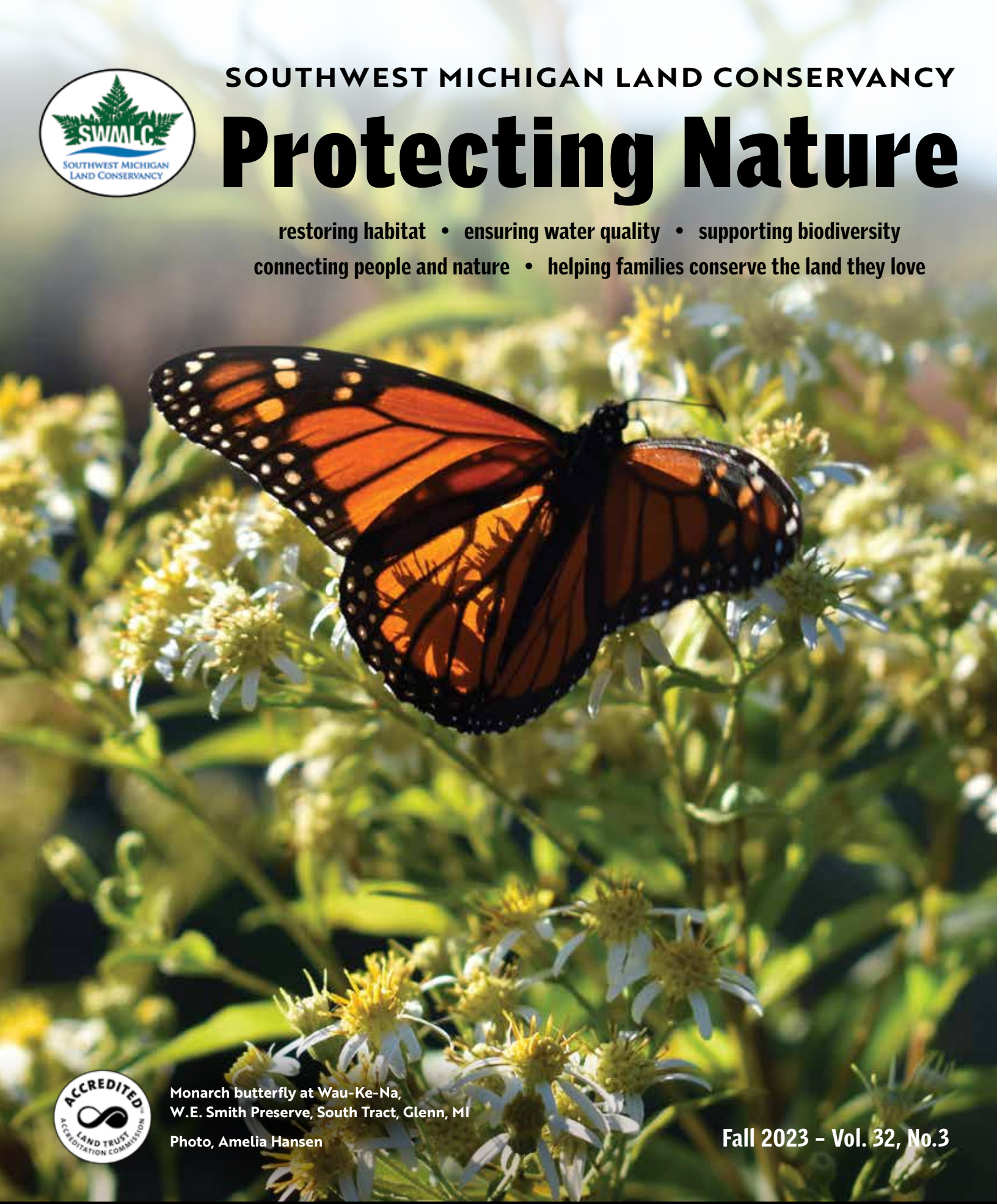
SOUTHWEST MICHIGAN LAND CONSERVANCY

Protecting Nature

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



Monarch butterfly at Wau-Ke-Na,
W.E. Smith Preserve, South Tract, Glenn, MI

Photo, Amelia Hansen

Fall 2023 - Vol. 32, No.3

If we don't protect our land and water - *who will?*

This fall, SWMLC is launching the Force for Nature Campaign for new and renewing members, which will help build the strong base we need to clarify our goals and design strategies to reach them.

Growing Membership, Building Capacity

Michael Larson, President and Executive Director

Aerial view of Chipman Preserve, Comstock Township, Kalamazoo County | Keto Gyekis

Fall is my favorite time of year.

I love being outdoors in the cooler temperatures and watching the colors change. A landowner whose property is protected by a SWMLC conservation easement recently gave me a tour of his land, which was bursting with fall color. As I listened to him talk about his beloved property, I was blown away by his proactive approach to land protection, one that I'm sure he shares with all of SWMLC's members and supporters. That deep commitment to nature, along with the friendship and generosity shown by SWMLC's supporters, is hugely inspiring and humbling.

