



Leelanau Conservancy

Conserving the Land, Water and Scenic Character of Leelanau County

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Option Signed to Protect Sonny Swanson Farm on Little Traverse Lake

Must raise \$900,000 by January 30th

For more than a half century, Sonny Swanson's pale yellow farm stand along M-22 near Sugarloaf was a must stop for cottagers and locals alike.

Here, they found an ever-changing display of home-grown produce, from strawberries to his famous sweet corn to wagonloads of pumpkins and squash. Longtime patron Carolyn Chormann enjoyed the produce, but cherished his honor system cash box even more, with its hand-lettered sign reminding her and others: "God knows everything. Thank you for being honest."

"I loved how he was so trusting," she says.

The stand, built in 1931, now sits quiet and empty; the paint is beginning to peel. Sonny died in 2008 at the age of 89. But memories of this farmer and his iconic stand live on; they were once the subject of everything from a column in the *New York Times* to the 1999 Manitou Music Festival poster.

Those who loved the stand will be pleased to know that the Leelanau Conservancy signed an option to purchase the 90-acre farm in August. Sonny's two sons, John and Tom, inherited the land upon their father's death. "We have no interest in farming and don't want to see it developed and neither do the people who live in the area," says John, a retired postal worker. "It's hard to let it go. But after giving it a lot of thought it is the right thing to do." (Their sister, Margaret, inherited a house on 17th St. in Traverse City.)

With \$545,000 raised so far, the Conservancy has until January 31, 2011, to raise the needed \$900,000. Director Brian Price is determined to see the project through. "This land is special to us and to the people in the area for a lot of reasons," he says. "What you see from M-22 is just a small part of what we're preserving." Wetlands cover most of the property, which includes 2,000 feet of natural shoreline along Little Traverse Lake. A half-mile of road frontage along the M-22 Scenic Heritage Route and a ridge overlooking the lake are also part of the picture.

Karen Viskochil, whose family has owned property on



Our thanks to photographer, John Hall, and pilot, Larry Webb, for this aerial of the Swanson Farm, with Sugar Loaf and Grand Traverse Bay in the distance.

the lake for years, calls the project "a dream realized. My late brother, David, was especially eager to see this happen. It's the last parcel of significant size of undeveloped wetlands and preserving it will help ensure lake quality, while providing significant woodland and shoreline habitat for birds and animals, with beautiful scenery for the enjoyment of all."

Provided that the Conservancy can raise the needed funds, about 17 acres of tillable land will remain in farming while plans for trails are being considered on the remaining 73 acres. If a young farmer were to take up someday where Sonny left off, it would be a fitting tribute. "It was his life," says Roger Favorite, who was married to Sonny's late sister, Eleanor. "He loved to start those little seeds and see them grow."

Sonny also enjoyed kibitzing with the customers who flocked to his stand. "He was always passing out samples to people, saying, 'Here, try this, try that, take it home and let me know how you like it,'" says Roger. continued on page 3

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Message from our Executive Director



"Their gifts are helping to turn dreams into reality"

Extraordinary Gifts, Extraordinary People

As we work our way through some of the biggest, most significant land protection projects in our history, I find myself thinking about some of the old friends who made this great work possible. Though many of these members are no longer with us, in a real sense they will always be part of our lives here on the Leelanau Peninsula. Their foresight helped ensure that places like the Crystal River, Whaleback—and soon the Olsen and Spinniken family farms—will be preserved forever.



At crucial times in our history, bequests and other planned gifts have meant the difference between a project collapsing or moving forward. Without Miss Sally Reahard's bequest, for example, the Crystal River project might have stalled out in 2004. Similarly, the Fortune Family endowment gifts (see story on page 8) gave us stability when we needed it most. More recently, Mary Ellen Gotshall and Clarence and Ruth Roy have been on my mind. Their planned gifts are helping turn dreams into reality today, when fundraising is more challenging than ever.

I spent time with Mary Ellen Gotshall a year ago as she was preparing to leave her cottage near Leland for the last time. She was approaching the venerable age of 87, full of humor and energy, with an appropriately irreverent outlook on life. She had come to the conclusion that her cottage was one home too many. But departing wasn't easy. The home held memories stretching back to the day that she and her late husband, George, bought a tiny cottage on a lovely stretch of Lake Michigan. Mary Ellen reminisced about the wonderful vacations her family spent together on the lakeshore.

Family photos were packed away to be taken downstate. Despite the chill fall air, and the sense that a very happy era for Mary Ellen and her family was coming to an end, she was completely confident and at peace. She had made an extraordinary decision to donate nearly all of the value in her home to the Leelanau Conservancy. Within a week or so, the Conservancy bought the home for a fraction of its value and listed the property for sale. Proceeds of the sale were designated to create the George and Mary Ellen Gotshall Stewardship Fund, to help care for all Conservancy-protected lands, including Mary Ellen's beloved 340-acre Houdek Dunes Natural Area just across the road.

More than a decade earlier, in another lovely living room on Lake Michigan, I got to know Clarence and Ruth Roy. Rather than growing from the seed of a small, simple cottage, their home had been lovingly designed from scratch by Clarence. No amateur, Clarence was a founding partner in Johnson, Johnson, and Roy, a renowned landscape design and development firm in

Ann Arbor. Clarence had retired, but the artwork and books on display showed that both Roys enjoyed their lives and avidly pursued their interests.

Sitting in the spacious and airy living room of the Roy cottage, with its white walls, native timber, and glass, Clarence and Ruth explored an idea that was taking shape in their minds. Because they intended to spend much more time in Texas in the coming years, they were thinking about donating their home to the Conservancy. Retaining a life estate would permit them to continue enjoying the home. Then, when they no longer wished to return north for the summer, the Conservancy could sell the home to fund land protection. Clarence and Ruth talked about how much their time in Leelanau meant to them, and how Leelanau's landscapes had touched their hearts. They felt blessed, and they wanted to make sure that they made a significant contribution to preserve the beauty of the peninsula.

