

LEGACY NEWS

Winter



2017



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REICHERT PRESERVE *expansion:* *making a good thing even better*

By Katrina Folsom, Communications and Engagement Coordinator

Adding to an existing preserve is a Legacy conservation priority. Larger protected areas are better for the health of the land, water, and wildlife—and in this case, better for preserve visitors!

Last fall, we were thrilled to celebrate our 45th anniversary with news of a significant addition to the Reichert Nature Preserve. Dr. Rudy Reichert donated the preserve to Legacy in 2012. It is a real gem: 92 acres of wooded hills, kettle lakes, and frontage along Little Portage Lake and Portage Creek.

Four years later, this protected area has grown by 53 acres through a set of three transactions. Seventeen of those acres are now part of the Preserve and designated as the “Reichert Nature Preserve—Lapham Family Addition.” This addition will eventually provide upland trails across Portage Creek from the original preserve.

Robin Burke, Land Protection Manager, said, “Preserving habitat directly on Portage Creek will keep the creek connected to its floodplain, maintain habitat for a wide variety of plant and animal species, and prevent uses that could contribute to erosion and water quality problems in the future.”

This acquisition will also allow public access improvements to Reichert Nature Preserve. “Legacy’s long-term plans for enhancement include a new parking lot, restrooms, and a footbridge over Portage Creek,” said Dana Wright, Land Stewardship Manager.

The value of a conservation buyer

A conservation buyer is someone who wants to own conserved land. The addition to Reichert Preserve was achieved with the help of an anonymous conservation buyer who bought 36 of the 53 acres that came up for sale. This privately



Summers at the Lapham family’s property included enjoyment of a swimming hole along Portage Creek, as pictured in this 1970s photo from the Lapham family. Vegetation along the creek has since grown back, the creek chooses its own course, and Legacy will maintain the trails on the portion of the preserve that will be open to the public. Photo courtesy of the Lapham family.

owned parcel is now protected with a conservation agreement, enlarging the block of land that Legacy protects.

“By purchasing a property that was for sale and working with Legacy during the acquisition, the conservation buyer allowed us to protect the property in a timeframe needed by the seller,” explained Executive

Director Doug Koop. “If we had had to wait to secure more funding to purchase the entire 53 acres, the seller’s need to complete a sale could have meant a sale to someone who would not preserve the land. So, this individual made the project possible.”

Land at the heart of family gatherings

The property was in the sellers’ family for a century. Sisters and third-generation owners Sandra Brinkman and Jeannine Thomas reported that their grandfather bought the property circa 1916. They fondly remember family reunions filled with swimming, fishing, canoeing, and picnics. Sandra said,

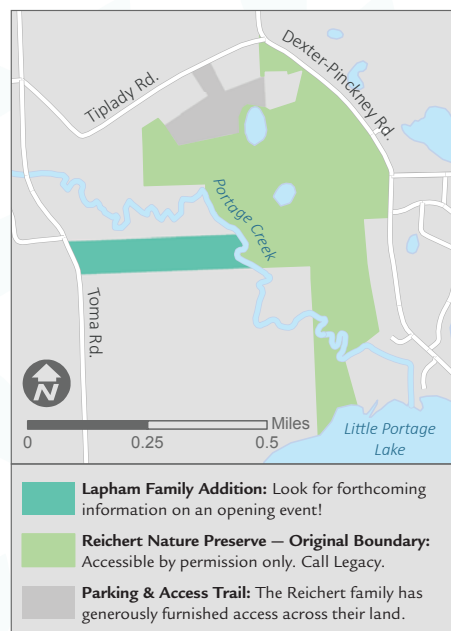
“We’re just thrilled it’s going to stay as it is.”

Partnerships like the ones formed to achieve this acquisition are the hallmark of Legacy’s work, which is funded by unrestricted gifts to our general operations. Thank you for making this wonderful outcome possible!

Portage Creek flows gently through Reichert Nature Preserve and the Lapham Family Addition.



Paul Morrison



Another working farm protected, thanks to our community's support for farm preservation

By Katrina Folsom, Communications and Engagement Coordinator

Raise your hand if you love sprawl. No one? Thought so.

In that case, you'll be happy to know that another farm that's part of the delightful transition from town to country near Dexter is now protected.

Legacy recently worked with Washtenaw County's Natural Areas Preservation Program (NAPP) and Webster Township to protect an 83-acre farm on Mast Road north of Dexter. This farm joins several other protected properties nearby, helping to preserve the beautiful agricultural landscape and a strong community of working farms.

