



LEGACY

Land Conservancy Journal

A publication of Legacy Land Conservancy • Volume 15 • Number 1 • Spring/Summer 2016



Photo: Barbara Michniewicz

Far Country

By Susan Lackey, Executive Director

We had an interesting discussion in the office the other day about why we have a stewardship staff. The question wasn't, "do we need their function?", but rather, "**why aren't we all stewards of the land?**" Good question. Don't you just hate those?

When we think about stewardship, we tend to think about the responsibilities we assume when the land is protected. Many of you know about our **Forever Fund**, which ensures that we will always have the financial resources to guarantee a visit to every protected property every year. In my words: make sure no one snuck a roller rink into the wetland. Each time we protect a property, we need to find another \$7,000 for that fund.

We also steward our six **nature preserves**. Increasingly, we don't accept new preserves without a funding source for their ongoing care. In most cases, we actively manage these properties, removing invasive species, restoring native plants. At the very least, we have to make sure they are safe, attractive places for you to visit. Even though we rely heavily on Eco Steward volunteers, we plan their work, train them, and perform any work that requires special skills. All these things take time.

Our third type of stewardship we hope **connects you to the land**. You may have attended a strolling wine-tasting at Sharon Hills or Beckwith, a full-moon solstice hike at the Lloyd and Mabel Johnson Preserve, or a Halloween storytelling at Reichert. During our 40th anniversary celebration (five years ago!) you might have joined us for five-hikes-in-five-days. During all these, you experienced our collective landscape, had some fun and, tucked in there someplace, learned a bit of botany, geology, herpetology or some other real knowledge. Because, of course, one of our hallmarks is that we believe when you're outside, learning should be fun.

Each of our nature preserves has a story to tell ... about hardscrabble farming, early exploration, Native American commerce, glaciers and rocks, rare or common plants and animals, our connection to Great

Lakes water quality. Those stories are why someone cared enough about the land to protect it forever, and why others were willing to provide the resources to do that.

In the context of human history and geological time those stories provide a deeper connection to the land, and to the people who have passed through it. For millennia, people have taken sustenance from what the land provided. The ways we've done that have varied over time, sometimes with the belief the land was inexhaustible, and other times, vividly aware of its fragility. Through those stories, that **connection makes us better stewards** not only of the land, but also of the communities in which we live today. It's easier to be a good citizen when you carry a connection to place.

Of course, the answer is that we are all stewards of the land; those who work here, the people who own the lands we protect, the people who give generously of their time and money to make sure **Legacy's work is sustainable**. If I have learned anything from over a decade of daily education, that is the take-away. Knowing that, I know that Legacy, and the place to which I feel so connected, is in good hands. You will all be good stewards of this organization that does so much in this community.

This job has given me a new appreciation for the ongoing responsibility of stewarding place. I'll never view a healthy



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Across the Board

By Jim Adams
Board President



It is the privilege and solemn responsibility of a nonprofit's Board to hire and support an Executive Director who will provide the organization's day-to-day leadership. By now you know that Susan Lackey, who has served as Legacy Land Conservancy's Executive Director since 2005, has chosen to retire from a position that, for eleven years, she has imbued with tremendous excellence and drive.

Early contributions to the Emerald Arc capacity-building campaign have afforded Legacy's Board the luxury of time and professional assistance in our search for the next Executive Director, and we anticipate a smooth transition by June of this year.

Meanwhile, the hard work, deep thinking, and collaborative spirit that characterize Susan's leadership are evident in the strong, flexible, achievable strategic plan—adopted in 2015—that Susan crafted in concert with Legacy's staff and Board. With this plan as a guide, Legacy will carry its momentum forward on footing that could not be more solid or well-aimed.

This is one way that Susan's legacy will continue to resonate through the work of land protection for all of us in the near term, and for future generations as well.

Another way her legacy will continue is through the **Susan Lackey Fund for Sustaining Stewardship**. By establishing this fund, the Board wishes to celebrate Susan's leadership, and its impact on our region and on the land conservation sector as a whole. The fund will recognize the transformational leadership Susan Lackey has devoted to Legacy Land Conservancy during her tenure.

Resources from this fund will be used by Legacy to sustain and enhance the connections between the communities Legacy serves and the lands Legacy protects. These connections are fostered by the activities Susan hopes will continue to grow, namely, opportunities for people to have great experiences on protected land, via:

- Interpretive and cultural programming and signage on Legacy's preserves
- Trails, trail maintenance, wayfinding, boardwalks, benches, viewing platforms and other aids to recreation on Legacy's preserves
- Preserve amenities, including parking and information kiosks

For Susan, the work of land protection at Legacy has always been focused on preserving and enhancing landscape features that provide what Susan calls "quality of place" for our neighbors and visitors in Jackson and Washtenaw counties.

