



# LEGACY

## Land Conservancy Journal

A publication of Legacy Land Conservancy • Volume 14 • Number 1 • Spring/Summer 2015



*Chickens at Brines Farm – photo by Erin Mittendorf*

## Farm Protection: Smart Business

By Margaret Engle, Legacy Trustee

It's easy to extol the virtues of Legacy's land protection efforts — clean water, recreation, stunning landscapes. But there's another important benefit of land protection, in particular farmland protection, that may not be so obvious. And like land protection's other virtues, it goes straight to the heart of community well-being: farmland preservation makes enormous economic sense.

Protecting agricultural land is a cornerstone of Legacy's work. By accepting donated and purchased farmland conservation easements, and providing financial or staff assistance to multiple partners who conserve farmland, Legacy has protected 25 farms totaling

2,245 acres so far. Farmland conservation partners include the Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission and township-level farmland conservation programs. Farmers who protect their land under farmland conservation easements (also known as purchase of development rights agreements) derive direct financial benefit that helps them stay in business. Farmland conservation easements permanently restrict development for non-agricultural purposes. In addition to bringing in a cash infusion from the sale of development rights, a protected farm has distinct tax advantages, including some that can help keep the property in the family over generations or help smooth the transfer of ownership to another farm family. By supporting farmers in this way, land protection bolsters the agricultural sector, which, in turn, contributes significantly to our local, state, and national economy.

Tom and Rosanne Bloomer own Bur Oaks Farm in Webster Township, where they raise and process traditional popcorns and food grade soybeans. Tom Bloomer sat on Legacy's board in the mid-1990s, while Rosanne was a Legacy board member from 2007 to 2013. They have both been active on farmland committees for Washtenaw County and Legacy over the years. Ten years ago they sold a farmland conservation easement

to the City of Ann Arbor as part of the Greenbelt program. Bloomer explains that the easement doesn't alter their everyday life on the farm. "We still own it and control every other aspect of it." They made money on the easement sale and got a tax break in terms of the valuation since the land can no longer be developed. But Bloomer underlines another important motivation. "It doesn't do a whole lot of good to preserve one farm. Commercial

*continued on page 2*



*Bur Oaks Farm – photo by Legacy staff*

### Inside

Farm Protection: Smart Business.....	1-4
Across the Board .....	2
Far Country .....	3
Legacy's Feast on the Farm.....	4
Upcoming Events .....	5
The Koenn Easement and Preserve.....	6-7
Getting to Know Legacy Lands .....	7-8
Stewardship at its Best.....	9
Legacy Volunteers in 2014.....	9
Partners in Conservation .....	10
Autumn in the Country:	
A Legacy Bus Tour.....	11
Art Exhibit to benefit Legacy .....	11

# Across the Board

By Sandra Sorini Elser  
*Legacy Trustee*



When I moved to Ann Arbor in 1976 I loved being able to drive five minutes out of the city and find places where we could hike, canoe, bike and explore the beauty of woodlands, streams and open space. It was such a different way of life from my family home in the Chicago area, where concrete and streetlights substitute for trees and moonlight.

I'm in my third year as a member of the Board of Trustees of Legacy Land Conservancy. I'm grateful to be a part of this wonderful organization dedicated to preserving our valuable woodlands, wetlands, wildlife habitat and farmland, now and for future generations. Legacy's work is designed to enhance the quality of life in our region, and is essential to attracting entrepreneurs, businesses and families to our cities, villages and townships.

To accomplish these goals, Legacy works with landowners to accept donations of land, to be owned and preserved by Legacy, or to create conservation easements that limit development of the property.

As a member of Legacy's Land Protection Committee, I have a firsthand look at the detailed analysis that goes into each potential new donation of land or conservation easement, and the annual monitoring that takes place to be sure that the land Legacy accepts remains preserved and protected forever.

Led by Legacy's exceptional staff, volunteers spread out through Legacy's preserves to install boardwalks, trails and pathways, making the land accessible to all of us. They also meet with the owners of farms and natural areas protected by conservation easements, to be sure the land is being used according to the development restrictions.

What has impressed me the most in my short time on the board is Legacy's clear understanding that what matters most are the people—those who are thinking about or who have already donated preserves or created conservation easements, those who are willing to learn more about saving our farms and natural areas, and those who volunteer their time or make financial contributions to allow Legacy to continue and expand its work.

I'm proud to be associated with this hard working group, and to be a small part of Legacy's preservation efforts.

