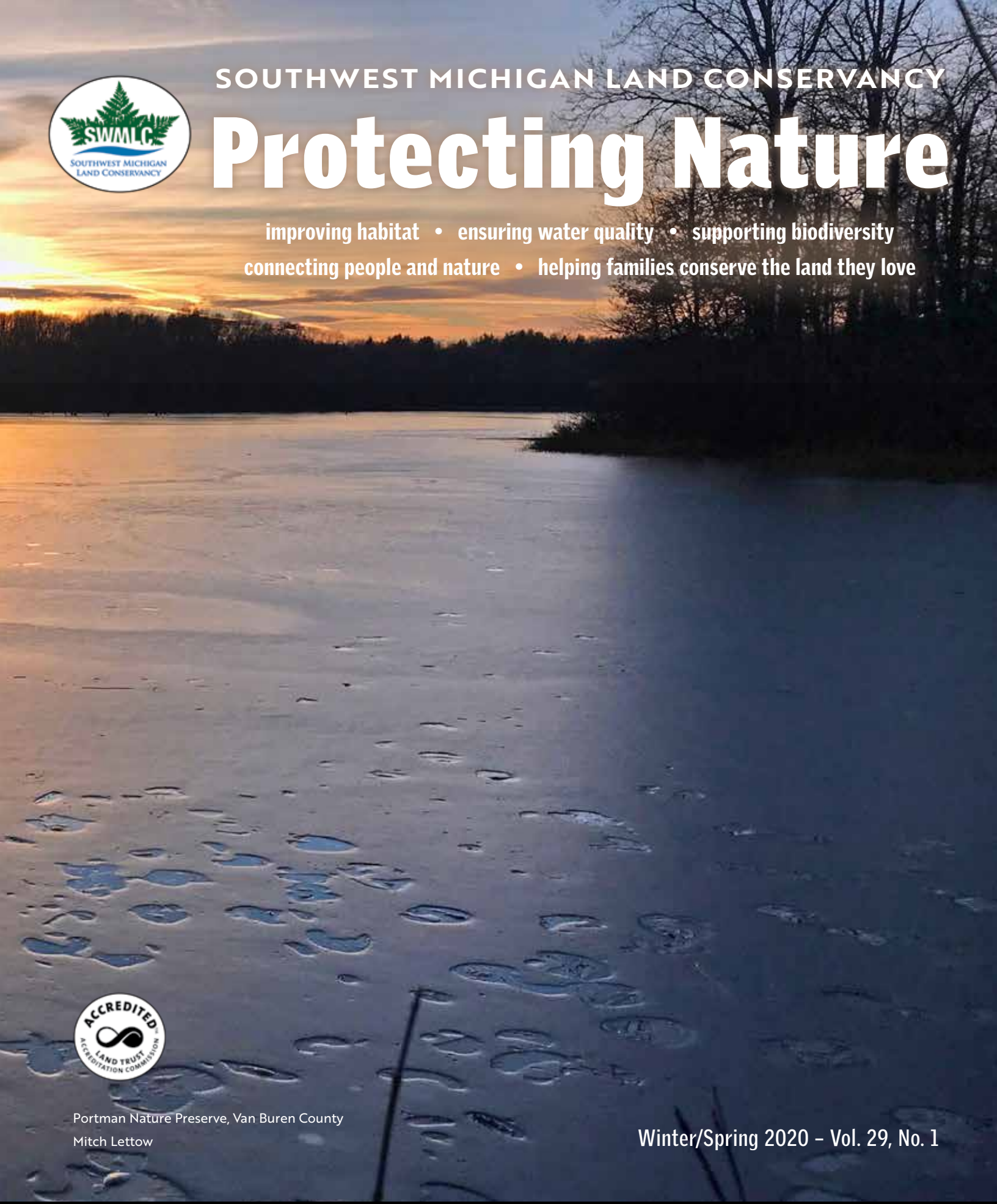
SOUTHWEST MICHIGAN LAND CONSERVANCY

Protecting Nature

improving habitat • ensuring water quality • supporting biodiversity

connecting people and nature • helping families conserve the land they love



Portman Nature Preserve, Van Buren County

Mitch Lettow

Winter/Spring 2020 – Vol. 29, No. 1

If we, the people of southwest Michigan, don't protect our land and water – *who will?*

Advocates for Nature

Peter Ter Louw, President and Executive Director

My conservation vision for southwest Michigan is big. Some of the broad environmental issues affecting our area far exceed Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy's capacity to solve on our own. But there is strength in numbers. Often, the greatest opportunities come when we collaborate with other groups, bringing people together to leverage our collective ideas and influence. Sometimes SWMLC has a large role and sometimes not, but being part of the conversation is at the core of our mission.

One such opportunity occurred this past October when the Boy Scouts of America's Michigan Crossroads Council announced that they would be closing and selling Rota-Kiwan Reservation, the nearly 100-year-old Boy Scout camp located in Kalamazoo County's Texas Township.

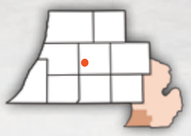
Often, the greatest opportunities come when we collaborate with other groups, bringing people together to leverage our collective ideas and influence.

The 200-acre camp contains two pristine lakes that are the headwaters of the West Fork of Portage Creek, which flows into the adjacent 700-acre Al Sabo Land Preserve, through the city of Kalamazoo, and ultimately to the Kalamazoo River. Kalamazoo Valley Community College's Texas Township Campus is also part of this open space corridor.

Al Sabo Land Preserve, owned by the City of Kalamazoo, contains a critical wellfield that supplies drinking water to residents in the western portion of Kalamazoo County. Recognizing its sensitivity to pollution, Texas Township has adopted wellhead protection and a stormwater ordinance, and zoned it a Resource Conservation Area that allows only limited development. Protecting the wellfield and the water that supplies it is of paramount importance for public health and safety.

More than a decade ago, SWMLC recognized the ecological and public health importance of this large contiguous greenspace and began a series of discussions with private and institutional landowners, highlighting the critical need for a long-term conservation plan. Today, SWMLC is part of a broad coalition of interested groups that are working together to protect and steward this property's clean water, extensive woods, and recreational open space for the people of southwest Michigan.

The future of Rota-Kiwan Reservation is still unclear but I'm pleased that SWMLC is part of the conversation and look forward to a positive outcome.



