



There's no place like *Leelanau*.

Conserving the Land, Water and Scenic Character of Leelanau County

Summer Newsletter 2021



From Our President

Ten years ago I walked into the offices of the Leelanau Conservancy, offering to volunteer. Having just retired and moved with my husband to Traverse City, we needed to establish a new life and although we had visited “up north” for almost 30 years we didn’t have family or close friends here. I didn’t feel I really belonged.

Immediately staff member Gayle Egeler had me stuffing and stamping envelopes. Carolyn Faught saw the “people” side of me and put me to work calling donors to thank them for their donation, be it large or small. I loved hearing everyone sing the praises of the Conservancy. Through hikes with docents Dave Amos and Lou Ricord I started my habit of hiking the trails in the Conservancy’s Natural Areas. These staff, donors and docents had a sense of belonging to the good work of the Conservancy.

I was asked to join the Board of Directors. Brian Price was this seemingly laid back executive director but so much happened during his leadership! Every month staff member Matt Heiman introduced us to a project to consider as a possible natural area, conserved farm, or conservation easement. Brian retired in 2014 and Tom Nelson stepped into Brian’s shoes but soon laid down his own path for the Conservancy. Both Directors followed the footsteps of Bobbie and Ed Collins who established the Conservancy with integrity and honesty. Staff and volunteers—all a part of the Conservancy family—belonging.

I quickly learned that when board member Steve Martineau speaks everyone listens. What’s this about a 1,000 acre parcel of forested land we should buy and turn into a Natural Area with mountain biking trails? Bob Gilbert was passionate we should do this, especially the mountain biking; but, there were concerns. Sharon Oriel insisted we be careful to preserve the peace and quiet and wonderful flora and fauna of what would become Palmer Woods. Susan Green questioned this purchase, as she was in charge of raising the funds. Becky Hill and her Stewardship Team of Emily Douglas and Chase Heise led us through the decision-making process and I learned that the Board could address questions, but then come to consensus to move a project forward. Now Palmer Woods is the Conservancy’s crown jewel, belonging to all of us.

It was also clear that if the farmhouse and barns at the DeYoung property were going to be preserved, action was needed sooner, not later. Our late board member Rich Hoover nudged us along and soon that beautiful restored old farmhouse will be open for community activities. Board and staff belonging to the greater good.

A former board member, Julie Weeks, urged the Conservancy to expand its use of social media. Such wisdom she had. We lost her way too soon—a future board chair to be sure. But now we use social media to reach so many more people who are developing their own sense of belonging to this beautiful place.

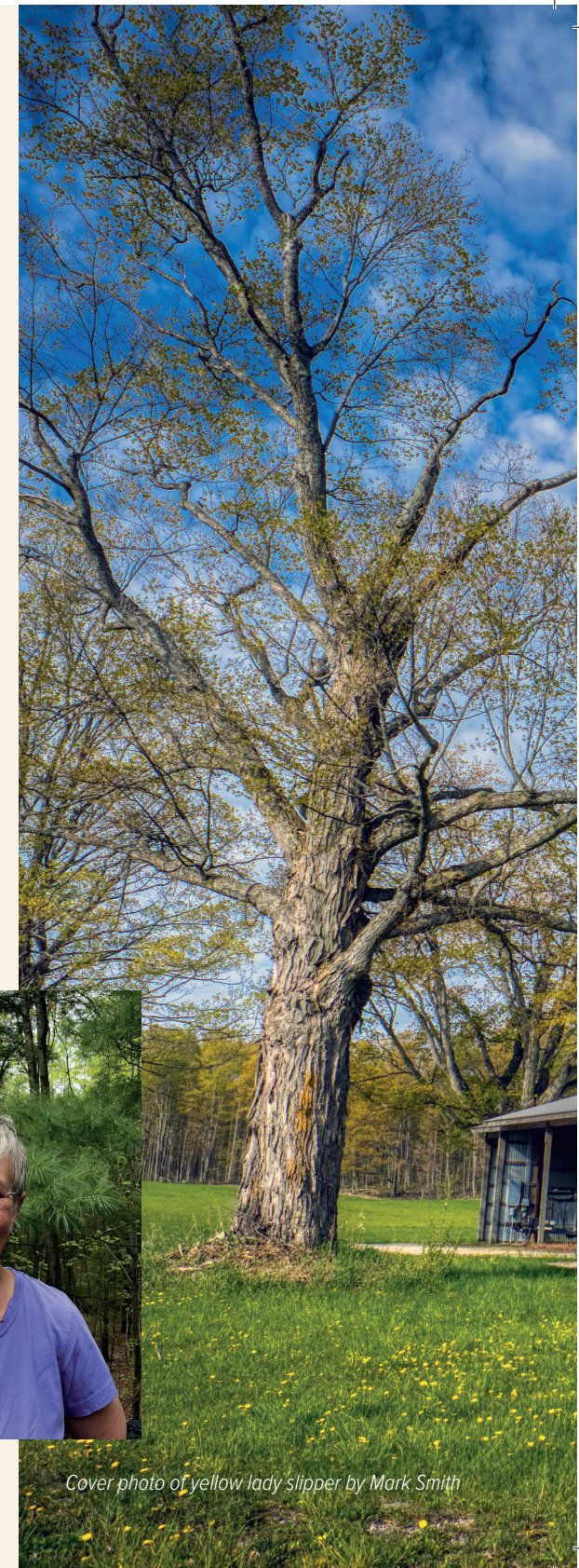
As I come to the end of my third and last term on the Board, I see what wonderful accomplishments have been achieved. During the past nine years we’ve added 8 natural areas and preserves (1,462 acres) and added 44 Conservation Easements, preserving 4,100 acres of farm and natural lands in perpetuity. New board members are adding depth and new insights to our decision-making: Alison Horton, expert naturalist; Kathy Garthe, committed farmer; Bill Witle, financial whiz, and Nick Loud, communications and social media expert. Each one is growing in their belonging with the Conservancy.

