



There's no place like *Leelanau*.

Conserving the Land, Water and Scenic Character of Leelanau County
Fall Newsletter 2019

New Lime Lake Preserve in the Works



From the Director

I am only one, but I am one. I cannot do everything, but I can do something. And because I cannot do everything, I will not refuse to do the something that I can do. – Edward Everett Hale

In my time as executive director, I have been blessed to deliver some truly positive news to all who cherish the Leelanau Peninsula. As you might imagine, it's incredibly satisfying—not to mention a lot of fun—to be the bearer of good tidings.

We've kept the good news coming this year of our 30th anniversary celebration. A thousand more acres of productive family farms in process for preservation. Opening the first two single-track trails at Palmer Woods and the beginning of a beautiful friendship with a whole new generation of outdoor enthusiasts. On Lime Lake, preventing a tragic impairment of a pristine forested wetland and an opportunity to help permanently protect the ecosystem that keeps water clean in Lime and Little Traverse Lakes, and ultimately Good Harbor Bay. Adding a long-coveted ridgeline parcel and the only dry-land access to our 500-acre Cedar River Preserve. And, the thrill of announcing we have honored our beloved founders—Ed and Bobbie Collins—by naming an unnamed lake at our Cedar River Preserve "Lake Collins." There are more wonderful opportunities on the way, so stay tuned.

But recently a couple of long-time supporters got in touch with me and asserted that I have been wearing rose-colored glasses, failing to address the most pressing issue of our time—climate change—and the prospect of devastating impacts to the planet, the Great Lakes and, of course, Leelanau.

They have a point. My mother once said to me, "I accentuate the positive. I have no time to be negative." Well, the apple doesn't

fall far from the tree. And so, the challenges we face as an organization tend to be dealt with quietly behind the scenes, until we have found a solution and can, yes, announce the good news. But, the enormity of the climate challenges we face, both as a society and organization, will not be resolved behind the scenes. So, let's not only talk about the challenges but let's also explore what the Leelanau Conservancy is already doing to build for climate resilience.

Climate scientists tell us that the models predicting the long-term impacts of climate change on the northern Great Lakes region vary significantly. Most say we'll have hotter, drier summers and warmer, wetter winters. Some say Lake Michigan water levels will fall; others predict a modest rise. A recent report found the Grand Traverse area was one of the top regional hotspots for climate change in the nation, surpassing the 2-degree Celsius threshold. What appears to be fairly consistent is that we will see serious stressors on our ecosystem, and the volatility and intensity of weather patterns may pose a serious threat to fruit farming.

There are many things the Leelanau Conservancy has been doing and is continuing to do to help. First and foremost, permanently protecting forest, wetland and grassland land cover, including orchards and farms, sequesters carbon. It's one of the best weapons available as a hedge against climate change. The Leelanau Conservancy is a leading member of a national community of over 1500 land trusts that have collectively preserved nearly 70 million acres of land and water. That is a lot of sequestered carbon, and we are not done yet.

This collective effort, termed "nature-based solutions" or NbS by the International

Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), is a critical component in the global effort to combat this threat. These are actions to protect, sustainably manage and restore natural or modified ecosystems which address societal challenges (e.g. climate change, food and water security or natural disasters) effectively and adaptively, while simultaneously promoting human well-being and biodiversity benefits.

Beyond permanently preserving land and water, for the last several years we've engaged in extensive on-the-ground stewardship: partnering with nonprofits and hundreds of school children to plant thousands of climate-resilient trees. Battling invasive plants to keep natural systems healthy and intact. Monitoring the health and quality of our inland lakes and streams—a program we've maintained for more than a quarter of a century. And, by bringing funding to willing farmers to eliminate development on family farms, we're providing capital to help them diversify their operations to remain viable in the future.

We all have a fundamental responsibility to do something. I believe that it will be through our collective efforts that we can most effectively address climate change. The good news is that supporting the Leelanau Conservancy's mission is a great first step to help meet the challenge. But it is clear to me that we all must do more. You can count on the Conservancy to keep up the crucial work in which we're already engaging. And, optimist that I am, I firmly believe we will collectively do what needs to be done.