Together, we met our summer goal of matching the $125,000 Carls Foundation Challenge Grant to protect and steward LaGrange Valley Wetlands, soon to be SWMLC's largest preserve at 457 acres. **SWMLC members and donors made this possible . . . *thank you!***

But SWMLC's members also make less glamorous work possible. Behind the headlines, there's a lot of extremely important, ordinary work that must get done. (Read more about our behind-the-scenes work in "Get to Know the Players!" on pages 8-9.)

Member support is the foundation of our work and vitally important to our mission.

Members make everything happen at SWMLC, from the splashiest land deals to buying pens and paper. The membership dollars you entrust to us support biodiversity, protect clean headwaters, connect people with nature, and help families save the land they love – now and forever.

But we need more members – more "forces for nature" – to walk this conservation path with us. The increased support will help make SWMLC strong and flexible so we can take good care of what we've already protected, pursue new projects, and make more of the opportunities that we currently have to turn away.

This fall, SWMLC is launching the Force for Nature Campaign for new and renewing members, which will help build the strong base we need to clarify our goals and design strategies to reach them. Current and past SWMLC board members have united to issue a challenge, pledging to match membership dollars one-to-one, doubling every membership contribution up to $150,000. **It's a good time to renew your membership – maybe even at a higher level – and a really important time for folks to start a new SWMLC membership.** Learn more about the Force for Nature Campaign on page 4, or go directly to our website to renew or start your new membership (www.swmlc.org/membership).

We need more members to walk this conservation path with us. The increased support will help make SWMLC strong and flexible so we can take good care of what we've already protected, pursue new projects, and make more of the opportunities that we currently have to turn away.

Experience for yourself the huge impact members have made by visiting one of SWMLC's 18 public preserves. Walk the trails, breathe deeply, enjoy the season, and know: our supporters make this happen.

Now let's keep going – together, we can make a lasting difference for nature in southwest Michigan!

Mike Larson, SWMLC President and Executive Director • mlarson@swmlc.org • 269-324-1600 x307

Welcome Emily!

We're excited to welcome our newest full-time staff person, Land Protection Specialist Emily Brown.

Emily grew up in rural Allegan County and was drawn back to West Michigan after receiving her Bachelor of Science in Environmental Science with a focus on conservation from the University of Michigan. Emily previously worked at the Allegan Conservation District where she helped farmers and landowners increase their soil health. Emily lives in Otsego now, where she enjoys gardening, hiking with her dog, Zora, and spending time outside and on the water as much as possible.

2023 Annual Members' Meeting

Thank you to everyone who came out to our Annual Members Meeting this past August at Cody Kresta Vineyard and Winery! SWMLC Board Chair Bruce Grubb thanked everyone for their continued support, Board Treasurer Tom Georgoff shared an overview of the annual audit report, and new President and Executive Director Mike Larson talked about his excitement over SWMLC's work and the huge responsibility that comes with protecting nearly 19,000 acres. Land Protection Director Kaleigh Winkler highlighted some of our current projects and Stewardship Director Mitch Lettow gave an update on the 457-acre LaGrange Valley Wetlands acquisition project *(our fundraising goal has been met, thanks to generous donors. See pages 12-13 for more!)*. It was a beautiful evening in a magical setting, and lovely to see so many new and familiar faces!

Many thanks to Cody Kresta for so graciously hosting us!

Birdathon 2023

To everyone who donated or pledged to Birdathon this year . . .

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

4 TEAM MEMBERS
Mitch Lettow, Dave Brown, Ashley Cole-Wick, Kaleigh Winkler

116 BIRD SPECIES DOCUMENTED

6 "LIFERS"
Species seen for the first time by our team of four birders

130 MILES DRIVEN

14 HOURS OF BIRDING

$3,211.17 raised for trail improvements at Spirit Springs Sanctuary!

For a list of donors, please see page 14.
Learn more about the impact these donations made on pages 6-7.

Read Mitch's account of the day's twists and turns on our website!

www.swmlc.org/birdathon-2023-highlights

A SWMLC MEMBER . . .

- Cares about protecting nature and improving habitat for native plants and animals.
- Loves to be outdoors, and feels both peace and energy when out in nature.
- Knows that biodiversity is key to our region's health and resilience.
- Believes that connecting people and nature is good for everyone.
- Gives their time, energy, and resources to create a better world for all of us.

Membership support is at the core of everything we do. We could not do our important conservation work without the powerful force of SWMLC members behind us.

We have protected nearly 19,000 acres in our 9-county service area – an almost 60% increase in land conserved in just the last nine years – while the number of permanent SWMLC staff has remained flat. SWMLC is poised for growth, but we need the organizational capacity to conserve more land and water, take good care of what we've already protected, and keep connecting more people with nature.

So, this fall, SWMLC is launching the
Force for Nature Campaign
for new and renewing members, which will help build the strong base we need to define our goals and implement strategies to reach them.

A SWMLC MEMBER IS A FORCE FOR NATURE

AND WE NEED MORE OF THEM!

Current and past SWMLC board members have united to issue a challenge:
for every dollar contributed for SWMLC membership between now and December 31st,
they will match up to $150,000, doubling the impact!

It's a good time to renew your membership – maybe even at a higher level – and a really important time for folks to start a new SWMLC membership.

