Southern Michigan’s Wild Places

By Susan Lackey, Executive Director

This is the second in a series of articles on Legacy Land Conservancy’s high priority areas – the ‘most important land’ that form the core of the 25,000 acres Legacy intends to protect for people to enjoy in 100 years.

It reads like a series of trivia questions on a coffee shop placemat: Where is the largest block of publicly owned land in southern Michigan? What state park has the largest collection of rare and endangered plants and animals? What Michigan land feature is globally significant and rarer than the rainforests?

The answer to all these questions lies within the arc of public lands known as the Waterloo-Pinckney-Sharonville area. These three parks total over 30,000 acres, and are part of a larger natural feature that begins at Hayes State Park in Lenawee County and runs north through Oakland County to the Saginaw Bay. This natural feature, left by the last glaciers, is known as the “Jackson Interlobate” and contains some of the last known instances of oak savannas, a now nearly extinct habitat that once covered much of southern Michigan. The Washtenaw and Jackson county portions of this rare place make up one of Legacy’s priority places for land protection.

Over the past five years, Legacy has worked closely with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources to identify the properties that are most critical to maintaining the integrity of this landscape.

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Over 6000 acres of privately held land is within the park’s boundaries, with an additional 7800 acres of ‘buffer properties’ - those that are not important to the integrity of the parks, but protect against intense development which could change the character of neighboring public lands. The strategy is simple: To acquire land within the park boundaries at fair market value, and to work with landowners to place conservation easements on buffer properties adjacent to park boundaries. It’s a long-term strategy, because it is based entirely on a landowner’s voluntary decision to sell or preserve their land.

Over the past five years, seven parcels totaling over 450 acres have been added to the park through this partnership, and the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund has appropriated $2.5 million to allow DNR to move quickly when a landowner decides to sell. Legacy adds value to these acquisitions by funding appraisals and related costs. While these expenses are small, they are important, and often Legacy completes this work more rapidly than state government.

Legacy’s work in the Waterloo-Pinckney-Sharonville area is supported by the Jackson Community Foundation, donors to Legacy’s Waterloo Fund, and the general support of Legacy donors who love Southeast Michigan’s wild places.
This has been a benchmark year for Legacy Land Conservancy. As hard as it is to believe, we celebrated our 40th anniversary in June. While it’s impressive to consider that over 4,500 acres of forests, farms, prairies and wetlands have been protected over those years, it’s equally impressive to realize just how many people have contributed their time, resources and effort to help this organization be successful and meaningful.

In the past few years we have established productive working relationships with other environmentally oriented organizations in our region. The most significant partnership of the past year, with long term implications for land preservation efforts in Washtenaw County, is with the Washtenaw County Natural Areas Preservation Program (NAPP).

NAPP was established by the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners (BoC) a little over ten years ago. The intent of this tax-supported program is to acquire, protect, manage and allow appropriate public access to nature preserves throughout the County. The program has received national acclaim, and in its first ten years has protected over 2,000 acres of land.

Prior to renewing the program for another ten years, the BoC amended the NAPP ordinance (Ordinance 128) to recognize and support the use of conservation easements to protect farmland. Experience had shown that most parcels nominated to NAPP included some acreage that was still actively farmed. Securing a conservation easement on that farmland provides the desired protection, while leaving the land in private ownership and on the tax rolls.

As approved by the voters in November of 2010, 75% of the available funds would now be used to acquire natural areas; and 25% would be set aside for conservation easements on farmland. A parallel review and prioritization process, in this case conducted by the County’s Agricultural Lands Preservation Advisory Committee (ALPAC), has been created to advise the Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission (WCPARC) – who manage the program – on potential conservation investments.

Recognizing their expertise, WCPARC has contracted with Legacy to manage the work of ALPAC leading to that recommendation(s). This partnership provides a reliable long-term source of revenue for Legacy, efficiency for the county program, and will undoubtedly result in much more land being protected.

Thanks again to everyone who helped us get this far. I’m already looking forward to our 50 year report card.
40th Anniversary Year in Review

It somehow feels right to say that Legacy Land Conservancy has enjoyed 40 years of natural, organic growth since its founding in 1971. In our 40-year history, we have protected over 4,750 acres of pristine land and productive farms. To celebrate our achievements, we sponsored three events: “Five Hikes in Five Days”, the “Bus Tour”, and the “Back to the Country Gala”. We have one more upcoming event called “STAND In The Place Where You Live.” All events are sponsored by Toyota.