## Farm Protection: Smart Business

*continued from page 1*

agriculture needs to be in a predominately agricultural community with agricultural services," says Bloomer. "We preserved the farm with the hope that others would as well. It worked. It made it possible for us to stay."

That's important because farms like Bur Oaks are a vital piece of the local economy. The latest figures from the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development peg the total market value of agricultural products at \$87.8 million for Washtenaw and \$78.2 million for Jackson County. At the state level, as a 2012 white paper from Michigan State University notes, Michigan's food and agriculture system "accounts for an estimated \$91.4 billion in direct, indirect, and induced economic activity annually. This sector also accounts for an estimated 923,000 jobs" in our state. The vast majority of Michigan's farms, roughly 87 percent, are owned by families or individuals, not corporations.

The economic ripple-effect of preserving agricultural land radiates far beyond crop and livestock sales. Every one of Washtenaw's 1,236 and Jackson's 1,073 farms is a business. When farms are preserved it means that farm-support businesses keep their doors open. These include Chelsea Grain, Crop Production Services, and Diuble Equipment in Washtenaw County and the Napoleon Livestock Commission Company in Jackson County. Many farms have diversified, extending both their offerings and the goods and services they use beyond typical ag-related products.

Farm protection also ensures that Washtenaw and Jackson counties' more than 20 farmers' markets—themselves economic



*Cows at Vershum Farm – Photo by Legacy Staff*

*continued on page 3*



**LEGACY**  
Land Conservancy



### Legacy Land Conservancy

1100 N. Main Street #203, Ann Arbor, MI 48104  
(734) 302-5263 · [info@legacylandconservancy.org](mailto:info@legacylandconservancy.org)  
[www.legacylandconservancy.org](http://www.legacylandconservancy.org)

**President:** Kristen Schleick

**Vice President:** Jim Adams

**Executive Secretary:** Gerald Nordblom

**Treasurer:** Adam Smith

**Trustees:** Charlie Crone, Margaret Engle, Joseph M. Fazio, Jennifer Fike, Paul Glendon, Martha Mayo, Sarah Newman, Heather Price, Dale Sass, Sandra Sorini Elser, Charity Steere  
**Staff:** Susan Lackey, Susan Cooley, Dana Wright, Erika Taylor, Robin Burke, Audrey Branam, Pam Bierzynski, Taylor Thorn



*continued from page 2*

engines that are the centerpiece to many community weekends—will be stocked with local produce.

## **A cherry empire rooted in protected farmland**

Bob Sutherland of Glen Arbor built an empire of sorts around Northern Michigan's most famous crop: cherries. Twenty-five years after launching Cherry Republic, Sutherland now has a roster of 170 different cherry-related products that are sold around the world.

Sutherland, who will be the guest speaker at Legacy's biennial gala on June 11, 2015, says that land conservation aided Cherry Republic by creating a more secure source of cherries. "During the 1990s and up to about 2006, there was lots of pressure on farmers to sell their farms to developers. And many farmers looked at selling their land as their way to retire. Land conservation or land preservation techniques have given farmers another tool to use to retire, pass the farm onto their kids, or raise capital. There was at one time a fear that there wouldn't be enough farms to supply Cherry Republic and the rest of the market, but, through land conservation and preservation, farms are staying in business and we have ample supplies of cherries for entrepreneurial businesses like ours."

Land conservation strengthens the local tourism economy by sustaining unique landscapes that provide an authentic visitor experience. "Cherry Republic resides in Leelanau County—it is very important that we have cherry orchards in this county," says Sutherland. "It is our heritage. It is a part of us. They are just as important as the lakes, dunes and woods. They are a part of our regional and cultural flavor. Seeing cherry pie, cherry salsa, and



*Cherry Baskets – photo from Cherry Republic*

cherry vinaigrette on every menu up here helps people see that they are vacationing in a special place." (And if you think tourism is just an Up North economic phenomenon, keep in mind that the Ann Arbor Area Visitors and Convention Bureau says that tourism brought in \$535 million "net-new" dollars to Washtenaw County in 2013.)

From the beginning, Cherry Republic supported land conservation through their local land trust, Leelanau Conservancy. The company has raised

*continued on page 4*

## **Far Country**

**By Susan Lackey**  
*Executive Director*



At the end of the Great Depression, the people of Michigan received a great gift in the form of a vision for the future. Rather than placing marginal farmland and wetlands back into the hands of private landowners, where they would likely be lost to mortgage foreclosure and back taxes yet again, these lands would be held in public trust. That meant the creation of a chain of public parks, game areas and recreational lands running from Hayes State Park in Lenawee County, to what is now White Lake in Oakland County. This includes not only state parks, but county recreational areas and the majority of Huron-Clinton Metroparks. This land would provide clean fresh water and outdoor recreation for the residents of a growing state.

