



There's no place like *Leelanau*.

Conserving the Land, Water and Scenic Character of Leelanau County

2022 Summer Newsletter



Letter from Our Board President

Eight years ago, Executive Director Tom Nelson sat down at a picnic table with me and my husband Brian to talk about the different ways Leelanau Conservancy could assist in our estate planning and in that plan address our desire to have our farm remain farmland for as long as possible.

Eight years prior to that meeting, Brian and I started New Mission Organics on an organic cherry plot in Omena. The parcel was part of a 100-acre site that had recently been rezoned as residential and was planned for development. We purchased 30 acres and reverted the zoning back to agricultural. The cherries are long gone due to climate change incompatibility. Today, doing business as the Hop Alliance, we grow 17 varieties of hops, supplying Michigan breweries with hop cones and pellets that reflect our unique Leelanau terroir.

By Leelanau standards, we were just infants in the farming industry, but like many others we were drawn to live and farm here because of the importance of agriculture to our county and the physical beauty and calming nature of Leelanau County viewsheds. Leelanau's character is inextricably intertwined with the strength and integrity of its family farms.

Farming in Leelanau is deeply connected to what we love most about our peninsula: diverse, fresh seasonal produce, breathtaking scenic vistas, uninterrupted habitat corridors for native wildlife, a robust local economy, and a tightknit community of people who care for one another.

Most of Leelanau's farms are owned and managed by people who live and work here, not big business. Farm families are stewards of the land. They have a strong interest in protecting Leelanau's land, water, and scenic character, which adds to everyone's quality of life.

Tom taught us that the Leelanau Conservancy's farmland protection program promotes and supports farming in Leelanau County. It permanently preserves

farmland from being converted to non-agricultural uses while providing much-needed capital to farmers, instead of selling or mortgaging their land. Farmers are paid up to 75% of the land's development value when they create an agricultural conservation easement with the Leelanau Conservancy. Landowners use these funds as they need and often reinvest in the farm, such as upgrading equipment, renovating infrastructure, or by collaborating with invaluable local resources like MSU Extension and the USDA, learning how to diversify crops and mitigate the effects of climate change, further strengthening the viability of their farm.

Protecting farms protects natural land. Many people may not realize that Leelanau farmers also own and care for an enormous percentage of our natural landscapes. In Leelanau, it is not unusual for half of a farmer's land to be covered in natural features like forests, wetlands, and streams.

The agricultural conservation easements used to permanently protect farmland typically include terms that also permanently protect natural features commonly found on Leelanau farms. Leelanau farmland's proximity to natural lands also means farms can act as buffers between human development and natural habitats that benefit from being less exposed to human interference. Agricultural conservation easements ensure these natural land buffers remain intact.

Development that is not targeted towards increasing access to affordable housing for people who work at the farms and other businesses in our county is a threat to Leelanau farm country.

The conversion of Leelanau's farmland to non-agricultural uses is persistent and growing. The long-term impact can be irreversible.

Fragmentation of productive farmland by residential and commercial development has a cascading effect that decreases neighboring farms' viability.

Farming is a community effort. Fewer farms lead to fewer nearby processing facilities and fewer opportunities to share resources like equipment and labor. This increases the cost to farmers and decreases the chances farms can remain viable.

The weakening of Leelanau's agricultural economy would have devastating impacts on local jobs, agritourism, and access to fresh, local food.

Farmers are under increased pressure to sell their land. In recent years, people's interest in living in rural places like Leelanau has significantly increased. This has led to higher land values and increased the incentive for farmers to sell their high-quality farmland to non-agricultural developers.

The Leelanau Conservancy needs your continued support to provide a viable alternative to local farmers so we can help ensure Leelanau's robust farming culture can weather these tumultuous times.



