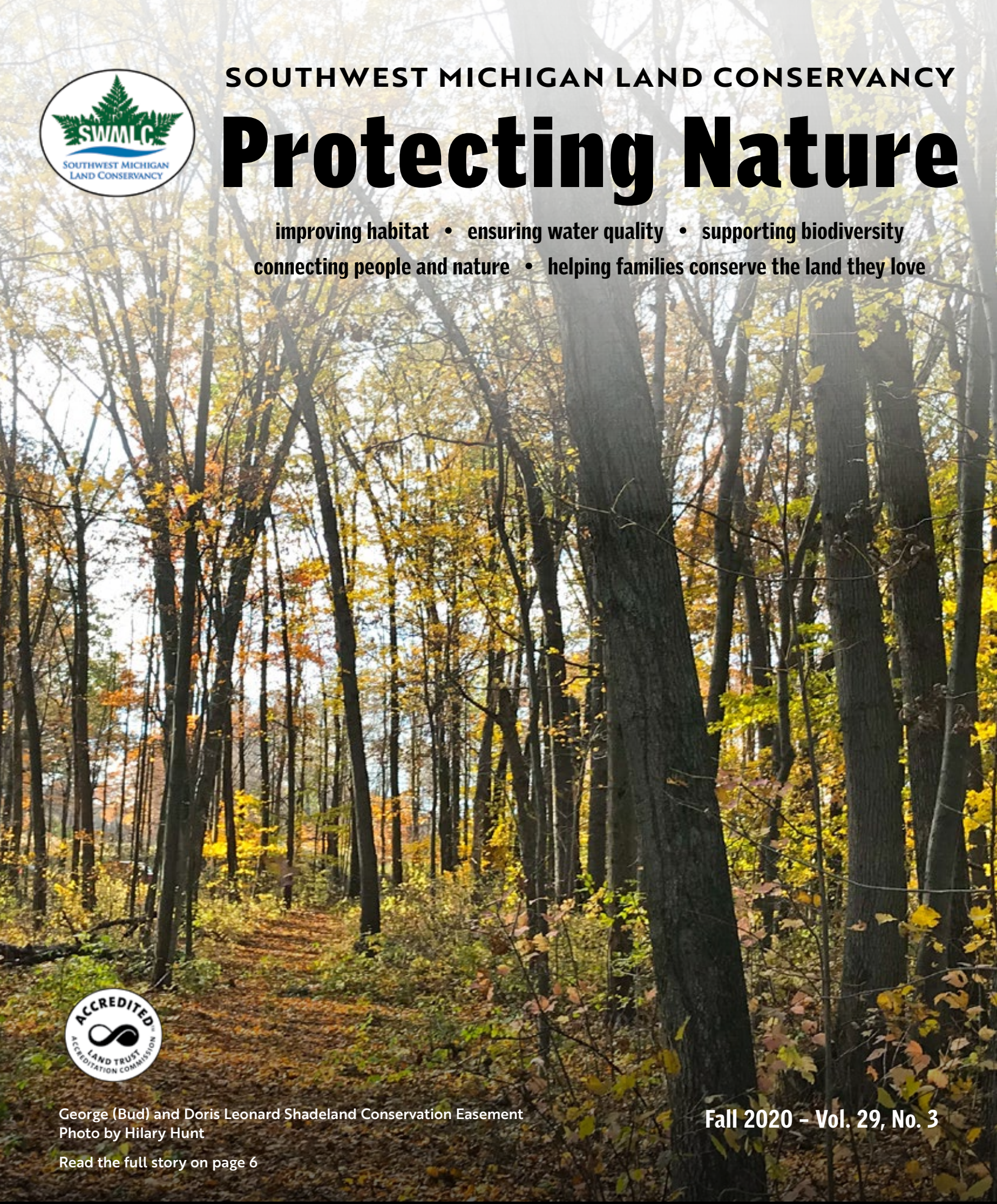
SOUTHWEST MICHIGAN LAND CONSERVANCY

Protecting Nature

improving habitat • ensuring water quality • supporting biodiversity
connecting people and nature • helping families conserve the land they love



George (Bud) and Doris Leonard Shadeland Conservation Easement
Photo by Hilary Hunt

Read the full story on page 6

Fall 2020 - Vol. 29, No. 3

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

TOGETHER,
We Can Accomplish Amazing Things

Peter Ter Louw, President and Executive Director

Collaboration is very satisfying . . . celebrating your partners' endeavors while knowing that your efforts are important, too. Every participant brings something unique to the table – different viewpoints, experiences, questions, solutions – and projects are strengthened when there's a greater diversity of participants.

