



Keeping Nature Nearby  
Winter 2008/2009

Muskegon River  
Photo: Terry Stilson



## New Grant Promotes the Protection of the Muskegon River Watershed



Earlier this year, the Land Conservancy of West Michigan was awarded a grant from the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality for the purpose of purchasing conservation easements of critical lands within the Lower Muskegon Watershed. These grant funds will allow the Land Conservancy to seek important lands that protect habitat for wildlife and fish, preserve and enhance water quality, and protect scenic views from public roadways and from the river system itself.

The Muskegon River's headwaters are in Houghton Lake in Roscommon County and it flows into our service area through central Newaygo and Muskegon Counties, emptying into Lake Michigan through Muskegon Lake. The Muskegon River is the second longest river system completely contained within the state of Michigan (the Grand River is the longest), and the system drains approximately 500 mi<sup>2</sup> of land within our service area.

The Muskegon River has been the source of great interest because of its unmatched natural resources and habitat for fish, such as the lake sturgeon (see Creature Feature on page 3). Also because of its powerful current, it is a source of hydroelectric power with the Croton, Hardy and Rogers Dams being located on the mainstem of the river (Croton and Hardy Dams are located within our service area). Historically, the river was a highway of timber when Michigan was cleared of the virgin white pine forests shortly after European settlement. It supported several lumber mills on Muskegon Lake as well as upstream on the river itself.

By having the grant funds available, the Land Conservancy has the ability to offer money to owners of important lands within the river

system. Usually, only income and property tax benefits are available to our landowners who donate conservation easements. Because of a variety of factors, donations of conservation easement rights for many landowners are not feasible, but these grant funds help bridge the gap in many of these cases.

Identification of high quality sites throughout the Lower Muskegon Watershed was a task taken on by the Annis Water Resources Institute (AWRI) at Grand Valley State University. Rod Denning of AWRI, who has experience working with the Conservancy, took on the task of mapping characteristics of the watershed including natural land cover, river frontage, critical habitat, and water quality impact, among numerous other factors. Rod's final map has been supplied to the Conservancy and shows potential conservation areas throughout the watershed. This map will not only be used to contact landowners for the purposes of this project, but will be used for many years to continue to target private natural lands.

Along with the Michigan DEQ and AWRI, the Muskegon River Watershed Assembly out of Big Rapids and the West Michigan office of The Nature Conservancy are partners in this project. With the wealth of knowledge that these organizations supply, the Conservancy is confident that lands of the highest quality are being targeted for protection.

### Muskegon River Facts

*Map of the lower Muskegon River Watershed on page 3.*

- Second longest river in Michigan (Grand River is the longest), stretching from Houghton Lake to Muskegon Lake.
- Historically important for transporting timber.
- Recreational benefits include paddle sports and fishing.
- Significant habitat for numerous fish species, including the lake sturgeon (see page 3).



**Mission**

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

**Board of Directors**

Rick Chapla, *President*  
Mary Hollinrake, *Vice President*  
William Byl, *Secretary*  
Daniel Grady, *Treasurer*

Bonnie Blackledge  
Bob Gamble  
Mike Hayes  
Mark Iverson  
Jon Jellema  
Penny Ladd  
Timothy Lundgren  
Dawn McDonald  
Elise Roe  
Scott Rush  
Doug Schrank  
Deb Steketeer  
Dave Warners

**Staff**

Peter Homeyer  
*Interim Executive Director*  
April Scholtz  
*Land Protection Director*  
Pete DeBoer  
*Land Protection Specialist*  
Melanie Good  
*Stewardship Coordinator*  
Danielle Fogel  
*Communications Coordinator*  
Diane Sampson  
*Program Assistant*  
John VanEyck  
*Administrative Assistant*  
Josh Dykstra  
*Intern*

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

Land Conservancy of West Michigan  
1345 Monroe Ave. NW, Ste. 324  
Grand Rapids, MI 49505  
Phone: (616) 451-9476  
Fax: (616) 451-1874  
email: [lcwm@naturenearby.org](mailto:lcwm@naturenearby.org)  
web: [www.naturenearby.org](http://www.naturenearby.org)

Printed on recycled paper.

**From the Interim Director - by Peter Homeyer**

Typically winter is a season for slowing down, reflecting, and taking stock. As the days shorten and grow colder we look back to see where we have been in the last year and think about where we are going in the year to come. Currently, taking a moment for reflection can be a sobering thought as much of the news from the world around us seems bleak and discouraging.

Against this backdrop I am happy to share with you the good news found within this newsletter. Inside are articles about a new township park dedicated near Grand Rapids, a potential addition to a Muskegon County park on Lake Michigan, how we manage our properties to increase native species, and identification work of high priority parcels going on in the Muskegon Watershed. We also expect to surpass 5,000 total acres of preserved natural and scenic lands before the end of this year. 2008 will be another great year for land protection.

Next year can be just as exceptional. Right now more landowners than ever are talking seriously with us about how to save their land and we expect to have many of their stories to share with you in 2009. But finalizing these deals cannot happen without your help. The Land Conservancy relies on your generosity now to provide the resources needed to complete next year's projects.

