

Leelanau Conservancy

Conserving the Land, Water and Scenic Character of Leelanau County

2015 Annual Report & Spring 2016 Newsletter

Vol. 27, No. 1



There's No Place Like Leelanau

In the 1980s, when my husband, Dave, and I were in our 20s and working in Cincinnati, we longed to be in Leelanau. Living from one vacation or holiday weekend to the next, we dreamed always of being here. And so we would think nothing of hopping

Carolyn's son, Sam, and his girlfriend, Shannon Clay

in the car on a Friday night after work and heading north. We rarely arrived before 2 a.m. at our tiny cottage on Lake Leelanau.

I remember the sense of well-being that washed over me once we arrived and packing in as much as I could when we were here. Time would fly by. Come Sunday afternoon, I would linger by the lake, as if I could somehow soak up that vista and take it south with me.

Sounds crazy, doesn't it?

But in fact today, my son and his girlfriend do the very same thing. Interestingly, they ended up in Cincinnati too and make the nine-hour drive north every chance they get. They come to ski trails lined with snow-laden hemlocks or to hike up to the spectacular Clay Cliffs overlook. Like we did, they love to swim in Lake Michigan and light bonfires along the shore, with iconic landmarks like Whaleback looming in the distance. I'm so pleased that they love Leelanau as much as we do.

I know that many of you feel the same way because you've told us so over the years. (See examples on pages 19-20) Our shared love for Leelanau is a great uniter. A Conservancy logo on a cap or the shape of the peninsula on a t-shirt can create instant friendships or launch a conversation halfway around the world. That love, when harnessed, can do great things—as you will see in this report.

Thank you for your support, which helped make it all happen. Jump to page 4 for a summary of our year.

—Carolyn Faught, Communications Director

Chairman's Message p2 Executive Director's Message p3 2015 Project Summary p4-9 Conservation by the Numbers p10-11 Protected Lands Map p12-13

The Erbs and Heritage Society p15 Donor Lists p16-22

New Sustainers p22 Change tends to creep up on us slowly. I am reminded of this whenever I try to do something that used to be easy and my body informs me I shouldn't try that again. The same is true with an organization like the Leelanau Conservancy. We age, we grow and all of a sudden, we have different priorities and challenges than we did just a few years ago. As I think about the past year, I am struck by how much our organization has grown and changed in the decade since I first joined the board.

Each year's changes are only incremental: a few more conservation easements, the purchase of development rights on two or three farms, perhaps adding a few acres to an existing natural area. But over time, this all adds up to a lot of responsibility. Closing the year 2015, we hold 161 easements on over 8,000 acres. Each of those easements needs to be monitored annually which means planning, scheduling, hiking and documenting. Some are several hundred acres and others under ten. Each requires significant effort every year, forever.



Warren Watkins, Board Chairman

We now have 25 Natural Areas and Preserves where we build and maintain trails and signage, plow parking lots (sometimes), conduct floristic surveys and manage invasive species.

We are nearing the end of the 5-year strategic plan that has guided the organization through our successful Leelanau Forever campaign and the hiring of a new Executive Director. Our wonderful staff has been one of the hallmarks

of the Leelanau Conservancy for as long as I can remember. This is one more area where we have had some changes in the last year and have hired some really great new people. They are working hard to get to know our properties and our members and are going to be great additions. During the next year, the staff and board will be working to update the strategic plan as we again look forward three to five years. We are in the land protection business, and we always will be, but even if we are able to continue to protect land at the same pace we have over the past 28 years, the stewardship component of land protection will consume an ever increasing share of our time and resources.

As I write this we are within days of completing the purchase of Palmer Woods; with over 700 acres it will be twice the size of our next largest Natural Area. This time, change will not be incremental; Palmer Woods will require equipment and manpower that smaller properties have not needed. We

are working through the plans to bring Palmer Woods into the organization and open its trails to the public while continuing to manage its forest resources. I am confident the acquisition of Palmer Woods will be just the start of another incredible year for the Leelanau Conservancy.

Warren Watkins

Board Chairman

Upcoming Events

Earth Week Activities:

April 18-22, events and times TBA. Watch our website, Facebook, and emails for a plethora of Conservancy events during Earth Week.

