



the washtenaw land trust journal

A publication of the Washtenaw Land Trust • Volume 7 • Number 1 • Spring 2008

Nature, Family, and Love of the Land

Father & daughter each protect land with the Land Trust

“Every day is a great day when I can go out there,” says Bob Ludwig about his Freedom Township land.

Rural living is nothing new for Bob. He grew up in a small Indiana town where his grandparents had a farm. From a young age, he helped out working on the farm and became a self-described “country boy.”

He bought the property on Bethel Church Road in 1968, and he rents it to a local farmer to be farmed. In the early 1990s, Bob gave half the property to his daughter Connie Ludwig, who now calls this land home.

Bob and his daughter Connie have protected these adjacent lands, totaling 167 acres, by donating conservation agreements to the Washtenaw Land Trust.

Bob said he’s glad that both of them have protected what has become, for each of them, a truly treasured landscape. He is on the land every day, enjoying the quiet, rolling hills and shady woodlands.

“To know that this will keep it that way, after you’re not around,” Bob started, searching for the right words to explain how he felt just after protecting the land. “You know, I was surprised today. I’ve never really had a feeling that something was different or unusual. But after signing the papers yesterday and going out there today, I had a warm, cozy feeling about that.

“After I’m gone, I know that others will enjoy the land as I have.”

Like her dad, Connie is also excited that the land will be protected for the future.

“I protected it because this is what I wanted for the land in my heart, and the Washtenaw Land Trust provided a way to make it possible,” said Connie.

“It makes you smile inside to look at the property you love and know that its natural beauty will be preserved forever.”

The conservation agreement, also known as a conservation easement, is a legal agreement that places restrictions on the future development of the property. Under the terms of the agreement, the land can continue to be farmed, and it can be sold or passed on to others, but the land can never be developed.



Susan Lackey



Barry Lonik

Protected forever: Bob Ludwig & his daughter Connie Ludwig have protected their land’s rolling hills and green woodlands, creating a block of protected land totaling 167 acres.

“This is such a lovely property, and by protecting it forever, the Ludwigs have given a great gift to the whole community,” said Charity Steere, chair of the Land Trust’s Land Protection Committee.

The Ludwig conservation properties are just two of 11 new projects completed in the last ten weeks of 2007 (whew!). You can learn about a few more on page 4.

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OUR MISSION: Washtenaw Land Trust protects natural areas and farmland, here where you live.

The Washtenaw Land Trust Journal, Spring 2008

Far Country

By Susan Lackey
WLT Executive Director



When Jack Webb intoned, "Just the facts, ma'am," he was missing the point.

The facts are easy. In 2007 the Land Trust protected a record 1,088 acres. We were awarded federal grants to protect farmland and endangered species. We were one of the first 23 land trusts in the nation to undergo accreditation. We monitored 100% of our properties. We held our first Jackson County landowners' workshop. We completed 14 projects – nearly double our usual number.

But the facts don't tell the whole story. The story is in the land, and in the families who work it and care for it.

This edition of the *Journal* tells some of those stories, and you've had the opportunity to read others over the years. These stories are the story of our community. They are the stories of farm families who carved productive farms from the wilds of an 1832 Michigan. They are those of men and women who fell in love with a piece of land or a body of water, and built a home and a life on it. Above all, they are the stories of people who understand the very special relationship between landowner and land.

The sentiment I most often hear from landowners is this: "We are so fortunate to be temporary caretakers of this land." I hear it so often, from so many different and unrelated places that it almost begins to sound like a slogan— until you watch the faces of these men and women. This isn't sloganeering. This is real. **This is a belief that our most important lands must be protected for future generations.** And a belief that they – as temporary owners of this land – have a responsibility to ensure that this protection is permanent.

Through your contributions to the Land Trust and other, similar organizations, your commitment to your own land, and your advocacy for future generations who will share in the beauty and productivity of our community, you help make this possible.

As we pause in that interminable moment between winter and spring, thank you for making sure these stories have happy endings.