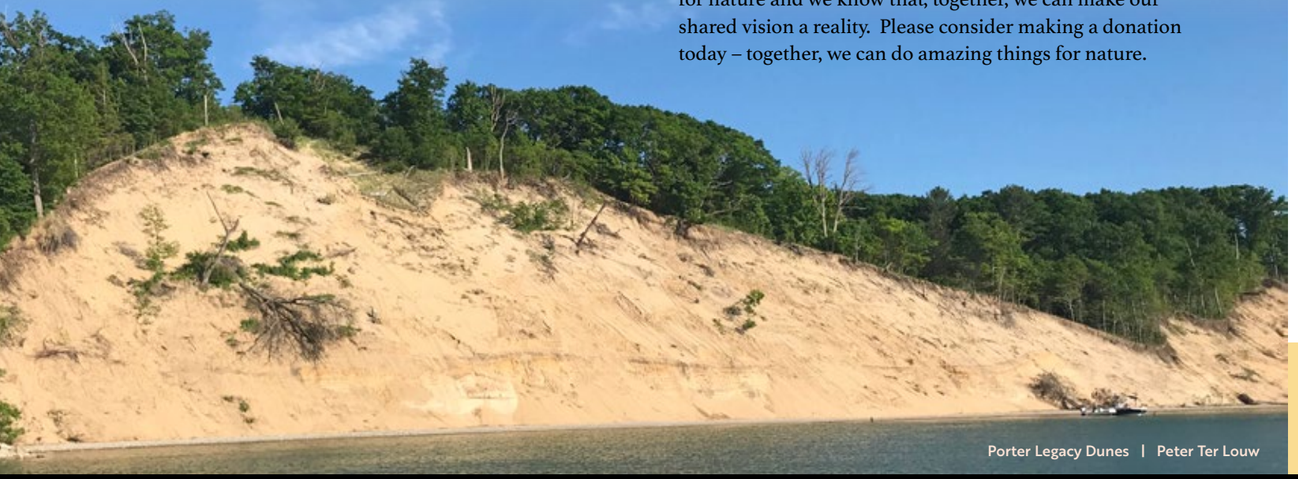
This year, Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy has partnered with a variety of groups and organizations on several projects. We've provided ideas and advice on protecting important natural spaces from development and used our connections to bring together groups that share similar goals. We've worked with local municipalities on successful grant proposals that neither of us could have achieved on our own, and found funding avenues that ease the financial obstacles that sometimes prevent families from conserving their land.

In the upcoming year, we look forward to more collaborations that combine our unique strengths with those of our partners, placing greater emphasis on seeking out and working with diverse groups like Eastside Youth Strong, who we have partnered with in the past to make Bow in the Clouds Preserve available as an outdoor classroom for summer students. Partnerships like this bring additional perspectives and ideas to projects – and we value these collaborations. Recognizing that we need and want to do more, SWMLC has formed a committee to address this. Its first step was to create the statement on Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Access that is on the next page, which the board has adopted.

You are our most important collaborator. We are amazed, humbled, and inspired each day by our community's love for nature and we know that, together, we can make our shared vision a reality.

Our greatest partnership of all is with you, our supporters . . . the people who share our same values and vision for healthy nature in southwest Michigan. We are people who want to conserve good habitat where wildlife can flourish. We want to see our favorite woodlands and wetlands every day when we drive around southwest Michigan. We are people who know that protecting headwaters is the first step toward ensuring water quality for the whole region. We want there to be undeveloped Lake Michigan shoreline for future generations to enjoy. And we know that southwest Michigan needs public natural areas where young people can grow their love for nature and where nature's benefits are available to everyone.

You are our most important collaborator. We are amazed, humbled, and inspired each day by our community's love for nature and we know that, together, we can make our shared vision a reality. Please consider making a donation today – together, we can do amazing things for nature.



Porter Legacy Dunes | Peter Ter Louw

SWMLC STATEMENT ON INCLUSION, DIVERSITY, EQUITY & ACCESS

It has been a difficult summer, with many upsetting stories in the news. As a land conservation organization focused on protecting land and restoring habitat, Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy isn't used to talking about racial injustice.

But we cannot put our heads in the sand and ignore what is going on in the world around us. Nor should we. The board of directors of SWMLC has begun discussing the organization's role and responsibility in the matter of supporting racial justice and inclusion for all peoples, and have recommitted to opposing all forms of discrimination. Further, we are committed to seeking broad diversity within our organization.

As a result, we wish to make everyone aware that the organization and its staff are committed to creating a culture where people from all walks of life are actively encouraged to collaborate and engage with SWMLC. We believe that everyone has a place in nature. We are not satisfied with the results of our efforts to serve marginalized communities, including those of color, in the southwest Michigan region and, though inclusion has always been a goal, we will actively pursue opportunities to make our nature preserves and our work more inclusive of these communities.

As a charitable organization approved by the Internal Revenue Service, SWMLC must work within our approved purpose and stay true to our mission, which states that we "seek to promote a healthy vision of community where people from diverse backgrounds can benefit from the restorative powers of nature." In an effort to improve our performance in this area, we have created an Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access Committee – composed of SWMLC staff and board – who are working together on strategies and specific actions to make SWMLC become a more inclusive and welcoming organization.

We are excited to announce that

Porter Legacy Dunes is Protected Forever!

Porter Legacy Dunes is one of those southwest Michigan landscapes that is so magnificent, so unique, and so ecologically important that anyone can see that it must be protected.

The 48-acre lakeshore property is certainly appreciated by migrating raptors and songbirds that are navigating the Great Lakes Flyway, its rich backdune habitats offering food, shelter, and fresh water. Part of an important two-mile natural corridor stretching from Pilgrim Haven Natural Area through Van Buren State Park, Porter Legacy Dunes is an oasis for exhausted avian travelers.