Sincerely,
Thomas Nelson
Executive Director





30th Anniversary Rally: Thanks for Coming!

Over 500 people attended our 30th Anniversary Rally and by all accounts, had a great time! We loved gathering with our supporters and feeling the energy that comes when so many people who care about Leelanau find themselves together under one big tent. We enjoyed a locally-sourced meal catered by Epicure Catering and beverages donated by Baia Estate Leelanau and Arbor Brewing. Cabin Fever String Band, the group that performed at our first Friends Rally, entertained the crowd.

Founders Ed and Bobbie Collins faced a cheering crowd when Director Tom Nelson thanked them for their vision and leadership (photo below, far right). Tom also talked about 10 projects, from the Crystal River to DeYoung Natural Area, and asked the crowd to imagine what these

places might have become without your help. Because of you, he told everyone, a golf course does not exist along the Crystal River, and an iconic farmstead endures where a housing development might have sprung up.

Tom presented Tandem Ciders with the Conservation Partner of the Year Award (photo below, far left). Owners Nikki Rothwell and Dan Young have donated their time, space, and funds over the past four years and are a big part of the success of Earth Week each year. These partners have the perfect venue to reach local families and the next generation. They are a true mainstay in our community and even source the apples used in their Smackintosh cider from some of the farms we have protected with conservation easements.

Kerry Kelly, President of Friends of Sleeping Bear (FOSB), accepted the Volunteer of the Year Award on the group's behalf (photo below, second from right). For the last three years, FOSB has groomed the cross-country ski trails at Palmer Woods, sharing their time, equipment and trained volunteers. They are great at communicating with us when the trails have been groomed and help promote our trails through their emails. We are grateful to all of them, and to all of our volunteers (photo below, second from left) and businesses who help to further our mission. Special thanks to our sponsors: Epicure Catering, Baia Estate Leelanau, Arbor Brewing, Olson, Bzdok & Howard, Gerhardt Tree Service and Four Season Nursery for helping us to put on a great event.





IN THE WORKS: NEW LIME LAKE PRESERVE

Mark Fisher has made his living selling real estate in Leelanau. Years ago, he purchased seven acres along the shores of Lime Lake and thought he might build a home there one day. Wetlands and a beautiful, wide stream that flows into Lime Lake are present on the property. And so it took him nine years and several rewrites of his permit application before finally earning approval from the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) to build there.

In the meantime, Mark became involved with the Lime Lake Association, and also sat on the Good Harbor Bay Watershed planning committee. In the process, he learned just how ecologically valuable his land was, and that of his neighbors. He scrapped his plans to build, and now has become an advocate for conserving a total of 31 acres owned by multiple landowners that are critical to preserving the clean waters of the lake he loves.

The Leelanau Conservancy is working with Mark and neighboring landowners in hopes of creating a “Lime Lake Preserve,” which will protect over 1,000 feet of natural shoreline. You can see Sugar Loaf from the crescent-shaped shore here and across the lake to the northeast is our 40-acre Teichner Preserve. Together, these two Preserves will help to safeguard Lime Lake’s stellar water quality. (See cover photo by Mark Smith.)

Mark and his wife, Betsy, will donate half of their land’s value toward the eventual purchase. “I’m older, and I’m smarter,” says Mark, who has lived on the lake for 40 years. “The long and short of it is that the largest amount of water entering Lime Lake flows through this area and it’s just the right thing to do. Last winter we were out on two-foot-thick ice and were amazed to see at least 100 feet out, all of the open water around the mouth of the stream. We’ve got an opportunity to leave a legacy and I know that you can’t replace this sort of environment. Once it’s gone, it’s gone forever.”

