

Lane Preserve Acquisition



In the late fall of 2017, what was once George and Sue Lane's property in Gladwin County was donated to The Little Forks Conservancy. This was a collaboration between the Conservancy, the Leon P. Martuch Chapter of Trout Unlimited, and Chippewa Watershed Conservancy. George was a longtime Conservancy supporter, a former board member and a conservation easement donor.

The Lane property is 272 acres with three quarters of a mile of

frontage on the North Branch of the Cedar River. The property includes important forestland habitat, open grasslands, and scenic views of the surrounding area. George and Sue's stewardship ethic led to dramatic improvements to the property, specifically regarding wildlife habitat, removing sediment from the river and controlling erosion along the river. The North Branch of the Cedar River is one of a limited number of coldwater trout streams

located within the northern reaches of the Saginaw Bay Watershed. The Lanes initially protected the property with a conservation easement and now the property will be a nature preserve to not only benefit the natural resources of the land, but also the local community.

With George and Sue's vision for their land in mind and with partners like Trout Unlimited and Chippewa Watershed Conservancy alongside of us, we cannot wait to begin work in 2018 on

the first Little Forks preserve outside of Midland county, a strategic goal of the last two strategic plans for the organization. The riparian corridor will be managed by the Leon P. Martuch Chapter of Trout Unlimited with the Conservancy managing the remainder of the property and Chippewa Watershed Conservancy holding the conservation easements.

We have begun working on putting together a management plan for the property. Stay tuned for more details to come!

The Little Forks Conservancy permanently protects and preserves natural lands that add to the quality of life in our mid-Michigan community.

Changes to the Newsletter

You may have noticed that this newsletter is labeled as Winter/Spring. As of this year, the Conservancy has decided to issue two newsletters a year, a Winter/Spring issue and a Summer/Fall issue, rather than four. This decision was made on the basis of a number of factors, but we still greatly enjoy putting these newsletters together and believe these publications to be important to

communicating to our membership. Look for our next newsletter mailed out about six months from now. When important news needs to be shared, we will do so with either special mailings or via our e-newsletter. If you would like to subscribe to our e-newsletter, email Alyssa at agerman@littleforks.org. We have been busy since our last newsletter and I hope you enjoy reading about what we've been up to!

Congrats Sally Hightower, Tree Farmer of the Year!

The Conservancy is excited to announce, our board member Sally Hightower, has been named 2018 Tree Farmer of the Year. Sally's Twisted Oak Tree Farm is a prime example for stewardship in the area and she works hard to keep the land in the best condition possible. At the Twisted Oak Tree Farm you can find rare pink or yellow lady slipper flowers, catch trout on the river, or simply enjoy the fresh air and the sounds of nature. Sally has worked with many conservation groups to

keep the property in pristine condition, the first being The American Tree Farm System which she joined in 1981.

The property is permanently protected with a conservation easement with Little Forks, enrolled in MAEAP Forest Wetlands Habitat*A*Syst program, and is used for stream temperature research by Leon P. March Chapter of Trout.

"We are so proud of Sally. This is a great example of how forestry and permanent land protection can go hand in hand" commented Elan Lipschitz, Director of Land Conservation. To learn more about conservation easements, visit our website or contact us at 989-835-4886.

Welcome Ted and Alyssa!

Little Forks Conservancy is pleased to welcome AmeriCorps member Ted Randich and Alyssa German.

As the Land Steward, Ted will be assisting the Stewardship Coordinator with management of our preserves.

Ted graduated from Clark University in 2017 with a master's in Community Development and Planning.

"I am excited to learn the ins and outs of the field and of course, give back through AmeriCorps service," Randich stated.

Ted is serving through the Huron Pines AmeriCorps program (www.huronpines.org).

As the Outreach Coordinator, Alyssa is responsible for the communications and engagements of the Little Forks Conservancy.

Alyssa graduated from Northern Michigan University in 2014 with a bachelor's in Fine Arts



**AmeriCorps Member
Ted Randich**

with a concentration in photography.

"I'm looking forward to learning more about conservation and working with Little Forks to implementing more effective communication strategies," she said. We look forward to seeing their accomplishments!



