

LEGACY Land Conservancy Journal

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ANNUAL REPORT



Photo: John Lloyd

Year in Review

By Susan Lackey, Executive Director

Time. Not lack of time, although renewed development pressure has certainly added to our sense of urgency. Rather, length of time. The time it takes for a family to know when to protect land they love, but which may represent a significant part of their personal wealth. The time we spend working, one caring landowner at a time, to protect a meaningful portion of a natural resource. Time has informed Legacy's work this past year.

Since 2005, Legacy has added two nature preserves to its inventory, and completed 76 additional conservation projects. This success brings with it an ongoing stewardship responsibility, and in 2014-15, Legacy added a summer

crew to assist with those efforts.

In 2015, working with our Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission (WCPARC) partner, we helped Else Heller protect her Lima Township farm, preparing the way for a new generation to continue the tradition of conscientious farming. We first spoke with Else and her late husband, Bob, in 2010, when they offered a portion of their Mill Creek land to the Huron River Watershed Council to demonstrate stream bank improvements on farm property.

Also with WCPARC, we were able to create a new County Preserve in the headwaters of Mill Creek, the Herman L. Koenn Preserve, while also protecting part of the adjacent Koenn family farm. Legacy has been working to protect these headwaters since we completed our first conservation agreement in that area in 2007. We continue to work with neighboring landowners, with an eye toward creating a block of over 700 acres of protected land, ensuring the quality of this Huron River tributary. Protecting this area helps keep the temperature of Mill Creek cold enough that Trout Unlimited is successfully stocking trout upstream.

These 700 acres come in properties large and small. One of our 2015 conservation agreements is on just 10 acres of wetland, woodland and winding ravines, acres that add an important connection within the overall 700-acre block. Larry and Stephanie Doll protected their 10 acres because Larry spent time wandering these special places as a child, and wanted to ensure that future generations could share the pleasure he got from growing up muddy there.

All told, Legacy has helped conserve 1200 acres in the Mill Creek watershed ... over time.

The same sense of timeliness inspired Betty Jean Murray to add an additional 20 acres to the 107 she protected in 2008. Her Marigold Marsh farm is located on the River Raisin. Legacy has protected over 400 acres in the River Raisin, where it joins

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New land protection at the headwaters of Mill Creek.

Photo: Tom Bosserd

Protecting and Preserving Southern Michigan Since 1971

Far Country

By **Susan Lackey**
Executive Director



What will it take to conserve the 25,000 acres Legacy envisions as part of this Emerald Arc we are creating? When Legacy's Trustees asked me that question, I had an answer: Nothing but money and hard work.

Taking me at my word, in 2012 we began planning for a comprehensive \$5 million Emerald Arc campaign.

Simply put, Emerald Arc funds provide the people, places and things needed to do our work: People to work with families on hard decisions and complex projects; important places we can move nimbly to protect with Emerald Arc resources; things, like stewardship tools and computers and accounting systems, that help us make sure our work is forever.

For three years, we've quietly worked toward that \$5 million goal. Today, we are at the 70% mark, and looking forward to putting the money to work as we close in on our goal.

This money enables so much: Our Farm Next generational transfer work. The Huron River Initiative, to help complete a conservation vision first articulated over 75 years ago. Work to protect the fresh waters that originate here, and contribute to the health of the Great Lakes. Programming in our preserves, to connect a new generation with the beauty of our landscape. Improved services to landowners who have conserved their land. More partnerships, across our service area and beyond.

It's a big vision, but one our community deserves. I look forward to realizing it with you.

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other lands protected by Washtenaw County, The Nature Conservancy, and Michigan Department of Natural Resources. With a joint focus on the most undeveloped parts of the River Raisin, this work helps support the health of the river, and will make it easier to address downstream runoff that significantly affects the condition of Lake Erie.

This work isn't fast. But with over 6000 acres of land protected by Legacy, and many more acres by its conservation partners, we are making a difference that will last forever.



In 2014-15 Legacy protected more farmland in the River Raisin watershed.

Legacy Events

From landowner outreach to hikes and other outings, Legacy is present in your community. Check out our event page on our website, or follow us on Facebook to stay current on our latest event updates.

www.legacylandconservancy.org and
<https://www.facebook.com/legacylandconservancy>

Can you double your support for Legacy?