If you've been paying close attention, you also know that, along with the River Raisin and the Upper Grand, this land forms the core of Legacy's 'Emerald Arc.'

The vision isn't complete, and much of our work is designed to complete it. By protecting valuable farmland, critical wetlands and natural areas nearby, we will ensure that our predecessor's vision will continue to meet the clean fresh water goals for new generations.

I'm proud to announce that, in 2015, that work has received a significant jump start, thanks to a generous gift from the Community Foundation of Southeast Michigan. The Foundation has given Legacy and Six Rivers Conservancy a grant to intensify our efforts along the Huron River, the main northern spine of the Emerald Arc. Staff support provided by this grant will allow us to undertake a focused community and landowner engagement effort. This work will enhance community understanding of the value of land conservation, and assist landowners in their efforts to protect water quality by conserving private lands.

The grant also provides the capacity to build new partnerships. Elsewhere in this newsletter, Chris Bunch, my friend and colleague from Six Rivers Conservancy, talks about the importance of our current partnership. The Community Foundation grant allows us to expand that effort to include Washtenaw and Oakland County Parks, as well as the DNR and MetroParks. Collectively we can fill the gaps in that early vision. Legacy and Six Rivers have chosen to supplement the Community Foundation funds with a grant received through the regional partnership, SEMIWILD, from Carls Foundation. By pooling our efforts, we know we will be more successful than if we tried to work alone.

It won't happen overnight. After all, it has taken us 70 years to get this far, and we all know the last 20% is always the toughest. But every day we don't begin is one day more until this vision becomes reality.

When we talk about the Emerald Arc, we know it will take years to complete. All big visions do. The post-Depression visionaries who originally crafted this idea weren't afraid to dream big. They left us with a tremendous legacy to build on. We can leave our own legacy by fulfilling our vision. Our grandchildren will thank us, as we thank those before us who first had the courage to dream.

and donated some \$900,000 for general environmental causes and another \$600,000 for farmland preservation alone. “Our first food product had a sticker that said, ‘Part of all profits go to the Leelanau Conservancy,’” says Sutherland. “Conserving land is a part of Cherry Republic’s culture and soul. It has given us a connection to many of our customers, who also believe and work at conserving land.”

### **Farms are everywhere. Until they’re not.**

Farmer Tom Bloomer stayed in business with the help of a farmland conservation easement, but he remains concerned about the lack of public awareness. “People don’t know how important agriculture is. They see one cornfield, and maybe it disappears one day, but there’s another nearby—it seems like they’re all over the place. Until they’re not.”

“We have a great resource here in this county, with the land and the temperate climate,” says Bloomer. “We produce more food with less damage to the environment than many places in the world. Now we have the opportunity to retain those agricultural

resources. We have the potential to manage our resources wisely or squander them. I come down on the side of managing them wisely.”



*Morning Haybales – photo by Paul Morrison*

## **Legacy’s Feast on the Farm**

The sky may be dreary and the ground is still hard, but spring is percolating even now. The wheel is about to turn to vernal. Soon fields will be plowed, seeds will be sown, and new life will break through the crust of Michigan earth. Children will emerge from winter captivity to the boundless wonder of the outdoors. Trees will unfurl their leaves, daffodils will pop and the cranes will return. The air will fill with birdsong and farmers markets will fill with fresh, local food.

That’s when we’ve turned the corner, we’ve made it to spring, and we can see summer shimmering on the horizon.

*It’s time to celebrate another turn in the ancient cycle.*

**It’s time to remember why we protect land:** to make sure that ancient cycle continues, so that we can be nourished, bring forth new life, create communities, and live connected to each other and to this unique landscape in our corner of Michigan.

Please join us for Legacy’s **Feast on the Farm**, where we will celebrate all that land preservation brings us. Enjoy local food, wine and music, a silent auction and more. Rejoice in the enduring community of nature and neighbors that we have created together.



*June Mower watercolor by Lois Lovejoy*

### **Save the date!**

June 11, 2015 • 5:30-9:30 p.m.