Looking back I am so thankful to have had this opportunity to meet these many wonderful people—volunteers, board, and staff, too many to name, who make the Conservancy such a wonderful organization—a place to belong. I invite each of you to find your place within the Conservancy—as a docent, trail steward, hiker, biker, water quality monitor, plant rescuer, office volunteer, photographer, Heritage Society member or Sustainer, board or committee member. You, too, can belong to this wonderful community called the Leelanau Conservancy.

Sincerely,



Linda J Proffitt
Board President



Cover photo of yellow lady slipper by Mark Smith

A Legacy of Farming



The barn John Schettek built in 1926 (right) is still standing today, now part of a recent conservation easement on the 90-acre Schettek Farm in Kasson Township.
Photo by Mark Smith

When the Leelanau Conservancy protects family farms, we often talk about the land as a globally rare resource that is perfect for growing stonefruit. We identify streams and towering hardwood forests, which protect water quality, and help to battle climate change. We celebrate and photograph the scenic views that will never change. We adore our local foods and charming farm stands, and care deeply about preserving a way of life, and a part of the local economy, that will forever be available to future generations of farmers. We love our family farmers.

Whispering from these lands are also the ghosts of farmers past, and incredible stories of those who journeyed to Leelanau from faraway places as long ago as the 1800s. Known as “homesteaders,” these earliest settlers led a hardscrabble and sometimes tragic life.

Such is the case with the Schettek family, who earlier this year preserved an extraordinarily beautiful 90 acres with a conservation easement. This Kasson Township farm just south of Maple City was a fourth generation farm. Livestock was raised here as well as potatoes, corn and hay.

We spoke with brothers Bob and James Schettek, the oldest and youngest of five siblings, who say that they are simply carrying out their parents’ fervent wish to “keep the farm as natural as it could be.” “They did not want it to be subdivided as many large tracts of land have been,” says Bob. Their mother, Arlene, 85, is still living. Their father Paul Schettek, died in 2017 at age 94.

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Paul Schettek and grandchild



Above: John & Helen Schettek



Below: Bob (left) and James "Butch" Schettek with family dog Roger.

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Paul inherited the land from his parents, John and Helen Schettek, who were the first to farm there, having purchased the land between 1914 and 1922. John built the beautiful barn on the property and is known for having built other barns in Leelanau, including the beloved and recently restored Poor Farm barn, located at Myles Kimmerly Park in Kasson Township.

Tragically, John died from pneumonia in 1927. He was only 49, and left Helen with seven children. Bob and James' father Paul was among the youngest and just four years old when his father died.

Helen managed to carry on, farming potatoes, and hauling them with a horse and buggy to the railroad depot in Cedar to be shipped out to city markets. She also sold timber off the property. She was also an avid gardener, growing flowers and vegetables. Paul quit school after the 8th grade, helping his mother to farm and raise livestock.

Helen never remarried, and lived in the rustic old house on the property until she died in 1964. She enjoyed electric lights, but had no indoor plumbing for her entire adult life. "She did her laundry by hand, and had a cistern well," says James.

After Helen died, Paul and his older brother inherited the land. Paul married Arlene and they built a new home near Helen's, living in the basement until a main story could be added five years later. By then he had taken a full-time job driving a truck for Concrete Services in Traverse City, where he spent 28 years. Arlene raised their five children, baked cakes for weddings and cleaned cottages for the summer people on Glen Lake.

Both James and Bob have great memories of growing up on the now preserved land. "We

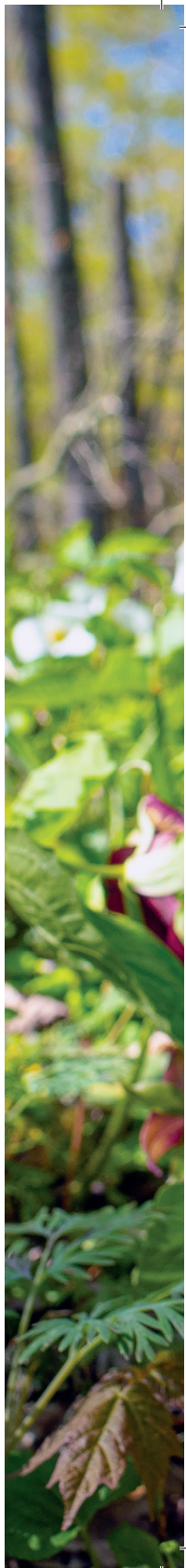
were so active, always outdoors," says James, 48. "There were no computer games. We had a treehouse and forts and a great sledding hill"—a hill his own two children have also enjoyed.

