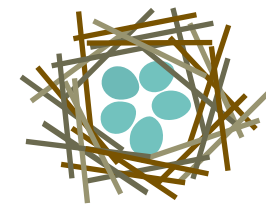




Photo by Margot Mehringer

Could there be a more lasting way to make a difference than a legacy of permanently protected farmland, fields, streams, prairies and waters? By including Legacy Land Conservancy in your will or estate plan, you are helping to leave a legacy for future generations.

If you would like more information on making a bequest, please contact your attorney. Please give us a call and let us know if you are planning on including us in your estate plans. Susan Cooley, 734. 302.5263 or cooley@legacylandconservancy.org



# LEGACY

## Land Conservancy Journal

A publication of Legacy Land Conservancy • Volume 13 • Number 2 • Autumn 2014



Devine-Koselka Farm

## Year in Review

By Susan Lackey, Executive Director

A Year in Review can be a simple compilation of numbers: acres and bucks, in the parlance of the profession. What those numbers can't do is tell the stories behind our year.

Take, for example, the story of our volunteers. The accumulated amount of work done by these men and women is equivalent to having two additional full-time employees. They help us accomplish work we couldn't get done otherwise. And each of them has their own story: those of boots sacrificed to knee-deep mud, and getting lost when photo points just don't seem to be where the GPS says they should be. Mostly, they seem

to have stories of laughter and new friendships.

The 43 artists who participated in our *Legacy of the Land through Art* exhibit have stories as well, told through a variety of artistic media and through the relationships they built with the owners of the land that inspired them. Our cover photo depicts Lois Lovejoy's rendition of her experience on the Feldkamp Farm. Shown here is Reno Feldkamp on his mower. This exhibit brought Legacy national recognition, but above all, it

gave people here in Washtenaw and Jackson counties a unique peek at the land around us and the families who care for it, sometimes across generations.

Our annual land protected map, in this newsletter centerfold, tells some of the stories of our landowners. But the stories are far more complex than can be described in a brief paragraph. In one instance, a landowner had saved many years worth of letters from us, encouraging him to protect

*continued on page 2*

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June Mower by Lois Lovejoy, from *Legacy of the Land Through Art* Exhibition

*Protecting and Preserving Southern Michigan Since 1971*



## Far Country

By Susan Lackey  
Executive Director



Why do we conserve land? It's worth stopping to ask.

We conserve land because without it, the character of our communities changes irrevocably; because unless forests and wetlands can do the work they were designed for, we can't guarantee safe drinking water; because without it, our \$176 million farming industry is at risk, endangering access to fresh food; and, simply because it provides the places where we play.

Often, I think we conserve land for the stories that come with it.

Throughout this annual report, you will see stories of people who love the land. We asked people their stories about landscapes that have changed over generations, about those which remained the same, and about commitment to a place.

Some of my favorite stories come from the late Harold Baker, of Half Moon Lake. Mr. Baker died this year, but not before he protected his land. His stories were about teaching his nieces and nephews to love the land and about the Boy Scouts he led along the Potawatomi Trail.

Just as Mr. Baker's were unique to him, every family has their own stories, and many begin with the land. At Legacy, we are fortunate to be able to share them.



Harold Baker near the Potawatomi Trail

*continued from page 1*

his land. Upon his death, his heirs found our letters and concluded that keeping the family land intact and undeveloped was important to him. Today, that land is protected, and the family has new stories to tell about the people who will steward it in the future.

In another case, it took a land swap between like-minded neighbors and a lot of creativity to protect a beautiful wooded site that protects the quality of the River Raisin. A third family found the presence of diverse insect life on their property to be a reason to consider conservation. While hardly the charismatic megafauna of legend, these small and numerous creatures also need secure homes.

These are the stories that you make possible. When you donate to Legacy. When you volunteer. When you attend our events. Each of those actions helps make possible the preservation of these stories; stories not just of the families who conserve their land. These are the stories of our community.

In 43 years, we have completed 110 conservation projects. That is 110 stories that will define our community - forever.



