



THE LITTLE FORKS CONSERVANCY

Protecting the places we love for future generations

Winter 2006

Issue 34

Serving the Tittabawassee, Chippewa and Pine River Watersheds

Georgia Couple Protects Gladwin Farmstead



Scott and Kay Whalen might live in Georgia, but they have strong ties to the land in Michigan. Scott, a native of Michigan, grew up in Gladwin County appreciating the outdoors by spending time afield. Over the years, he has seen the loss of habitat in the changing landscape and wanted to do his part for conservation.

In 1997, Scott and Kay purchased 119 acres of intensively farmed land in Butman Township, Gladwin County. Scott began restoring the land with native grasses including big bluestem, little bluestem, Indian grass and wildflowers. He also began to

reestablish wetlands on his property to provide habitat for waterfowl and other migratory species. Over the past several years, almost half of the land previously farmed has been converted to valuable habitat for local wildlife, improving water quality and enhancing the scenic view of the land.

The Whalens look forward to living full time on their land and are strong advocates for conservation and preserving the land that is so close to their hearts. On November 17th, the Whalens permanently protected their land with a conservation easement with funding from our contributors as well as the State of Michigan under the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program.

“Farming defined America, many hands have contributed to what is now there. Developing this land would tarnish the hard work of the previous stewards of the property. The memory and hard work will now be exhibited in perpetuity thanks to Elan and Little Forks,” said Scott Whalen, commenting on the

decision he and his wife made to protect their Gladwin property.

This is the Conservancy's second project completed on land enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program. In the Whalen's case, they wanted to protect not just the 13 acres of CREP enrolled land but the entire farm. Using the Conservancy's land fund we were able to leverage one grant source to maximize the conservation benefit.

“Their actions today will have a lasting impact on wildlife habitat and water quality. The land will continue to be farmed as well as provide high quality native habitat” comments LFC land protection specialist, Elan Lipschitz. We commend Scott and Kay on their commitment to conservation. To learn more about conservation easements please contact our office.

Inside...

Check out The Little Forks Conservancy's new posters celebrating completed land projects. (p. 5)





From the Director...

We recently received a newsletter from Little Traverse Conservancy (LTC), one of Michigan's oldest land conservancies. The cover article declared a major milestone had been reached by that

organization. After 33 years they just completed a project that pushed them over the 25,000 acre threshold of protected land. What was equally amazing is that LTC protected over half of that total acreage (12,800 acres) in just the last five years. While a majority of their projects now protect land through the use of a conservation easement, LTC also manages 164 preserves throughout five counties in northwest Michigan.

When the Little Forks Conservancy was formed almost 10 years ago, it set as its goal the protection of significant lands throughout the Tittabawassee River watershed, with an emphasis on riverfront land. The founders wanted to take the methods of LTC and apply them locally. LFC is a response to the fact that each year in our community natural lands are converted to other uses. Most of the time it occurs in places that we infrequently see or visit. Occasionally, however, one or two high profile properties undergo dramatic changes.

For example, when a couple of parcels along Eastman Avenue in Midland changed from a field to a commercial use, most people noticed but are pleased that they have a new store or restaurant to visit. And, quite frankly, the character of the town or street did not change significantly.

But, as I watched the slow conversion of 80 acres along nearby Joe Mann Boulevard, I lamented the dramatic change that I knew was inevitable. The site was slowly being prepared for a major change, one that changes the nature and feel of that part of our community. For the last year or so I've seen a few trees cut here, a few trees cut there, some roadwork, a little bit of grass mowing, I was getting used to the change.

Then, WHAM! The nice little block of woods that provided a visual buffer to the rest of the commercial development was gone. In a matter of days the experience of entering the commercial mecca changed. I was hopeful that there might be some reasonable balance between pavement and trees, even in a commercial development.

Our goal is not to protect every piece of land that is out there. Rather it is to protect significant, or signature properties, that can define us as a community.

As the Board of The Little Forks Conservancy nears the completion of a five year strategic plan, I can't help but wonder whether we can meet the pace of our sister organizations throughout the state. From the completion of our first project in 1999 to our most recent completed project this past November, we have helped private landowners protect more than 1,200 acres for the benefit of themselves, their heirs and their communities. At a rate of 200 acres per year, it would take us another 19 years to reach just the 5,000-acre



threshold. Interestingly enough, our Board is considering setting a goal of 5,000 acres, but not in 19 years. We want to be there in just five years.