Memorial Weekend Wildflower Rescue Plant Sale: Friday/Saturday May 27-28, 9am-4pm at the Leland

Village Green, see page 14 for more information

Summer Sustainers Gathering: Thursday, July 7, DeYoung Natural Area

Annual Friends Picnic:

Thursday, August 4, Location TBA

Palmer Woods Dedication: Summer 2016. Date TBA

Hike Schedule:

Our wonderful docents were planning the spring and summer hike schedule as this report went to press. Visit our website to see scheduled hikes and to register. (under the "Hikes and Events" tab)



You have a story. You may or may not be a storyteller, but I am certain you have at least one you love to tell. It's your Leelanau Story. It's about how you came to be here. It's about how Leelanau came to occupy a cherished place in your heart. And, it's as much about how Leelanau is on the inside of you as it is on the outside—how you would not be, well, you, without Leelanau.

I understand. I have my own Leelanau Story. By the same token, I have the complete conviction that the reverse is also self-evident: Leelanau would not be Leelanau without you. The simple truth is that we belong to Leelanau as much as she belongs to all of us who love her.

Simply stated, at the Conservancy, we see ourselves as the guardian of your story. It is a role we wholeheartedly accept and take very seriously. We are a sentinel of sorts, watching and working to ensure that your children, grandchildren and future generations have the same profoundly moving experience of seeking, discovering and one day telling their own Leelanau Story. They are sure to be the ones retelling yours, too.



Executive Director Tom Nelson, his wife Stephanie Berger-Nelson, and their daughter, India, enjoy a hike at the Swanson Preserve.

In his Chairman's Message, Warren Watkins has given you a window to the inner workings of the Conservancy. He's touched on the serious, in-depth and ongoing strategic planning to address new challenges that will naturally occur as the Conservancy continues to evolve and as Time impacts

Leelanau. He speaks eloquently of the diligence with which our Staff and Board labor to protect your Leelanau Story and Leelanau County. In other words, if the Conservancy aims to foster excellence in stewarding Leelanau's lands and waters in perpetuity, we too must be excellent stewards of the Leelanau Conservancy itself.

I have been with the Conservancy for 12 years now and

"The simple truth is that we belong to Leelanau as much as she belongs to all of us who love her."

have a little over a year under my belt as executive director. I have every intention of a long career at the helm, but I have already begun to think about my role as a thoughtful, engaged but ultimately, temporary, steward of the Conservancy itself. It is a given that the Conservancy must endure far beyond my years here. To me, this means being careful and deliberate about maintaining a highly effective organization to which I will one day bid a fond farewell. After all, the greatest measure of my ability to steward the Conservancy in its role as guardian is how well it thrives once I've stepped down as its executive director. Quite honestly, there must be few things more deeply satisfying than letting go and watching your life's work continue to soar of its own accord.

It goes without saying that planning for success is a complex and continuing task. In doing so, our bedrock principle is that every single relationship matters. We are nothing without the trust of our supporters and this community. Of course, trust is something that must be continually earned. But what is sometimes overlooked is that our persistent effort to expand the depth and breadth of our trusting relationships is transformative in itself. In a word, the broader and deeper the trust and goodwill of the Conservancy is held, the more effective we can be as guardians of your story. And when it comes down to it, it's you and your Leelanau Story that keeps us passionate and

motivated every single day to be the thoughtful, careful and highly-effective stewards we aspire to be. Thank you.

Thomas Nelson
Executive Director

Palmer Woods: Our Biggest Project EVER

Palmer Woods is a once-in-a-lifetime project to protect one of the largest privately owned tracts of land in Leelanau. It has long been on our wish list of places to protect. When the opportunity arose, however, we were tempted to exercise caution because we had just completed our Leelanau Forever Campaign and were onboarding a new Executive Director. Could we take on this 707-acre, \$4.1 million project? The answer: We must! Our members agreed and nearly 600 families donated to make it happen. Located near Glen Arbor, the Forest Reserve will provide miles of trails for the public to enjoy in all four seasons. It also will allow ecologically sustainable forestry to strengthen a quintessential Leelanau forest. The property stays on the tax rolls and officially became ours in late February. As this report went to press, trails were being marked and plans to welcome the public were well underway.

Why it matters:

The majority of groundwater that recharges Glen Lake flows from the eastern side of the watershed, where Palmer Woods is located. Protecting this forest protects the water quality of Glen Lake.





Farmland: 320 Acres Preserved in 2015

Gene and Kathy Garthe's bluff-top farm near Northport was protected with a conservation easement. These 200 acres have been in Gene's family for four generations and are prime for fruit growing, including 26 varieties of apples. Gene's greatgrandfather, Steiner Garthe, homesteaded the land in the late 1880s. Steiner was among the first to grow fruit in Leelanau and was known for his experiments and his interest in growing exceptional fruit. Now nearly 150 years later, Gene carries on the tradition of fruit farming, experimentation, and thoughtful land stewardship. In addition to the Garthe project, a 120-acre fruit farm (whose owners wish to remain anonymous), was also protected this year in Suttons Bay Township.