Foundations, corporations, and other organizations offer programs to match qualifying charitable contributions. Many local, regional, national, and international employers and service clubs are pleased to match charitable gifts made by their employees, retirees, or members. Matching gifts are a tremendous way to multiply the impact that your giving can achieve through Legacy's work. Please get in touch with us if you would like some help determining whether your gift is eligible for matching support from an organization with which you are affiliated.

Perpetuating Your Values

The term "planned giving" refers to future charitable gifts that require some planning now, before they are made. These gifts, which include bequests and other estate provisions, are popular because they ensure that your vision can live on forever. Because so much of our land protection work is about ensuring that the places we save today will be protected forever, planned gifts are indispensable—and there is no better way to continue to make a difference for land conservation many years from now. To learn more, contact Diane Dupuis, at 734-302-5263 or diane@legacylandconservancy.org

The Emerald Arc is Legacy Land Conservancy's new fund that supports the creation and preservation of a vital conservation corridor spanning SE Michigan.



It's all around us.



LEGACY
Land Conservancy

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www.legacylandconservancy.org

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Intern Spotlight: Seeing Farther – The Emerald Arc

By Remy Long, Land Protection Coordinator

Editor's note: Last spring Remy Long, who is finishing his graduate work in environmental science, began working with Legacy as our Land Protection Intern, assisting in developing Legacy's farmland preservation programming. He brought with him experience in community-based sustainability, resilience initiatives, agroforestry, food security, and environmental psychology. Remy also brought with him the practice of broadening his outlook from the statistics of "outcomes" to the insights that other perspectives can impart. In September, Remy became Legacy's newest Land Protection Coordinator.



"Keba sitoo ka meng je dindingo lotoo buka wo je."

This Mandinka proverb, translated as "The old man sitting can see farther than the young man standing," guided me throughout my Peace Corps service in West Africa. While traveling across our country and the world, cultivating relationships with different lands, I often turned to my elders for perspective. This proverb is also what guided me to Legacy. Like many, I came to support land conservation after reading one of conservation's root texts—Aldo Leopold's *A Sand County Almanac*—and I can look back on pivotal times in my life when, out back from the shack, I stood in the Wisconsin River re-reading Leopold's enduring wisdom about the land ethic.

I have worked in agriculture from North Carolina and Wisconsin to the United Kingdom and West Africa, immersed in a variety of cultures and cultivars. Elders have guided me through each new landscape. I learned prairie restoration from Frank, cover crops rotations from Ken, beekeeping from Mbondi, and rice intensification from Aliou. These lessons accrued at the nexus of humans and land. Likewise, my work at Legacy has been focused on how to preserve our agricultural landscapes and heritages for our future communities.



Southern Michigan's farmland is an important natural resource, harboring some of the state's most richly productive agricultural soils.
Photo: Paul Morrison

When I am an elder, I want to know I have done all I can to ensure the next generation's opportunity to learn, as I did, from these ecosystems and cultures. I feel a sense of urgency, because that opportunity is threatened.

Over the last 40 years, Michigan farmland has been disappearing at rates as high as 117,000 acres lost annually. And only 33% of the state's remaining farmland has been put into any formal conservation; this means that 67% of our diverse and productive farmland isn't secured for our common future. What's more, 35% of farmers who plan to retire in the next decade hold nearly 472,000 acres of productive farmland. A simple tally of dollars raised and acres preserved doesn't begin to tell the story of this community tipping point. The way forward will recognize the needs of the people living on and served by our farms. It will require increased support for today's farmers and the cultivation of a new generation of farmers. Our charge will require not just response, but also outreach.

Not so very long ago, the human community was viewed as irrelevant or detrimental to the ecological community. Now, as a profession, conservationists are starting to act on what we know: the ecological and human communities are interwoven and interdependent. The Emerald Arc campaign is not just a call for the preservation and protection of our biota—it is a call to strengthen our human community. When we support this campaign—by gifts of labor, capital, or land—we are planting our stake in the ground, declaring, "This is our community, our culture, our heritage, our future." The outreach made possible by the Emerald Arc campaign is the old man sitting. It sees beyond just acres preserved. It sees livelihoods, economies, and cultures perpetuated.

Across the Board



By Jim Adams
Board President

Putting an Annual Report in context is the privilege of a Board President, and also, usually, a challenge—a challenge, because organizations are typically well embarked on their next fiscal year when the prior year's audited financials are ready for presentation, and the "here and now" seems so much more vivid than the neatly closed books of the last four quarters. This time, though, last year is still very present. That's because the Emerald Arc Campaign's capacity-building strategy is solidifying before our eyes at Legacy Land Conservancy.