Just a few weeks ago we mailed you an appeal listing some of the ways your special contribution makes a difference for West Michigan. Like the stories in this newsletter I believe it lays out the simple, but compelling reasons for making a donation. As always, this work is only possible because of you. For over thirty years your generous response to our year-end fundraising campaign has been the essential element in our successes. Our land protection program, stewardship projects, and partnership work are the result of your commitment to *keeping nature nearby*.

Outside the prediction may call for clouds and grey skies, but for the protection of our region's open spaces the forecast remains sunny and bright. I hope you will consider a special donation to the Land Conservancy this year. Your gift has the real power to ensure that the forests, fields, wetlands, and dunes of West Michigan remain preserved for all the seasons to come.

Happy Holidays,

Peter

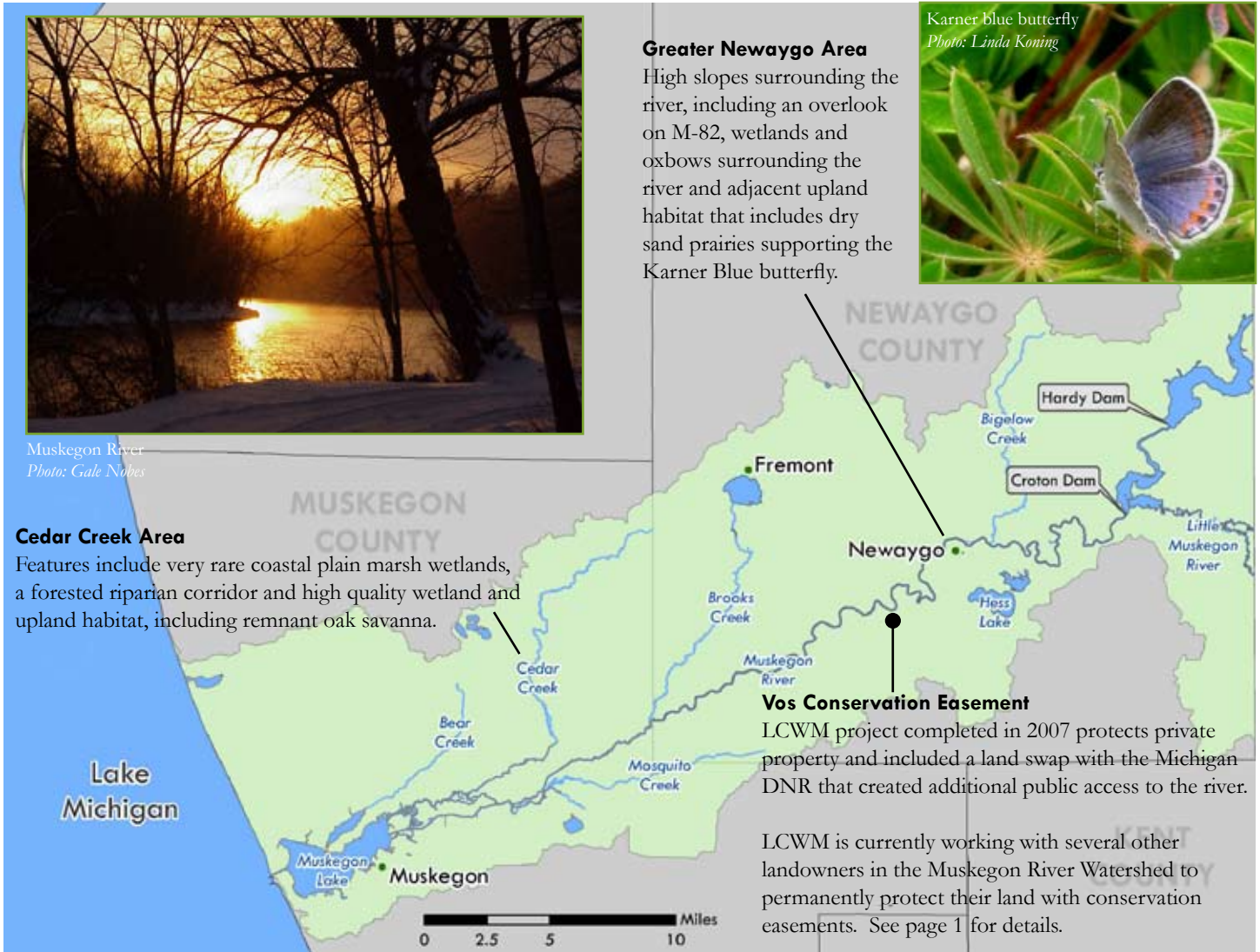
P.S. As an added incentive, a group of donors has put together a \$25,000 dollar-for-dollar match for increased contributions, large gifts, and new memberships to help us meet our preservation goals. Gifts in these categories will go twice as far!