The Porter Family loved and protected this beautiful land for nearly 140 years – all the way until Catherine Porter Arini passed away a few years ago and left it to her fiancée, Scott Royle. Living far across the country, Scott knew he couldn't keep it and searched for the special property's next guardian. Owning the adjacent Pilgrim Haven Natural Area, Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy seemed the obvious choice. What was less obvious was how we would be able to acquire the very expensive property. Perhaps a partnership . . . ?

A few years ago, SWMLC worked with the South Haven Area Recreation Authority (SHARA), which manages the facilities at Pilgrim Haven, to apply for the grants that built the preserve's barrier-free walkway, restrooms, and parking lot. SWMLC staff talked with Scott and described how, by working with SHARA, we might secure another Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund grant that could provide the lion's share of the purchase funding – but that it would take some time. Scott agreed that it was worth the wait.

Working with SHARA's Chairman Ross Stein, we took a chance and asked the state if we could submit an application, even though we knew that the deadline had already passed. The Trust Fund staff were so pleased by the project that they said "yes" and approved our request to submit an out-of-cycle proposal. Ultimately, the Porter Legacy Dunes project received the second highest score in that cycle and was awarded $2.26 million by the state.

One of the key ingredients in the project's success is Scott Royle himself, whose commitment to creating this Lake Michigan natural area is a testament to his love for Catherine, and respect for her family and the land. Other important contributions came from the Carls Foundation, the J.A. Woollam Foundation, the Esther & George Jaruga Charitable Foundation, Cottage Home, and several private donors. Finally, there were the donations made by regular folks like you, who saw the property's ecological worth and physical beauty, and generously stepped up to meet our $350,000 fund-raising goal.

Altogether, the campaign raised over $3.4 million for the purchase and stewardship of the property. With Pilgrim Haven's parking and other visitor amenities just next door, we plan to leave Porter Legacy Dunes mostly natural and have entered into a 20-year Memorandum of Understanding with SHARA (who will officially own the preserve) that defines our role in managing the preserve's natural habitats.

This winter, SWMLC stewardship staff will explore the design of a trail system that allows people to cross the creek, enjoy the exceptional carpets of wildflowers, and marvel at the lake views without damaging this extremely sensitive dune habitat.

We hope to hold a celebration at the preserve in Spring/Summer 2021 so that you all can finally see the rare beauty of Porter Legacy Dune for yourselves!

Porter Legacy Dunes and coastline looking south | Bruce Howe

Thank you for helping to protect this special place *forever!*

Yellow-rumped warbler
Portman Nature Preserve, Mattawan
Greg Myrkle, Jr.

Nature has our backs. Let's return the favor.

SWMLC
Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy

Our Main Takeaways from 2020:

- **In a pinch, you can use leaves for toilet paper.**
- **It's easier to run away from people who cough when you're outdoors.**
- **Walking through a nature preserve is a lot cheaper than walking through a mall.**
- **It's way easier to stay 6-feet away from other people when you're outside.**
- **Being outside is fun (just ask your dog . . . or your kids)!**

Seriously, though, nature has been a huge part of getting through this year for many of us. When restaurants, gyms, theaters and other recreational venues were closed, we were still able to turn to nature for the peace, exercise, inspiration, and fulfillment that we all need. At SWMLC, we are proud that our preserves have remained open for the public to explore and enjoy every single day of this prolonged health crisis.

Nature has been there for us this year and continues to be there for us every day. Now it's time for us to return the favor and do something good for nature.

Supporting SWMLC helps maintain welcoming public preserves, protect the habitats where endangered species thrive, create public preserves for the whole community to love, ensure there will always be healthy ponds where kids can see frogs and fish, restore native plants that sustain wildlife, save acres of land from being developed, and protect water quality for millions of Michiganders.

Please show that you have nature's back, and donate to SWMLC today!

Checks may be mailed to SWMLC, 8395 E. Main St., Galesburg, MI 49053

Donate securely online with your credit card by using this QR code to go to www.swmlc.org/donate-now

Protecting a One-of-a-Kind Gem

Completion of the George and Doris Leonard Shadeland Conservation Easement

SWMLC Staff Contributors

"Welcome to Delton." The sign's impressive stone foundation and raised flowerbed speak to small town pride and hospitality. And its location makes sense once you learn that it stands on George (Bud) and Doris Leonard's property, because the couple were well known for their generosity and deep community roots.

Not far from that sign, a row of picturesque little white cottages hugs the shore of Wall Lake, nearly as iconic as the welcome sign. They belonged to the Leonards, as did the pretty farmhouse across the street where the couple lived. A small wooden sign in its yard names it "Shadeland" and hints at the natural treasures beyond the roadside.

Recently, Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy put the final touches on the George and Doris Leonard Shadeland Conservation Easement, forever protecting not only its roadside beauty, but also the 116 acres of natural habitat that lay beyond. The Leonards' property perfectly expresses everything that makes Barry County a one-of-a-kind gem: rolling farmland, thousands of feet of frontage on two lakes, shimmering wetlands, peaceful old forests, and the crown jewel – a rare tamarack bog.