Amy Tennis
Board President

Cover photo by
Sheen Watkins



Fisher Family Donates Land on Good Harbor Ridgeline

The Fisher family has been long time Conservancy supporters and champions for land protection in Leelanau for generations. A recent donation has provided both support and land protection in one fell swoop. The land we protect must meet specific conservation criteria. Much of these criteria revolve around biodiversity, ecological and aesthetic value. Sometimes, this is land that we seek out; other times, landowners contact us. The Fisher (Ball) family has been in Leelanau for decades. When they reached out in 2019 to Farm Protection Director Kim Hayes to look at a parcel they owned, the family was looking for advice. Located on a ridge overlooking Good Harbor, the steep hill up wouldn't be ideal for building a driveway. "The majority of the property continues to go up and up, and at the top, has an incredible view of Lake Michigan. We have a conservation obligation to protect Good Harbor Ridge, which you can see from M-22 and from some parts of Lake Michigan. Ridgeline protection is an important part of our work, and this property is adjacent to land we've already protected," Kim said. A decision was made soon after; the property would be donated to the Conservancy.

When folks think of our properties, our natural areas usually come to mind. However, our land transactions typically need to be a certain size, and at 18 acres, this particular property wasn't large enough to justify public access. Regardless of size, the land was worthy of protection due to its location and breathtaking view. A conservation easement (CE) was drafted to permanently protect the land and it was placed on the market with the sale subject to the CE. Multiple offers were received. The property then sold on Earth Day 2022.

Most of the property is wooded ridgeline. The CE gives the new landowner option to build a home and two outbuildings on the acre at the bottom of the ridge. However, the ridgeline portion will remain unchanged, even if the property is sold. With the Fisher's full support, the net proceeds made from the sale of their donated land

was used to match federal farmland protection funds. We are so grateful for their generosity and continued commitment to Leelanau.

Speaking for him and siblings Jeff Fisher, Mike Fisher, Judy Fisher Oetinger, John (Jay) Fisher, and Jerry Fisher, and Joan Woods, Jim Fisher said, "The lakes and woods of Leelanau County have always held a special place in our family's hearts. Fourth and fifth generations of Fishers continue to enjoy the beauty of the lakes and forests as summer residents, some now living in the area full-time. Protecting and preserving this unique environment, especially the views and vistas from the hilltops and beaches-even views from the lake-is important in preserving all of this for future generations to cherish and protect. The professionals at the Conservancy helped us create a win-win solution with this property. The forested ridgeline above South Manitou Trail, now combined with several property parcels from our cousins and other local residents, will be protected from further development, giving wildlife and vegetation a place to thrive."



Photos by Mark Smith.

Stew Crew Happenings

1. AmeriCorps members LeighAnna Peck and Emma Somers went out to survey Gull Island with Dr. Bill Scharpf and the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians in late April. They counted Herring Gull nests and were mesmerized by the abundance of gulls.
2. A Wood Frog is found at a vernal pool in Krumwiede Forest Reserve.
3. An early spring wildflower, trout lilies can be spotted on the forest floors of many of our natural areas. This wildflower gets its name from the muted speckles on its leaves, which resemble the pattern on a trout fish.
4. Every year our stewardship team monitors natural areas for Red-shouldered Hawks. This year while surveying at Teichner Preserve, Land Steward Caleb Garone came across a pair of trumpeter swans gliding across Lime Lake. Trumpeters were once a wiped-out population in Michigan. Their numbers have steadily increased since the '80s due to an initiative by a Michigan bird sanctuary. Today, there are more than 3000 in the state.
5. Dutchman's Breeches are a local spring wildflower adored for its tiny, pantaloon shaped flowers. Like any other native plant species in our natural areas, we ask that folks don't pick them. Dutchman's Breeches, while lovely to look at, wilt quickly after being plucked.
6. A brush-burning at DeYoung Natural Area with AmeriCorps members Katelyn Maylee, Emma Somers, LeighAnna Peck, Cedar River Preserve Trail Steward Mike Scharpf, and Property and Trail Maintenance Specialist Chad Jordan. Brush burnings keep some of our natural areas clear, and wood ash is known to be valuable for soil.
7. Fungi feed off the dead bark on this tree stump at Kehl Lake Natural Area.