Why it matters:

Leelanau's hilly terrain surrounded by water creates a unique and globally rare microclimate, ideal for fruit growing, important to our local economy. These two projects add to over 5,000 acres to date that will forever be preserved, maintaining the integrity of our agricultural heritage and keeping our ag economy strong.

Bass Lake Project Protects Shoreline

This beautiful 89-acre ecological powerhouse near Omena preserves 3,100 feet of undeveloped shoreline, a native hardwood forest, 22 acres of wetland and over 1,000 feet of stream frontage on Belanger Creek. We're grateful to Leona Kalchik for donating a portion of the value of this conservation easement which protects critical fish and wildlife habitat.

Why it matters:

The property is near other protected lands, (the Mitchell family and Saving Birds Thru Habitat conservation easements) enhancing a natural greenway along the Belanger Creek valley.



Stewardship: Caring for Protected Lands

Our Stewardship staff had a busy year. They conducted floristic studies at natural areas to help determine best management practices. They walked for miles to document invasive species via GPS (Global Positioning System) and to treat early infestations on the spot. With help from volunteers, they installed signs and benches, spread wood chips and removed truckloads of garlic mustard. They picked up refuse along the Lake Leelanau Narrows, cleared hazard trees from trails after the big storm and added erosion control cutaways on the Whaleback trail. Water quality monitors and coastal monitor volunteers collected dozens of samples and on-the-ground data to help guide our work. When you visit one of our natural areas, and have a great experience, you have Stewardship to thank for it.

Why it matters:

Protecting land is just the first step. Caring for it in perpetuity, improving habitat, and making our natural areas safe and enjoyable for visitors are all tasks in the ongoing work of stewardship.



DeYoung Natural Area Expands

One of our most popular natural areas grew by 48 acres with the addition of the Corrigan property which fronts Cherry Bend and Strang Road. (See story on page 9) Also new at DeYoung: We completed a Universal Access Trail which connects the main parking area by the big barn to the fishing and viewing platform on Cedar Lake!

Why it matters:

Multiple streams and seeps emerge from or pass by the Corrigan property on their way to Cedar Lake. Preserving this land adds to the protection already in place—including three quarters of a mile of Cedar Lake shoreline.

We are thrilled that those in wheelchairs and pushing baby strollers can experience the peace of this mature cedar forest and spend time on the beautiful fishing/viewing platform on the shores of Cedar Lake.



Omena Woods Association Adds 24 Acres

In 2004 the Conservancy purchased a conservation easement on IIO acres from the Omena Woods Association. The purchase ensured that the threat of development on several ridge top lots visible from M-22, Mougey Lake and Omena Bay is eliminated forever. For everyone who loves to bike or walk Omena Point Road's four-mile loop with its trillium-laden hillside, this was welcome news. This fall an additional 24 acres were protected. The private property features a high quality, mesic northern hardwood forest. It includes diverse native species, trees of many age classes and structural diversity, including a multistory canopy, standing dead trees and downed logs—all great habitat for wildlife.

Why it matters:

Permanent protection of this property in its natural and open space condition helps to ensure the quality and quantity of groundwater resources by facilitating natural groundwater recharge for the West Grand Traverse Bay area.



Steichen Family Conservation Easement

This natural and undeveloped 13-acre property in Leelanau Township adds to a conservation corridor spanning over 300 acres and is part of the Lake Terrace Coastal Wetlands Watershed. Protection helps to ensure the quality of water resources for Lake Michigan and also provides important upland recharge for the watershed.

Why it matters:

Located along the M-22 Scenic Heritage Route, the project preserves the view for future generations.

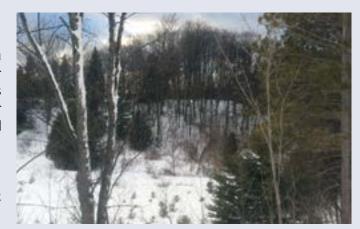


Echo Valley Sold to Conservation Buyer

One tool in our land protection toolbox is our Conservation Buyer Program, which connects conservation easement sellers with buyers who are interested in purchasing protected property. In some cases, the Leelanau Conservancy will purchase land with important ecological features and hold it until a conservation buyer can be found. The property will then be sold at fair market value with the conservation easement restrictions in place. This is called a Buy, Restrict, Conserve project. A great example is the Echo Valley ecologically rich 40-acre parcel we purchased near Empire, placed a conservation easement on and sold in 2015 to a caring conservation buyer. In the process we recouped some of our costs that have since been funneled into new projects.

