

THE UNDERSTORY

The newsletter of Legacy Land Conservancy

Fall



2018



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LEGACY
Land Conservancy

A warm welcome to our Interim Executive Director

In September we welcomed Deborah VandenBroek as Interim Executive Director. Deb will partner with Legacy's board and staff to lead initiatives such as land protection prioritization.

"Deb's experience with strategic planning, community partnerships, and workforce development make her an ideal leader for Legacy at this point in the organization's history," says Simon Whitelocke, President of the Board of Trustees.

Named one of "Detroit's Most Influential Women" in 2002 by *Crain's Detroit Business*, Deb brings extensive leadership experience gleaned working with the Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation, Navigant Consulting, Washtenaw County Community Mental Health, Packard Health, and the Trinity Health System.

"I am thrilled to join forces with the professionals, volunteers, and supporters who have created such lasting impact for our communities through Legacy's work," says Deb. "Everyone who helps Legacy succeed is making a permanent difference. It's an honor and a privilege to be part of this conservation legacy."

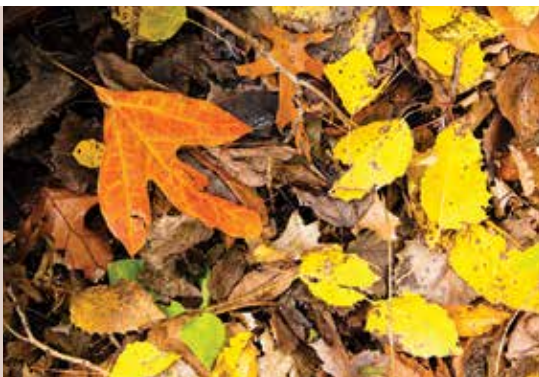


On the cover



*Brilliant fall colors at
Sharon Hills Preserve*

Photo by Dietrich Ludwig





Get to know our new Trustees:

George Borel

George Borel, CPA, is a Tax Principal at Rehmann in Ann Arbor. He advises high net worth individuals and business owners, providing individual, estate, and trust tax planning and consulting services. Prior to joining Rehmann in 2013, he was a Tax Partner with Deloitte for nearly 30 years, and before that he was employed at Iceman, Johnson & Hoffman. George serves as Treasurer for both the Glacier Hills Foundation and Forest Hill Cemetery.

Suzanne DeVine

Suzanne and her family live on a 100-acre farm in Washtenaw County. Her father sold 137 acres, now known as the DeVine Preserve, to the Washtenaw County Natural Areas Program. Suzanne served on our Board back when the organization was known as Potawatomi Land Trust and Washtenaw Land Trust, and we are glad to welcome her back. Suzanne is a partner in the law firm of Koselka DeVine, PLC.

Bill Strohaver

Bill retired from Jackson College, where he served as a political science faculty member, Dean, and Executive Vice President. He advanced green initiatives, including LEED certification for new buildings and hiring the first sustainability director. After reading books by Douglas Tallamy, Bill developed environmental interests that became central to retired life.

Karen Ufer

Karen's interest in land use led her and her husband to donate a conservation easement on 30 acres. Karen served 19 years on the Lodi Township Planning Commission. She has also served on and chaired the Washtenaw County Planning Commission and the Ann Arbor Y's Board. Karen owns and operates a yoga school.



Thank you to our outgoing Trustees!

Rob Aldrich

Rob served on our Board from 2008 to 2013 and came back for a return engagement in 2015. Rob worked hard to simplify the financial complexities of a nonprofit land conservancy. Absorbing terms like "Board designated temporarily restricted net asset" is a commendable thing, and to know how it all affects our mission takes skill.

Jerry Nordblom

Jerry's curiosity and willingness to learn were a great asset during his six years of service on the Board, especially as Board President during 2017-18. Jerry is continuing his service to Legacy by remaining on the Development and Land committees. The latter committee is near and dear to Jerry's heart, as he and his wife Barbara have protected their homestead with a donated easement.