Notes From The Land

Jackson/Washtenaw Land Protection

Nature doesn't stop at the county line, and neither do we! The Land Trust has protected lands beyond Washtenaw County for nearly a decade. Recently, more and more Jackson County landowners are showing interest in conservation. Thanks to a new grant from the **James A. & Faith Knight Foundation**, over the next year we'll be looking at brand assessment and implementation planning to boost impact for land protection in both counties. Stay tuned!

In thanks...

Thank you to the foundations who have recently chosen to support the Land Trust's conservation programs, including: **The Towsley Foundation**, \$25,000 toward the Land Trust's farmland preservation program; **The Lloyd and Mabel Johnson Foundation**, \$5,000 toward the Rogers farm's portion of the Forever Fund (see page 5 for more about the Forever Fund).

Rebuilding a connection to nature

Public recreation in nature is at an all-time low worldwide, according to a new study by The Nature Conservancy. This has prompted questions about the potential consequences for human health and well-being, as well as the future of conservation to protect the food, water, and clean air provided by the natural world. To learn more, visit www.videophilia.org/declining_nature.html – and then get outdoors! Here in this area, we're lucky to have many wonderful public natural areas. For details on Land Trust preserves you're welcome to visit, please see www.washtenawlandtrust.org.

Conserving what we have: Transfer of Development Rights

Important open spaces can be protected by concentrating new development in less sensitive areas, and Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) programs are one way to do this. A recent study by the Huron River Watershed Council looks at plausible scenarios detailing how TDR might work in our region and identifies potential environmental benefits. The study is available at www.hrwc.org.

Turn off the lights to help the birds

Did you know that the lights on tall buildings can interfere with birds' navigation systems? Turning out the lights can save birds' lives. Project Safe Passage asks owners and managers of buildings five stories or higher to please turn off the lights at night during the migration season. For details, please visit www.detroitaudubon.org/safe_passage.html or contact Ray Stocking at president@washtenawaudubon.org or (734) 973-3155.

Horses galore

Washtenaw, Livingston, and Jackson counties are three of the top four counties in Michigan in numbers of horses, led only by Oakland County, according to the 2007 Michigan Equine Survey. Statewide, Michigan has 155,000 horses on 35,000 horse operations, an average of four horses per site.

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Journal

Washtenaw Land Trust

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The Latest News from the Field

This past fall and winter, we've built bridges (literally!), shared conservation news, and reached out to the community with educational workshops. Thank you to everyone who attended a volunteer workday, site visit, or another of our events. Here are some highlights:



A bridge starts to take shape: Volunteers build the new bridge at the Land Trust's Beckwith Conservancy. You're invited to the grand re-opening and ribbon-cutting on May 17! (See page 7 for details.)

A celebration of 19th century farm life: The Land Trust helped welcome visitors at the Waterloo Farm Museum's Pioneer Day in October.



Local landowners learn about conservation options at 'Keeping it Green: Conserving Your Future through Land Use Planning.' (Thank you to workshop partners Jackson Conservation District, Mid-Michigan Land Conservancy, Potawatomi RC&D, MSU Cooperative Extension, and Michigan Department of Environmental Quality.)

Across the Board



By Bob Tetens
WLT Board Member
Director, Washtenaw County
Parks and Recreation Commission

My interest in the environment and land preservation is deeply rooted in a profound respect for nature instilled by my parents and grandparents. Family camping, canoe trips, hiking and other outdoor activities all had an educational component that made each activity an opportunity to discover or more deeply understand our relationship with the land.

Having lived in Washtenaw County for the past 45 years, I am very familiar with the wide range of natural attributes that exist here. The lakes and rivers, the productive farmland, the hills, the woods and wetlands, all make this a very special place to live. Even more important, however, is the broad recognition of the interrelationship and fragility of those ecosystems, as demonstrated by the community's long standing commitment to land protection and preservation.

That commitment has grown steadily over the years -- dramatically so in the past decade -- as residents have supported various tax initiatives for land preservation efforts throughout the County. Some of these programs are targeted at preserving farmland through conservation easements; others protect land by purchasing development rights (PDR); and some focus on protecting important natural features.