For those who appreciate how much we owe to Susan's tenacious and visionary leadership at Legacy, this tribute fund is a chance to help ensure that our communities retain the benefits of Susan's work as Legacy continues to expand on her impact.

Please contact Legacy and join the Board in supporting the **Susan Lackey Fund for Sustaining Stewardship**.

Far Country continued from page 1

forest or a clear-running stream in quite the same way again. Thank you for that.

"We are all stewards of the land when we seek to understand it. I want a way to understand the land and its history. I want to know about the people who have lived on it, expected sustenance from it, and worked it, to whatever end. I want to know about how it was formed; what glacier, what earthquake, what long-term drip of water shaped it and laid down its soils. I want to understand the role it plays today, as a home for critters and plants, in water quality, in recreation. I want to know why it was special to the people who sought to conserve it for future generations, or to the people who care for it now."

— Susan Lackey, Executive Director



Scratch and sniff hike



LEGACY
Land Conservancy

Legacy Land Conservancy
1100 N. Main Street #203,
Ann Arbor, MI 48104
(734) 302-5263
info@legacylandconservancy.org
www.legacylandconservancy.org

President: Jim Adams

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Fostering Forever

By Dana Wright, Land Stewardship Manager

My summers growing up were spent in the woods and lake surrounding my home. The youngest of seven siblings and step-siblings, I don't remember much direct interaction with my parents. I do remember wandering the forest wondering in whose footsteps I followed; spending hours at a time finding, picking and eating wild strawberries warm and sweet from the sun; and swimming, paddle-boarding, sailing, and rock hunting on the clear, cold, beautiful Torch Lake. Our roaming boundaries were set by the calling distance of a bell mounted on a ten-foot post rung with a knotted rope at the 7:00 hour. Our other rules were: no swimming without a buddy or a life jacket, and no TV during daylight hours. We were blessed to grow up wild.

Protecting land forever is a pretty lofty goal. On the front end of that goal we engage landowners and write conservation easements, on the back, very very long end of that goal, we (and our descendants) steward the land. This is no easy task. Its face constantly changes with the needs of the community, the culture of conservation, and the available resources to achieve goals.

The perception that each living organism is connected to the landscape in a myriad of ways—some of which we understand, and many of which we don't, some of which we can control, many of which we can't or shouldn't—and the understanding that



humans are as connected and as dependent on our landscape as every other living creature, comes from witnessing it first-hand. Our connection to the land is also the reason we protect it—forever. Fostering the type of connection to nature I experienced as a child is the best tool we have to make protection permanent in our local community.

At Legacy, fostering forever looks like:

- interpretive hikes with fun themes (Cranes Colors and Cabernet)
- organizing and/or hosting classes to learn about land management (Conservation Stewards Program)
- hosting workdays and engaging volunteers on a day-to-day basis in land management
- keeping up-to-date on current technologies
- blending volunteer independence, education, and ownership in our Eco Steward program
- building management and conservation easement plans flexible enough to protect conservation values while not hindering us in the face of change
- making our preserves “user friendly” and engaging
- keeping the lines of communication open with easement landowners
- and partnering with other environmental organizations in the community (Wild and Scenic Film Festival)

All this is undertaken with the end goal of protecting enough land to support a local food source, fresh water, and places to play, right here where we live.

Support the Emerald Arc—look for some of these events in this year's calendar and find your opportunity to help foster forever!

Emerald Arc Priority: Places to Play

Off and Running: New Trail System Will Connect Legacy Communities to Statewide Adventure

Last April when Legacy's Board decided to accept the Huron-Waterloo Pathways Initiative (HWPI) project, we had good reason to expect widespread community engagement for an effort led by committed volunteers and aligned with a top Emerald Arc priority: connecting people with the land through access to regional assets such as natural areas, recreational opportunities, and scenic rural corridors.

HWPI's goal is to complete a looped bike and pedestrian trail across western Washtenaw County. Called “The Loop,” this circular trail will tie the Border-to-Border Trail and the Lakelands Trail into a single integrated 44-mile continuous loop.

Because nearly 50 percent of Michigan's population lives within an hour's drive of The Loop, more than four million Michigan residents will enjoy enhanced access to healthy recreation, improving the

health and wellness of our communities at the same time as The Loop increases the region's appeal as a destination for events and activities.

The Loop will also connect the Chelsea, Dexter, Pinckney and Waterloo recreation areas to Michigan's showcase trail system, the Iron Belle, envisioned to provide continuous trails from the Detroit River's Belle Isle to the Upper Peninsula city of Ironwood.