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8. This pretty Pileated Woodpecker was spotted at Lighthouse West. At 16-19 inches, they are the largest woodpeckers in North America. Their chisel like effect on trees is distinct by rectangle-shaped markings. Other bird species like being around a Pileated Woodpecker when he's pecking away. While all those wood chips are flying, so are plenty of delicious bugs.
9. AmeriCorps member Katelyn measured the length and weight of a brown trout from a Boardman River tributary. This research was part of an electrofishing project that Emma, Katelyn, and LeighAnna assisted the Grand Traverse Band and folks from Grand Valley State University with. They helped gather data that will be used in a project that determines the feasibility of reintroducing the Arctic Grayling fish to northern Michigan.
10. The Palmer Woods Trail Crew meet up every Tuesday night from 5pm until 7pm to work on keeping the trails ready to ride and hike! Pictured here is our AmeriCorps crew and volunteer Garrett Chamberlain working on roughing in a new trail.
11. Scarlet Elf Cup is a popular fungus for slugs and rodents to feast on. Lore states that woodland elves drink morning dew from the cups. Though not poisonous, they're not tasty.
12. A tree planting workbee at Whaleback drew a fun crowd of board, staff and volunteers. Pictured from left are Gina Erb, Rich and Lynn Bahle, with cages used to protect the newly planted white pines.

Bahle's Protect 109-Acre Family Farm

One doesn't get far in the county before hearing the Bahle name. Whether seeing it on the family retail boutique or recently sold golf course, the Bahles have a long and rich history in Suttons Bay and Leelanau County. We're excited to announce that in partnership with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) through their Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP), the Bahle farm has been permanently protected.

On a warm day in May, Bahle siblings Lois, Rich and Chris enjoy coffee and conversation in Lois's backyard at a table shaded by a large umbrella. "Brothers Bob and Carl are away this morning," eldest Lois explained. "It goes me, Bob, Rich, Carl then Chris." Owen Bahle, the only child of Otto and Lena (Sogge) Bahle, is their father. He married Leila Bremer and they raised their kids to have a deep respect for the land, farming, and hard work. The family lineage in Leelanau dates to the 1870s. It was Otto's father Lars who opened the iconic downtown Suttons Bay retail shop, which back then functioned as a general store. The Sogge family was also a large retailer in the county. That entrepreneurial spirit was no doubt passed down to Owen, along with a gift for community building. "He was Mayor, he was Fire Chief, he was doing Rotary and Chamber of Commerce, farming, all with a family of 5 kids," said Rich.

The first family farm is off Herman Road. The road slopes into a hill, and a small road named Bahle splinters off to the farm's location. "That's how you can really tell

if you're local," Lois smiled, "There's a road named after you." Owen and Otto grew peaches and other fruit on that farm that they shipped to Chicago. They split a second piece of land to farm in Bingham Township with two other businessmen and farmed it as a partnership. While away to fight in World War II, Owen wrote his father asking him to find farmland for sale. Otto obliged his son and bought two properties, one of 100 acres and another of 80. When Owen returned home, the Bahle family owned over 300 acres of farmland.

A close friend of Lena's, Julia Anderson, was the last of her name in the county. She and Julia had grown up together and remained close friends throughout their lives. When a family tragedy left Julia alone, she needed to sell the farm. Owen was interested in purchasing it. "We were actively farming apples and tart cherries at the time and he wanted to expand," Rich said. When he bought the farm in 1972 there were enough cherries growing that it was already a cash-flowing enterprise. "We farmed it, and it's still farmed to this day. It's a productive cherry farm on a beautiful piece of acreage," said Chris. For his 75th birthday, Owen renovated the homestead cabin that came with the original Anderson property. Previously unlivable, now "the family uses it all the time," said Lois.