Why it matters:

The land preserves the ridgeline surrounding Big Glen Lake and is part of the Hatlem Creek sub-watershed. The Hatlem Creek area is one of very few places in the state where the endangered Michigan monkey-flower thrives.





Volunteers: More Important Than Ever!

We love our volunteers; they have been integral to our success since the Conservancy's founding. Our docents led over 500 people of all ages on hikes through stunning Conservancy natural areas, introducing both new visitors as well as longtime members to the wonders of these places. Meanwhile our Picnic and Auction Committee put on another memorable gathering, raising funds needed to carry out our work. Over 100 people volunteered at the Picnic alone! Outreach volunteers created videos; mailing crews helped to get our newsletters out the door. Palmer Woods' fundraising success could not have happened without many people who hosted gatherings in their homes, inviting friends and neighbors to learn about this fantastic project. Finally, our hard-working Board of Directors spent hundreds of hours doing everything from working at our events to helping to create and update plans and strategies for success.

Why it matters:

313 volunteers logged 4,747 hours. (See list on pg. 23) Their time and talent saves us thousands of dollars and maximizes the work that our staff is able to accomplish. The value volunteers provide has a huge impact on our budget and our ability to get things done.



30 Acres on Cedar Run Creek Protected

Like Echo Valley (see pg. 6), this project was a buy, restrict, and conserve endeavor. Cedar Run Creek is a primary tributary flowing into South Lake Leelanau. The land features numerous groundwater springs and upland forest with towering hemlock and white pines. "It's a win win," says Matt Heiman, Director of Land Programs. "We protect the conservation values and the new owners have this beautiful, pristine place in which to enjoy nature."

Why it matters:

1,300 feet of frontage along this beautiful, fragile creek are protected, preventing sediment from disturbing important fish habitat.



Mebert Creek Preserve: An Ecological Link

2015 saw the protection of an additional 40 acres along Mebert Creek, a cold-water trout stream and important tributary that flows into Lake Leelanau. The new Preserve is sandwiched between two public resources: 100-acre Veronica Valley and Mebert Creek Natural Area (140 acres also protected by the Leelanau Conservancy and transferred to Bingham Twp.). In addition to its environmental qualities, the new Preserve will provide important dry-land access to birders and hunters in the future. Previously there was almost no feasible way to access much of Mebert Creek Natural Area, largely landlocked due to the extremely thick wetland along the lake shore.

Why it matters:

The new preserve protects 3,000 additional feet along Mebert Creek. Also present on the land are several seeps and springs that trickle in to the stream, as well as groundwater recharge areas that help to filter water entering the lake.

Project Updates Project Updates

Good Harbor Bay Watershed Protection Plan Completed in 2015!

In Leelanau County we are fortunate to have clean, clear water and we want it to stay that way. One way to ensure that is to have watershed protection plans in place. These plans provide in-depth information about the health of a watershed while also outlining steps to ensure the watershed remains healthy and clean for the future generations. Watershed plans also make stakeholders (such as lake associations, the conservation district, the Conservancy) eligible for funding for various tasks outlined in the watershed plan. Leelanau County has five major watersheds. The completion of the the Good Harbor Bay Watershed Protection Plan (GHBWPP) in 2015 means all five major watersheds in Leelanau County have an approved plan!

The GHBWPP was drafted over many years by a volunteer steering committee, facilitated by the Leelanau Conservancy. The Good Harbor Bay Watershed is located in the middle of Leelanau County. It includes Lime and Little Traverse Lakes and extends into the southern part of Kasson Township (see map). The GHBWPP was submitted to the state of Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) in August of 2015. It was approved by the state of Michigan last fall with some minor changes suggested. The plan was then sent on to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for federal approval. Once the EPA review is complete, all the comments and edits will be incorporated into a final plan and available to the general public.

A copy of the plan is available now by calling Yarrow Brown at the Leelanau Conservancy. Members of the GHB steering committee also have copies of the plan as submitted to DEQ.



The Swanson Preserve on Little Traverse Lake lies within the Good Harbor Bay Watershed.



Completing the Good Harbor Watershed Plan means that stakeholders can apply for funding to help execute the goals of the plan.