Sometimes events overtake the best-laid plans. In the case of the Roys, their donation was delayed when Clarence was diagnosed with a serious illness. The Roys nevertheless made clear that they wanted to continue to support our work in a significant way. While we did not fully understand how their plans would unfold, their sincerity was apparent.

Sadly, Clarence passed away in 2000. After Ruth followed in 2008, we learned rather stunning news: the Roys generous bequest would amount to nearly \$670,000. With more than \$2 million in unfunded land protection projects currently pending, the Roy's bequest will be used to fund immediate needs. As we feel they would have wished, Clarence and Ruth's legacy will live on in the Clay Cliffs Natural Area, the Swanson Farm on Little Traverse Lake, and in the sweeping landscapes of three working Leelanau farms.

In Mary Ellen's case, the gift of her cottage in 2009 represented the single largest contribution ever made to the Conservancy by a living donor. As she drove south to Florida, she anxiously awaited word of an offer on the home, both pleased and determined to establish a strong foundation for the Gotshall Stewardship Fund's "forever" work. When she passed away unexpectedly last February, we mourned the loss of a colorful and long-time friend. A few months later, despite the difficult real estate market, her cottage sold to a family who will be making their own memories on the shores of Lake Michigan. The net proceeds of \$800,000 launched the new George & Mary Ellen Gotshall Stewardship Fund, according to her wishes. Mary Ellen's legacy ensures that protected lands will be well cared for, long after all of us are gone.

These are just two timely stories of extraordinary people and extraordinary gifts. We are fortunate that so many people—landowners, members and volunteers—give of themselves in selfless and astonishing ways to protect this extraordinary peninsula. Thank you for all you do to join us in this work.

"He was a wonderful character and as honest as could be"



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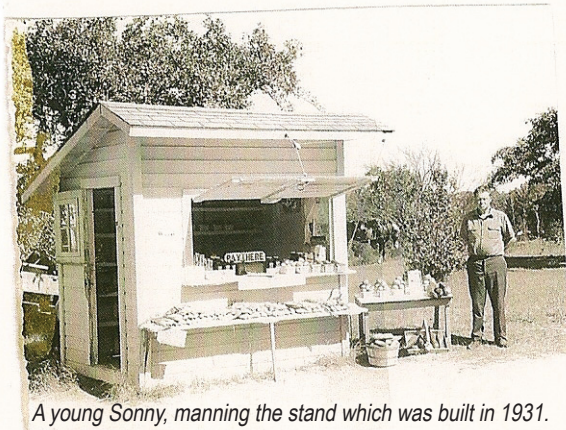
Swanson Farm, continued from cover

Daughter-in-law Sherry Swanson recalls driving up to the stand one day to find Sonny being photographed by four women, all with cameras in hand.

Sonny took pride in the freshness--and price--of his produce. If sweet corn sat on the stand for more than an hour, he would pull it. He often sent Sherry to check prices at Meijer. "He was determined to be lower," she says.

Sonny had grown up with a brother and two sisters on the farm that his parents, Robert and Ruthella, bought in the 1920s. The children attended the Shetland House School up the road, built in 1871, where their mother taught. (Today the school house on M-22 is still painted bright red but is now a private home.) Sonny and his brother, Alfred, inherited the farm but it was Sonny who picked up where his parents left off. He commuted to his fields daily from Traverse City, where he raised a family. His wife, Edna, had a job at the State Hospital and did not want to live on the farm.

"She was a people person, and did not want to get stuck out there," explains Roger. "She had a good job and knew how unpredictable farming was." When Sonny's mother passed away, the home's contents were auctioned off and it was closed up. Sonny put a small trailer on the property and on those nights when he was too tired to drive home, slept there. After his wife passed away in 1997, he would stay at the trailer until the first



A young Sonny, manning the stand which was built in 1931.

blizzard. "He sold every last cabbage that way," says Sherry.

Sonny's toiling was legendary. In addition, to truck farming, he also had a big maple syrup operation, which his father, Robert, had begun years earlier. They tapped 6,000 trees every spring and had a "syrup house with two huge evaporators and a mountain of wood outside," says Roger. They ran it 24 hours a day, but shut down at midnight on Saturday; the family adhered to a strict branch of the Wesleyan faith called Pilgrim's Holiness that forbade work on Sunday.

His granddaughter, Sara Swanson, has great memories of



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her "PaSonny." She and her twin brother, Bob helped on the farm after school and all summer. "He had this really funny saying," she recalls. "We'd be working and he'd say, 'Well kids, once we get all this work done, then we can get really get to work.' My brother and I would look at each other and say, 'Oh man, this is gonna be a long day.'" He had exacting standards and his way of doing things. Sara, who misses her grandfather deeply, says that no matter what were to happen with the land, "the place will never be the same without him."

Sherry has collected photos and articles about Sonny and the stand over the years. "He was a wonderful character, and as honest as could be," she says. "But it was like he was stuck in the in the 20s and 30s and never evolved from there."

She recalls Sonny calling her after his wife died to say he had gone through the house and found two things that he could not identify. "One was a calculator, one was an Instamatic camera," she says. "He had no idea what they were for. He had never been through a fast food drive through until his late 80s when we took him after a doctor's appointment."

For decades, he rarely went anywhere but the farm and the house in Traverse. Astonishingly, although he had strong political opinions that he shared freely at the stand, he was not a registered voter. "Why would he leave the farm to go vote?" asks Sara. "It was the only place he wanted to be."

