



the legacy land conservancy journal

A publication of the Legacy Land Conservancy • Volume 8 • Number 1 • Spring 2009

Washtenaw Land Trust is now



LEGACY Land Conservancy

*Protecting and Preserving
Southern Michigan*

Thank you for helping us move forward! This organization has protected natural areas and farmland beyond the borders of Washtenaw County for years. The new name, Legacy Land Conservancy, acknowledges our broader geography while reminding us that the important question is not always “What lands are we protecting?” but rather “*For whom* are we protecting these lands?”

The bird’s nest logo is a symbol of things that are worth caring for and protecting (not only baby birds, but also children of our own species, and the world around us). The nest is modeled on a bluebird’s nest, and the story of the bluebirds’ recovery is a great story of how the average individual, like you and me, can work together to accomplish important things. (See page 5 for more about the bluebirds’ story.)

On behalf of all those will come after us, **thank you** for protecting the forests, fields, wetlands, and rivers of this community.

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‘09 Preservationists of the Year

The Legacy Land Conservancy is pleased to announce the 2009 Preservationists of the Year: **Dr. Rudy Reichert** and **Mr. Harold Baker**. Dr. Reichert and Mr. Baker have both demonstrated a commitment to the land and a determination to leave a legacy for future generations.



Dr. Rudy Reichert protected his family’s 100-acre nature area and ensured that these lands will be available for public use for future generations. Said Dr. Reichert, “People in a position to do this should consider protecting property – even purchasing property to protect – and giving it to the Conservancy.”



Mr. Harold Baker (shown here with Conservancy President Guy O. Williams) has shown a lifelong commitment to stewarding local lands and trail systems in the Pinckney-Waterloo area. Mr. Baker said, “I urge anyone who has a piece of land and loves the land for the land, to do something about it before ‘progress’ takes hold of it.”

OUR MISSION: The Legacy Land Conservancy protects natural areas and farmland, here where you live.

The Legacy Land Conservancy Journal, Spring 2009

Far Country

By Susan Lackey
WLT Executive Director



Naturalist and writer Edward Abbey begins his book *Desert Solitaire* with these lines:

"This is the most beautiful place on earth.

"There are many such places. Every man, every woman, carries in heart and mind the image of the ideal place, the right place, the one true home..."

With those words, Abbey finds the heart of the conservancy movement: The protection of our 'one true home.' Put another way, the protection of the *local* places that are important to the people who live in a community... that are important to *you*.

On March 19, the Washtenaw Land Trust became the Legacy Land Conservancy. A lot of paperwork changed on that day, yet one very important thing did not. The Legacy Land Conservancy remains Michigan's *oldest local* conservancy, committed to protecting nature and farmland.

Southern Michigan is a surprisingly diverse landscape. Throughout the area the glaciers left behind soils that vary radically within a single property. This region possesses some of the rarest habitat in the world, as well as landscapes so common they virtually define their type.

Those of us who live here often don't think of these lands as globally significant, rare, or definitive. We think of them as our *local* lands – the places we carry with us in our hearts as defining 'home.'

But *being local is more than an address*. It means that we work hard to understand not only the natural resources that cross government boundaries, but also the fabric of the communities that we serve. What's important to you? How do you already steward the lands you love? How can we help honor the legacy of those who came before us, and leave an even deeper one for those of the future? Where is your 'one true home?'

The strength of the land protection movement is in its **connection to local places and communities**. Across the nation, more than 1,700 conservancies, rooted in local place, help people protect the places they carry in their hearts. For thirty-eight years, we've helped you do this, here – in Washtenaw and Jackson counties – where you live. We look forward to the next thirty-eight years.

Notes From The Land

Attention landowners: conservation incentives expire soon

Powerful tax incentives for land conservation are set to expire December 31, 2009. The incentives make conservation a financially viable option for many landowners who wish to protect their forests, fields, and wetland for future generations. If you have been considering permanent protection for your land, now is a great time. To learn if conservation is a good option for you, contact us at 734-302-5263 or info@legacylandconservancy.org.

Raise a glass for the land

If you enjoy wine, here's a great way to drink something special while supporting local vintners *and* the Conservancy at the same time. Our friends at Sandhill Crane Vineyards in Jackson have created Legacy, a limited-edition dry white blend of Chardonnay and Vignoles. (If we say so ourselves, the wine is absolutely *delicious*.) A portion of the



proceeds from each bottle sold benefits the Conservancy, and a 10% discount is available for bulk orders. It's available at:

- **Sandhill Crane Vineyards**,
4724 Walz Road, Jackson,
www.sandhillcranevineyards.com
- **Whole Foods Market**
(both Ann Arbor stores)

Thank you, and enjoy!

