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## **Legacy Land Conservancy Celebrates 50 Years of Protecting and Preserving Land**

Ann Arbor, Michigan – May 10, 2021 – Legacy Land Conservancy is celebrating 50 years of protecting and preserving land in southern Michigan, and kicking off the celebration of its achievements with two public events.

Legacy formed under the name Washtenaw Land Conservancy (WLC) on May 10, 1971 when a group of Ann Arbor community leaders concerned about the potential development of a parcel of land on what is now the Bird Hills Nature Area, officially banded together. It was the state’s first nonprofit organization dedicated to the voluntary protection of local landscape.

“It is amazing to be leading Legacy the year we turn 50-years-old,” Executive Director Diana Kern said. “As we reflect upon this milestone, Legacy is proud of our achievements and grateful for the hard work and dedication of so many who have brought us to this moment. Our success is the result of a collective belief that protecting and preserving land is a responsibility we all share.”

In the beginning, WLC was an all-volunteer organization only protecting natural land along the Huron River in Ann Arbor. Over the years, it remained committed to its mission, but adapted to endure within the ever-changing landscape of land protection. It merged with Potawatomi Land Trust (1999) and Waterloo Land Conservancy Trust (2003); changed its name from WLC to Washtenaw-Potawatomi Land Trust (1999) to Washtenaw Land Trust (2001) and finally to Legacy Land Conservancy in 2009; and expanded its land protection service area to include Washtenaw and Jackson counties, and beyond.

Legacy is proud to celebrate all it has accomplished over the last 50 years in partnership with the community and its supporters.

“Built on a five-decades-long foundation of strong land protection, dedicated staff, board, donors, volunteers, and partners, Legacy has the ability to withstand and adapt to the dynamic world in which we live – now and in the future,” Board Chair Larry Doll said. “Together we successfully navigated through the first fifty years. And, together we will continue the journey to ensure that the next fifty will be just as successful.”

Since 1971, Legacy has:

- Protected nearly 10,000 acres of land in the greater Washtenaw and Jackson areas
- Worked with 71 landowners to protect over 3,900 acres of private land through conservation easements
- Protected over 300 acres as public nature preserves that include over 9.5 miles of trails
- Completed 48 projects with partners resulting in 5,288 acres protected
- Protected 2,416 acres of farmland, 43 acres of open water, 1,370 acres of wetland, 1,500 acres of woods, and 119,459 feet (or 22 miles) of water frontage as a result of the protection of private land through conservation easements and preserve ownership
- Worked with 742 volunteers who recorded more than 34,500 volunteer hours



Legacy also became one of the first accredited land trusts in the nation in 2009. In 2014, and again in 2020, Legacy was re-accredited by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission. Currently, Legacy monitors over 100 conservation easements and manages seven public preserves—Anthony & Rose Shatter Family Preserve (Plymouth), Beckwith Preserve (Stockbridge), Creekshead Nature Preserve (Plymouth), Lloyd & Mabel Johnson Preserve (Ann Arbor), Reichert Nature Preserve (Pinckney), Sharon Hills Nature Preserve (Sharon Township), and Woodland Preserve (Ann Arbor).

In honor of its 50<sup>th</sup> year, Legacy will be kicking off the celebration with two special events open to the public: a #50ForTheLand Preserves Pathway Challenge in May and a virtual 50<sup>th</sup> birthday party in June.

In partnership and through Toyota Motor North America's commitment to environmental sustainability, Legacy Land Conservancy is challenging the Washtenaw and Jackson communities to visit one of its seven nature preserves and log 50,000 steps of exploration. Join the 50 For The Land Strava club and take a walk, hike, or run with Legacy! Participants are invited to record their activities on the app Strava from May 10 - Oct. 10, 2021 and share a photo to Instagram using #50ForTheLand for the chance to earn a prize and kudos.

Legacy's virtual 50<sup>th</sup> birthday party presented by Absolute Title will be held on June 10, 2021. Tickets for the gala can be purchased online at [www.legacylandconservancy.org/50-years](http://www.legacylandconservancy.org/50-years).

For a more detailed history of Legacy Land Conservancy, visit <https://legacylandconservancy.org/50-years/a-look-back/>

**About Legacy Land Conservancy:** Founded in 1971 as Michigan's first local land trust, Legacy is a nonprofit conservation organization that protects land in southern Michigan. Legacy's mission is to secure for current and future generations a land base for nature, agriculture, fresh water, and recreation in Jackson and Washtenaw counties and beyond. Legacy has helped to protect more than 9,500 acres of land (including seven nature preserves open for all to enjoy) that enhance our community's quality of place by safeguarding water quality, conserving working farms, and protecting places to play. In a testament to 50 years of successful voluntary conservation, Legacy is accredited by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission for adhering to a set of standards designed to ensure the organization's work will endure forever. Legacy is based in Ann Arbor, Michigan. For more information, visit [www.legacylandconservancy.org](http://www.legacylandconservancy.org).

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