The tasks and goals of the GHBWPP can be implemented since the plan is approved on the state level. The steering committee will meet early this summer to celebrate the plan's approval, discuss implementing certain tasks, and explore funding opportunities.

The Leelanau Conservancy will continue to monitor the seven lakes and 15 major tributaries in the watershed through our water quality monitoring program which gathers baseline data (Total Phosphorus, Nitrates/Nitrites, Chlorophyll-a, pH, Temperature, Dissolved Oxygen) four-six times per year. For more information on the water quality program visit leelanauconservancy.org.

DeYoung Natural Area Grows by 48 Acres!

Over the last 14 years I've spent a fair amount of time following my co-worker, Matt Heiman, around in the woods. Trying to keep up with him, as he leaps across streams, inches down steep slopes or bushwhacks through a dense thicket can be a challenge. But I'm always grateful to escape my computer and get out onto the land. Furthermore, tapping in to Matt's knowledge of the natural world is, without fail,



Matt Heiman with board member Steve Martineau, touring the new addition to DeYoung.

rejuvenating and inspiring. He inevitably answers the "why" of our work.

The fact that we never get lost is also appreciated. As someone who is easily turned around, I have always been in awe of Matt's and other staffers' ability to disappear into the woods and find their way back out again--a skillset I'm quite sure I will never develop.

And so on a day last May, Matt guided me and a few of our Board members on a tour of the Corrigan property, which the Leelanau Conservancy had purchased some months earlier. The land sits adjacent to the upland portion of our DeYoung Natural Area, and fronts Cherrybend and Strang Roads. At the time, Matt and our Land Protection Committee were trying to decide whether this parcel should be kept and added to DeYoung, or sold with restrictions to a conservation buyer (in order to buffer our existing natural area). In the end, Matt made the case for keeping the land and opening it up to the public.

Here are just a few of the reasons why:

- I. "Multiple streams and seeps emerge from or pass by the property on their way to Cedar Lake," says Matt. "Preserving this land ultimately protects the water quality of the lake as well as West Grand Traverse Bay." A rare marl spring is also present on the land.
- 2. The broad variety of habitat is unusual and hosts an array of wildlife. "You have a diverse young forest, an old agricultural area that has been naturalized, you have thickets and fields and streams, all within 48 acres," says Matt. "As a result, there are upland game birds like grouse and wetland mammals such as otters and mink that go up and down the creeks." The property is part of a wildlife corridor that encompasses Cedar Lake, DeYoung, and private protected lands that eventually connect to the Pere Marquette State Forest.
- 3. Vegetation along the streams is biologically diverse, and hosts songbirds, amphibians and insects. Black cherry, native red osier dogwood and white pine are plentiful.

Finally, adding these 48 acres to the I45-acre DeYoung Natural Area just makes that place even better for humans and wildlife alike. Located on the outskirts of Traverse City in an area full of rapidly developing dense subdivisions, DeYoung has often been called an oasis and a gateway to Leelanau County's agricultural heritage.

Leaving the Corrigan parcel along Cherrybend Road in its natural state preserves the highway's scenic character

and enhances an enormously popular natural area. "Visitors to DeYoung will be able to experience yet another type of terrain and woodland," adds Matt. "Trails and passive recreation are expected to be developed late next year, or early in 2017."

Communications Director

-Carolyn Faught,



Multiple streams and seeps are present on the land and ultimately flow into nearby Cedar Lake.

85 photos were posted on our Why Leelanau photo blog this

year, bringing the total number of images to 1092. See them all at

LeelanauConservancy.org/whyleelanau.



297 plant species were recorded at the 40-acre Hatlem Creek Preserve, an ecological powerhouse that helps to preserve the quality of Glen Lake, including the endangered Michigan Monkey Flower. 231 are native and 66 are non-native. 21 of the non-native taxa are identified as potentially invasive.

575 people attended our Annual

Friends Picnic at Chippewa Run

Natural Area, celebrating our love for

Leelanau and our work to protect it.

51 hikes were led by our wonderful Docents; over 500 members and guests enjoyed these outings.





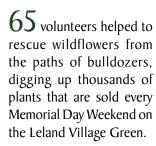
87 new acres were added to 2 natural areas, expanding opportunities for hikers and preserving habitat for flora and fauna.



2 farms were permanently protected totaling 320 acres. 4 more farm projects are in the works that would permanently preserve 611 acres. We hope to complete those projects in 2016.



the new Palmer Woods Forest Reserve. Thank you!





