YOU've helped the Land Trust to another great year. High on the list of successes we're celebrating are five newly completed conservation projects:

• 21 acres of natural area along the River Raisin in Washtenaw and Jackson counties; agreement donated by Annette van der Schalie
• 25 acres of farmland and woodland in Scio Township; agreement donated by a landowner who prefers to remain anonymous
• 22 acres of farmland and woodland in Northfield Township; two agreements donated by Sue Shink and Tom Hatch
• 52 acres purchased for the Waterloo Recreation Area by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, because of our efforts

Thanks! We all owe a debt of gratitude to these landowners for this commitment to preserve their land – and to YOU for making it possible. The Land Trust now protects over 2,000 acres, throughout your community.

Other Highlights for 2005:

• Our new Executive Director, Susan Lackey. The Land Trust welcomed her in April, and she has definitely hit the ground running!
• Expanded partnerships with other conservation organizations (story on page 3).
• Improvements to our organization. We established an externally-managed endowment to provide financial reserves for future stewardship, began a Strategic Plan to carry us through the next 5-10 years, began policy review to prepare for national accreditation, and received another clean financial audit. (Copies are available - just ask.)
• Our 3rd federal farmland protection grant. This grant of $215,000 will protect 43 acres in York Township. These challenge grants make your contributions go much farther to protect strategically chosen local farms.
• Land protection challenge grants. We were awarded a W.K. Kellogg Foundation grant of $25,000, and a Carls Foundation matching grant of $25,000. Contribute now and triple your dollars!
• A series of informative and fun events. The Land Trust hosted workshops, member receptions, stewardship workdays, and a farm preservation tour praised as "very impressive and enjoyable…very informative!" (Why, thank you!)
• Meeting our fund-raising challenges. Protecting land takes money, so fund-raising successes are land protection successes, too! The big ones in 2005: Completing the Community Farm project, a unique partnership to protect a cherished community asset, and meeting the challenge grant goal of $75,000 to protect the Vershum dairy farm in Bridgewater Township. The Land Trust accomplishes these things only with your support. Thank you.

Looking ahead to 2006

The Land Trust’s plans for 2006 include:

• Sustainability. Conservation organizations like the Land Trust need systems and processes to ensure that our work will stand the test of time. Our goal is to be one of the first land trusts accredited under the Land Trust Alliance’s new guidelines.

• Land Protection. In natural areas, we will intensify our efforts to contact owners of priority parcels around the Waterloo and Pinckney Recreation Areas, to add acres to already protected lands in that special region. We’ll also host stewardship workdays at the Land Trust nature preserves (see calendar page 6.)
• In farmland, we will leverage matching grants to protect strategic farm properties such as the Rogers farm in Saline. Protecting this farm will create a block of conserved working farms totaling over 400 acres.

• Education. One of our efforts will be to host an all-new seminar about land protection options for landowners. Watch for announcements of this workshop, designed specifically for local community landowners, maybe like you!
• … and more!

Thank you for supporting this work. You are making a difference!
Notes From The Land

Senate Bill to expand conservation incentives

Good news: Conservation incentives for private land preservation will live to see another day. Incentives were not slashed, as had been feared. In fact, the US Senate tax bill passed last November would expand conservation incentives. The Land Trust has encouraged local Representatives in the House to support similar incentives. We urge you to talk to your Congressperson too!

Connecting the open space dots

The Washtenaw Metro Alliance (WMA) has published its draft plan to coordinate and connect a parks and open space system (wma.ewashtenaw.org). WMA members include the cities of Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti, the townships of Ann Arbor, Pittsfield, Scio, Superior, and Ypsilanti, and Washtenaw County. The Land Trust is a project partner in this community-wide effort.

Your 2006 Land Trust leadership

Please join us in welcoming new board members Janet Crone, Guy Williams, James C. Adams, and Robert Tetens. And, stepping into new roles, the 2006 officers for the Land Trust are Robert W. Marans, President; Phil Surratt, Vice President; Janet Crone, Treasurer; and James W. Govert, Secretary.