Peter Homeyer is serving as the Land Conservancy of West Michigan's Interim Executive Director. Photo: Lynne Homeyer



## Lower Muskegon River Watershed At a Glance



## Creature Feature: Lake Sturgeon

The Muskegon River provides ideal habitat for lake sturgeon. Formerly thought to be disappearing from the Muskegon River system, this prehistoric fish has seen population growth in recent years.

- Average life span of a lake sturgeon is 55 years (male) and between 80 to 150 years (female).
- They are the largest freshwater fish reaching up to 8' in length and 300 lbs!
- Females reach sexual maturity between 24-26 years old; males between 14-16 years old.
- Like trees, annual growth rings on the pectoral fins can be counted to age a sturgeon.
- The greatest threats to sturgeon populations include: destruction of spawning and nesting habitat, poaching and invasive species.
- Current research through the Annis Water Resource Institute is studying the success of reproducing sturgeon in the Muskegon River.



Researchers show off a healthy lake sturgeon taken from the Muskegon River last year.  
Photo courtesy of the Muskegon Chronicle.

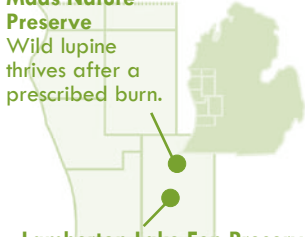


## Stewardship: Caring for the Lands Entrusted to Our Care

### What is the Burning Issue at LCWM?

#### Maas Nature Preserve

Wild lupine thrives after a prescribed burn.



#### Lamberton Lake Fen Preserve

LCWM hopes to change the Grand Rapids City Ordinance to allow prescribed burns within the city limits.

As some of you may have heard, the Land Conservancy of West Michigan is working to change the Grand Rapids City Ordinance to allow prescribed burns within the city limits. You may be wondering why we would go through the effort to change city legislation. The answer is simple, prescribed burning is a critical part of the restoration of many of our most endangered ecosystems, including the prairie fen at Lamberton Lake.

Here are a few facts about this important tool in ecological restoration:

- Many of our native ecosystems are adapted to periodic fires. For obvious reasons we now suppress natural fires. Prescribed burns are a way of putting fire back into a system in a planned and controlled format.
- Burning of dead plant matter releases nutrients into the soil.
- Heat and smoke have been shown to trigger germination and growth in fire-adapted species.
- Prescribed fire sets back many invasive species, such as young woody invasives.
- Prescribed fires reduce an areas fuel load which lessens the chance of an accidental fire.
- Prescribed fires are not burning of leaves, grass clippings or other yard waste. They are permitted fires for the sole purpose of improving the ecological health of native ecosystems.
- A prescribed fire utilizes certified wildland firefighters to conduct the burn. The burn boss develops a plan that manages the smoke and behavior of a fire.
- Burns are only conducted if weather conditions fit within the parameters of the burn management plan.

To find out more about prescribed fire please visit Michigan Prescribed Fire Council's website at [www.firecouncil.org](http://www.firecouncil.org) and download their informative brochure..

### Wild Lupine Thrives After Maas Preserve



Wild Lupine grows vigorously at the Maas Preserve (Rockford) one month after the prescribed burn. Lupine is the only larval food source for the federally endangered Karner blue butterfly (see photo on page 3). *Photo: Peggy Falk*



The area on the left is one portion of the Maas Preserve that received a prescribed burn in the spring of 2008. The burn greatly reduced the presence of invasive spotted knapweed (purple weed on right). *Photo: Melanie Good*



### Sunset Snowshoe Hike at Kuker-VanTil Nature Preserve

(Park Township, Ottawa County)

**Dec. 30, 2008 (Tuesday), 3 pm - 5 pm**

\$5 snowshoe rental (snowshoes for ages 8+)

To register, please call 616-451-9476 or email [lcwm@naturenearby.org](mailto:lcwm@naturenearby.org).

**Directions:** Located on the north side of Perry Street between 160th and 168th Avenues, just west of Winstrom Park.

Come experience the serenity of the Kuker VanTil Preserve (KVT) on traditional Ojibwa-style snowshoes. These snowshoes, provided by Outdoor Discovery Center, are great for beginners and easy to use. This winter hike will explore KVT for animal activity including birds and mammals. In addition to finding animals, participants will also look for their signs including scat, tracks, and nests. Basic winter ecology will be included in the topic for the day. Binoculars are encouraged though not necessary. Dress for the weather since the program will be outside the entire time. If there is less than 4 inches of snow is on the ground, the group will hike the trails without snowshoes.



## Stewardship: Caring for the Lands Entrusted to Our Care

### Stewardship Network Works!

The Land Conservancy of West Michigan (LCWM) has heard numerous success stories of the West Michigan Cluster of the Stewardship Network. The most recent is the partnership of LCWM, Kent County Parks, and Forest Hill's Goodwillie Environmental School.

With assistance from LCWM staff, students are learning about the effects of invasive species on native habitats first hand as they remove small autumn olive shrubs from their school's property and the adjacent Seidman Park. In exchange, Kent County Parks staff are removing large shrubs from the both properties.