Arlene Taylor photomonitoring



**LEGACY**  
Land Conservancy

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## Landowner Spotlight: Jerry Nordblom and Barbara Michniewicz

By Jerry Friends - Legacy Stewardship Crew Leader



Jerry Friends

In 2003, Jerry Nordblom and his wife, Barbara Michniewicz, purchased property in Whitmore Lake to have as their new home. It turned out to be the perfect setting for Barbara's photography and Jerry's long dog walks. It wasn't long before they acquired 25 acres of adjacent woodland and wetland. With the help of Legacy, they established a conservation easement to prevent the additional land from ever being developed. Since then, they have been hard at work restoring and maintaining the health and beauty of their property.

Jerry began by removing autumn olive from the woodland. After several seasons, all but three acres were cleared of the prolific invasive, opening space for native plants to make a comeback. With the woodland restoration nearly complete, the focus shifted elsewhere.

This past summer, Jerry and some hired help removed hundreds of pounds of garlic mustard from an area bordering wetland and woodland. The tenacious herbaceous invasive is known for outcompeting native wildflowers, but the newly cleared patch will serve as a strategic starting point for next spring, ensuring the weed does not expand its domain.

As a reward for the couple's commitment, whitetail deer, a family of foxes, and even long-eared owls have made their homes on the property, reflecting the fact that it supplies diverse food sources and shelter for wildlife. The abundance of local flora and fauna have allowed Barbara to establish an impressive photography portfolio which she shares with Legacy for website content and marketing materials.

Though they have achieved a great deal, there is work to be done for years to come. It is their continuing efforts that make Jerry and Barbara paragons of land conservation.



Photo by Barbara Michniewicz



Jerry Nordblom with his dog, Annie

## Across the Board

By Kristen Schleick  
Board President



Have you ever eaten at a truly local restaurant? One that reflects its setting thoroughly, using local produce and changing the menu based on what is fresh and in season. It's a simple premise, yet there is huge value in the connection between food and place. Fortunately, the local food movement is growing, causing people to think about where their food comes from, to look to the land around them, and to work to preserve and protect that land.

In our land preservation efforts over the past year, we have not been alone. We're fortunate to work with conscientious and thoughtful landowners. The preservation of hundreds of acres of local productive farmland begins with those owners. This mindful and important effort extends to Legacy Land Conservancy's team - led by executive director Susan Lackey - which has been recognized in southeast Michigan and across the state for exemplary work.

That recognition helps to build an ever-growing lineup of partner organizations, including the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Washtenaw County Parks & Recreation Commission, the Dahlem Center, Raisin Valley Land Trust, Six Rivers Conservancy, and Waterloo Hunt Club. This list is far from exhaustive, but it hints at our growing reach. I can't wait to see how we leverage this network of allies to do great things in the next year, including protecting local farmland. It's a great time to be part of this organization. Won't you join us?

## Legacy Events

This is a great opportunity to explore our new website! Check out our event page to find out what is going on with Legacy or follow us on Facebook to get event updates.

[www.legacylandconservancy.org](http://www.legacylandconservancy.org)



# In Praise of Drops in the Bucket

By Robin Burke, Land Protection Coordinator

Land protection is a task without an endpoint in sight. We chip away at it bit by bit: Legacy's average conservation easement size is fifty-two acres - a number driven by the historic 40-acre parcel found in southern Michigan.



Robin Burke

It is easy to feel daunted. It is easy to say, "fifty-two acres protected, well done - but isn't that just a drop in the bucket?"

Yes. That is exactly what it is: a drop in the bucket. No matter how you look at it, fifty-two acres is a small portion of the surface of Earth.

When a single drop hits the calm surface of water, it sends out ripples in all directions. Its size does not make it powerless; the force of that drop carries well beyond the place it first made contact. Likewise, property boundaries do not isolate

what is within them. The change created by protecting fifty-two acres ripples outward across a community that includes, as Aldo Leopold wrote, "soils, waters, plants, and animals, or collectively: the land." Protecting land can have positive ecological impacts beyond parcel boundaries. Words and stories

from individuals who protect their property are shared again and again, catalyzing friends and neighbors to action.