Rota-Kiwan Scout Reservation | Peter Ter Louw

Thank You, Cass County Conservation District!

We are both excited and humbled to announce that Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy has received Cass County Conservation District's 2019 Conservation Partner of the Year Award!

It was presented to SWMLC Land Protection Specialist Bruce Howe at the District's Annual Meeting, held at the beautiful, gold-level, LEED-certified Pokagon Band Community Center near Dowagiac.

SWMLC received the award for our lead role in designing the Jones Area Conservation Plan, which brought diverse partners together to build upon existing protected areas, with special focus on expanding and protecting wildlife corridors.

SWMLC is very grateful to our volunteers, partners, the Jones Project Committee, and to Cass County Conservation District for their crucial roles in this endeavor.

So far, SWMLC has protected 14 properties in Cass County – totaling 1,183 acres, 491 acres of which is wetland. We're looking forward to continuing our work in Cass County in 2020.

SWMLC Land Protection Specialist Bruce Howe with the award. | Thom Coder

Starry Nights

Light pollution creeps up so slowly that we may not notice how bright our nocturnal world has become. There are few places left where artificial light doesn't spoil the view of the nighttime sky – but soon there will be a wonderfully dark, public place from which to stargaze and appreciate the cosmos.

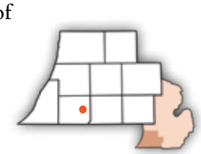
Recently, Cass County's Dr. T.K. Lawless County Park was designated an International Dark Sky Park by the International Dark-Sky Association (IDSA), a prestige shared by only one other Michigan location. The IDSA website describes an International Dark Sky Park as "land possessing an exceptional or distinguished quality of starry nights and a nocturnal environment that is specifically protected for its scientific, natural, educational, cultural heritage, and/or public enjoyment."

To earn the designation, the park modified its lighting and will soon offer special nighttime hours and stargazing programs. An official celebration will take place at the park during the Michiana Astronomical Society's annual Star Party, April 24-26.

In an article on the IDSA website, Parks Director Scott Wyman is quoted as saying, "Through the parks, we have always been able to say that we are stewards of the land, but I'm very proud to say that now, we are stewards of the land and the sky." And Robert Parrish, Cass County Parks Commission member and International Dark-Sky Association Advocate, reminds us, "After all, the beauty of nature doesn't have to end with the setting Sun."

Congratulations, Dr. T.K. Lawless County Park!

Read more on the IDSA website: https://bit.ly/2RfNcr4



Chipman Preserve | Allyson Wentela

Many thanks to everyone who donated to our year-end appeal to protect Porter Legacy Dunes!

THANK YOU!

Because of you, we were able to meet our $50,000 anonymous challenge grant, raising a total of $105.550 toward our overall $350,000 goal!

Anonymous (2)
David A. Anderson
Robert and Mary K. Andree
Robert Arvidson
Ned and Neva Asplundh
Donald Ayer
Korine and Jeff Blyveis
William H. and Ann Baker
Charles S. Barr
Alan Baudler
Joan Bauer
David K. Baute
Robert and Janet Beemer
Charles and Jan Benner
Elna Bevins
Peter Boerma
Alex and Kathy Bozymowski
Dennis Bradley
Jo Beth Bridleman
Dick and Lois Brunvand
Mr. Jewell D. Burdette
David and Mary Lou Butkovich
Greer Candler
Mr. Kim Cauchy
Richard and Joanne Chamberlin
Mike and Gayle Champagne
Dallas Chester
Michael Clement
Dave Coleman
Mr. Jason Combs
Jeff Conner and Buffy Silverman
Harry and Mary Ellen Cotterill
Doug Coulter and Pam Hoppe
Robert and Nancy Cretsinger
Nancy and Ron Crowell
Theodore and Pamela Cummins
Nancy and David Daugherty
Deer Creek Open Space Association, Inc
Mike and Martha DeGrandchamp
Pamela R. Dewey
Gary and Marjory Dietz
Al and Bonnie DiGennaro
Steve Diller
Mike and Barbara Dittlinger
Brian and Maureen Dobbie
Marilyn Doolittle
Mary G. Dorr
Tacie and Martin Draznin
Helen Elkiss
Hans Engelke
The Esther and George Jaruga Charitable Foundation
Kate Ferraro
Wendy Field
Alice Fish
Mark A. Fleckenstein
Michael Fleckenstein
Jeff and Mary Fleming
John and Shannon Floyd
Chris and Laura Fluke
Christopher M. Flynn
Fred and Sandy Frederick
René and Bill Garrity
Dana and Teresa Getman
Paul and Janet Gilbert
Sharon Gill and Maarten Vonhof
Anthony and Grace Gilmore
Gayle Girou
Don and Janet Gladstone
Loretta Gold
Jay and Cindi Gooch
Bruce and Leslie Gosling
Michael Graham
Larry Grayheck
Lisa and Tom Groos
Keto and Kathryn Gyekis
Kevin Haight and Mindy Russell-Haight
Dyrk Hamilton
Maren Harkness
Donald and Ronnee Harrell
John and Cynthia Hartgerink
Ms Sassafras Havilar
Jennifer and Matt Haywood
Phil Hecksel
Gary and Mary Herder
Malcolm and Patricia Hickok
Mrs. Everett N. Hiestand
Cynthia Hingtgen and Grant Nicol
Mr. Bill Hogan
Phyllis J. Hoger
Mary and Daniel Houser
Allan Hunt and Rochelle Habeck
Daria Hyde
David Jackson and Margaret McAllistar
David Jamieson
Mark Jenness and Cheryl Lyon-Jenness
Susan Kavanaugh
Stephanie and Robert Kennedy
Mary Anne Kidney
Evelyn Kirkwood
Renee Kivikko
Mr. and Mrs. Paul C. Kline
Michael Krabach
William H. Krasean, Jr.
Jacqueline Ladwein
Cara LaLumia-Barnes
Wendy Larson and Rich Enbody
Brian and Bridget Leppard
Robert and Joyce Leppard
Steven Leuty
Amelia Lietzau
Paul and Linda Locey
Joanne Lowery
Georgia Ann and Doug Mackinder
Kris Martin
Mr. and Mrs. William Martin
Bill and Jeannette Maxey
Mike and Cindy Mazurkiewicz
Helen McCauslin
Russell and Connie McFee
Tom Mears
John and Debbie Mellein
Dennis Miczulski
Margaret I. Miller
William Minshall
Dr. and Mrs. Donald L. Minter
John and Roberta Mitchell
Jim Montgomery
Shannon Moore
Alan G. Mueller
Lou Mule
Jane Murray
Christopher Nagy and Shannon Thornton
Mr. Donald C. Nitz
Robert and Kay O'Boyle
Terry O'Connor
Sandra Olsen
Anita and Jamie Orlikoff
David and Carol Overton
John Paquin
Lynda Pelkey
Kay Perry
Greg Petty
Stephen E. Pew and Kathleen M. Keelan Pew
Jerry and Julie Portman
Mr. and Mrs. Allan S. Puplis
Mr. Janis Putelis, Jr.
Jane Quinn and Jeff McCarthy
Chuck and Rose Quoss
Stan and Connie Rajnak
Laura Rajzer
Jon and Stephanie Rambow
Phyllis Rappeport
Jeffrey Rappin and Penny Brown
Heather and Jim Ratliff
Patsy Richardson
Barbara Rider and Fred Sammons
Dr. and Mrs. Arthur H. Rossof
Judy Kraft Rowe
Mary Ann Ruesink
Paul Runnels
Pamela Rups
Mrs. Jackie Marie Ryan
Larry Saunders
Ruth E. Schmitter
Jan Schroeder and Susie Pierson
David and Deb Schuette
Dale and Marlene Schultz
Lucinda A. Sebald and Andrew Van Doren
Vance Senecal and Lynne Bruehlman
Rebecca J. Shank
Sara Shields
Kim Shook
Charles Sittig
Julie Sokolow and Jay Bonsignore
Ms. Victoria Staniszewski
Cheri and Ross Stein
Steve and Sarah Stryd
Charles Stull
Mike and Pam Thomas
Mr. Michael A Travis
Stephen and Irene Trivers
Lee and Pam Utke
Gary Van Horn
Robert and Melicent Van Peenan
John and Lucy VandenHeede
Heidi Hollenbach-Wall
C. Glen Walter and Edite Balks Walter, MD
Bruce Wechsler
Earl Werner
Ms. Helene Whalen
Bonnie L. White
Deloris Ann Williams
Mark Winkel
Pamela and Arno Yurk
Robert and Beverly Zalewski
Amanda and Peter Ziemkowski
Andy Zillins
Chad Zirbel