The preliminary results are amazing! The students are doing a fabulous job and are excited about protecting their forest. Because these students also host educational hikes on their property, future educational lessons related to invasive species are in the works.

For additional information about the Stewardship Network, visit [www.stewardshipnetwork.org](http://www.stewardshipnetwork.org).



Land Conservancy volunteer Betty Jo Crosby (right) helps a student from Goodwillie Environmental School remove invasive autumn olive shrubs from the school's forest. This project is one of the many success stories from the West Michigan Cluster of the Stewardship Network. *Photo: Melanie Good*



### Lowell Area Community Fund Helps Protect Wege Natural Area

Wege Natural Area is not only a fine example of a southern hardwood forest, but it provides an excellent experiential learning environment for the students of Lowell. One of the current lessons the students have been learning is the degrading effects of invasive species on the ecological balance of a native ecosystem.

Volunteers from Lowell High School, MSU Extension Service's Master Naturalist Program, boy scout troops, United Way Day of Caring, and the Land Conservancy of West Michigan (LCWM) work hard to remove the small autumn olive plants from the understory of the woods. The large parent shrubs, however, which are difficult to remove continue to produce seeds that are infesting the preserve. Just one shrub can produce 8 pounds of berries!

LCWM asked Lowell Area Community Fund (LACF) for financial assistance to contract a crew to remove the large shrubs in order to protect the preserve from continued infestations and to make sure the volunteer efforts are not wasted. This fall LACF generously rewarded us the full amount! This winter large shrubs will be removed from the open field. Check our website, [www.naturenearby.org](http://www.naturenearby.org), in the future for before and after photos of this exciting project. To learn more about the effects of autumn olive on our natural lands visit [www.nature.org/wherewework/northamerica/states/indiana/misc/art23197.html](http://www.nature.org/wherewework/northamerica/states/indiana/misc/art23197.html).

The Lowell Area Community Fund is providing financial assistance for the removal of invasive autumn olive from the Wege Natural Area. *Photo: Melanie Good*



### Conservation Easement Donors

Ada Township  
 Charles Anglin Trust  
 Ken & Judy Betz  
 The Bigford Family  
 Jeanine Biese  
 Manuel & Barbara Butzow  
 Jeff & Anya Byam  
 Christ Community Church  
 City of Norton Shores  
 City of Saugatuck  
 Elizabeth J. Crosby  
 The Duffing/Henrikson/  
 Anderson/Bunch Family  
 The Heasley Family  
 HMA Development, L.L.C.  
 Mrs. David Howe  
 Margaret P. Hoyle Trust  
 Manuel & Lilah Huyser Trust  
 F. Martin & Dorothy Johnson  
 E.L. Ladd & Company  
 Joseph & Irene Larson  
 John Levings  
 The Muzzy & Lerchen Families  
 Ottawa County  
 Ox-Bow School of Art &  
 Artists' Residency  
 Douglas & Gretchen Paprocki  
 Parkland Investments, Inc.  
 The Rasmussen Family  
 Mark & Tami Redfield  
 The Reed Family  
 Paul & Christine Santoro  
 Dick & Lu Schwikert  
 Peter & Joan Stekete  
 Southwest MI Land Conservancy  
 Cecilia Vanderbout  
 The Gary Vos Family  
 Peter M. Wege  
 Mrs. Joseph Weingartner  
 Willard & Joan Wolfe