The bog is an unexpected treat, hidden from the road by steep, wooded slopes. Lush ferns crowd around a mat of sphagnum moss that surrounds the bog's center. A track through oldfields studded with asters, milkweed, and goldenrod passes the old hangar where Bud kept his airplane. Heading west along farm fields, a shady footpath through the woods meets a wide tree-lined trail, once part of the now-defunct Chicago, Kalamazoo and Saginaw Railway. That railbed now ends somewhere in the big marsh at the edge of Jones/Mud Lake. Those who are lucky enough to have a canoe handy can slip through the wetland to explore a small island that's covered by ancient black, red, and white oaks.

View of the Oak Island from Woods Trail Drive,
George and Doris Leonard Shadeland Conservation Easement
Hilary Hunt

"I'm honored to have been a part of their conservation legacy."

— Emily Wilke, SWMLC Conservation Projects Manager

Bud and Doris were appreciated for their dedication and loyal service to the community. Both served on numerous boards over the years and volunteered for many community organizations, including the library and local ambulance service. Doris directed choir and played piano at their church, while Bud served as president of the local historical society. Both valued education so much that they set up the Doris and Bud Leonard Scholarship for Delton students through the Barry County Community Foundation. They left most of their estate to local kids through the scholarship, classroom grants, and more.

SWMLC had worked with the Leonards since the mid 1990s toward placing a conservation easement on their beautiful farm, though neither Bud nor Doris lived to see the final paperwork completed. Their cherished caretaker, Sandy Barker, became trustee after their passing and worked with SWMLC to complete the easement, just as they had planned. Sandy emphasized, "Bud and Doris both dearly loved Wall Lake and the land around it, they both cared for the history of Delton, and, with no children, they shared their legacy with the community."

SWMLC Conservation Projects Manager, Emily Wilke, adds, "The Leonard Conservation Easement is a perfect example of everything that makes Barry County such an incredible place to conserve land. Property owners like the Leonards have a deep, abiding love for these

special places, and you can feel the echoes of it even after they are gone. I'm honored to have been a part of their conservation legacy."

Indeed, Bud's and Doris' legacy lives on in this final, generous gift that protects nature while ensuring that the entrance to their beloved Delton remains inviting and natural forever.

This is what we do. SWMLC helps families like the Leonards explore their land protection options to see if conservation is right for them. As a community-supported organization, **YOU make this possible.** Your desire to conserve special, natural places in Michigan has protected over 17,000 acres in the last 29 years. **Together, we are making a difference.**

Curious about land protection options? Give us a call at 269-324-1600 or email conserveland@swmlc.org to request a confidential conversation with Emily, Bruce, or Hilary – our land protection specialists.

Carrying Forward a Love for the Land

Bruce Howe, Land Protection Specialist

When the realtor told young parents Anthony and Amber Wurl that the property they wanted to purchase was permanently protected by a conservation easement, they found themselves asking the same question that many who are unfamiliar with the term have asked before, "okay, what's that?" However, the size, location, and natural beauty of the land persuaded them to learn more. "Our first phone call with Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy definitely encouraged us to get our questions answered," Anthony later said, "and we felt confident that the relationship would be a partnership." Last fall they became the second owners of land protected since 2003 by the Anderson Conservation Easement (CE).

Understanding the easement before their purchase allowed the Wurls to focus on these important moments rather than worry about how it might affect their vision for their family's future.

After nearly 30 years in existence, SWMLC continues to work with families like the Wurls to protect over 100 unique, privately-owned conservation easement properties. As one of the first lands protected by SWMLC, the Anderson CE is the harbinger of a new trend in private land conservation: it is among a handful of SWMLC easement properties that have changed ownership in recent years, passing on to "successive generation" easement owners.

We caught up with the new owners of the Anderson CE on a sunlit spring afternoon with their young daughter, Esther, and new baby son, Joseph, in tow. Esther bounded through the woods, as full of energy as the freshly grown leaves around her, exploring as we talked. Having space for their growing family was a top priority in their search for a home and now, as Amber put it, "it's like having a nature center in our backyard."

Understanding the easement before their purchase allowed the Wurls to focus on important moments like these rather than worry about how it might affect their vision for their family's future. Navigating this transition can be a challenging process for easement buyers and sellers alike. For sellers, it's an inevitable event that's made easier by involving your land trust early on in the process. This allows us to help you accurately represent restrictions to realtors and interested buyers. Then, when a sale does occur, new owners are more informed not only about the conservation values of their land, but also their role in the partnership of protecting it.

The Wurls are already deeply invested in the property, having restored the original house and created natural trails through the woods. "The conservation easement is something we talk about a lot," said Anthony, with Amber adding that it fit right into their shared mindset of sustainability. Along with the land, this approach is something they hope to pass on to their children, who are growing up literally surrounded by nature. "We're more excited than our daughter when a deer peers in our windows, at this point she's just used to it."