Sandy Sorini Elser

Sandy's service was marked by great insight into conservation easement projects. Not only did she advise on the language of agreements, she also made our process of reviewing potential projects far more effective. We gladly credit Sandy's counsel with helping keep the Camp O' the Hills project (see p. 5) moving forward, as it proved to be a monumental undertaking.

Stiltgrass basics

Is stiltgrass new to our area?

Stiltgrass (*Microstegium viminum*) was brought to the US in packing materials in the early 1900s. Since 2017, it has been found on 50 Scio Township properties, two properties in Ann Arbor, and in Oakland, Cass, and Lenawee counties.

How does it spread?

Stiltgrass spreads quickly via water, wildlife, foot traffic, and equipment.

What are the consequences?

After it becomes established, it spreads quickly and chokes out all native flora.

How can it be eradicated?

Effective treatment methods can include pulling, herbicide, and torching depending on the location of the plant, other nearby species, and the plant's growth cycle. Eradication requires repeated treatments.

Has it been found on any land Legacy protects?

Stiltgrass was identified on a conservation easement property and we worked with the landowner to treat it. Stiltgrass has not been found on any of our nature preserves. We will continue to survey each preserve and eradicate it if found.

What is Legacy doing to detect and eradicate stiltgrass?

As part of the Stiltgrass Working Group, we are conducting outreach, surveying, mapping, and recommending treatments to landowners.

What should I do if I see stiltgrass?

If you think you have found stiltgrass, send a photo of the plant, the location, and your contact info to washtenawstiltgrass@gmail.com. Well-established populations can only be controlled with a substantial investment of time and resources over a long period of time, so early detection and rapid response are critical.



Stiltgrass in our midst.



Amii Fofana, Doris Duke Conservation Scholars Program Intern

Thank you to our summer interns!

Amii majors in environmental science at the University of Toledo. She updated the management plan for Creekshead Nature Preserve and assisted with stiltgrass outreach.

"Being able to educate the communities that may be affected by stiltgrass was definitely a highlight of my experience. I met with community members who were concerned about this issue and wanted to take action." – Amii

Trey attends U-M's School for Environment and Sustainability. He applied the concept of ecosystem services to address the question "What is the value of Legacy's land protection to improving water quality by reducing sediment and nutrient runoff?"

"The most interesting aspect of my work was seeing the coordination and determination needed to promote natural land conservation in southeast Michigan." – Trey



Trey Snow, Marshall Weinberg Intern

Girl Scout camp permanently protected

You may be familiar with the challenges that many scouting organizations face keeping camps open for future generations. Now, thanks to a partnership between the Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan Council and Legacy, the land that is home to 90-year-old Camp O' the Hills is protected—forever.

Protecting the camp, located on Wampplers Lake in Jackson County, benefits not only the camp's visitors and local wildlife, but also the water quality for all residents along the lake. And beyond the substantial ecological gains, this project protects a unique site for young people to experience the natural world and develop leadership skills for life.

The land is protected by a conservation easement, which gives the Scouts continued use and ownership of Camp O' the Hills while permanently restricting development of the natural areas.

The easement was funded through public and private grants and donations from individuals. Thank YOU to everyone who contributed to protecting this vibrant camp!



Now protected, Camp O' the Hills will endure as a beautiful natural setting for nature exploration, wildlife, and water quality.

“Near-pristine” land becomes Legacy’s 7th preserve

A fruitful partnership led to the Anthony and Rose Shatter Family Nature Preserve in Salem Township. The 25-acre property is just a quarter of a mile from Legacy's Creekshead Nature Preserve.

The Salem Township Land Preservation and Conservation Board approached us after learning that the Shatter Family had put the land up for sale. With its high-quality beech-maple and oak-hickory woodlands and buttonbush swamp, the property was identified as a priority area for public access.



The peaceful woods of Shatter Family Nature Preserve.

“It's in near-pristine condition,” says Susan Bejin, Chair of the township's Land Preservation and Conservation Board.

The preserve is Legacy's first created in response to a community request. Our other six preserves were initiated and donated by the landowners.