Frutig Farms: The Valley

7650 Scio Church Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48103

Reserve your tickets today: Tickets \$150 each

[www.legacylandconservancy.org](http://www.legacylandconservancy.org) or give us a call at 734.302.5263



# Upcoming Events

## **Volunteer Photo-Monitoring Kick-off and Training Part I** **March 26th, 7-9 pm (Part II on March 28th)**

**NEW Center, 1100 N. Main St., Ann Arbor, MI**

The Photo-Monitoring Squad volunteers are a group of dedicated individuals interested in bush-whacking, GPS use and digital imagery to assist Legacy in upholding the terms of their conservation easements. Part I will be an indoor orientation session. Part II is outdoor field training. **Join the squad by attending both of these trainings.** Register with Dana at [dana@legacylandconservancy.org](mailto:dana@legacylandconservancy.org) or 734.302.5263.

## **Volunteer Photo-Monitoring Field Training (Part II)** **March 28, 1-5pm**

**NEW Center, 1100 N. Main St., Ann Arbor, MI**

Part II of the Photo-Monitoring Training. RSVP to Dana at [dana@legacylandconservancy.org](mailto:dana@legacylandconservancy.org) or 734.302.5263

## **Feast on the Farm**

**June 11, 5:30-9:30pm**

**Frutig Farms - The Valley • 7650 Scio Church Rd., Ann Arbor, MI**

See article on page four for more information.

### **Later this year Legacy and partners will be hosting additional exciting events, including:**

- Reichert Preserve official opening
- Film festival
- Preserve hikes
- Cranes Colors and Cabernet event
- Annual bus tour

For more information on Legacy events, please visit [www.legacylandconservancy.org/events](http://www.legacylandconservancy.org/events)

# Wonders of Waterloo

By Steve Daut

*Legacy Land Conservancy has long supported protection of land adjacent to the Waterloo Recreation Area. The Recreation Area contains wildlife, fen habitats and wetlands, which filter the surrounding watersheds. This article, by geologist Steve Daut, explains the glacial features and history of the Waterloo Recreation Area.*



**Steve Daut**

Water is a substance with very special properties. One notable property is the relationship between liquid water and ice. If you apply enough pressure to ice, it becomes liquid water. Ice is less dense than water, causing it to float. This is what allows glaciers to move. When ice is thick enough, it exerts enough pressure to melt into a fluid layer at the bottom. The ice floats slowly along, bulldozing through the landscape in front of it.

You may know that Michigan and the Great Lakes have been shaped by a number of glacial periods, the most recent occurring around 10,000 years ago. During that episode, the glaciers pushed in through Saginaw Bay, moving southwest into Southeast Michigan. When they reached a place just north of Chelsea, they split onto two separate paths, the two glacial lobes piling up material between them to create an incredibly varied and dynamic landscape. The northern lobe is called the Kalamazoo. The origin of

the name “Kalamazoo” is disputed, but scholars suggest it may mean “boiling pot”, in reference to a fast flowing river with numerous eddies on the surface. The southern lobe is called the Mississinewa, which most likely means “great stone”, a possible reference to the huge boulders left by the glaciers.

There are many interesting glacial features to be seen in the Waterloo Recreation Area. The areas once occupied by glacial lobes tend to be relatively flat and low, dominated by wetlands, immature drainage, and muck soils. Local features within these areas include eskers and

kames. Eskers are best described as reverse river beds, in which water rushing along inside the base of a glacier deposits rocks and gravel, resulting in a long, sinuous hill in an otherwise flat area. Kames are hills that consist of materials that fell down through massive holes in the ice, building up as the glaciers added more material.

In the area between these two lobes (aka the interlobate), the landscape abruptly changes to complex hills and valleys, steep slopes and a variety of forest lands. The soils are extremely variable sands and gravels, with frequent pocket wetlands and kettles, where ice was trapped and then melted to form undrained depressions.

These incredible landscapes can be explored from the Eddy Discovery Center just north of Chelsea at 17030 Bush Road. If you are interested in a self-guided tour, a booklet is available for free at the Discovery Center or on Legacy’s website.



**Painted Pool – photo by Steve Coron taken at Waterloo Recreation Area**





*Koenn barns – photo by Robin Burke*

## Announcing the Koenn Easement and Preserve

Robin Burke, Land Protection Coordinator

*Partnership between Legacy Land Conservancy, the Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission (WCPARC), and the deeply committed volunteers of the Agricultural Land Preservation Advisory Committee (ALPAC) led to the protection of 190 acres of farmland near Chelsea in December, 2014. Legacy staff works under contract with WCPARC and ALPAC to conserve private farmland county-wide, using conservation easements. Meanwhile, the Natural Areas Technical Advisory Committee (NATAC) works with the Parks and Recreation Commission to purchase unique natural areas as public preserves. This work is all made possible by the voter-approved Natural Areas Ordinance No. 128, passed by the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners in 2000.*

From their kitchen window, Chuck and Judy Koenn observe wildlife every day. Migrating songbirds visit birdfeeders while hawks watch from the wooded wetland edge not far from the house. Attracted by sizeable patches of wetland, a pair of cranes sometimes nests nearby. Taking a walk out to the woods can mean sighting a well-camouflaged owl or quick-moving fox.