The wetlands here act like a giant sponge, sucking up rainwater and snowmelt from nearby hills and run-off from busy Maple City Highway, which runs parallel to the proposed Preserve. Wetlands also stem erosion, trap pollution, and slowly release cleansed water back into the lake.

This area also is a haven for wildlife. Eastern white hemlock, Northern white cedar, red maple and yellow birch are home to songbirds as well as the state-threatened red shouldered

hawk. Eagles are frequently seen along the shore. In the wide, spring-fed stream that meanders through the wetlands, brook trout spawn and thrive. Snakes and toads, ducks and otter all use this area for feeding, resting, loafing, rearing, and nesting.

The first parcel of the new Preserve is now in hand, thanks to you. The Leelanau Conservancy had a short window in May to buy a 5.9 acre parcel that was most at risk of being developed. “Because of our incredible supporters, we had the funds on hand to act quickly,” says Tom Nelson, Executive Director. The former owner had wanted to build a 35x14-foot bridge over a beautiful stream, and install utility lines underneath it. That would have involved excavating 59 cubic yards of earth in a 400-foot long gash—threatening fragile streambank habitat in the process. The owner had also applied to truck in nearly 500 yards of dirt to fill the wetland, and construct a 630-foot long boardwalk.

The DEQ denied the permit, citing “significant adverse effects on the natural resources associated with an unnamed stream and wetlands contiguous to Lime Lake.” The owner was getting ready to appeal the denial when Mark and a member of the owner’s family reached out to the Conservancy, seeing if a deal could be struck. “We were able to make it work, and to protect an ecological powerhouse that was at risk,” adds Tom.

I visited the proposed Preserve in August with Land Protection Specialist Kim Hayes. Even then, during the dry season, it was hard to find places to walk that weren’t saturated. At times, our rubber boots sank into muck, and in order to reach the shore, we did some serious bushwhacking, climbing over downed trees. We passed cattails, Joe Pye weed and giant Jack-in-the Pulpit along a flagged path. Kim told me that when she toured the property in spring there was an amazing array of wildflowers.

“It’s so nice to see such a healthy forest and mix of trees,” said Kim, pointing to a giant yellow birch, to a rotting log, to seedlings dancing in pockets of sunlight. “The impact of putting in a road and utilities here would be absolutely devastating to this healthy, intact system.”

Thanks to you, this special swath of land along Lime Lake will remain relatively untouched, and a new Preserve is on the horizon. Stay tuned for news about how you can help this project evolve. If you would like to learn more, please contact Meg Delor, Development Director. —Carolyn Faught



Jack-in-the-pulpit: Next year's plants in the making on Lime Lake

WETLANDS— WHY WE MUST PROTECT THEM

Even though the State is charged with protecting wetlands, permits are often still granted and damage to these fragile ecosystems occurs. It’s highly likely that the landowner who wanted to put in a road and build on the parcel along Lime Lake that we obtained could have eventually done so via an appeal process.

In Leelanau, only seven percent of our land mass consists of wetlands. When you think about the critical role that wetlands play, and the important wildlife habitat they provide, why wouldn’t we do everything we can to protect them?

The Environmental Protection Agency says that wetlands are the most productive ecosystems in the world, comparable to rain forests and coral reefs. They are home to an immense variety of species. Think of wetlands as “biological supermarkets” which provide an abundance of food that attracts all manner of animal species. Dead plant leaves and stems break down in water to form small particles of organic material, which feed many small aquatic insects and small fish. They in turn become food for larger fish, reptiles, amphibians, birds and mammals.



DeYoung

and Old

Restoring the Historic Leelanau Farmhouse to its Former Glory

Our journey into historic restoration of the 164-year-old DeYoung farmhouse reached a satisfying place this summer. The 191-acre DeYoung Natural Area contains the only remaining buildings of any of our natural areas, so much thought and deliberation went into the vision for the house's future. After over a decade since protecting the land, we are now in the midst of restoring the home to its former glory thanks to you. The work on the farmhouse is expected to be completed later this year. Follow along with Land Steward Chase Heise, who is the project manager for the restoration of the house.