James, the youngest, recalls helping his dad to cut firewood they supplied to The Homestead and to a meat market in Cedar for their smokers. 160 cords lined their long driveway. "Then as now, we managed the woods really well," says James. "We cut up fallen trees and/or harvest less desirable species."

"The family has been great stewards of the land," says Kim Hayes, Director of Easement and Farm Programs, who worked with the Schettek to preserve the land. "In addition to this fertile farmland, two-thirds of the property also contains a large forested area. There is a fantastically beautiful ephemeral pond and wetland. The forestland is full of wildflowers in the spring." A classic and well-cared for barn is visible from Maple City Highway.

Like many other farms that the Leelanau Conservancy has protected, the Schettek project demonstrates once again what might be lost if these lands were to be paved over. The endless and renewable promise of food production, the ecological value of what the land enables, and a very way of life, past and present, that could be extinguished.

"Our parents very much wanted to see the land protected," says Bob. "Lots of wonderful memories have been made here over four generations and with Mom and Dad's help that will continue."

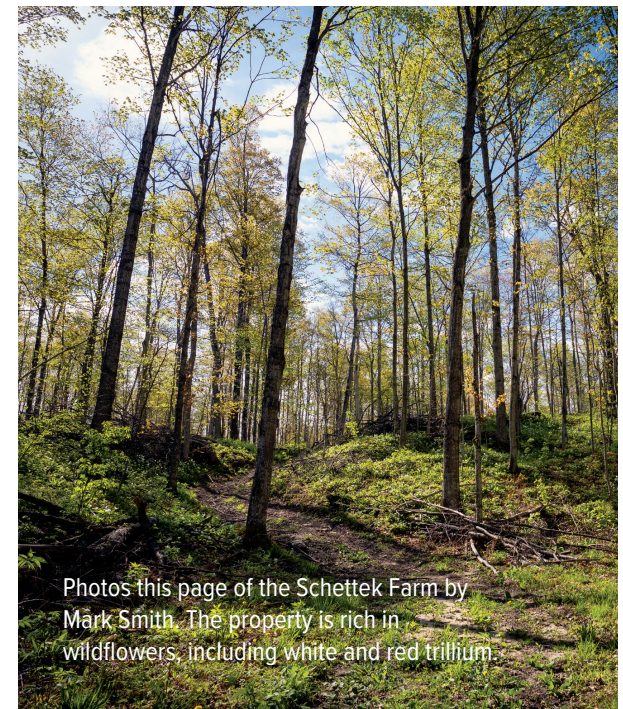




What is a Conservation Easement?

Private lands like the Schettek farm are protected with a legal agreement known as a conservation easement—a somewhat confusing term because the word “easement” can sometimes denote access, which is not the case. All of the private lands that the Conservancy has protected with conservation easements are not open to the public and remain in private hands. This legal tool permanently restricts development on the land, protects its natural features and each agreement is tailored so that it does what is best for the landowner and the land.

Funding: the Schettek family donated 50% of the conservation easement fair market value. Federal farmland funds through the Regional Conservation Partnership Program of the Natural Resources Conservation Service provided 50% of the cost, and donations from our wonderful supporters made up the remaining 25%.



Photos this page of the Schettek Farm by Mark Smith. The property is rich in wildflowers, including white and red trillium.



Tom Dunfee, former Conservancy Board Chairman

Stewarding a Beloved Preserve

By Carolyn Fought, who retired from our communications staff in April, 2021.

During the 41 years that Gretchen and Tom Dunfee owned their home on Little Traverse Lake, Gretchen had a morning ritual. Weather permitting, at dawn she would step into her kayak and paddle the shoreline. “I saw river otters and eagles, turtles basking in the sun, and blue herons,” says Gretchen. “Deer would come down to the shoreline to drink. It was so peaceful.” As the light grew brighter on her 1.5 hour paddle, she would pass people sipping coffee on their docks.

Tom, who died last fall, preferred to sleep in and got his exercise on a beloved bike, which he often rode in to Leland. During those years, Tom, a past Board Chair, often stopped by the Conservancy’s office to check in with staff, including me. Many a quick chat was had standing in the doorway to make sure he was on top of all that was happening, and to learn what he might do to help. The role of Chairman was just one of several that Tom held over nearly two decades.

In memory of Tom, Gretchen made a generous donation to fund additional boardwalk and other maintenance at the Swanson Preserve, a place they both loved and visited often. Tom, in fact, was a fundraiser for the project, securing key donations from friends and neighbors around the lake. At the 2013 dedication of the new preserve, Tom cut the ribbon and welcomed nearly 100 people to explore this lovely place.