The word "capacity" comes from a Middle French word of the early 15th century meaning "ability to hold," which in turn stems from a Latin root meaning "able to hold much." Isn't that the essence of a land trust, holding easements on public and private lands so that future generations can enjoy the same balance of fresh waters, productive farms, and access to nature that we hold dear today? True to its mission, Legacy Land Conservancy holds nothing less than our community's future. That's a lot of capacity to grow and sustain.

Building Legacy's capacity now is critical, as generational transfer of land ownership collides with renewed pressure to develop Washtenaw and Jackson counties, and supporters stepped forward last year to make sure that Legacy can not only respond, but reach out. Because of that support, the plan is coming together. When I attended a Legacy staff meeting recently, I was introduced to new Land Protection and Land Stewardship staff who were hired because of your Emerald Arc support, and are prepared to fulfill the responsibility a land trust holds for all of us, now and in the future. This is the best way I can think of to frame last year's achievements—made possible by you.

Farm Next: A New Tool to Implement an Emerald Arc Priority

By Robin Burke, Land Protection Coordinator

I'm at my desk one yellow-tinted fall afternoon. A phone call brings thoughtful questions from a local farmer seeking to ensure the family's centennial farm stays in agriculture. We speak at length about conservation easements: the legal agreements between private landowners and conservancies that protect land forever. This is the tool I work with every day, the tool Legacy has historically relied upon.

I learn that the adult children of the family aren't farmers, and that the family farmland doesn't just represent a considerable portion of the business's equity, it is also their retirement plan. The farmer needs to get some cash value out of the land in order to retire, and an emergent health situation means more cash is needed than expected, and it's needed now. The farmer could simply have chosen to seek the highest offer for the sale of the land—possibly from a non-farmer, possibly from a developer. Yet the farmer's deep care for the family farm led him to Legacy, in hope of keeping the land in farming.

A year ago, I'd have underscored the limitations of what a conservation easement can do financially, and emphasized the length of time it often takes to complete an easement (usually a year or more from the first conversation to closing). Legacy must follow best practices, which limit how much we can pay for an easement, and

we need time to fundraise or seek grants to assist in purchasing an easement.

I'd have said, "I want so much to help you keep your land in farming, but your personal situation might mean the land protection tool at our disposal can't give you the money you need, or get it to you quickly enough."

Since January, though, Legacy has been working to build a program that expands our toolbox and will allow us to help farmers more immediately and more creatively. With the help of conservation buyers, Legacy can respond nimbly when conservation-minded farmers need cash and are committed to keeping their land in the farming community. By providing farmers with succession planning and business planning assistance, Legacy will encourage the smooth transfer of land from today's retiring farmers to the next generation. With right-of-first-refusal contracts, Legacy can build long-term relationships with that next generation that will encourage permanent easements at the best time for the farmer, while ensuring that, if a farm family needs to sell, they can fall back on Legacy to direct the land back into the farming community.

Our program, called Farm Next, recognizes that farmland protection is an economic and social issue as well as a conservation measure, and adapts progressive tools from conservancies across the country. It has been launched with the help of a grant from a generous local family foundation, and we are able to continue developing Farm Next because the Emerald Arc Campaign prioritizes staff capacity. Because of Farm Next, a year from now I'll be able to confidently answer, "Yes, Legacy can help!" to farmers with a broad array of needs. Every one of Legacy's supporters has had a hand in placing this new tool in my hand. Thank you.



Legacy's new Farm Next program will allow us to respond more nimbly when conservation-minded farmers are committed to keeping their land in the farming community when passing it to the next generation.

Treasurer's Report: 2014-15 Financial Review

By Jennifer Fike, Treasurer



How does a balance sheet tell a story? How do expenses and revenue underpin the vital work of fulfilling the imperative of the Emerald Arc?

On the expense side, in fiscal year 2014-15, Legacy devoted resources to protecting four properties. A 20-acre easement in Manchester is held and will be monitored by Legacy. Legacy also contributed time, expertise, and capital to three properties held by Washtenaw County: the Koenn Preserve—81 acres, the Koenn conservation easement—110 acres, and the Heller easement—186 acres. In all, Legacy added 396 acres of green to the Emerald Arc.