If we have accidentally omitted your name, or you find an error, we apologize. Please call Nicole at 269-324-1600 x307 so we can correct the mistake. Thank you.

For the Love of the Dunes

NEW!
The Spring Carls/Woollam Challenge Grant . . . for the Love of the Dunes!

We are excited to announce that The Carls Foundation and the J.A. Woollam Foundation have awarded a $125,000 joint challenge grant for Porter Legacy Dunes!

When combined with all of the generous donations to our year-end appeal, if we can match this new $125,000 challenge grant as well, we will be able to reach our overall fundraising goal of $350,000 to make Porter Legacy Dunes a reality.

Altogether, these funds will not only help us to complete the purchase of the 48-acre healthy backdune forest in partnership with the South Haven Area Recreation Authority, but will also allow us to design and implement a trailhead and low-impact trail system, stream crossing, and benches to allow public access to the preserve while still protecting its pristine, delicate, and rare ecosystems.

The Carls/Woollam Challenge Grant will match dollar-for dollar every donation up made through June 30th up to $125,000! We'll have to raise more than twice as much this spring as we did at year-end, so we will be reaching out to people from all around the broader regional community to help ensure that this spring campaign is a success! Any funds raised above and beyond our original goal will go toward development of a backdune stair system, viewing platform and long-term stewardship fund for Porter Legacy Dunes.

If you didn't already have a chance to donate to the year-end appeal, please consider donating to our spring campaign!

To donate today, please visit our webpage: www.swmlc.org/protect-porter-legacy-dunes

Watch our Porter Legacy Dunes video! https://youtu.be/vDuZqricXJ8

Porter Legacy Dunes | Drone photo, Bruce Howe

Carrying the Torch

C. Miko Dargitz, Development Associate & Amelia Hansen, Communications Specialist

Walking the trails of your new property, you marvel at the giant oak trees that have been spared by all the past owners. Seeing the stumps of autumn olives, you're eager to continue the good fight against this invasive plant. Finding a sweet spot near the water, you realize that, for decades, everyone has looked at it from this same beautiful view. People have obviously cared for this land for a very long time; the conservation easement just makes it official.

Second generation CE owners are special folk who view buying a previously protected property as an opportunity to contribute to future generations.

Are you interested in purchasing a previously protected property?

We post listings of conservation properties that are for sale on our website as they come onto the market: www.swmlc.org/conservation-properties-for-sale

Imagine you're house hunting and find the perfect property – maybe with some woods, a small lake, a nice house, and some outbuildings. The price is a lot lower than you expected . . . and then you find out it has a 'conservation easement' on it. Disappointed, you think, "Oh, no wonder it's so cheap! There must be some legal restriction on it that prevents you from doing anything."

But for us nature lovers, a 'conservation easement property' may be the hidden gem that offers everything we treasure: privacy, abundant nature, and a guarantee that it will stay natural forever.

A conservation easement protects a property's natural values by limiting development, so it can often be purchased at a lower price. Each conservation easement's terms are different and it's important to completely understand them but, generally, purchasing land with a conservation easement on it may offer the chance to have that perfect property with the woods and water – with money left over.

Outdoorsy and conservation-minded, Dale and Julie Grimes are the new owners of a 100-acre property with an existing conservation easement on it. A hilly mix of fields, oak woods, and wetlands, the property is adjacent to the 20 acres where the Grimes' have lived and raised a family since 1994. They are excited about the property's potential. Besides skiing and hunting it, they have had the local high school's cross-country team out to run the trails and look forward to summer sleep outs in the woods with friends from church.

"It takes the fun out of it if you just lock it up and sit on it by yourself," says Dale, who also notes a sense of stewardship, responsibility, and planning. The property has inspired Dale and Julie to be good caretakers so the land will be healthy when they pass it on to their four daughters who also love nature.

For the Grimes, their property's conservation easement is a reminder that the previous owners treasured it enough to protect it forever and assurance that it will still be there for their great grandkids and many generations to come.

Since our inception in 1991, Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy has helped more than 70 families and individuals protect the land they love by placing conservation easements on their private private property. Over time, these protected properties are transferred to heirs, or sold when their owners move on or pass away.

