

LEGACY

Land Conservancy

Protecting and Preserving Southern Michigan



ANNUAL REPORT 2018-2019

Dear Friends:

Rachel Carson told us in her book *The Sense of Wonder*, “If a child is to keep alive their inborn sense of wonder, they need the companionship of at least one adult who can share it, rediscovering with them the joy, excitement, and mystery of the world we live in.” The photos on the front cover draw inspiration from this idea as we work to make the human connection with land a positive one while looking to the future.

Land conservation today is more important than ever as we face the realities of toxins in our water, Lake Erie algal blooms that cover hundreds of square miles, invasive plants in our ecosystems, and global climate change that threatens every animal species.

Our work is a very reliable response to these growing problems. Undeveloped land naturally filters pollutants and moderates water quality by slowing surface runoff and increasing the infiltration of water into the soil. Our participation in collaborative, inter-agency invasive species removal projects is an effective hedge against ecosystems damage. There is growing evidence that all forms of intact lands, not just forests, are capable of effective carbon sequestration.

Our sense of wonder deepens with every step on the trail and we are grateful to share the company of so many companions that keep us here to share the results with you.

We hope you enjoy this annual report summarizing our fiscal year 2018-2019 that wrapped up on June 30, 2019. What an interesting year Legacy had, with some amazing highs and some continued challenges. In the end we emerged from the year stronger and more focused on our mission to secure for current and future generations a land base for nature, agriculture, fresh water and recreation in Washtenaw and Jackson Counties and beyond.

After an external search for a new Executive Director, the Board of Directors hired southeast Michigan native and long-time nonprofit executive, Diana Kern in February 2019. Collectively we are inspired to lead the agency into our upcoming 50th year (2021) of protecting important land.



New and existing staff circled the wagons to ensure our mission and goals moved forward. The Board of Directors was strengthened, adding new skill sets and stakeholders engaged in important conversations to help guide our future planning. We helped secure critical land adding to better water quality, saving working farms, and we witnessed the planned expansion of contiguous swaths of natural areas that support wildlife habitat and carbon sequestration. We have protected close to 10,000 acres of land in Washtenaw and Jackson Counties.

Coming off of a capacity building year with an expected operating deficit, we now are focused on financial sustainability through a year of strategic planning and business development, while continuing our momentum in raising funds for land and easement acquisitions.

We can't continue this work without your support. We thank you for joining us in both **learning** and **acting** in ways to increase climate resiliency, protect our water, save working farms, and to ensure that current and future generations understand their role in natural areas protection.

In Conservation,

Simon Whitelocke
Board President

Diana Kern
Executive Director

LEGACY Land Conservancy

*Protecting and Preserving
Southern Michigan*

STAFF

Ann Agler, Office Manager | Pam Bierzynski, Office Systems Associate | Diana Kern, Executive Director | Susan LaCroix, Land Protection Lead
Scott Rosencrans, Associate Director of Development and Communications | Allene Smith, Land Stewardship Coordinator
Erika Taylor, Finance & Operations Director | Dana Wright, Land Stewardship Director | Cayla Tinney and Shawn Zellers, Reichert Preserve Caretakers

BOARD OF TRUSTEES 2019-2020

Simon Whitelocke, President | Larry Doll, Vice President | George Borel, Treasurer | John Moran, Secretary | Neal Billetdeaux, Member at Large Executive Committee
Suzanne DeVine | Jerry Nordblom | Dale Sass | Sandi Smith | Charity Steere | Bill Strohaber | Ginny Trocchio | Karen Ufer

CONTACT

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Financial Report 2018-2019

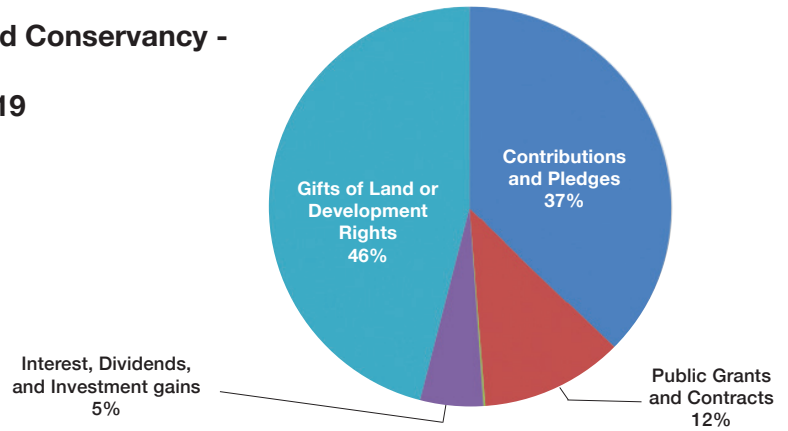
Acquiring new land and conservation easements is a multi-year effort that requires bringing interested parties together, negotiating terms, aligning with community partners, and raising funds to bring a project to closing. At any given time, Legacy has 5-10 projects in the pipeline with estimated close dates as far out as 5 years. In the last fiscal year Legacy acquired 6 new land projects and supported other partners in closing two, which totaled 628 acres and brought us to 9,357 acres protected.

