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The Tanton Family Working Forest Reserve

TAKING THE LONG LOOK

IT IS FITTING THAT JOHN AND MARY LOU TANTON'S most recent conservation effort was the protection of one of the highest points in Emmet County. The couple have always had a sweeping vision for positive change in the world, and this new forest reserve is just one more accomplishment in two lifetimes dedicated to protecting our shared natural world. If not for their lead gift in a successful fundraising campaign last fall, the land's fate may have gone in a different direction.

Formerly known as Christmas Mountain, the new Tanton Family Working Forest Reserve consists of 236 acres of land located just six miles southeast of Petoskey. The property lies directly east of LTC's beloved 168-acre Allan and Virginia McCune Nature Preserve. Springvale Township land lies to the north, and State of Michigan land to the south. What makes the new reserve extra special is its elevation. At its highest point of nearly 1,300 feet, it is just over 100 feet shy of the tallest point of the Nub's Nob ski resort a few miles to the northwest.

Walk to this tallest point when the deciduous trees have shed their leaves, and you will be offered views of Little Traverse Bay, Crooked Lake, and Pickerel Lake. The waters flowing through the land to the beautiful Minnehaha Creek down below eventually arrive in Crooked Lake, which is situated near the headwaters of the nearly 40-mile Inland Waterway that drains into Lake Huron in Cheboygan.

"It is becoming more and more rare to protect land of this magnitude that is so close to Petoskey and to Little Traverse Bay," said Ty Ratliff, LTC's director of donor relations. "And it is even more rare for us to have the opportunity to protect land of this size that is adjacent

to an existing nature preserve. We knew this was a unique opportunity, yet we had no idea how much support we would receive and how many people would come forward to make it happen. Clearly, a lot of people care!"

This land matters. Its protection helps ensure not only the long-term health of the soil, trees, and resident wildlife, but also a much larger scale of land and water beyond its reaches.

Thinking big, thinking broad, thinking problem prevention. This has always been the way the Tantons have approached their work in this world. Both born into a farming heritage, John and Mary Lou separately formed strong land ethics at very early ages and have never wavered from their appreciation for and care of the earth's natural resources. Discovering their common interests while both students at Michigan State University, the two have become a united model of devotion to the greater good. From John's desire for non-adversarial land conservation as a founding member of Little Traverse Conservancy in the early 1970s to Mary Lou's active involvement in the Outdoor Lighting Forum (as just one example), the Tantons pursue what can be done to ensure the future remains healthy for all.

They have always walked their talk, with examples of previously completed conservation projects including the Sturgeon Bay Dunes addition to Wilderness State Park, as well as the placement of a conservation easement protecting their own

20 acres in Bear Creek Township.

"While the Tantons have often had their sights set on issues that impact us globally, their mark is on a multitude of issues that have helped shape our local



Todd Parker

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The New Wortley Family Nature Preserve

HELPING A LAND
- AND A FAMILY -
HEAL AFTER
TIMBER THEFT

Todd Parker

Alfred and Betty Wortley made Good Hart their “up north” destination early in their lives, their cottages becoming primary retreats from the Detroit area, long into retirement. In 1976, Alfred purchased a spectacular 80-acre property in northern Emmet County along what was then unpaved Rugged Road. He was drawn to the incredible maple stands, and recognized the land’s ecological and financial value. Occasionally he would take family members over to hike the two-tracks.

Fast forward nearly 30 years from the land’s purchase. Alfred was suffering ill health in a care facility in Waterford when his family received some disturbing news. “Alfred was being approached by lumber jockeys who were trying to get him to sign a contract, even while he was under hospice care,” explained Carole Wortley, Alfred’s daughter-in-law. “They continued to bother him at the facility, even after being rebuffed. My husband Jim finally had to call the company and tell them that ‘No!’ was our final answer.”

At that time, Carole and Jim - who live in Ypsilanti - were not only caring for Alfred, but also Betty, and they hadn’t visited the “up north” land since five years before Alfred’s passing. A few days after Alfred was interred at the Island View Cemetery north of Good Hart, Jim and Carole decided to take a walk on Rugged Road to view the property. Upon arriving, they were horrified to discover that the land had been illegally logged in a devastating manner. The loggers took only the high value timber without any regard for proper sustainable forestry practices. “I was shocked and utterly horrified,” Carole said. “I sat on a freshly cut stump and cried my heart out. The area looked so terribly devastated. I could not believe it.” Jim started going door to door to talk with the neighbors.

The couple found out that Alfred’s signature had been forged, and the logger had stolen nearly 1,200 mature trees valued at roughly \$500,000 from the land. In addition, many mature or nearly mature trees had been cut and just left on the land, along with other slash.

After a painful and arduous legal battle necessitating extensive legal fees, the Wortleys

received an out-of-court settlement that was a fraction of the value of the timber, but at least covered legal costs, with a small amount left for Betty’s care.

From early on, when they found out they would be receiving the land from Jim’s parents’ estate, Carole and Jim had hoped to donate it to Little Traverse Conservancy. Yet after discovering the logging, they feared the Conservancy wouldn’t want it. “Fortunately Kieran (Fleming) assured me that the land would recover and that LTC would definitely be interested in holding the land,” Carole said. “We wanted to give it before, and then after the logging, even more. We wanted something good to come out of this. We want people to hike and enjoy it just like we enjoy so many Conservancy properties.”

Today, 10 years after being logged, the land still shows remnants of the damage. The Conservancy’s forester has made future recommendations to ensure the forest recovery is as healthy as possible. “When you look closely, you can still see the predominance of poor quality and impaired trees, but nature’s resilience is powerful, and the land is regaining its beauty,” said Caitlin Donnelly, LTC land and stewardship specialist. She also notes how comforting it was for the family to have a mechanism for helping to heal both the land and the years of emotional distress that resulted from such a personal assault.