Second generation conservation easement owners like the Grimes know their property is worth protecting. The conservation easement is like a badge of honor that proves it's special, whether it's because of clean water, healthy habitat, remarkable biodiversity, or proximity to other protected land. By purchasing protected land, the Grimes are continuing the conservation circle and carrying this property's torch into the future by conserving, improving, and protecting it – and Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy is honored and humbled to work with people like them.

Julie and Dale Grimes on their newly purchased property | Amelia Hansen

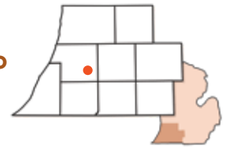
Better Birding Coming Soon to Sora Meadows!

"This generous grant from Entergy-Palisades will allow us to construct a 10-car gravel parking lot, a birders' viewing platform, boardwalk, and a trailhead. These public access amenities will enable us to better share this spectacular nature preserve with the community and the general public."

— Peter Ter Louw, SWMLC President & Executive Director

Sora Meadows Preserve | Nate Fuller

We are pleased to announce that Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy has been awarded a grant from Entergy-Palisades' Environmental Initiatives Fund to create public access amenities at Sora Meadows Preserve in Paw Paw Township.



In the past twenty years, Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy has conserved over 3 ½ square miles of wetlands, forested floodplains, and woodlands in the Paw Paw River Watershed while focusing on protection of the Great Lakes' waters and wildlife habitat. The 65-acre Sora Meadows Preserve, acquired through donation from landowner Phyllis Webb, is a critical component in protecting water quality in the watershed.

Acquired in 2008 as part of a larger EPA - Michigan Department of Environmental Quality nonpoint-with Ducks Unlimited to build several impoundments on the site for water storage and create critical waterfowl habitat. Today, the preserve supports a broad diversity of birds, including 65 nesting species and over 100 migrating species.

SWMLC board member and Western Michigan University professor Dr. Sharon Gill, volunteers, and members of Audubon Society of Kalamazoo will assist SWMLC in designing the viewing platform to optimize the birdwatching experience at Sora Meadows Preserve.

"Our ongoing restoration work on this preserve, including removal of invasive species and wetland creation, has served to create additional habitat for elusive bird species like soras and indigo buntings. We are really excited for birdwatching groups, schoolchildren, and others to be able to visit this preserve and have a place from which they can comfortably experience the great bird diversity at this special place."

— Mitch Lettow, SWMLC Stewardship Director

"The Land is Something That Lasts."

Completion of Rye Conservation Easement

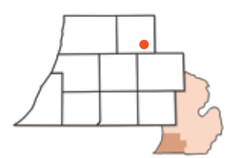
Some people may be surprised to learn that wilderness still exists in southern Michigan, but Rye Eggerstedt knows it firsthand and is taking action to protect it.

Rye and members of his family worked with Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy last year to place a conservation easement (CE) on 203 acres of wild wetland in northern Calhoun County (see *Landscapes,* Winter/Spring 2019, Vol. 28, No. 1). This past fall, Rye placed another easement on the adjacent 80 acres, forever protecting nearly 300 acres of natural, high-quality habitat on the combined properties. His forward-thinking action has a positive ripple effect that will travel downstream far into the future.

With the completion of the Rye CE, SWMLC has successfully closed a grant issued by the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy – a "Section 319" grant which is part of the Federal Clean Water Act that funds projects that improve water quality for the long term. With the pristine headwaters of both Ellis and Wanadoga Creeks (tributaries of the Battle Creek River, which feeds the Kalamazoo River, and eventually reaches Lake Michigan) protected by these combined CE's, this project will have a huge impact on people and wildlife for hundreds of river miles.

Home to nesting bald eagles, sandhill cranes, otters, badgers, and turkeys, Rye CE protects pockets of high-quality, maturing, oak forest uplands and wet woodlands that hold vernal pools in spring. It also protects part of an unnamed creek that flows through a broad wetland to Wanadoga Creek.

When asked why he cares so much, Rye explains, "It will be here longer than anyone living here. The land is something that lasts."



Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy wholeheartily thanks Rye Eggerstedt and his family for their firm commitment to conservation.

Aerial photo of the marsh at Eggerstedt Conservation Easement, which is adjacent to the newly protected Rye Conservation Easement. Drone photo, Bruce Howe

Boots in the *Muck* for Biodiversity

Save the habitat, save the wildlife!

Mitch Lettow, Stewardship Director

Allyson Wentela

Megan Martin,
Stewardship Crew Leader

SWMLC has received a $45,000 grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Partners for Wildlife program that enables the Stew Crew to restore critical habitat on over 30 acres of degraded fen at four nature preserves (Portman, Myers, Dowagiac Fen, and Cook Lake Fen). They will also put SWMLC's promise into action in Branch County, honoring the support of the many donors who raised money to protect and restore Mitchell's satyr habitat during our 2018 Annual Appeal.

Megan Martin, leader of Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy's stewardship crew, steps from the truck on a crisp January morning, breath billowing. Wearing insulated muck boots, flannel, and heavy canvas pants, she and the Stew Crew are ready for 'another day at the office' – restoring prairie fen habitat for the rare plants and animals that call it home.

The average hiker won't see the Stew Crew's work in these areas. Prairie fens occupy the unseen corners of SWMLC preserves, their habitat too sensitive for trails. Megan doesn't mind. "Someone's got to do the dirty work. And besides, we're making it better for the plants and animals!" Humans may not spend much time in prairie fens, but native plants and animals do.

Prairie fen wetlands are characterized by springfed, calcium-rich water and are ranked 'Vulnerable' in Michigan, and globally. From boneset to bog birch, fens are also botanical hotspots. "Acre per acre, a healthy prairie fen will hold more species of plants than any other natural community we have in southwest Michigan," says SWMLC Stewardship Director Mitch Lettow. "We understand that a diversity of plants leads to a diversity of insects, which provides a more reliable food source for birds, and so on up the foodweb." Spending just an hour on prairie fen restoration may improve biodiversity more than an hour spent in any other habitat. Fens are home to dozens of wildlife species, including rare Mitchell's satyr butterflies and Eastern massasauga rattlesnakes, and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources has highlighted fens as areas where limited resources may have the greatest impact toward protecting animals.