Total revenue was \$1,770,073 last year, 46% of which was donations of land and development rights. Contributions from individual donors and private foundations, public grants and contracts make up the remaining 49% that provides working capital for operations. Legacy's total investment portfolio, which include \$1,169,443 in endowment funds and \$963,046 reserve funds, have enjoyed an overall 7% return. 4% of the endowment funds are distributed each year to support the easement and fee land stewardship programs.

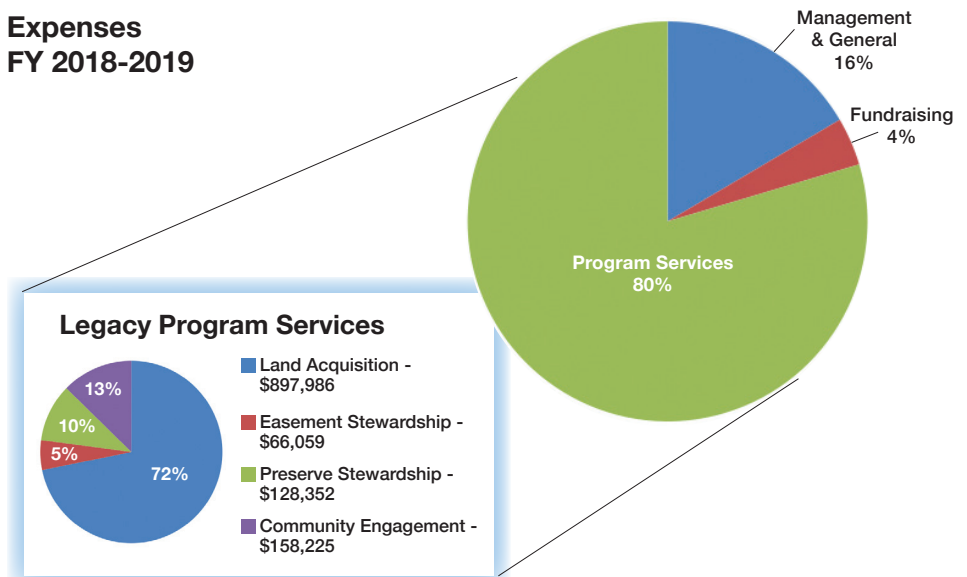
The Land Acquisition Program makes up 72% of total Programs Services. \$748,896 of expenses were for the acquisition of land. The remaining \$501,726 is divided into four programmatic areas. Management and fundraising comprise of 20% of total expenses.

We are extremely grateful for our donors who contribute annually to support our programs and volunteers. They help us keep down the cost of stewarding the land. Together we continue to make an invaluable investment in the future of our community.