If you're not a member, won't you become a SWMLC Force for Nature today?

And if you already are a member, would you consider renewing your membership at the next level up?

Your gift of $100 today will put $200 toward increasing climate resiliency, restoring habitat, ensuring water quality, supporting biodiversity, connecting people and nature, and helping families conserve the land they love.

With your help, we can meet the challenge to build the organizational strength, range, and flexibility we need to keep doing our critical conservation work.

YOU ARE A FORCE FOR NATURE!
SHOW IT WITH A SWMLC MEMBERSHIP TODAY!

Giving is easy – just return the envelope in the center of this newsletter, or scan this QR code (www.swmlc.org/membership), or watch your mailbox (if you're already a donor)!

Waves at Pilgrim Haven Natural Area | Allyson Wentela
Aerial view of Portman Nature Preserve | Nate Fuller
Force for Nature logo | Amelia Hansen

OUTFOXING THE BEAVERS

and other improvements at Spirit Springs Sanctuary

Project photos: Dave Brown, SWMLC

Steve Hersey, Wikimedia Commons

Does the sound of running water make you so crazy that you have to drop everything and find the leak right now? If so, you may be a beaver!

As everyone knows, beavers build dams to create ponds that are safe havens for feeding and raising their families. The sound of trickling water tells a beaver that this all-important security system has a hole in it, and the energetic rodents seem unable to rest until they've fixed the dam leak.

Beavers live in the the large pond at Spirit Springs Sanctuary and, though the flow from the pond's outlet on the northeast end isn't fast, it's strong enough to worry the beavers. Their efforts to block the flow were so enthusiastic that they began to wash out the hiking trail and negatively affect other wildlife. For a while, the beavers plugged the pipe so often that volunteers had to remove their work on a daily basis!

While it is sometimes necessary to get rid of beavers that are causing property damage, SWMLC staff didn't want to do that at Spirit Springs, feeling that the beavers are part of the preserve's ecosystem. So, we decided to trick them instead.

We developed a crafty plan with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), but weren't in a financial position to move forward until last year, when Cass County 100+ Women Who Care graciously donated $3,875 toward the project (see related story in *Protecting Nature,* Vol. 31, No.2). Wanting to make their generosity go even further, we secured additional financial help from USFWS, Ducks Unlimited, and supporters of SWMLC's Birdathon Team, who raised another $3,211 – enough money altogether to not only install the 'beaver deceiver', but also make improvements to Spirit Springs' driveway and parking lot.

This past June, contractors from Generation III Construction installed a brand-new beaver-resistant pond overflow at Spirit Springs. They buried a long plastic pipe under a pile of limestone, then extended it under the trail and into the water. The pipe has a cap at the end and is perforated with many small holes along the sides that allow water to slowly seep from many places at once, eliminating that triggering sound that launches beavers into action, while also making it harder to plug if they are attracted to it. The water exits on the other side of the hiking trail, covered by a cage that prevents debris and critters from getting into it.

The contractors also buried an ingenious 5-foot tall water control device called an Agri Drain that allows stewardship staff to adjust the pond's outflow by inserting panels of increasing heights, and created limestone 'check dams' along the stream bed that help prevent erosion by slowing the pond's outflow during storms. And while they were there, they also graded the parking lot and fixed the driveway's potholes and drainage.

More improvements are planned that will address erosion issues on high-use trails and allow users to walk through other wet areas in the preserve where those beavers are again busy at work!

Thank you, Cass County 100+ Women Who Care, for kicking off this project and supporting our work!

Visit Spirit Springs Sanctuary Sanctuary and experience its quiet solitude and beautiful trails for yourself! Like all of our public preserves, it's open dawn to dusk everyday. Find maps and other info on our website: www.swmlc.org/project/spirit-springs-sanctuary

SWMLC staff can now control the pond's outflow through a pipe that goes under the trail.

This water control device extends five feet down and has removable panels that allow staff to adjust the height of the pond and rate of water through the outflow.

Get to Know the Players!

SWMLC Staff Stats

Mike Larson, President and Executive Director

Hired April 2023

Job: President/Executive Director

Typical day: An early start before everyone in my house wakes up, responding to emails, preparing for meetings. The rest of the day is full of meetings with staff, board members, and key stakeholders, and visiting properties and preserves.

Special day: Watching our team do a prescribed fire at Portman Nature Preserve.

Favorite part of job: Spending time with property owners who have a passion and commitment to conserving land.

Works at SWMLC because "The mission of SWMLC impacts what's important to me personally, and I love playing a role in protecting something forever!"

Favorite public preserve: It's really hard to pick one, but maybe Armintrout Milbocker Nature Preserve?

All time fave song: Here Comes the Sun!

Amelia Hansen, Media Specialist

Hired April 2015

Job: Telling SWMLC's story in words, graphics, and video to increase community awareness and support.

Typical day: Writing stories; creating visuals; posting to social media; updating website.

Special day: Doing field research for a story.

Favorite part of job: Getting to be creative every day.

Works at SWMLC because "I can use my skills to help protect nature right here in my home region."