For more than 20 years, SWMLC has protected wildlife by using a boots-on-the-ground approach to restoring fen habitat. At preserves like Jeptha Lake Fen and Marc's Marsh, staff and volunteers have whacked down glossy buckthorn, swiped hybrid cattail, and carefully tended prescribed fires since the early 1990's. Their work has created amazing transformations: spectacular marsh blazing stars at Jeptha Lake Fen, the buzz of bumblebees tending acres of joe-pye weed at Bow in the Clouds Preserve, and rare turtles nosing through lush native sedges that have sprouted between the stumps of invasive shrubs.

Megan tops off the chainsaw fuel and grins at today's towering buckthorn challenge. She knows that a few months after the whine of the saws has quieted, patient native plants will silently push forth – and wildlife will follow. It's all in a day's work.

Volunteers make the difference.

Thank you, Winter Warriors!

Working alongside the Stew Crew, the all-volunteer Winter Warriors have made a huge impact removing glossy buckthorn at Myers Preserve. | Bradley Sullivan

Welcome, Dave!

We are excited to announce the addition of our newest full-time staff member, Stewardship Specialist Dave Brown!

Dave grew up in Parchment, north of Kalamazoo, and has been working and playing outside ever since! Many people will know him as Program Manager for Youth at Open Roads Bike Program, or from his years at the Kalamazoo Nature Center as a Naturalist and Facilities Manager. He also holds a bachelor's degree in Recreation Management from Western Michigan University. Dave brings a ton of practical experience to his new job as Stewardship Specialist here at Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy. The varied requirements of the job fit him just fine – in his own words, "I've led a program for toddlers, fixed a pond pump, and conducted a prescribed fire all in the same day." We will definitely find ways to utilize 'Dave of All Trades' here at SWMLC!

Jamie McKinney-Brown

Local Government Taking Action

This summer, Calhoun County residents will have the opportunity to cast a vote to create a five-year parks and recreation millage, the first countywide effort of its kind in southwest Michigan. In January, the Calhoun County Commissioners approved a new Five-Year County Parks & Recreation Master Plan, which includes a measure to create a millage that would generate over $700,000 a year to develop a county-wide system of parks, with half of the proposed funding to support improvements in county parks and the other half distributed to municipal governments.

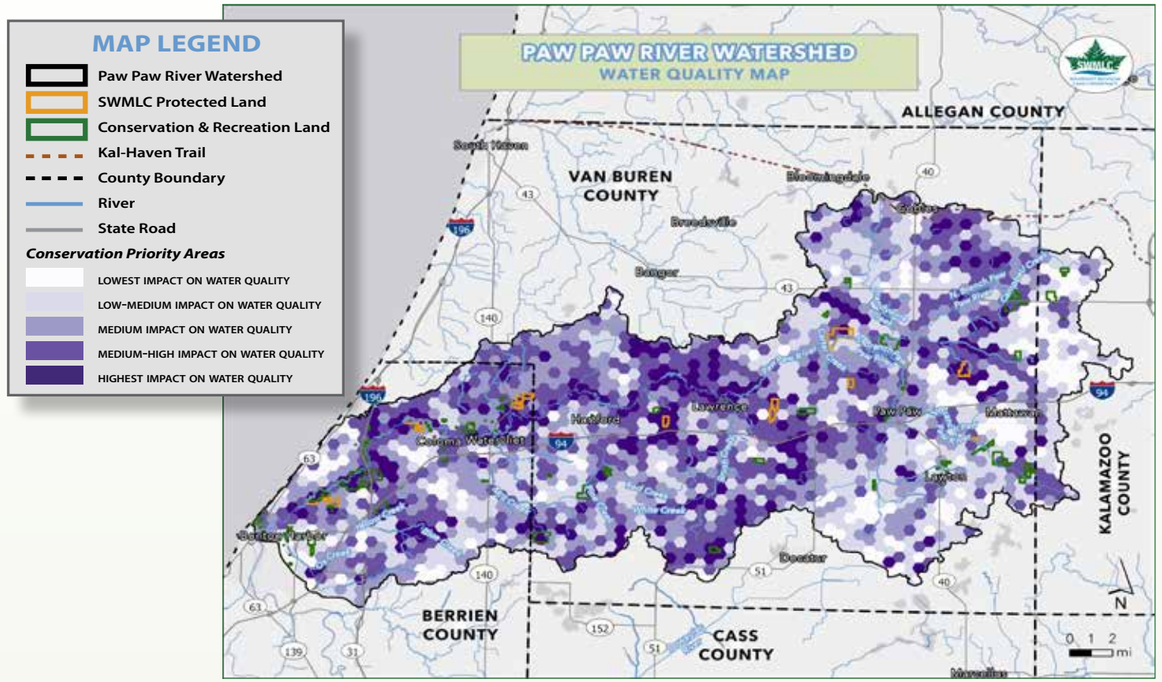
Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy strongly endorses local governments taking action to develop conservation funding to manage existing parks and create new greenspaces. If you live in Calhoun County please consider supporting this proposal on the August 4th ballot.

Amanda Okerstrom, Facebook

Congratulations to the Cherry Beach Project!

The grassroots Cherry Beach Project has been awarded a $2.475 grant from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Trust Fund to purchase a 3-acre of property on the Lake Michigan shore, enabling Chikaming Township to acquire the pristine woods and dune next to Cherry Beach Park. The community made it all possible by generously raising a 40% match – $1.65 million in individual pledges and foundation grants. Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy supported the project by securing a $250,000 dollar-for-dollar challenge grant from The Carls Foundation, and requesting a 2019 extension when the initial proposal to the state wasn't funded. It's so heartening to see the community support and protect nature in this way!

Photo from the Cherry Beach Project's Facebook page



Map by Bruce Howe | Data provided by Claire Gilbert

Land, Water, and Our Voices

Hilary Hunt, Land Protection Specialist

Just as arteries carry oxygenated blood from our hearts to the furthest reaches of our bodies, the wild rivers of southwest Michigan carry nutrients, sediment, and clean water from floodplains and headwaters out to Lake Michigan. Keeping the pulse of rivers healthy and unimpeded is as vital to watersheds as maintaining a healthy circulatory system is for our bodies.

Two of southwest Michigan's largest watersheds are the Paw Paw River and the Black River. The Paw Paw River begins in northeast Van Buren County and flows over 60 miles before joining the St. Joseph River near Benton Harbor, and then into Lake Michigan. The Black River begins in three distinct branches, flowing more than 80 miles through three counties before forming a mainstem near South Haven, where it empties into Lake Michigan.