Five Hikes in Five Days
Starting on October 5, and ending on October 9, we set out on one hike a day to different preserves protected by Legacy including, Sharon Hills, Beckwith, Johnson, Woodland, and Creekshead Preserves. Participants were able to learn about the layouts of the preserve, wildlife, and invasive species in the area while enjoying the beautiful Michigan fall weather.

Bus Tour
On August 20, a bus full of wonderful people ventured out to our magnificent protected lands and had a chance to learn more about local efforts to protect the nature, waterways & farmland that make our community a great place to live, work, and play. We met at REI, drove by many of Legacy’s projects and spent the afternoon out at the Discovery Center and Sharon Hills.

Back to the Country Gala
On June 9, the diverse land protection community came together to celebrate 40 years of land protection at the beautiful Misty Farm. The table was set with local food, beer and wine from Zingerman’s Roadhouse, Grange Kitchen & Bar, Sandhill Crane Vineyards and many more, while the stage was set with homegrown entertainment featuring the Chenille Sisters. Special thanks to our guests, sponsors and especially our lead sponsors, Toyota, the Americana Foundation and the Sarns Family for making our evening so extraordinary.

TOYOTA

STAND In The Place Where You Live

In celebration of Legacy Land Conservancy’s 40th anniversary, we have partnered with the Chelsea Center for the Arts (CCA) for what we think of as our most artistic conservation effort ever.

In this inspired partnership, Legacy and CCA have selected a group of 16 artists to create individual works of art that celebrate land protected by Legacy. Each artist was assigned a particular site. These very special protected lands are not open to the public, but all are areas within 30 miles of Ann Arbor. Through their works, these artists bring insight into our relationship with the landscape and how we inhabit and change the natural environments in which we live. “Art helps us understand the idea of place and illuminates how our sense of place is connected to our ideals and identity,” said Cathy Barry, Chelsea Center for the Arts trustee.

Co-curators of the exhibition are artist Cathy Barry and longtime local conservation champion Barry Lonik. The artists include: Barbara Bushey, Deborah Campbell, Nancy Feldkamp, Steve Gilzow, Birgit Hutteman-Holz, Angelis Jackowski, Janet Kohler, John Lloyd, Nancy McKay, Brenda Miller, Susan Moran, Lynn Quick, Anne Rubin, Cathy VanVoorhis, Nora Venturelli, and Elaine Wilson. Media includes: paint, photography, textiles and sculpture.

On Friday, December 2, 2011, from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m., Reinhart Realtors will sponsor a reception at the CCA Gallery. “Legacy Land Conservancy and the Chelsea Center for the Arts are both tremendous community resources,” says Dave Lutton, President of the Charles Reinhart Company. “We are very proud to support these wonderful organizations as well as the STAND Project.” Sandhill Crane Vineyard wines will be served with light appetizers. The reception is free and open to the public.

Janet Kohler on the Marigold Marsh Tree Farm owned by Betty Jean Murray.

Nancy McKay’s painting of a May Apple flower.
Financial Report

Statements of Financial Position - Audited
June 30, 2011 and 2010

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASSETS</th>
<th>2011</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Current Assets:</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Fixed assets, net of accumulated depreciation</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Other Assets</strong></td>
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<td>Preserves- Unencumbered</td>
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<td>Lands (held for sale for operations)</td>
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<td>Easements</td>
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<td><strong>Total Assets</strong></td>
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<td>Accrued expenses</td>
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<td><strong>Total Liabilities</strong></td>
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<td>Unrestricted</td>
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<td>Temporarily restricted</td>
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<td>Permanently restricted</td>
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<th>TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</th>
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<td><strong>4,756,899</strong></td>
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**Revenue**

- General Contributions: 9%
- Designated Fund Contributions: 17%
- Grants: 14%
- Land and Easement Acquisitions: 48%
- Investment Gains and Interest: 8%
- Other Income: 4%

**Expenses**

- Program Services: 26%
- Fundraising: 7%
- Management and General: 4%
- Expense of Easement/Development Rights: 63%