The HWPI project came to Legacy through a group of volunteers who recognized that Legacy's expertise and reputation in the region's nonprofit sector, as well as our staff capacity and capabilities, would allow HWPI volunteers to focus on trail development and move swiftly on planning and resourcing the



project.

As a result, progress to-date has definitely been fast-tracked! Once fundraising efforts kicked off, institutional donors such as St. Joseph Mercy Health System, Chelsea Milling Company, Hardwood Solutions, and Chelsea State Bank committed financial support. The 5 Healthy Towns Foundation matched gifts made to the project in October, 2015. Individuals in the community have also made donations, some through a matching-gift challenge established by the Ann Arbor Bicycle Touring Society. Further private and public funding sources have been identified for grant submissions.

On the planning side, feasibility studies over the entire trail route are expected to be completed by the end of 2016, with a target for groundbreaking in the spring of 2017.

Unrestricted donations to Legacy's Emerald Arc Campaign allow Legacy to work with groups like HWPI to achieve long-term benefits for our community—thanks for your support!

Upcoming 2016 Events

Catch Them if You Can Spring-Summer 2016

Cost: Free

Nature is difficult to schedule! Stay tuned to Legacy's Facebook page to catch these guided events. Announcements will go out 1-5 days before the event.

Spring Ephemerals at Creekshead Preserve (late April/early May)

This preserve has carpets of spring wildflowers interspersed with little pools of chirping frogs.

Perseid Meteor Shower at Sharon Hills Preserve

(July 17-August 24, peak on Aug 12-13)

Away from city lights view this annual light show as earth's path crosses that of Comet Swift-Tuttle and we see bits of the comet hitting our atmosphere and burning up.

No matter which event you're planning to attend, please dress for the weather (including hat), wear sturdy shoes, and bring a water bottle!

Except as noted, to find out more about an event or to register, contact Dana: dana@legacylandconservancy.org, (734) 302-5263.



Falconer Cynthia Avery Photo: Laurie Gendron



Reichert wildflower hike

Earth Day Ring in Spring Workday—Reichert Nature Preserve

Friday, April 22, 1-4pm

Cost: Free

Reichert Nature Preserve, 2nd driveway on the left from Dexter Pinckney Rd. on Tiplady
Love the Earth day! Help us clean up an antique glass pile in our newest preserve. The pile, mostly of old broken glass bottles from a former speakeasy—now a private residence—is deep and wide. We need your help! Collectors welcome. There will be more than a few good finds. If you have a wheelbarrow or sturdy plastic sled for aiding in removal of the glass, please bring it!

Garlic Mustard and Falconers—Sharon Hills Preserve

Saturday, May 14, 1-5pm

Cost: Free

Sharon Hollow Road between Walker and Washburn Roads

What do invasives and birds of prey have in common? Sharon Hills Preserve. Invasive species at Sharon Hills are reducing habitat for the animals needed by falcons, hawks, and other birds of prey to survive. Join us and spend the afternoon clearing out garlic mustard. End the day with a presentation by Falconer Cynthia Avery with Forest, her Harris's Hawk.

Nature Photography Workshop—Reichert Nature Preserve

Saturday, June 18, 11am - 1pm

Cost: Free

Reichert Nature Preserve, 2nd driveway on the left from Dexter Pinckney Rd. on Tiplady
Laughing Duck's local professional

photographer, Victor Banta, leads this workshop to explore Reichert Nature Preserve for 2 hours, while learning techniques to improve your nature photography skills and expand your creativity. Bring your digital camera and optional tripod. Stay late to join Ice Cream Social activities at the Preserve. Donations accepted for The Laughing Duck Nature Center. Please register for the event by June 15th.

Ice Cream Social—Reichert Nature Preserve

Saturday, June 18, 1-4pm

Cost: Free

Reichert Nature Preserve, 2nd driveway on the left from Dexter Pinckney Rd. on Tiplady
Old-fashioned ice cream for an old-fashioned event; enjoy yummy locally made ice cream while socializing with neighbors and community members. If you'd like to see the land, or learn about land protection join one of our special guided trail hikes, or stay where the gabbing and food is and build a bumble bee house while learning about pollinator habitat in your yard. Please register for the event by June 15th.