Photos | Amelia Hansen

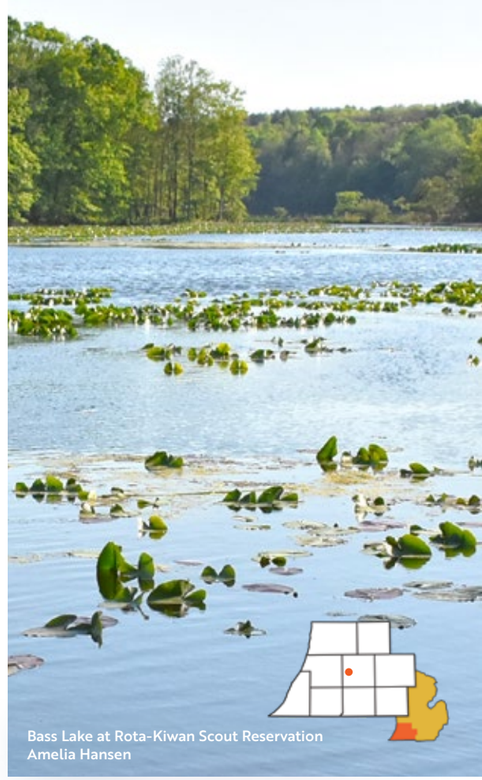
Moving Forward Together

The announced closure of the Rota-Kiwan Scout Reservation by the Michigan Crossroads Council of the Boy Scouts of America caused quite a stir in the fall of 2019. Concerned citizens and officials met to discuss what might happen next, and Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy was invited to participate.

Built in 1921, the reservation is beloved by many former scouts who have fond memories of learning wood lore, crafts, and canoeing while attending camp. The 200-acre property is mostly forested and contains two lakes, one of which is home to a great blue heron rookery. Seeing an incredible opportunity to create public, natural, open space on Kalamazoo County's west side, SWMLC recommended that it be conserved.

Earlier this year, Kalamazoo County Parks and Recreation announced their intent to work with the Boy Scouts to purchase the property and create a new county park. As part of the fundraising efforts, SWMLC was asked to consider holding a conservation easement on the property to ensure that the remarkable site will remain forever undeveloped.

SWMLC staff have begun working with Kalamazoo County Parks and donors to outline our oversight role in the project. Creating and implementing a county park vision for the former camp has its challenges, but we are honored to be a part of this collaborative community effort.



Bass Lake at Rota-Kiwan Scout Reservation
Amelia Hansen

Let It Flow

Hilary Hunt, SWMLC Land Protection Specialist

Since 2014, SWMLC has owned and stewarded the Donald and Hilda Myers Nature Preserve on East G Avenue in Comstock Township. The 93-acre Myers Preserve protects the headwaters of Comstock Creek, as it flows south under G Avenue through the nature preserve's woods and wet meadows, and out into Campbell Lake. Through the farseeing generosity of the Myers family and the representatives of their trust, 27 additional acres of wetland habitat adjacent to the existing preserve have now been protected! This recent preserve expansion includes 800 feet of frontage on Campbell Lake, which will provide a safe, natural passageway for waterfowl and wetland birds.

The wetlands on the Myers Nature Preserve are critically important for filtration of water in the Kalamazoo City well fields less than a mile downstream. Whether or not you live in the Campbell Lake area, anyone drinking city water benefits from this nature preserve. Water that flows from the headwaters of Comstock Creek within the preserve then flows through a series of wetlands, depositing sediments and nutrients along the way, making them rich wildlife habitat. As that water flows out of the preserve and into Campbell Lake, it is made cleaner for human drinking water by this natural filtration. Because of the sensitivity of the habitat, this limited access preserve will only be open to the public during special events.

Although Dr. Donald and Dr. Hilda Myers are no longer alive to see this preserve expansion, we are nonetheless deeply thankful for their vision and generosity, which lives on in the sandhill cranes, great-crested flycatchers, scarlet tanagers, and other wildlife and plants that are a part of this land.

Donald and Hilda Myers Nature Preserve
Mitch Lettow

Tree Planting *with a Twist*

Creating climate resilient forests on our nature preserves

Mitch Lettow, Stewardship Director

Planting trees is a timeless tradition that helps the environment and leaves a living legacy for the next generation. And this classic call to action is still relevant in a rapidly changing 21st century, perhaps more than ever. With a changing climate, emerging forest pests, and a fragmented natural world, "tree planting with a twist" may be just the thing that brings long-term ecological health to our beloved Michigan forests.

To that end, we are thrilled to announce that we have received a $179,000 grant from the Wildlife Conservation Society's "Climate Adaptation Fund," funded by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation. This grant will help Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy and partners work together to improve the health of some of our degraded forest habitats, and keep them healthy into the future amidst the many challenges they face. Over the next two years, SWMLC, Ottawa County Parks, The Nature Conservancy in Michigan, Chikaming Open Lands, and Shirley Heinze Land Trust will collaborate in planting over 40,000 trees and shrubs, and improving forest health. The work covers nature preserves totaling over 500 acres and spanning over 70 miles of latitude from northwest Indiana to the Grand River in west Michigan. SWMLC nature preserves Wau-Ke-Na (north and south tracts), Black River, Eastman Creek, and Kesling will all see benefits to their forests.

Many of our strategies are proven habitat improvement techniques: removing invasive plants, reforesting damaged habitats, and thinning single-species forests by planting diverse saplings in their understory. The "twist" comes with the selection of which tree species to plant.

