreational values already placed on the Mierendorf’s land.

The reasons for protecting Lost Lake and its environs are many: it would complete the State Park’s ownership and protection of an ecological and recreational resource, it is in an area where residential development continues to fragment and replace natural areas, it provides a buffer for the dune ecosystem in the park, it is an important piece of the forested corridor along Lake

Michigan that serves as invaluable habitat for migratory birds, and it is one of the last, large natural areas that could be added to Muskegon State Park.



Woollam Challenge - Met and Exceeded!

Once again, the J.A. Woollam Foundation extended a very generous challenge grant to the Land Conservancy of West Michigan for its land protection work in 2007. And once again, we met that match and then some!

This year’s challenge for \$15,000 matched contributions from new and lapsed members, new business members, and those able to increase their gift to the patron level or higher. When it was apparent that our fundraising efforts were going to exceed \$15,000, the Woollam Foundation agreed to add another \$5,000 for a total challenge of \$20,000.

The new goal was met and exceeded in June. As a result of the Woollam Foundation’s generosity, we welcomed 102 brand new members, 34 lapsed members and five new Business Members. Another four donors increased their gifts to the patron level of \$1,000 or more and we added one new Landmark Leader with a gift of \$2,500.

The Land Conservancy Board of Directors and the Fund Development Committee extend its sincere appreciation to John

Woollam and all the trustees of the Woollam Foundation. Dr. Woollam is a great friend and champion for conservation in Michigan, and the challenge grants he and his Foundation have provided over the past three years have been instrumental in building our capacity for greater land protection throughout West Michigan.

“It gives me great personal satisfaction to know that our challenge grants have had significant influence on contributions to conservation in West Michigan. To save places we love from development we need to all work together and we need to act now, while there are still opportunities,” explains Dr. Woollam.

And, of course, very special thanks go to all of you who contributed to this year’s Woollam Challenge. By doing so, you are helping us with several key projects that will forever protect spectacular natural and scenic lands throughout West Michigan. Thank you!



Land Protection & Project Support

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Bob Gamble Named Volunteer of the Year

Every year, the Land Conservancy recognizes the volunteer who most contributed to the our mission of *keeping nature nearby*. This year the Volunteer of the Year award was bestowed upon Bob Gamble for his invaluable service on the Land Conservancy’s Board of Directors, participation in the Membership Development Committee, and his volunteer stewardship work.

“Most volunteers find one job that they focus their energy on, but Bob breaks that mold,” explains Julie Stoneman, the Land Conservancy’s Executive Director. “You will find him pulling exotic invasive plants at nature preserve work days, strategizing ways to raise funds for land protection projects, reviewing marketing programs, and doing countless other behind the scenes projects that help make the Land Conservancy a successful organization.”

Bob and his wife Chris Gamble became members of the Land Conservancy in 2002. Immediately after joining they became volunteers, using their skills and talents to support the Land Conservancy in every way imaginable.

“We can always count on the Gambles when assistance is needed,” Stoneman adds. “We are honored to present Bob with the Volunteer of the Year award – he truly deserves it.”

Mary Jane Dockeray Award recipient Jean Laug-Carroll played an instrumental role in the establishment of a dedicated parks millage in Ottawa County. The millage made North Ottawa Dunes and several other county parks possible. *Photo: Danielle Fogel*

Jean Laug-Carroll Recognized for Work in Ottawa County

The Mary Jane Dockeray Award, established in 1990, recognizes an individual or organization that has made a significant contribution to nature interpretation or conservation in West Michigan. This year the award was presented to Jean Laug-Carroll for her extraordinary conservation work throughout Ottawa County.

Jean was the key individual responsible for establishing the Ottawa County Parks and Recreation Commission in 1987, a new agency to take over the management of the parks from the Road Commission.

She was a strong advocate for establishing a dedicated millage for the parks system and worked tirelessly to get it on the ballot and to campaign

for approval. She organized the committee, was the chief fund-raiser, and carried the campaign to a successful conclusion in 1996. She also took the lead role in organizing the successful millage renewal campaign in 2006.

Jean has taken an active role in many park projects and was instrumental in negotiations leading to the acquisition of the Rosy Mound Natural Area. She has even donated 46 acres, including 1/2 mile of frontage on the Grand River, to support Ottawa County’s Grand River greenway initiative.