We need quiet, interesting and beautiful rivers to canoe. This should be our balance to the pavement, bricks and lights of our commercial development. We also need biologic diversity, clean water, clean air, farms and open fields. We need quiet places to explore with our children and grandchildren. We need to maintain working natural landscapes, not as remnants, but as signature landscapes that define who we are as a community.

What can we learn from our neighbor to the north to make our goals a reality? I spoke with their executive director to try and ferret out the secret of their success. This is some of the wisdom imparted to me.

- This is a business of relationships. You have to take the time to build relationships with your donors, the landowners and the general community. You are

(Continued on p. 4)

Campaign Donors Celebrate

On November 3 the Conservancy held a gathering at the Whiting Forest Visitor Center to thank the donors to and leaders of our recent capital campaign and to celebrate the close of fundraising for the “Preserve Today, Ensure Tomorrow” challenge grant from the Herbert H. and Grace A. Dow Foundation.

The Dow Foundation provided a challenge to LFC to raise \$750,000 in endowment or land acquisition donations by the end of 2006. For each dollar raised The Foundation pledged two dollars (up to \$1.5 million) toward the Conservancy’s endowment fund. The endowment fund is money that will be invested to support the Conservancy in perpetuity.

The cause for the celebration was the completion of fundraising for the project one year ahead of

schedule. With the recently announced \$363,000 grant from the State’s Clean Michigan Initiative (CMI) to purchase conservation easements along high quality waterways in the Cedar River watershed, the Conservancy has received donations and commitments for more than \$1 million during the grant period (2004–06). In 2006 we will collect final pledges and close one or two projects as part of the CMI grant to obtain the last of the funds needed to close the campaign.

Guests heard from William Stavropoulos, honorary campaign chair; Ranny Riecker, President of the Herbert H. and Grace A. Dow Foundation; Christian Velasquez, LFC campaign chair; and Doug Koop, LFC Executive Director. Other campaign leaders in attendance included Rick Reynolds, Eric Gilbertson, Alan Ott and Herbert D. “Ted” Doan.



Campaign donors gathered on the back deck at the Whiting Forest Visitor Center on an unusually warm November evening to celebrate the completion of our fundraising efforts for the Preserve Today, Ensure Tomorrow Capital campaign.

LFC Welcomes Its Newest Board Member



The Little Forks Conservancy is pleased to announce the addition of Blake Hine to the Board of Directors.

Blake earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration majoring in Accounting with a minor in Management Information Systems from Central Michigan University. While at CMU he was an active member of the professional accounting fraternity Beta Alpha Psi. Before Graduation, Blake did an audit internship with BDO Seidman, Grand Rapids. After Graduation, he began his career in public accounting in Midland at Yeo and Yeo, PC where he earned his CPA license and later at Burnside & Lang, PC. Blake volunteered extensively with the Optimist Club of Midland, serving both as Treasurer and Vice President, Sales Leads Roundtable as President, and The Midland Area Chamber of Commerce. In 1999, Blake's focus turned from public accounting to private industry where he was

able to focus on the success of a single business. He now works as CFO for Gerace Construction Company, Inc.

From 1996-1999, he and his wife Angela, opened their Midland home to 15 teenage foster children by volunteering through the Midland County Probate Court. Blake also contributes his time to the Midland Rotary Club, he will begin serving as Chairperson of the Program Committee in 2006, The Midland Community Center where he is active on the operating board, and for Midland Tomorrow's Attraction and Retention Committee.

Blake comments, "The welfare of our land, one of our most valuable resources, shall be treasured, respected, and preserved with the best interests of both the community and economy in mind." It's with those ascertains, that Blake begins work with Little Forks in 2005.

Blake and Angela have 3 boys (Jacob, 7, Samuel 5 and John,3), they enjoy camping, friends, and fishing in remote locations of Ontario, as well as involvement in the many sports (especially hockey) and activities that the Midland Community offers.

(From the Director, continued from p. 2)