Since then, untold numbers of hikers have enjoyed the 83-acre preserve which takes in 2,000 feet of shoreline. “We always thought that Little Traverse Lake was one of the best kept secrets in Leelanau,” says Gretchen. “Tom really felt it was so important for the lake that Sonny’s (Swanson) farm be protected. We wanted to preserve what we had experienced.”

That included their daughters picking strawberries and buying sweet corn and tomatoes from the iconic yellow farm stand. And, long conversations with Sonny whenever the legendary farmer happened to be working at the stand. (The farm has since been sold to a young farmer and is protected with a conservation easement.)

Like all of our natural areas, usage has skyrocketed during the pandemic. “Erosion has occurred as hikers step wider to pass others and to stay out of muddy sections,” says Chad Jordan, Property Maintenance Specialist. “A vernal pool near the kiosk has grown larger as water levels have risen.” Two new sections of boardwalk, a total of 60 feet, link up to older boardwalk and were built in our Stewardship barn. Chad spearheaded the work, with help from AmeriCorps members Grace Nagle and Veronica Bauer. The trio also spread new wood chips and added gravel to the parking area, all thanks to Gretchen’s donation.

I met Gretchen out at the preserve in April, shortly before I retired. We sat on a memorial bench in Tom’s honor located at the shore of Little Traverse Lake. From there, a serene view takes in the home where she and Tom spent so many years. Former Conservancy Board Chairs donated the bench naming rights.* The bench itself was built by Founding Executive Director Brian Price. “That meant a lot to me; Tom enjoyed a long friendship with Brian,” says Gretchen.

Gretchen recalled how Tom became involved with the Leelanau Conservancy. He had just turned 60, and had retired as the Director of Nephrology at Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit. The couple moved north, but after a summer of golf and biking, Tom quickly became bored.



Photo of Little Traverse Lake by Ken Scott

“One day he came into the laundry room and watched me iron and I thought, this guy needs something to do,” she says. Gretchen suggested he join a Leland men’s coffee group she had heard about. There he met then-Conservancy Board Chair Dick Ristine. “Tom revered Dick, and valued his friendship,” she adds. Tom quickly became involved, and I met him a few years later.

At that time we had just one Stewardship staffer, Meg Woller. Under Meg’s and Brian Price’s direction, Tom and two retirees, Dr. John Bull and Jim Vachow, formed “The Volunteer Stewardship Network.” The trio became great friends, and spent hours building and maintaining many of the trails that exist today. Sadly, all three are now gone. But they set the stage for the large volunteer group we have come to depend on which lightens our load and saves the Conservancy thousands of dollars annually.

As time went on, Tom took on more jobs. He trained to become a docent, leading hikes for over a decade. “He loved to teach; it was a favorite part of his job at Henry Ford,” says Gretchen. She laughs recalling how he couldn’t stop talking about kettle holes, dune formations or pointing out wildflowers on hikes when their three adult children came to visit.

To me, Tom was the embodiment of our entire organization. He did trail work. He led hikes. He helped fundraise. He and Gretchen gave generously as longtime Sustainers, and joined our Heritage Society too. As a board member and Chair, Tom helped to set the direction for the organization. But most of all, Tom was a friend to so many.

When I was going through treatment for breast cancer 10 years ago, Tom would swing by my office at least once a week and pull me into the conference room to check in. As a physician, he helped to ease some of my worries and answered my questions. As a melanoma survivor himself, we shared common fears and thoughts on our mortality.

I am not the only one he encouraged and cared

for. “Tom was and still is such a beloved figure,” says Executive Director Tom Nelson. “He was always curious and keenly interested in our work and our lives, like a favorite uncle.” He encouraged Tom Nelson when he was a candidate to become our second Executive Director. “Tom believed in me—a gift I’ll never forget,” adds Tom Nelson.

Tom died last fall at 80. In his last few years he suffered from dementia and an autoimmune disease. To simplify their life and be close to medical care, the Dunfees sold their home on Little Traverse Lake and moved to Traverse City.

Gretchen feels so fortunate to have been married to such a fine man for 57 years. Almost the entire time we sat on Tom’s bench, a male and female merganser swam in front of us along the shore. Gretchen commented that the mergansers seemed symbolic of her and Tom who, too, had “nested” on the lake. “I guess I am always aware of Tom’s presence with me and my memories of our life together,” she says.

Gretchen recalls a day early on in retirement when they hiked the Cottonwood Trail at Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore. “We got to the top and Tom encircled me in his arms and said, ‘We made it!’” she says. “But he wasn’t really talking about the trail, rather the fact that we had retired to a place that we both loved so much.”

“As we stood there taking in the view, I remember saying that I hoped we would have at least 15 good years,” says Gretchen, tearing up. “Now I wish I had said 20 or 25.”

Those of us who worked or volunteered with Tom were all so lucky to know him. Thank you, Gretchen, for your gift that will remind us of him every time we visit the ecological gem that he helped to save.