**Statements of Activities - Audited**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revenue</th>
<th>2011</th>
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<tr>
<td>Contributions</td>
<td>$124,039</td>
<td>$201,187</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grants &amp; Contracts</td>
<td>142,047</td>
<td>179,647</td>
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<td>Events and Miscellaneous Income</td>
<td>52,646</td>
<td>52,646</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interest and dividends</td>
<td>3,789</td>
<td>12,790</td>
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<td>Realized and unrealized investment gains (losses), net of fees</td>
<td>85,007</td>
<td>10,981</td>
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<td>Acquisition of easements/development rights</td>
<td>612,000</td>
<td>1,417,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acquisition of donated land (held for sale for operations)</td>
<td>57,625</td>
<td>150,000</td>
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<td><strong>Total Revenue</strong></td>
<td><strong>992,146</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,067,537</strong></td>
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<table>
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<th>Expenses</th>
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<th>2010</th>
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<tr>
<td>Program services</td>
<td>252,700</td>
<td>252,700</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fundraising</td>
<td>68,130</td>
<td>32,981</td>
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<tr>
<td>Management &amp; General</td>
<td>38,840</td>
<td>40,697</td>
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<tr>
<td>Expense of easement/development rights</td>
<td>611,996</td>
<td>1,416,992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Expenses</strong></td>
<td><strong>971,666</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,686,561</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| Net Increase (decrease) in net assets [Revenue less expenses] | 20,480 | 305,650 |
| Net Assets, beginning of year | 2,817,151 | 4,360,909 |
| Net Assets, end of year | **2,837,631** | **5,047,535** |
Protecting Nature, Food & Water, Here Where You Live
Serving Southern Michigan by protecting its forests, prairies, farms, wetlands and waters - today and forever.

Waterloo Parcels, 155 acres
Legacy regularly joins with other organizations to help protect the most land we can! These additional parcels of protected land increase public access to Southeast Michigan’s “Wild Places.”

Stephenson Conservation Agreement, 12 acres
These wooded acres were the site of a wood-fired kiln for the Stephenson artists for many years. Seen here is a key triangulation point marker on the property placed by the government for surveying the earth used in geodetic and land surveying.

Spike Clark Trust Preserve, 102 acres
Legacy facilitated getting these ecologically important acres into conservation with Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation.

Rees Conservation Agreement, 10 acres
These peaceful acres on Columbia Lake provided the Rees’ many years of refuge which will now be available for future generations.

Girbach Conservation Agreement, 100 acres
This centennial farm will remain in production for a new generation of farmers providing locally raised livestock for the local market. The development rights were acquired by a coalition of the Ann Arbor Greenbelt, Lodi Township, Legacy Land Conservancy, and generous cooperation from the Girbach family and their Realtor.

McMullen Conservation Agreement, 5 acres
The McMullens have made this small woodland special to their family inviting each child and grandchild to have their own tree to take care of and watch grow to maturity as the children grow. They now have offered this land to school groups interested in getting out into nature so more children can enjoy its benefits.

Bigelow Conservation Agreement, 37 acres
This scenic conservation agreement protects land along the Falling Water Trail in Jackson County. Legacy partnered with the Dahlem Conservancy to complete the agreement.

Scio Township Conservation Agreement, 45 acres
This conservation agreement is part of a larger farm of over 400 acres. This additional agreement brings the total up to 216 acres preserved.
Legacy Land Conservancy expresses our sincere appreciation to our generous supporters. Thank you for helping us protect Southern Michigan’s forests, prairies, farms and waters today and forever.

**Founders ($10,000 and up)**
- Anonymous
- Anonymous
- Sally & Ian Bund
- Bill & Carol Kauffman
- Thomas B.
  & Debby McMullen
- Helen & Mike Vlasic Family

**Partners ($5,000 - $9,999)**
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- John M. Allen
  & Edith A. Maynard
- Lucie Audette
  & Rob Baum
- John Bassett
- Ted & Peggy Beals
- Steven Bean
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- James Bergman
  & Penelope Hommel
- Victor Boccalon
- Kathie Briegel
  & Shelley Bruder
- David & Angela Chernin
- Gerald Clark
  & Shutter Crum
- Susan & Patrick Cooley
- Martha Coscina
- David Dickinson
  & Jeannine LaPrad
- Andrzej Dlugosz
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- Wendell & Nancy Dunbar
- Douglas & Elizabeth Duwe
- Abbe Eaton

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  & Cynthia Knapp Dlugosz
- Steve & Judy Dobson
- Wendell & Nancy Dunbar
- Douglas & Elizabeth Duwe
- Abbe Eaton
Chef Brandon Johns & Legacy Trustee, Margaret Engle.

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Rae Ann Weymouth
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Jason Wiederhold
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Parke Wiegman
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Chelsea Community Foundation
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Heart of the Lakes Huron River Watershed Council
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The Mannik & Smith Group
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Rosanne & Tom Bloomer
Café Japon
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Dennis Serras
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U of M Musical Society
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Tom & Rosanne Bloomer
Harlie Smith
Martha Cosicina
Miriam Hyde
Miriam Hyde
Melissa Knudson
Marguerite Smith
Ethan Smith
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Webster Township Fund

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For corrections, please notify us at
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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 or intend to do so. Susan Cooley, 734.302.5263 or susancooley@legacylandconservancy.org