Favorite public preserve: Black River Preserve

First car: 1972 Ford Gran Torino

Not included in the photo: our Stewardship Crew, who were working at a preserve that day!

Ben Miller, Stewardship Crew Leader

Cedric Ruppert, Stewardship Technician

Gabrielle Sorgenfrei, Stewardship Technician

Cindy Mills, Conservation Easement Specialist

Hired September 2014

Job: Facilitate annual monitoring of conservation easements protected by SWMLC.

Typical day: Lots of paperwork! Communicating with staff, landowners, and volunteers.

Special day: Monitoring visits with landowners, especially if their dog comes along!

Favorite part of job: Helping landowners conserve the habitat and wildlife they love.

Works at SWMLC because "I've been a member of SWMLC since its inception, and I can make a difference from 'behind-the-scenes'."

Favorite public preserve: Black River Preserve

Favorite book: Anything by Fredrik Backman

Dave Brown, Stewardship Specialist

Hired January 2020

Job: Stewarding SWMLC's preserves and infrastructure.

Typical day: checking in with our Stew Crew, preserve maintenance, planning, coordinating projects with stewardship volunteers, contractors, and partner organizations, equipment and structure maintenance, project planning, onsite communications.

Special day: Conducting a prescribed fire, or finding a new plant or animal that I haven't seen before.

Favorite part of job: seeing amazing natural areas from my unique perspective and being the current steward in a long line of future stewards.

Works at SWMLC because "I care deeply about our region's ecological health and this is the way I can use my skillset to give it a nudge."

Favorite public preserve: "I truly love them all . . . they all have something unique and special if you slow down to see it."

Favorite kind of music: punk

Mitch Lettow, Stewardship Director

Hired July 2013

Job: Looking after SWMLC preserves and planning for future conservation

Typical day: Communications with staff and community, coordinating preserve and land protection projects, map-making, budgets, writing grants, presentations.

Special day: Wildlife field surveys or working a prescribed burn.

Favorite part of job: "I'm never bored, and every day is different!"

Works at SWMLC because "The work truly feels like it represents my values, so I get to live that out every day. It's a privilege to be in this position and make a difference."

Favorite public preserve: Portman Nature Preserve

Favorite food: Venison backstrap or ceviche

Miko Dargitz, Development Director

Hired September 2014

Job: Creating opportunities for people to support SWMLC's conservation work.

Typical Day: Writing (letters, donor/community/partner emails, E-News), phone calls, planning, researching funding opportunities, answering inquiries.

Special day: Any day at a SWMLC preserve!

Favorite part of job: Connecting with SWMLC's members and friends who are also passionate about making a real difference for nature in southwest Michigan. I am grateful and inspired every day!

Works at SWMLC because "I believe protecting Nature for the present and the future is essential to the health and well-being of all of us (humans and non-humans, alike)."

Favorite public preserve: Chipman Preserve

Favorite color: Green

Reality Rojas, Operations Director

Hired May 2023

Job: Managing the financial and general operations of the organization.

Typical day: Financial entries, preparing reports, paying bills, registering donations, and much more! No day is ever the same.

Special day: Meeting donors and SWMLC members.

Favorite part of job: Crunching the numbers.

Works at SWMLC because "I get to be part of an organization that has a mission that aligns with my personal values, making the work much more meaningful."

Favorite public preserve: All of them!

Favorite season: Sunny and hot!

Emily Brown, Land Protection Specialist

Hired July 2023

Job: Land Aquisition

Typical day: Creating maps using ArcGIS, drafting conservation easements or baseline documentation reports, grant applications.

Special day: Exploring and documenting new potential land acquisition properties.

Favorite part of job: Any day in the field!

Works at SWMLC because "protecting habitat and natural spaces is important to me!"

Favorite public preserve: Wolf Tree Nature Trails

Favorite movie: The Parent Trap

Kaleigh Winkler, Land Protection Director

Hired May 2022

Job: Land and conservation easement acquisitions, conservation easement stewardship and defense

Typical Day: Identifying potential conservation properties, managing grants and projects, communicating with landowners, stakeholders, and contractors, prepping legal documents.

Special day: Kayaking through LaGrange Valley Wetlands.

Favorite part of job: Working with landowners that are passionate about conservation, collecting conservation easement species lists.

Works at SWMLC because "I feel that I'm able to make a difference in my own community, connect others with nature, and spend more time outdoors."

Favorite public preserve: Spirit Springs Sanctuary

Favorite bird: Wood thrush

Giving Buckthorn the Ol' One-Two

SWMLC volunteers and staff are puttin' the hurt on glossy buckthorn.

Stewardship volunteers Joe Dill and Mike Weis, before and after the glossy buckthorn fortress at Myers Nature Preserve was crushed.

Glossy buckthorn is an invasive, non-native headache that, once established in a wetland, quickly becomes a dense forest that shades out all other plants. SWMLC staff and the mighty Weekly Warrior volunteer stewardship groups have been confronting it at a number of preserves and getting good results.

Volunteers and stewardship staff have whittled down the buckthorn fortress at **Myers Nature Preserve** in Comstock Township for the last four years and their swashbuckling efforts have finally succeeded! This past spring, the Warriors finally freed the prairie fen from the dreadful plant and saw it come alive by late summer with native wildflowers like aster, lobelia, and goldenrod. The buckthorn may creep back, but it will be much more controllable.