As Sonny aged, his family worried about him when he was out at the farm. One day he fell in the tomato patch and could not get up. It was hours before someone found him and helped him to his feet. "Every year he would say, 'This is my last year,'" says Sherry. "But he would

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Continuing the Farming Tradition: Spinniken Family

When you have a gravely ill child, the term "family farm" can take on a whole new meaning. Nancy and Alan Spinniken say that without the help of his extended farming family—particularly Alan's father Robert—they never would have made it through the worst year of their lives.

It was March of 1995 when Nancy noticed that her second youngest, Aaron, was pale and sleeping a lot. At first she thought the six-year-old just had the latest bug, but became

and his crew were in the middle of winter pruning on their 440-acre East Leland farm. The price of cherries, their major crop, had hit bottom, selling for just 4 cents a pound, down from 55 cents a pound in the 1970s when he had bought the farm. Things weren't looking any better for the coming season.

But suddenly, none of that really mattered. Aaron had to get down to Grand Rapids to begin chemotherapy followed by a bone marrow transplant. Fortunately, his sister Sarah was a perfect donor match.

Alan's parents, Robert and Carol, had retired from farming and were wintering in Utah. One phone call had them on their way back to Leelanau to step in where needed. "We left the farm in March and didn't return until September," says Nancy. "We couldn't have done it without them. Alan's dad was a godsend. He took over the entire operation."

Nancy's dad, Donald Mullen, pitched in as well. Alan and the older children traveled back and forth but Nancy and the younger kids lived at the hospital. "Aaron did better when we were all there," she says. In those days, Butterworth Hospital permitted the entire family to camp out in Aaron's room.

Happily, Aaron recovered fully and today, at age 22, leukemia is just a distant memory. He helps run the farm and if all goes well, will one day take over the operation with his four siblings. They will be the fifth generation to work this land homesteaded by Alan's great grandpa Matthew.

The Leelanau Conservancy is helping to make the generational transfer possible by securing an \$866,000 Federal Farm and Ranchland Protection grant to permanently preserve 172 acres of the family farm. Under these kinds of conservation agreements, farmers are paid a portion of the difference between what their land would be worth as a residential subdivision and its underlying value for farming. The federal program contributes up to 50 percent of this value, and the Conservancy must raise a 25 percent match. The farm family is also required to forego 25 percent or more of the acreage's cash value—this is considered a charitable donation for which there are federal tax incentives as well. Thereafter, the legal right to develop the land is extinguished forever, keeping the land available for farming for future generations. The land stays in private hands and remains on the tax rolls.

In the vast majority of cases, farmers like the Spinnikens couldn't afford to transfer their land to the next generation



Aaron Spinniken (on tractor) and his parents Nancy and Alan, with boxes of Rhode Island Greenings, a processing apple used in making apple juice and apple sauce. "I enjoy the work," says Aaron, who, along with three of his siblings, were married in the last year. "I would like to have a family and for my kids to grow up the way I did, with lots of room to play and the farming way of life."

alarmed when he took off his pajamas, revealing a funny rash and bruises on his arms. She whisked him off to their pediatrician and from that point on their lives turned upside down. Tests quickly confirmed the doctor's suspicion that Aaron had leukemia. Worse yet, it was the type (AML) that was harder to treat and would require a bone marrow transplant if he were to survive.

Like most parents who have lived through this sort of trauma, even 16 years later Nancy can't tell the story without weeping. "The doctor said that if we had waited even two more weeks, he might have died," she says. "It was that serious." Alan

Today they raise over a million pounds of tart cherries



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without receiving compensation to support them in their retirement years. "There's no way we could turn it over to our kids and they could assume that kind of debt," says Alan. "We need to realize some value to be able to retire some day, and there's not much in our 'portfolio' besides beautiful Leelanau County land."

"The Spinniken farm represents some of the finest fruit growing land not only in Leelanau County but in the state of Michigan," says Jim Nugent, former District Horticulturalist with MSU Extension and a Conservancy board member. "It's great to know that it will always be available for fruit growing. This is land that has a globally rare microclimate and is virtually irreplaceable."

Alan's dad, who died in 2002 at the age of 78, "would be thrilled that the boys are so interested," and that the farm will stay in the family, says Nancy.

The road to this point, however, has taken a fair amount of detours. "I never expected to be a farmer," says Alan. "From fifth grade on I wanted to be a doctor." He describes his early 20s as "drifting" and himself as "a philosophical young man." He dropped out of school, traveled, worked construction.

"But I always found myself back here every summer," says Alan. "I realized I kind of liked this." When he met and married Nancy in 1978 that sealed the deal. Today they raise over a million pounds of tart cherries, 300,000 pounds of sweet cherries and 2,000 boxes of apples.

The price of cherries is still nowhere near what it was in the '70s, when the farm had five partners, and all of them made a comfortable living. Alan says the boom years at 55 cents a pound spurred over planting. And the industry has not hit on the right marketing strategy to push through the over supply. "The per-pound price can put you pennies away from poverty to wealth when you are talking about three million pounds," says Alan. "We struggle to make it work."

Still, it's a great life, and they wouldn't have it any other way. "The kids who work for us on the farm, they miss it when they are gone," says Nancy. "It gets into your bones. There's something that runs deeper than a paycheck. Like being out on a tractor at seven a.m. and seeing a gorgeous sunrise."

"We're happy we can do this for our kids," she adds. "You realize that the purpose is good beyond you and your own



needs. We have confidence in the program. The Conservancy isn't looking to control things. It doesn't feel like government meddling. We're keeping the land open so that the farm won't die out with us."

\$1.5 Million Grant Will Help Protect 3 Farms, 480 Acres of Working Farmland!