Welcome, Dana!

Please join us in welcoming **Dana Frenzel-Wright** as Stewardship Coordinator. Dana holds a BS in Biology/Zoology from Michigan State University and has worked for many years in environmental education, most recently as Volunteer Coordinator for the City of Ann Arbor's Natural Area Preservation program. Welcome, Dana!



Stay Connected

eUpdate: Stay current on all the latest Conservancy news and events with the monthly email update. Call 734-302-5263, email Mark at mark@legacylandconservancy.org, or sign up from www.legacylandconservancy.org.

Blog: Wonder what we're working on and thinking about this week? Check out landconservancy.wordpress.com.

Facebook: You can become a fan! Search for Legacy Land Conservancy and look for our birds-nest logo.

The Legacy Land Conservancy

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Editor: Suzie Heiney

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Upcoming Events

Wednesday May 27, 5:30-8:30 p.m.: Volunteer mailing party.

We're looking for additional helpful hands for stuffing and sealing the spring mailing that helps keep us in business protecting local lands! Can you help for an hour or two? We'll meet at our office, upstairs at 1100 N. Main Street, Ann Arbor.

Saturday June 6, 1:00-4:00 p.m.: Volunteer training day - see the back cover for details!

Saturday June 20, 7:30 p.m.-Dusk: Rancho Tranquillo Concert and Bonfire.

Great music in a great location, for a great cause! Award-winning band Billy King and the Idylls will bring their mix of folk, pop, bluegrass, swing, and rock to this all-ages show in the countryside. Just bring your blankets or lawn chairs out to Rancho Tranquillo, 11300 Island Lake Rd, Dexter. Suggested donation: \$10 per person. All proceeds benefit the Forever Fund, to protect nature and farmland, and keep it protected forever.

Saturday July 18, 3:00-5:00 p.m.: How to Get Kids Involved in Nature (Stewardship Network).

Jeannine Palms, Andy Brush, and the Super Swampers of the Buhr Park Children's Wet Meadow Project will lead a discussion followed by an abbreviated workday. Come prepared to spend time outside. To register: www.stewardshipnetworkonline.org or (734) 996-3190.

Spring at Creekshead



*We managed to time this year's wildflower workshop just right for a profusion of wildflowers, such as the Dutchman's breeches (*Dicentra cucullaria*) shown here. Catherine Marquardt shared identification tips and lore for some two dozen wildflowers found at Creekshead Nature*

Preserve, a high-quality remnant beech-maple forest. For photos, a map to the nature preserve, and more, please visit our website: www.legacylandconservancy.org.

Across the Board



By Rosanne Bloomer,
Board Member

I have been involved in agriculture all of my life. I grew up on a diversified livestock farm in Shiawassee County, where my parents were both commercial agricultural producers and committed land and wildlife conservationists. My father had a deep love of the land that he passed on to his children; before he passed away he permanently preserved 90 acres of Shiawassee River watershed through the Michigan Department of Natural Resources.

During the 33 years that I have been a commercial ag lender in Ann Arbor I have had the privilege of working with the many dynamic agricultural producers who have that same respect for their land, and who continually look for ways to enhance its value as working land while preserving it for future generations. A great joy in my work is helping producers acquire and rejuvenate land to its most productive potential. I have a great appreciation for the skill and foresight of those individuals who see the value of farmland from all perspectives.

My husband Tom and I have been actively involved in land preservation for over 30 years, after first serving on the county's original agricultural land committee. I have seen some of those ideas evolve into what is now a real model for the state in land preservation, part of which is attributable to the efforts of the Legacy Land Conservancy. We were fortunate in being able to preserve our farm in Washtenaw County, through the Ann Arbor Greenbelt Program, as well as land in the Upper Peninsula.

I appreciate an opportunity to serve on the Board of the Legacy Land Conservancy. Much of the open land in our county is devoted to agricultural production, and I am glad to bring to the board my background in that industry and its challenges. I have watched the land trust over the years become a dynamic organization and it is gratifying to see it as a major force in the preservation of our natural resources for future generations.