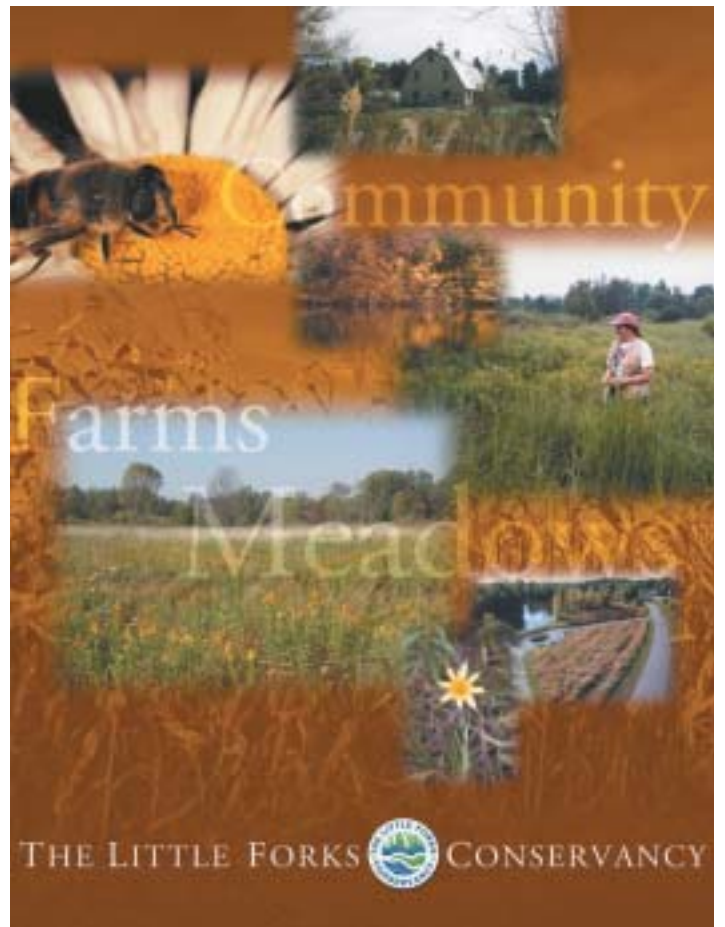
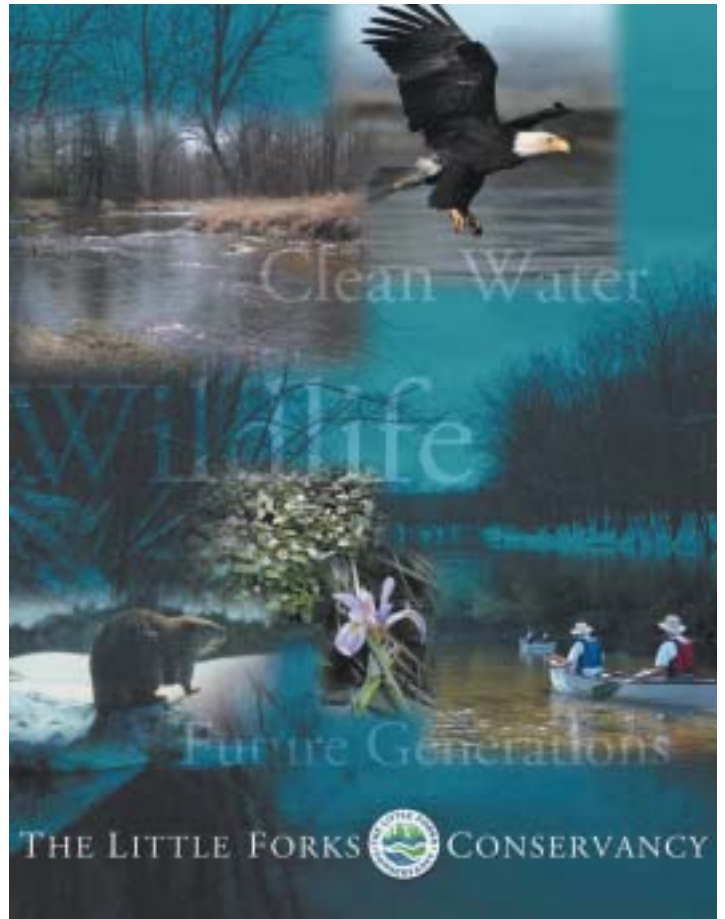
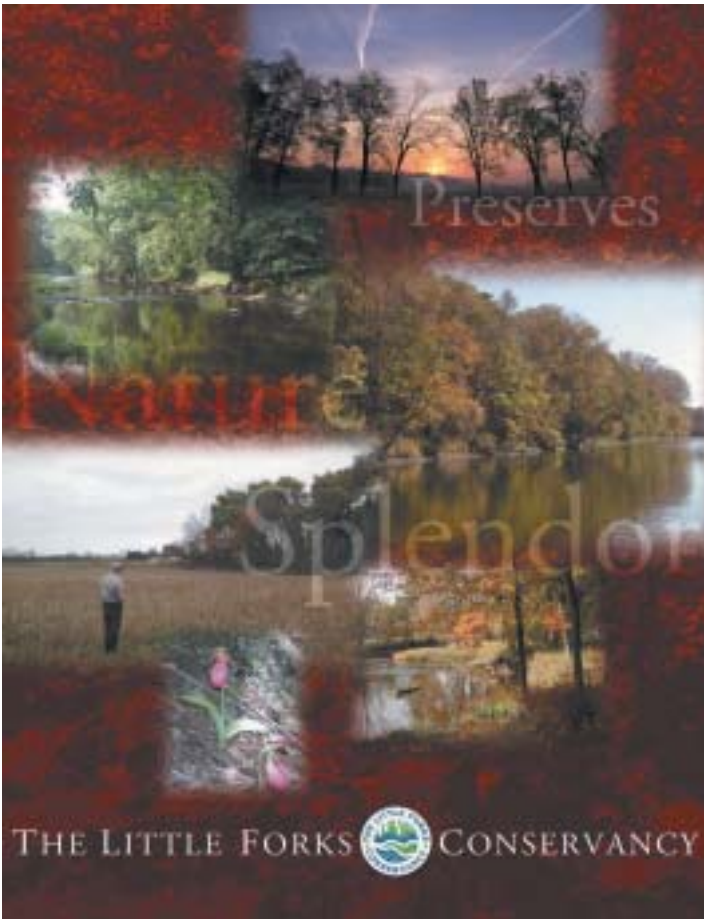
building an organization that needs to last and your relationships will sustain you.