As they reminisced about growing up on a farm the siblings couldn't help but remember farm chores. "We had to do a bit of everything!" said Lois. Like their father, the Bahle kids worked on the family farms. They had house chores as well, and Owen

was even-keeled about assigning the house and farm tasks fairly. The Bahle kids grew up knowing the meaning of hard work and family business. Their grandfather, Otto, passed in 1964. Soon after, a relative who ran one of the farms fell and broke his ribs. Rich at age 12 and Bob at 13 took on full time work for the first time at the farm. Lois was already working full-time at the retail store, though, her hours looked a little different than her brothers. When cherry season was in full swing "Full-time on the farm is sun-up 'til sundown," she chuckled.

The Bahle-Anderson farm is just a few miles north of the village. "We'll head over there and take a look," Rich said. The trio get into Lois's car and drive a few minutes up m-22 before making a left and following a trail to the renovated homestead, where a young Bahle is temporarily staying before heading off on a trip. Closer to the road is the home of Rich's son Erik. Erik walks over with his young son Otto perched on his shoulders. They greet each other for a moment, three generations of Bahles surrounded by family farmland. Rich smiles at Otto before telling Erik that they're going to look at the cherries.

Deeper through the woods a path shaded from the sun is cool and opens to a cherry orchard in full bloom. "We picked the right day to come take a look," Chris said. Masses of fluffy white cherry blossoms climb up a hill. Lois, Rich and Chris steadily walk up the sloping orchard hill for a few minutes before stopping and turning around. "Now that's a view," Lois said looking at the cherry trees neatly descending towards a skyline view of Grand Traverse Bay.

Though this is the first protected Bahle property, the Bahles and the Conservancy have a long history together. "I was one of the original board members," said Rich. "Ed Collins and Carl Headland were putting together a board. I was interested in land preservation before the Leland group got going so, they wanted me on it. I was out at one of the farms pruning and this car with two guys goes racing past, then came back in the other direction, then in the other. It was a low traveled road and I thought, 'That's interesting.' It was Ed and Carl looking for me." Another reason Ed sought Rich for the board was his family's long connection to Leelanau. Ed knew the Bahles had roots here, not only that, but they were also part of the farming community. Rich accepted their invitation and served eight years on the board.



Bahle siblings.

With their history with the organization, it wasn't a difficult decision for the Bahle siblings to protect the farm. Chris brought the idea up to his sister and brothers, and they all wholeheartedly agreed that it was something they wanted to pursue. "What people love most about Leelanau is its beautiful landscapes," said Rich. "We're getting older and they're disappearing. We have this beautiful farm, and unfortunately, right next to it they've built a subdivision. It broke my heart." Protecting their land has given the Bahles peace of mind that their farm and quintessentially Leelanau view will never succumb to a similar fate.

Chris was also thinking about the family legacy. He wanted the family to leave behind something that was not only permanent, but representative of them and the place they've called home for generations. "We've had a theater; we've had a golf course. When the dust settles, this land is something that we want to always be here," said Chris.

After one more look at the view, the siblings head back. Walking down the orchard, Lois, Rich and Chris get on the path leading them back through the woods. They walk in comfortable quietness. Occasionally Rich tosses a branch aside, or a rock in the path catches Chris's eye. The three take in the vastness of this wooded path even though they've walked it countless times. Still, there is always wonder. Always something new or lovely to look at. Always the orchard at the end.



Owen and Leila Bahle.