Medicinal Plants—Sharon Hills Preserve

Saturday, August 6, 10am -12pm

Cost: \$10 TSN Members/

\$15 Non-Members

Sharon Hollow Road between Walker and Washburn Roads

Stroll with Legacy Land Conservancy's Land Steward Allene Smith through the varied botanical communities of

Legacy's Sharon Hills Preserve to discover common plants used as medicine historically and today. Learn to properly identify some of these "herbal allies," hear a history of their use as medicine, and gain insight into why today's trained herbalists prize certain species. Expect to walk no more than two miles, with regular breaks for meeting and greeting our botanical companions. To find out more or **register for this event** with the

Stewardship Network call 734.996.3190 or visit www.stewardshipnetwork.org

Cranes Colors and Cabernet Walks

Saturday, October 15th, 1-3pm

Cost: Free

Sharon Hills Preserve, Sharon Hollow Road between Walker and Washburn Roads, and

Beckwith Preserve, E. Main St. on north side just after Maple intersection, Stockbridge

As part of the Big 400's fall celebration, join Legacy for guided wine tasting hikes at two of our preserves: Sharon Hills Preserve just north of Manchester, or Beckwith Preserve in Stockbridge. Learn a bit about how and why trees change color in the fall.

Each new bend or hilly alcove in the trail may feature a Sandhill Crane vineyard wine or show of anthocyanin color!



Emerald Arc Priority: FARMLAND

Safe Passage

By Robin Burke, Land Protection Manager

Whether or not you own a farm, and regardless of whether you have protected your land through a conservation easement, estate and succession planning are critical. And this is particularly so when it comes to farms.



conservancies), and my colleague Remy Long and me, representing Legacy's land protection staff. For the three of us, the event was a chance to understand what farmers are learning about succession planning and to determine how conservancies may fit into that picture.

The future of the land and the future of farming as an income-producing business are deeply intertwined. Losing the business can mean losing the farmland, and vice versa. According to the United States Department of Agriculture, almost 96 percent of US farms are family owned and operated. However, growing up on a farm isn't the career predictor it once was. Tomorrow's farm owners and operators aren't necessarily blood relatives of today's.

The prediction is that over the next twenty years, only 30 percent of US farmland will remain under the same ownership as today. If family farms don't carefully plan a hand-off to the next generation of farmers, the loss of farm businesses and farm land will be significant, leaving today's farmland vulnerable to development for non-farm uses, irreversibly.

To address this concern, the Michigan Farm Bureau (MFB) hosted in February "Take Root," a day-long conference for farmers. The event focused on farm estate and succession planning and attracted almost 300 farmers. A few non-farmers were there too, including Julie Stoneman, associate director of Heart of the Lakes (the Michigan consortium of land

The "Take Root" conference featured ten Michigan experts covering financial, legal, and business management aspects of estate or succession planning. Sessions encouraged farmers to choose the most appropriate legal structure for their farm business, set goals, make plans for the transfer of land and business at or before death, and plan for their personal long-term care.

Business consultant and author Jolene Brown, CSP (also an Iowa corn and soybean farmer since 1979) gave the keynote address. Stressing that family conflict often arises around farm estate and succession planning, she advised creating a legal and well-discussed plan, and starting early. Brown also provided tips and tools encouraging family businesses to operate as what they are: a business which happens to include some of your relatives.

Take a step back to the idea that many of tomorrow's farmers may not be the children of today's farmers, and it's easy to see challenges posed by offspring who may want "their share" of the family farm but don't want to farm. This is one of many scenarios where a conservation easement can play a role in estate planning. For one family, receiving payment for an easement

It is Legacy's job to talk with people about the future of their land. Though staff at Legacy aren't expert in estate and succession planning—and we don't offer legal or tax advice—our conservation work is based on helping our neighbors answer the question, "What will happen to my land when I can't take care of it any longer?" For farmers, the future of the land and the future of the business are nearly synonymous.

— Robin Burke

designates the farm as farmland forever, while turning some of the equity of the land into cash, providing an inheritance for non-farming descendants. For another family, donating a conservation easement could yield a tax deduction to offset income gained from the sale of the family business. Whether a farmland conservation easement is donated or sold, its dollar value can have a positive impact on estate and succession planning.

Among accountants, attorneys, and financial planners who specialize in estate and succession planning, some even focus specifically on farmers. It's worth asking yourself: "What will become of my land when I'm not here to care for it?" Then, no matter your answer, seek out the advisers who can help create your personalized plan.