*Learn more about Swanson Preserve on our website. *For more information about named gift opportunities, contact Meg Delor, Development Director: mdelor@leelanauconservancy.org*



Tom Dunfee at the ribbon cutting at Swanson Preserve



Gretchen Dunfee on the old boardwalk at Swanson Preserve

Closing the Circle

When Dr. Paul Dechow and Joanne Blum protected 105 acres of their land in 2017, it was to preserve a piece of Leelanau, and Paul's family heritage. "In 1855 a bunch of people from Germany and Bohemia came here and established a town called North Unity. Many of those people moved to a place called Bohemian Valley," said Paul. Some of those early settlers were Paul's ancestors, who helped found North Unity. Today, the Dechow home overlooks Bohemian Valley now and forevermore with a donated conservation easement. "We became sustainers at the Conservancy sometime in the early 2000s and always wanted to do more."

Doing more came in the form of preserving those first 105 acres. In 2020, they preserved an additional 30 acres of land. Both donations by Paul and Joanne are private conservation easements (CE's). "I offered to buy 30 acres of my sister's (Lynn and Jim McAndrews) land to protect, and she agreed. All of us are very interested in keeping this land just as it is." This 30 acre CE addition is adjacent to the earlier 105 acre CE, and it closes a gap between Krumwiede Forest Reserve and their first CE. Krumwiede is also adjacent to Palmer Woods Forest Reserve, and the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore.

When protected lands connect like this, it creates a corridor that facilitates growth and a comfortable habitat for native plants and wildlife. "Establishing permanent natural habitat connections is vital to maintaining native plant and animal populations. Corridors of connected forest and open field habitat allow animals to utilize their true geographic range. This allows for successful exchange of genetic material between individual populations, which in turn provides much more resiliency to climate change and habitat pressures than isolated populations with diminishing gene pools," said Director of Natural Land Protection Matt Heiman.

Paul and Joanne are delighted to preserve a piece of land and history that means so much to them, and that is a part of the natural vitality of Leelanau. This land is private and not open to the public. For more information on land protection options for your property, email Matt Heiman, Director of Natural Land Protection at mheiman@leelanauconservancy.org or Kim Hayes, Director of Farmland & Easement Programs at khayes@leelanauconservancy.org.

Pictured right: the new addition to the Dechow's conservation easement.



Sustainer Spotlight

Every summer, Mimi Mullin makes the journey from her home in Columbus, Ohio, to a small brown cabin in Leland. Though Ohio is her home by location, Leland is her home at heart. "I always look forward to it. When I was a child and school got out, we came up here. Summers in Leelanau are the only summers I know."

Every year she stays at one of several family cabins on Lake Leelanau. The cluster is affectionately called The Johnson Camp by Mimi and family members. It's provided the backdrop for countless summer memories that span across generations, and all began with Mimi's grandfather, Claude Walden Johnson Sr. "Both my grandfather and grandmother enjoyed camping. They started exploring northern Michigan, and when they found Lake Leelanau, they fell in love with it."

In 1921, they brought their three children up to camp—Mimi's mother Louise (Pat) and her brother (Claude) and sister (Sarah). On lazy summer afternoons, the Johnsons would wander over to visit with the families that summered in a trio of cabins in East Leland on the north side of Lake Leelanau. Two red cabins belonged to a couple, and the brown one belonged to Dr. William Locy, a retired biology professor.

Dr. Locy's midday hammock naps were of particular importance to him. He made a wooden sign that read "Please use upper paths in the afternoons" to keep this time quiet for himself. Claude was one of the few who respected the sign, and because of that, Dr. Locy sought him out as a fishing companion and friend.

At the end of the summer, Dr. Locy offered to rent his cabin to the Johnsons the following August. Included in the offer was the option to buy. On the family's second day at the cabin in August of 1922, Claude walked to the train station and sent Dr. Locy a telegram that read: "Offer accepted. Check in mail."

Eventually, Claude also bought the neighboring pair of red cottages. The original three have been remodeled, and more cabins have been added. No

matter how many there are now, Mimi always stays in the brown one that started it all.

"Next summer, it will be 100 years since it's been in the family."

She has spent all of her summers there. The magic of Leelanau is interlaced through her most cherished memories. Her past and present enjoyment of Leelanau is part of the reason Mimi has been a longtime Sustainer, and *Heritage Society member. "When my mother passed away in 2006, I wanted to honor her by helping to protect Leelanau. It was then that I became a Sustainer. We shared so many wonderful memories here, and by preserving this place, I feel like I'm preserving those memories too. It's special to be giving back to the land that has given so much to me, and now my children and grandchildren will be able to enjoy this place for years to come."

Mimi spends half of the summer in Leelanau soaking up the sunshine, walking, visiting friends, enjoying long conversations in backyards and on porches, and picking cherries for her "Best Damn Jam in the Land".

"It's my little piece of heaven."

The Sustainers Circle recognizes members who commit to making a gift of \$500 or more annually to the Leelanau Conservancy to support the core expenses of the organization. To learn more or to join, please contact Meg Delor, Development Director at mdelor@leelanauconservancy.org or 231-651-1882.

*The Leelanau Conservancy's Richard O. Ristine Heritage Society recognizes those who have included the Leelanau Conservancy in their estate plans. It is named in honor of our former board member, Dick Ristine, Sr., who talked to everyone he knew about leaving a gift to the Leelanau Conservancy in their wills. For more information, please contact Leslee Spraggins, Planned Giving Officer, at lspraggins@leelanauconservancy.org or 231-256-9665.