The new Wortley Family Nature Preserve (named in memory of Albert, Betty, and Jim’s brother Bill) contributes to the greater land protection of Readmond Township. It lies close to more than 300 acres protected with conservation easements held with LTC, as well as a Working Forest Reserve now owned by LTC. It is a scenic part of the county that people love to drive through for wildlife viewing, with deer and raptors frequently visible.

Jim and Carole hope other remote landowners might learn from their experience. They strongly suggest letting neighbors adjacent to the property know that they will be notified if logging or other action is planned. Then, if neighbors observe any unexpected activity, they can check with the landowner and in this way help keep watch over the land.



Jim, Albert, and Bill Wortley at Good Hart cottage, circa 2003.

The Gravity - and Relief - of a Conservation Easement

by Kate Bennett



Bennett Conservation Easement/TMPetersen

ORIGINALLY, AS SO HAPPENS ON YOUNG ADVENTURES, I followed a man to Bliss. He was living periodically with friends in the township while helping his linguistics professor compile an Algonquian dictionary. We were students at the University of Michigan and part of the hippy, artist, musician, eco-conscious migration of the 1970s and '80s.

After a land contract, in fits and starts, we built a home and two outbuildings with the help of family and many talented local friends, resourcing materials from where ever we could: the garage walls are partly constructed from the logs of the old Levering gas station, the kitchen and bedroom cabinetry is from logs cut on site and nearby, the oak floors from a paneling deal we got in the U.P. We cleared a garden, and I learned about the challenges of going back to the land when the land is sand.

We had a child and in a nod to modernity, we installed an electric water pump and a hot water heater. For fun we tramped through the woods and mucked about near the creek, skied through Wilderness State Park, picked wild blueberries and blackberries, fished in O'Neill Lake, hiked multiple sections of the North Country Trail, rode to the Headlands – now the Dark Sky Park – swam and watched sunsets at Sturgeon Bay.

Bliss.

I don't recall how or when the idea of signing a conservation easement lodged in my head but I can see early influences. I grew up with four older brothers at the edge of a golf course in Kent County. Our childhood playgrounds were the rolling hills of the course and the shrub and woodlands of our neighborhood. My dad was an outdoorsman, a hunter whose annual trip to Beaver Island (and once I moved there, to Emmet County) for birds continues with my brothers to this day. I got my family to start recycling and

reusing grocery bags in the early 70s.

I first contacted LTC in 2004. Kieran Fleming was my touchpoint. He brought the project to the board at the next monthly meeting, and once I knew there was agreement from the board that they were interested in the property, I began trying to figure out just exactly what I wanted conserved. Lucky I didn't have to hurry the process; I still owed a mortgage and the Conservancy needed top billing on any lien.

Now, I had a new marriage and a new home in Canada. I moved back for the summer, and was trying to sell the property, so I also spent time working out the details of the easement. This process was pretty interesting. I realized, this was bigger than a marriage! This is irrevocable. It was quite a feeling knowing that there is no going back. I didn't quite get that until I started reading the documentation carefully. It gave me pause. When we signed the paperwork and there was no band or drum roll, it was sort of anti-climactic. Tom Bailey was so sweet saying how grateful the Conservancy was, and I just felt so much gratitude back.

Being back in northern Michigan this past summer with all the trails and preserves - it really hit home to me that next to my family, the environment is my most important thing in the world. I guess even though I was always a hippie environmentalist, I hadn't realized how important it was. It is REALLY important.

I feel really good about the easement. I was telling friends about it recently, one friend's eyes got really big and she said, 'that is really amazing,' and it made me say, "Yes it really is!" The bigger picture hadn't really hit home until then.

As a side note, my son is very happy about the easement. A few years ago he wasn't happy about selling our special place. But now that he is 26 he says, "I get it."

photos from October 2016,
Harbor Springs Middle Schoolers



Using Technology to Look Closer by LTC Education Coordinator Sarah Mayhew

Selfishly, I wanted to stay active in photography because it's one of my passions and expressions.

When I was hired by LTC and became familiar with the mission of the education program, I had a realization. What better way to exercise our mission of appreciation and awareness of the natural environment than to be taking pictures of the subjects you appreciate?

In the Spring of 2011, LTC's education department received a grant through the Petoskey-Harbor Springs Area Community

Foundation that allowed for the purchase of 30 digital cameras. During this time, there was a lot of buzz surrounding the use of electronic devices amongst young people. We wanted to harness that interest and use the cameras



as a positive tool for getting outdoors and observing details in nature that they might have otherwise overlooked. The results have been amazing!

The program consists of two parts:

- 1.) In-classroom presentation on how to use the camera and its parts and functions, the types of images that can be achieved using the different settings and terminology.
- 2.) Field trip to nature preserve of choice, providing students the opportunity to photograph unique and exciting subjects in nature.

The first year the program was piloted by a 5th grade teacher

from Harbor Light School. Every year since, the program has continued to evolve and grow in popularity amongst grades 5th through 12th. Photography can be used for multiple subjects across the curriculum. Teachers who have participated in this program have used the skill to teach a wide variety of lessons ranging from art, science, language arts, technology, weather patterns and everything in between.

Observations from the trail:

Most students are extremely receptive to photography, and it can be a helpful tool for students who struggle with attention or behavioral disorders. It's quite the sight to witness students in the outdoors, camera in hand, observing through an artist's eye the smallest of details along the trail. Art can be intimidating to many but there's a magic that occurs when students have a camera in hand. They now hold the magical ability to freeze a moment in time; a moment that will never exist again. The accomplishment and pride that comes from capturing a fantastic image is immeasurable. The photos that have been achieved from students over the past six years are nothing short of impressive.