“Jean is very deserving of the Mary Jane Dockeray Award,” says Julie Stoneman. “Her tireless dedication to the preservation of natural lands in Ottawa County is an inspiration to all.”



Volunteer of the Year, Bob Gamble, stains the shed at Saul Lake Bog Nature Preserve.





Stewardship Volunteers Leading the Way!

Volunteers have always been the backbone of the Land Conservancy of West Michigan's (LCWM) Stewardship Program. This last year was no exception. Since September 2006, over 200 volunteers have worked in the heat of summer and freezing temperatures of winter to help maintain our preserves. Without the dedicated efforts of these LCWM volunteers our preserves could quickly become degraded and lose their unique natural features.

Many groups and individuals worked to protect the preserves from the threat of invasive species. The never-ending battle against glossy buckthorn at Lamberton Lake Fen continues to be fought by the tireless volunteers who value the rare wildlife that live there. When autumn olive exploded at Wege Natural Area this year, volunteers stepped up to stop the invasion. Finally, this spring 43 bags of garlic mustard were removed by volunteers to protect our preserves from this destructive exotic plant.

Starting this year, LCWM has a volunteer Preserve Steward for every preserve. Preserve Stewards assist in monitoring and maintaining preserves, amongst many other tasks depending on the steward's interest and skills. Thanks to Preserve Stewards we have several new scenic trails, we are fighting invasives throughout the year, and continuously have watchful eyes caring for our most precious resource—our preserves.

Finally, we would like to extend a special thank you to the outstanding work of the Stewardship Committee. The Land Conservancy is fortunate to have a diverse group of volunteers who invest many hours each month to the leadership of the LCWM stewardship program. Committee members help develop policy, conduct research, lead/participate in workdays and provide valuable insight to the stewardship of LCWM's preserves. One of the most exciting products of the Stewardship Committee this year is the formation of the Prairie Project (see article below).

Volunteers are an indispensable part of the stewardship program of LCWM. Their hard work and support are critical in maintaining and restoring our nature preserves. If you know someone who helped on a workday or a company/school who donated people to work on a preserve, please tell them thank you. Or, if you see a Preserve Steward or Stewardship Committee member, let them know their work is really making a difference.

Please see the back page of this newsletter for upcoming workdays. For more information, contact Melanie Good at 616-451-9476 or melanie@naturenearby.org

Stewardship Wish List

- Loppers
- 10' or 12' Double Axel Trailer

Preserve Stewards

Justin Martisius
 Jim Benson
 Robert Vanderkamp
 Clark Elenbaas
 Lynne Martin & Tom Dandridge
 Rob Hartman
 Penny & Dan Folsom
 Jim Bradley
 Ernie Brumbaugh &
 Carole Mueller-Brumbaugh
 Sue Clements
 Chad Wiersma
 Dan Broersma
 Dick Granse

Stewardship Committee

Dwight Baker
 Dean Salisbury
 Bonnie Blackledge
 Steve Mulder
 Randy VanDragt
 Al Steinman
 Neil MacDonald
 Clark Elenbaas
 Eric Good
 Chris Baer
 John Fox

Businesses/Schools Assisted on Workdays

Foremost Insurance
 Forest Hills Environmental Club
 Wolverine Worldwide
 GVSU Alternative Break Students
 GVSU Soil and Water Cons. Society
 Earth Institute
 East Grand Rapids Middle School



A Promise of a Prairie

Have you seen the changes happening at Saul Lake Bog? Since 2002, volunteer Dwight Baker has worked tirelessly to create a native prairie at Saul Lake Bog. Now, the trial period is over, and we are expanding the size of the prairie by removing the sterile nonnative brome grass and replacing it with a high-quality wildlife habitat. Please visit Saul Lake to see the lovely established prairie and the site for the future planting. Volunteers are invited to be part of this exciting project at this year's Volunteer Reception in September.