Over the past fiscal year, Legacy worked with five families to complete six conservation easements, affecting a total of 373 acres of southern Michigan. Small though those acres may seem when measured against the size of Earth, these drops in the bucket are already rippling into our community of people, soils, waters, plants, and animals. Join Legacy in celebrating every shining, glorious, indelible drop in our bucket.



River Raisin, van der Schalie property

## Treasurer's Report: 2013-14 Financial Review



Adam Smith

By Adam Smith, Treasurer

Our Executive Director, Susan Lackey, has said, "numbers are not the story, but without the numbers the stories cannot happen." This is true, and yet the numbers themselves confirm that the 2013-14 fiscal year was another successful one for Legacy Land Conservancy.

The highlights include:

- 373 acres of land protected, representing a total easement value of approximately \$340,000 with 48% coming from donated easements and 52% from purchased rights. We continue to strengthen relationships with numerous partners to assist with funding needs, but even this model involves a significant investment of Legacy staff time for education, document preparation and due diligence.

- 86% of expenses supported program activities for land protection, confirming that we continue to keep administrative and fundraising costs at levels consistent with desired nonprofit benchmarks.

- \$125,297 (18.5%) increase in Endowment and Forever funds, \$359,000 put into Long Term Operating Fund. This ensures that we not only have the necessary financial resources to keep land protected forever but also to take advantage of unique opportunities that may arise.

The fact remains that this important work costs money, and the necessary amount to continue our programs is increasing. For example, it costs approximately \$843 per acre to educate landowners about protecting their land, perform due diligence on the property and write the conservation easement. And this doesn't even count the cost if we need to purchase an easement. For those reasons, we greatly appreciate your continued interest in, and support of, the organization that made these accomplishments possible. If you are interested in the full details of Legacy's financial performance, please visit our website ([www.legacylandconservancy.org](http://www.legacylandconservancy.org)) to view our annual audit results, which will be posted in December 2014.

## Financial Overview 2013-2014 FY

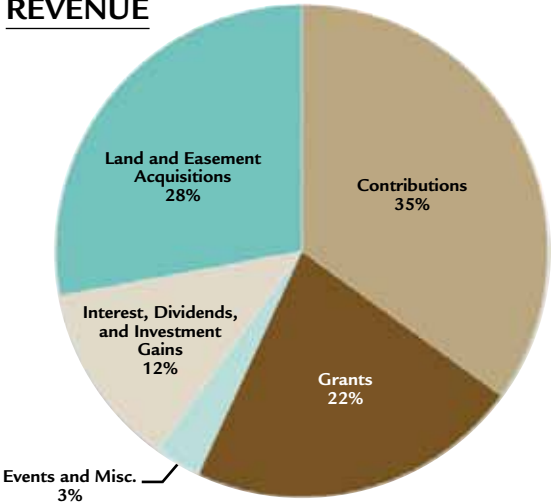
REVENUE 2013-2014 FY		
Contributions	\$ 425,572	35%
Grants	\$ 267,173	22%
Events and Misc.	\$ 37,301	3%
Interest, Dividends, and Investment Gains	\$ 147,200	12%
Land and Easement Acquisitions	\$ 339,656	28%
		<b>\$ 1,216,902</b>
EXPENSES		
Program Services	\$ 435,605	46%
Fundraising	\$ 50,017	5%
Management & General	\$ 82,844	9%
Purchase of Development Rights	\$ 224,853	23%
Expense of Donated Easements	\$ 162,919	17%
		<b>\$ 956,238</b>
<b>Change in Net Assets (NET INCOME)</b>		<b>\$ 260,664</b>

LEGACY BY THE NUMBERS 2013-2014	
Volunteers	118
Times Distracted by Cute Animals	142
Volunteer Hours	4,837
Photo Monitors	40
Properties Photo Monitored	74
Hours Photo Monitoring	2960
Alleged Bigfoot Sightings by Stewardship Crew	1
Pounds of Garlic Mustard Removed and Composted	2,200
Organic Compost Sites Established on Preserves	3
Stones Skipped on Pond at Reichert Preserve	42