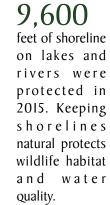
170 water samples were collected on 7 lakes and 15 streams over 5 months by 10 volunteers, helping us to assess the state of our water quality. 4.741 hours were spent by volunteers in 2015, helping with everything from clearing trails to stuffing envelopes and installing benches. We love our Volunteers!

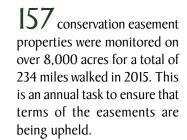


families have joined our Evergreen giving program-making automatic monthly or quarterly donations—saving everyone time, postage and paper.



602 is the number of Sustainers who support the Conservancy with an annual gift of \$500 or more, such as Ted and Tali Lanham and Lois Bahle, shown here enjoying our winter sustainers gathering.





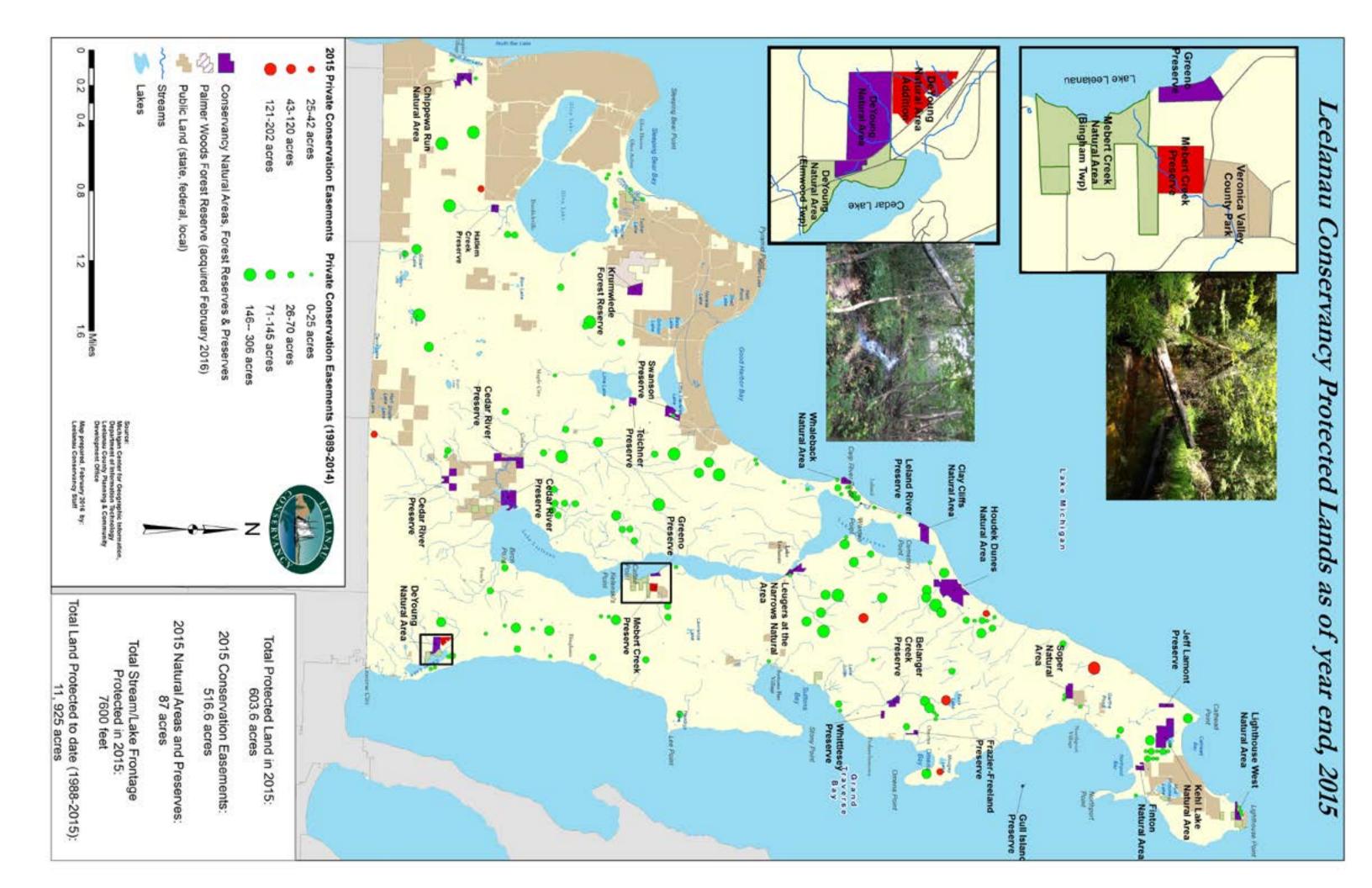


1.415 acres were surveyed for invasive species by our Stewardship staff, providing valuable information on how best to eradicate them.