Fall programs were a blast this year with such wonderful weather. Winter programs will run from **January 10-February 24**. Please call Sarah or Melissa at 231.347.0991 if you'd like to schedule a time!



Students from the JKL Bahweting School near Sault Ste. Marie.



John and Mary Lou with Ruth O’Gawa, a friend and partner in conservation.

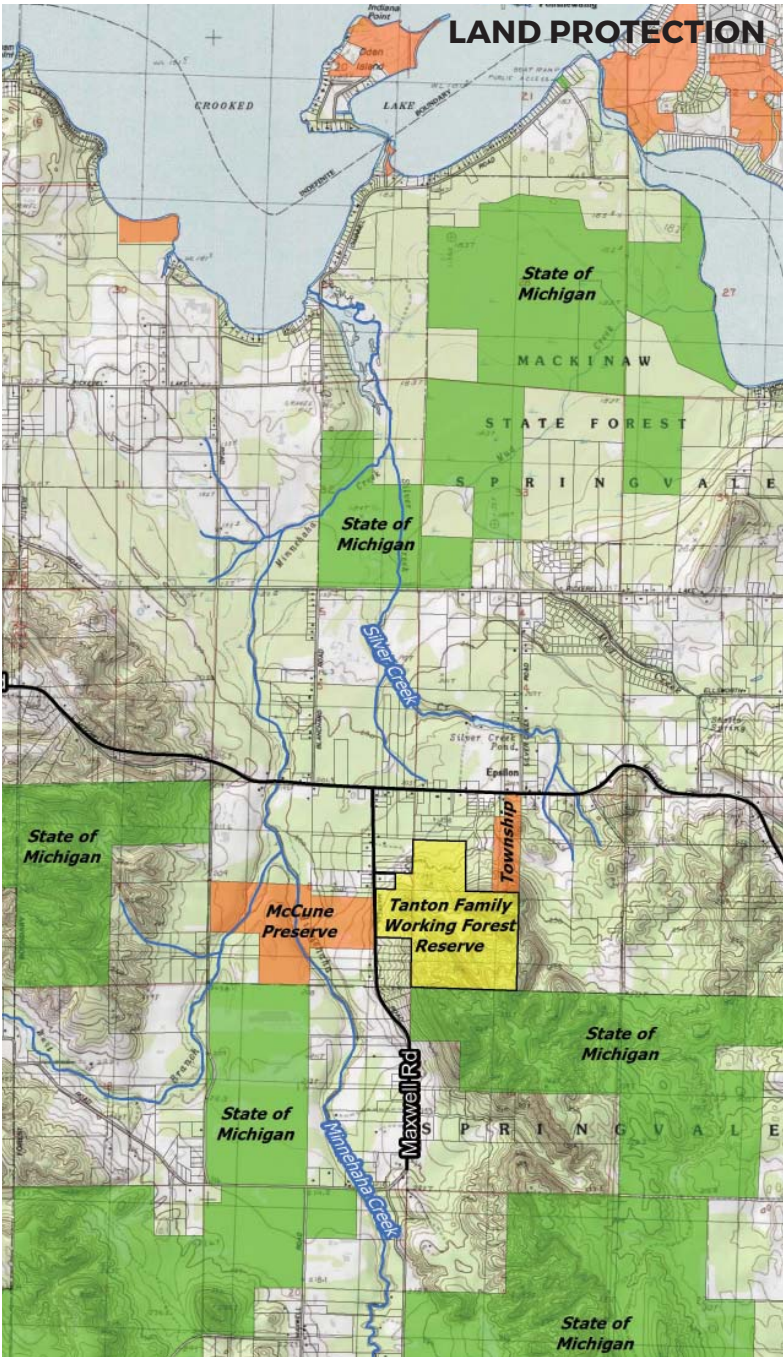
Tanton Family continued from cover

community,” said LTC Executive Director Tom Bailey. “It is difficult to imagine how they have found the energy and the fortitude to accomplish all that they have in their lifetimes.”

The Conservancy is currently writing the management plan for the Tanton Family Working Forest Reserve, shown in yellow on the adjacent map. As a forest reserve, it has been fully enrolled in Michigan’s Commercial Forest Act Program joining other lands that have recently been donated to LTC within this category of protection. By next summer, a formalized parking area is planned for completion, allowing hikers to enjoy a rugged and steep climb that offers rewarding vistas at the summit. For more information, contact the LTC office at 231.347.0991.



John and Mary Lou with daughter Laura (husband John de Olazarra, children Olivia and John Xavier), and daughter Jane with husband Hugh Thomson.



Contributors to the Tanton Family Working Forest Reserve Protection Project
(formerly known as Christmas Mountain)

- | | | | |
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Cleanup at the Marchio Fen Nature Preserve.

PICS FROM THE FIELD: Stewarding Protected Lands



Day of Caring, 2016

LEFT: Volunteers from Circuit Control Corporation in Petoskey helped reroute a trail at the popular Round Lake Nature Preserve during the Char-Em United Way Day of Caring.

RIGHT: Also during Day of Caring, East Jordan High Schoolers cleared trail at The Hill Preserve just outside of Boyne City.