NAPP protects agricultural land by purchasing farmland conservation agreements, which allow farms to remain in private production while offering protection from future development.

"The Washtenaw County farmland preservation program is highly competitive," says our Land Protection Manager Robin Burke, who oversaw this project. "Over

70 farms have applied since the program started in 2011, but there is limited funding and we're only able to take on 2-4 projects a year. So it's pretty exciting that this one has come to fruition."

The property is owned by siblings Brigid, Chris, and Kevin Sullivan, who inherited it from their mother, Agnes Sullivan. The farm raises soy, corn, and wheat in rotation, using no-till practices. It scored well in Washtenaw County's competitive program because it adjoins protected land, has high-quality soil, and was at risk for development.

Washtenaw County and Webster Township benefit from voter-approved millages that provide funds for permanent conservation. Because funds from both programs are limited and many landowners have applied, partnerships help stretch public dollars further. Legacy worked with Washtenaw County, Webster Township, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service to fund this project.

This scenic landscape near Dexter—a working farm owned by the Sullivan Family—is now permanently protected.

Scott Stroutman



Dave Foster

The land Cathy and Dave protected is home to a variety of wildlife, including this blue jay.

"Our small corner of the natural world" A cherished property is now protected

By Katrina Folsom, Communications and Engagement Coordinator

Our family of supporters has expanded to include another set of landowners, Cathy Kamil and Dave Foster. Last fall they protected their forested wetland next to the Waterloo Recreation Area, creating a permanent buffer for part of the larger adjacent wetland.

This project fits with the goals of the Emerald Arc, Legacy's initiative to form an arc of protected land around fast-growing southern Michigan communities. By adding to existing protected areas, projects like this create wildlife corridors and a healthier landscape.

Cathy and Dave chose to permanently protect their land via a conservation easement. In accordance with the conservation agreement they retain ownership, but the property will never be developed, regardless of ownership succession.



On the Cover

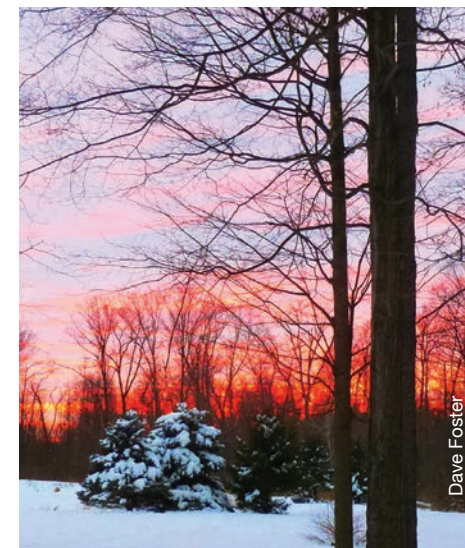
Downy woodpecker in winter.

Photo by Dave Foster.

Their decision to protect their land was heartfelt. Cathy says, "We cherish our property and its location within an exceptional region of Michigan. Not just for today, however; our love reaches for tomorrow as well."

Cathy and Dave brought an extraordinarily forward-thinking mindset to their conservation agreement. When considering the future of their land, they envisioned the possibility that succeeding owners might want to operate a farm business on the land. So, in partnership with Legacy's staff, they structured the protection agreement in a way that would allow part of the land to be used for a small farm or market garden.

"Understanding that preservation requires thoughtfulness, effort, organization, even sacrifice," says Cathy, "we are grateful to Legacy for helping us protect our small corner of the natural world."



Dave Foster

A winter sunset lights up Cathy's and Dave's woodland paradise.

Getting ahead of oak wilt

By Allene Smith, Land Steward



Leaves showing the effects of oak wilt.

Rebecca Finneran, MSU Extension

You might have heard through the grapevine (or through root grafts, in this case) that Legacy's Reichert Nature Preserve has come down with a case of oak wilt. While we lay the groundwork for remediation efforts on the Preserve, we'd like to share what we've learned about this increasingly common forest threat that causes oaks to die rapidly.

What is oak wilt?

Oak wilt is caused by the fungus *Ceratocystis fagacearum* and is most lethal to trees in the red oak group. That brings six of Michigan's native oak species into the crosshairs: northern red oak (*Quercus rubra*), black oak (*Q. velutina*), Hill's oak (a.k.a. northern pin oak, *Q. ellipsoidalis*), pin oak (*Q. palustris*), shingle oak (*Q. imbricaria*), and Shumard oak (*Q. shumardii*). I'm sure you can imagine that losing these species en masse would drastically change the natural communities we call home.