398 birds were banded at Chippewa Run in ongoing research by Dr. William Scharf and Alice VanZoeren, including the magnolia warbler.







Wildflower Rescue Gears Up!

The wonderful Wildflower Rescue Committee will hold their kickoff meeting on Thursday, April 21st at Ipm in the Munneke Room adjacent to the Leland Library. This group rescues wildflowers from the path of bulldozers and sells them every Memorial Day Weekend on the Village Green. Many of the leftovers are also used in restoration work at our natural areas. If you want to get involved with this great group, plan to come to this meeting. Brian Zimmerman of Four Season Nursery will speak about butterflies and pollinators.

Save these dates too: The first work day for the group will be on Friday, April 22nd at Swanson Preserve, also the home of Wildflower Rescue. The first dig is planned for April 25th. The Annual Plant Sale on the Village Green will be held the Friday and Saturday of Memorial Day Weekend (May 27, 28 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.)

The Wildflower Rescue Committee continually seeks new sites on which to dig. If you are building a home, driveway, addition, or know of someone who is, please contact the WRC so they may have a chance to remove these precious wildflowers before the excavators arrive!

Contact Patty Shea: 256-9249 or Joanie Woods: 256-7154.



Barry Dove holds a giant Jack-in-the-pulpit at a Wildflower Rescue dia.



Doing Our Part for the Monarchs!

Every fall, millions of monarch butterflies migrate from the U.S. and Canada to overwintering areas in Mexico and California and return in the spring. This migration is an amazing natural phenomena that is threatened by habitat loss. We are happy to report that the north garden (Adelia Ball Morris Memorial Garden) of the Leland Village Green was registered by Monarch Watch as an official Monarch Waystation in 2015. Monarch Waystations are places that provide resources necessary for monarchs to reproduce and feed on their migration through North America. The garden is home to four different species of milkweed host plants and seven different species of nectar plants.

Tapping into Solar Power

We're excited to report that 28 solar panels were installed on our roof in December. The Conservancy was accepted into the Consumers Energy program Experimental Advanced Renewable Program (EARP) after having applied to the program for many years. EARP provides incentives to customers like the Leelanau Conservancy to increase renewable energy production by installing solar panels.

Under the program, Consumers will pay us a slightly higher rate for the power we generate than they charge for the power we use. That differential, over time, will offset the cost of our panels. "It's a win-win, makes good economic sense and is the right thing to do," says Director Tom Nelson. We're grateful to Ian Olmsted of Peninsula Solar, who helped every step of the way, from applying for permits to helping with the design of our system. "It's great to work with an organization where we have such a similar mindset," says Olmsted. "The goal is to have both a financial and an environmental benefit."

"It has been a long-term goal of the Conservancy's to reduce our reliance on fossil fuels," adds Nelson. "We're happy to do our part to address climate change."



John and Gina Erb: Making the Case for Planned Giving

ohn and Gina Erb both grew up as city kids—John in Chicago and Gina in Pittsburgh. They met in college at University of Detroit and although they became avid sailors while living in Chicago, both say that they didn't truly fall in love with nature until they started coming to Leelanau.

John was working as an attorney and Gina as an interior designer in the windy city when they first came north to visit college friends, Jim and Barb Varley. "We didn't have any money," laughs John. "And so when we came up we sponged off the Varleys who were living in a cottage at the Jolli Lodge while Jim was getting his dental practice up and running." One winter weekend, looking for something to do, they saw that the Conservancy was hosting a hike up Pyramid Point to view the winter eclipse.

They signed up and when they arrived, it was snowing hard, and more was forecast. The hike leader, Chad Kahler, asked if the small group wanted to bag it. After all, the eclipse would be obscured by the snow. Everyone was game to go. Chad, a teacher, carried a "ginormous" backpack full of props, including a model of the sun and moon. On later hikes, Gina recalls Chad pulling out a bag of potato chips to teach ways to recognize tree bark or pointing out porcupine droppings

at the base of a girdled tree. If they ever were lost and needed to start a fire, Chad said the droppings contained wood that would quickly light.

The night of the snowstorm, Gina says that when they got back to their car, more than a foot of snow had fallen. After digging out, it took an hour to get back to Leland. But they were invigorated, and hooked.