1. Chase looks at the newly-open upstairs, which will become office space ('before' photo on the right). The stairs used to come out in the middle and this space was separated into three rooms. Downstairs, we also have opened up the front room for meeting space and added an ADA-compliant bathroom.

2. The most visible change to the farmhouse so far is the new paint color. (Left, old on the right.) "It was important to us to keep the original character of the house with tasteful updates," Chase says. "We chose historic paint colors with a traditional light primary color and dark trim (Ancient Ivory and Lafayette Green). We also were able to restore and keep the original wavy glass windows downstairs."

3. "We saved a lot of the furniture original to the house and look forward to rearranging it! The biggest question right now is where we will put the piano," Chase says.

4. These new stairs to the basement replaced the harrowingly-narrow former ones.

5. Volunteers helped add fresh paint to the power house.

6. Still to do: Siding repair, and lots of finishing touches inside. On the list: insulate the walls, replace windows upstairs due to safety concerns, plaster, drywall, trim, floor refinishing, and a new kitchen (the original wood-fired Home Comfort cook stove will remain).

7. The most interesting thing about the restoration project so far? "The contractors found tons of old newspapers from the early 1900s in the walls that were used as a wind barrier around the windows. They were in surprisingly good condition. You could still read a story about president Theodore Roosevelt," chuckles Chase. Also found were some interesting old bottles and tins.

8. Picture of progress: all new electrical and plumbing, plus a new furnace and air conditioning have been installed. Many more structural improvements, too: new footings in the basement, and two new redesigned staircases. Chase looks at the new electric & plumbing in the basement. Notice the original cedar beams from 1855, still with bark hanging off, above Chase.





The Healing Power of Nature

While waiting for a hike to begin during Earth Week last spring at Kehl Lake, I felt my phone buzzing in my pocket. Glancing at the screen, I saw it was a close friend of mine, a college roommate, who dislikes talking on the phone, and almost never calls. I picked up.

My friend could hardly speak but managed to get the words out that her daughter, 28, had died that morning of a drug overdose. She had just heard the news. It was a call that I had somehow always expected I might get, and yet it nearly took me to my knees.

Her daughter had struggled with addiction mightily for 12 years. She was bright, beautiful, married and a mother to an adorable three-year-old. This was a girl who my own two sons thought of as a cousin. She loved Leelanau and came up every summer with her mom and younger brother, to stay with us for a week. I can still see her jumping off our raft, or surfing the waves at Van's Beach, or toasting marshmallows by firelight, her long dark hair pulled back.

But tragically, as in so many cases across our nation, her drug addiction trumped everything. We went downstate to be with my friend and to attend the funeral. In the days that followed, I felt alternately numb and perpetually on the verge of tears, sad for my friend and incredulous at her unimaginable loss.

I came back to work later that week and our staff carpooled out to tour the new Cedar River Preserve addition. Our Board had just taken the leap of faith to buy this incredible 80 acres that could have easily become a ridgetop development, with its sweeping views of Lake Leelanau.

It was a cool and overcast May afternoon as we trekked up and along the ridgeline. The trees were still stark and bare. But the bright green of spring ephemerals on the hillside took my breath away, contrasting beautifully against the darkness of a

forest floor rich with leaf litter. Iridescent moss and patterned lichen fanned out on decaying logs. We heard a cacophony of birdsong and looked down on a kettle hole lake, formed by the glaciers.

For the first time in weeks, I felt something ease in me. Seeing all of the new life after such a long, brutal winter felt hopeful. The ancientness of the kettle hole, the girth of old-growth trees, even the skeleton of what appeared to be a deer gave me a kind of peace and perspective that only nature can provide. Life and death are intertwined so beautifully and naturally in the out of doors. It gave me comfort to be reminded that each of us is just a small speck in time, whirling through a very big universe. Somehow, it felt easier to accept the death of my friend's daughter.