The Ann Arbor Greenbelt and Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission pooled their resources so the land could be purchased and transferred to Legacy's care. We are working on parking access and a trail system.



We enjoy seeing old friends and meeting new supporters at the Ann Arbor Green Fair.



A gaggle of birders accompanies volunteer naturalist Gary Siegrist to observe nesting grassland birds at Watkins Lake State Park and County Preserve, land Legacy helped protect.



At Legacy's Volunteer Appreciation Picnic, Neal Billetdeaux and Charity Steere receive Legacy Mentor Awards in recognition of their commitment to nurturing the skills and dedication of newer Legacy volunteers. Also honored: Sandy Sorini Elser (Helping Hand Award) and Marguerite Smith and Sara Lupkas (Eco Steward: Bur Oak Awards).



More than thirty budding botanists stroll with native plant advocate Amanda Klain through Sharon Hills Preserve to discuss plants used as medicine, historically and today.



On the summer solstice, loyal supporters Fran and Campbell Laird welcome guests to learn about and support access improvements at Beckwith Preserve. A new parking lot, trailhead, and signage are made possible by Legacy's acquisition of a parcel adjacent to the preserve—and by generous donors and volunteers who value access to nature! See p. 7 for related info.

Beckwith Preserve Access Improvement

We are grateful for **cash and in-kind contributions** to support the addition of parking, a trailhead, and signage at Beckwith Preserve:

5 Healthy Towns Foundation, Tom Clark, Frances and Campbell Laird, Roberta and Gary Ludtke, Jo Ann and Gary Munce, Jo Mayer and Paul Crandall, Tina and Bob Patterson, Dave and Jill Peck, Linda and Clair Risner, Kelly Schmidt and Jan Werfelmann, Andrea and William Stickney, Stockbridge Area Wellness Coalition

We are also grateful for **volunteers** who helped prepare Beckwith Preserve for Access Improvement:

Neal Billetdeaux, Bruce Brown, Tom Clark, Bob Cole, Suzi Greenway, Campbell Laird, Frances Laird, David G. Lindemer, Jo Mayer, Cathy Muha, Charity Steere, Jo Ann Munce, Kelly Schmidt, William Stickney, Jan Werfelmann

It's not too late to give!

To help defray costs associated with access improvement at Beckwith Preserve, use the donation envelope included with this newsletter and write "Beckwith Access" on your check's memo line. Or go to legacylandconservancy.org/donate and use the "Honoree Name(s)" field to type in "Beckwith Access Improvement."

More Ways to Support Our Work

Donate from your IRA

If you are 70 ½ or older, you can make direct contributions from your IRA, which can be counted toward your Required Minimum Distribution and may result in lower taxable income.

Gift of Securities

Giftting appreciated securities to Legacy can help you avoid paying capital gains taxes. Also, you could earn a federal income tax deduction based on the current fair market value of the securities, regardless of their original cost.

Planned Gift

"Planned giving" refers to future charitable gifts that require some planning. There is no better way to continue to make a difference for land conservation many years from now. We will work with your financial advisor to design a plan that meets your personal, financial, and charitable goals.

Gift of Real Estate

A gift of real estate is a very significant conservation contribution. If the real estate is not appropriate for preservation, we will sell it with your permission and use the sale proceeds to further our land protection mission.

Consult with your financial advisor. To learn more, contact Diane Dupuis at 734-302-5263 or diane@legacylandconservancy.org.

LEGACY Land Conservancy

*Protecting and Preserving
Southern Michigan*

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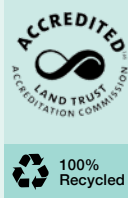
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*As the season turns to gestures
of gratitude and generosity,
we hope that the prospect of
safeguarding water quality,
preserving local farms, and
conserving natural areas
like woods and wetlands will
inspire your gift of support for
Legacy. Watch for our year-
end message, or give online any
time. Your support fuels the
work and warms the heart!*

*Visit legacyconservancy.org
or call 734-302-5263.*

Dietrich Ludwig



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