*You can find bios of these (and all!) board members on our website, www.washtenawnlandtrust.org.

Thank you to board members whose terms ended in 2005: Kathy Aznavorian, Jean Connell, Jim Crowfoot, Karl Frankena, Bob Gilbert, and Bill Martin. Their long and dedicated service to the Land Trust has improved the community for all of us and for the future.

‘Forests Forever’ in Jackson County and beyond

The Land Trust and Michigan State University Extension for Jackson County co-sponsored “Forests Forever,” a workshop on ways landowners can plan for the future of their land.

Want to know how you can protect the land you love? Contact us at 734-302-5263 (LAND) or info@washtenawnlandtrust.org.

Pittsfield Preserved - Again

Pittsfield Township can add another feather to its land protection cap. The township won a $255,000 grant from the Michigan Department of Agriculture Farmland Preservation Fund. This grant will protect 142 acres of farmland. The Land Trust helped coordinate local applications for these state-wide competitive grants. Special kudos to Terry Brinkman, Jan BenDor, and Barry Lonik for their work in Pittsfield.

Washtenaw Land Trust

1100 N. Main Street #203, Ann Arbor, MI 48104 (734) 302-LAND (5263), fax (734) 302-1804 info@washtenawnlandtrust.org, www.washtenawnlandtrust.org


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Ending the Acronym Soup

Conservation groups join forces to spell "Information here!"

APP, PDR, WLT, TDR, TNC - Is your head spinning yet? Imagine that you’re a landowner who wants to protect your land. Would you like to understand the available options without dealing with dozens of acronyms for many disconnected programs? Well, good news is here!

The Land Trust is playing a lead role in increasing cooperation amongst the many local land preservation programs.

"The goals of this effort are two-fold," explains Susan Lackey, Land Trust director. "First, we’ll be able to provide better, more complete information to landowners about local preservation programs - and their similarities and differences.

"Second, it creates a forum where conservation groups can easily share opportunities to work together on projects. Everyone’s conservation investments can go even further."

The informal alliance of conservation groups includes local land conservancies such as the Nature Conservancy, Raisin Valley Land Trust, and Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy, as well as the funded preservation programs, such as Ann Arbor Township, Scio Township, Webster Township, Washtenaw County, and the City of Ann Arbor’s Greenbelt program.

Here’s even better news. The group has already made a tangible impact. Tom Freeman, the Washtenaw County Parks staff-person responsible for the county’s Natural Areas Preservation Program, explains: "Before, landowners were forced to complete and sign separate applications for each municipality’s program, even though the forms asked for essentially the same information. And the municipalities were not authorized to share applicant information, even when there might be a better fit with a different program.

"Now, each municipality is updating their forms to give landowners the option to have their information shared with other conservation groups who could help protect their land.

"It’s just a simple checkbox, but it will be a big improvement in helping landowners find the best program to preserve their land."

Stay tuned; there’s more cooperation to come!

What is the sound of successful land conservation?

Move aside, chickadees and robins: According to the local talent, it’s somewhere between swing, folk, and rock

Thank you to Eric Kelly and Embassy Hotel Records for organizing a fun and fantastic concert for this year’s "All On A Michigan Night! The third-annual Michigan Songwriter’s Festival."

The talented artists who donated their time, tales, and tunes for the Land Trust benefit concert include:

Across the Board

Late last year, I was honored by being elected President of the Washtenaw Land Trust - following in the footsteps of Theresa Schenk, Tom O’Brien and Tom Bloomer. Each provided strong leadership during the organization’s growth and matura-

As I reflect on the organization’s accomplishments during the eight years I’ve served on the board, I also realize how fortunate it is to live in Washtenaw County which offers a nice blend of urban amenities and a tranquil rural landscape with lots of farms and land devoted to parks. Several non-profit organizations working together with local and county governmental units are striving to maintain our quality of life in the face of growing development pressures. The Washtenaw Land Trust is one of those organizations.