Legacy Land Conservancy - Revenue FY 2018-2019



Expenses FY 2018-2019



Statement of Financial Position

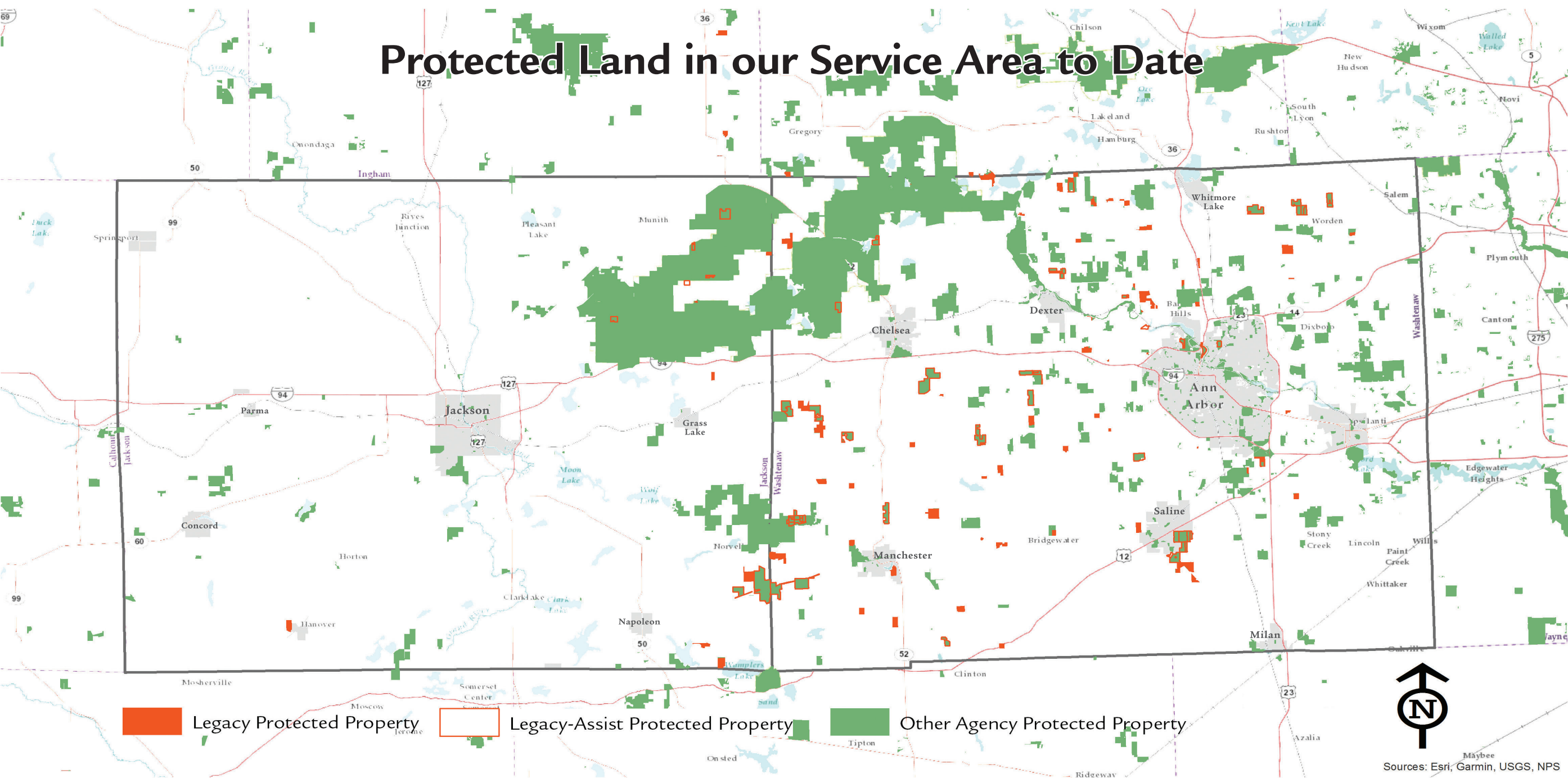
ASSETS	
Current Assets	\$ 459,625
Pledges Receivable (non-current)	\$ 7,000
Investments	\$ 2,147,601
Land Held for Resale	\$ 260,000
Land Options	\$ 1,500
Conservation Easements	\$ 85
Preserves	\$ 4,597,418
Total Assets	\$ 7,473,229
LIABILITIES	
Accounts Payable	\$ 4,990
Accrued Expenses	\$ 36,121
Total Liabilities	\$ 41,111
NET ASSETS	
Without Donor Restrictions	\$ 988,093
With Donor Restrictions	
Subject to Time and Purpose	\$ 677,079
Subject to Restrictions in Perpetuity	\$ 5,766,946
Total Net Assets	\$ 7,432,118
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$ 7,473,229

Statement of Activities - FY End June 30, 2019

REVENUE	
Contributions and Pledges	\$ 657,136
Public Grants and Contracts	\$ 205,139
Events and Misc.	\$ 2,894
Interest, Dividends, and Investment Gains	\$ 91,180
Gifts of Land or Development Rights	\$ 813,724
Total Revenue and Support	\$ 1,770,073
EXPENSES	
Program Services—	
Land Protection	\$ 1,250,622
Management & General	\$ 259,439
Fundraising	\$ 61,045
Total Expenses	\$ 1,571,106
Change in Net Assets (Net Income)	\$ 198,967
Net Assets, beginning of year	\$ 7,233,151
Net Assets, end of year	\$ 7,432,118

*Based on audited financial statements. Full statements, prepared by Dennis, Gartland, Niergarth, CPAs, is available at legacylandconservancy.org.