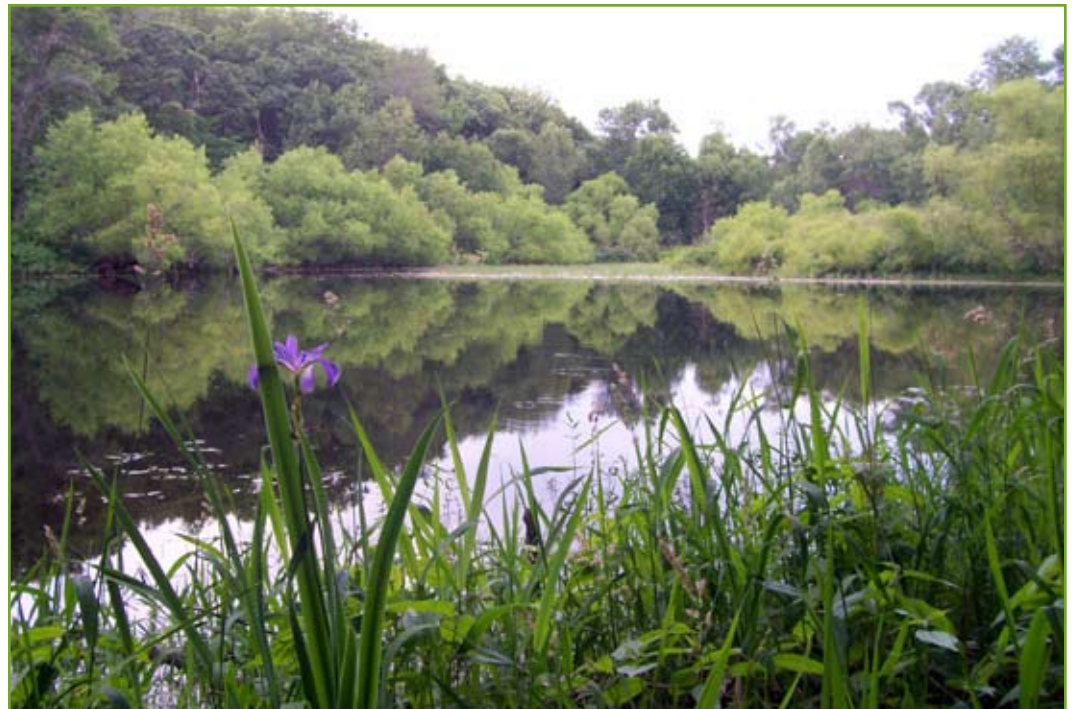
### Land Donors

Weldon & Marilyn Brummels  
 Castle Park Association  
 Valerino & Maria Castro  
 Anne Cridler  
 Reginald & Diane Cridler  
 Lake Breeze Protection Group  
 Joan Lerchen Trust  
 Muzzy Family Partnership  
 RED Investors, LLC  
 Mrs. James Sebastian  
 Ruth Skwarek  
 South Highlands Beach Assoc.  
 Edith Van Til Trust/  
 Blackburn Family  
 Wege Foundation  
 Evangeline White

## Efforts Underway to Expand Muskegon County Park

A proposed new project would more than double the size of a Muskegon County Park. Located on Lake Michigan, Meinert Park is currently 88 acres and includes a parabolic dune with overviews of Little Flower Creek and the shoreline. To the south are 95 acres with critical forested dune habitat, seasonal wetlands, and a small undeveloped lake.

Working with the property owners and Muskegon County the Land Conservancy has submitted a grant to the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund. If approved local contributions will be needed to complete the project. Stay tuned for opportunities next year to visit, and help protect, this important property!



The Land Conservancy of West Michigan is working with Muskegon County to add 95 acres of forested dune habitat, wetlands, and a small undeveloped lake on to Meinert County Park. *Photo: April Scholtz*

### Wish List

- Cordless Drill
- First Class Postage Stamps
- Hand Cart or Dolly
- LCD Projector
- Leather Gloves (all sizes)
- Paper Shredder
- Pickup Truck
- Plat Books

### Join Our Email Listserv

Be the first to know about Land Conservancy events and land protection projects! To join our email listserv, please email [danielle@naturenearby.org](mailto:danielle@naturenearby.org).

### Visit Us Online! [www.naturenearby.org](http://www.naturenearby.org)





## Exciting Projects In Store for Year-End

This holiday season, Land Conservancy staff will be busy putting the finishing touches on projects that will bring the total number of acres preserved in 2008 to over 1,000. The year-end projects are located in 6 counties and include river corridors, hardwood-pine forests, wetlands, and lakes. In our next issue we look forward to sharing with you the stories of the families who are making the remarkable choice to permanently conserve their land.



Land along Crockery Creek in Muskegon County will likely be permanently protected by the end of 2008. Watch your upcoming newsletters for details! *Photo: Pete DeBoer*

## Ada Township Dedicates Carl Creek Wetland Preserve

On a sunny October afternoon Ada Township formally dedicated the 34-acre Carl Creek Wetland Preserve. The purchase of the forest and wetlands was made possible thanks to financial contributions from local residents and the Ada Open Space Fund.

this legal agreement will forever limit the property's development by current and future landowners and will allow the Land Conservancy to monitor and protect the conservation values of the property.

The Carl Creek Wetland Preserve will be open to the public as part of the Ada Township park system. The township has no immediate plans for improvement, but has retained the right to construct a walking path along the south side of the property and establish a small parking area.

The protection of the Carl Creek property preserves natural habitat for local wildlife and plants. In 2003, Dave Warners, Professor of Biology at Calvin College, examined the property and found "that it provides valuable, high quality habitat in an increasingly urbanized landscape." He noted upland and lowland woods, a prairie community, and extensive open herbaceous wetlands, the latter being the highest quality plant community on the property. Carl Creek, a small tributary of the Grand River, meanders along the property. Protection of this riparian corridor benefits the Grand River's water quality.



A conservation easement with the Land Conservancy of West Michigan has been placed on the property to insure that the land remains in a natural state forever. As with the other 46 conservation easements in West Michigan held by the Land Conservancy,

Carl Creek Wetland Preserve is Ada Township's newest preserve. A conservation easement with the Land Conservancy of West Michigan has been placed on the property to insure that the land remains in a natural state forever. *Photo: Jim Ferro*