Since its inception, the Land Trust has been responsible for preserving roughly 2,600 acres of farmland and natural areas in Washtenaw County. Additionally, the county through its Natural Areas Preservation Program administered by the Parks and Recreation Commission has acquired more than 700 acres of prime undeveloped land containing woodlots, wetlands, and open lands suitable for leisurely walks, fishing, and birding. The acquisition of county-owned and administered natural areas comes from our tax dollars. Furthermore, the 2003 passage of the Open Space and Parkland Preservation millage by Ann Arbor voters and similar initiatives in Scio, Ann Arbor, and Webster Townships promise to further preserve more working farms and other open lands surrounding the city. Grants, donations, and membership fees, augmented by a host of volunteers, have supported Washtenaw Land Trust’s non-profit preservation efforts.

In a 2001 UM survey of residents in the seven southeast Michigan counties, Washtenaw County residents expressed great concern about the diminishing open areas in the county and the loss of wildlife habitat. In fact, more than half said they would be willing to increase their tax bill if the monies went to farmland preservation while nearly half said they would pay more in taxes for additional parkland. These expressions of concern and willingness to act have resulted in the passage of land preservation millages and an increase in membership in the Washtenaw Land Trust.

Your continuing support of the Land Trust enables the organization to coordinate our work with others in preserving land throughout the county. We do this in order to maintain the unique qualities that make Washtenaw County a desirable place to live for ourselves and for future generations.

Dr. Marans is a research professor at the UM Institute for Social Research and professor emeritus of Architecture and Urban Planning. In addition to serving as President of the Washtenaw Land Trust, he is also a charter member of the Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission, a board member of the Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority (HCMA), and Board chair of the Michigan Land Use Institute.
In December 2005 landowner Annette van der Schalie protected twenty-nine acres of land along the River Raisin by the donation of a conservation agreement.

"I am so happy that it's going to be in your hands," said Mrs. van der Schalie at the closing with the Land Trust.

"I'm honored to be able to help Mrs. van der Schalie preserve the features of the land that she loves," said Susan Lackey, director of the Land Trust.

"The property's River Raisin frontage and its proximity to other protected land -- Washtenaw County parks, Sharonville State Game Area, and The Nature Conservancy's Nan Weston Preserve-- make this a very special project."

Long-time Ann Arbor residents Annette van der Schalie and her husband, Professor Henry van der Schalie (now deceased), moved to the riverfront property in 1976 when he retired as Professor of Zoology in the Mollusk Division at the University of Michigan.

The van der Schalies had traveled and lived around the world during Dr. van der Schalie's tenure as a professor, but both of them loved the land they found just outside Manchester. "Once you've lived away from Michigan for awhile, you really miss the seasons," said Mrs. van der Schalie, reflecting on her days of travel.

The van der Schalies came to know their land very well. With her M.S. in Botany, Mrs. van der Schalie enjoyed identifying every plant on the property. Even after many years, she still glows when talking about the plants that grow there.

Michigan Natural Features Inventory also recognize the significance of the property's habitat. They conducted a Riparian Biodiversity Study there in 2000. Along the stretch of the River Raisin that runs through the van der Schalie property, they found 10 types of mollusks, 83 aquatic invertebrates, and 108 plant species.

The van der Schalie family highly values the diversity found on their land.

"It's a relief to know it's protected in the right way," Mrs. van der Schalie expressed, smiling.

Catherine Marquardt is a naturalist with Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation. Working with Mrs. van der Schalie and the Land Trust, she created the baseline documentation for this conservation property. She lives in Ann Arbor and owns a property that is also protected through a Land Trust conservation agreement.

About the van der Schalie property
Conservation agreement donated to the Land Trust in December 2005 protects:

- 29 acres of land in Washtenaw and Jackson Counties
- River frontage near the Raisin River headwaters
- Restored tall-grass prairies planted by the van der Schalies in 1986
- Floodplain forest and adjacent wetlands that host a wide biological diversity
It’s estimated that Michigan will lose 2 million acres of farmland and open space over the next 40 years. So the Land Trust knows we must make certain our conservation efforts are as proactive, efficient, and effective as possible.