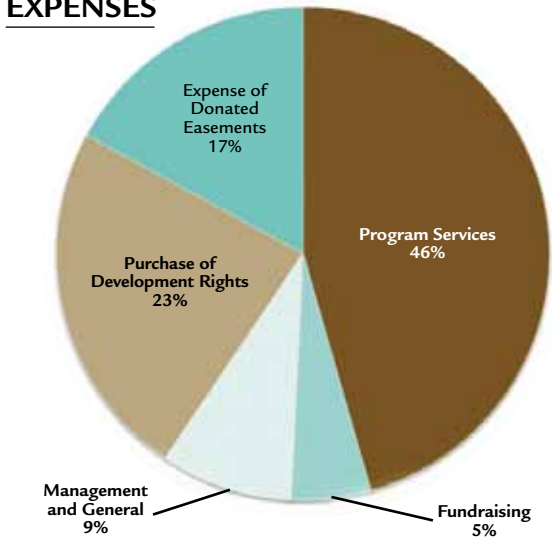
\*Please visit our website at [www.legacylandconservancy.org](http://www.legacylandconservancy.org) for complete audited financial statements.  
Acres Protected, 2013-2014..... 373  
Total Acres Protected by Legacy.....5,910



### REVENUE



### EXPENSES



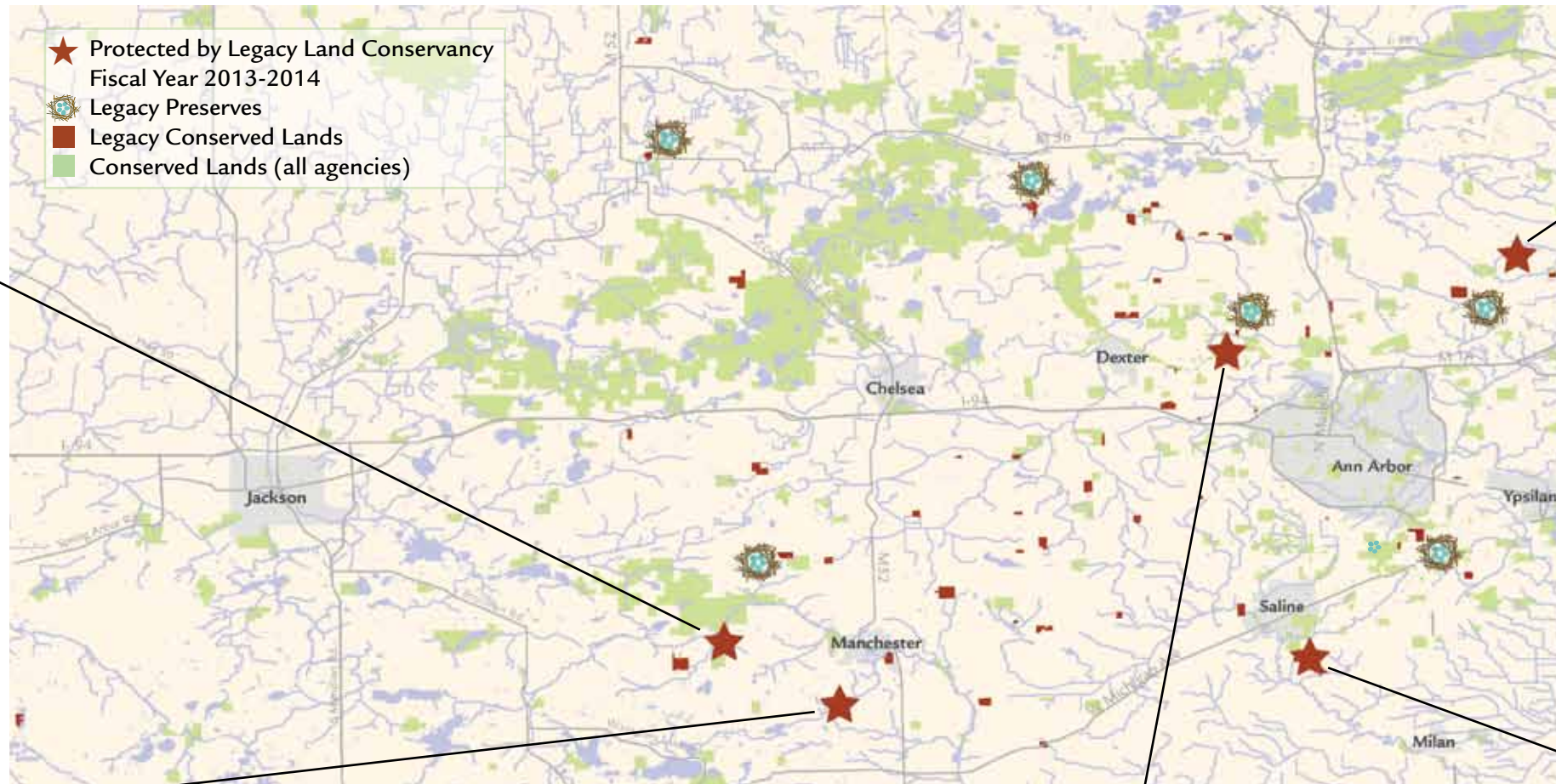


# Protecting Nature, Food & Water, Here Where You Live

## Serving Southern Michigan by protecting its forests, prairies, farms, wetlands and waters - today and forever.



▲ **Eric & Franci van der Schalie Easement:** Bordered by the River Raisin and Marsh Creek, seventeen acres of diverse natural habitat have been Eric and Franci van der Schalie's home since 2000. They have observed the passage of seasons and the yearly travels of migratory birds. They have learned the importance of their land to local water quality, an abundance of terrestrial plants, animals, and insects, and even the survival of rare freshwater mussels in the adjacent river and creek. The couple watched closely as Eric's mother, Annette van der Schalie, conserved her neighboring property with Legacy. Acting on their desire for their land to always serve the whole community of soils, waters, plants, animals, and people, the van der Schalies completed a conservation agreement with Legacy in winter 2013.



▲ **Cort Farm Easement:** Richard and Diana Cort are the third generation of the Cort family to farm in Salem Township. As they considered the legacy they would leave for future generations, it became clear that conserving 79 acres of their farm would have a lasting impact on their community. Funding from Legacy, the United States Department of Agriculture – Natural Resources Conservation Service, Salem Township, and the Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission contributed to a conservation agreement held by Washtenaw County.