To explore how a conservation easement could be part of your planning, you and your estate planning adviser are welcome to contact Legacy's land protection staff: 734-302-5263 or protect@legacylandconservancy.org



Five Land Protection Projects Help Solidify Emerald Arc

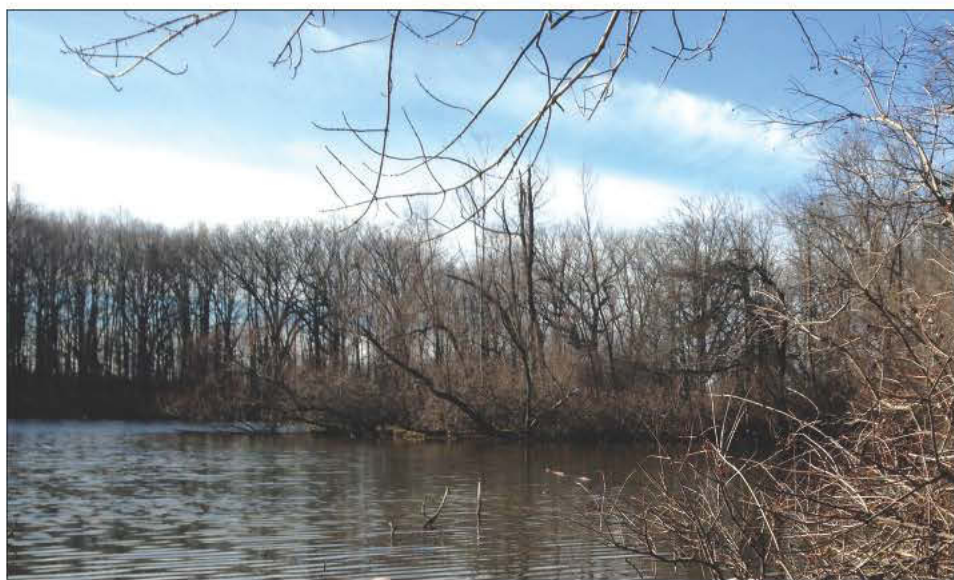


With significant frontage on the Portage River, Robert **Nester's** 25-acre parcel is rated highly by the Huron River Watershed Council for its bioreserve qualities. The property is located in Putnam Township and is approximately one mile from Legacy's Reichert Preserve.

Dale and Julie **Frey**, representing a longtime farming family, chose to protect 115 acres in Lima Township. The resulting easement, held by Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission (WCPARC) and developed by Legacy staff, was funded by the federal farm program and WCPARC.



Siblings Robert and Margaret **Rockol** worked with Legacy staff to protect 167 acres of farmland in Northfield Township. The easement on their land, which has been farmed by their family for more than 100 years, is held by Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission (WCPARC) and was funded by the federal farm program and WCPARC.



Continuing in their history of conservation efforts in Washtenaw County, David and Karen **Ufer** protected their 30-acre property with a conservation easement. Originally encouraged to work with Legacy several years ago by the late Dr. Rudy Reichert, David and Karen finalized the agreement in late 2015. The Ufers' property, located in Lodi Township, is a groundwater recharge area and is home to headwaters for Honey Creek.



Marie **Coppa** recently chose Legacy to protect 42 acres in Livingston County with a donated conservation easement. Coppa's property includes more than 1500 feet of frontage on the Portage River and received a high bioreserve rating from

the Huron River Watershed Council. With a combination of woodlands and wetlands, the property is located adjacent to the Unadilla State Wildlife Area, providing an additional buffer to this important habitat.

Congratulations! 7,000-Acres Permanently Protected, Thanks to YOU!

Legacy Land Conservancy has now been directly involved with the permanent protection of more than 7,000 acres of land in southern Michigan. We reached this milestone after 45 years of work capped off by five new agreements [details on pp 6-7] with private landowners.

Water Quality and Community

Two of these recent agreements illustrate Legacy's focus on water quality in the Huron River's Portage Creek watershed. Grant support from the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality helped to fund these projects. This state support recognizes the importance of local fresh water protection to the health of the Great Lakes.

These two properties add 68 acres of Legacy protected land near the Reichert Preserve, bequeathed to Legacy by the late Dr. Rudolph Reichert in 2013.

Susan Lackey, Legacy's Executive Director, notes, "The Reichert Preserve serves as an anchor for land protection in that part of our service area. It allows us to envision a connected string of protected lands that, taken together, can help safeguard water quality throughout that part of the Huron watershed."

"Neighbors have told me that the entire dynamic of our community would have changed dramatically forever if we hadn't protected this property and the creek running through it. For me, it's rewarding to have the opportunity to do something with such significance for the neighborhood, and preserve this land just the way it is, in perpetuity."
—Bob Nester, commenting on recently protecting his Portage Creek property.

A third new conservation agreement helps safeguard water quality in the headwaters of Honey Creek, another Huron tributary.

Working Farms

The other two recently completed projects, one in Lima Township and one in Northfield Township, continue Legacy's history of protecting working farms.

"Our grandparents bought this land and drove out to it in horse and buggy. Our father was born on the place. Over time each generation added to the farm. We worked so hard, as a family, to continue producing agricultural products and we want another farmer to continue to farm it after we're gone. We preserved the land so that it can be farmed in the future, so we can picture the next owners growing crops right here." —Margaret Rockol and her brother Robert, on protecting their family farm earlier this year

With these five projects, Legacy has now been keystone in protecting more than 7,000 acres, right here where we live.