Event Happenings

1. Conservancy staff all got together at Palmer Woods in January to warmly welcome new staff member Stacie Longwell-Sadowski and the 2022 AmeriCorps members. We skied and snowshoed the trails followed by enjoying some snacks and beverages around a warm fire.
2. Traverse City based nonprofit Norte teaches kids how to have fun and be safe cyclists. Every year they host a bike camp program at Palmer Woods and this summer's camp quickly filled and spilled over into a waitlist.
3. Earth Week 2022 was a success! Art's Tavern in Glen Arbor has long supported the week of events and outreach with donations from their chicken jalapeno soup. Pictured is a group enjoying some fun at Art's after an Earth Week hike.
4. Docent-led hikes are always a fun time! Especially when hikers are treated to a view like this. Pictured: Clay Cliffs Natural Area.
5. Hemlock Woody Adelgid (HWA) is an invasive insect that preys on our precious Hemlocks. The tiny bugs are in the aphid family and feed on sap from the Hemlock's branches. An infected tree has small, white cotton-like puffs on the underside of its branches. AmeriCorps member LeighAnna Peck led a training on HWA for docents and staff that demonstrated what HWA infestation looks like and how to report it. No HWA was found at any Conservancy properties.
6. Sampling our streams is important work that largely relies on volunteers. Our volunteers sample once a month from May to October. The data they collect is important for monitoring overall quality of water in the county. Our large database of stream sample data spans over decades and helps identify changes in water quality. Pictured here is Conservation Easement Program Manager Chase Heise giving a group of new volunteers a tutorial on how to stream sample.



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7. Trail building workbees are a great way to forge new paths, or keep existing ones clean and clear.
8. Leland school kids after helping out at a garlic mustard pull. Many hands make light work!
9. Executive Director Tom Nelson got into character for a reading of The Lorax at the Old Art Building. Leland school kids delighted in his animated performance, and learned a little something about the importance of trees, truffula or not.
10. It's always a good day when wildflowers can be saved. Our annual Wildflower Rescue Sale was a success! Thank you to the volunteers who continue to preserve our Leelanau wildflowers.

Interested in volunteering?

We would love to have you! We are always looking for folks to help out at our workbees, become trail stewards, volunteer photographers, and more. Get involved and learn more by clicking the 'Support' tab on our website's homepage at leelanauconservancy.org.

Ephemeral



Spring in northern Michigan feels like biding time until summer. We still experience frost and snow. Rain stretches from the end of March through May. We make do with the gray skies and muddy ground because we know that long days of sunshine come after the rain. However, a lot happens in the natural world during this transitional time. As temperatures begin to rise slowly, leftover snow melts, and the ground softens. Water collects in concave dips in the land and creates vernal pools. These ephemeral wetlands are wondrous worlds filled with unique and necessary wildlife.

On a chilly April morning, Land Steward Caleb Garone and Conservancy AmeriCorps members Katelyn Maylee, Emma Somers, and LeighAnna Peck set out to monitor a vernal pool within Lighthouse West Natural Area. Katelyn leads the group, walking the trail with a digital map. She stops and looks to her right, “We’re going that way,” she points to the woods. The crew duck and climb through snowy cedar branches until coming to a clearing where the vernal pool ripples silently. “If it were warmer, you’d be hearing a lot more sound from wood frogs,” Katelyn says. “But because it’s cold out today, they’re hiding away.”

The crew wades out into the water, each with a different task. Equipped with a measuring stick and temperature monitor, Caleb and Katelyn move to the deepest point in the water. On the other side of the pool, Emma rakes a long-handled net through shallow water. In the distance, LeighAnna walks the perimeter lifting logs and gently placing them back down as they were, searching for salamanders.

Vernal pools in Michigan have mainly formed by floodplains, glaciers, and sag ponds. When groundwater winnows away tiny pockets of limestone deep in Leelanau’s soil, it creates a divot, or sag pond, in the surface land that makes a great prospective vernal pool. At a glance, vernal pools look pond-like. They’re shallow, typically small bodies of water. What separates them from ponds is their lifecycle and the species that inhabit them. Vernal pools go through a three-part lifecycle every year; wet, flowering, and dry.



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In Michigan, over 100 species of invertebrates have been found in vernal pools, and 24 amphibian species. Over half of vernal pool amphibian species use the pools in their breeding cycle. The Michigan Natural Features Inventory (MNFI) is collecting data all over the state through their Vernal Pool Patrol program. The program offers a training on how to properly identify, map and monitor a vernal pool. Interested individuals and organizations that complete the training provide information to MNFI so the pool can be mapped and the data can be stored. The Conservancy is the Leelanau County partner for this program. This year we monitored four vernal pools in the county.