Great news! The Alan Spinniken Farm is just one of three farm projects we received Federal Farm and Ranchland Protection funds to protect. The grant will also help us to permanently protect an additional 228 acres at the Olsen Farm, which we wrote about in our Spring, 2010 newsletter (40 acres already protected there). Finally, Jean Sedlacek's 80-acre farm is also slated for protection. We wrote about Jean in our Fall, 2008 letter when she protected a second 78-acre farm nearby with a conservation easement. In order to see these projects through, we must raise \$845,300. Please consider a donation to our Community Farmland Fund to help make this happen!

Spinniken Farm – 172 acres, Suttons Bay Twp

Olsen Farm – 268.3 acres (including 40 acres preserved last year) Cleveland Twp

Sedlacek – 80 acres, Leelanau Twp

Total USDA Grant Commitment.....	\$1,589,400
Total Conservancy Match Commitment.....	\$845,300
Total Farmer Match Commitment.....	\$845,300
Total Value of All Preservation Projects.....	\$3,280,000

Swanson Farm, continued from page 3 always be back."

After Sonny died, the family began exploring their options. John's son, Jonathan, who shared his grandfather's passion for working the land explored taking over the farm. But the timing wasn't right, says his mom, Susan, who adds that it was Jonathan who led the family to the Conservancy.

"We called other landowners who had worked with the Conservancy to ask them about their experiences," says John. "It was all very positive." He says that Matt Heiman, Director of Land Protection, has been "helpful, honest, fair and given us a lot of options."

For the family, it's almost too painful to think about the future of the farm without Sonny. But Susan says that even though it will be hard to drive by, "It's a good feeling to know it can continue on. Sonny would have liked that."

Before he died, together with granddaughter, Sara, Sonny listed what was so solidly in his head: the varieties that were the tastiest and best performers in the field. The Tom Swanson family has a garden at their home in Long Lake Township, where they will put Sonny's 70-some years of experience to the test.



Making a Difference: Volunteers Help Battle Phragmites

Two years ago Nancy Miller viewed a video on the internet about Phragmites *australis* and how the invasive plant had created a 20-foot tall barrier of thick vegetation along the Beaver Island coast. “It was frightening,” she says. “I knew it could happen on our shoreline if we let it go.”

Meanwhile, her neighbor, Jo Walker, had seen Phragmites obliterate Lake St. Clair’s shoreline near Detroit. “It was so thick people could not get their boats into the water,” says Jo. So when a letter arrived from the Leelanau Conservation District asking for permission to kill any Phragmites found on their shoreline, Nancy and Jo quickly agreed—and together went to the Conservation District office to see what else they could do to help.

The Conservation District had taken on the role of coordinating the effort to eradicate Phragmites in Leelanau County. The Michigan Department of Natural Resources had provided some funds to assist with the project, but the task was Herculean—and a communications nightmare. “It was overwhelming,” says Conservation District Director Buzz Long. Among the challenges: contact each shoreline owner to obtain permission to go onto his or her property to spray, and a limited window of opportunity. Phragmites must be sprayed in the fall for optimum treatment, and so it was a race against time.

At the District office, Nancy says “I saw piles of papers people had sent in. The staff could not open the envelopes fast enough.” She and Jo pitched in, recording responses on huge maps and phoning landowners who had not yet responded.

Back in their neighborhood, she and Jo “decided we would shoot for 100 percent participation” and went door to door.

“When people were hesitant, we said, ‘Here’s what will happen’ and showed them pictures of how it gets 20 feet tall,” says Nancy. “Everyone said ‘Yes’ once they understood the threat to our Lake Michigan beaches and to their property values. Believe me, I’m not a fan of spraying but it’s the only thing that works.”

While the District handled landowner communications, the Conservancy took on creating a database to electronically map the infestations. Such a database would help certified herbicide contractor Vicki Smith locate the affected sites for quick eradication come fall. It would also guide future monitoring to keep tabs on hot spots. But in order for the Conservancy to create such maps, they needed volunteer “Coastal Monitors” to walk the shoreline using GPS units to record where Phragmites was present. Nancy and Jo stepped forward to help.

The pair, along with a cadre of other volunteers, surveyed 39 miles of shoreline during the summer of 2009. The first



Nancy Miller and Jo Walker (left) inspect a root of Phragmites australis that washed up in a storm. Even though it looks dead, the root can take hold again and start a whole new stand. Dispose of or burn stalks and roots that wash ashore to keep this invasive plant in check.

herbicide applications took place that fall in Leelanau Township. Over the following winter the Conservation District met with officials from several townships and convinced them to pass an ordinance that mandated treatment of Phragmites. This eliminated the “impossible task of getting permission from every landowner,” says Buzz. Meanwhile the County had secured the necessary spraying permits.

“In that first year there were a lot of properties that did not get treated because we could not reach people,” he adds. “And that’s no good—you have to treat them all or the problem just comes back.” (There is no cost to the landowner for the treatment, which is paid for by a state grant.)

This fall nearly 800 sites were treated—everything from a single clump to a quarter-acre of shoreline. “We’re lucky to have tackled it at this stage,” says Conservancy bio-tech Fields Ratliff. “On Saginaw Bay they are now having to spray from airplanes to control it. That’s costly and not a great way to attack it.”

The worst sites in Leelanau will need treatments again next fall to kill off plants that are expected to regenerate at an estimated 20 percent comeback rate. To keep the problem under control, shoreline owners will need to remain vigilant, watching for signs of new infestations which will spread quickly. They are also encouraged to collect the large bamboo-like roots that wash ashore, especially after a big storm. “The roots should

"We said from the beginning that we would marshal our forces and get this done"



Stewardship Updates

be burned or disposed of, or they'll just take root and start the problem all over again," says Nancy Miller.

The Conservation District and the Conservancy encourage landowners to call with questions and concerns in helping to identify Phragmites on their property. "It has been an unbelievable effort involving numerous partners," says Buzz. "The early response has kept the problem manageable and hopefully it will be even more manageable in the future."