▲ **Debbie Thompson Easement:** An artist's eye for detail and an awareness of the big picture have always shaped Debbie Thompson's view of her wooded Manchester-area property. Understanding the ecological importance of this land but knowing that sometimes the big picture includes developing highly sensitive natural areas, Debbie felt committed to conserving her corner of the woods. The highest hill of the property offers stunning views across the Iron Creek watershed, which feeds into the Huron River. The lowest point is a wooded wetland, filtering water from the surrounding area before it enters Iron Creek. With funding assistance from the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, Legacy recently completed a conservation agreement on Debbie's 54 acres.



*Moore Easement – photo by Barry Lonik*

▲ **Thomas & Eleanor Moore Easement:** The Moores knew that hay fields and pastures with a view to the Huron River were increasingly rare, but an important part of the Scio Township landscape. That landscape boasts an agricultural history mixed with residential communities; a mix which requires planning to maintain. Legacy began working with the Moores to conserve their property, and connected them with Scio Township. The township enthusiastically supported taking a step to conserve agricultural history and protect water quality. Scio Township funded and holds a conservation agreement on the 24-acre private property.



▲ **Rogers Farm Easement:** Kendall Rogers, head of a four-generation farming family in York Township, has watched the landscape around him change all his life. He's seen quality farmland sold for development over many years. In 2007, Kendall took action, conserving 43 acres of his centennial farm through a conservation agreement with Legacy. Determined to ensure that even more of the land he and his family love remains available for farming forever, he used two conservation agreements to conserve an additional 199 acres of farmland this year! Legacy partnered with Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission and the United States Department of Agriculture – Natural Resources Conservation Service to fund this project.



# Thank You!

Legacy Land Conservancy expresses our sincere appreciation to our generous supporters in our last fiscal year, July 2013 to June 2014. Thank you for helping us protect Southern Michigan’s forests, prairies, farms, wetlands and waters -- today and forever.

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