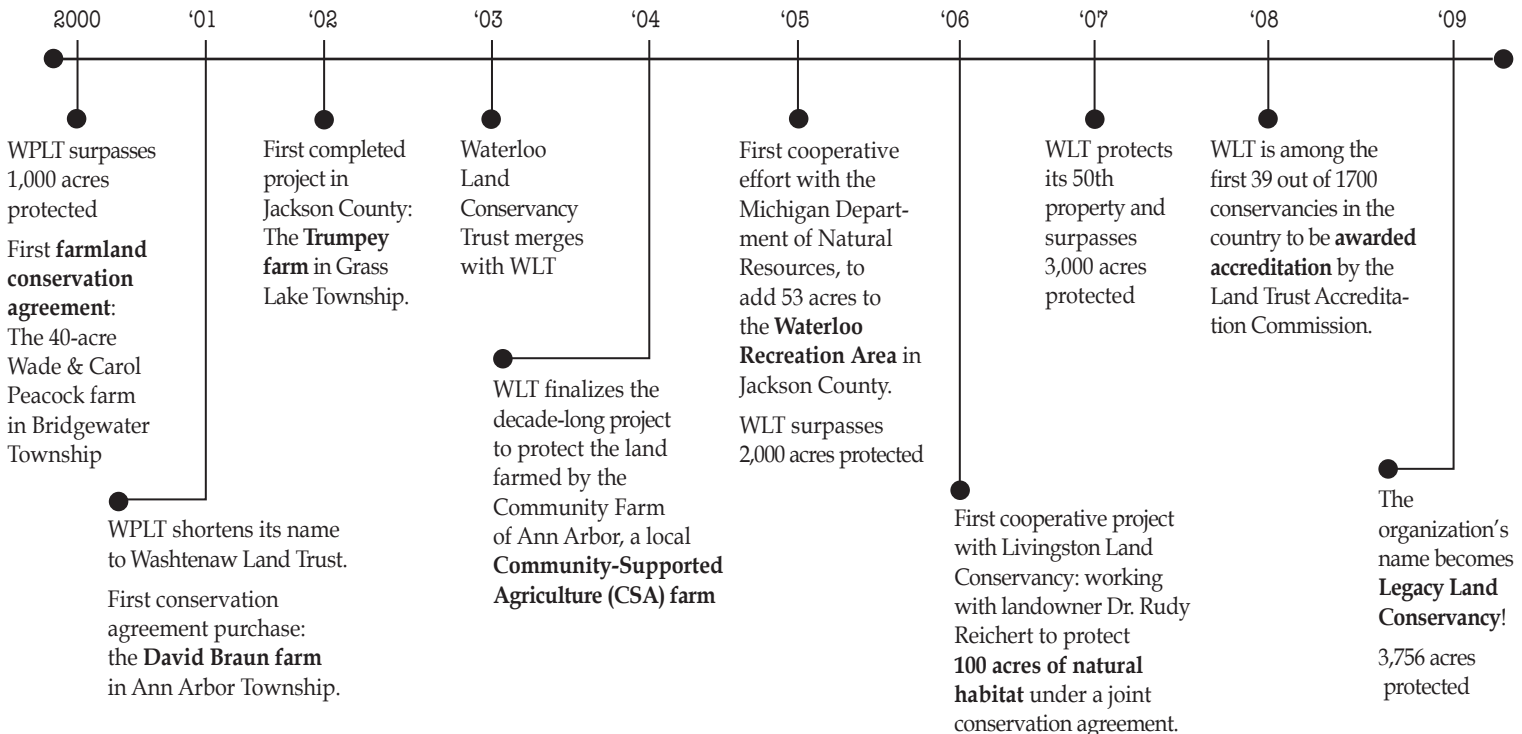
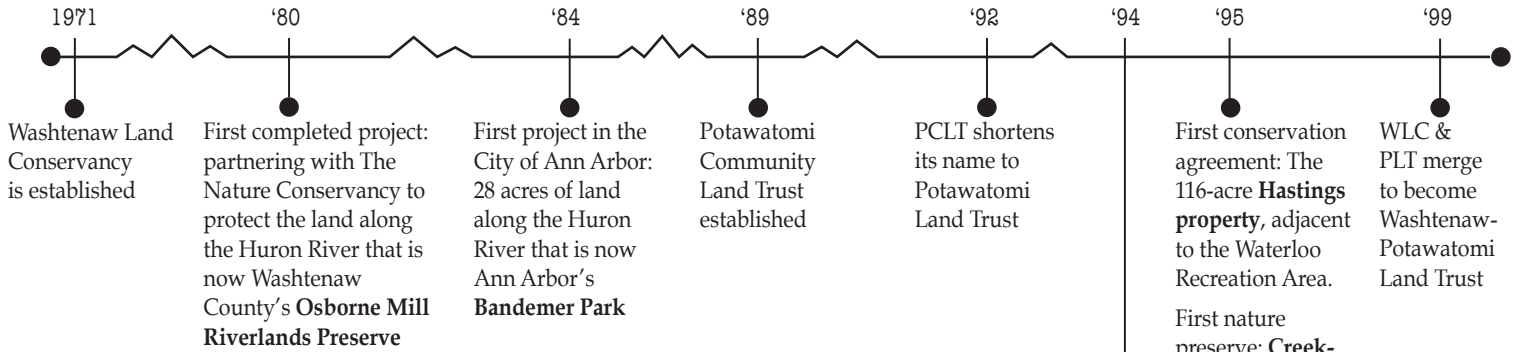
Of course none of this would be possible without the generous support of all of you. I hope that support for local conservation will continue for generations to come. Thank you.