In 2007, land preservation efforts in Washtenaw County accomplished another significant milestone with the formal establishment of *Preserve Washtenaw*. This voluntary consortium includes representatives of the Washtenaw Land Trust; the County's Natural Area Preservation Program; the Ann Arbor City Greenbelt program; the Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy; the Raisin Valley Land Trust; the Nature Conservancy; and Ann Arbor, Pittsfield, Scio and Webster townships.

The effort was undertaken to foster closer ties and better coordination among the groups; to help determine the most appropriate preservation strategy for a particular parcel; and to maximize the investment of scarce public resources. The most satisfying aspect of the program, however, has been the close working relationships that have developed, strengthening each of our programs and enhancing our accomplishments.

I am honored to contribute to this work, and I'm excited at the prospect of continued success and growing public support for land preservation activities in Washtenaw County - and beyond. The land is forever; the time is now. Please join us!

Got email?

Sign up for our monthly email list! Stay current on all the latest Land Trust news and events. Call 734-302-5263 or email Mark at mark@washtenawlandtrust.org.



Protecting Natural Areas & Farms, Here

Parker Woods Protected

Mark Patrick



Stanley and Helen Parker have protected their woods, connected to already-protected lands in Scio & Lima Townships that now total 256 acres.

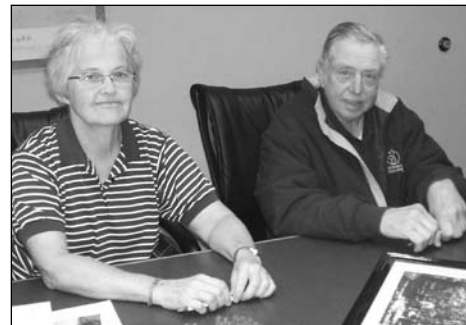
The Parker farm is one of the oldest family properties in this area, dating back to 1836. In 1999, most of the Scio and Lima Township farm was permanently protected with conservation agreements sold to the State of Michigan farmland preservation program. It was one of the first properties so protected in Washtenaw County and in the state.

Stanley & Helen Parker have now donated a conservation agreement to the Land Trust to protect the remaining acreage of their farm, 23 acres of mature woods on its eastern edge.

"We're glad we could get our land into the Land Trust," said Helen Parker. "We encourage more people to do this so more land is conserved."

"This gives our nephew a chance to stay in farming, and it leaves open space, which means a lot."

Under the terms of the conservation agreement, the trees can be selectively cut in accordance with a forest-management plan, and the land can be sold or passed on to others, but the woods can never be clear-cut and the land can never be developed.



Mark Patrick

"The Parkers are to be commended for donating this land protection agreement," said Charity Steere, chair of the Washtenaw Land Trust's Land Protection Committee.

"This 23-acre woods links up to a contiguous block of 256 acres of protected land that will now be available for farming forever, a permanent benefit to the community."

"Thanks should also go to Scio Township for their contribution of funds to help with the costs of completing and recording this conservation agreement. We are honored to have the opportunity to partner with the Township to protect this land."

Bloom Family Donates Agreement to Keep Land Protected

Bill & Jane Bloom of Ann Arbor have donated a permanent conservation agreement to the Land Trust to protect 103 acres of open space along Dixboro Rd. in Northfield Township.

The property includes a mix of farm fields, woods, and marsh.

"I must say, I'm very pleased," said Mrs. Bloom. "Protecting this land - what a nice thing to have happen."

The conservation agreement is a legal agreement that places restrictions on the future development of the property. The Land Trust, in turn, takes on the responsibility of making sure the land stays protected.

This property falls within the City of Ann Arbor's Greenbelt District, and the Greenbelt Advisory Commis-



Barry Lonik

Bill and Jane Bloom donated a conservation agreement to protect their 103-acre property in Northfield Township.

sion endorsed the protection of this sizeable block of land.