A tree is never "just a tree" and the genetics of any given species make it suitable to particular ranges in latitude, temperature, conditions, and habitats. For example, Eastern hemlock prefers the chilly moist conditions of northern Michigan but it is also rooted in the cool stream drainages along the Lake Michigan shore in our area. However, the increasingly high summer temperatures of recent years and invasive forest pests are stressful to it, making it harder for hemlocks to survive in southwest Michigan. What new species will replace their shrinking populations?

The answer may be to plant trees with "southern roots," whose geographic ranges extend northward just into or near southwest Michigan. Consider pawpaws, small trees whose tropical-tasting fruit are coveted by locals almost as much as morel mushrooms. Pawpaws are rather uncommon in our region because they are at the northern limit of their range, but the "Indiana banana" is much more common in counties and states to our south. If our weather patterns continue to get warmer and wetter, will pawpaw populations grow in southwest Michigan?

Paw paw fruit; Eastern hemlock foliage
Amelia Hansen

Another approach may be to plant local tree species but choose stock that has been grown in southern locations. For instance, white oaks are one of the most widespread and highly adaptable trees in eastern North America, and those from southern Illinois are likely to be better adapted to warm temperatures than are those from northern Michigan. By working with reputable nurseries that track the genetics of their saplings, we can strategically incorporate species and genetic diversity into our forests.

To uphold our mission to "preserve wild and scenic places for today and keep them healthy for tomorrow," we must be willing to adapt to changing conditions for the health of our natural areas. It's not an easy task, but if we stay optimistic and focus on solutions to ecological problems, we can keep our promise to the next generation.

While we'd love to take credit for this idea, it's not a new one. In fact, nature has orchestrated this ebb and flow of tree species across the continent many times. Every year, tree pollen blown by the wind lands on the surfaces of lakes, then sinks to the bottom. Scientists have analyzed these decades of pollen layers like pages in a history book. They tell us that different groups of trees in our recent past have spread nearly 100 miles north into southern Michigan with a shift of just 1.5° Celsius . (Hupy and Yansa, 2009).

Map: Bruce Howe

MAP NOTES

Resistance: The ability to maintain relative status quo in the face of disturbance.

Resilience: The degree to which systems can bounce back from disturbance without major or irreversible changes.

Transition: Easing into a future state

COL = Chikaming Open Lands
OCP = Ottawa County Parks
Pier Cove = Pier Cove Park
SHLT = Shirley Heinze Land Trust
SWMLC = Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy
TNC = The Nature Conservancy in Michigan

VOLUNTEERS MAKE THE DIFFERENCE THANK YOU!

preserve stewardship
PLAY IT SAFE

Kristi Chapman, SWMLC Volunteer
Article reprinted with permission from *SW Michigan Spark*

As the coronavirus continues to stalk southwest Michigan, the Wednesday Warriors have had to adjust their tactics. SWMLC practices the most careful and safe procedures to protect its staff, and the merry band of irrepressible volunteers who put their enthusiasm for the natural world into action are no exception.

With carpooling ruled out, the Wednesday workdays concentrate on preserves closest to the greater Kalamazoo Area. Chipman and Myers Preserves are getting extra helpings of loving attention this year. Arriving in separate cars, we don our PPE: work gloves, hat, sunscreen, bug spray, water bottle. And, after being told to share ever since kindergarten, we now must bring all our own tools: loppers, pruning shears, saws, online maps. With one self-designated Social Distancing Cop, we fan out into the preserve to clear out invasive species, collect wildflower seeds, and generally scout the area for interesting plants and less interesting litter. From time to time, two Warriors will accidentally drift too close and the call goes out, "Six feet!" Like the butterflies at the blooming summer flowers, we mirror their six-footed lifestyle.

With some adjustments, and slightly louder conversations, the Warriors are making the most of the season, returning the preserves to more natural habitats, getting some exercise, and taking a little break from watching the news.

As the recent nationwide call went out to prepare for a second wave of the virus, SWMLC has pulled back from organized group workdays in an abundance of caution. But we look forward to a future when we can once again make full-force attacks on those invasive plants that just don't give a hoot about staying six feet apart!

Photos | Dave Brown

BEFORE
At Myers Preserve, enormous piles of cut buckthorn weren't very pretty last winter after the Wednesday/Winter Warriors tackled them.

AFTER
But by late summer, it's almost as if the wetland responded with a huge sigh of relief, exhaling in wildflowers.

What are they doing out there?

While adapting to stewardship work during COVID-19, the SWMLC Stewardship Crew has been:

- Managing the usual offenders: autumn olive, honeysuckle, narrow-leaved/hybrid cattails, phragmites, multiflora rose, and oriental bittersweet at preserves all across our 9-county service area.
- Tagging and surveying hemlock trees in Allegan county in preparation for Hemlock Woolly Adelgid management treatment.
- Keeping things up at those preserves that are experiencing increased use as people turn to nature for balance and self-care in response to the pandemic.