I couldn't be more grateful that the Leelanau Conservancy has protected places like the Cedar River Preserve to hike in, to heal in, and to offer peace and perspective. My friend plans to come up this fall. We won't visit the new preserve as it is not yet open to the public. But we will go to Clay Cliffs, to the dunes, and walk in the pounding waves of Lake Michigan, remembering the little girl who once played along those shores.—*Carolyn Faught*

Cedar River Preserve, What's Next?

Please Note: The new Cedar River Preserve 80-acre addition is not yet open to the public. As has been our practice with all natural areas, access is provided as soon as we can develop a management plan for the property that best preserves the land's ecological resources and create safe, well-marked access.

172-Acre Gallagher Farm Protected!

Great News! Just as we were wrapping up this newsletter, a farmland protection project that had been in the works since 2017 was completed. The 172-acre Gallagher Farm owned by John Gallagher Jr. is located along Breithaupt and Lincoln Roads in Elmwood Township. The farm currently produces cherries and apples.

The land was protected as part of the Farm Bill-funded Tribal Stream and Fruitbelt Collaborative grant. The Gallagher family was compensated for removing the development rights from the property with 50% of the funds coming from this federal program administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service. The Gallaghers donated a portion of the value and donations to the Leelanau Conservancy's farmland protection fund covered the rest. This agricultural conservation easement will permanently protect important groundwater springs that form the headwaters of an unnamed stream flowing through the Conservancy's DeYoung Natural Area and eventually into Cedar Lake and West Grand Traverse Bay. The project also helps protect a very scenic ridgeline enjoyed from most of West Bay south of Power Island. Protection of this productive farm will also ensure 89 acres of prime and unique agricultural soils will forever be available for farming. Watch for a more in-depth story about this farm family to come.



Spring + Summer Happenings

1. Staff of Senator Debbie Stabenow's met with our staff, as well as members of the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians and the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy—partners in the Farm Bill-funded Tribal Stream and Fruitbelt Collaborative. Restoring fish passage under roadways and protecting farmland are goals of the Collaborative.

2. Volunteers Jan and Dave Puterbaugh help save ferns at Kehl Lake Natural Area, where the boardwalk they are standing on will be replaced this fall.

3. Land Steward Chase Heise cuts up a giant fallen beech at Clay Cliffs that had pinned down several smaller trees & also split. "That can create tension pockets throughout which can be dangerous – but Chase handled it like a pro!" says AmeriCorps member Shelly Stusick, who took the photo.

4. Barn swallow nest at DeYoung Natural Area.

5. Volunteer stream samplers get instructions on how to read a flow meter from land steward Chase Heise.

6. Staff and AmeriCorps Members tried out the new mountain biking loop at Palmer Woods.

7. Sustainers gathered at 45 North. Pictured l-r: Amy Tennis, Christine Armbricht, Barbara Winkelman and Barbara Siepker.

8. Docent Ed Ketterer led a paddle & photographed the Cedar River Preserve.

9. Natural Areas and Preserves Manager Becky Hill captured this image of smoke fungus at a very lush Teichner Preserve.

10. AmeriCorps Member Shelly Stusick models our new Cedar River t-shirts (\$22.) Zip up hoodie also available (\$40.) Call Molly to order: 231-256-9665.

11. Volunteers including a group from Coldwell Banker helped to reroute a trail at Clay Cliffs Natural Area that was causing some erosion issues. We could not be nearly as successful without the help of so many great volunteers.

12. A group of middle schoolers from the Lake Forest Open Lands helped to put in a new fern garden at Palmer Woods. (see story on page 12.)

13. Botanist Liana May teaches stewardship staff and visiting Huron Pines AmeriCorps members about plants found on fens in the Teichner Preserve.