Stewardship Director Jenee Rowe says the data collection that first year has led to multiple grant awards for the Conservancy. "We were two years ahead of everybody else in other parts of the state who were applying for funds because of the mapping work of our volunteers," says Jenee. The latest of these is a three-year grant that will enable the Conservancy to continue coordination of plant surveys and monitoring and



Nancy Miller (left) with landowner Mary Duff (center) and Jo Walker (right.) in a sea of Phragmites on the Duff's shore last summer.

to remove invasive plants from Conservancy Natural Areas on inland lakes. The Conservancy is one of 16 partners to receive the grant administered by the Grand Traverse Conservation District as part of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative awards from the U.S. EPA.

You can bet that Jo and Nancy will be a part of our ongoing efforts, and that next summer will find them on the beach, walking their five mile stretch, keeping watch. "We're a team," says Nancy. "We said from the beginning that we would marshal our forces and get this done."

"Those two are great examples of the difference volunteers can make," says Jenee. "They took the bull by the horns and decided they just weren't going to let Phragmites take over our shoreline. Their work had both short and long term impact. We are really lucky to have them volunteering on our behalf."



This fall, the same Duff shoreline plot is mowed after treatment. Youth Corp crew leader Justin Parsons tosses a load onto a pile that will be burned this fall. The Conservancy's bio-technician Fields Ratliff and certified herbicide contractor Vicki Smith discuss safe timing for the burning plan.

Stewardship Volunteer Summer Summary

It's been another successful summer for our stewardship volunteer programs. Our bi-weekly work bees were a great way for volunteers to help improve and maintain some of our most cherished lands. Work bee activities included a tree rescue at the Teichner Preserve, mulching the trail at Whaleback Natural Area, planting native ferns at the Finton Natural Area, and removing invasive glossy buckthorn from the DeYoung Natural Area on Cedar Lake. A total of 21 volunteers contributed over 50 hours for the work bees.

Along with the work bees, volunteers also joined the Conservancy in surveying for invasive plants. Volunteers used GPS units to collect data in order to help the Conservancy and other partners manage invasive plant control throughout the

area, especially the Lake Michigan coastline and ecologically significant areas in Leelanau County.

Invasive Plant Survey by the Numbers:

- 95 accumulated volunteer hours
- 22 miles of shoreline walked
- 600 acres surveyed

Thank you volunteers for all your help and we hope you will return for the fall season. If you are interested in learning more about volunteer opportunities or the programs mentioned above, please contact Fields Ratliff at fratliff@theconservancy.com



Bill and Jane Fortune: “Giving Back Was in Their DNA”

Not everyone who is born under a lucky star chooses to share its light. Not so Bill and Jane Fortune. The Indianapolis couple and longtime Leland summer residents believed it was their responsibility to use the gifts they had been given to create good in the world. And so they were quiet champions of the underdog, protectors of the environment and worked in the political arena on matters of equality and justice.

Jane died last year, Bill passed in 2004. Each left a generous bequest to the Leelanau Conservancy but their story has never been told. The couple had insisted on anonymity during their lifetime. But their four children (Bill Jr., Pam, Jane and Rich) would like their parents’ legacy to be celebrated. “It’s like a veil has been pulled back,” says Bill Jr. “They would have been uncomfortable now, would argue with us and say, ‘Please don’t.’ They worried that any attention toward them would take away from the purpose of the gift.”

The Fortune’s impact on our organization—and many others—is sizeable. The couple were lead donors for our Leland Village Green and Whaleback projects. When Bill Sr. passed away, we received a gift that jumpstarted our endowment fund and provided a meaningful layer of stability to our organization. After Jane died last year we received a second sizeable bequest. “We would not be the organization we are today without the help of the Fortune family,” says Director Brian Price.

Bill Fortune Sr. began coming to Leland as a toddler; his parents owned a cottage on North Lake Leelanau. After he and Jane were married, they too brought their family to Leland for the summers, staying everywhere from the cottage to the Leland

Lodge to rental properties on Lake Michigan. In the ‘70s, they bought what is known as the historic Blackledge Cottage, which sits in the shadow of Whaleback.

The cottage features a classic wrap-around screen porch with wicker furniture. It overlooks Lake Michigan’s ever changing moods, pounding surf

and spectacular sunsets. Jane adored the porch, and Leland. “Every summer when Mom arrived at the cottage, her first words were, ‘I’m home,’ and we, her children, all feel that same way,”



Jane and Bill Fortune, enjoying time at their cottage in Leland.

says daughter Jane. “It’s a magical place and when I’m not up there, I miss it terribly.” Today, all of the Fortune children own homes in the Leland area.

Their childhood summers began with loading the station wagon when school let out. The family, along with two dogs and cook, Nettie, crowded in for the 400-mile trip north. “We looked like the Beverly Hillbillies,” laughs Bill.

Jane recalls hours spent hours at the beach. “We soaked up the sun, and searched for heart-shaped rocks and driftwood that resembled whales,” she says. Her mom particularly loved blue stones. There was always a jigsaw puzzle in progress, nightly campfires, and an Ouija board to quiz.

“Back then, there were no soccer camps that today end the summer so early for a lot of families,” continues Bill. “Kids did not drive the bus in my parents’ generation. We were not the center of my parents’ universe, we were the outer planets.” He recalls being rustled out of bed one night at 2 a.m. to see Haley’s Comet.

“I was 10 yrs old,” he says. “I had no interest in getting up. But my parents insisted I see this magnificent sky. If I had been at soccer camp I would have missed it.”

The environment was important to Jane and Bill. “They talked often about what we were doing to it and how we could be stewards of it,” adds Bill. The couple was one of the first to donate to save Fishtown and underwrote expenditures that made the Hoosier National Forest possible.