"This deal achieves two of the Greenbelt's top priorities," said Laura Rubin, chair of the Greenbelt Advisory Commission and director of

the Huron River Watershed Council, "working with local partners to protect land within the Greenbelt, and adding another parcel of protected land to form the Greenbelt along the northern boundary."

Where You Live

Wenk Conservation Agreement Honors Family History

Bill Wenk, a native of Freedom Township, has fond memories of cutting wood with his father on their family land, which the family affectionately refers to as “the swamp.” His father Ernest used the property to graze sheep and cattle for many years.



Mark Patrick

Bill Wenk protected his family's Freedom Township land by putting in the Land Trust.

Bill, who now resides in Denver, Colorado, has now permanently preserved 41 acres of open space on Waters Road.

“It was an easy decision to put the property into the Land Trust,” says Bill. “For one thing, the protection makes property taxes manageable, and gives other significant tax advantages too.”

“Most importantly, though, it allows me to keep a part of the family farm that has been in the family for almost 150 years.”

The protection agreement that Bill signed with the Land Trust allows the land to be sold, inherited, and managed responsibly, but it cannot be developed for residential or commercial use. As with all donated conservation agreements, the reduced land value is considered a donation to the nonprofit Land Trust.

As part of his protection agreement, Bill has reserved the right to allow grazing on the property. Not only would this restore the property to its historic use, but the grazing could act as a preventative against invasive plant species which threaten natural habitat. Bill has also reserved the right to potentially farm the corner five acres, which was once planted with corn, alfalfa, wheat, and oats.

“It’s exciting to think that farther into the future, this land could once again contribute as a local food source,” Bill said.

Making A Difference

Protecting nature and open spaces today – and keeping it protected forever

For retired cardiologist Dr. Rudy Reichert of Ann Arbor, the concept is simple: “Save it and don’t pave it.”



He and his advisors worked with the Land Trust to establish a perpetual conservation agreement to protect his family’s 100-acre forest and wetlands. Dr. Reichert also specified that at his passing, the land will be donated outright to the Land Trust as a protected nature area.

To help care for this nature area, Dr. Reichert will also donate two small homesites for the Land Trust to sell. The proceeds from these sales will provide revenue to the *Forever Fund*.

The *Forever Fund* provides funds to uphold and defend protected lands, today and into the future. The fund will supply the financial stability and flexibility needed to ensure that the lands we have all worked so hard to protect will stay protected forever.

Gifts to the *Forever Fund* can be made in a variety of ways: by check, credit card, gifts of stock, or in your will or personal trust. If you’d like to learn more, please contact Suzie Heiney at suzie@washtenawlandtrust.org or 734-302-5263.