Thank you, Weekly Warriors!

We're taking a different approach at **Augusta Floodplain Forest Preserve** on the Kalamazoo River. Here, glossy buckthorn has invaded a 13-acre acre wet meadow habitat, an area that's too large to control with hand tools. So, with matching grants from the US Fish & Wildlife Service and Ducks Unlimited, we're using two techniques that take advantage of buckthorn's preference for moist – but not wet – environments.

First, we've stressed the obnoxious plant with targeted herbicide treatments. Next, we will use an AgriDrain (an ingenious water control device that allows us to manage water depth, see more on pages 6-7) to drown it. When we draw the water back down in the spring, we hope to see sunlight streaming through sad, leafless buckthorn, encouraging the native sedges and wildflowers to flourish.

Bye bye, buckthorn!

Making Conservation Personal with StoryCorps

Two people are talking on the radio. Their heartfelt conversation is so real that you pause to listen and realize it's a StoryCorps interview.

StoryCorps is a non-profit organization that preserves and shares stories that "build connections between people and create a more just and compassionate world." People interview people they know: parents, kids, spouses, friends, co-workers, and the vibe is gentle, supportive, and genuine.

StoryCorps started in New York City, but now travels the country in an Airstream trailer equipped with a mobile recording studio. This past summer, they came to Kalamazoo and offered recording sessions to selected non-profit organizations and SWMLC was one of those they chose!

We were delighted and surprised by this opportunity to talk about conservation on a personal level. But slots were limited and choosing who to interview was tough ***(to the many friends and supporters that we didn't contact, please accept our sincere apologies, we may still contact you for a non-StoryCorps interview!).*** Knowing that history has a way of fading if it's not actively engaged, we decided to focus on SWMLC's early days.

SWMLC Media Specialist Amelia Hansen and Stewardship Director Mitch Lettow conducted the interviews, pairing people with shared experiences in hopes of sparking stories. Questions were sent ahead, then Amelia and Mitch met the interviewees at the Kalamazoo Public Library, which generously provided recording space after StoryCorps' equipment was stolen from the Airstream. A StoryCorps technician helped folks get started, regulated the sound, and signaled when they reached the 40-minute limit.

The interviewees did an amazing job! Sharing microphones in the tight, stuffy recording room, they all dug in deep to offer gently humorous tales and thoughtful, positive, inspiring reflections on the past and future of conservation in southwest Michigan. We've received three recordings so far – here's a sample:

"Nature is what brings us all back together." – Nate Fuller

"For me, to love the land is to be the best person I can be." – Al Gemrich

"There's a conservation movement and it's been coming for a long time . . . and I'm proud to be part of that." – Donna Keller

"Conservation reminds me of how important the long view is." – Renee Kivikko

"A sense of curiosity helps, and don't give up hope." – Pam Larson

"This (conservation) part of my life would not have been fulfilled . . . without the vehicle of a land trust and the community it created." – Tom Springer

Long time friends and SWMLC supporters Al Gemrich and Donna Keller, with StoryCorps facilitator Francesca Peña.

SWMLC's StoryCorps recordings will be archived at the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress – giving future generations a glimpse into our current world. Listen to them on our website: www.swmlc.org/storycorps-interviews

Photos: Dan Burton

The Prothonotary Partnership

Here at SWMLC, we're very gratified when we learn that the time, work, and money spent on protecting a property has paid off in some way. In this case, at Dayton-Willard Wildlife Preserve (protected 2009), it has paid back in gold . . . "golden swamp warblers," that is!

We're delighted to learn that prothonotary warblers raised a family in one of the three nest boxes that SWMLC friend Dan Burton built and installed along the South Branch of the Paw Paw River near the limited-access, refuge preserve. Considered a species of 'Special Concern,' the presence of these brilliant yellow songbirds indicates that Dayton-Willard's floodplain forest habitat is healthy, rich in biodiversity, and an excellent home for many other species as well.

Adding to the good news, Dan says there were many more reported sightings of prothonotaries on the Paw Paw River this summer than in recent years.

Dan volunteers as a Conservation Easement Monitor for SWMLC, but he is also deeply involved with Two Rivers Coalition (TRC), another non-profit organization that works to protect water and habitat in the Black and Paw Paw River Watersheds. Through TRC, Dan has created the Prothonotary Partnership, a citizen science project that not only places and monitors nest boxes in promising habitat, but also educates and advocates for these two ecologically valuable watersheds, using the dazzling golden birds as metaphorical ambassadors.

Many thanks to Dan Burton and Two Rivers Coalition for caring and working to protect water and habitat in southwest Michigan!

There's so much more to the Prothonotary Partnership story than we can fit into this space! Please visit TRC's website to learn more: **www.tworiverscoalition.org/prowpartnership.asp**
And be sure to check out their excellent Storymap: **https://bit.ly/46Cfel0**

Thanks to the generosity of many conservation-minded people and the Carls Foundation, SWMLC now has the additional $250,000 we need to to match the federal Endangered Species Act funding that we gratefully received from the **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**, enabling us to purchase **(Recover)** this property that is the former Lake LaGrange.