Oak wilt is often referenced as a new forest threat, but it was identified in

Wisconsin circa 1940. Similar mortality patterns were recorded in Wisconsin and Minnesota as early as 1912. The disease has become more prevalent in the past 20 years, possibly due to changes in land use and forest management.

How oak wilt impacts trees

Once infected, trees wilt and die rapidly, sometimes within weeks. The most visible symptom is leaf scorching and defoliation. Infected trees often drop leaves while they are still green. The following season, fungal mats (known as pressure pads) develop under the surface of the bark.

Cracks form and allow sap-feeding beetles access to the sweet, yeasty-smelling fungus beneath. These beetles deposit spores from their fungal frolic on the next oak they visit and the cycle starts anew. Once oak wilt claims one tree in an area, the disease can spread through connections in the trees' root systems called root grafts.

Damage to an oak's bark can expose the tree to the oak wilt fungus.



Bill Cook, MSU Extension

What can we do?

As with other forest management issues, prevention offers the biggest reward. The beetles that carry spores can only spread the disease to a wounded tree.

Consequently, experts recommend avoiding pruning oaks from just prior to bud opening to after leaf drop (roughly from April to October). If you must prune during the growing season, use wound paint. If you hire a professional tree service, look for one that is aware of oak wilt and doesn't use climbing spikes.

Remediation for oak wilt is costly and drastically disturbs the treated area, making prevention all the more attractive! Preventing infection through conscientious pruning and maintenance of storm-damaged trees has an impact beyond the individual trees you care for—it impacts the entire forest.

There are many other reasons a tree might be ailing, so proper diagnosis is paramount. If you think a tree near you might be infected with oak wilt, please let us know. We'd be glad to help you find resources in your area.

We will keep you posted as remediation efforts progress at Reichert Nature Preserve, and continue to share what we learn along the way.

Oak trees make up a large portion of the forest at Reichert Nature Preserve. Legacy is treating oak wilt to keep the forest looking as beautiful and healthy as you see here.



Staff Photo

One device to do it all **TECHNOLOGY** in the field

By Dana Wright, Land Stewardship Manager



Jill Anderson

Sue Nelson juggles all the gear our volunteers currently carry to monitor a property.

Technology is moving if not at the speed of light, at least at the speed of sound. I'm not that old (I was carded last week) and can easily remember when a phone was something you actually dialed, televisions were controlled with dials and took up most of the living room, and the radio (also operated with a dial) took up the leftover space. Now a phone can handle all this without a dial in sight.

Having been called both a techie and a Luddite, I try to find a balance between the two. Technology should be used to increase efficiency and effectiveness without being cost-prohibitive or difficult to learn. Legacy's program for monitoring protected land has dabbled in the technology world—we use GPS and digital cameras—but we have been held back by the nature of field work.



Currently, Legacy's photo-monitors carry into the field:

- a rugged GPS unit
- a binder encased in plastic
- a camera in a waterproof case or plastic bag
- a clipboard for taking notes

Starting next year, that awkward bundle will be downsized to one tablet, or one phone (no dials). We will utilize an application that will allow us to combine note-taking, photos, geolocating (finding yourself on the map), and georeferencing (placing information on a map) all in one device. Not only will data collection be easier and more accurate, data will become easier to track and share. Instead of having to manually sort and file photos, GPS points, route maps, and notes, the app will kick out one file for upload to our new database or to Google Earth. The file will embed photos and notes in their locations, and lay the monitor's walking route over an aerial image.



Dana Wright

The wave of the future! Volunteer Neal Billetdeaux enjoys the greater ease and effectiveness of monitoring properties with a single device: a tablet.

Pretty neat, huh? If you agree and would like to help, consider making a donation to help Legacy offset the cost of six tablets that will equip our squad of 45 volunteer photo-monitors. These hardy volunteers make sure the land we promise to protect stays protected, and by adopting this new technology we make their work easier!

VOLUNTEERING

The simple pleasures of photo-monitoring

By Tania Evans, Photo-Monitor since 2009

The ancient maple tree I cherish visiting each year, with my monitoring partner Bill Steere.



Tania Evans

Each season, I can't wait to walk Legacy's protected properties. It's fun to explore landscapes so dear to landowners. The work of a volunteer photo-monitor is to take pictures of protected land from assigned spots. My monitoring partner and I follow a prescribed route, armed with a GPS and notes from other years, putting foot-to-earth in special places.

For example, the Saline River ribbons ferociously through a farm I visit each spring. It surges to Level 2 rapids and then becomes serene again. I kneel on the bank, usually at the foot of a lone, giant-girthed maple, and just listen.