The Erbs eventually bought a place on Gills Pier. Heart problems compelled John to retire early and in 1998 they moved here permanently. With the move, their love for the county only deepened. "Leelanau has incomparable natural resources," says John. "And the people are fascinating, curious and involved. The opportunities to learn here, to contribute are endless. It's a place where you can have a second or third phase of life that's as full—or even more rich, than the life you came from." They began volunteering at our booth, digging wildflowers and attending events. Gina served on our Outreach Committee and continues on the Auction Committee; John served on our Board

of Directors for nine years, the last two as Chairman.

John says that when he started having heart issues he realized that the two things he cared most about were health and the environment. "It was kind of an epiphany to narrow it down and it gave me a focus to say, 'How can I get involved in these two things and make a difference?" In addition to serving on our Board, John is in his I2th year on the Munson Medical Center Board.

Most recently, the Erbs were asked to serve as ambassadors for our Richard O. Ristine Heritage Society. Members of the Heritage Society (over I40 strong) have made a provision for the Leelanau Conservancy in their will or estate plan.

"We were honored to be asked," says Gina. "We believe in the cause and it is very near and dear to our heart." John agrees.

"The Leelanau Conservancy is a forever organization," he says. "It gives you great confidence when you make a donation whether it's today or a pledge or a planned gift. You know it will be shepherded perfectly and managed in the way you want. You know you can trust this organization to do exactly what is right because it always has. It is the best managed and most trusted organization that I have ever been associated with."

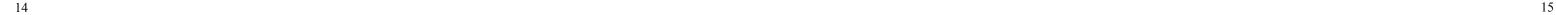
The Erbs have made a significant planned gift and are

excited to help grow the Heritage Society. "Just like us, the world around us has the same frailties," says John. "We need to take care of Leelanau the same way we take care of ourselves. Water doesn't preserve itself; there are so many outside threats. The soil we grow our food in needs to be protected. If we are not vigilant they will be taken away from us."

"We want people to know how easy it is to make a planned gift and how important it is," he adds. "It is a way to support the mission that is absolutely painless." "After all," Gina chimes in, "you can't take it with you!"



To learn more contact: Leslee Spraggins, Planned Giving Officer, at 231-256-9665 or lspraggins@leelanauconservancy.org



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This list recognizes people who have made a gift of land or development rights through an outright gift or bargain sale. Thanks in part to the generosity of these donors, the Leelanau Conservancy can ensure significantly more land and water conservation for every dollar raised. The names below reflect all such donors from the time of our founding in 1988. If you notice an error or omission on this list, please notify us.

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Welcome New Sustainers!

This crucial group pledges a minimum annual gift of \$500 to support the operations of The Conservancy, ensuring that the long-term goals of conserving Leelanau's land and water resources can be met. Knowing that the Sustainer support is there on an annual basis has allowed us to hire bright, passionate, skilled staff that are making huge inroads with willing landowners to preserve our unique peninsula. The following people have joined our Sustainers Circle since publication of our last newsletter—thank you! To learn more/join, contact Gayle (231-256-9665). Benefits include special recognition in our publications and two events per year where Sustainers can meet our Staff, Board and other Sustainers who share their commitment to our work.

New Sustainers Kathy and John Imboden: "We are so fortunate to live in an area of such outstanding natural beauty and ecological richness. Joining the Sustainer's Circle has allowed us to help ensure that future generations will have the same opportunity."

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Volunteer with the Conservancy!

Volunteers are super important to our success and we have many opportunities for you to get involved. You can work at our Picnic, serve on our Auction Committee, work with our water sampling group, help out in our office with mailings and more. Tell us about your interests by filling out our Volunteer Questionnaire. Find it by clicking on the Volunteer tab at leelanauconservancy.org. Also, check out the list below for upcoming volunteer opportunities.

Wildflower Rescue Committee Kickoff Meeting April 21st (details on page 14)

Earth Day Workbee at Clay Cliffs
April 22wnd 10 am-noon

First Wildflower Rescue Dig April 25th (details on page 14)

Garlic Mustard Pull Workbee at Lighthouse West May 10th, 1 pm-3 pm

Garlic Mustard Workbee at Clay Cliffs
May 14th, 9 am-noon

Garlic Mustard and Mullein Workbee at Palmer Woods
May 21st, 10 am-noon

Garlic Mustard and Buckthorn Workbee at Clay Cliffs June 4th, 10 am-noon

Knapweed & Bladder Campion Workbee at Houdek Dunes July 14th, 9 am-11 am

Get more info about each workbee and register at leelanauconservancy.org/events/hikes