Taking notice of their animal neighbors is just one way the couple connects to their land: along with wetland and woods, their home is also a family farm. Years

of producing crops and raising heifers has meant years of learning about and caring for every inch of soil on the farm. The family's passion for their farm led them to provide on-farm experiences and education to the public through Project Rural Education Days, and Breakfast on the Farm.

The Koenns recognize that productive



*Robin Burke*

farmland is a limited (and rapidly disappearing) natural resource. When they became aware of the Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission's millage-funded work to conserve farmland with conservation easements, it was an easy decision to nominate their property to the competitive program. Once they saw a survey of habitats and plant species in their woods and wetlands, Chuck and Judy decided to create a public preserve, too.

WCPARC's new 81-acre Herman L. Koenn Preserve will allow anyone to experience the blueberry bog, sphagnum moss, Michigan holly, buttonbush, and more. Trails will give visitors the chance to observe the plants and animals living here. Located on Hayes Road near Chelsea, the preserve will open when work on trails and a parking area is complete.

Next door, a conservation easement protects 110 acres of the Koenn farm. Today, Chuck and Judy's son Matt Koenn is the third generation to work the farm. chairman of the Washtenaw County Conservation District's board of directors, Matt is devoted to improving the soil he farms. He hasn't tilled his fields in years, and has seen crop yields increase as a result. "No-till", as the practice is commonly known, controls soil erosion, helps soil retain moisture, and significantly reduces fuel and labor costs. Matt pairs no-till with cover crops like radishes and winter peas. Growing at times of the year when fields would otherwise be barren, cover

*continued on page 7*



*Chuck Koenn in woods – photo by Robin Burke*



continued from page 6

crops can return organic material to the soil, reduce soil compaction, recycle soil nutrients, and fix atmospheric nitrogen.



*Blueberry on Koenn Property –  
photo by Legacy Staff*

Matt is the first of many who will farm here with the promise that this will always be a farm; the conservation easement means it can never be developed for non-farming uses. Matt uses progressive farming practices today, and the easement leaves him – and future generations – the flexibility to adapt practices as the world continues to change. Responsible and productive farming will look different in 100 years than it does today. While none of us can say just what it will look like, we can point to conserved farms like the Koenns' and know where farming will be.



*Michigan holly on the Koenn property –  
photo by Robin Burke*

## Getting to Know Legacy Lands

Dea Armstrong, Ornithologist

Spring is (practically) here and there is no better time to have a look at some of Legacy's properties! From beautiful wildflowers to calling and crawling amphibians and reptiles to migrant birds and emerging insects, these properties will be bustling with springtime changes. Multiple visits may be the best way to see springtime unfold.

I'd like to suggest that perhaps you do a little citizen science work on these visits! You can record your observations of birds, herptiles and insects and add that information to various databases that serve science. If this appeals to you, please have a look at Cornell's eBird website (ebird.org) or Michigan's Herp Atlas (miherpatlas.org).

Not good at identifying more than a few types of birds or frogs or butterflies? Allow me to make a few suggestions! The fastest way is to take a class or start going on local naturalist led field trips and hikes (*Legacy frequently offers such hikes*). However, there is also the "slow way". Naturalists

often suggest getting very familiar with a specific part of a woods or natural area as a way to experience nature and to learn more about it. Jon Young talks about "The Sit Spot" in his book, *What the Robin*



*Dea Armstrong*

*Knows*. He picks a spot to sit down and simply observes and listens and records his observations. He returns to this spot regularly, year round. Folks who try this report that it takes a while but they eventually learn that the little brown bird with the big song they kept seeing was a house wren! One day a hummingbird gathering spider webs to build a nest may stop by to investigate your red hat. That odd looking bug digging a small pit right in front of you is an ant lion.

Similarly, several years ago the much beloved University of Michigan professor Bill Stapp encouraged me to pick one park or natural area and survey it every week for a year. It was a fabulous way to really learn about a site! Serious birdwatchers call this patch birding. They record their observations on a regular route through the particular patch.