Every property boasts some sort of wildlife: turkey, deer, mink, pheasants, bald eagles, cranes—and some rare creatures as well. Last year we found a Blanding's turtle beside a bog. We huddled over her for a photo. She was so wild that she eyed the camera with curiosity instead of ducking inside her shell.

After a walk in the fall, I have been presented with a squash in return for my volunteer efforts. After a cold walk on a snowy morning, I have shared English tea in a warm kitchen. Love it! Thank you, landowners.

And thank you Tania and our other volunteers! If you are interested in becoming a photo-monitor, contact Dana Wright at dana@legacylandconservancy.org or 734-302-5263.

A Blanding's turtle (*Emydoidea blandingii*) on protected land.



John Lloyd

Rain did not dampen enthusiasm for new state park

By Katrina Folsom, Communications and Engagement Coordinator



With pride in their family's legacy, descendants of Royal Watkins dedicate the new state park and county preserve.

It's hard not to comment on the weather that greeted the Watkins Lake State Park and County Preserve ribbon-cutting ceremony last October. Despite a blustery, chill rain, public turnout was high. People are enthusiastic about Michigan's newest state park!

The long-awaited 1,122-acre park is managed by

the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission. It's the first of its kind in Michigan: a partnership between DNR and a county. As DNR Parks and Recreation Chief Ron Olson noted at the ceremony, partnerships offer more opportunities to achieve shared goals. He expects this model to become more common.

That comes as no surprise to Legacy. We've long embraced the power of partnerships to protect land. In fact, under former executive director Susan Lackey's leadership, Legacy helped assemble and continually mobilize the partnerships that made the Watkins Lake project possible. At the ceremony, Olson expressed appreciation for Susan's role as a "sparkplug" who "helped connect the dots."

Interested in checking out the park? A rail trail and grassland loop are open (4.5-mile roundtrip hike). Picnic tables along the lake offer an invitation to sit and watch ducks, egrets, and the many other birds that frequent Watkins Lake.

For park information, visit michigandnr.com/parksandtrails.

Watkins Lake is a popular waterfowl resting area. A drive or walk along Arnold Road offers close-up views, including this great egret.



Nathaniel Siddall



Staff Photo

"On a January day when I haven't seen the sun in weeks, I open the sunflower section [of the catalog] and can almost feel the warmth on my face," says Trilby.

SHOPPING for *Spring*

By Trilby Becker, Legacy volunteer and co-owner of Sunseed Farm

By the time the leaves are falling and the morning dew has turned to frost on the grass, weary farmers are looking forward to the end of the season. After just a few more big days of pulling roots out of the ground and hauling them to storage, the harvest will be over. At long last we can begin to slow down.



Trilby the flower farmer and Tomm the vegetable farmer are deeply connected to the land. They run Sunseed Farm near Ann Arbor and delight in perusing seed catalogs during the doldrums of winter. Photos courtesy of the Beckers.

But before the flakes have started to fly the first sign of spring has already appeared. Between the books stacked on the nightstand, underneath the newspaper on the kitchen counter, on the passenger seat of the car: catalogs, catalogs, catalogs! We pull from our mailbox more than a dozen vegetable and flower catalogs this time of year.

On monotonous gray winter days, there is something electric about opening them up and seeing all that color. Vegetable farmers call it "vegetable porn" and flower farmers call it "flower porn." In the doldrums of winter we all love to look at bright, bodacious plants in happy anticipation of the next growing season.

As a flower farmer married to a vegetable farmer, I love both, yet deep down I'm pretty sure my catalogs are the best. On a January day when I haven't seen the sun in weeks, I open the sunflower section and can almost feel the warmth on my face. The snapdragons are sparkling, the salpiglossis is outrageous, and I can hardly wait to see the lisianthus and the bells of Ireland reunited.

Last fall I bought bulbs that will begin to flower in our hoophouse in February, so I will be treated to an early spring. Until then, I will snuggle up with my catalogs and dream.

Trilby volunteers as a photo-monitor. Read more about photo-monitoring on pp. 8-9.



Playing giant checkers was a family affair for Legacy Trustee Adam Smith (left), his daughter Lindsay, and his mother (also a Legacy volunteer) Marguerite Smith.