The Black and Paw Paw Rivers are important waterways due to their large volume, the special wildlife that call them home, and the many agricultural products they make possible. Protecting them is a conservation priority for Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy and other allied groups. Thanks to funding through the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy, SWMLC and the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission are collaborating on a new Paw Paw and Black River Watershed Management Plan, updating the previous one from 2008.

As part of the Management Plan, SWMLC staff worked with geographers from Western Michigan University's W.E. Upjohn Center for the Study of Geographical Change to create maps that show the areas where conserving land would make the greatest impact on water quality within these two watersheds. These priority areas (shown in darkest purple on the map) share many characteristics: high-quality wetlands, generous surface water, good groundwater recharge potential, and healthy ecosystems adjacent to the water resource.

SWMLC will use this information to reach out to landowners within the priority areas who are interested in conserving their land. We work to protect these places because we belong to them, too.

This project has been funded wholly or in part through Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy's Nonpoint Source Program by the United States Environmental Protection Agency.

EGLE MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT, GREAT LAKES, AND ENERGY

Michigan's Nonpoint Source Program

EPA United States Environmental Protection Agency

SOUTHWEST MICHIGAN LAND CONSERVANCY EVENTS & WORKDAYS

Unless indicated, all events and workdays are free and open to the public. Find details, maps, and directions on our website by entering www.swmlc.org/swmlc-events-workdays or using this QR code.

REGISTRATION: Please help us to plan our events by registering. Use the secure form included in the online event descriptions, or contact us by phone at 269-324-1600 x302, or send an email to conserveland@swmlc.org.

The River Runs Through Us
THURSDAY · March 19 · 6 - 7:30 pm · PAW PAW DISTRICT LIBRARY · CONSERVATION STORIES

Presentations and stories by guest speakers and Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy staff about the charismatic Paw Paw River. Enjoy dessert while listening to folks who know and love this beautiful, wild, southwest Michigan river – then learn what you can do to help protect it.

Social Hike: Partly Cloudy, Chance of Snowshoe
SATURDAY · March 21 · 10 am · CHIPMAN PRESERVE · SOCIAL HIKE

You can't control the weather but you can control your footwear! Come dressed for weather-wise adventure and explore the early spring trails with us.

Volunteer Workday
SATURDAY · March 28 · 1 - 4 pm · CHIPMAN PRESERVE · VOLUNTEER WORKDAY

Grab the pruners, seize a saw, hoist the loppers, or drag some brush – anyone can help improve savanna habitat at this big, popular preserve.

Go Fly a Kite Hike
SUNDAY · April 12 · 3:30 pm · PORTMAN NATURE PRESERVE · KIDS & FAMILIES

Bring some kids and share with them the ancient tradition of spring celebration, kite-flying. Few things lift spirits like a kite . . . let your heart soar!

IN COLLABORATION WITH KALAMAZOO AREA LITTLE ADVENTURERS' CLUB

Social Hike: "Skunk Cabbage Scavenger Hunt"
SATURDAY · April 18 · 10 am · BOW IN THE CLOUDS PRESERVE · SOCIAL HIKE

Shake off the cobwebs and search for signs of spring: swelling buds, jubilant birds, and – of course – skunk cabbage! If you wish, bring a picnic lunch and stay to volunteer for the Earth Day Workday. EARLY REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED FOR THE EARTH DAY WORKDAY, PLEASE CALL, EMAIL, OR REGISTER ONLINE

Earth Day Workday
SATURDAY · April 18 · 1 - 4 pm · BOW IN THE CLOUDS PRESERVE · VOLUNTEER WORKDAY

Give back to the planet, then celebrate the Earth at Old Dog Tavern with a complimentary pint from Great Lakes Brewing Company.

EARLY REGISTRATION REQUIRED - HURRY AND CALL, EMAIL, OR REGISTER ONLINE!

Arbor Day Workday
FRIDAY · APRIL 24 · 1 - 4 pm · HIDDEN POND PRESERVE · VOLUNTEER WORKDAY

Join us in planting oak trees that may possibly outlive every person on the planet! PLEASE BE SURE TO REGISTER.

Love Your Mom Hike
SUNDAY · May 10 · 3:30 pm · PILGRIM HAVEN NATURAL AREA · KIDS & FAMILIES

Grab your mama (your granny, your auntie, your favorite friend - or even your dad, uncle, or grandpop!) by the hand and enjoy nature together.

IN COLLABORATION WITH KALAMAZOO AREA LITTLE ADVENTURERS' CLUB

Mother's Day Bird Stroll
SUNDAY · May 10 · 9 - 11:30 am · BLACK RIVER PRESERVE · GUIDED NATURALIST HIKE

Black River Preserve is a bird magnet so bring your binoculars for upclose views of avian moms. PLEASE BE SURE TO REGISTER.

Social Hike: Birds & Blooms
SATURDAY · May 16 · 10 am · BLACK RIVER PRESERVE · SOCIAL HIKE

Got spring fever? Get your fix by sampling Black River Preserve's extensive, springtime woodlands, wetlands, uplands, and river corridor.

Volunteer Workday
SATURDAY · May 23 · 9 am - 12 pm · PORTMAN NATURE PRESERVE · VOLUNTEER WORKDAY

Removing garlic mustard is an easy and effective way to improve habitat – be part of a volunteer group that quickly makes a huge difference.

The Digital Naturalist: Using eBird
SATURDAY · June 6 · 9 - 11:30 am · PORTMAN NATURE PRESERVE · NATURALIST WALK & TALK

Explore new places and connect with nature by learning how to collect real data with your phone that will help us to better understand our preserves.

PART 1 OF A 3-PART SUMMER SERIES THAT INTRODUCES FUN AND USEFUL MOBILE PHONE APPS FOR NATURALISTS

National Chocolate Ice Cream Day Hike
SUNDAY · June 7 · 3:30 pm · WOLF TREE NATURE TRAILS · KIDS & FAMILIES

What?! Ice cream and hiking? Why not?! Work up a sweat while scampering through the preserve, then cool off with a chocolatey treat.

IN COLLABORATION WITH KALAMAZOO AREA LITTLE ADVENTURERS' CLUB

Social Hike: People & Paws
SATURDAY · June 20 · 10 am · PORTMAN NATURE PRESERVE · SOCIAL HIKE

All well-behaved dogs (and humans!) are welcome to join the pack on this canine social hike. PLEASE NOTE: dogs must be kept on 6-foot leashes at all times , abd please bring – and – your dog's poop bag.