The land protection specialists at Legacy welcome inquiries from any landowner considering a protection strategy for their property.

Landowner Bob Nester says, "I'm happy enough with the process that I'm now working with Legacy on protecting a larger piece of property to accomplish these aims on a greater scale."

"Everyone at Legacy was wonderful to work with," says landowner Margaret Rockol. "We had a lot of fun, and it was so easy, I want to thank them all."

Thanks go to **every** Legacy supporter!



Spring beauty

Fleeting Spring Ephemerals

By Allene Smith, Land Steward

There is a particular feeling to spring, like fingers thawing out after sledding, or the cool, damp air after a rain. With the thaw comes a resurgence of scent. Our feet are lighter without insulated boots

(though the mud and puddles still require something waterproof), and our arms and legs move more freely, unencumbered by the many layers needed for winter walks. Our patch

of land here in the Great Lakes Basin is waking up, and our charming spring ephemerals are some of the first to welcome back the green and growing world.

These botanical early-risers in deciduous forests take advantage of a brief window of time framed on one end by the warming soil and on the other by the leafing-out of the overstory that will shade the ground below. During this fleeting interval, the forest floor is damp from melting snow and spring rains, and warmed by direct sun. Within this niche, spring ephemerals, such as wild leek (*Allium tricoccum*), Dutchman's breeches (*Dicentra cucullaria*), and wood anemone (*Anemone quinquefolia*) can grow, flower, and die back, returning to dormancy—all in the space of four to six weeks.



Dutchman's breeches



If the change of seasons is to be celebrated, spring ephemerals are throwing the party. Their fresh, vibrant faces not only give us a welcome dose of color, they also

provide newly-emerged insects with a food source when most other plants are just beginning to awaken. Ties between a spring ephemeral and its pollinator can be tight, even exclusive; the bee known as the spring beauty andrena (*Andrena erigeniae*) is highly selective, feeding on only two species in the genus *Claytonia*. One of the two is our native *Claytonia virginica*, commonly called Virginia spring beauty. Similarly, trout lily (*Erythronium americanum*) enjoys its own special partnership with *Andrena erythronii*, aka, the trout lily bee.

Each year the emergence of spring ephemerals is subject to a variety of environmental conditions. If temperatures warm early and cool off again, the season may be long and drawn out, but produce few blooms. Trout lily may bloom for two weeks, or for only two days.



Wood anemone

To accommodate this variability, Legacy is piloting a series of "Catch Them If You Can" events. We do the watching and waiting, then we'll let you know when it's prime time for a hike! Watch our Facebook page or sign up for text updates, and when the time is right, **join us for a guided hike** through Legacy's **Creekshead Preserve**, known for its high-quality deciduous forest carpeted with lovely spring ephemerals. We hope to see you there!



Trout lily

Want to know more about your own natural area? Our partnership may help!

By Meghan Prindle, Community and Landowner Outreach Coordinator

Two years ago Legacy, along with other regional land conservancies in the SEMIWILD consortium, joined forces with the Huron River Watershed Council (HRWC) to help private land owners protect natural areas that impact water quality in the Huron. This spring, the partnership is hosting information sessions throughout the Huron watershed. At these sessions land owners will learn about the land protection process and register for free land assessment tools.



To help record the most accurate information about these remaining natural areas in the watershed, HRWC is offering free field assessments to private land owners.

After land owners contact HRWC to schedule an appointment, a small team of trained volunteers will spend 2-3 hours gathering

information about forest structure, wetland types, plants and animals, invasive species, and other ecological data about the land. The land owners will receive a copy of the assessment, so they may learn new things about their property. The information will then aid HRWC in their ongoing monitoring of the river's health.

Land owners in the watershed can play another vital role in protecting the future of our land and water by creating a conservation agreement for their land. Local land conservancies like Legacy can help land owners utilize permanent, private land conservation tools that may offer tax incentives and ease the generational transfer of land ownership to the next generation.

Nine land conservancies in Southeast Michigan collectively promote and protect the region's wild nature through a consortium known as SEMIWILD. Participating conservancies include Legacy Land Conservancy, Six Rivers Regional Land Conservancy, Livingston Land Conservancy, Michigan Nature Association, North Oakland Headwaters Land Conservancy, and Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy.

Land owners can reach SEMIWILD by emailing semiwild@heartofthelakes.org or calling (248) 326-4751.

The Huron River is considered Michigan's cleanest urban river. It owes this designation both to historic land conservation efforts and to the watershed's remaining natural areas.