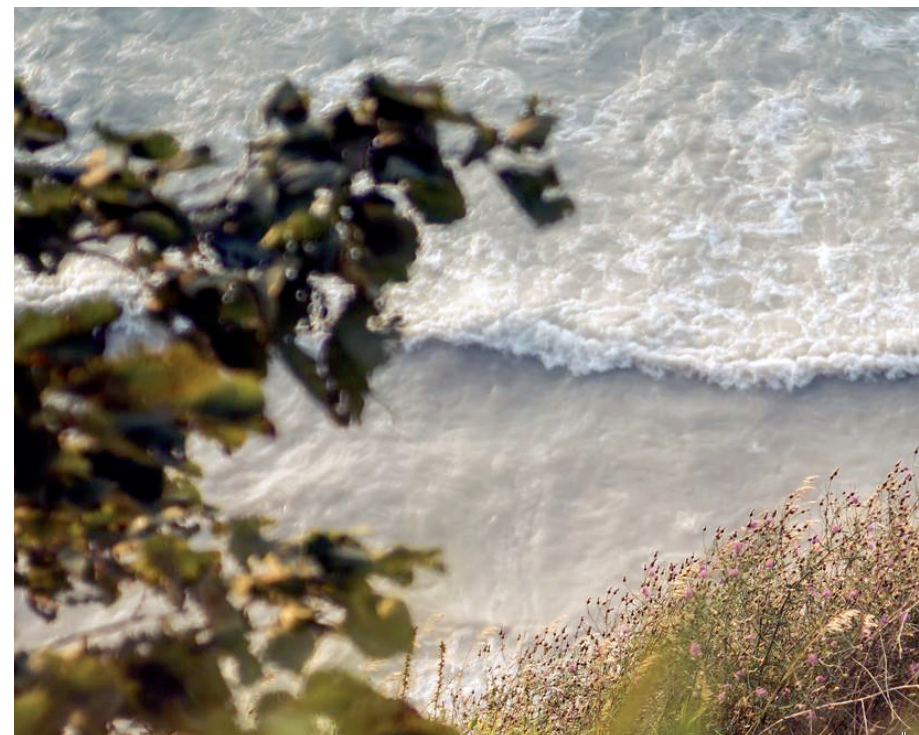
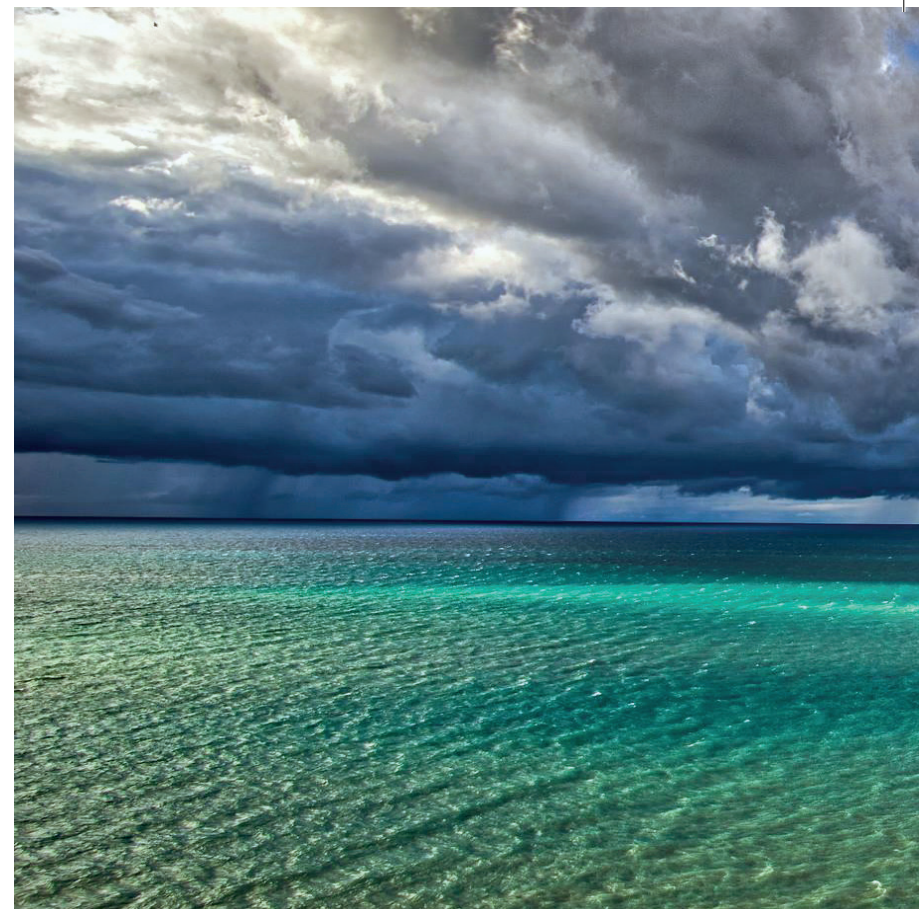




Five Can't-Miss Natural Areas This Summer

Michigan summers are the long-awaited reward at the end of a harsh winter and cool spring. We trade in our heavy layers and early nights for sunshine-soaked strolls that linger long into the evening. With plenty of tie-dye skies, mild temperatures, and lush vegetation, Michigan summers are truly exceptional—and Leelanau offers all the very best of it.