Protected Land in our Service Area to Date

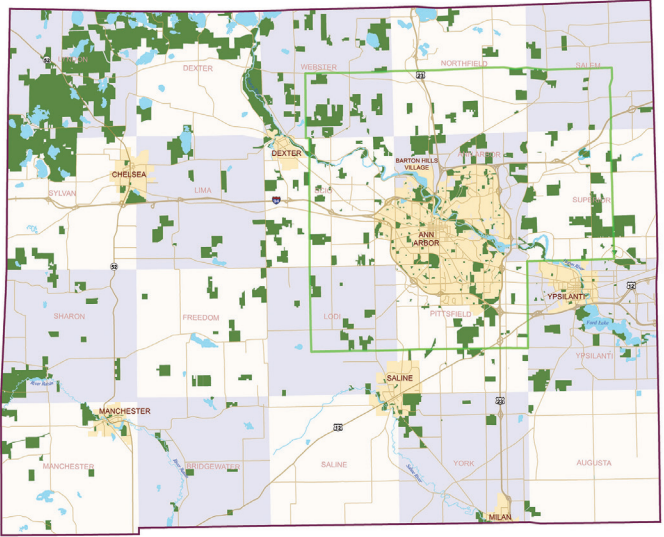
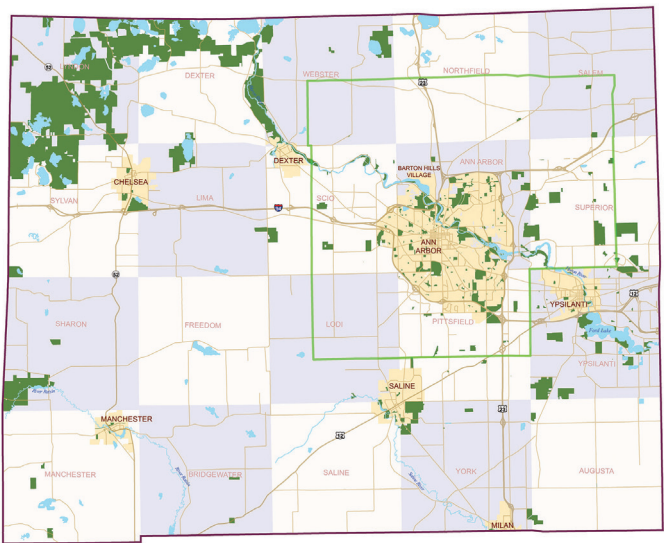


Legacy's Conservation Success

We have assisted partner agencies in protecting 5177 acres
Alone we have protected 4180 acres, which includes:

- Farmland
- Forest
- Wetlands
- Open Water
- Other land use
- Over 22 Miles of Water Frontage

Protected Lands in Washtenaw County 2000 and 2019



- Protected Land*
- Ann Arbor Greenbelt Boundary
- Lakes/Rivers
- River
- Highway
- Major Road

* Some land is closed to the public

Gaining Results Through a Collective Effort

Working together land trusts, local governments, and the State of Michigan have protected 48,785 acres that includes preserves, conservation easements, nature areas, state recreation areas, and parks in Washtenaw County alone. Jackson County offers numerous opportunities for land conservation and watershed protection with its prevalence of high quality soils, unique wetlands, and rich populations of threatened or endangered species. In the coming years Legacy will be increasing our efforts in Jackson County to preserve these important assets.

Continuing a Legacy of Land Protection

Legacy Land Conservancy's core program for land protection is delivered in three important ways: land acquisition, conservation easement monitoring, and nature preserve stewardship. Land acquisition includes accepting donations of high-quality natural areas and the voluntary placement of conservation easements on properties that landowners want to protect in perpetuity.

Conservation easements are used for both natural areas and agricultural lands. Once an easement is placed on a property, or "closed", it is our responsibility to monitor the land to ensure that the provisions of the easement are being observed by the owner. Our monitoring staff also serves as a resource for invasive plant species management and as a liaison for realtors, buyers, and sellers when an easement property is transitioning to new ownership. When an easement violation is detected monitoring staff is an invaluable asset for assisting in the resolution of disputes.

Once we have formally accepted ownership of a natural area to be

used as a nature preserve our job is to make unobtrusive improvements that facilitate its use by the public and the species that live there. We engage in trail building and maintenance, the installation of benches and interpretive displays, habitat restoration, and invasive plant removal.