LEGACY Land Conservancy



Legacy Land Conservancy Timeline: 1971 to today



The Recovery of the Bluebirds

How everyday people have made a difference for a well-loved bird

By Dea Armstrong, Ann Arbor City Ornithologist and Conservancy volunteer

Mention bluebirds to me and I cannot help myself, I smile. And I've noticed other folks often do the same. Words like "happiness" and "hope" are associated with them in poetry and song. Bluebirds are a beautiful, cheery bird in winter, a sweet songster in spring and a fascinating bird to watch in the summer, so I guess it's no wonder that they put a smile on my face every time I see or even think about them (I am smiling now...).

Fortunately, I get to see them regularly, as they are a fairly common resident, especially in our more rural areas. Bluebirds are found all over the state during breeding season. In the winter, the more northerly populations retreat to the southern counties of the state.

The breeding cycle starts in early March as birds begin to seek out territories in open fields, large gardens or orchards. Birds will nest in man-made nest boxes or natural tree cavities and prefer a site with a medium-sized tree near the nest box. Most birds have four to five pale blue eggs in the nest by late April and they hatch in two weeks. After 17 days or so, the young leave the nest and the female will begin another round of eggs. By fall, birds will seek out their wintering areas. Adult birds eat insects in spring and summer but add fruits to their diet in the fall and winter.

This colorful native thrush has experienced substantial changes in its numbers over the years as a result of both natural and unnatural occurrences. In the late 1800's, with the introduction of the non-native House Sparrow, the Eastern Bluebird could not compete successfully for the natural cavity nest sites in parks

and gardens in more urban areas. Then in the 1920s, introduced European Starlings reached Michigan so that bluebird populations had the added burden of having to compete with starlings for the nesting cavities as well. Harsh, extreme winters had always negatively impacted bluebird numbers but without any other problems, the populations have tended to bounce back. The addition of two non-native competitors for nest sites and several cycles of bad winters was too much, and by 1950 bluebirds were no longer as common as they once were. In addition, modern farming techniques, including the use of DDT, caused even more problems for the bluebirds and by the 1960s, the local populations of the Eastern Bluebird were at their lowest numbers ever. The story was the same for bluebird populations throughout the eastern US. The loss of appropriate open area habitat for bluebirds was ongoing as well. Declines of breeding bluebirds were most severe in southeastern Michigan, where urban habitats predominate.

Scientists and naturalists had been seeking support for a national bluebird preservation effort, founding the North American Bluebird Society in 1978. Its slogan of "Effective Conservation" reflects the effort of the group to help educate folks about the ways that they could easily help the bluebird. By the early 1980s, individuals across the country had joined the effort. Local Audubon groups, conservation societies, boy scout troops, farmers, and many



Eastern Bluebird (*Sialia sialis*)

concerned individuals built and put up bluebird houses to provide more nesting sites for bluebirds. The two decades after 1979 were also kinder to bluebirds as far as the weather was concerned, and the winter bird count data show a substantial increase in numbers of over-wintering birds for the Ann Arbor area.

The story about the bluebird's recovery is a great example about how *an individual can do something that can make a difference, and how many folks working together can have an impact on a big problem.* Humans may have caused some of the Bluebird's problems, but we were a large part of the solution as well. And all of those folks who provide housing for bluebirds when they needed it left a legacy for the next generations to enjoy.

