

Conservation Easements by County

as of March 2018

County	# Easements	Acres
Charlevoix	76	4101
Cheboygan	60	9942
Chippewa & Luce	19	456
Emmet	118	5010
Mackinaw	17	962
TOTAL	290	24,551



Juvenile Great Horned Owl photographed by Darrell Lawson in May 2017 at the Waldron Fen Nature Preserve. This property was originally protected by Nancy and Jack Waldron with a conservation easement.

Conservation Easement Signs are Available

Up to two signs are available at no charge, with additional signs available at \$7.50 each. Just call our office at 231.347.0991.

Private Conservation Property

The Little Traverse Conservancy holds a conservation easement on this property. The Conservancy and the landowner are cooperating to ensure that the scenic, natural, and open space values of this land will remain protected.

This protected area is private property.

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Remember

- Again this year, we will be sending a monitoring report to each of you. If you would like to receive yours by email, please let Melissa Hansen know: 231.347.0991 or melissa@landtrust.org. Otherwise we'll be putting them in the mail.
- LTC stewardship staff coordinates volunteer-based trail building and citizen-science training events. Please check the Events page at www.landtrust.org or contact LTC's volunteer coordinator Cacia Lesh at 231.344.1002 or cacia@landtrust.org for more info. or to register.

Closing Thoughts

You are one of 290 conservation easement landowners in Little Traverse Conservancy's five county service area and your land is part of protected property covering 24,551 acres. You're also part of a growing list of conservation easement owners across the state and nation.

A Heart of the Lakes* 2016 Protected Lands Survey showed 117,736 acres with conservation easements in Michigan. A 2015 National Land Trust Census by the Land Trust Alliance^ indicated that 16,784,077 acres are under easement in the United States. This is in addition to 101,937 acres owned and managed by land conservancies in Michigan and 8,103,562 acres owned and managed by conservancies across America.

"As future generations look back on our work and the willingness of landowners to be thoughtful caretakers of their land, I imagine them appreciative of this effort to help safeguard the forests, waterways, scenic beauty, farms, and natural communities they've inherited." - Melissa Hansen, previously Education Coordinator at LTC, is now the Conservation Easement Stewardship Coordinator.

*The Heart of the Lakes is a state, non-profit, organization supporting land trusts and conservation across Michigan. www.heartofthelakes.org

[^]The Land Trust Alliance is a national, non-profit, organization supporting land trusts and conservation across the country. www.lta.org



Conservation Easement Landowner Newsletter

Spring 2018

A newsletter for owners of land protected with a conservation easement.

Are there any special programs you've enrolled your land in and how they have worked?

- Michigan DNR Game Bird Preserve Program which ties in well with the various habitat efforts we are making.
- Michigan Tree Farm System which also fits with the habitat efforts.
- Partners for Fish & Wildlife (USFWS) – A habitat project in conjunction with Ruffed Grouse Society.
- American Bird Conservancy and NRCS/USDA habitat project to enhance habitat for the Golden-Winged Warbler (see <https://abcbirds.org/bird/golden-winged-warbler/>) and other species.

Can you tell us some of the things you have done for your land?

We have had two forest management plans (FMP) completed to help manage the habitat. The most recent plan was prepared in December 2017 with Martell Forestry.

Pursuant to the FMPs, we have worked with the foresters to harvest 60+ acres of timber (primarily aspen) over the last 8 years: a cut in 2010 and another one in 2015, which has resulted in great habitat for grouse, woodcock, song birds, deer, turkey, etc.

In addition to the timber cuts, we worked with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Ruffed Grouse Society (using their RGS forest mower) to open up another 10+ acres of habitat in the center of the property in 2015.

And in the fall of 2017/winter 2017-18, we worked with The American Bird Conservancy and Natural Resources Conservation Service/U.S. Department of Agriculture to mow/cut an additional 35+ acres of habitat in the SE corner of the property.

So, in the last 10 years we have diversified nearly 100 acres of habitat on the property.

We have worked with Presque Isle Conservation District to plant over 1,000 trees/wildlife shrubs in the last 10 years on the property.

We also purchased in 2017 approximately 5 acres of additional property that is located a half mile east of our main property. The new property has 130 feet of Lake Huron frontage as well as additional frontage on Green Creek. We are looking for ways to also enhance the habitat on the new property.