### Land Protection & Project Support

Alcoa Foundation  
 Anonymous  
 Carls Foundation  
 Community Fnd for Muskegon Co.  
 Crane Foundation  
 Driesenga & Associates  
 Dyer Ives Foundation  
 Fremont Area Community Fnd  
 Frey Foundation  
 Grand Haven Area Community Fnd  
 Grand Rapids Community Fnd  
 Grand Rapids Label Fnd  
 Hansen Charitable Foundation  
 J.A. Woollam Foundation  
 Korth Family Foundation  
 Marion A. & Ruth K. Sherwood Fnd  
 McShane & Bowie, P.L.C.  
 Michigan DEQ  
 Nonprofit Tech. Assistance Program  
 North Bank Communities Fund  
 Progressive AE  
 Ruth & August Homeyer Trust  
 Steelcase Foundation  
 Varnum, Riddering,  
 Schmidt & Howlett  
 Wege Foundation  
 Wolverine World Wide Foundation  
 Zondervan

### Business Members

*Annual contributions of \$500 or more*

Alcoa Howmet  
 Aquinas College  
 Center for Sustainability  
 Baker Book House  
 Bata Plastics  
 Cirrus Environmental  
 Fairly Painless  
 Foremost Insurance Group  
 Forest Hills Foods  
 Founders Bank & Trust  
 Grand Rapids Convention &  
 Visitors Bureau  
 Grand Rapids Label Foundation  
 GVSU Annis Water Resources  
 Institute  
 Jack Dykstra Excavating  
 Magna Donnelly  
 McShane & Bowie, P.L.C.  
 Meijer, Inc.  
 Progressive AE  
 Reusch Design Services  
 Rooks Landscaping  
 Saint Mary's Health Services  
 Trace Analytical Laboratories  
 Universal Forest Products  
 URS Corporation  
 Valley City Environmental  
 Varnum Riddering Schmidt &  
 Howlett  
 Warner Norcross & Judd  
 Webtecs, Inc.  
 Williams & Works  
 Wolverine World Wide, Inc.  
 Zondervan

## Welcome New Members (August 2008 - October 2008)

Daniel L. Achterhoff  
 Betsy Ratzsch Pottery  
 Suzanne Bouchard  
 Rudolph Chmelar  
 Marianne Derby  
 Dan Dekker  
 Janice Dyer  
 Sharon Fase  
 Glen & Christi Hayden  
 Blake Heminger  
 Renae Hesselink  
 Matthew Howell  
 JFNew & Associates, Inc.  
 Veronica & Ray Muscat

Beverly Oyler  
 Patricia Jane Pennell  
 Paul Prinzing  
 Nellie Sabin  
 Daniel G. Schultze  
 Mike Smith  
 Mr. & Mrs. Richard Swanson  
 Gordon & Joanne Torresen  
 Dot Vander Pol  
 Western Michigan Herb Society  
 Scott Wierenga

### Gifts were made in memory of:

Kevin Keeney  
*by Bob & Jerahyn Keeney*

Florence Van Dussen  
*by Pam & Jim Key*

**A gift was made in honor of**  
all who helped with the Tallmadge  
Woods conservation easement  
(see Fall Newsletter, page 1).  
*by Bill & Fran Myers*



Minnie Skwarek Nature Preserve. Photo: Danielle Fogel

## Attention Photographers: Fall & Winter Photo Contest

The Land Conservancy is holding an amateur photography contest that showcases the beauty and splendor of autumn and winter at our nature preserves. Many of the photographs will be used in our newsletters, brochures, and website.

Photos can be submitted in the following categories: close-up, landscape, animals, and people in nature. Entries must be received by February 1, 2009. Visit our website at [www.naturenearby.org](http://www.naturenearby.org) for complete contest guidelines. For additional information, contact the office at 616-451-9476 or email [danielle@naturenearby.org](mailto:danielle@naturenearby.org).



## Volunteers Help Keep Nature Nearby (August 2008 - October 2008)

We would like to thank all of the individuals and organizations who help us *keep nature nearby* by volunteering their time. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer, please contact Diane Sampson at 616-451-9476 or [diane@naturenearby.org](mailto:diane@naturenearby.org).



Stewardship volunteers constructed a bridge across the creek at the Minnie Skwarek Nature Preserve, connecting the hiking trail to the Grand River. *Photo: Melanie Good*