If the vernal pool lifecycle were a three-act play Part I would be the wet phase. Towards the end of winter and at the beginning of spring, vernal pools begin to fill with water. Rainwater and melted snow collect in the basins and fluctuate throughout spring. Each pool has a different hydroperiod based on size, temperature, and precipitation levels. As the water levels rise, vernal pool species come alive. Blue-spotted salamanders, wood frogs, spring peepers, fairy shrimp, fingernail clams, and more magical sounding creatures call the pool home while carrying out their reproductive cycles. The amount of time the pool is wet significantly impacts which species will thrive. For example, fairy shrimp only need a month to mate and release eggs into the water. Spring peepers have a more extended mating season and require more time for laid eggs to hatch.

By early summer, the water from vernal pools is almost gone. Left behind is damp, sometimes muddy soil and lush vegetation. Some of the vernal pool creatures hatched when water was still abundant, but other species' eggs will continue to dry out with the pool, only to hatch next year when the pool fills again. The saturated ground provides an excellent base for native flora to thrive. Vegetation in vernal pools differs from its surrounding uplands because of its unique conditions.

Vernal pools provide a safe place for amphibians and insects to lay their eggs. "It's not a vernal pool if there's



fish in it," says Katelyn. Wood frog and blue-spotted salamander eggs would be quickly eaten up if there were.

The vernal pool has reached its dry phase as summer ends and fall begins. By now, it's dried up along with all the eggs, plant life, and seeds within. The pool looks seemingly unremarkable as leaves fall and cover the once lively set.

Emma scoops a couple of water samples into a white bin and brings it to shore. She crouches down to look at her findings. To the untrained eye, the water in the container looks like nothing more than swamp water with sticks and debris. A closer look reveals a tiny world bustling with life. Small, orange crustaceans known as fairy shrimp move through the water via their rippling appendages. They're perhaps the most prominent indicator that a body of water is indeed a vernal pool. Their lifecycle requires their eggs to dry out before rehydrating fully. Emma grins as she holds up a fingernail clam on her fingertip. "Good haul Somers," Katelyn says over her shoulder. She and Caleb have returned with their recordings, including the temperature and deepest point measurements.

Within this unique ecosystem are obligate (or indicator) species and facultative species. Obligate species are the flora and fauna that rely on vernal pools to carry out their lifecycle. Included in obligate species are wood frogs, spotted salamanders, blue-spotted salamanders, Jefferson salamanders, and fairy shrimp. If they're not present in or near the water, it cannot be considered a vernal pool. Facultative species are wildlife that benefit from a vernal pool's resources but are not reliant on them. Some of these creatures use the pool for breeding; others use it as a convenient snack shack filled with delectable amphibian and insect eggs. Examples include red-spotted newt, northern spring peeper, American toad, wood turtle, and spotted turtle.

Vernal pools influence wildlife through the food chain. Deer will munch on growing vegetation and grasses, and birds eat eggs and insects. California was once rich with vernal pools. It's estimated that they've lost 90 percent or more due to agricultural expansion and urban development. This rare wetland habitat has declined further due to continued development in recent decades. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service finalized its Recovery Plan for Vernal Pool Ecosystems of California and Southern Oregon in 2005 to address and prevent more loss. Out of 33 obligate species in the state's vernal population, 15 are endangered and would go into extinction if the pools cease to exist. The complete loss of vernal pools would have a profound and adverse impact on the rest of California's wildlife.

LeighAnna approaches the crew, huddled around the sample water. "I think there's another vernal pool attached to this one on the other side," she said. "Let's record what we found in this water and then go take a look," Caleb suggested. They record their findings based on the water sample taken. A questionnaire asks what kind of species were discovered and roughly how many could be found within the pool. After the data is recorded, Caleb and LeighAnna take a walk where they find that there is another vernal pool next to the one just monitored. They repeat the sampling and data collecting on the newly discovered pool before heading back to the work truck. They'll return midsummer to survey the pools with a more up close look at some of the plant life. One more survey will be done in the fall. Blanketed under snow, the vernal pool will rest until next spring, where the magic will begin again.