"Undeveloped lands—woods, wetlands, prairies, and other natural areas—support water quality by helping to store rainwater, absorb spring melts, and filter runoff," says Kris Olsson, Watershed Ecologist for the Huron River Watershed Council. Olsson explains that even lands not directly located along a river or creek bank provide significant benefit to water quality.

"Using scientific best practices, we created a map of priority lands within the watershed to focus on important remaining natural areas," notes Olsson, adding, "The key to protecting the health of our freshwater is this strategic land conservation."



Dexter Farmer's Market

the (is all around you.

You Can Extend the Emerald Arc's Reach

We know that land protection concepts generally put newbies on a pretty steep learning curve. . . . You probably remember a few “aha!” moments of your own as your understanding of Legacy's work deepened over time.

This year Legacy is counting on **you** to help extend our ability to reach new ears with enthusiasm as we near the finish line in funding and begin to implement initiatives outlined in a cohesive campaign.

Introduced to **you** in our last newsletter (found online at legacylandconservancy.org), Legacy's **Emerald Arc** campaign is part of a larger **vision** for Southern Michigan with a history dating back 80 years or more.

The campaign's goals in Legacy's service area challenge us to:

- Bring the **total acreage** of lands protected by Legacy over the past 45 years to 8,400
 - see how we're doing, page 8
- Raise \$5 million in direct **financial support** from individuals and institutions
 - at press time this total surpassed \$3.9 million

Land conservation only happens when two things occur:

- 1) **landowners** contact Legacy to explore protection options, and
- 2) surrounding communities support Legacy with the **resources** to respond to, prepare, and finalize agreements that permanently protect significant properties.

Neither of these, in turn, can happen without **awareness**, throughout our communities, of what Legacy does.

That's where **you** come in: you can play an important role in getting the word out about why the Emerald Arc's land protection success matters, and why **you** are devoted to helping Legacy succeed.

For many of us, land protection matters because:

Land protection helps safeguard water quality. The headwaters

of 5 of Michigan's major rivers (Huron, Raisin, Kalamazoo, St. Joseph, and Grand) rise in Legacy Land Conservancy's service area. These rivers flow to Lake Michigan and Lake Erie, part of the Great Lakes Basin, which contains 20% of the globe's fresh water. *Because we care about clean water for drinking, agriculture, and recreation, we care about what's happening on the land that our water travels through on its way to our taps, crops, and beaches.*

Land protection keeps working farms located near where we live. Washtenaw and Jackson counties contain some of the most productive farmland in the state. Protecting our lush farmland supports our region's agricultural sector, while also preserving the scenic beauty and historic character of rural land. *Because we care about our access to fresh healthy food, and cherish our region's pastoral heritage, we care about how far away our farms are from our residential communities.*

Land protection provides nature here, where we live, for recreation and wildlife. Access to recreational opportunities in natural areas is a key quality-of-place indicator, as well as an economic factor that is closely measured by employers seeking to attract or retain workers, and by health insurers and providers. Legacy works to connect new land-protection projects with previously protected land to enhance recreational opportunities and strengthen wildlife corridors within an hour's drive of half the state's population. *Because we care about access to nature, we care about land protection and stewardship that invests in and preserves the value of nearby natural assets.*

As you find yourself telling neighbors and friends the story of how and why you're involved with Legacy, please take a moment to tell us as well—we want to hear why land protection matters to you. **What's your Emerald Arc story?**

Contact Legacy's Development Director, Diane Dupuis, with your “why and how” Emerald Arc insights: diane@legacylandconservancy.org or 734-302-5263

Volunteer with Legacy!

Volunteer energy, enthusiasm and expertise are used throughout our organization. We are proud to foster a rich volunteer community and hope you will consider joining us! Some of the ways volunteers can help are listed below. We are also happy to build a volunteer experience which is just right for you.

- Become a Volunteer Ambassador • Attend a Stewardship Workday
- Join the Photo-monitoring Squad • Become a Preserve Adopter
- Join a Committee • Offer Your Special Skills

For more information, please email dana@legacylandconservancy.org or call 734-302-5263



Why I Volunteer with Legacy

By Neal Billetdeaux, Legacy volunteer

On a tour of one of Legacy's finest properties, the Reichert Nature Preserve, I learned of Legacy's mission to protect land and promote stewardship across the region. Soon after, I volunteered as a photo-monitor with Legacy.

Photo-monitors play an important role in documenting easement compliance. We also serve as eyes and ears on the land for the Conservancy, and significantly increase Legacy's capacity to efficiently maintain contact with a large number of landowners.

Serving as a volunteer photo-monitor has been personally rewarding on several levels. I get to visit some of southern Michigan's great landscapes and ecosystems. More important, I feel a direct connection with Legacy by helping achieve their conservation goals.