- |                            |                         |                          |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| Amy & Dave Elliott         | Jesse Lincoln           | Karen & Robert Schermer  |
| Peggy Falk                 | Timothy Lundgren        | Doug Schrank             |
| Jim Ferro                  | Kathryn D. Lynnes       | Clay Stauffer            |
| Penny & Dan Folsom         | Neil MacDonald          | Alan Steinman            |
| Elizabeth Ford             | Kory Manion             | Deb Steketee             |
| John Fox                   | Lynn Martin             | Nancy Tassin             |
| Jean Galang                | Sydney & George Martin  | Steve TenElshof          |
| Bob Gamble                 | Bill Martinus           | John R. TenHave          |
| Alan Gebben                | Jody Mastroeni          | Pamela Tyler             |
| Richard Gillett            | Dawn McDonald           | John H. Uhl              |
| Daniel S Grady             | Kim Mertz               | Janet Vail               |
| Alexander Grant            | Patrick Miller          | Virginia VanAnel         |
| Josh Green                 | Carol Mills             | Robert Vanderkamp        |
| Peter & Virginia Gustafson | Steve & Nancy Mulder    | Randy VanDragt           |
| Rob Hartman                | Christine & Patrick     | Jeff & Nancy VanWinkle   |
| Mary (Kasey) Hartz         | Muldoon                 | Howard Veltman           |
| Charles Hayden             | Jon and Carol Muth      | Beth & Evan Walker       |
| Michael P. Hayes           | David and Kathy Myers   | Glenn & Virginia Walters |
| Amy Heilman                | Richard S. Norton       | Dave Warners             |
| Sheryl Helmus              | Nucraft Furniture       | John Will                |
| Michael X. Hidalgo         | William A. Peterson     | Yvonne Woodrick          |
| Barbara Hoag               | Carol Phelps            | Joseph and Judith Zainea |
| Mary Hollinrake            | Larry Piatek            | Ned & Susan Zimmerman    |
| Dawn Holtrop               | Chris & Maureen Potter  | Matthew Zimmerman        |
| Jodi Hovey                 | Dave Preston            |                          |
| Mark Iverson               | Bonnie Randall          |                          |
| Jon Jellema                | Herb & Kathy Ranta      |                          |
| Haig H. Kassouni           | Tracey Reed             |                          |
| Linda Koning               | Ms. Kate Rieger         |                          |
| Fred Kraft                 | Elise & Thomas Roe      |                          |
| Wendy Kuenzel-Kapolka      | Barbara & Milt Rohwer   |                          |
| Jamie & Penny Ladd         | John Rubie              |                          |
| Gary Lanning               | Scott Rush              |                          |
| Jean Laug Carroll          | Dean & Elaine Salisbury |                          |

- |                           |                       |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| Pat Allen                 | John Considine        |
| Larry & Chris Baer        | Anne Copps            |
| Robb & Karla Bajema       | Jim Reminga           |
| Dwight Baker              | Tom Dandridge         |
| Jerry & Linda Bakke       | Gary and Linda DeKock |
| Jan Barger                | Ron & Jeanne DeWaard  |
| JoAnn Bayne               | Mary Jane Dockeray    |
| Nancy Benner              | Linda & Don Dodge     |
| Alan & Carol Bennett      | Michael G. Dodgson    |
| Jim Benson                | James Doyle           |
| Bonnie Blackledge         | Kayem Dunn            |
| Tom Blandford             | Clark Elenbaas        |
| Glen Borre                |                       |
| David C. Bos              |                       |
| Suzanne Bouchard          |                       |
| Kathy Bowler              |                       |
| June Bowman               |                       |
| Diane Brady               |                       |
| Jim Bradley               |                       |
| Ernie & Carol Brumbaugh   |                       |
| Timothy & Bridget Bureau  |                       |
| William Byl               |                       |
| Ron Cammel                |                       |
| Janet Carbonneau-Jones    |                       |
| Mike & Char Cary          |                       |
| David Chambers            |                       |
| Rick & Willow Chapla      |                       |
| Sue Clements              |                       |
| John & Michelle Cleveland |                       |

*Our sincere apologies for any omissions.*



Office volunteers help prepare a mailing to our members. *Photo: Danielle Fovel*



## How the Land Conservancy of West Michigan Keeps Nature Nearby



This fall the Steketee family helped unveil an interpretive sign for Saul Lake Bog Nature Preserve. The sign was donated in memory of Mame Steketee. *Photo: Gary DeKock.*



LCWM members take a special tour of the private Cashion Lake conservation easement this summer. The Duffing, Henrikson, Anderson, and Bunch families created a conservation easement with the Land Conservancy to protect Cashion Lake and the surrounding 160 natural acres. *Photo: Danielle Fogel*



To *keep nature nearby*, the Land Conservancy of West Michigan permanently protects natural and scenic lands. To accomplish our mission we utilize the following land-saving tools:

### Establishing Nature Preserves

The Land Conservancy acquires land for nature preserves through donation or the purchase of high priority land. We currently own 13 nature preserves which are all open for public enjoyment. Each preserve is managed in a way that best protects the natural features of the property. For additional information on our preserves please visit [www.naturenearby.org](http://www.naturenearby.org).

### Creating Conservation Easements

Conservation easements are voluntary legal agreements between a landowner and a land conservancy or government agency that permanently limit development of the property in order to protect the conservation values of the land. The land remains in private ownership and can continue to be used by the landowner.

The Land Conservancy has protected nearly 3000 West Michigan acres with conservation easements. These lands preserve vital wildlife habitat, help to improve the quality of our water, and provide us with scenic views along our road and water ways.

### Assisting Local Communities

Many West Michigan communities do not have the staff expertise or resources needed to protect important natural areas and create community parks. The Land Conservancy works with our local communities and assists with the identification and preservation of important natural areas.

The successful Campaign to Save Lost Lake which added 68 acres to Muskegon State Park this summer is a perfect example of how the Land Conservancy can help a community with a land-saving project. We provided assistance with the negotiations between the landowner and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR), helped acquire a \$190,000 grant for the purchase of the property, and lead a fundraising campaign that raised over \$230,000 from individual donors.

