



The Long View

A Newsletter for Practical Preservationists

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THE PESTS THAT CHANGE OUR LANDSCAPES

Since the early 1900s, exotic pests such as gypsy moths, longhorn beetles, tent caterpillars and elm bark beetles have killed millions of trees in the U.S. annually and have spurred the demise of a number of tree species, such as the elm. Exotic insects and associated diseases are reaching a disturbing level in Michigan, and they have taken a huge toll on many common trees that populate our native landscapes. This article is designed to assist you in identifying the pests and the trees they are impacting and Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) recommended practices to minimize their spread. To learn more about exotic pests and the DNR recommendations, visit www.michigan.gov/dnr under the heading Forests, Land and Water.

We are losing the fight with several species, two of which are detailed below, but there are steps each of us can take to help minimize the damage.

Emerald Ash Borer

In 2002, the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB), a wood-boring beetle from Asia that preys on ash trees, was discovered in southeast Michigan. As of February 2011, the entire lower peninsula of Michigan



was placed into level 1 quarantine, which means most areas will be impacted if they haven't been already. The pests are spread primarily through the transport of

firewood. The EAB larvae feed on the cambial bark of ash trees and bore D-shaped openings and serpentine galleries into and below the ash bark. Since its discovery, the EAB has killed 15 million ash trees across Michigan. The borer, pictured above, is a metallic green color and is about 1/2 inch in length and 1/16 inch in width.

As shown below, a telltale sign of an EAB infestation is when the top third of an ash tree begins to thin and then die back. Stressed trees will often grow shoots on the trunk. Many landowners have already seen ash stands succumb to this pest. Recommended biological controls include EAB parasites which are currently being tested on DNR state lands. The most successful chemical control is *Tree-age*, found to be 100% effective but is an expensive injection treatment at \$50-100 per tree. The injections are usually effective for 2-3 years to prolong the life of the tree. There is no long-term treatment. Other agents include Merit and Bayer Advanced Tree and Shrub Control. These chemical treatments are permissible under your Conservation Easement.



To proactively protect forests from this pest, it is recommended to cut young ash trees in forest areas where ash dominates to reduce the density of that species. Encouraging the regeneration of other trees species is critical. Understory plantings of other Michigan native tree species may be beneficial to help diversify your forest. If you decide to thin an ash tree stand, please contact the conservancy in advance that you are exercising your right to cut trees to reduce the threat of infestation. Please call us if you would like to discuss planting replacement species.

For further assistance identifying trees on your property, these websites may be helpful: http://treedoc-tor.anr.msu.edu/ash/ashtree_id.html or <http://forestry.msu.edu/extension/extdocs/idents.htm>.

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2011 Conservation Easements - Year in Review

2011 was the **BIGGEST** year in the **HISTORY** of the Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy (SWMLC). We completed a total of 15 projects protecting over 1,500 acres, bringing the total acreage we have conserved to over 10,400. The majority of these projects were the conservation easements (CEs) highlighted below. We are very happy to welcome several new conservation easement donors to the SWMLC conservation landowner family!



Paul and Joyce Kline pictured at left with SWMLC land protection specialist, Geoffrey Cripe. Paul and Joyce donated the Kline Family CEs which encompass 184 acres in Mendon Township, St. Joseph County. The properties feature prime farmland soils, upland forest, and significant wetlands fronting along Bear Creek and Portage Lake. The Klins created a residential community, "Klines Resort," in the 1960s on the opposite shore of the lake, where they currently reside.

Jerry and Becky Gray are pictured at right with SWMLC board member, Bruce Snook. The Grays dedicated the Samuel and Irene Oldenburg CE in tribute to Becky's grandparents who helped inspire their conservation ethic. The conservation easement encompasses 100 acres of farm field, open fields and floodplain forest along the Pigeon River in Mottville Township, St. Joseph County. The Grays are working on a plan to restore much of the upland field into savanna/pine barren habitat through management of invasive species and planting of native grasses and forbs associated with these habitats.



Darla and Hunter Leggitt and Jim Gehring, pictured left, protected 210 acres of Camp Ronora, a multi-disciplinary camp retreat where "one can find mother nature, sense Her balance, and find your own." The site is located in Watervliet Township, Berrien County, and contains a myriad of high-quality wetland resources and upland forest, including a 7-acre inland lake and multiple scenic vistas.