Wild blue lupine grows in the native prairie at Saul Lake Bog Nature Preserve. *Photo: Jim Reminga*



Welcome New Land Conservancy Members (March 2007 - June 2007)

Jeff & Dawn Auch	Georgia Donovan	Susan Hoekema	Barbara J. & John S. Morrison	Miriam Secker
Mary Block	Joshua & Amy Duggan	Denny & Fay Hoffman	Gerald Nehra	Gloria Shay
Robert Byrens	Arline Dzwonkowski	Elaine & Paul Isely	Mary & Matt Ogdahl	Dud & Marty Smith
Keith Charak & Sue McIlwaine	Mr. & Mrs. Homer A. Earl	Don Keegstra	Jim Overzet & Gail Hill	Charles Strabbing
David & Janice Chase	Joseph Engel	Scott & Marcia Keller	Dr. & Mrs. Walker Parmalee	Mr. & Mrs. Verne Sutherland
Michael (Xuefeng) Chu	Mark Fitzpatrick	Jeffrey & Kelly Kurburski	Jim & Julie Petrie	Neil & Cynthia Taylor
Sue Clements	Forest Hills Vet Clinic	Vernon Laninga	Beth Pierson	Edward & Margaret Twohey
Roger A. Cole	Richard & Stephanie Fryer	Mr. & Mrs. Glenn Lorch	Marilyn Plank	Universal Forest Products
Charles & Shirley Cooper	Charles Geenen	Marjorie Loughrin & Michael Cary	Sue Poll & Greg Young	Jan van der Woerd
Bill Darooge	Deborah Gibson	Danny Lynn	Valija Rauceps	Susan E. VanTimmeren
Roger DeCook	Randy & Julie Goble	Stephen J. Macedo	Stan & Elaine Roose	Gary & Vicki Verplank
Bert & Sally DeVries	Dr. Keith Grasman	John & Nancy McIntyre	Richard Ruch	Floyd & Sue Wickerham
Diana Dieckman	Wendell Hahn	William & Jill Mendenhall	Sacred Space Community	Scott & Jean Wilbur
Mr. & Mrs. John Dillbeck	Lonnie & Kim Herrington	Mrs. Barbara Miner	Mr. & Mrs. Ray Schlaff	
Bill & Carol Doezema	Mrs. Alfred W. Hewitt	Moore & Bruggink, Inc.	Jack & Laura Schultz	

Memorials & Honorariums (March 2007 - June 2007)

Gifts were made in memory of:

Sue Blandford
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Beverly & Ray Blandford *
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Barbara & David Jester *
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Diana Sieger *
Michael & Kathleen Staszal *

Barry Draft
by Shirley Draft

Laura Jarvis
by David & Belinda Jarvis

James R. Lass
by Leonard & Wanda Anderson *
Betty Dedman *
Kelly Garnsey Hubbell & Lass LLC
Thomas & Sonja Koenig *
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Mame (Mary Louise) Steketee
by Mrs. John Blodgett *
Cynthia Claus *
Mr. & Mrs. Dennis Gandy *
Mrs. William J. Johnson *
Robert D. Steketee
Marie Vierson *

Jay Van Nuil
by Bronson Hospital Laboratory *

Gifts were made in honor of:

Margie Jackson Haley
by Catherine Bragdon *

Elmer A. Jarvis
by David & Belinda Jarvis

Jamie & Penny Ladd
by Ruth Frechen

Marilyn Plank
by Colin & Lisa Plank
Maddie & Max Tencate
by Scott & Marnie Tencate

* denotes new LCWM member



Best Wishes Rhoda!

This summer the Land Conservancy had to say goodbye to our Land Protection Specialist, Rhoda de Zoete. Rhoda and her husband Johan are fulfilling a lifelong dream of living overseas and have moved to Seoul, South Korea to teach English.

Rhoda joined the Land Conservancy staff in 2001 as an intern. Her hard work and dedication to our mission of *keeping nature nearby* soon earned her a full time position as our first Land Protection Specialist.

As Land Protection Specialist, Rhoda increased the Land Conservancy's presence in the far reaches of our service area. Her outreach to landowners has already resulted in at least six new conservation easements and a new nature preserve. In addition, she was largely responsible for securing over \$400,000 in State grant funds for the Land Conservancy to protect additional lands in the Rogue River Watershed.

We will truly miss Rhoda's enthusiastic attitude and willingness to help out whenever she was needed. Her sense of humor and endless energy was much appreciated by landowners and added immensely to the office environment.

Thank you Rhoda for your six years of dedication to the protection of West Michigan's natural areas! We wish you and Johan all the best on your adventure and look forward to emails and photos from your travels.



Business Member Spotlight: Valley City Environmental Services

A West Michigan native, Bob Van Stright became interested in the relationship between the environment and business while working on his MBA at Northwestern University. While there Bob learned about the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act. This Act, passed in 1976, helps protect the public from the harm caused by waste disposal and encourages reuse, reduction, and recycling. Realizing that companies needed help conforming

to these new laws he went to work finding profitable solutions benefiting everyone.