Meanwhile the Wednesday Warrior volunteers have:

- Expanded the savanna at Chipman Preserve by removing more walls of invasive shrubs at their edges.
- Re-treated obnoxious glossy buckthorn and autumn olive resprouts in places where we've worked in the past.
- Removed so much common buckthorn at Myers Preserve that we saw native fen species like Joe-Pye weed and tussock sedge come back after just one year!

And the volunteer "Pluggers" have been harvesting prairie and savanna seed for next year's projects, and planting the "plugs" of desired plants into new areas.

Stay tuned, there's lots of fun stuff to come!

Renaissance at Hidden Marsh

Hidden Marsh Sanctuary, located on the Portage River just upstream from the city of Three Rivers, is one of Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy's oldest and most beloved public preserves.

It's been a neighborhood favorite for years, its shady paths and scenic water providing a nice place to walk the dog, make a beautiful plein air painting, or take the kids to search for pretty leaves.

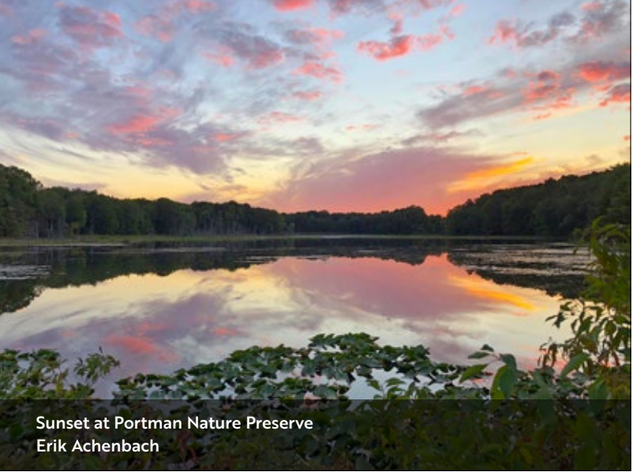
But it has gotten a little shaggy in recent years and its many fans want to make sure it continues to be a peaceful, local place where people go to connect with nature. Friends and neighbors have started helping out – and we couldn't be more grateful or delighted.

Preserve stewards, John and Michelle Harrold, have gone above and beyond in keeping the place spruced up – mowing trails, picking up the grossest trash imaginable, and tending to details like marking trip-hazard stumps. Neighbor Damien Newberry has taken on some large management projects with his tractor, which includes helping SWMLC's Stewardship Crew make the trails more inviting by thinning the wall of shrubs around the parking lot. Volunteer Jay Bonsignore is donating costs, skill, and talent to build a new trail kiosk for Hidden Marsh, as well as other SWMLC preserves. The work and dedication of these volunteers is making a huge impact.

SWMLC Executive Director and President Pete Ter Louw spent the afternoon at Hidden Marsh during the recent Three Rivers Area Fall Color Tour and talked with people about the preserve. Those who were familiar with it were excited to learn about the proposed improvements, increased maintenance, and the renewed attention the preserve is receiving. He counted nearly 60 visitors, mostly from the Three Rivers area, but also Kalamazoo, Indiana, and Chicago. There were many families with young children, and lots of positive comments.

Hidden Marsh Sanctuary seems to be experiencing something of a renaissance that's inspiring and humbling. We're motivated and pleased to see how important it remains to the community!

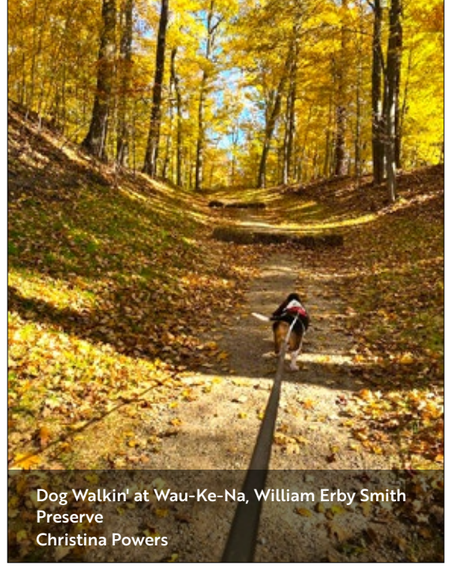
Peter Ter Louw



Sunset at Portman Nature Preserve
Erik Achenbach

"Portman Preserve is so gorgeous it hurts, with two lovely lakes, lush forested trails, and so many birds (turkeys, herons, geese, and songbirds). And ferns."

— Melissa Zinn



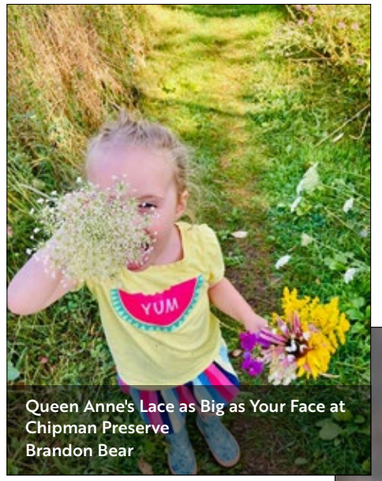
Dog Walkin' at Wau-Ke-Na, William Erby Smith Preserve
Christina Powers

#SWMLC

Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy has embraced the power of social media as a communication tool that allows us to speak directly to preserve users, friends, colleagues, and supporters. We post stories and photos, make announcements, provide education, share news, and invite people to join us in our conservation work. In turn, our followers regularly post their own photos and preserve experiences on Facebook and Instagram, attracting their friends to SWMLC's pages and work. Here is just a small sampling of the cool stuff that's been recently posted. Do you have something to share? Please post it – or send it via email to conserveland@swmlc.org!