It's not too very different from what Legacy Land Conservancy is helping us all do here in southern Michigan: effectively working together to conserve land, and to leave a legacy for us all. Now that makes me smile, too.

'Legacy of Trust' Gala was a success!

On Thursday, March 19th, 2009, the Washtenaw Land Trust officially became the Legacy Land Conservancy, at a gala celebrating land conservation and local foods.



The Conservancy's Mark Patrick & Suzie Heiney unveil the new name!



Susan Lackey, Executive Director of the Legacy Land Conservancy, describes the Conservancy's 100 Year Vision to protect 25,000 acres of the most important nature and farmland in Washtenaw and Jackson counties.



Evan D'Silva and Jeremy D'Silva provided music during the reception.



Guy Williams (left), Conservancy board President, welcomes Rand Wentworth, President of the national organization Land Trust Alliance. Rand's keynote speech focused on the impact and importance of land conservation in turbulent times, and the strong role that local conservancies play.

The sold-out gala raised \$19,000 for protecting local nature and farmland.



The delicious local-food menu – yes, in March, in Michigan! – was prepared by A Knife's Work.

You Can Help Protect Local Lands — Forever

A generous challenge grant will match your gift \$1 for \$1!

Will lands protected today stay protected forever? **Yes** – so long as the Conservancy can defend them. The **Forever Fund** was established by the Conservancy for this very reason, to protect and defend lands forever. Based on current and projected conservation needs, we have set a goal to raise \$500,000 for the Forever Fund and our Endowment. We are pleased to announce that we are 77% of the way to this goal. You can help close the final gap and *keep local lands protected for all time*.

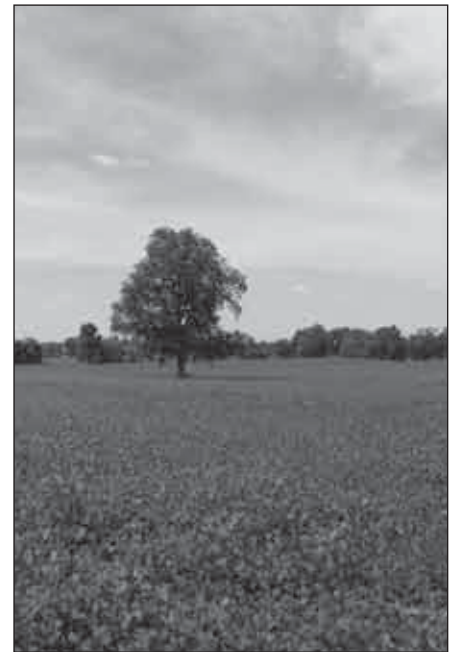
To encourage your support, a local foundation has offered a challenge grant for every gift to the Conservancy's Forever Fund! This means every dollar you give will be matched, dollar for dollar.

Conservation isn't over when the documents are signed – it's just beginning. Your gift to the Forever Fund can make the difference in being prepared for legal defense of protected lands. To make a gift or learn more:

Suzie Heiney, Development & Communications Director
Legacy Land Conservancy

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Special thanks to-

- Everyone who was able to attend the event, or to make a gift in honor of it.
- CD Photo Group's Greg Czarniecki and Sue Dempsey, for taking truly lovely photos of the event.
- The event committee: Janet Crone, Suzanne DeVine, Margaret Engle, Sherry Hall, Susan Roth, Charity Steere. Great job!



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Formerly Washtenaw Land Trust —
New name, same commitment, 38 years strong.

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Photomonitoring Squad

Legacy Land Conservancy invites you to be a part of our **new** Photomonitoring Squad! The Photomonitoring Squad volunteers will be a group of dedicated and hardy individuals interested in bush-whacking, compass use, and digital camera wizardry. Together with staff, these individuals will be in charge of our annual monitoring of protected properties.

Interested volunteers should be able to make a 3-5 hour commitment for each of 2-3 visits during the monitoring season and be comfortable outside. If you have your own digital camera, please bring it along.

Our 1st ever annual training and kick-off will be held **Saturday June 6th** from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. at our office at the NEW Center building, 1100 N. Main Street, Ann Arbor. Please call if you would like to participate in this fun new program, or with any questions. If you are interested but can't make it to the training, let us know!

(734) 302-5263, stewardship@legacylandconservancy.org