His sister, Pam, says her parents “were an excellent model of how a couple can live and love each other for 66 years.” She admired her mother’s hard work in establishing the Indiana Dyslexia Society and Camp Delafield, a summer camp for learning -disabled children.



A young Bill Fortune Jr. sandwiched between his mother, Jane, and grandfather on a boat ride around Lake Leelanau.



Economically disadvantaged children tugged at Bill and Jane's hearts. The couple spent an afternoon at a boys' home in Indiana that left such an impression on Bill Sr. that he provided generously for the school in his will. "It didn't take him long to understand their mission," says Bill Jr. "He could see it, feel it, in that short time."

In addition to philanthropy, politics occupied Bill Sr.'s days. He served many roles, including state legislator. Bill Jr. says his father could have been governor of Indiana but refused to bend to the will of special interests and was called "Fortune Turncoat" when he switched to the Democratic Party.

Bill Sr.'s character was shaped by a housefather at a New Jersey boarding school. "This man, according to my dad, was a man of great principles, and left him at the age of 12 with a sense of his life's purpose," says Bill. After boarding school, Bill Sr. attended Princeton, where he later established a speaker series. Jane Goodall, the famed scientist who studied primates in Africa, was the first speaker.

Late in life, Bill Sr. spent much of his cottage time writing *The Moment*. "The gist of the book is that he believed everyone had moments in their lives that are pivotal," explains Bill. "He contended that there are only a few lucky ones who see the moment as it is occurring—moments that can change their life and those around them. He felt it had happened in his life. So his message was to pay attention to your life because those moments are out there and that you can make a difference."

"As philanthropists, they were very powerful role models," concludes Jane. "Giving back was in their DNA. They believed that since they were so fortunate, it was their responsibility. My Dad never passed a beggar on the street, without acknowledging him or her and giving a dollar or two. We, as their children, are also very fortunate, and feel it is our responsibility to continue Mom and Dad's legacy, and to make a difference too."

Welcome New Sustainers

Conservancy Sustainers provide the lion's share of our operating support and are a big part of our success. Giving levels start at \$500. Benefits include special recognition in our publications, and two events per year where Sustainers can meet our staff and others who share their commitment to our work. Want to join? Call Gayle Egeler: 231-256-9665. The following people have joined since publication of our last newsletter. Thank you!

Daniel and Susan Brondyk
Mark and Laurie Carlson
James and Elizabeth Fisher
Steve and Lauran Gilbreath
Frederick and Judith Hill
Steve Luebke & Sara Later
James and Anne Lutz
Reed and Rosemary Tupper
John M. Weber



Mark and Laurie Carlson joined our Sustainer Circle this summer. Here's why:

"We became Sustainer's Circle members to help preserve the natural beauty of the county that we love. The Conservancy continues to make it possible for our grandchildren to enjoy the same undeveloped landscape. The Sustainer's Circle is key to assuring this for future generations."



Lake Leelanau Watershed Initiative Grant Protects Two More Parcels— Total of 316 Acres Protected In Phase II All Together!

On September 30th the Leelanau Conservancy completed a very successful three-year grant project that helped to purchase conservation easements in the Lake Leelanau watershed. The final two projects detailed below were completed in the last two months, adding a total of 33 acres of forested stream valleys to a complex of existing conservation easements.

Tom Price and his wife, Cindy Carlson, have owned their vacant 40-acre wooded parcel for several decades with the intention of someday returning to Leelanau County to build a retirement home. In 2007, their long-time Leelanau County friends, Bill Rastetter and Carolyn Weed told the Prices about the Conservancy's Lake Leelanau Watershed Initiative. Phase Two of the Initiative was near completion and its goal, as in Phase One, was to purchase conservation easements from interested landowners in the watershed in order to protect water quality and wildlife habitat.

While Tom and Cindy knew exactly where on their property they wished to build their dream home some day, they also felt that most of their land should remain untouched. They know the ecological value and sensitivity of the groundwater springs and broad seepage areas that are present on steep forested slopes. These springs and seepage areas flow through organically rich soils that are very sensitive to disturbance from motorized vehicles and logging practices. After talking with Matt Heiman and learning about how conservation easements work they decided to permanently restrict about 34 of their acres. The remaining 6 acres about a county road and were not restricted because that land would be a good site for their future home. This part of their property features a young, immature forest with no streams or spring sources. In early August the Conservancy purchased a permanent conservation easement from the Prices.

The final conservation easement purchased with "Lake Leelanau Permanent Land Protection II" grant funds covers 61.5 acres owned by Bill Rastetter and Carolyn Weed. The Rastetter/Weed conservation easement helps to maintain high water quality by protecting over 3,150 feet of groundwater streams that flow into Lake Leelanau. The project also protects important wildlife habitat and contributes to a large block of already protected lands that include the Miller I CE (60 acres, est. 2001), Miller II CE (60 acres, est. 2005), Karfonta CE (40 acres, est. 2008) and Price CE (34 acres, est. 2010). All of these properties are adjacent to one another and lie south of the Rastetter/Weed property. The Rastetter/Weed conservation



easement contributes another 61.5 acres to what is already one of our largest privately held conservation easement corridors on the peninsula. The combined properties total 254.5 acres and make up a contiguous corridor of wetlands, stream corridors and forested uplands, forming a vital natural habitat network. Large corridors like this one provide essential connections for wildlife movement and natural plant dispersal.

The Lake Leelanau Watershed Permanent Land Protection Project II was a tremendous success and exceeded expectations by completing permanent conservation easements over 316 acres,-- more than double the 125 acres projected. The project leveraged \$70,069 more than the contracted local match of \$384,938. This high level of community support allowed the Leelanau Conservancy to exceed the project goal and establish six permanent conservation easements over 316 acres containing 8,050 feet of frontage along first and second order streams flowing into Lake Leelanau. These permanently protected areas prevent over 21.21 tons of sediment, 917.30 lbs. of nitrogen and 85.94 lbs. of phosphorus from loading into the Lake Leelanau watershed every year by preventing conversion of the land under conservation easement to residential use.



