



News Release

The Little Forks Conservancy
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Shellenbarger Land Company Property Protected



This section of the North Branch of the Cedar River flows through the recently protected Shellenbarger Land Company property.

October 31, 2006

A conservation easement was placed on property owned by the Shellenbarger Land Company in Gladwin. The conservation easement, held by The Little Forks Conservancy of Midland, will ensure that approximately 3500 feet of the North Branch of the Cedar River will remain natural and undeveloped forever.

Richard Shellenbarger, a co-partner in the Land Company, contacted the Conservancy after reading about the 191 acres George and Sue Lane protected just downstream with the help of the Conservancy in 2004.

The 80 acre property, where the Shellenbargers manage the natural resources for traditional recreational use, contains woods, open fields and wetlands. By ensuring their property remains natural and undeveloped, the Shellenbargers are protecting the water quality of the Cedar River.

Bill Shellenbarger, a co-partner in the Land Company, said, "To know that we made the sacrifice to protect it, it's a good investment for society."

A conservation easement is a voluntary, legal agreement that permanently protects land which has conservation value. Through conservation easements, the landowner retains ownership of the property and can live on it, sell it or pass it on to heirs, knowing that it will always be protected. The property remains in private ownership, and public access is not permitted.

The Shellenbargers' easement is the Conservancy's first completed Cedar River Conservation Easement Project property, which was funded in part through a grant from the State of Michigan's Clean Michigan Initiative. Additional funding was provided by 3M Scientific Anglers.

Elan Lipschitz, LFC land protection specialist, said, "The project's goal is to protect lands

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that benefit water quality in the Cedar River watershed, and the Shellenbarger property easily meets that goal.”

The conservation agreement on the property ensures that a permanent vegetated buffer will act as a filter for runoff entering the North Branch of the Cedar River. In addition, the vegetation that hangs over the river provides thermal regulation of the stream, which is important for maintaining healthy aquatic habitat.

Lipschitz added, “Maintaining high water quality in the Cedar River watershed benefits the cold water fishery ensuring a healthy trout population along with other aquatic species.”

Steven Kin, LFC board president, said, “The conservation easement the Shellenbargers have placed on their property is important for the long term protection of the Cedar River watershed. We applaud the Shellenbargers for taking this critical step in protecting the environment of the Cedar River and hope that it will set an example for others to follow.”

The Little Forks Conservancy works with landowners to permanently protect land with natural and cultural resources that add to the quality of life in our community. The Conservancy has helped private landowners protect over 1,300 acres in Mid-Michigan, including more than six miles of river shoreline.

To learn more, please contact our office at (989) 835-4886 or visit our website at www.littleforks.org.

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