To accomplish this, we are refining our Strategic Plan to set goals and priorities for the next five to ten years and to establish the steps we must take to reach those goals.

The plan will focus on making the best possible use of the resources generously entrusted to us: funds given by members, time donated by volunteers, and the land we are committed to protect for all future generations.

The map on the right shows the Land Trust’s proposed high-priority target areas:

• **Fragile natural areas**, suggested by the arc encompassing the great natural lands of our community: along the river corridors (the Huron, Raisin, Saline Rivers) and the blocks of already protected land (Waterloo, Pinckney, and Sharon Recreation Areas)
• **Key working farms**, suggested by the rural areas enclosed by this arc, focusing on the southern and western-tier of townships.

We will also continue to protect and steward other important natural and agricultural lands throughout our region.

We are interested in your input. Please contact us at 734-302-LAND (5263) or info@washtenawlandtrust.org with your questions and comments.

**And the Winners Are…**

**Tom and Rosanne Bloomer honored as 2005 ‘Preservationists of the Year’**

Within the farming community, it hasn’t always been “politically correct” to support land preservation. But that never stopped Tom and Rosanne Bloomer.

The Bloomers have long been involved in land preservation. Five and ten years ago, land preservation ballot successes like those we have today seemed impossible. Nonetheless, Tom Bloomer was willing to sit on a county task force and help look for ways to protect local working farms.

“At the time, it was really sticking your neck out, being a farmer in that role,” explained Theresa Schenk, outgoing Land Trust President.

“It really changed history for the preservation of agricultural lands and open space in this region.”

Tom has served on Washtenaw County’s Agricultural Lands and Purchase of Development Rights Ordinance Revision Committees and was instrumental in helping pass Webster Township’s recent land preservation ballot initiative. He also volunteered as president of the Land Trust for several years. Rosanne is Senior Financial Service Officer at GreenStone Farm Credit Services, Michigan’s largest agricultural lender.

Most recently, the Bloomers have become the first landowners to protect their land through the City of Ann Arbor’s Greenbelt program. They are reinvesting the funds from that transaction back into their farm, to help their farming operation thrive and grow.

The Bloomers own and operate Bur Oaks Farm in Webster Township. They grow, process, and package the soybeans and corn for their “Rabble Roasters” snacks and old-fashioned popcorn. Their snacks are sold in stores locally and across the nation.

“Tom and Rosanne have helped forge a future for this community, instead of just letting a future happen to it,” said Theresa at the award reception.

“They know that keeping the business thriving, protecting the land, and helping others to see the value of land preservation, is all part of being sustainable.”

In their own words

“I know there are a lot of people besides us that deserve recognition for land preservation in this community, and I know that this organization, the Washtenaw Land Trust, also deserves a lot of recognition. I look at the Land Trust as a sort of bank, that during some pretty lean times kept people’s energy and enthusiasm up. For that, we’re truly grateful.” -Tom Bloomer

“I’m proud of what we’ve all accomplished here… I think future generations will look back on this and be very grateful.” -Rosanne Bloomer
**Upcoming Events**

**Sunday, May 7:** Stewardship workday and hike at the Land Trust’s Sharon Hills Nature Preserve

**Saturday, May 13:** Guided hike at Sharon Hills Nature Preserve with Andy Henriksen, forester with Washtenaw County Conservation District. See the results of our prescribed burn!

**Saturday, June 10:** Farm tour & ice cream social – all members and friends are invited – this means you!

**Saturday, Sep. 16:** Stewardship workday at Beckwith Conservancy near Stockbridge

**Saturday, Oct. 7:** Guided hike at Sharon Hills Nature Preserve with Andy Henriksen, forester with Washtenaw County Conservation District.

**Thursday, Nov. 2:** Lanternglow Party – The Land Trust’s leading supporters can get a window into life in 1800s Michigan at this special thank-you reception and exclusive guided tour of the Waterloo Farm Museum.