**Outreach Coordinator
Alyssa German**

MiCorps Spring Stream Sampling

Join us in continuing our stream monitoring program! Data collection at the Cedar River on Saturday, May 5 at 9 am. We will meet at the Gladwin Community Building to break into teams. Volunteers can also help identify samples on Monday, May 7 at 5:30 pm at the Little Forks office.

For more details or to sign up, contact Andrea at afoster@littleforks.org

Nature/Nurture

Little Forks Conservancy has received widespread community support for the new program Nature/Nurture. Finishing up its first year at both ACEA and Windover High Schools, Nature/Nurture has received a grant of \$10,000 from the Midland County Youth Action Council of the Midland Area Community Foundation. The grant will fund the purchase of snowshoes, binoculars and compasses that the students can use for hikes and recreation as part of the program.

Thanks to a donation from ACE Hardware's Daniel Buzzell, 60 backpacks filled with hiking essentials were recently given away to each student of the program. The MCYAC grant will also fund two more years of backpacks to be given away to students, as well as two years of service projects completed by each school.

The Nature/Nurture program is an in-school



Andrea Foster and some of the students from ACEA show off their new hiking backpacks.

program spearheaded by Andrea Foster, Community Programs Manager with Little Forks. "This exciting news from MCYAC will allow me to take students on field trips during the cold months in addition to the fall hikes we currently go on. It's important to connect with nature during the winter months when depression is at its highest," she states.

At the end of each year, students create and implement their own service project. The program teaches leadership,

the importance of connection and preservation of natural spaces, and how to feel like a part of their community.

"We are so grateful for the community support we have received already, including from the Gerstacker Foundation. ACE Hardware has been incredibly generous and caring. I know that the students feel cared for, and now they can access nature any time when they grab their backpack and go," said Foster.

Averill Access For All - Update

Construction for the Access for All project, managed by Three Rivers Corporation, started in July 2017 and finished in November 2017. During this time creation of an asphalt path, benches and upgrades to the

overlook were completed. A Nature Play Area was constructed by volunteers at the end of the new path. This area creates a space where play and the natural world are reconnected.

In 2018, we will fin-

ish up this project with placement of interpretive signage, additional interactive elements in the Nature Play Area and a handicap portable bathroom.



Memorials and Honoraria

The following donors have made gifts to The Little Forks Conservancy on behalf of friends and family.

In Honor of Emma Meitler
Linda Dodge

In Honor of Beverly Gurnutt
Carol Feider

In Memory of Dan Provost
Bernadette Weaver

In Memory of Carol Weaver
Bernadette Weaver

In Memory of Don Blades
Ted & Jackie Denison
Harry & Betty Huguelet

In Memory of John Johnson
John & Norma Ritter
John & Karmalee Homes
Scott & Lana Maxwell
Mary Yeomans
Ruby Eastman
Paul Horning

In Memory of James & Bette Tollar





The Little Forks Conservancy
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**wild about
nature**

Your Winter/Spring Newsletter



New! Citizen Science Program: Vernal Pools

The Little Forks Conservancy's preserves contain large areas of wetland. One type of wetland is called vernal pools, these areas are crucial for many macroinvertebrates, reptiles and amphibians.

Through a monitoring program developed by Michigan Natural Features Inventory, we hope to learn more about these vernal pools and we need your help! To be a part of this program, you do not need prior knowledge but if you do that is wonderful! We will be hosting a workshop to cover the basics about vernal pools and the steps required to monitor them.

Sunday, March 25 • 1 - 4:00 p.m.
at Little Forks Office and Forestview Natural Area

To register, call 989.835.4886 or email shuettelman@littleforks.org.

2018 Chippewa Nature Center Programs with Little Forks Conservancy



May 17th, 6 pm. | Szok Preserve
Join Jeanne Henderson to observe wildflowers growing in the area.

July 21st, 10:30 am. | Riverview Natural Area
Join Michelle Fournier to look under logs for salamanders.

August 11th, 10 am. | Forestview Natural Area
Join Jeanne Henderson to explore Forestview for Ferns and Fungi.