In 1998 Bob returned home to Grand Rapids when he purchased Valley City Environmental Services. Located on Market Street SW, Valley City offers a variety of services from transportation of industrial waste to technical services for manufacturing sites to electronics recycling. Bob has generously recycled two generations of the Land Conservancy's computers at his facility.

Bob is an avid biker and often rides to work from his home in the Rockford area. In 2005, he and a friend began a bike trip across America which began in San Diego and will finish at Acadia National Park. Riding in stages, he just completed a section through Indiana and Ohio this summer with his wife, Karen.

"I support the Land Conservancy because I see the protection of open spaces as a quality of life issue for everyone," says Bob. "I love the geography of West Michigan and there is so much that still needs to be saved. I appreciate the organization's proactive approach to preserving that character."

Bob Van Stright and his company Valley City Environmental Services have been business members of the Land Conservancy since 2001.



Current Land Conservancy Business Members

Baker Book House
 Bata Plastics
 Cirrus Environmental
 Foremost Insurance
 GR Convention & Visitors Bureau
 Grand Rapids Label Foundation

Haworth, Incorporated
 Howmet Castings
 Jack Dykstra Excavating
 Magna Donnelly Corporation
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Land Conservancy
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- Contributor \$30
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Please help the Land Conservancy protect West Michigan's forests, fields, wetlands, & dunes!

Yes! I want to help *keep nature nearby* with a gift of \$_____.

Name _____

Gift enclosed

Address _____

Please bill my credit card

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Card (please circle): Visa Mastercard

Card # _____

Exp. Date _____

Signature _____

Phone _____

Billing Address: Same as on left

Email _____

Please make check payable to the Land Conservancy of West Michigan and mail to:
 1345 Monroe Ave. NW, Ste. 324, Grand Rapids, MI 49505.

Nature Preserve Events

Please join us this fall for our nature preserve workdays and guided hikes. All events happen rain or shine unless the weather is potentially dangerous. For workdays, please bring work gloves and loppers if you have them. Children under 12 may participate with close adult supervision. **To register and for additional information, please call 616-451-9476 or email lcwm@naturenearby.org.**

Dune Pines Preserve Workday & Hike

(Holland, Allegan County)

Saturday, October 13, 2007

Workday: 10 am to 12 pm

Hike: 2 pm to 3 pm

In the morning help remove debris from an old dump site and eradicate a growing infestation of Japanese barberry.

At 2 pm a naturalist will guide visitors through the back dune forest and to nearby Castle Park Reserve for spectacular views of Lake Michigan. Hiking will be difficult at times.

Directions: 146th Ave. west of the Village of Graafschap. Entrance is 1/4 mile past intersection of 146th and 66th Street.

Brower Lake Preserve Workday & Hike

(Rockford, Kent County)

Saturday, November 3, 2007

Workday: 9 am to 11 am

Hike: 2 pm to 3 pm

Come out to enjoy a beautiful fall day while helping to stop autumn olive from degrading this natural treasure. Herbicide and hand tools will be used for this project.

At 2 pm a naturalist guided hike will take visitors through the woods and wetlands.

Directions: From US-131, take 10 Mile Road east to Je-Ne-Be Drive north.



Photo: Steve Petrides

A Picture Perfect Way to Help Keep Nature Nearby

This summer nature photographer and Land Conservancy member Steve Petrides donated 10% of all of his photo sales to the Land Conservancy. His generosity has helped to *keep nature nearby* and protect the scenic natural areas and stunning wildlife that are the subjects for his artwork. To see more of Steve's photography, please visit www.naturephotosonline.com.

Annual Korth Conservation Speakers Series

Jane Holtz Kay: Last Chance Landscape

Author on preservation, conservation, and the built and natural environment.

Her books include Asphalt Nation, Preserving New England, and Lost Boston.

Date: Wednesday, October 3, 2007

Time: 7:30 am Continental Breakfast, 8:00 am Program

Location: Prince Conference Center, Calvin College

Cost: \$10 LCWM members, \$25 non-members



To register and for additional information, please contact the Land Conservancy at 616-451-9476, lcwm@naturenearby.org, or www.naturenearby.org.

This event is made possible thanks to the generous support of the Korth Family Foundation, local businesses and the area's leading conservation and environmental organizations.

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