Legacy's strategic initiatives to increase both Community Engagement and Land Stewardship are also reflected in the expense figures, as program services make up 76% of total expenses. Within Program Services, our resources were allocated almost evenly between Community Engagement, Preserve Stewardship, Easement Monitoring, and Land Protection.

It stands to reason that when an organization plans to increase its ability to carry out its mission, sufficient resources must support that increased ability. So when Legacy committed to realizing the vision of the Emerald Arc, we took care to build a fundraising campaign that would garner the necessary resources—that's the revenue side of the story. Within the context of the Emerald Arc Campaign, 2014-15 represented a planning period, and resulted in a net surplus of \$686,914 for the fiscal year. This surplus secures Legacy's readiness to expand staffing capacity and thus quicken pace of land protection in Washtenaw and Jackson counties. To the same end, Legacy received numerous program grants totaling \$536,547—including a 3-year grant from a private foundation in support of farmland protection. By ending the year "in the black" we are poised to add even more green to the Emerald Arc in 2015-16.

2014-2015 Financial Report

Statement of Financial Position

ASSETS

Current Assets	\$ 1,077,518
Investments	\$ 1,705,615
Fixed Assets (net of depreciation)	\$ 5,042
Pledges Receivable (non-current)	\$ 195,406
Land Held for Resale	\$ 260,000
Preserves	\$ 4,152,503
Conservation Easements	\$ 71

Total Assets \$ 7,396,155

LIABILITIES

Accounts Payable	\$ 303
Accrued Expenses	\$ 44,396

Total Liabilities \$ 44,699

NET ASSETS

Unrestricted Operating	\$ 301,181
Board Designated	\$ 1,244,829
Unencumbered Land	\$ 2,379,853
Temporarily Restricted	\$ 743,583
Permanently Restricted	\$ 2,682,010

Total Net Assets \$ 7,351,456

Total Liabilities and Net Assets \$ 7,396,155

Statement of Activities

REVENUE 2014-2015 FY

Contributions and Pledges	\$ 317,790
Grants	\$ 536,547
Events and Misc.	\$ 55,754
Interest, Dividends, and Investment gains	\$ 36,391
Land and Easement Acquisitions	\$ 376,000
	\$ 1,322,482

EXPENSES

Program Services-Land Protection	\$ 521,907
Management & General	\$ 86,403
Fundraising	\$ 78,604
	\$ 686,914

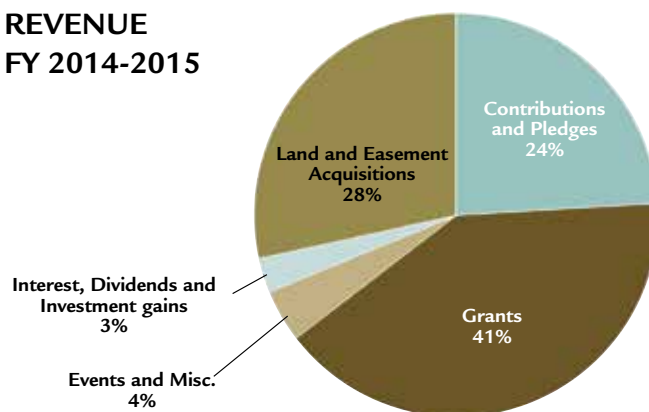
Change in Net Assets (Net Income) \$ 635,568