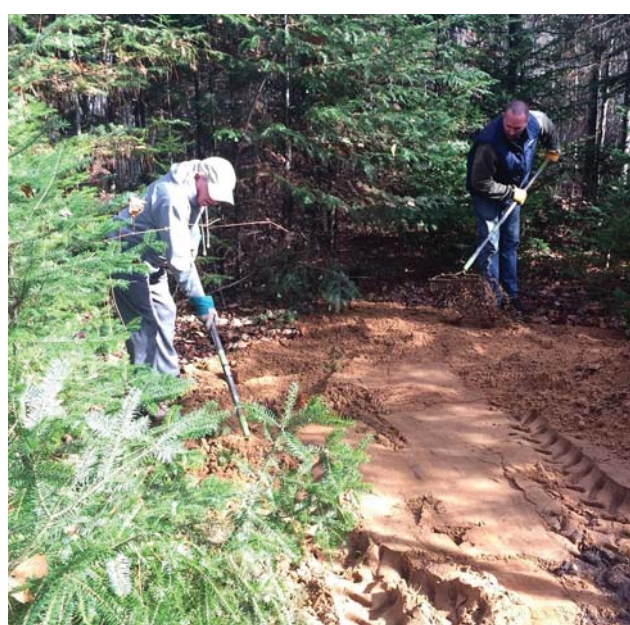
LEFT: The parking area at the Woollam Family Preserve recently received some TLC to help with a water seepage problem that had worsened with the preserve's popularity.

RIGHT: A large group of Andreae Preserve cabin users joined together to restock the wood pile this fall during a highly productive work day!



LEFT: Petoskey Audubon joined together with LTC volunteers and staff to reconstruct a delapidated overlook platform at the Waldron Fen Nature Preserve.

RIGHT: LTC volunteers put several hours into the Banwell Nature Preserve in October, continuing to improve one of the Conservancy's largest trail systems.



Winter Trail Time!!

WINTER GROOMING

Plowed and Groomed Trails at LTC Nature Preserves

Packed & Groomed Trails

Charlevoix County

The Hill
Driggers
Susan Creek

Cheboygan County

Banwell
Chaboiganing

Emmet County

Goodhart Farms
Offield Family
McCune
Round Lake

Mackinac County

Birge
Derby

Parking Areas Plowed (no grooming)

Charlevoix County

Darnton Family

Cheboygan County

Seven Springs

Chippewa

Round Island Point

Emmet

Waldron Fen

Hailand-Helstrom Family (NEW)

Offield Preserve Forest Management Update

PHASE ONE IS NEAR COMPLETION

SINCE OUR LAST NEWSLETTER, FOREST MANAGEMENT HAS BEGUN AT THE Offield Family Nature Preserve near Harbor Springs. The property is one of four nature preserves currently enrolled in the state's Commercial Forest Program (CFP). As such, LTC is following through with our obligation to sustainably manage the property for long-term forest health. Our specific objectives at Offield are to convert the existing red pine and Austrian pine plantations to a native forest type over time. These plantation pines are effectively ecological deserts and we can increase the diversity of the preserve by thinning them out of existence over time and encouraging Mother Nature to re-seed them to a healthy, native forest community. Another goal at the preserve is to encourage the growth of exceptionally large individual trees. This is a unique idea that our consulting wildlife biologist, Glen Matthews came up with. The idea is to manage the mixed hardwoods stands by culling out poor quality trees and other trees that are competing with particularly large specimens as a means to increase the growth rate of those larger trees. We plan to move toward a forest type that more closely mimics a "climax" forest type in a manner that is accelerated by the management. Many of the trees that are being removed are dying beech and ash trees which are succumbing to the latest invasive pests to affect our forests. Many standing dead trees or "snags" will be left behind to be used by cavity nesting or denning critters. Woodpeckers also use standing snags to find food, or to hammer out the drumbeat that is their mating ritual each spring.

You may have seen the loggers recently working on thinning the pine plantations and doing a "salvage" cut in portions of the hardwoods. They will be done with this first phase very soon. The next phase will happen in 2017 or 2018 and will involve more of a select cut in the remaining mixed hardwoods to achieve our goals. Approximately seven acres will be left untouched to demonstrate the difference between stands that were actively managed and those that were not. As always, we are being careful to protect unique features such as the vernal pond, seeps, and wetlands. In addition, the tops will be left behind, and the loggers have created brush piles at a "per acre" rate through the process. Leaving the tops or "slash" behind is probably one of the least aesthetically pleasing parts of all this management. However, beauty is in the eye of the beholder and what looks like a mess to some human eyes may look like a great place to live for many wildlife species, particularly invertebrates, amphibians, and reptiles. The "coarse woody debris" - or CWD in wildlife biologist lingo - provides food and shelter for many species, enhancing the overall diversity and ecological stability of this preserve. It also returns nutrients and carbon to the soil so the forest can continue to grow for the next millennia.



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BUSINESS PROFILE: Benchmark Engineering, Inc. *"For our love of the outdoors"*

Joe O'Neill flips through the old yearbooks at his dentist's office in Harbor Springs and notices that many of the business sponsors no longer exist. Thankfully, that is not true of Benchmark Engineering, Inc. Not only has this civil engineering and surveying firm existed for decades, it has also been committed to supporting the Little Traverse Conservancy.

Like many relationships here in our small communities, with a spark of conversation, people can quickly see how we are connected. Coincidentally, the founder of Benchmark, Herb Irish, raised one of the Conservancy's founders, Dave Irish. Herb later sold the business to Jim Young and Dick Bidstrup who started donating to LTC in 1981. It was right around that time that Joe O'Neill joined the firm as a young professional.

Joe spent 15 years in the outdoors surveying properties all over northern Michigan and by 1998 was the owner of the firm. Rather than put his name on the sign, Joe renamed the organization to its current moniker. This is fitting with his nature. Rather than choose the spotlight, Joe quietly serves this region, the people who live here, and those he employs.