Teichner Transformation



Trail Steward Erika Ferguson, helping to rescue hundreds of trees and wildflowers at the Teichner Preserve with the help of workbee volunteers and the Suttons Bay Boy Scout Troop. As the freezing weather approaches, our Stewardship staff race to remove the roadbed at Teichner with the goal of reconnecting the wetland and restoring the original wetland landscape. This is among the first steps of a multi-year restoration effort that involves removing 100 truck loads of wetland fill, recontouring the land and reconnecting several sections of open wetlands. In 2011, the restoration work will continue with a 400 ft. wetland boardwalk and a narrow footpath where there once was a 16 foot wide x 3 foot tall road. "We envision completing the excavation work by Spring in order to start building the boardwalk and planting rescued trees. The wetland will continue to heal for the next several years," says Stewardship Director Jenee Rowe. "It's going to be an amazing, wonderful transformation when it's all said and done."

Bridge Builders



Volunteer Leonard Marszalek hammers away at a newly constructed foot bridge at the Chippewa Run Natural Area in Empire. Leonard was joined by fellow volunteer Lou Ricord and Conservancy staff Brian Price and Fields Ratliff. The bridge helps trail goers cross the creek and protect the surrounding habitat.

Staff Milestones



Fields Ratliff, Stewardship staffer, and his partner Ivy Saur welcomed baby Wren Ratliff on September 6. Yes, that basinet really is a nest! It was handcrafted by Ivy's dad, Don Saur.



Director of Farmland Programs Tom Nelson ties the knot! Pictured: Tom with his wife, Stephanie, and their girls (l-r) Kira, Ella Rose and Sophie at their June 19 wedding.



Winter 2010/2011 Hikes and Events

Hikers Take Note

We are pleased to offer this schedule of outings at no charge led by our knowledgeable volunteer docents. Do dress according to weather. So that we may provide the best experience possible and be fully prepared, we require (and appreciate!) advance registration by calling 231-256-9665 or email nthomas@theconservancy.com. Most hikes last around two hours unless otherwise noted. Directions (both written or via our Google mapping feature) can be found on our website. Learn about our natural areas and the docent leading your hike at www.theconservancy.com. If your schedule does not mesh with ours, or you have a special event such as a family reunion or wedding, our docents may be available to lead groups of five or more if given two weeks notice to plan. School groups also may be accommodated with enough notice.

December

Wednesday, December 29th 10 am
Houdek Dunes in the Holidays

Animal tracks, drifting snow, the silence of winter. Come join docents Jack Schultz, Sharon Oriel and Lou Ricord as we explore the vastness of Houdek Dunes in winter. Snowshoes are appropriate but if you don't have them you can follow those who do. Come prepared for crisp air. This hike has become a holiday tradition for many.

January

Saturday, January 15th 10 am
Tracking Winter's Active Wildlife at Kehl Lake

Did you think that nothing goes on in the wintertime in nature? Guess again. Join docents Ann McInnis and Judy Smart on this Martin Luther King holiday weekend for a tracking adventure to discover the myriad wintertime activities of our resident wildlife. Read the stories told by tracks and traces, nibbles and nips, sounds and sights...to learn about wildlife survival strategies at this high quality, Conservancy natural area. Snowshoes would be advisable if there is lots of snow.

Wednesday, January 19th 2pm
Windswept Landscape at Chippewa Run

We'll traverse the trail system at Chippewa Run to see what's happening at the pond and in the red pines. Then we'll navigate the new bridge across the wetland and see if deer are pawing the ground to get at apples dropped in the snow. Chippewa Run offers so much variety and we'll check it all out. Join docents Jack Schultz, Sharon Oriel, and Lou Ricord on the winter hike. Snowshoes are desirable but not mandatory.

Saturday, January 22 10am
Fresh Air and Exercise at Houdek Dunes

Join docents Judy Hoeffler, Judy Smart, and Jack Schultz as we tramp the snow through the woods and into the open at Houdek Dunes. A little exercise doesn't hurt anyone, and we'll take it slowly as we pack down the snow and look for the nutritious buds of trees and other signs of winter.



February

Saturday, February 5th 1pm
Winter Wonderland at DeYoung Natural Area

Join Docents Dave Amos and Lou Ricord for a snowy trek at this multi-faceted natural area. Tour the inside of the farm house at the historic DeYoung Farm as well as hike or snowshoe to the lake and the barns. The house is now open for docent-guided tours and the outbuildings have received additional renovations. See all the good work by the joint efforts of the Conservancy and Eastern Michigan University. If snow is deep, snowshoes are advisable.

Ask a Docent

If you have a nature question or would like to have one of our docents visit your property to help you identify its natural treasures, give us a call (231-256-9665) or shoot us an email (info@theconservancy.com) We'll do our best to answer your questions and will post the answers on our website.



Hikes and Events

Annual Friends Picnic Celebrates People and Places

It was another great picnic! Thank you to everyone who helped to make this event a huge, fun, success! Nearly 800 people attended and \$141,000 was raised to help the Conservancy carry on its mission to conserve the land, water and scenic character of Leelanau County. During our first ever President's Paddle Raise, 33 families participated, raising \$18,000 for farm and natural lands protection. Special thanks to Roger and Coco Newton, who hosted the event on their spectacular site overlooking the Manitou Islands.



Larry Mawby and John Erb did a great job encouraging picnic goers to raise a paddle during our first-ever "President's Paddle Raise." Thirty three people put a paddle up in the air, and in the process raised \$18,000 for farm and natural land preservation. Thank you!