As you seek to investigate some of the Legacy properties this spring, make it just the beginning of a year-long (or lifelong!) adventure. Following are a few Legacy properties to visit. I hope you will share what you find with the Legacy staff. They

would love to hear about what you see, even if you cannot give it the "proper" name!

Let's start with some properties that you may not even be aware are part of the Legacy family. Washtenaw Land Trust (precursor to Legacy) helped the City of Ann Arbor to add these properties to the parks system. You can find maps on the City of Ann Arbor web site.



*Bird Hills shelf mushroom –  
photo by Margot Mehringer*



*Dutchman's breeches and spring beauty –  
photo by Legacy staff*

**Bandemer Park and Nature Area** is an important riparian open space in the city and heavily used by crew teams, sunbathers and disk golfers. It even has a dirt bike course! Road bikers on the border-to-border bike trail wind past a

*continued on page 8*



## Thinking about Spring *continued from page 7*

prairie and cross over the Huron River. It's one of the best places to hear warbling vireos in spring and summer and enjoy a seat near the boat dock just to people watch. Sometimes a phoebe will nest under one of the small bridges near the parking area.



*Bird Hills trillium – photo by Legacy staff*

**Black Pond Woods** is a good place to see spring wildflowers. The topography of the 34-acre nature area is varied enough for a great hike for all ages. However, the claim to fame here is the spotted salamanders that “migrate” through the woods to Black Pond on warm spring nights to lay their eggs.

Sections of **Bird Hills Nature Area** were a part of the Washtenaw Land Trust's efforts to preserve natural areas along the river. Today, Bird Hills is the biggest natural area in the city (146 acres). It is not as “birdy” in all areas as its name might imply but the Hills part of its name is right-on! Great views and the bird species that do nest there (broad-winged hawk, hooded warbler, and indigo bunting) make it a wonderful “close-to-town” get away.

**Creekshead Preserve** is known for its outstanding wildflower displays. It's a good place to figure out the differences between squirrel corn and Dutchman's breeches. Plan on several visits in May and don't forget your camera!

**Sharon Hills Preserve** contains 67 acres of oak-hickory forest, kettle wetlands and remnant prairie. There are a variety of bird species to observe. One of the most interesting in both appearance and song is the eastern towhee. In spring, listen for the ringing “drink-your-tea!” of this black, white and orange bird.

The **Lloyd and Mabel Johnson Preserve** is ripe for discovery of birds, herptiles and butterflies in its oak hickory forest. Because it is adjacent to so many other nature areas, this site could produce some interesting finds. Calling all birdwatchers!

The **Beckwith Preserve** is one I haven't had a chance to visit yet but the possibilities for discovery sound fabulous. Pileated woodpecker, barred owl and others have been reported in the pine plantation and along Portage Creek.



*Hummingbird – photo by Dave Foster*

**Woodland Preserve** in Webster Township is accessible, but, at the land donor's request, lacks a trail system.



*Chickadee – photo by Dave Foster*

The small woodlot habitat supports woodpeckers, black-capped chickadees and even perhaps an eastern screech owl.

**Reichert Preserve** will be accessible to all for the first time this spring\*. It will be a wonderful place to explore or find a “sit spot”. The only problem is that, with 92 acres of varied topography and multiple water features, it may be hard to pick just one spot! You will definitely find woodpeckers, and in summer there should be a variety of swallows on the ponds. Woodland birds like blue-gray gnatcatchers, eastern phoebes and eastern towhees should be heard and perhaps seen on the site. This is a place I am looking forward to learning more about!

I hope you will enjoy your walks or “sits” on some Legacy properties this spring and thanks in advance for sharing your finds with us.

*\*The Reichert preserve is accessible to the public, but written permission from Legacy staff is required. Please call 734-302-5263 or email [dana@legacylandconservancy.org](mailto:dana@legacylandconservancy.org) if you'd like to visit the preserve.*



*Bird Hills*



# Stewardship at its Best

By Dana Wright, Stewardship and Volunteer Coordinator

Like many Americans, my ancestors came from various, mostly-unknown places around the globe. My cultural heritage is equally unknown, mixed up, forgotten. However, I am blessed with an amazing and rich Michigan heritage. Our shared heritage is not



*David Read at a prescribed burn in Sharon Hills – photo by Legacy Staff*

the way we look, the foods we eat or our celebrations. It is in the lands and waters that surround us and in how these features have shaped our communities. Being surrounded by 1/5 of the world's freshwater (that is six quadrillion gallons) has always had significant influence on the people of Michigan. In the past two centuries, those six quadrillion gallons have felt the impact of the communities they support. Michigan is the only place where every

drop of water that touches the land will end up in one of the Great Lakes, carrying with it traces of any pollutants it comes into contact with. We have a responsibility to care for this amazing global fresh water resource that we, locally, have so much influence over.