A Lasting Legacy

Susan Cady gazes out her window with a smile. Across from her sits husband Chuck, and between the pair, morning light casts a glow on their coffee table. Susan reaches toward the table and picks up an older Conservancy publication titled *Why We Preserve*.

Currently, the couple lives in a Traverse City condo Susan affectionately calls the Tree House. High up and surrounded by trees, it feels like a natural oasis. “We’ve been here in Traverse City for the past 9 or 10 years, but we had lived in Leelanau for 40 years before this,” said Chuck. It was 1974 when they moved to Suttons Bay and built a home. Susan and Chuck both grew up in Grand Rapids with fond memories of northern Michigan and Leelanau County. They were living in Ann Arbor when a trip visiting friends near Sleeping Bear turned into finding a lot for purchase in Suttons Bay Township. “We were always attracted to the coastal side of the state, less population, and so forth.” Making Leelanau their home was a dream come true.

Susan took a job teaching elementary students at Suttons Bay Schools, and Chuck worked from home and traveled, “This was before telecommuting was what it is today, too,” Susan said. Having their home in Leelanau, coming home from a trip often felt more like going on vacation rather than returning.

A big draw for moving to the county was the privacy and beauty of nature. The Cadys also soon found themselves charmed by the community. “We’ve come to appreciate the number of nature lovers that live here,” Chuck said. “Many of them are big supporters of the Conservancy.” Two of those nature lovers happened to be a couple living in Northport named John and Gina Erb.

Susan flips open *Why We Preserve*. “Chuck and I were both very busy working. We were aware of the Conservancy, but when we met John and Gina

Erb we were convinced to join this first class organization,” Susan said. “So we joined as Sustainers about eight years ago. I credit the Erbs with getting us involved in the Sustainers Circle, and eventually as Heritage Society Members.”

The Richard O. Ristine Heritage Society began as a way for folks passionate about Leelanau to leave a legacy that will impact generations to come. Named after a former board member and chair, Richard “Dick” Ristine was a champion for the Conservancy. His knack for relationship building lent itself well to donor relations and mentorship among other board and staff. His warmth was a catalyst for many to get involved with the Conservancy, whether through volunteering or donorship. Dick was influential in the Heritage Society’s development, and before his passing in 2009, the planned giving program was named in his honor.

When Chuck and Susan were planning their estate, they said that including the Conservancy wasn’t a difficult decision. “When I think of places I want to leave a footprint in the sand, it’s the places that have affected us most, meant the most to us,” said Chuck. “And not just me and Susan, but our kids and grandchildren.”

They have two daughters and four grandchildren that have their own fond memories of Leelanau. The Cadys have a busy summer ahead enjoying the Conservancy trails with family and friends. Knowing that they’ve passed their love for this corner of the world down their family tree has given them further comfort in becoming Heritage Society members. “We know we’re in good hands with the Conservancy. Their perseverance in completing projects, stability, care for members, and dedication to preservation is admirable,” said Susan. “We wanted to invest in our memories here so our kids and grandchildren can keep making more for years to come.”

To learn more about planned giving and the Heritage Society, contact Major Gifts Officer Stacie Longwell Sadowski at ssadowski@leelanauconservancy.org.



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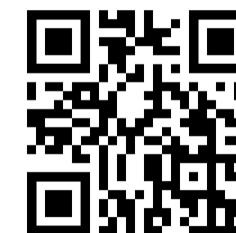


Photo by Mark Smith

Support Leelanau – Donate Now

Want to be a part of protecting Leelanau County's special places? Your financial contribution will support the Conservancy's efforts to conserve the land, water, and scenic character - now and in perpetuity. Whether through a cash gift, stocks, land, or estate planning, there are a variety of options for you to participate in a way most meaningful to you. Share in the work of keeping Leelanau's beauty and serenity available for future generations.

Donate today at leelanauconservancy.org or by mail to Leelanau Conservancy, P.O. Box 1007, Leland, MI 49654



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