Net Assets, beginning of year \$ 6,715,888

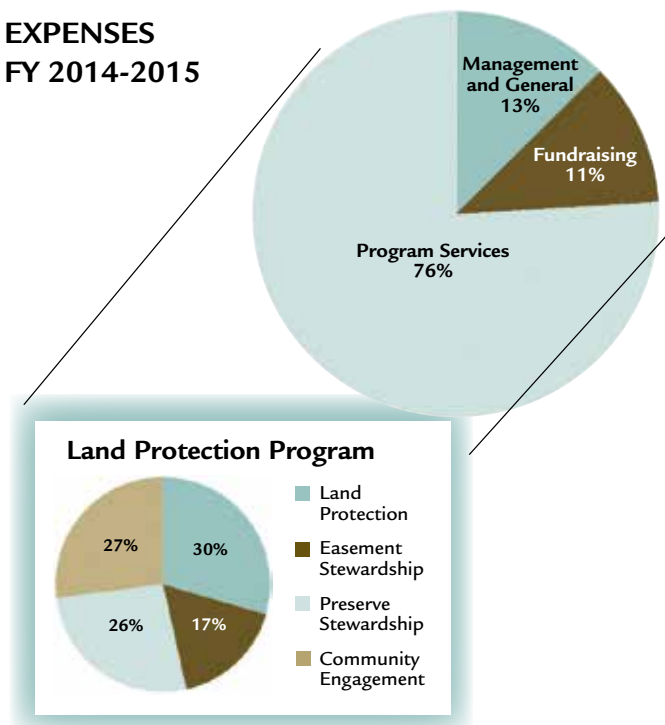
Net Assets, end of year \$ 7,351,456

Figures are based on draft audited financial statements at time of printing. Final audited financial statements prepared by Dennis, Gartland, Niergarth are available on Legacy's website at www.legacylandconservancy.org.

REVENUE FY 2014-2015



EXPENSES FY 2014-2015



BY THE NUMBERS

- 6306 Total acres protected by Legacy as of June 30, 2015
- 4071 Hours volunteers spent on land-protection priorities
- 2978 Hours devoted to photo-monitoring
- 2000 Pounds of garlic mustard prevented from growing
- 1200 Acres Legacy has helped conserve in the Mill Creek watershed
- 396 Acres protected, 2014-15
- 93 Community members who volunteered with Legacy
- 77 Properties photo-monitored
- 70 Percent of Emerald Arc Campaign goal reached by June 30, 2015
- 65 Acres of natural areas burned for invasive control
- 50 Percent of Michigan's residents proximate to the Emerald Arc
- 41 Percent of land in Jackson County that is farmed
- 38 Percent of land in Washtenaw County that is farmed
- 37 Community members who served as photo monitors
- 33 Percent of farmland in Michigan that is protected
- 20 Percent of the world's freshwater contained in the Great Lakes
- 4 Rivers (Grand, Huron, Kalamazoo, Raisin) whose headwaters rise in Legacy's service area
- 2 Michigan's rank, nationally, in variety of crops grown (California is #1)
- 1 Committed community—starting with you—that gets the work of land protection done

The Emerald Arc: Enduring Vision, Emerging Imperative

When we think about marvels of human engineering, like the Great Wall of China or Cologne Cathedral, we recognize that their construction took several generations to complete. Projects that benefit an entire community are carried forward, generation after generation, until they are accomplished. But how many generations does it take to ensure that farmland, forests, marshes, and waterways remain community assets? Every generation. All of us.

The Emerald Arc Vision

A project of this nature began to come into focus about 80 years ago. In the depths of the

Great Depression, community leaders in Southeast Michigan began to plan for the vision of a series of connected parks throughout the Huron River and Clinton River watersheds, in order to provide recreation for a rapidly growing regional population. Extending from Lake St. Clair to Lake Erie and beyond, this land forms a true greenbelt for southeast Michigan, and became known as the “Emerald Arc.” These plans formed the nucleus for the Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority, as well as a state park system that remains a benchmark for other Midwestern states to emulate. The Emerald Arc vision is still, relatively speaking,

close to its inception, and brings with it the enthusiasm and sense of discovery that attends the beginning of a compelling endeavor. Today, recreation and conservation organizations across the region are committed to completing the vision. When fully implemented, the Emerald Arc’s swath of protected lands will provide, among other benefits, a world-class destination for recreational enthusiasts, seeking to merge a love of the outdoors with sophisticated urban attractions and the beauty and bounty of productive local farms.