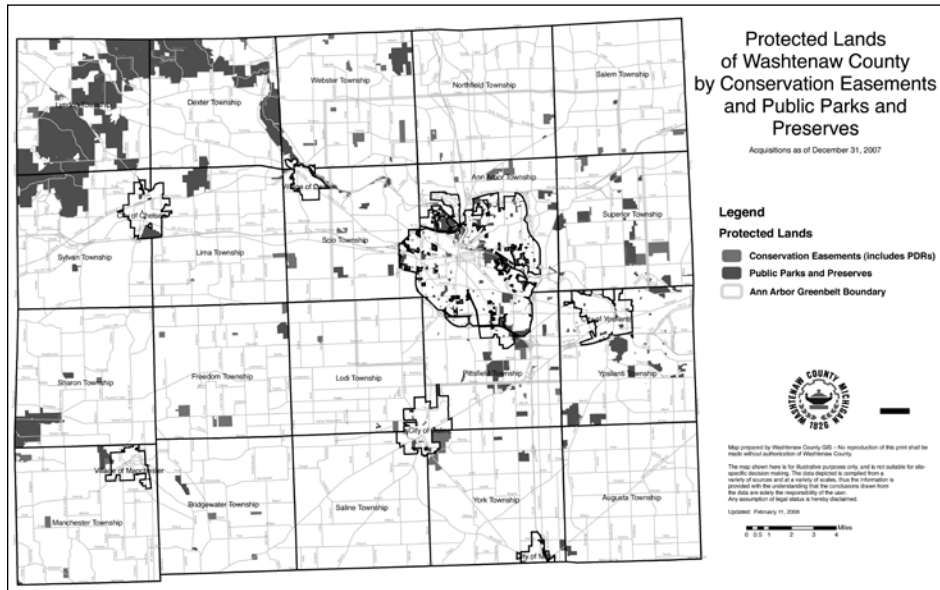


Suzie Heiney

Preserve Washtenaw: Partnering to Protect Nature & Farmland

By Susan Lackey

Map courtesy of Washtenaw County Planning & Environment



Ten charter members have now signed onto Preserve Washtenaw, a coordinating body for local land protection efforts. They are the **City of Ann Arbor** (with its Ann Arbor Open Space and Parkland Preservation (Greenbelt) program), **Washtenaw County** and its **Parks & Recreation** division (with its Natural Areas Preservation Program (NAPP)), **Scio Township**, **Ann Arbor Township**, **Webster Township**, and **Pittsfield Township**, as well as local land trusts the **Raisin Valley Land Trust**, **Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy**, and **Washtenaw Land Trust**.

But here's the real news. In 2007, these groups protected an additional 1,720 acres of the natural areas and farms that make this community a great place to live and work. Prior to 2007, land preservation programs were key to protecting 6,045 acres in the region.

Of the total 7,765 acres protected to date, nearly 5,000 are farmland, making the combined farmland protection efforts of Washtenaw County land protection organizations the most successful in the state.

In 2007, this included three Federal Farm and Ranchland Protection projects, completed with the support of the US Department of Agriculture. For example, the City of Ann Arbor protected the 70-acre John and Beverly Alexander farm, located within one of the areas identified in the Greenbelt's Strategic Plan. The Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy, with the County's

Natural Areas Preservation Program, protected the 158-acre Shultz farm in Superior Township, connecting a contiguous block of 950 protected acres. The Washtenaw Land Trust protected the 43-acre Rogers farm in York Township, south of Saline, expanding the block of protected land there to nearly 550 acres.

The key to these successes has been a willingness for land protection organizations to work collectively to complete important projects. The Fox Science Preserve, for example, was

protected through a collaborative effort involving the former owners Betty and Mel Fox, the City of Ann Arbor Greenbelt Program, the Scio Township Land Preservation Program, and Washtenaw County Parks, who now holds title to the land. This 49-acre site provides an outdoor classroom to investigate natural phenomena such as fossils, native woodland habitats, natural succession, and evidence of glaciers.

Another collaborative effort between Pittsfield Township and the Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy resulted in three new Pittsfield Township conservation agreements on 141 acres of land. The agreements were acquired by the Conservancy prior to the Township acquiring the lands for public parks and nature preserves, and they assure that the properties will remain as public preserves in perpetuity.

Many acres have been protected not only through purchasing a conservation agreement or outright purchase of the property, but also through donation of a conservation agreement by the landowner to a local land trust or local agency. For a few examples of properties protected in 2007, please see the articles on page 1 and pages 4-5 in this newsletter. Thanks are due to these landowners and to all those who protected their lands in 2007. Stay tuned for more details in future newsletters.

Here's looking forward to a 2008 with just as many successes like these.

(A version of this article was originally published in Michigan Business Review, March 6-12, 2008)

Protected Farmland & Open Space Acres in Washtenaw County

	Prior to 2007	2007	Total
TOTAL ACRES PROTECTED	6,045	1,720	7,765

Land Protection Details, By Organization

	Prior to 2007	2007	Total
Ann Arbor Greenbelt	636	119	755
Ann Arbor Township	148	153	301
Pittsfield Township	838	223	1,061
Scio Township	0	79	79
Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy	1,974	443	2,417
Raisin Valley Land Trust	150	na	150
Washtenaw County Parks & Recreation	980	99	1,079
Washtenaw Land Trust	2,531	1,088	3,619

Notes: The totals in the "Land Protection Details, by Organization" section do not match the overall Washtenaw County totals because the details section lists the acreage for any partnership projects for each partner, and it lists acres protected in the organization's entire service area, where applicable.