14. Thanks to Kathryn Palms for holding several yoga classes outdoors this summer to benefit the Leelanau Conservancy.







Palmer Woods Updates: New Fern Garden Takes Shape

Dr. Dan Palmer has a passion for ferns. The retired physician (pictured on page 13) is the author of two books on the ferns of Michigan and Hawaii. And long before the Leelanau Conservancy purchased the Palmer family's 720 acres, Dr. Palmer had established the beginnings of a fern garden along a perennial stream, just off the Price Valley trail at the Palmer Woods Forest Reserve. His dream was to showcase the ferns that grow in Michigan on the property.

This summer the fern garden grew under the direction of Land Steward Emily Douglas (pictured left), who earned her degree in botany from Arizona State University. Emily also has a passion for ferns and the identification of native species and the role they play within the ecosystem. Under the guidance of Dr. Palmer and Susan Fawcett, a teacher and PhD candidate from the University of Vermont, Emily took the fern garden a step further. In the process, she turned a whole new generation onto the wonders of ferns, by harnessing the energy of industrious 8th graders from Lake Forest, Illinois.

Emily explains that over a 10-year period, Dr. Palmer had transformed the area from a few maple saplings into a fern garden that encompassed 19 species of Michigan ferns. "Our goal is to establish an area where the public can learn about ferns and we can carry on Dr. Palmer's legacy," says Emily. She is looking to add another 17-20 species to the garden along with "fern allies"—including species from the *Equisetum* (think horsetails) and *Lycophyte* (clubmosses) families. "Fern allies disperse by shedding spores in the same way that ferns do and belong to

the oldest existing vascular plant group," adds Emily. "But their evolutionary lineage distinguishes them from ferns."

Dr. Palmer and his wife, Helen, have made a generous donation toward the establishment of the fern garden. Emily says plans also call for interpretive signage and some observation boardwalks. In July Emily and the Stewardship crew welcomed the group of 8th graders from the Lake Forest Open Lands Conservation Explorers program. This three-week-program focuses on water and wildlife in the Lake County Forest Preserves and includes a week-long trip to Michigan where students compare and understand exceptional natural areas through education and volunteering.

The students spent a day at Palmer Woods helping to plant over 110 ferns composed of 15 different species. They also hauled limestone and constructed a rock wall that will feature alkaline-dependent fern species. Three species planted were re-located from Kehl Lake Natural Area, where a boardwalk is being rebuilt. Several other species were moved from within Palmer Woods itself. "The work they did was physical, repetitive and challenging and they all did it with smiles on their faces," says Emily.

"The students loved the stewardship work they did with your crew!" says Susie Hoffman, Director of Education for Lake Forest, who annually brings her group to Leelanau to help the Conservancy. "Some apparently wanted to continue that work instead of kayaking. That speaks volumes about not only the work you do, but the people you gather to do it with. We are already looking forward to next summer!"



Joy Riders in the Woods

On a Monday morning in early July, a steady stream of cars circulates through the parking lot at Palmer Woods Forest Reserve. It had only been three days since the new, 2.75-mile-long Central Ridge Trail opened to the public, but already the word had spread about Leelanau County's newest mountain bike trail.

The new Central Ridge Loop creates a total of 6 miles of mountain bike trails at Palmer Woods in the heart of Leelanau County. Compared to the East Ridge Loop built in fall of 2018, the new loop offers a harder climb, longer downhill and adds progression: stepping stones for riders to master before going on to try bigger features.

"Thanks to the Edmund F. and Virginia B. Ball Foundation, Palmer Woods is becoming the destination for mountain biking in the Northern Lower Peninsula," says the Conservancy's Executive Director Tom Nelson. "We're already seeing that with the number of riders here testing out the trail today." The word is certainly out. Conversations with the dozens of riders circling the parking lot reveal that people were visiting from Traverse City, Detroit, and even the Upper Peninsula in search of an adventure in the woods. The Palmer Woods mountain bike trails drew them to Leelanau.