Joe has carried on the tradition of supporting LTC for a simple reason: Benchmark employees love the outdoors. Whether they are outside surveying the newest construction project for Bay Harbor or enjoying hunting season, the team at Benchmark appreciates having land to enjoy, and is grateful that the Conservancy can protect it.

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We thank you all
for your support!



SPECIAL GIFTS

Pigeon River at the Andreae Preserve/TMPetersen

Memorials

Gunner Adams, The Dog
Becca Nelson and Gwen Smith

Robert Aikens
Mr. and Mrs. Byron L. West

Britt Beaumont
Tom and Kathy Snow

Donald Allen Burns
Thomas and Christine Hassett

Eleanor Chanda
Susan Vron dran

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Heather Gates
Marilyn Gates

Dean Grundy
Birchwood Association of Mullet Lake

Robert Harnishfeger
Mr. and Mrs. John D. Harnishfeger

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Ms. Jackie McMurtrie

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Mr. and Mrs. Melvyn L. Smith
Douglas P. and Susan Williams

Barbara Samberg
Birchwood Association of
Mullet Lake

Joseph Spuller
Mr. and Mrs. John R. Gosnell

Fay Squibb
Ms. Eliece B. Aiman
Ms. Marion Wyatt

Ann Trufant
Ms. Eliece B. Aiman

Honorariums

Mr. and Mrs. Kevin Farrell's wedding anniversary
John and Rita Picton

Richard Jenkins
Mrs. Chester Studzinski

Bill and Karen Murray
Ms. Cynthia Dickstein

Theo Neils' first birthday
Mr. Owen Neils

Sally Soter's birthday
Mr. and Mrs. Mark Townsend Driggs
Joan Keller

In Memory of Clem O'Neil



From Kathy Bricker, former LTC executive director: Jim and I had the great privilege of getting to know Clem and her husband Jay through their daughter Wendy. Wendy both worked and studied at the University of Michigan Biological Station, overlapping Jim and me in classes, on the job, and on many hikes and endeavors throughout the 1970s. Where she led, others followed, including me.

From LTC: *In 2008, Clem and Jay O'Neil donated the 15-acre Bubbling Springs Preserve to Little Traverse Conservancy, protecting part of the Little Traverse Bay Watershed in a highly developing region close to town.*

Wish List

EcoStewards Program Special equipment wish list to be used by LTC volunteers with the EcoStewards Program:

- Acoustic monitoring equipment for bats and other wildlife
- A FLIR One (A thermal imaging camera for phones or iPads) -<http://flir.com/flirone/ios/> needed to identify trees that are being used by bats as roost sites so that we can better manage and protect bats!
- A live video or nest box camera for an active kestrel nest box.

- We are also seeking a new Trail Groomer to use for narrow trails at some of our preserves.

Thank you to the following members who newly made or increased their commitment to the Little Traverse Conservancy between August 23 and November 18, 2016.

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Raven Hill Discovery Center

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Kenneth and Yvonne Bengelink
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Mr. Daniel Beyer



Great Lakes Energy People Fund Grant Awarded for Trail Cameras

A \$1,200 grant was recently awarded to Little Traverse Conservancy to purchase eight trail cameras that will help the organization identify and assess trail use and priorities among their ever-growing list of nature preserves. The grant comes from Great Lake Energy's People Fund, a source of money that comes from Great Lakes Energy members voluntarily rounding up their bills to the next highest dollar. The rounded up amount is distributed to non-profit organizations and charitable activities that benefit people in



communities served by the cooperative. Trail cameras help LTC figure out where we should be directing our efforts among our more than 200 nature preserves. We are grateful for those who continue to support the People Fund by saying "yes" to rounding up their energy bills. Visit gtlakes.com for more information or call 888-GT-LAKES.

CELEBRATING A LONGTIME MEMBER

Henry Redder, who gave an annual donation to Little Traverse Conservancy since 1987, missing only one year, passed away on October 10, 2016. Here is a bit about him, excerpted from his obituary:

Mr. Redder, 96, long time Petoskey resident and member of "The Greatest Generation", was born on a dairy farm in Red Hook, NY. Henry's early schooling was in a two-room schoolhouse up to the 8th grade. He was the second in the family to go to college. After the outbreak of WWII, Henry enlisted in the Navy where he served as a Lieutenant in the Naval Reconnaissance Unit for the Invasion of Europe. He and his team cleared harbors of sunken enemy ships and debris left by the sabotaging Germans. Henry documented these and other wartime experiences in a memoir. Henry and his wife, Eleanor, retired to their beloved northern Michigan where they settled in Petoskey during the mid-70's. Hiking, skiing and the remote beauty of the area attracted them. For several years, he was a supporting partner of the Mackinac Freight Company. "Hank" loved riding with a team of horses across the island going about the daily business. Eleanor preceded him in death in 1986. Kind, thoughtful, and with a loving spirit, those who knew Henry, cherished him. He will be missed.



Community Field Trips

Guided Odawa Canoe on Crooked River/Burt Lake in October.

Pre-registration is requested for all field trips at www.landtrust.org or by calling 231.347.0991.

Years Measured in Winters:

The Significance of Winter for the Odawa

Saturday, January 7 10am-12 Noon

Round Lake Nature Preserve, Emmet County

Traditionally, the Odawa measured years in winters, due to the difficulty wrought by snow, ice, and cold. Come learn from new board member Eric Hemenway (see facing page) how the Odawa navigated the winter season.