Jo Beth Bridleman has a strong conservation ethic and she could not fathom the thought of her property being developed in the future. She donated the Bridleman CE, encompassing her 41 acre homestead just east of the Barry State Game Area in Rutland Township, Barry County. The conservation easement protects valuable forestland, wetlands, and a portion of a spring-fed lake, part of the Thornapple River Watershed. Protecting this property adds to the conservation values protected by the nearby Barry State Game Area and Edger Waterfowl Protection Area owned and managed by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services, respectively. This easement helps to provide an open space buffer from development pressure around the State Game Area to further protect one of the most "wild" areas in southwest Michigan.

2011 Conservation Easements – Year in Review



Dave Foerster and Shelia Birdsall, pictured left, protected the heart of the largest intact complex of southern floodplain forest in southwest Michigan. Eureka! CE encompasses 341 acres and over 2 miles of frontage along the Paw Paw River in Waverly Township, Van Buren County. The habitat is home to several state-listed species of special concern, including the brilliant yellow-orange prothonotary warbler.



In 2007, Bo VanPeenan, pictured right, and family donated their first conservation easement on 87 acres. Then in 2011 they added to that conserved land, protecting an additional 282 adjacent acres, now totaling 369 acres of conserved farmland just south of the village of Richland in Kalamazoo County. The property contains prime agricultural soils, the best you will find to grow crops, once part of the soils of the rich Gull Prairie. If you are familiar with the area, this is the farmland between the Richland Township Park and the Village limit bordered by the black split rail fence that catches your eye with the scenic views driving down 32nd street or DE Avenue.



Following the passing of Suzanne Upjohn DeLano Parish, pictured left, her trustees donated the Gull Lake CE, encompassing 41 scenic and partially forested acres in Barry Township, Barry County. This estate, on the northeast corner of Gull Lake, bordered by three roads, would have been prime for a future residential development. The conservation easement will protect this from ever happening and further preserve what some have called the “Gull Lake Experience.”

Sherwood (Woody) Boudeman Sr. and his family donated the C Avenue, 56 Acre CE to add to the land they have already conserved in Richland Township, Kalamazoo County. The 56 acre property is majority farmland with a small wetland in the wooded northern edge. The Boudeman Family has now conserved 1,055 acres of prime farmland, forest, lakes and wetlands with SWMLC. Woody and Peter Ter Louw, SWMLC executive director, are shaking hands at the dedication event for Woody’s first donated conservation easement in 2004.



John and Sharon Garside donated the Garside CE, encompassing 98 acres of farmland with prime agricultural soils directly north of the Michigan State University Kellogg Biological Station in Ross Township, Kalamazoo County. The 98-acre Garside Conservation Easement and the biological station are direct complements to each other, each enhancing the conservation values found on both properties. One of the linking conservation values that traverses the biological station and Garside properties is the publicly accessible North Country Trail. The North Country Trail is America’s longest scenic trail, stretching 4,600 miles from New York to North Dakota, linking 7 states and more than 150 public lands. The trail extends over 2.5 miles through the Kellogg Biological Station and then about ½ mile past the Garside property before entering Barry County to the north.

PESTS THAT CHANGE OUR LANDSCAPES...CONTINUED

Beech Scale

Beech bark disease is caused by a small beech scale insect that feeds on beech sap and enables the entry of a fungus, *Nectria*, which weakens the tree until it dies. This one-two punch pest has hit the upper peninsula and many of our treasured state and federal parks hard, and it is showing up throughout the lower peninsula at an alarming rate. The pests and fungus spread by wind from the northeast U.S. and Canada and thus are very difficult to contain. It is projected that 1 million mature beech trees throughout Michigan will be impacted, and recent data shows the disease is spreading south from the Ludington area.



The immobile scale gives affected beech trees a fuzzy, waxy white appearance and forms “strips” of white tufts along the main trunk and limbs. An affected beech tree is shown at right. Cracking bark, cankers and “snap” damage due to weakening are common indicators. Yellowing and thinning of leaves, which often remain through summer, is a helpful canopy indicator. The DNR is working on developing resistant strains, focusing on bark resistant to scale penetration which nullifies the potential for the fungus. The best recommendation to landowners in the near term is to remove young beech and reduce density of existing beech stands to prepare in advance of an infestation. Keeping young beech saplings at bay could be a challenge. Under-planting other trees species could help.

It is anticipated that resistant strains will be funneled through the private sector to private landowners in the future. There are biological and chemical controls, including a ladybird beetle that preys upon adult beech scale insects but widespread use is still premature. If you plan to do management to mitigate/discourage the spread of these pests, please notify SWMLC in advance!

This publication is sent to all conservation easement landowners annually to share information. It is created by the SWMLC Land Protection Department. For more information or ideas on featured content, please contact either Emily Wilke or Geoffrey Cripe at the SWMLC office (269) 324-1600 or visit us at www.swmlc.org.



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