Tom continues, "We built these trails because we heard over and over again from our community that there was a need for mountain bike trails here in Leelanau County. It feels good to deliver that." The younger generations and families especially seem to appreciate the active outdoor recreation opportunity the trails bring. "They want fun and active ways to

keep themselves and their families healthy," Tom says. "That's why we're excited to begin work on a new beginner cross-country style mountain bike trail

as well as more hiking and cross-country ski trails next year." And we're seeing real results from the trails, too. Based on Google data, Palmer Woods Forest Reserve is now our most searched for natural area. And the bike trail is our second most visited trail out of the eight popular natural area trails we tracked over the summer months with a device called a trail counter.

"We've already seen the importance of the trail for families and those new to mountain biking," says Bike Leelanau co-founder Cody Sprattmoran.



Cody Sprattmoran; Photo by Drew Palmer.

"From kids learning on balance bikes, to getting their first air, to clinic participants taking their first-ever ride on a mountain bike," she adds. "All different abilities of riders are coming together and connecting to the land here."

The trail is a meaningful addition to local riders who have been longing for something closer to home, too. "I haven't touched my road bike all summer," realizes Chad Jordan, president of Northern Michigan Mountain Bike Association (NMMBA) and Suttons Bay resident, as he rehydrates after a ride through both trails. His excitement is palpable.

When asked what it means to finally have a public mountain bike trail in Leelanau, Chad says: "It's a dream come true. We've been dreaming about it for decades. It's like Christmas day to see other people enjoying it now that it's built. It just blows my mind."

Intern Power!

Like us, many of you loved our Clay Cliffs t-shirts. Meet the talented designer: intern and graphic design student Alyssa Spaeth (top left), who will be returning to Northeastern University this fall as a senior. Alyssa also designed our 30th Anniversary Rally materials and invitations, infographics for our publications and more.

We were fortunate to have Emma Putney (middle, left) serving as a GIS intern this summer. She is from Onekama and will be a senior at MSU this fall, majoring in Geographic Informational Sciences. While she was here, she did two things: “I fell in love with Leelanau,” she says. “It’s only an hour from home, but is so different, and so beautiful.”

She also worked on an in-depth mapping project that details everything from erodible soils to wetlands to inland lakes and stream buffer areas. Her maps will help our staff to prioritize areas most in need of protection from an ecological standpoint. The maps will also be useful to area lake associations.

Finally, Omena summer resident Claire Edgley (bottom, left) took photos and did some writing for us this summer, including an essay about the docent-led “nature immersion” hike at Swanson Preserve attended by over 30 people. Claire recently earned a post-graduate degree in English Literature at Trinity College in Dublin, Ireland. Read an excerpt from her essay below, and the complete piece on our website.

“For me the Forest Immersion purpose of this hike created a rejuvenating and eye-opening experience. I certainly started observing the living things around me in a more attentive and multifaceted way than I have before. Touching trees and comparing the textures of bark is surprisingly enjoyable, and I now know that the sap of a Yellow Birch tree smells like wintergreen. I enjoyed listening to different sounds fade in and out, the buzzing of cicadas and trills of various birds forming a soundscape that sounds interesting if one is consciously paying attention to it. Perhaps because my nearest docent Shelley mentioned the way the light and shadow look around the stream, my observations tended towards seeing things with an artistic sensibility. I noticed how certain tree stumps with holes or beech trees with twisted bark looked like sculptures.”

Thanks to all of these great young women for their dedication and expertise this summer!