Wishlist

You may be able to grant the Land Trust's wishes! If you can help with any of the items below, please contact Suzie Heiney at 734-302-LAND (5263) or suzie@washtenawlandtrust.org. *Thank you!*

- Copy paper (recycled preferred)
- Postage stamps (first class and postcard rate)
- .5 inch or 1 inch paint brushes for painting trailmarkers
- White paint
- GPS unit for monitoring
- Gift certificates for food items for member events
- Office phones with 2+ lines and caller ID
- Volunteers to help with:

Event Planning, Finance or the Endowment, Development/Fundraising, Office tasks, Stewardship of protected lands, Spreading the word by being an "Ambassador" at community events, and more!



Other ways you can help the Land Trust



Got yardwork or landscaping to be done? With Todd's "Give Back to the Community" program, mention the Washtenaw Land Trust and Todd's will make a generous donation after your work is done.

Rose Chiropractic

Joan Rose and her sister have protected their farm with the Land Trust. Joan has offered that when you go to Rose Chiropractic and make a \$25 donation to the Land Trust, you will receive a COMPLIMENTARY initial exam and treatment recommendations.



The Songbird Company, locally owned & operated by Land Trust members Jim & Katie Wait, will donate \$1 for each of their wild bird seed tags submitted to

the Land Trust. Simply save the tags off each bag and mail them to the Land Trust!

For more details on these programs, please visit washtenawlandtrust.org and click on "Support" or call Suzie Heiney at 734-302-5263.

Upcoming Events

Sunday April 27, noon-4:00 p.m. - Ann Arbor Earth Day Festival 2008. Family fun! Location: Leslie Science & Nature Center.

Saturday May 3, 9 am-Noon- Identifying Michigan Spring Wildflowers. Back by popular demand! This workshop will begin with a background on plant identification, an introduction to 'indicator species', and a discussion of threats to wildflower areas. Then we'll hit the trail to see what we can find and identify! **Bonus:** This year, we're visiting a site that is not yet otherwise open to the public.

To register: please contact 734-302-LAND(5263) or info@washtenawlandtrust.org,

Or register online: www.stewardshipnetworkonline.org. Cost: \$10 for members, \$15 for non-members. Space is limited.

Saturday May 10, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. - Assessing Natural Areas: Rapid Ecological Assessment. Learn how to identify high-quality natural areas for protection at this workshop, which includes outdoor hands-on practice.

To register: www.stewardshipnetworkonline.org.

Saturday May 17, 11 a.m - Beckwith Grand Re-opening!

Join us to celebrate the completion of the brand-new (and beautiful!) pedestrian bridge at the Land Trust's Beckwith Conservancy in Stockbridge. Festivities include a trail hike, ribbon-cutting, bridge walk, and snacks. FREE and open to the public.

Location: M-106 in Stockbridge, just east of Maple Street. Please park along the north side of M-106 along the edge of the woods.

To RSVP: 734-302-5263 or mark@washtenawlandtrust.org.

Save the Date:

Land Protection Bus Tour, Saturday June 14

The land is forever. The Opportunity is now. You can make a difference.

You can protect nature and open spaces, here where you live, with a gift to the Washtenaw Land Trust.

Yes! I'll help protect open spaces for future generations! Enclosed is my gift of \$_____

Please use this for: Farmland Preservation The Forever Fund Wherever most needed

For other giving opportunities, please contact 734-302-5263 or info@washtenawlandtrust.org.

Yes! Please add me to the monthly email list.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Please make checks payable to Washtenaw Land Trust, or make a secure credit card donation online at www.WashtenawLandTrust.org.

Washtenaw Land Trust

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Please contact me about:

- Upcoming events
- Becoming a volunteer
- Planned giving The Forever Fund
- Protecting my land



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