Ski and Snowshoe Event

Saturday, January 14 1-4pm

Andreae and Banwell Preserves, Cheboygan County

Join us in one of our favorite winter traditions! Hike/ski/snowshoe the groomed trails at the Andreae and Banwell Preserves with a destination in mind – the Andreae Cabin on the Pigeon River. Park at the Andreae Preserve and make your way to the Cabin, exploring the preserve trails at your leisure. Once there, hot cocoa and a warm fire will await you. This is one of our most extensive trail systems and the trek can be anywhere from 4-6 miles out and back.

What do animals do in winter? Family Hike

Saturday, January 21 10:30am-12 Noon

Susan Creek Nature Preserve, Charlevoix County

Join Mary Trout on winter trails looking for critters and their tracks. Which critters go into a dormant stage and which hibernate? What is the difference? We will also look and listen for winter birds. Wonder why some birds go south while others stay and brave our winters? What do they eat and how do they stay warm enough to survive our cold winter temperatures? Join us to find out and have an invigorating hike in the winter woods! Snow shoes for both adults and children can be provided but bring your own if you have them. We will meet in the Susan Creek parking area off US 31.

Fat Tires and Snowshoes

Sunday, January 22 1-3pm

Offield Family Nature Preserve, Emmet County

Join Latitude 45's fat-bike and snowshoe experts to try out LTC's groomed winter trails at the Offield Family Nature Preserve. After you and your family, sweetheart, or friends have explored the trails, enjoy a steaming cup of cocoa around the fire. Don't have a fat-bike or snowshoes? No problem, Latitude 45 will have free demos of both available at the event. If you'd like reserve a demo slot please email latitude45bicycles@gmail.com.

Birding the Waldron Fen with

Petoskey Regional Audubon Society

Saturday, January 28 10am-1pm

Waldron Fen, Emmet County

Join PRAS President Darrell Lawson for a morning of birding. Waldron Fen offers a rich diversity of habitat making it an ideal

location for a variety of birds. On this trip we will focus on birds that winter in our area such as Rough-legged Hawks, Common Redpolls, and Snow Buntings. If there is enough snow, we will snowshoe; if not, then we will hike around the fen. Loaner binoculars and snowshoes will be available upon request and the guide will be carrying a spotting scope.

Fat Tires and Snowshoes

Sunday, February 12 1-3pm

Susan Creek Nature Preserve, Charlevoix County

Join Latitude 45's fat-bike and snowshoe experts to try out LTC's groomed winter trails at the Susan Creek Nature Preserve. After you and your family, sweetheart, or friends have explored the trails, enjoy a steaming cup of cocoa around the fire. Don't have a fat-bike or snowshoes? No problem, Latitude 45 will have free demos of both available at the event. If you'd like reserve a demo slot please email latitude45bicycles@gmail.com.

Eastern Upper Peninsula Birding

Saturday, Feb. 18 8am - 6pm

Chippewa & Mackinaw Counties

Join Michigan Sea Grant extension educator Elliot Nelson for a full day of birding around the Eastern Upper Peninsula. We will be targeting northern owls and hawks as well as other winter birds such as Pine Siskin, Purple Finch, Common Redpoll, Pine Grosbeak, Red Crossbill, White-winged Crossbill, and Bohemian Waxwing. Sharp-tailed Grouse and Northern Shrike will almost certainly be encountered as well. Cameras are welcome, but we will be moving frequently. Participation is limited, so register early! Reschedule date is Sunday, Feb. 19.

In Memory of Ginger Nash

Ginger Alexander Nash was a third generation Walloon who spent every summer in the 1920s era cottage built by her grandfather on Indian Garden Road on the north arm of Walloon Lake. Ginger loved Walloon and the forests and fields that surround it, and spent much of her time helping preserve the beauty of our area and volunteering for the Walloon Lake Trust & Conservancy. Dedicated to the outdoors, Ginger, along with her husband and three sons, was an avid kayaker and hiker who knew all the preserves around Little Traverse and Walloon.

Tragically, on August 11 Ginger lost her life in a car accident on Intertown Road after leaving Bubbling Springs Preserve. Ginger was a recently retired teacher from the Chicago suburb of Naperville, who was looking forward to spending more time in northern Michigan in retirement. Her innate kindness and gentle spirit endeared her to all her Walloon neighbors, who miss her greatly.

Welcome NEW BOARD MEMBERS



Eric Hemenway speaking to 5th graders.

EVEN AFTER TRAVELING THE WORLD AND LIVING IN countries as far away as Laos, Eric Hemenway found he could no longer ignore the call back home to Lake Michigan and his northern Emmet County roots. “It was the water...always the water,” Eric said. “Even the oceans, to me they just couldn’t compare, and the Great Lakes are most special.” A native Anishnabe/Odawa who was raised in Cross Village, Eric currently works as the Director of Repatriation Archives and Records for the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians. While his office is based near Harbor Springs, Eric is one of several people from the tribe who are involved with native issues on a national and even international level. Known for his speaking and storytelling skills, Eric can be seen leading walks for local historical societies, or talking with high school Anishnabe language classes (which are open to both natives and non-natives). “I try to tell all of the kids that these stories are now part of YOUR history. We are all together.” He recently returned from Austria where he assisted with a museum exhibit of a large collection of Odawa artifacts brought there

by a World War II veteran. (See facing page for a field trip Eric is offering with LTC.)

Eric credits his solid land ethic to his close relationships with his grandmother, mother, and extended tribal family, along with a youth spent mostly outdoors. As a child in the 1980s, he camped along the shores of Wycamp Lake along with hundreds of people gathered for regional meetings that preceded the re-establishment of native rights in the Great Lakes. This time is known today as “The Movement.” His mom was on the first Tribal Council, and he recalls an incredible energy around those meetings and around the lake, which flows through Wycamp Creek into Lake Michigan. The more formalized tribal presence that we see today (law enforcement, administrative facilities, casinos, etc.) has only come about since that time, and has brought about a completely different era for our coexisting populations in northern Michigan.