Throughout the year, Legacy embarks on a number of stewardship projects on our preserves, from prescribed burns to installing compost stations. These projects contribute to the health of the land and water in our region, which, in turn, protects the Great Lakes.

Taking care of the lands in Michigan has global significance. Stewarding our lands is a way to honor our rich heritage, and our Michigan ancestors and global descendants.

To learn more about Legacy's stewardship projects, visit our website at [legacylandconservancy.org/preserves/stewardship-projects](http://legacylandconservancy.org/preserves/stewardship-projects). There are also many resources for stewardship work on your own properties available on our website. Please visit [legacylandconservancy.org/protect-your-land/resources-for-land-owners](http://legacylandconservancy.org/protect-your-land/resources-for-land-owners) to learn more.



*Dana Wright*

## A Sample of 2014 Stewardship Successes

- 71 acres of land managed as invasive free
- 12 miles of trails marked and maintained
- 4 EcoSteward plots adopted

# Legacy Volunteers in 2014

By Dana Wright, Stewardship and Volunteer Coordinator

2014 was a great volunteer year for Legacy. In just three years, our number of volunteer hours has doubled. In 2011, volunteers put in a total of 2,364 hours. In 2014, volunteers spent 4,242 hours helping Legacy achieve our mission! Volunteers



*Jeffrey Post*

worked on our committees, our board and at our events. They did photo monitoring, stewardship and inventories on our preserves. We say this often, but probably not often enough: we could not do the work we do without our volunteers.

One volunteer who has gone above and beyond is Jeffrey Post. Jeffrey has been a volunteer on Legacy's marketing committee for just two years, but in that time he has developed some of our most important collateral material. He also works with our development committee

and is a tireless fundraiser. Many thanks to Jeffrey, Legacy's 2014 Volunteer of the Year.

The upward trend in our volunteer hours is due in part to our new EcoSteward Program. This program fosters long term, independent volunteer work in our preserves. Each EcoSteward

cares for a specific plot of land in a Legacy preserve. Legacy staff members train these volunteers in invasive species identification and other necessary skills to care for their plot. Work is done at the volunteers' convenience.

Legacy now has four EcoStewards. Two are groups- UM Circle K, and Smith Group JJR. Paul Breck and co-adopters Jamie

Bastian and Sophie Harrison complete the roster. All four EcoStewards are working in Legacy's Johnson Preserve. We'd like to give a special thanks to this group of pilot EcoSteward volunteers. They have been resourceful, resilient and helpful in getting this program off the ground.

Please consider joining the Legacy corps of EcoStewards, or volunteering in another capacity! To learn more, please give us a call or visit our website. We'd love to talk to you.



*Student volunteer helps remove invasive shrubs from Lloyd and Mabel Johnson Preserve – photo by Legacy staff*



# Partners in Conservation

By Chris Bunch, Executive Director, Six Rivers Land Conservancy

Connection to nature runs deep in the spirit of Michigan citizens. The Great Lakes and a long outdoor recreation heritage combine to foster a strong conservation ethic among its residents.

For generations the core of this sentiment has pointed “up north”.

Here in the southeastern part of the state, industry is king. This is where we build things—we are the economic engine of the state, the Auto Capital of the World.

In the earliest part of the 20th century, “up north” for Ann Arbor was Milford; for Detroit it was Lake Orion. Over time, much of this landscape has been developed, and “up north” and “nature” have become more distant, both literally and figuratively.

Until recently.

In the last several years there has been a welcome resurgence in interest and connection to local nature. To the natural areas, forests, fields, rivers and lakes; to the farms, meadows and marshes right in our



*Chris Bunch*

backyard. This connection to local landscapes is why land conservancies exist.

The local nature of land conservancies provides direction and motivation, but also presents challenges. Between the local focus of land conservancies and their demanding work, it can seem as if the organizations work in isolation—

often times several will exist close to each other and have overlapping missions or territories.

Partnership is an important mechanism to increase effectiveness. Working as partners rather than competitors allows organizations to play off the different strengths of each group; to avoid redundancy, to combine resources and direct more capacity to their mission instead of administration.

