



## News Release

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### Little Forks Purchases Permanent Conservation Easement



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Nearly 6 acres along Bear Head Drain will be protected by a Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program conservation easement purchase.

The Little Forks Conservancy is pleased to announce the completion of a conservation easement purchase as part of the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). The purchase of conservation easements under CREP is a partnership between the Michigan Department of Agriculture, the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, the Michigan Association of County Drain Commissioners and local land conservancies within the Saginaw Bay watershed. The goal of CREP is to improve the water quality of streams, rivers and drains that feed into Saginaw Bay and Lake Huron.

With funds provided through an Environmental Protection Agency Section 319, Clean Water Act grant, the Conservancy purchased a 5.81 acre permanent conservation easement along the Bear Head Drain from Phil and Janet Hehnlín of Jasper Township in southwest Midland County. The Hehnlíns qualified to participate in this grant program by removing the land along the drain from active agricultural production and creating a grass filter strip that will benefit water quality and wildlife within the watershed.

This project is one of about 40 similar projects throughout the Saginaw Basin that will permanently protect filter strips, forested buffers and wetland restorations totaling over 1,000 acres along several miles of waterways. "This voluntary action by landowners like the Hehnlíns will reduce the amount of sediment and other pollutants that enter our waterways on an annual basis" says LFC Land Protection Specialist Elan Lipschitz. "By extending the benefits beyond the initial 15-year rental component of CREP, the new permanent conservation easement will provide benefits and protection of our water resource forever."

The Hehnlín conservation easement is the only one The Little Forks Conservancy will hold under this first phase of the program. However, new funds are being made available through a Clean Michigan Initiative (CMI) grant that may allow Little Forks to acquire one or two additional CREP permanent conservation easements.

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