45th BIRTHDAY party

Last fall, our supporters spent a lovely fall day celebrating 45 years of preserving local land. We enjoyed the company of friends who stepped up in our early days, and new folks who took their first step toward becoming supporters by attending this party. Thanks to everyone who helped Legacy reach 45 years—here's to many more! Enjoy a selection of photos by volunteer Julie Williamson. View more on Facebook: [tinyurl.com/45bdyalbum](https://www.facebook.com/tinyurl.com/45bdyalbum).



We ordered a personalized—and tasty—cake from Dom Bakeries in Ypsilanti.



Staff member Meghan Prindle had the happy job of serving cake.



Adults got in on the fun too: a spirited game of cornhole!

save the date

Plan to join us Saturday, June 3, 2017 for Legacy of the Land, a fundraising event at a beautiful farm protected by Legacy. Stay tuned for details.

We sincerely appreciate all our generous supporters. This list includes donations to highlighted categories from July 1, 2016 to December 31, 2016. If you believe we have made an error, please contact Diane Dupuis at diane@legacylandconservancy.org or 734-302-5263.

The Susan Lackey Fund for Sustaining Stewardship

The Susan Lackey Fund for Sustaining Stewardship was established by Legacy's Board of Trustees. It recognizes the transformational leadership of Legacy's recently retired Executive Director. The Fund will allow Legacy to sustain and enhance the connections between the communities we serve and the land we protect via:

- interpretive and cultural programming and signage on Legacy's preserves
- trails, trail maintenance, wayfinding, benches, viewing platforms, and other aids to recreation
- preserve amenities, including parking and information kiosks

Since the fund was introduced in Spring 2016, the following donors have committed more than \$55,000 to pay tribute to Susan's 11 years of tenacious and visionary leadership at Legacy. Their contributions will help to ensure that our communities retain the benefits of Susan's work as Legacy continues to expand on her impact.

Lackey Fund gifts through 12/31/2016

James C. Adams and Naz Edwards
Peter and Sally Allen
Margaret Bignall and Paul Hossler
Susan Blake
Lenore Blum
Nancy Brucken
Gary and Shelley Bruder
Jonathan and Trudy Bulkley
Chris Bunch
John and Mary Caldwell
Sue and Richard Chase
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Norman and Deborah Herbert
Maurita Peterson Holland
James House and Wendy Fisher House
Willard H. Johnson
Peter and Carol Kappus
John and Anne Knott
Julia Koths
Frances and Campbell Laird

Tributes

Albert Gallup

From Tom and Alice Van Zoeren

Anne and Paul Glendon

From Brian Mansfield and Ebru Misirli Mansfield

Diane Huhn and Carolyn Miller

From Bethany Snyder

David and Marilyn Jachalke

50th anniversary from Charles and Barbara Mallek

Pat and Carolyn McNamara

In celebration of Christmas from Bill and Marlene Wenk

Christopher Morphew

From Christopher Searcy

Rudy Reichert

From Brian and Lee Talbot

Memorials

Allison Ann Arscott

From Dave Arscott

Norman O. Klave

From Kerry Klave and Norma Dentler

Dorothy Lapp

From John Lapp

Carol F. Westerman

From Cherry and Kenneth Westerman

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James and Mary White
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*Snow provokes responses that reach right
back to childhood. —Andy Goldsworthy*

Cardinal Winter Gathering. Photo by Barbara Michniewicz

LEGACY Land Conservancy

*Protecting and Preserving
Southern Michigan*



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Need a speaker for your group? Have questions or feedback about this newsletter? Contact Katrina: kfolsom@legacylandconservancy.org.

Legacy's new newsletter emerges

..... **YOU**
decide what it will be named!



As you can see, our newsletter has undergone a transformation. We took the best parts of our old newsletter; added time, creative energy, and your feedback from last fall's survey; and a new, reader-friendly newsletter has emerged!

With informative and engaging articles, increased frequency (three issues a year, up from two), and an eye-catching new design, it's designed to help you stay connected to Legacy.

But this newsletter transformation isn't complete yet: it needs a name!



Illustrations by Kaylan Petrie



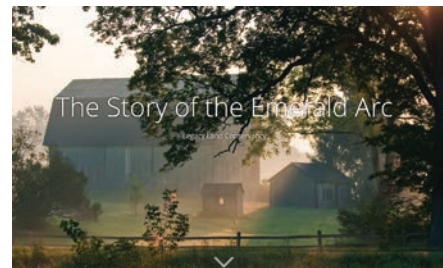
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Go to tinyurl.com/namecontest17 or call 734-302-5263
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Explore the Emerald Arc in a new way with our online story map. Scroll through the history of the Emerald Arc, and see what it holds for the future. Find a link at legacylandconservancy.org/emerald-arc.



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