Black bear seen on the Tracy land.

Any particular people or organization resources that you would recommend for other landowners?

- Martell Forestry (Keith Martell and Kaytlyn Brinkman)
- Bryan Lofgren/Lofgren Excavating in Cheboygan (various habitat work)
- Presque Isle Conservation District
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Heather Rawlings
- American Bird Conservancy
- NRCS/USDA (Perry Smeltzer)
- Ken Schleben (Cheboygan area trapper)
- Of course, The Little Traverse Conservancy!

What wildlife are you seeing on the land? The habitat changes mentioned above as well as predator trapping that trapper Ken Schleben has done (Ken trapped 25 coyotes during the 2017-18 season) has really helped with wildlife, which includes: eagles, sand-hill cranes, ducks, geese, mergansers, beaver, deer, fox, pine marten, bobcat, porcupine, raccoon, coyotes, pileated woodpecker, various song birds, various hawks and raptors, turkeys, various fish species in the Green Creek, squirrel, rabbit, snowshoe hare, and bear.

With the timbering, we have great regeneration of various tree and shrub species.

NOTE: Not all conservation easements allow for habitat management. Be sure to check the terms of your own easement and call our office if you have any questions.



Wanted: Citizen Scientists!

As a landowner of protected property, you have a unique opportunity to participate in citizen science by exploring your own backyard. Anyone interested in the gathering of data, conducting research, or making discoveries about the plants and creatures on their land can be a citizen scientist. A variety of programs are available! Citizen science leads to increased knowledge and can help guide your management goals for - and enjoyment of - your own land.

1. Project FeederWatch - www.feederwatch.org

Project FeederWatch is a winter-long survey of birds that visit feeders at backyards, nature centers, community areas, and other locales in North America. FeederWatch data help scientists track broadscale movements of winter bird populations and long-term trends in bird distribution and abundance.

2. Bud Burst - www.budburst.org

Bud Burst is an opportunity to track, over multiple years, a shrub or tree on your property and document when it blooms.

3. Butterfly Network

www.michiganbutterfly.org

The Michigan Butterfly Network is a conservation program of the Kalamazoo Nature Center that provides a citizen science based butterfly monitoring initiative. It is a network of enthusiasts dedicated to the goal of supporting the widespread collection and use of data on all types of information on butterflies.

4. Frog and Toad Survey

www.michigan.gov/wildlife

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources is seeking volunteers throughout the state to assist with its annual frog and toad survey, but you can also take their protocol and apply it on your own land. Use their free frog and toad recordings to learn the calls and then document what is on your land. Contact LTC for assistance!

5. Kestrel Nest Box Monitoring

kestrel.peregrinefund.org

Launched in response to kestrel population declines across much of North America, The Peregrine Fund's American Kestrel Partnership is a network of citizen and professional scientists working to

Identifying the butterflies on your land can be challenging but rewarding work. Left two photos are of an "American Cooper" and right two are of an "American Lady." Photos credits from left: Benedict Giardi; hwales; Susan Elliott (2); users on www.iNaturalist.org.

collaboratively understand kestrel demographics and advance kestrel conservation. LTC is already working with XX easement landowners who were provided Kestrel Nest boxes. If you have large open fields and are interested, contact us!

6. Michigan Sentinel Tree

www.canr.msu.edu/eyes_on_the_forest

"Eyes on the Forest" links research, outreach and communication activities through MSU's Department of Entomology and MSU Extension. The ultimate goal is to recruit trained volunteers who agree to "adopt" an individual tree, and periodically monitor and report on the condition of the tree over time. This will help monitor, and hopefully, prevent invasive pests.

7. Invasive Species

www.misin.msu.edu

We document invasive species on LTC lands using the protocol from the Midwest Invasive Species Information Network (MISIN). You can also use the MISIN app to share information or just keep it for your own management. Let us know if you would like to map invasive plants on your property. We can help!

8. Wildlife Food Tracker

www.mimast.org/

Our forests provide food for wildlife, called mast. Scientists are trying understand the cycles of mast production in forests and impacts of changes on local wildlife. You can join the effort!