Due to the strengths and determination of our acquisition staff Legacy was able to maintain the momentum from previous years that resulted in five easement closures of our own, two for which we assisted partner organizations, and one nature preserve acquisition. Our land protection efforts for fiscal year 2018-2019 included:

- 106 acres of woodland
- 79 acres of wetland
- 394 acres of farmland
- Over 4 miles of water frontage
- 23 acres of open water
- 26 acres of meadows, prairies, and other land use

Our local and national conservation partners consistently serve to expand our collective impact. Thanks to

local and federal grants, strong local partnerships with other organizations, and landowners who chose to donate the value of their conservation easement, Legacy was able to leverage \$6 for every donor dollar spent to achieve another year of conservation successes.



Sandhill Cranes on the Huron River -
Photo by John Lloyd



Hay Field on a Legacy Protected Farm - Photo by John Lloyd

Each acquisition project requires a long-term plan and regular management to uphold the forever promise of protection. Easement stewardship includes an annual site visit to each easement property to make sure the terms of the easement are being upheld. This year, as in years past, Legacy staff and the 34 volunteers who participate in our Photo-monitoring Squad visited all 86 Legacy-held easements and the 15 easements we monitor on contract for other organizations.



Sharon Hills Preserve -
Photo by Dietrich Ludwig

As easement agreements age we know that keeping lines of communication open with landowners can increase the likelihood of management that aligns with the terms of the agreement. Legacy is working to be a stronger partner to landowners by providing resources on land management, easing the transition process when an easement property is for sale, and providing space for easement landowners to network with each other. Landowners are now reaching out to confirm plans on their conservation properties and using Legacy as a resource more frequently. Communications with our existing easement landowners increased four-fold in the 2018-2019 fiscal year.

Our enthusiastic volunteers put over 350 hours into caring for our seven preserve's. In August of 2018, Legacy added a 25-acre natural area to the list of publicly accessible lands. The Anthony and Rose Shatter Family Preserve (Shatter Preserve) was acquired by Legacy in partnership with the Ann Arbor Greenbelt Program, Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation, and Salem Township. The property is characterized by its water features, which are diverse for a property of its size. The preserve's trail system, the first phase of which was installed by volunteers this year, winds around several pockets of buttonbush swamp making a short but interesting trail loop. Plans for the site include a dedicated parking area and a 400-foot-long boardwalk extending the trail system across the wetland. You can expect a formal opening of the Shatter Preserve in 2020.

The 2018-2019 fiscal year saw the installation of a long-awaited parking area at the Beckwith Preserve, providing safe and reliable access for visitors. Legacy continued to engage volunteers in land stewardship through restoration projects and trail improvements at our Lloyd and Mabel Johnson Preserve, resulting in a new trail stretching through the preserve's in-progress prairie restoration.

In the latter half of the fiscal year our stewardship capacity was greatly elevated with the addition of two



Photo Monitoring on a Legacy Protected Farm -
Photo by Erika Taylor.

new caretakers at the Reichert Nature Preserve. Their presence at Reichert has already become invaluable. They have helped to advance important projects on our list of priorities including the increased management of damaging invasive plant species, and the initiation of monitoring and strategic management within the high-quality tamarack swamp that composes over half of the Reichert property. These new team members also provide important assistance on projects in our other nature preserves.

Legacy's land protection efforts in our service area remain strong. In addition to the regular maintenance our work requires, staff have managed to improve our processes as we work with the community to conserve our exceptional natural and agrarian surroundings. Given the current and future threats to our natural environment and resources, we continue to take our mission seriously and believe our work reflects that focus.



Wood Ducks on the Huron River - Photo by John Lloyd

The Legacy Land Conservancy Family



*Back Row L-R: Susan LaCroix, Jerry Nordblom, Larry Doll, Bill Strohaver, Dale Sass, Scott Rosencrans, Simon Whitelocke
Middle Row L-R: Charity Steere, Diana Kern, Suzanne DeVine, Ginny Trocchio, Erika Taylor, Ann Agler, Sandi Smith, Karen Ufer
Front L-R: Allene Smith, Dana Wright Absent: Pam Bierzynski, George Borel, John Moran, Neal Billetdeaux*



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Legacy Land Conservancy's mission is to secure for current and future generations a land base for nature, agriculture, fresh water, and recreation in Washtenaw and Jackson Counties and beyond.