To Eric, land is the great leveler: “It is the land that connects us all, allowing us the opportunities to build relationships and come together,” Eric said. Although he has been offering programs in partnership with LTC for several years, Eric looks forward to learning much more about the organization at a deeper level. “I hope I can help advance all of the things that have been happening through the Conservancy: land protection, education programs...all of it.” He also looks forward to helping forge new relationships throughout the Conservancy’s service area.

LITTLE TRAVERSE CONSERVANCY WELCOMES DALE LEWIS TO THE BOARD of Trustees. Dale has served on the LTC Education Committee for three years, recently becoming the committee chair. He now looks forward to learning more about all departments of the Conservancy’s work, and discovering new ways in which he can help.

“The environmental education work has become a passion of mine,” Dale said. “I have the utmost respect for LTC’s program and the work that they do.” As a former Petoskey elementary school principal, Dale’s wealth of knowledge has helped staff navigate the ground between schools and the Conservancy. He notes that he is personally interested in discovering more ways to use technology to enhance children’s understanding of nature and the environment, and our impact on the outdoors (see story page 4). A few examples of this would be geocaching, using the nature preserve app, and scannable codes that help answer questions or provide information at a particular location. “Technology is such a powerful tool, allowing us to find information so quickly.”

Another trend Dale would like to see continue and grow is our collaborative relationships with others, such as the Watershed Academy with Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council and some of our summer programming in neighboring towns. “We can readily increase our student participation with these kinds of partnerships.”

Dale shares that he and his wife Jeannette are on a mission to explore as many preserves as possible. “Earlier this fall, we hiked the Andreae Preserve and it has become my new favorite with such a diversity of ecosystems, beautiful river, and the changing leaves.” Other Lewis favorites include the McCune and Waldron Fen nature preserves.

“I’m so impressed with the knowledge and skills that are available on this board, and how much that enhances what the Conservancy does. I really look forward to working with everyone.”



Dale Lewis

Nature Change: *The Future of Nature* Panel Discussion, September 30, 2016

Summary of remarks by Tom Bailey at
Northwestern Michigan College, Traverse City


Change is coming to northern Michigan in a number of ways. The Great Lakes have become an immense experiment in what happens when exotic species are introduced to an ecosystem with virtually no limits or controls, as ballast water from ships all over the world continues to dump new organisms into the lakes. Diseases like the beech bark fungus, and pests like the emerald ash borer and hemlock wooly adelgid have come from Europe and Asia in wood products and shipping containers with little to prevent more such pests from finding their way into our system. Ornamental plants which look pretty in the yard can turn out to be major invasives that crowd out native plants, displace food for wildlife and proliferate virtually unchecked across the landscape. These are serious threats to the balance of our ecosystem in northern Michigan, and the environmental, economic and social devastation they can cause should not be underestimated. More courage to regulate those aspects of interstate and international commerce that threaten our aquatic and terrestrial ecosystem could go a long way in addressing these perils.

Looming over it all, of course, is the Big Issue of climate change. During my lifetime I have watched the opossum, previously not found in the northern Lower Peninsula, arrive and multiply. Though their population can be reduced by a hard winter, these animals are finding it easier to live in areas that were previously too cold to sustain them. Winters just aren't what they were several decades ago when I was a boy. Meanwhile, measurements of rising carbon dioxide content in the atmosphere have been made at the University of Michigan Biological Station near Pellston. To help figure out what this might portend, scientists at the station have been subjecting various tree species to carbon dioxide levels expected to prevail later in this century. I recall hearing about one study that found in maples, for example, growth speeds up but reproductive success goes down; not the best prospect when we consider that exotic pests may make it harder for our forests to sustain themselves.

Exotic pests, climate change — given all this, what's the role of the land conservancy?

First and foremost, as owners and guardians of natural land, land conservancies have some of the best areas to study and observe trends and changes in the natural world. Areas that are maintained with minimal direct human intervention can serve as control plots versus areas where management is undertaken. Everything from complex research to simple measurements can be done by institutions ranging from large research universities to local school science classes. The general public can be involved, too, through volunteer efforts such as the "bio-blitz" that identifies the multitude of species present on a given property at a given time. Over a period of years, results from these exercises can provide insight into what might be changing and how.

Volunteers and educational institutions can keep phenology records, noting events like first and last frost, first and last snow, first blooming of vegetation, dates of bird migration, monarch butterfly



Native grasses have been planted at the Meadowgate Nature Preserve as part of an ongoing restoration effort.

migration, and so on. This information tells us a lot about what's going on with weather and climate.

And on managed parcels, land conservancies can engage in some modest experiments to test ideas that have been advanced about forest migration in a changing climate. We can, for example, plant trees and shrubs whose northern ranges were previously found two or three counties to the south and see if they thrive under changing weather and climate conditions. We can invite universities and others to study and in some cases experiment in our forests, meadows and wetlands to learn how plants and systems might adapt to changing conditions and how the ranges of various organisms might be shifting.

Some people consider climate change "settled science" as others remain skeptical. Land owned by conservancies can help to shed light on what is and isn't happening by providing areas for research and areas to serve as controls.

In the long run, perhaps the best hope offered by land conservancies and our collaborations with local, state and national park and resource management agencies is to keep enough land in a natural state that Mother Nature will be allowed to evolve and adapt. The more we can do to protect what is common today, the less we will need to worry about what might be endangered or threatened tomorrow. I have long said that if one thinks of extinction in terms of the metaphor of falling off a cliff, it seems that in the rush to protect threatened and endangered species we are spending too much time at the edge of that cliff trying to keep things from falling off. I would suggest that our time and effort might be better spent ensuring that we protect the integrity of the land back away from the cliff so that all species have the opportunity to thrive, and Mother Nature can decide which unsuccessfully adapted species will be relegated to the cliff's edge.