Citizen Science Opportunities with LTC

Perhaps you live near an LTC nature preserve or are interested in extending your citizen science reach beyond your own land. LTC has many volunteers that participate in citizen science programs and projects, helping to monitor, study, and restore native habitats on our nature preserves. If you are interested in participating in citizen science on Little Traverse Conservancy nature preserves, contact Volunteer Coordinator, Cacia Lesh at 231.344.1002.

Upcoming Conservation Events

LTC Community Field Trips - www.landtrust.org.

A variety of LTC field trips and events are offered each season.

Mackinaw Raptor Fest - www.mackinawraptorfest.org

Thousands of hawks, eagles, and owls migrate north each spring, funneling through the straits of Mackinac on their way. Join bird enthusiasts and experts at the Mackinaw Raptor Fest to observe and learn about these impressive birds. Outdoor birding opportunities and indoor sessions will be available. Hear keynote speaker Eugene Jacobs talk about Snowy Owl Winter Habitat Use and choose from sessions on Bird Photography, Raptor Identification, Owl Banding and much more. You won't want to miss Glen McCune's Live Raptor Presentation and artwork!

Earth Day Cheboygan - www.earthweekplus.org

Earth week Plus-Northern Michigan presents a free, family-friendly, eco-tastic, environmentally-friendly, Expo Event each April to increase education and awareness about environmental issues. The 'PLUS' is because adventures are offered in April, May, and June at various locations around Cheboygan County and the Great Up North.

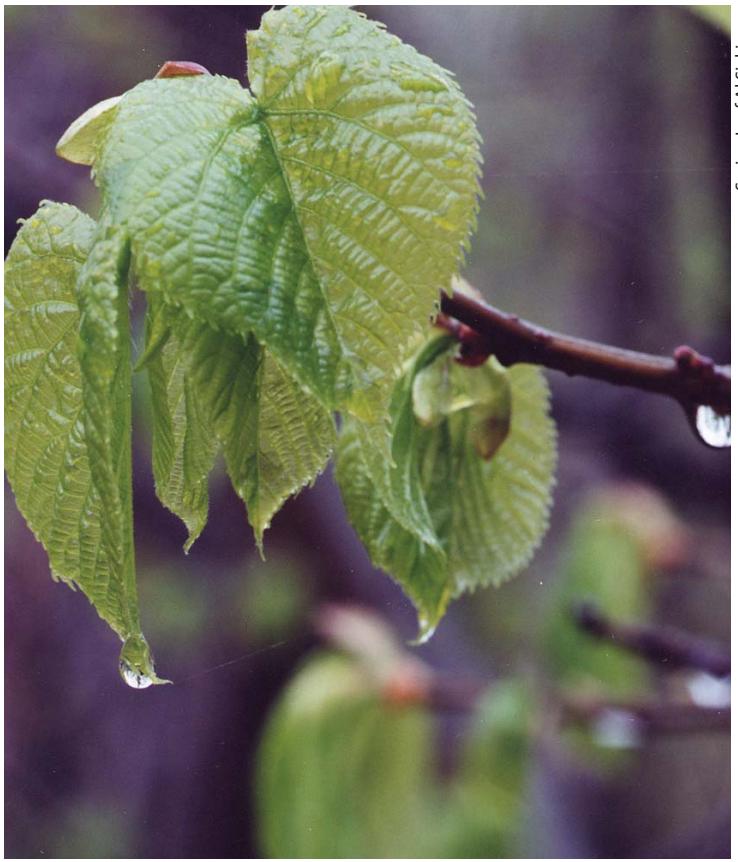
Aldo Leopold Festival: www.aldoleopoldfestival.com

A weekend of natural discovery throughout Michigan's Les Cheneaux Islands. Hiking, paddling, wildflower walks, birding, triathlon & more!



Did you know...

- The Conservancy's first conservation easement was donated in 1986 on a property in Emmet County?
- The average size of a LTC conservation easement is 94 acres?
- We offer free education programs to schools in our service area, reaching more than 4,500 students annually?
- We have over 300 volunteers helping to steward our nature preserves?
- Every membership dollar donated to LTC translates into more than \$2.50 of protected land?



Planning for the Future

Consider including the Little Traverse Conservancy in your will or estate plans. Advanced, thoughtful planning offers you the opportunity to support the Conservancy knowing your gift will further the organization's mission for years to come. It may also provide meaningful financial benefits for yourself and your heirs.