Additionally, I've met several wonderful



people. My fellow photo-monitors are dedicated individuals with a penchant for observation and a commitment to completing assigned tasks under the guidance of Legacy staff. And I'm honored to work with the incredible landowners who share a vision of voluntary conservation and stewardship of important land.

"Through my time spent with Legacy, I have come to realize Legacy's capacity to collaborate across a wide-ranging group of private landowners, municipal agencies, and nonprofit organizations to achieve common goals. This has been, most certainly, one key to Legacy's outstanding success."

While protecting land through easement agreements is the essential first step, it is critical that Legacy remain engaged in focused stewardship that will maintain the integrity of these landscapes—today and forever!

Neal Billetdeaux is a landscape architect at SmithGroup JJR in Ann Arbor. With academic studies in botany and ecology, Neal has gone on to improve ecosystem health on landscape projects incorporating habitat restoration and green infrastructure. A certified Divemaster, he teaches scuba diving, and enjoys diving on Great Lakes wrecks and Caribbean reefs. Neal also serves on the board of the Michigan Trails and Greenway Alliance.

As a Legacy volunteer, Neal keeps tabs on nine easement properties, leads educational hikes, makes group presentations, facilitates technical grant submissions, participates in stewardship workdays, and serves as co-chair of our Stewardship Committee.

When Legacy presented Neal with our Volunteer of the Year Award for 2015, Neal responded: "All the volunteers deserve this. Everybody's time is precious these days. Volunteering with Legacy is an acknowledgement of the organization's mission and a recognition of the quality and commitment of Legacy's staff. Rather than accept a 'Volunteer of the Year' award, I accept a 'Representative of the Volunteers for a Year' award. I'm grateful for everything everybody is doing to advance land preservation and stewardship in southern Michigan."

Volunteerism: Legacy in Context

By Emily Courcy, Communications Assistant

Many communities thrive on the support that volunteers provide, and the US is known worldwide for our remarkable willingness to devote time to others. For nonprofit organizations such as Legacy, volunteers are often instrumental to the effectiveness of the organization. More than 1.5 million nonprofit organizations serve a variety of causes in the US, with 73,212 nonprofits active in Michigan alone. Although they represent a range of missions, their reliance on volunteers unites them. Whether in the office or the field, Legacy's volunteers are invaluable, and allow us to thrive and grow in our land protection goals.

In Michigan, 28% of our population volunteers in some capacity. However, despite the high number of individuals who are volunteering, only 2.6% listed "environmental or animal care" as the primary type of organization benefiting from the gift of their volunteer time and expertise.

In the words of inspirational author H. Jackson Brown Jr., "The happiest people are not those getting more, but those giving more." Not only

does volunteering benefit organizations, but volunteers themselves benefit as well. Studies show that volunteering leads to the development of new skills, a healthier mind and body, and, in general, increased happiness and fulfillment.

"People who volunteer tend to have higher self-esteem, psychological well-being, and happiness," notes Mark Snyder, a psychologist at the University of Minnesota. "All of these things go up as their feelings of social connectedness goes up, which in reality, it does. It also improves their health and even their longevity."

For Legacy, the satisfaction that volunteering inspires combines seamlessly with an opportunity to make a difference for the natural areas in our own community.

Legacy's volunteers stand out against national averages. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the median number of hours spent volunteering is 50. Legacy's 100 volunteers have collectively spent more than 7000 hours volunteering—an average of about 70 hours each.

The Independent Sector reports that the current dollar-value of an hour of volunteer work in Michigan is \$22.96, meaning that our volunteers have given Legacy the equivalent of more than \$160,000.

"The work and passion for the land shown by our volunteers is essential to our conservancy and our stewardship endeavors, and we couldn't do it without them," says Dana Wright, Legacy's Land Stewardship Manager.

Whether it's getting rid of invasive species on our preserves, serving as a photo-monitor, helping out in the Legacy office, building trails, planning events, or a host of other tasks, Dana concludes, "When it comes to protecting and preserving our environment, our volunteers make all the difference."



Volunteer outing

Photo: Diane Huhn



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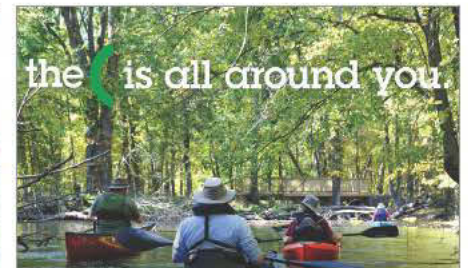
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1100 N. Main Street, Suite #203
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104
734.302.5263
www.legacylandconservancy.org

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