The feeling was unanimous among the nearly 800 people who attended the picnic; the view from the Newton Farm is one of the most gorgeous on the Leelanau Peninsula. As guests departed, a spectacular sunset was on display.

We honored our Volunteer of the Year, Dan and Anka Harkness, who have been volunteering for us since our earliest days at events like the Picnic or Blues at the Bluebird. Dan is a carpenter who has built many of the benches you see at our natural areas and on the Village Green. Like so many Conservancy volunteers, Dan and Anka are the kind of people who always seem to be willing to help whenever we call.

Our Business Partner of the Year, L. Mawby Vineyards, was also recognized. Larry Mawby and his partner Stu Laing do

a lot to support our work and have for years. They donate cases of wine to events, produce a "Conservancy Wine" each year and donate a portion of their profits, and have forever preserved their 32-acre farm with a donated conservation easement. We're lucky to have so many great people like the Harknesses and L. Mawby Vineyards working on our behalf!

Conservancy Wear Makes a Great Gift

We still have plenty of t-shirts, tote bags and other logo-wear to fit all ages.

Help spread the word and give a great gift too! Pictured here: the Ed and Linda Ketterer family, who dressed three generations in our new shirts. Visit our Leland office, order online <http://www.theconservancy.com/store.php> or call Nancy Thomas 231-256-9665.





Honorariums & Memorials

6/22/10 through 10/25/2010

Unrestricted honorariums and memorials support the George & Mary Ellen Gotshall Stewardship Fund, created to care for permanently-protected lands in Leelanau. From creating and maintaining trails to replacing invasive species with more wildlife-friendly habitat, your gift helps ensure that natural areas and conservation easements are cared for in a way that honors those who helped protect them in the first place. Thank you!

In Honor of

David Amos

Mrs. Mary E. Jellema

Jennie Berkson and David Edelstein

Sharon and Artie Raphael

Gil and Anne Bogley

Mr. Lloyd Williams

The Burnham Rainbows

Mike and Julie Rogers

Carter B. Dolan

Sarah and Matt Lichtel

Roland Drayson

Mrs. Luvian Owens

Thomas Dunfee

for his many years of service as a support and leader
The Wadsworth Family

Chase Hall

Mollie and Chuck Hall

Sarah Hall

Mollie and Chuck Hall

Joy Ham

Mr. and Mrs. John L. Kutilek

Molly Harrison

Mrs. Lucy W. Maish

Tony and Tee Heald

Ms. Joanie Abbott

Judy Hill

Ms. Mary Martorella

John and Judy Hoeffler

Julie Dawson and Ellen Whitney

Their Parents & Grandparents
(Charles & Isabelle)

The Houdek Grandchildren

Bill, Kit & Lauren Hoyerman

Marlis Mann and Tom Skinner

Peg Later

Thomas and Bridget Lamont

Matt and Sarah Lichtel

Ms. Lynn S. Lightner

Tom and Shelly Loudon

Ms. Joanie Abbott

Susan Manson

Al and Susan Manson

Ann Mason

Mrs. Luvian Owens

Tad and Wendy McKay

Mr. and Mrs. William T. McKay, II

L. J. Noling

Mr. David E. Noling

Sharon Oriel

Mr. and Mrs. Mike Jacobson

Judge Thomas Power

Mr. Tim Throm

The Reynolds-Zeolla Family

Mr. and Mrs. Charles L. Reynolds

Jack Schultz

Mrs. Mary E. Jellema

The Sikes Family

Mr. and Mrs. Daniel M. Witten, II

Kaylee May Smith

David and Suzanne Alpers

Bill & Carole Warren

Dick and Karen Warren

Elise Weisbach

Carol and Herb Anster
Prue and Ami Rosenthal

Elizabeth and Fred Wiese Family

Elizabeth Bracken Wiese &
Fred Wiese

Happy Birthday

50th – John and Mary Bolan

Mr. Richard J. Bolan
Mr. and Mrs. Branden Fisher
Mr. Joseph G. Freeman
Mr. and Mrs. John G. Heekin
Jeffrey and Marcia Schloemer

Marisela Calderon

Mr. and Mrs. Delbert Dyche

Isaiah Calderon

Mr. and Mrs. Delbert Dyche

12th – Olivia Fellows

Kurt and Eleanor Luedtke

Ann Mason

Dr. Conrad Mason
Rhys VanDemark & Kathi McGookey

Ann McInnis

Mr. & Mrs. John McInnis

Happy Anniversary

Charlie and Nora Bumb

Mr. and Mrs. Thomas E. Lauer

60th – George and Mary Eggenberger

Mr. and Mrs. David L. Banks
Drs. Ann and Conrad Mason

55th – Tom and Alma Eichstadt

Mr. and Mrs. Thomas A. Eichstadt

50th – Dr. and Mrs. Richard Gotsch

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50th – Rick and Enid Grauer

Enid and Rick Grauer

Curt and Judie Leece

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5th – Matt and Sarah Lichtel

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In Memory Of

Deborah Bunn Alley

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Leelanau Preservers: Give a Gift That Lasts Forever



When you give a gift through the Leelanau Conservancy Preservers program, you can preserve land in a child's name, and instill in them at an early age that they have a stake in what Leelanau is to become. You can also give a gift to friends or family who live far away, but have Leelanau in their hearts. Or, preserve land in your own name. As a result of your contribution, your gift recipient becomes a "Leelanau Preserver." We send a beautiful card acknowledging your gift and keep track of the total acres that have been preserved in your gift recipient's name. When Preservers reach the 1/10 acre milestone (\$500) a beautiful personalized hand-made tile is mounted on our Preservers Circle in the Leland Village Green. This summer we mounted 68 new tiles honoring or memorializing loved ones. Learn more about Leelanau Preservers on our website: <http://www.theconservancy.com/leelanaupreserve.html>

Leelanau Conservancy

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www.theconservancy.com

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