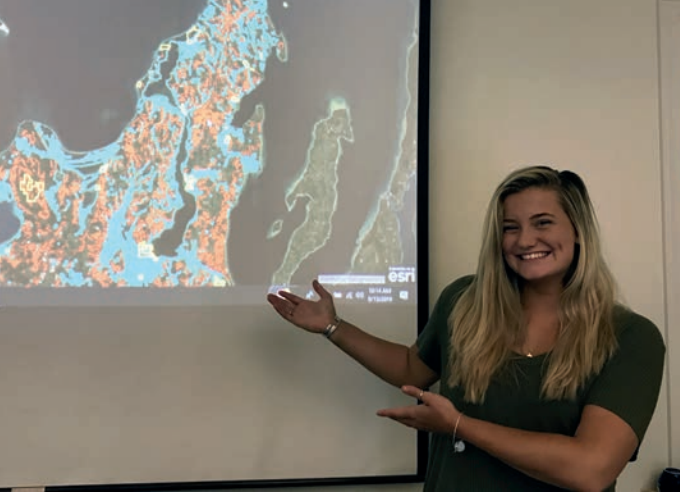


Photo by Claire Edgley

A Fan of Benches

Docent Marsha Buehler is a fan of benches. She sees them as integral to getting people of all ages out to our natural areas. Moms nursing babies. Grandparents using walkers. People with a recent illness or surgery who want to get out in the woods but can't go their normal distance.

And so when she asked our Stewardship crew to consider putting one in midway along the short trail at Finton Natural Area, they added it to their ever growing to-do list. The bench, built by volunteers Dave Coyne and Al Swiderski, was installed in August. "It's in the perfect spot," said Marsha, basking in the morning light streaming through the trees. The bench looks out toward a cedar swamp as a woodpecker sounds nearby.

Marsha leads hikes annually at Finton, which is not far from her home in Omena. "It's a great place for people with limited mobility, and now, with the new bench even more so," she says.

Max and Mary Finton donated this 37-acre parcel to the Leelanau Conservancy in 2000 to ensure that its natural beauty remains preserved forever.



The Legacy of 45 North

We were sorry to learn of the passing of Steve Grossnickle in late August, who with his wife, Lori, preserved 100 acres known today as 45 North, previously owned by Dean and Cindy Robb. The Grossnickles donated a conservation easement in 2007 to the Conservancy and launched their popular vineyard and tasting room. Steve Grossnickle's family had been vacationing in the Little Traverse Lake area for the last 50 years. At the time, he said that his love for the peninsula is what inspired him to permanently protect the 100-acre farm. "Leelanau is beyond spectacular," he said. "It should remain pristine, as it is."

We are grateful to the Grossnickle family and 45 North for all the ways they partner with the Leelanau Conservancy. In June, 45 North hosted our Sustainers summer gathering. The winery also features hiking and maintains biking and cross-country ski trails through their scenic property that the public may enjoy. "Steve was a good man, and his legacy lives on," says Tom Nelson, Executive Director, who worked with the family to preserve the land.



Board Reunion

On a special evening in August, former and current Leelanau Conservancy board members gathered for a first ever "Board Reunion" on the Leland Village Green. It was a fitting locale, given that the Green was the first property protected and opened to the public after the Conservancy was formed. Director Tom Nelson welcomed the group and introduced Board President Karen Mulvahill, who began her talk with a quote from Sir Isaac Newton: "If I have seen further, it is by standing on the shoulders of giants," she said. Founding Director Brian Price also spoke, telling the group that all board members, past and present, share a passion for Leelanau, and for moving the mission of the Conservancy forward. Founders Ed and Bobbie Collins told board members how much they had mattered over the years and were presented with the news from Tom Nelson that an unnamed lake in the Cedar River Preserve was now officially 'Lake Collins.' Pictured l-r: Founding Directors Susan and Brian Price, Founders Ed and Bobbie Collins and current Executive Director Tom Nelson.



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Rick Gans
Kathy Garthe
Susan Green
Bob Gilbert
Alison Horton
Ed Ketterer
Larry Mawby
Roger Newton
Warren Watkins
Bill Witler



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Executive Director
Thomas Nelson

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Kathy Birney
Molly Crimmins

Charitable Giving
Meg Delor
Leslee Spraggins
Sara Michael
Gayle Egeler

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Carolyn Faught
Lindy Kellogg

Land Protection
Matt Heiman
Kim Hayes

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Becky Hill
Yarrow Brown
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Chase Heise

AmeriCorps Members
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Nature in miniature: *Cladonia sp.* Also known as “Golf Tee” or “Pixie Cup” lichen, found near Lime Lake. Photo by Mark Smith