The funds raised this summer will also go toward building a much-needed stewardship fund that will enable us to **Restore** the property over the near-term, and **Rewild** it over time.

Once acquisition is complete, and with valuable assistance from our conservation partners at **Edward Lowe Foundation**, SWMLC will focus on removing the most aggressive invasive plant (the non-native wetland grass called 'phragmites') that poses a serious threat to LaGrange Valley Wetlands' rare and threatened native plants and animals, as well as to neighboring properties.

The final goal for SWMLC will be to return LaGrange Valley Wetlands to its natural, wild state: quality habitat for the plants and animals that have historically lived there.

It has been amazing to see people rally around this project, and we want to say THANK YOU to everyone who helped make this happen! Your enthusiastic support makes us even more hopeful for the future of conservation in southwest Michigan.

IN-KIND DONATIONS

Cairn Stone Adventure Tours
Leading a fundraising hiking event

Doe-Wah-Jack's
Loaning kayaks

Edward Lowe Foundation
Hosting committee meetings

Lindy's Restaurant
Hosting hiking and paddle events

DONATIONS ABOVE $1000

Anonymous (2)
Beth Bradburn
David Coleman
Joan Conway
Kalman and Becky Csia
Dana and Toni Dogterom
Mark and Donna Harrison
Jim Hewitt
Paul C. and Joyce R. Kline
Paul LaFerriere
Robert Linderman
Michael and Ann McCuistion
Stan and Connie Rajnak
Rob Servis
Richard and Julie (Powell) Wyrwa

Dowagiac Creek at LaGrange Valley Wetlands, photo by Mitch Lettow

DONATIONS UP TO $1000

John Adams
Bruce Alden
Todd Alfes
Jill Allread
David A. Anderson
Jeanne M. Anderson
Aren and Sarah Arendsen
Robert and Joanne Arvidson
Korine E. Bachleda Blyveis and Jeff Blyveis
Michael E. Bailey
Phyllis J. Barents
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JoAnne Beertema
George A. Bergman
Harry Bird
Nancy Bishop
Black River Tavern
Barbara Boven
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Ilse Gebhard and Russ Schipper
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Justin Gish
Kyle Alexandra Gonzalez
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Rochelle Habeck and Allan Hunt
Thomas Hagadone and Pamela Miller
Robert and Sharon Handelsman
Ladislav R. Hanka and Jana Hanka
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Jean Hartmann
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Amy and Kevin Hausman
Sassafras Havilar
Phillip and Lynne Heasley
Phil Hecksel
Gary and Mary Herder
Heather Hill
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William C. Johnson
Susan Junkroski
Peter Keith
Patrick Kenning
Amy Garver Kilbridge
Renee Kivikko
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Robert and Joyce Leppard
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Diana K. Lubic
Karen Maas
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Edwin F. Meyer II
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Mark E. Miller
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Craig and Jean Mohney
Shannon Moore
Diann Morris
Sally Muniz and Vernon Bennett III
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Wendy and Doug Robbins
Lynn Robertson
David Roeder
Cindy Roman
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David Sheldon
George and Harriet Slomp
Carole G. and John C. Smith
Judi Stimson and Bill Myers
Diana and Houston Stokes
Laurel and Rick Stravers
David and Susan Taylor
Ed Thomas
Town and Country Garden Club
Michelle and Chris Tracy
Michael A. Travis
Virginia Van Andel
Mark Van Eizenga
William and Carol Venema
Donna Vogtmann and Robert W. Leet
Rhonda Walters
Mallary Webb
Janice Wick
Larry and Rose Wile
Bruce and Jean Williams
Neil Willson
Tim and Julie Winslow
Kristina Wirtz
Nancy Wolf
Eugene and Vivian Wood
Susan and Gerald Wray
Jonathan Wuepper
Betsy York
Chris and Katie Youngs
Ben and Kathy Zimont
Chad Zirbel

Many thanks to the LaGrange Valley Committee members for their invaluable help!

Korie Blyveis (Cass County Conservation District), George Burgoyne, Matthew Bussler (Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians), Paul File, Jennifer Kanine (Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians), Mike McCuistion (Edward Lowe Foundation), Becky Moore, Jarod Reibel (Edward Lowe Foundation), Lynn Steil, Bill Westrate, Steve Winchester (Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians), Scott Wyman (Cass County Parks), Jake Young (Cass County Conservation District).

If we have accidentally omitted your name, or you find an error, we apologize. Please call Reality Rojas at 269-324-1600 x309 so we can correct the mistake. Thank you.

Donations • June 16, 2023 – October 15, 2023

The following contributions were made by people who want to make sure that there will still be wild places for future generations of people and wildlife.

You make our work possible. Thank you!