This approach demands careful and continuous study, and the kind of humility that Jack Ward Thomas seemed to have in mind when he reportedly observed that "ecosystem management is not only more complex than we think; it's more complex than we can think."

This is the essence of good, old-fashioned conservation: the wise use of our environment and its bounty only to the point where we don't remove so much from the system — or pollute it with too many byproducts — that the system becomes unable to sustain itself. Change is the only constant in Nature. However, it is essential that we recognize that some of the changes brought about by human activity can be damaging to natural systems and to humanity itself. We have a responsibility to our great-great-grandchildren, to our fellow creatures on the Earth and to ourselves to avoid the recklessness that in the past has led to environmental devastation in Michigan, the United States and worldwide. We need to learn from our mistakes, set aside our hubris and strive to be responsible stewards of our environment.

Thank You...

Todd Parker, Todd Petersen, and Gary Osterbeck, for photos.

Susan Creek Preserve work bee volunteers for helping to maintain a winter use trail and update maps and signs: Bernie Aulgur, Richard Jenkins, Kathy Lawson, Ed Strzelinski, and Mary Trout

Andreae Preserve volunteers for maintaining the fire wood and cabin upkeep: Doug Engler, Richard Jenkins, Dale Landes, Doug Mantha and volunteers from Petoskey United Methodist Church, Dan Armstrong and volunteers from Emmanuel Episcopal Church of Petoskey, Laura Brunmeier and Boy Scouts from Troop 49 and Troop 53 from Boyne Falls, Walt Dark and volunteers from St. Paul's United Methodist Church of Cheboygan, Boy Scout Troop 4 and the Alanson United Methodist Church, Bob Petersen and Cub Scout Pack 53 from Boyne City.

Scout Volunteer Trey Matthews and his family for making improvements for guests at the Andreae Cabin.

Bernie Aulgur, Tim DeWick, John Griffin, and Jim Keighley for creating a trail and parking area at the Mertaugh Family addition to the Birge Nature Preserve.

Field trip leaders Darrell Lawson, Marilynn Smith, Sarah Sloan, Eric Hemenway, and Mary Trout.

Bonnie and Mike Brunett, Art Currey, and Roger and Marsie Gowdy for helping to maintain the trails at Sleepy Hollow Preserve.

East Jordan High School students for clearing trails at The Hill Preserve as part of the Char-Em United Way Day of Caring.

Char-Em United Way Day of Caring volunteers from Circuit Controls Corporation Jack George, Roger Fosmore, Diane Morse, and Sally White, and Preserve Steward John Lehman, for making trail improvements at Round Lake Preserve.

Fred Clinton, Sarah Sloan, and Mary Jane Clayton for helping analyze trail camera data.

Jared Friske for many, many hours interning with us in the Stewardship department this fall.

Bernie Aulgur, John Baker, Jared Friske, and Richard Jenkins, for helping improve trails and boardwalks at Raunecker and Leslie Preserves.

Richard Jenkins, Darrell Lawson, Kathy Lawson, Glen Matthews, Ed Pike, Kenyon Stebbins, Ed Strzelinski, and Mary Trout for rebuilding the viewing platform at Waldron Fen Preserve, and Nancy Waldron for providing a beautiful lunch for the work group two days in a row.

John Baker, Richard Jenkins, Dan Reelitz, and Gary Reid for creating a trail to Voight Bay on Marquette Island Clark Township property. Bob Dunn and his staff for providing boat transportation and help during the work bee.

Shane Albrecht for helping clear trails on Sugar Island Preserves.

Tom Cadwalader, Jared Friske, Richard Jenkins, Jean Moberly, and Diane Morand for helping to build a trail at the Cheboygan Marsh.

Mary Trout for conducting after school birding programs at Sheridan Elementary School.

Glen Matthews for volunteer wildlife habitat consultation.

John Baker for monitoring nature preserves without preserve stewards assigned.

Fall mailing volunteers Sally Bales, Marlene Barton, Barb Bechhold, Gretchen Brown, Michaleen and Nick Karay, Karen Knapp, Betty Kujat, Doris Lark, Sharon Ledingham, Rye Muir, Nancy Staley, Lurli Vaughan, and Bev Warner along with RSVP of Emmet County.

Bernie Aulgur, Bruce Booth, John Baker, Richard Jenkins, Glen Matthews, Mary Trout, Noah Janssen for removing exotic honeysuckle at Offield Family Nature Preserve.



Snowy Owl/Darrell Lawson taken along North Huron Birding Trail, January 2016.

John Griffin for donating chainsaw chaps to keep our staff protected and safe.

Ben Musielak for support above and beyond his caretaker duties at Vermilion Point Nature Preserve.

Bill Henne for mowing the Driggers Preserve trails.

Scott Smith and Family for mowing the parking area at Hailand & Helstrom Family Preserves.

Steve Miller and Glen Schmiede for mowing our Sugar Island preserve trails.

Bill Olstrom for mowing our Charles M. Taylor/Olstrom Family Preserve parking area.

Al Haske for mowing at The Hill Preserve.

Boyne District Library and City of Charlevoix – Camp McSauba for summer partnership programs.

Marty Amlin, and Cheryl Graham-Dryer for editorial review.

The mission of the Little Traverse Conservancy is to protect the natural diversity and beauty of northern Michigan by preserving significant land and scenic areas, and fostering appreciation and understanding of the environment.

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