Six Rivers Land Conservancy is thrilled to be working in partnership with Legacy Land Conservancy. We are involved in several projects that allow both organizations to protect and steward more land. Recently, we hired a shared staff person to focus on community and landowner engagement in the Huron River Watershed. In a related effort we



*Huron River – photo by Legacy Staff*

are working to build a larger coalition including state and local park agencies that will allow us to leverage more funding for conservation, including acquisition of conservation easements, agricultural easements and more conservation, recreation and park lands.

We are working closely to bring more attention to our shared mission of land protection, to create more engagement and enjoyment of natural assets right here at home, and to take advantage of a shift in public policy and sentiment that focuses attention on acquiring more recreation lands and trails here, where the majority of the state’s population lives. The implications for this work are

huge. Securing a solid natural, agricultural and recreational resource base is key to attracting and retaining workforce talent to rejuvenate and sustain the region’s economy. Providing more outdoor recreation here will directly impact our local economy, reduce carbon footprints by reducing travel, and improve public health. All of this in addition to protecting water quality, wildlife habitat, food supply and the aesthetics of our region.

Partnership is a powerful tool. It is truly a pleasure to be working with friends in pursuit of shared values, and to know that together we are providing a Legacy of Nature Near You!



*Huron River in fall – photo by Barbara Michniewicz*



# Autumn in the Country: A Legacy Bus Tour

By Ruth Vail

What could be better than a Michigan fall day spent catching up on what Legacy Land Conservancy has been doing, complete with someone to drive you around so you can pay attention to what you're seeing, and someone else to explain it?



*Pumpkins at Community Farm – photo from Community Farm of Ann Arbor's Facebook Page*

The Legacy Bus Tour was all of that. But wait, there was more! There was a picnic lunch at the Community Farm of Ann Arbor with presentations by some of the who's who in Southeast Michigan land protection. Farmers Annie Elder and Paul Bantle, who have managed the Community Farm since its beginning, described the farm as a serious commitment mixed in with fun and dirt. (I have been a farm member for many years\*. I recommend it.) Barry Lonik, the first executive director of the Potawatomi Land Trust (precursor of Legacy Land Conservancy), spoke about the development of farmland conservation agreements. He spoke on progress that has been made, and on remaining challenges. On the bus, Robin Burke, Legacy's land protection coordinator, pointed out protected Legacy lands. Susan Lackey inspired us with tales of continuing work. The finale was a stop at Alber Orchard, complete with a hay ride.

I thought I knew Washtenaw County. After all, I've lived here for 30 some years and have done my share of wandering around, but this trip was a revelation and an inspiration. It's one thing to read the newsletter and nod with smug satisfaction (I do this) and another to be there, walk around and see our protected farms and open space. I am part of this!



*Sharon Hills – photo by Margot Mehringer*

*\*For more information on Community Farm membership, please visit their website at [communityfarmofaa.wordpress.com/join](http://communityfarmofaa.wordpress.com/join)*

## Upcoming Art Exhibit to Benefit Legacy

Brenda Miller-Slomovits is a local artist. Her work has been featured in numerous outlets, including the Chelsea River Gallery, Legacy Land Conservancy Exhibits, Ann Arbor Women Artist's exhibits and the U of M Art Exhibits, and on the cover of the Ann Arbor Observer.

On May 1, 2015, Miller-Slomovits show "Seeing Latitude" will open at the Ann Arbor Senior Center with a reception from 6-8pm. The show's theme is preservation and ecology, topics that capture Miller-Slomovits attention and inspire her art. Miller-Slomovits hopes that her work will inspire a similar effect in her audience. In reference to her upcoming exhibit, she stated that her "deepest wish is that

this exhibit would be a springboard for impressions and memories of our love of the land, moving us to help protect and sustain our natural surroundings."

One quarter of proceeds from "Seeing Latitude" will be donated to Legacy Land Conservancy.

### **Seeing Latitude**

Brenda Miller-Slomovits  
Reception on May 1, 2015, 6-8pm  
Ann Arbor Senior Center  
1320 Baldwin Avenue,  
Ann Arbor, MI 48104  
Exhibition runs from  
May 1- June 18, 2015



*Art by Brenda Miller-Slomovits*





**LEGACY**  
Land Conservancy  
*Protecting and Preserving  
Southern Michigan Since 1971*



1100 N. Main Street, Suite #203  
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104  
734.302.5263  
[www.legacylandconservancy.org](http://www.legacylandconservancy.org)

NONPROFIT ORG  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
ANN ARBOR, MI  
PERMIT No. 62



*Kipka Property, "Bridge and Bare Trees"*

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 plan: Susan Cooley, 734. 302.5263 or [cooley@legacylandconservancy.org](mailto:cooley@legacylandconservancy.org)