Honor Gifts

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

Elisabeth R. French
Hastings Point, LLC
In Honor of Pete Ter Louw

Pam Hjelmquist
In Honor of Kenneth Kirton for Father's Day

Rudy Herdeck and Becky Schrock Herdeck
Chip and Pat Hlatko
Deb Wickman and Tim Bartik
In Honor of the Marriage of Regina Alleman and Rhonda Egidio

Memorials

Kaye M. Campbell
In memory of Bruce Campbell

Nathan and Deborah Mattson
In memory of Mr. and Mrs. Donald Dragoo

Charles McEwen
In memory of Lorna McEwen

Frederick and Nancy Reeves
In memory of David Dieterman

William Schma
In memory of Gerry Schma

William and Carol Venema
In memory of David Blunt

In memory of David Allen
Susanne Butters
Joyce Denooyer
Tom and Donna Lambert
Lyda and Vern Stillwell
William and Carol Venema
Dr. and Mrs. Tim Whalen

In memory of Richard Brewer
Joseph and Nancy Engemann
Mark and Mary Sue Hoffman
Florence Orosz
Hazel Rood

In memory of Ross Clay
Gary and Karen Armstrong
Pattie Bender
Douglas and Tamara Bloss
Christopher Katsaros
Judy Lamphere
Myrna Myers
Margaret Ruggles
James and Carolyn Stokoe

In memory of Jocelyn Hodgman
Stanley Clark Carmichael
Kurt Droppers
Charles and Pamela Hodgman
Bruce Kresge
Dianne Martin
Elinor Upjohn

In memory of Paul Locey
Anonymous (2)
The Bresson Family and all of the employees at Galesburg Hardware
Pat and Ruth Harrison
Leonard Klein
Randy VanDam

In memory of Milo VanDyk
Helen Bogatschow
Carol Carpenter
Dorothy Fancher
Laurie Schuster
Lorraine Vlietstra
Lance and Marti Wile

In-Kind Donations

Edward Lowe Foundation
Hosting and providing tours for SWMLC's Volunteer Appreciation Day

Keto Gyekis
Drone photography

Paul MacNellis
Loan of prescribed fire equipment

Welcome New Members!

Spotted Turtle ($100+)
David and Susan Allen
James A. Chipman Family
Patrick John Hall
Pat Sweeney

Little Brown Bat ($50+)
Sheryl DeLuca
Kristine Gibson
Kevin Gilligan
Dawn Henningson
Jim Long
Kyle Pierce
Kim Traverse
Mr. and Mrs. James Wheeler

Business Memberships
Audubon Society of Kalamazoo
Black River Tavern
Cody Kresta Vineyard & Winery
Grow and Show Garden Club
Secure Start Inspections, Inc.

Grants

The Burdick-Thorne Foundation
The H.P. and Genevieve Connable Fund
Nancy Malcolmson Connable Fund

Matching Gifts

The Clorox Company
Microsoft/Give with Bing
New Belgium Brewing Co.
Pfizer
Stryker

Birdathon Donations

Chuck and Jan Benner
Bev and Chuck Brown
David and Mary Lou Butkovich
Joe Byars
Maureen Cartmill
Kristi and Stephen Chapman
Kalman and Becky Csia
C.M. Dargitz
Robert De Beck
Jeff Fleming
Geum Services
Sharon Gill
Tiffany Gose
Carol Harris
Janet Hay
Noel and Larry Hayward
Robert and Donna Keller
Renee Kivikko
Paul LaFerriere
David Mindell
Tom Nehil and Gail Walter
Mitchell Joseph Petz
Pamela Rups
Jan Shillito
Bruce A and Kathy Shurtz
Rebecca Sive and Steve Tomashefsky
Lynn and Mike Steil
Beth Troxell
Tim and Julie Winslow

Gifts Beyond Membership

Kathryn Campbell
Edward Chiang
City of Allegan
Praveen and Nagalakshmi Ghantasala
Evan Hanson
Scott Hewitt
Katie Klute
Jim Long
Richard Mayoras
Hans Olsen
People's Food Co-Op of Kalamazoo
Pat Sweeney
USDA NRCS / Allegan Conservation District

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 using this QR code or by typing: ***www.swmlc.org/membership***

If we have accidently omitted your name, or you find an error, we apologize. Please call Reality Rojas at 269-324-1600 x309 so we can correct the mistake. Thank you.you.

Corrections . . . we're very sorry!

The following donors were not acknowledged in the last issue of our newsletter. Please accept our apologies for the error.

Memorials

Greg and Roxanne Danneffel
In memory of Frank Ballo

In memory of Gary Stock
Andy Smith
Brian M. Smith and Maria Maki

In-Kind Donations

Dillon Martin
Assistance in creating financial dashboard in PowerBI

Memberships

Mitchell's Satyr Butterfly ($1000+)
Brian Hoff
Jim Novaria
Michael Gene Plum
Denny Stelzer

Eastern Massasauga Rattlesnake ($500+)
Greg di Gennaro
Raymond Dubray
Doug Jonas
Sam Qualls
David and Lorri Walch