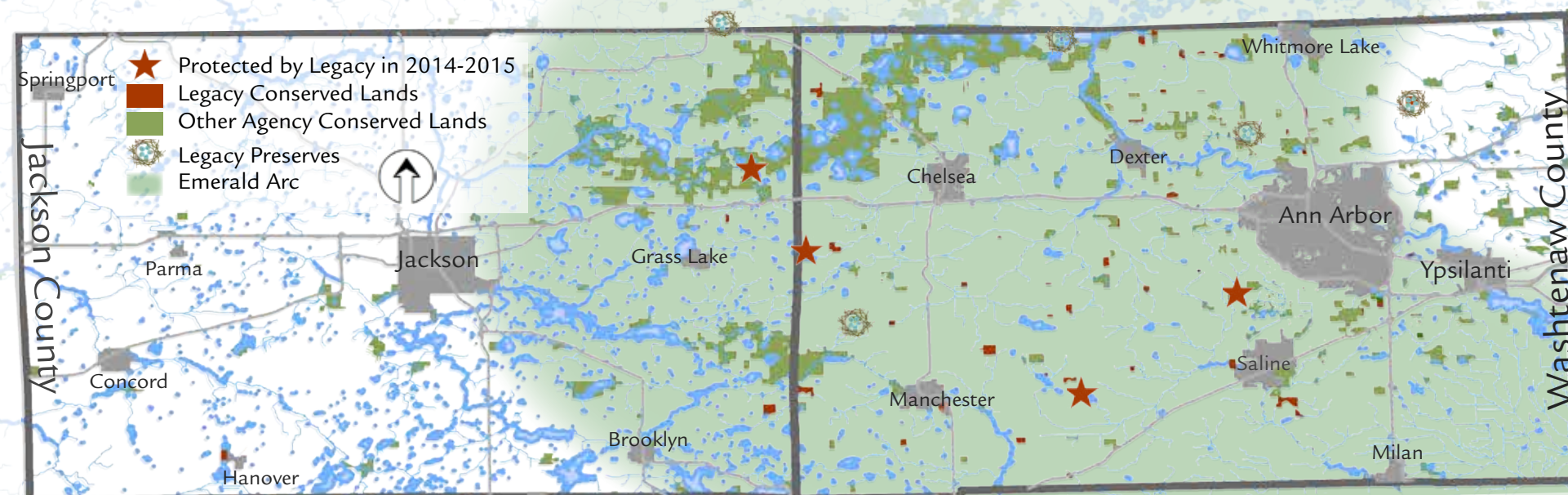
The Emerald Arc Campaign

When Legacy Land Conservancy committed to fulfilling our responsibilities toward the ambitious Emerald Arc vision, we demonstrated our strength of purpose by crafting a strategic plan designed to accomplish the Emerald Arc’s land protection goals in our service area. In concert with regional leaders (see Emerald Arc Committee, right) we assessed the capacity Legacy would require to safeguard our community’s Emerald Arc potential. To resource this increased capacity, inspired supporters are responding to Legacy’s Emerald Arc Campaign.

The Emerald Arc in Action

Over the past 80 years, the conservation toolbox has evolved. While early planners could not envision a land conservation strategy other than publicly accessible parks, times have extended the vision to include conservation easements on natural areas that protect water quality, habitat corridors, farmland production, and trails linking larger blocks of recreation land. This expanded toolbox makes it possible to complete the original Emerald Arc vision, even as we retain opportunities for the growth of vibrant communities.

More than a place, the Emerald Arc is an idea; the idea that we can provide significant open spaces for ourselves, for our neighbors, forever. The Emerald Arc will build on the generous legacy of prior generations, who have chosen to protect land throughout the area. It will protect lands that increase public access, protect water quality, encourage local agriculture, and preserve wildlife habitats. There are Emerald Arc lands in every part of our community.



The Emerald Arc in Jackson and Washtenaw Counties

Legacy Land Conservancy has set a goal of protecting 25,000 acres of the most important lands in Washtenaw and Jackson Counties. This part of the Emerald Arc extends from Pinckney State Recreation Area on the north, to Hayes State Park on the south. It includes portions of the Huron, Raisin, Grand, and Kalamazoo rivers. Both sides of our Arc are bordered by some of America’s most

productive farmland. Working with our partners and with the community, Legacy is committed to ensuring that future generations enjoy the clean water, fresh food, and peaceful recreational opportunities that have characterized Jackson and Washtenaw counties for generations.

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Look for Legacy’s
Emerald Arc Campaign
logo as we increase
our regional outreach.

Thank You!

Legacy Land Conservancy expresses our sincere appreciation to our generous supporters in our last fiscal year, July 2014-June 2015. Thank you for helping us protect Southern Michigan's forests, prairies, farms and waters—today and forever.

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Revisiting Feast on the Farm

As spring turned to summer, Legacy gathered with friends new and familiar to celebrate and share conservation stories; we called our evening together the Feast on the Farm, and it was indeed a festive setting for an outpouring of community support. Legacy is grateful to the organizations and individuals who contributed the time, resources, and expertise that combined to bring so much love for land protection together under the tent's glowing canopy!

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