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**Answers to Your Questions**

Isn’t the Washtenaw Land Trust a part of Washtenaw County government?

No. The Land Trust is not a government program. We are a private, non-profit organization. The Land Trust receives no funding from Washtenaw County government. In fact, the Land Trust’s service area extends well beyond the boundaries of Washtenaw County, into Jackson and Ingham counties. 100% of our funding comes from people like you - people who know that private land protection options are critical for protecting our community’s sense of place.

How much of each dollar I give is used to protect land?

More than 73% of Land Trust expenses go directly into land protection – land acquisition, landowner outreach, and educational services. Fundraising and management functions to support this work account for less than 27% of expenses. (These figures come from the Land Trust’s 2003 and 2004 independent audits. Would you like a copy? Please call 734-302-LAND (5263) or visit www.washtenawlandtrust.org.)

Do you have questions?

Send ’em in! Call us at 734-302-LAND (5263) or email us at info@washtenawlandtrust.org.

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Use your retirement assets wisely.

Retirement assets can be a wonderful way to protect land and receive tax benefits. By making the Washtenaw Land Trust a beneficiary of your retirement plan, you can maximize your contribution while reducing your tax burden.

Because assets are subject to estate and income taxes, your heirs may receive only 35 cents of each dollar you leave in your will. By designating us as the beneficiary of your retirement plan, you can reduce these taxes from your estate. For more information, please contact Janae Reneaud, Washtenaw Land Trust, 1100 N. Main Street #203, Ann Arbor, MI 48104, or call 734-302-LAND (5263).

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The first land trust in Michigan, the Washtenaw Land Trust protects the natural areas and working farms of Washtenaw, Jackson, and Ingham counties.

Working with private, individual landowners, we’ve completed more than 40 projects directly protecting over 2,000 acres, and we have been a leader in campaigns that have successfully secured funding to protect thousands more acres.

You can help us do more.

Make a gift today.

Washtenaw Land Trust
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Yes! You can protect natural areas and farmland!

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Please make gifts payable to the Washtenaw Land Trust, or to pay by credit card:

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In 2005 the Land Trust helped Tom Hatch and Sue Shink protect their farm property, including the woodlands and wetlands shown here. Their donation of a conservation agreement to the Land Trust will create a legacy for Sue and Tom’s young daughters, and will also protect the land they love.
The Washtenaw Land Trust would like to thank the following people and organizations for their generous support in calendar year 2005.

Land Conservation Agreement Donors
Susan Shink & Tom Hatch
Annette van der Schalie
1 anonymous landowner

Individual Gifts
Founders
($10,000 and up)
Robert & Cynthia Helber
1 anonymous gift

Partners
($5,000-$9,999)
Maureen Martin & Mike Penskar
Roger & Coco Newton

Benefactors
($2,500-$4,999)
Gavin Clabaugh & Margaret Engle
Wade & Carol Peacock
Ellen Ward & James Young, Jr.

Conservators
($1,000-$2,499)
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Robert E. Williams
Anna Williams
Elizabeth Williams
Susie Wilson
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George & Jeanette Winans
Jen Wineman
John B. Woodward
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The Washtenaw Land Trust helped expand Bird Hills Nature Area, now Ann Arbor’s largest park.

Bird Hills lies along the banks of the Huron River on Ann Arbor’s north side. In 1989, local residents urged the City to purchase a 31-acre parcel of land adjacent to the park. Because of its non-profit status, the Land Trust was able to act as an escrow agent for public donations to expand the park. Local residents donated funds to the Land Trust as tax-deductible charitable contributions. The funds were then donated to the City for use in the park.

Today, Bird Hills Nature Area is the largest protected nature area in Ann Arbor, at 147 acres. If you’d like to visit, parking is available on Newport Road, along Bird Road, and at the Barton Nature Area lot off Huron River Drive.

Dogwood trees bloom in Bird Hills Nature Area in early spring. The Washtenaw Land Trust helped expand this nature area, now Ann Arbor’s largest protected nature area.