Blueberry Summer Hike
SUNDAY · July 12 · 3:30 pm · BLACK RIVER PRESERVE · KIDS & FAMILIES

Nothing says "summer" in southwest Michigan like blueberries. Bring some kids and explore the trails, then enjoy this quintessential fruit.

IN COLLABORATION WITH KALAMAZOO AREA LITTLE ADVENTURERS' CLUB

Donations • October 1, 2019 – January 31, 2020

The following contributions were made by people who share our vision for southwest Michigan in which clean water and wildlife habitat are protected for future generations.

Thank you.

Honor Gifts

Bud and Judi Baldwin
In honor of Woody Boudeman at Christmas

Sarah Buller
In honor of Amy Cherry's 60th birthday

Christopher C. Bunch
In honor of the Bunch Family: Tim, Theresa, Amanda, and Curtis, at Christmas

Charles and Ann Fourtner
in recognition of the dedication to SWMLC given by Earl Werner

Malcolm and Patricia Hickok
In honor of Patricia Hickok

Pam Hjelmquist
In honor of my father Ken Kirton at Christmas

Katya Hokanson
In honor of Charlotte Mittler

Joseph Kopp
Merry Christmas Chuck "Papa" Moore

Aaron Lane-Davies
In honor of Tobi Hanna-Davies

Robert and Joyce Leppard
In honor of The Trekkers

The Locke Sisters
In honor of Woody Boudeman at Christmas

Rev. Rachel Lonberg
In honor of Allan Hunt

Bennett Nott
In honor of Robin and Nancy Nott and family. Happy Holidays!

Brian and Katy O'Boyle
In honor of Bob and Kay O'Boyle at Christmas

Zaide Pixley and John Fink
In Honor of Elisabeth Pixley-Fink

Mrs. Kerry Quinones
In honor of Bruce Shurtz

The Sanderson Family
In honor of my father, Bruce Shurtz, a big supporter of SWLMC

Kim Shook
In honor of Rob Hayes, CEO at BASIC Benefits

Robert G. Stickland
In honor of Dr Ronald McCormick
In honor of Timothy Stickland

Rebecca Suman
In honor of Lisa Baker at Christmas

Bruce and Jean Williams
In honor of Travis and Sarah Simmons
In honor of Rob and Julia DelSignore

Matthew Zimmerman
In honor of the best Grandma ever, Winifred Zimmerman. Thank you for all you do!

Memorials

Donald Ayer
In memory of Dorothy Ayer

John and Cynthia Hartgerink
In memory of Ron Hartgerink

Connie and Fred Hubbell
In memory of Judith Van Solkema

Nanette and Jack Keiser
In memory of Don J. Sayan

Kenneth and Marlena Kirton
In memory of George Lauff

Mike and Carol Klug
In memory of George Lauff

Wm. David and Elizabeth Mohr
In memory of Rosemary Flinn

Alan G. Mueller
In memory of Bessie Woolner and Bessie Mueller

Jean Stevens and Jeff Bernstein
In loving memory of Larry Lyle Burns of Kalamazoo, MI

Deloris Ann Williams
In memory of William Matters

In-Kind Donations

Ronald L. Johnson
Costs associated with maintaining Coon Hollow Preserve, including 2019 mowing charges, refinished trail signs, and removing a broken railing.

Erkan and Caitlin Eyvaz
2005 Ford Expedition as a SWMLC work vehicle.

Brian Bosgraaf and Cottage Home
Shoreline cleanup at Wau-Ke-Na, William Erby Smith Preserve.

Welcome to Our New Members!

Cerulean Warbler ($250+)
Tom Glen Chelew
Rachel Gerrits
John Soule

Spotted Turtle ($100+)
Sandra Bliesener
Jerry M. Herst and Julie Dorfman
Jan and Vaughn Maatman
Rick and Cheryl Rodbard
Ferris Standiford

Little Brown Bat ($50+)
Jason Wolf Ballew
Chuck Lund
Benjamin Reynolds
George Wallis
Jerry Wilinski

Gift Memberships

From Don Miller
To Christopher Dawson Miller, Benjamin Dawson Miller, and Sam Boase Miller

Grants

Amazon Smile

The Arctica and Abbey Foundation
Entergy Environmental Initiatives Fund
Evergreen Foundation
Land Trust Alliance
Kalamazoo Community Foundation Love Where You Live: Environment Fund and Sustainable Community Watershed Endowment Fund
Network for Good
W.S. and Lois Van Dalson Foundation
Walmart Foundation
Lawrence and Sylvia Wong Foundation

Matching Gifts

Bank of America Foundation
The Benevity Community Impact Fund
Microsoft Corp
Pfizer Foundation Matching Gifts Program
Thomson Reuters

Make a difference for nature every month

Set up a sustaining membership that will be automatically billed to your credit card and you will provide Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy with a stable source of support.

You decide how much you want to contribute and how often: monthly, quarterly, semi-annually, annually.

It's easy: set up your account by using this QR code or t*www.swmlc.org/become-a-member* and click *join now!*

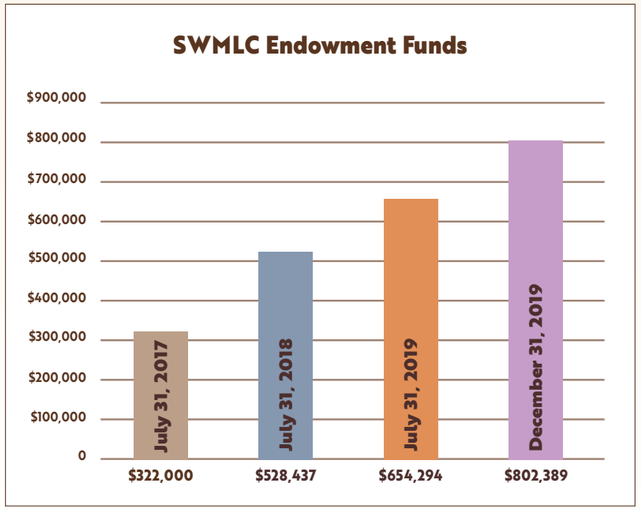
If we have accidentally omitted your name, or you find an error, we apologize. Please call Nicole at 269-324-1600 x307 so we can correct the mistake. Thank you.