For more information on how you can protect your land, please contact our land protection staff at 616-451-9476 or email [lcwm@naturenearby.org](mailto:lcwm@naturenearby.org).

In 2008 the Land Conservancy helped expand Muskegon State Park and permanently protect 68 natural acres, including Lost Lake. *Photo: April Scholtz*



## Member Profile: Tom & Elise Roe

Ada residents Elise and Tom Roe have been faithful supporters of the Land Conservancy of West Michigan since the Land Conservancy was known as NACOWMI (Natural Areas Conservancy of West Michigan).

“We were on the mailing list and thought the organization supported our values of preserving open space. And, I got a tote bag with my membership!” explains Elise.

Since then the Roes have supported the Land Conservancy in every way imaginable. They regularly attend Land Conservancy hikes, events, and volunteer workdays. Elise was even named volunteer of the year in 2007 for her service on the board of directors and willingness to volunteer her time whenever and wherever needed.

The Roes also show their support through regular contributions and have made arrangements to have their credit card automatically



Elise and Tom Roe are dedicated Land Conservancy members.

charged monthly. “By making monthly, automatic contributions we are sure we remember to include the Land Conservancy in our giving,” says Elise. “We also like our gifts are spread out evenly throughout the year.”

Not only do Elise and Tom make contributions, but their friends and family members do as well. When someone is searching for a gift idea for the couple, a donation is often made in their honor.

“We support the Land Conservancy of West Michigan because there is something concrete to show for our contributions. Tom and I see this

as a way of joining others in leaving a legacy of high quality natural areas in West Michigan,” explains Elise.

Members like Tom and Elise truly help the Land Conservancy *keep nature nearby!*

## Get Your Year-End Gift Matched Dollar for Dollar!

Our members are so generous that several of them have stepped forward to match your year-end gift dollar for dollar! This wonderful group of individuals will match up to \$25,000 in contributions to our Program Fund. Gifts that will be matched include: new member contributions, increased member donations, and all gifts of \$1,000 or more. Please make your donation today!



Land Conservancy  
OF WEST MICHIGAN

- Landmark Leader \$2500
- Patron \$1000
- Business Member \$500
- Sponsor \$500
- Benefactor \$250
- Sustainer \$100
- Supporter \$50
- Contributor \$30
- Other \$\_\_\_\_\_

### Please Help Protect West Michigan's Natural Lands

Last year every \$1 donated protected \$33 worth of 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

Card (please circle): Visa Mastercard

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Card # \_\_\_\_\_

Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Billing Address:  Same as on left

Donate online at [www.naturenearby.org](http://www.naturenearby.org) or make check payable to the Land Conservancy of West Michigan and mail to: 1345 Monroe Ave. NW, Ste. 324, Grand Rapids, MI 49505.



Bradford Dickinson White Nature Preserve (Lowell) *Photo: Danielle Fogel*

## Winter Slideshow Series

Please join us for a slideshow near you and enjoy picturesque scenery of protected natural lands without braving the cold outdoors! Members and friends are invited to attend these free shows which will highlight our land protection successes and preview upcoming projects. All Shows are from 6:30 pm to 7:30 pm. Light refreshments will be served.

**January 27, 2009 (Tuesday)**

**Norton Shores:** Norton Shores Library, 705 Seminole Rd., Norton Shores, MI 49441

**January 28, 2009 (Wednesday)**

**Ludington:** Ludington Library, 217 E. Ludington Ave., Ludington, MI 49431

**February 3, 2009 (Tuesday)**

**Whitehall:** White Lake Library, 3900 White Lake Dr., Whitehall, MI 49461

**February 11, 2009 (Wednesday)**

**Grand Rapids:** Cascade Library, 2870 Jack Smith Ave. SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49546

### Sunset Snowshoe Hike at Kuker-VanTil Nature Preserve

**Tuesday, December 30, 2008**

**3 pm - 5 pm**

\$5/pair snowshoe rental (snowshoes for ages 8+)

Details on page 4.

## In This Issue

Grant Promotes Protection of the  
Muskegon River Watershed *(Page 1)*

From the Interim Director *(Page 2)*

Lower Muskegon River Watershed *(Page 3)*

Stewardship Update *(Pages 4&5)*

Muskegon County Park Expansion *(Page 6)*

Ada Township Dedicates Carl Creek  
Wetland Preserve *(Page 7)*

New Members *(Page 8)*

Thank You Volunteers *(Page 9)*

How LCWM Keeps Nature Nearby *(Page 10)*

Member Profile *(Page 10)*

Winter Slideshow Series *(Page 12)*

Land Conservancy of West Michigan  
1345 Monroe Ave. NW, Ste. 324  
Grand Rapids, MI 49505  
(616) 451-9476



Land Conservancy  
OF WEST MICHIGAN

web site: [www.naturenearby.org](http://www.naturenearby.org)  
email: [lcwm@naturenearby.org](mailto:lcwm@naturenearby.org)

Non-Profit  
Organization  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Grand Rapids, MI  
Permit No. 906