"... so we went to Bow in the Clouds Nature Preserve. I've come in late winter and early spring. Visiting there at this time of year was like visiting a completely different nature preserve!"

— Denise Miller



Queen Anne's Lace as Big as Your Face at Chipman Preserve
Brandon Bear

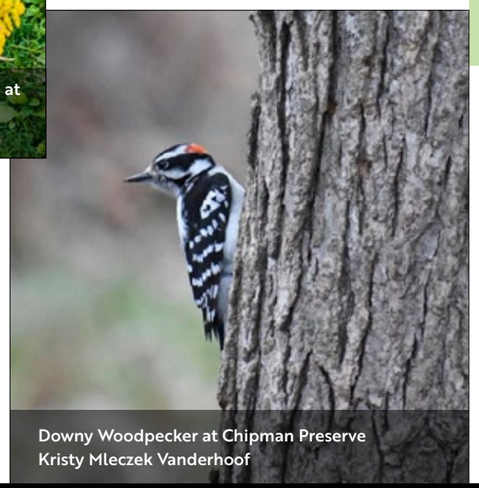
"On this first warm and sunny day I took the boys to Lake Michigan (Pilgrim Haven Natural Area). It was so life giving! This is how we will deal with the foreseeable unknown future. Taking deep breaths of fresh air and getting outside as much as possible."

— Marci Larsen

Joe-Pye Weed at Bow in the Clouds Preserve
Denise Miller

"How is at-home learning going? AWESOME! We got to explore at Bow in the Clouds Nature Preserve and reinforce the things we've been learning at school. Rhyming, spelling, letter sounds, greater than, less than, senses, seasons, colors, weather all while enjoying this beautiful day and getting some exercise."

— Janelle Haselhuhn (via email)



Downy Woodpecker at Chipman Preserve
Kristy Mleczek Vanderhoof

Donations • June 1, 2020 – September 30, 2020

The following contributions were made by people who love the forests, fields, lakes, marshes, prairies, rivers, streams, swamps, and woods of Southwest Michigan. **You make our work possible. Thank you!**

Honor Gifts

Bud and Judi Baldwin
In honor of Woody Boudeman's 80th birthday

David Fitzgerald
In honor of Danny Fitzgerald's 53rd birthday, and our time spent camping at Pilgrim Haven

Pam Hjelmquist
In honor of my parents, Ken & Marlena Kirton's 65th wedding anniversary, 7/31/2020

Pam Hjelmquist
In honor of Ken Kirton for Father's Day

Laura and Dale Latulippe
In honor of Patricia Pettinga

Lauri Rosenberg
In honor of my dad, Marvin Rosenberg, and all the wonderful times we shared in South Haven

Karen E. Semenuk
In honor of Carole Dubritsky on her 70th birthday.

Memorials

Guala Giving Fund at Fidelity Charitable
In memory of Gail Lauzzana

Mark Jenness and Cheryl Lyon-Jenness
In memory of Dennis Bryan

Amy Lehman
In memory of Ronnee Harrell

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In-Kind Donations

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Welcome to New Members!

Cerulean Warbler ($250+)
Nate Hartmann
Jurate M. and Carl Landwehr
Kerry Mulholland

Spotted Turtle ($100+)
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Bethany Moody
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Southwest Michigan Planning Commission – Paw Paw Black River EGLE Project
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Matching Gifts

Microsoft Corporation
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If we have accidently 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.

Double Your Impact! Many corporations match contributions made to Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy.

Are you an employee of – or retired from – a company with a matching gift program? Send your company form along with your gift and we'll be happy to follow-up! Call Nicole at 269-324-1600 x307 or email her at nmspeedy@swmlc.org.

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, or annually. It's easy! Set up your account by typing: ***www.swmlc.org/become-a-member*** and clicking ***"join now!"*** *or* use this QR code.

Holiday gift-giving that helps protect nature!

A gift membership to SWMLC tells the recipient that you recognize and honor their love for nature.

Call Miko at 269-324-1600 x302 or send an email to cmdargitz@swmlc.org to find out more.

Soft colorful t-shirts, eco-friendly tote bags, ball caps, magnets, beanies . . . help spread the word about land conservation in southwest Michigan by giving SWMLC swag!

Sorry, mail-order only this year due to COVID restrictions, so please shop our website (menu dropdown: *Support Our Work,* then *SWMLC Gear)* or use this QR code.

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It can really add up at this time of year!

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"Sometimes I wish I could photosynthesize so that just by being, just by shimmering at the meadow's edge or floating lazily on a pond, I could be doing the work of the world while standing silent in the sun."

— Robin Wall Kimmerer

Mother, scientist, professor, author, and enrolled member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation.

Smoky Sunrise at Chipman Preserve | Lynda Anderson

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