Our natural areas saw record high visits throughout the pandemic. As the clouds clear and temperatures rise, we hope to see folks enjoying these areas just as much this summer. Expect to see plenty of beautiful water and skyline views, lovely forests, and, if you're lucky—some wildlife while exploring. Consider adding one (or all!) of these natural areas to your summer list to get started.

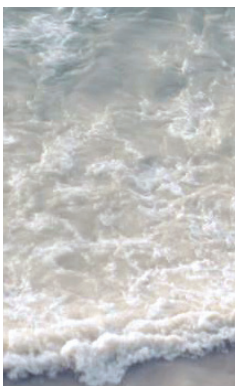




Clay Cliffs Natural Area

Encapsulated between Lake Michigan and Lake Leelanau, Clay Cliffs is a vision in blue and forest greens. This natural area is a favorite owned by Leland Township and maintained by the Conservancy. Protected along with the 104.5 acres of land is 1,700 feet of shoreline on Lake Michigan and North Lake Leelanau. Hiking the loop is easy and includes a few mild inclines. Plenty of varied and lovely views are packed into this short hike, making it an excellent option for taking kids and summer guests.

This rare and delicate ecosystem is home to nesting bald eagles, native wildflowers, and shorebirds. Many locals consider Clay Cliffs to be the best place in Leelanau for wildflowers.



Take a break mid-way through your journey to stop and behold Lake Michigan. The 200-foot tall viewing platform provides a stunning view of the lake and the Manitou Islands that never disappoints. Continue on the trail and feel magically disoriented when the trees disappear all at once into a large open meadow. A few steps in, you'll be greeted by a panoramic view of North Lake Leelanau. From there, the loop completes itself on a grass-carpeted path back to the trailhead. Make an afternoon out of it with lunch in Leland. Eat out on the Village Green and take in Leland's liveliest season.

Photos left by Mark Smith.




Whaleback Natural Area

The only other one of our natural areas where you can enjoy a view of the Manitou Islands is just a few miles south of Clay Cliffs. They may share a picture of Lake Michigan, but Whaleback is a special place all its own. This 40-acre natural area in Leland contains a short but challenging one-mile loop. The first half of the journey is an invigorating, steady incline. It's effort well spent upon arriving at the stunning vista that showcases the Manitou Passage. The water and skyline view continue to accompany you on the second half of the trail to Birch Valley, where hundreds of birch trees lie peacefully in a quiet and serene resting place.

This natural area's bluff hovers 300 feet above Lake Michigan and is named after its distinct shape. Another feature unique to Whaleback is the thimbleberry. Though they're easy to find around Lake Superior, finding them in Leelanau is rare. Thimbleberries are described as being tiny, creamy, and sweet red cups similar to raspberries. The berries are only here for a flash, from June to August. Keep an eye out for these hidden and delightful treats.

Leland is a short distance away from Whaleback. After completing your hike, head into town and cool off by going for a shoreline walk along Van's beach.

Photo right.





DeYoung Natural Area

Farmland and forest combine for a varied and unique experience at DeYoung. Located in Traverse City, this 191-acre natural area is usually the first one that introduces folks from the Grand Traverse area to the Conservancy. Like a forest from woodland fairytales or folklore, the first half of DeYoung is an otherworldly escape. Before anything else, take the boardwalk to the serene view of Cedar Lake. Walking back, enter the Cedar Forest Trail to begin your journey. Cool, shaded air, paired with knobby and twisted cedars, provides a mystical, easy half mile trail. This walk can be made longer by adding on the intersecting Leelanau Trail.

The second half of the trail can be accessed through a trailhead just a couple of minutes away on Strang Road. This upland, 1.5-mile trail is beautiful at any time of the day but can be especially lovely when the farmland's dewy greens are illuminated by the rising or setting sun. This trail is also where you can see the historic DeYoung farmstead, including the recently restored farmhouse. You'll find few inclines, and throughout most of it, you can hear the soothing sounds of a creek.

Afterward, use the Leelanau Trail to make your way as far as Suttons Bay and enjoy a coffee or glass of wine somewhere overlooking Grand Traverse Bay.





Palmer Woods Forest Reserve

The largest of the natural areas, Palmer Woods, is a multifaceted experience. The expansive 1,075 acre wood in Maple City is home to 10 miles of multiple walking trails and a growing 5.75-mile mountain bike trail that accommodates all skill levels. Palmer Woods has the versatility to be an all-day activity or just a quick and easy hike. Choose your adventure with the walking trail. Several different loop options for every energy level, with the option to hike 2 to 4 miles on the Price Valley Trail, 1 mile with the Loop Trail, and two additional leisurely trails.