Cerulean Warbler ($250+)
Randy Mark
Mark McKeon
Arthur and Janet Riley

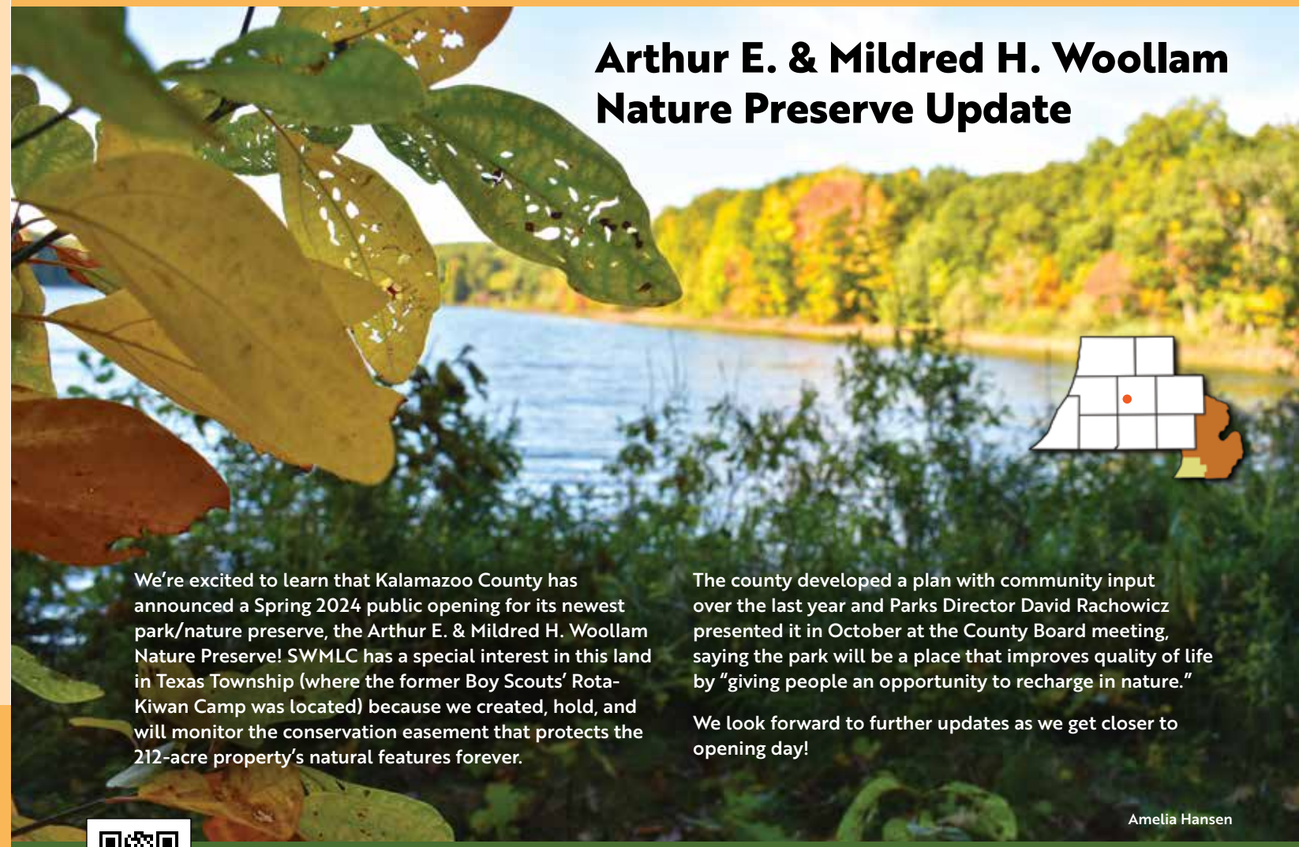
Spotted Turtle ($100+)
Laura Pernice
Pamela Denise West

Little Brown Bat ($50+)
Dillon Martin

Gifts Beyond Membership
Maggie Elian
Chris Fusciardi

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 Reality Rojas at 269-324-1600 x309 or email her at rrojas@swmlc.org.



Arthur E. & Mildred H. Woollam Nature Preserve Update

We're excited to learn that Kalamazoo County has announced a Spring 2024 public opening for its newest park/nature preserve, the Arthur E. & Mildred H. Woollam Nature Preserve! SWMLC has a special interest in this land in Texas Township (where the former Boy Scouts' Rota-Kiwan Camp was located) because we created, hold, and will monitor the conservation easement that protects the 212-acre property's natural features forever.

The county developed a plan with community input over the last year and Parks Director David Rachowicz presented it in October at the County Board meeting, saying the park will be a place that improves quality of life by "giving people an opportunity to recharge in nature."

We look forward to further updates as we get closer to opening day!

Amelia Hansen

What's with all the QR codes? We can fit so much more on our website than between the covers of the newsletter! Find extra content quickly by focusing your smartphone's camera at the QR codes, then tapping the link that's offered.

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

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JOIN THE WEEKLY WARRIORS!

Do you enjoy working outdoors? Got a few hours to spare for a meaningful cause on Monday or Wednesday mornings? Maybe SWMLC's weekly volunteer-driven stewardship workdays would be a good fit! There aren't any commitments - come when you can or feel like it, you will always be welcome. And you don't need any special tools, strengths, or skills either - just bring yourself and a willing attitude.

Want to give it a try? Check our website for weekly updates:
www.swmlc.org/weekly-outdoor-stewardship

Expect extreme satisfaction when you see the difference you and your team have made!

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