Looking to the Future

Bow in the Clouds Preserve | Julie Collard

Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy's endowment funds are made up of the Sustain SWMLC Endowment Fund and the George Lauff Land & Stewardship Endowment Fund. Together, they will grow year after year, ultimately bearing the fruits and dividends that will make certain that, generations from now, Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy will be around to continue to protect and care for southwest Michigan's most wild and scenic places.

In the same way that our ancestors knew that sowing the seeds of trees that would bear fruit year after year would help safeguard the survival of their families, we know that we must sow the seeds today that will ensure that we can protect these lands in perpetuity.



Your love for southwest Michigan's natural areas has ensured that they will be protected forever.

Your support has conserved secluded habitat where endangered animals thrive.

You've helped create public preserves for the whole community to use because you know that nature is good for the soul.

You've made sure there still are clean ponds where kids can watch frogs jump.

You've brought back the plants that benefit wildlife, kept acres of woods and wetlands from being developed, and protected water quality for millions of Michiganders.

Our work is possible because people like you care about the natural world and want to protect it for future generations.

Thank you.

Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy
8395 East Main St.
Galesburg, MI 49053

FORWARDING SERVICE REQUESTED

Nonprofit
Organization
U.S. Postage PAID
Grand Rapids, MI
Permit No. 1

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Thom Coder
Chair

Gail Walter
Vice-Chair

Thomas Georgoff
Treasurer

TJ Wilkinson
Secretary

Robert Burr

Erwin H. Doerschler

Sharon Gill

Bruce Grubb

Keto Gyekis

Jennifer Haywood

James Hettinger

William Main

Michael Nave

Earl Werner

STAFF

Peter D. Ter Louw
President and Executive Director

Dave Brown
Stewardship Specialist

C. Miko Dargitz
Development Associate

Amelia Hansen
Communications Specialist

Bruce Howe
Land Protection Specialist

Hilary Hunt
Land Protection Specialist

Mitch Lettow
Stewardship Director

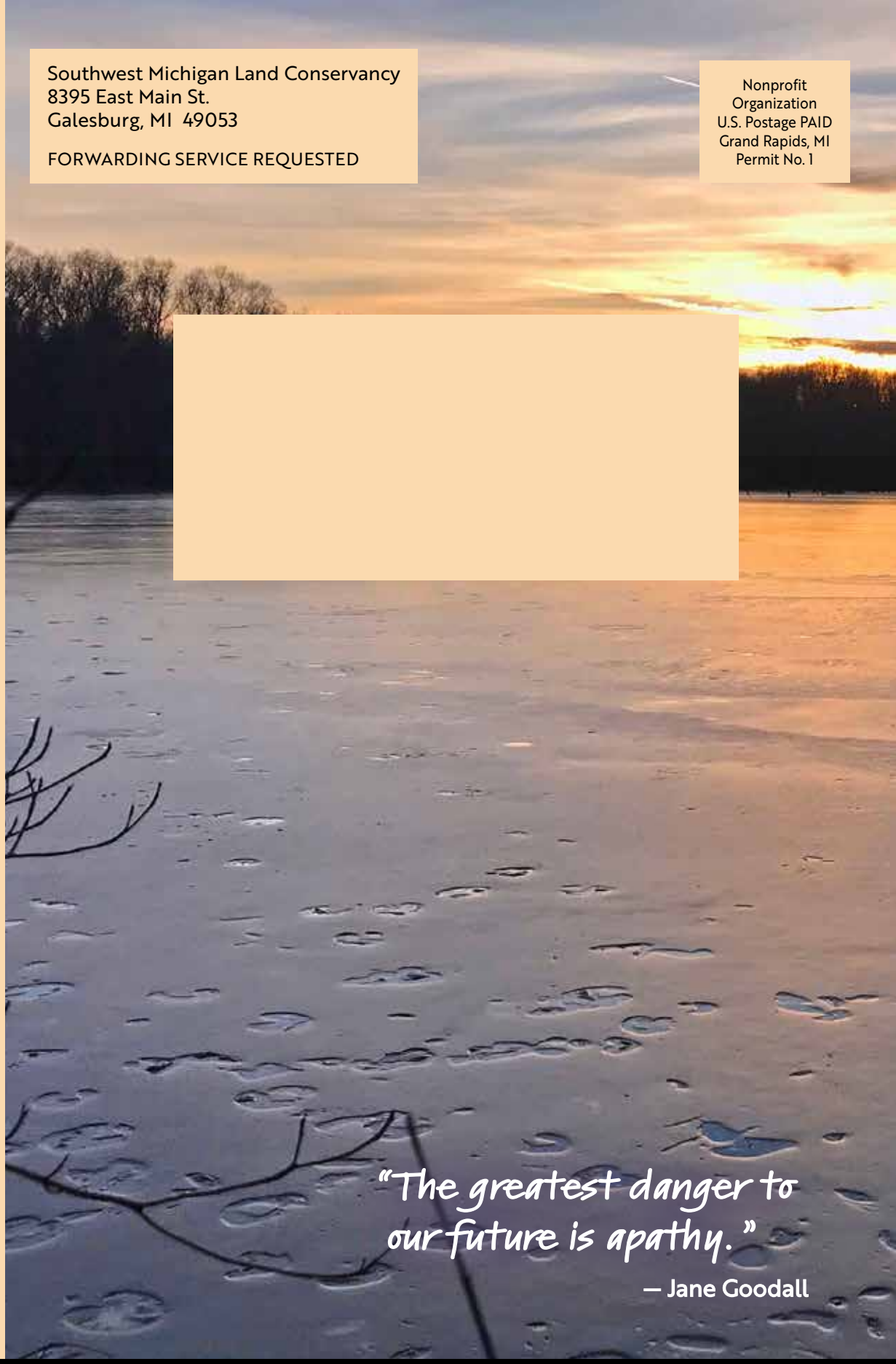
Megan Martin
Stewardship Crew

Cindy Mills
Conservation Easement Specialist

Nicole Speedy
Operations Director

Jessica Vanden Berg
Stewardship Crew

Emily E. Wilke
Conservation Projects Manager



Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) corporation. Our mission is to conserve ecologically important and scenic landscapes that give our region its natural character — now and for generations to come.

All programs and services are provided on a nondiscriminatory basis. Federal EIN 38-3038708