Two mountain bike trails—the East Ridge Loop and the Central Ridge Loop are best suited for intermediate riders. These trails provide heart-pumping climbs, exhilarating descents, berms, and drops that will make for hours of satisfying ride time. However, work is well underway for an additional, easygoing mountain bike trail that will suit all riders, including beginners.

A destination to seek while exploring Palmer Woods is the Fern Garden. Dr. Palmer is a fern expert. When a windstorm wiped out a mass of trees protecting an array of different ferns, he asked if he could transplant them within the Woods. He worked quickly and methodically, making trips between his property and what is now the Fern Garden. It's a little legacy within his larger legacy and is a must-see for hikers and bikers.

Glen Arbor is just 10 minutes away and well worth going if you're looking for a complete day trip. Explore all of the beach, shops, bookstores, art galleries, and restaurants. End the day by watching the sunset from Good Harbor Beach. Photo center by Mark Smith.

Cedar River Preserve

Enjoy a peaceful paddle down to the Cedar River Preserve. This 548-acre wetland complex is crucial to protecting the health of Lake Leelanau. Located inside Solon Swamp, this natural area is home to lots of wildlife and rare wetland plant life. The river begins in Cedar and will take you to Lake Leelanau.

Kayak or canoe this slow-flowing river for a tranquil afternoon outdoors. Mesmerizing wetland plants are at every turn, including water lilies that look painted underneath the glassy water. Without diverting from the path, the river takes around three hours to complete. Cedar River Preserve is a great place to observe wildlife up close. In this warmer season, you can see turtles sunning themselves on protruding stumps and rocks. You may catch a glimpse of the rare Saturniid moths and their large, vividly colored wings. Or even a mother duck and her ducklings swiftly moving between water and land. Here, the quiet are rewarded.

Extend your trip by traveling down one of the splits in the path. Make sure you have a map, bug spray, sunscreen, a wide-brimmed hat, water, and snacks for your trip. There isn't a stop to get out through the preserve, so remember to plan accordingly.

With long days melting into short nights, it's the perfect time to get the most out of this picturesque paradise. Enjoy all of the coming beach days, breezy drives, and long talks with walks. Touch the grass. Feel the water. Begin your Leelanau Adventure. Photo right by Emily Stuhldreher.



Stewardship Updates

If the past year has taught us anything, it's to slow down and indulge in the process. Whether it was a workbee, trail enhancement, or catching a moment of wildlife, we have been especially grateful for Leelanau's beauty and the much needed serenity it has imparted.

Here are some favorite photos of what the Conservancy has been up to over the last few months. Keep your eyes peeled for ways to join us in upcoming volunteer events.

1. This past Earth Day we encouraged all to explore our natural areas and do a 'clean sweep.' Plenty of folks got out there and removed trash to keep the trails, plants and wildlife healthy. Photo: Kim Hayes.

2. Our Wildflower Rescue Committee had a successful season of saving native wildflowers that all found new homes over the annual Memorial Day weekend Wildflower Rescue Sale. Joanie Woods will be stepping down as co-chair. She plans to still volunteer and we're grateful for her time and dedication to WFR. We welcome Ruth Geil and Erika Ferguson as the new co-chairs of the committee.

3. This past year, we worked with the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians to reforest the dilapidated old orchard at Chippewa Run Natural Area, which could pose a threat to working farms by drawing in pests. In all, we will plant around 5,000 native trees, including White and Red Pine, Sumac, and Bur Oak to help speed up field succession and to mitigate climate change.





4. Another year, another hard fought battle against garlic mustard in the books. The volunteers who participated in the garlic mustard workbees got busy clearing out the invasive weed at several of our natural areas, providing surrounding native plants room to thrive. Pictured is a before and after at Clay Cliffs.

5. The DeYoung farmstead property has undergone substantial restoration and beautification since becoming a Conservancy property. Conservation Easement Program Manager Chase Heise took the lead on the project that will come to completion by the end of this fall.

6. Every Tuesday evening you can find the Palmer Woods Trail Crew diligently working to keep the walking and mountain bike paths optimal for all to use. At the helm of the crew is Property and Trail Maintenance Specialist Chad Jordan, who says he's come to enjoy the maintenance as much as riding. New volunteers are always welcome and needed.

7. A resting fawn found nestled up for a nap at Swanson Preserve.

8. AmeriCorps members Grace Nagle and Veronica Bauer got out to explore some wildlife within the water. They took samples of tiny aquatic crustaceans called copepods from the Swanson Preserve and examined them up close underneath the microscope.

9. Director of Natural Areas and Preserves Becky Hill joined Conservancy member Dr. Scharf on an expedition to Gull Island, to count Herring Gull nests and eggs. About 1095 Herring Gull nests were counted.

10. Docent Ed Ketterer and some Conservancy staff spent an afternoon paddling down the Cedar River with a group of visiting kayakers and canoeists who were enchanted by the property and can't wait to return.

11. Sixty feet of boardwalk has been added to the Swanson Preserve. Chad Jordan led the project with the help of AmeriCorps members Grace Nagle and Veronica Bauer. Also added were fresh woodchips and new road gravel in the parking area.



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