- You must have smart, dedicated, passionate staff.
- Your board members must believe in the organization and its mission.
- You must recognize the urgency of your work without being alarmist.
- You must be clear that your mission is to conserve land *for* people, not *from* people.
- Your organization must be willing to take reasonable risks. When a property is available for conservation, your organization must take the lead in making it happen. That is how the community will become familiar with who you are and what you do.

I believe, at least in my analysis, The Little Forks Conservancy actually does quite well in each of these areas. If these are the critical building blocks for success, then LFC should do well over the next few years.

Of course we can not continue in our mission without the support of our members, local foundations and landowners. I want to thank each of you who made a contribution in 2005 and I look forward to earning your support again in 2006 and in years to come.





A special thanks to Steve Space for designing these posterboards for Conservancy use in our public outreach programs.

LFC Continues Community Outreach Efforts



Tom Lenon, Chippewa Nature Center (l) and Stan Lilley from the Chippewa Watershed Conservancy prepare for an LFC presentation on priority conservation lands in the Tittabawassee River watershed.



Board member Glenn Sanford (5th from left) speaks with landowners from within the Sturgeon Creek watershed about his experience with placing a conservation easement on his 20 acres along the Chippewa River.



Executive Director, Doug Koop was invited to the Whiting Forest Visitor Center to make a presentation on leadership and networking, for the Federated Garden Clubs of Michigan.



Land Protection Specialist, Elan Lipschitz uses a powerpoint presentation to inform landowners about our work in the Sturgeon Creek watershed



Board member Carol Feider shares a laugh with former Board member Dick Touvell at the annual LFC holiday open house.



Land Protection Specialist, Elan Lipschitz discusses protection options with landowners following a meeting at the Lost Arrow Resort.

Project Partners:

-1999-

- Don Blades, 274 acres

-2000-

- Hugh & Eileen Starks, 40 acres
- Borys & Lubo Zura, 44 acres

-2001-

- William H. Meek, 75 acres
- Glenn & Carol Sanford, 20 acres

-2003-

- Ceo Bauer, 236 acres
- The Midland Area Community Foundation, 41.5 acres
- Nancy Steiner, 9.8 acres

-2004-

- Phil & Janet Hehnlín, 5 acres
- Dr. Kyung-Sik Ahn, 31 acres
- Saginaw Basin Land Conservancy, 39 acres
- George & Sue Lane, 191 acres

-2005-

- Ceo Bauer, 78 acres
- Scott and Kay Whalen, 119 acres

Notes on Giving



LFC President Wendy Baker accepts the contribution from 3M Scientific Anglers representative Bruce Richards.

For the third consecutive year The Little Forks Conservancy was selected by the employees of 3M Scientific Angler to be the recipient of a corporate contribution toward our annual operations. We are grateful to 3M and their employees for supporting us again.

We wish to recognize **3M Scientific Anglers** along with **National City Bank** as our business sponsors for this newsletter. Their contributions help offset a portion of the cost to produce this newsletter.

National City



PLEASE ACCEPT MY CONTRIBUTION TO HELP PROTECT SIGNIFICANT NATURAL RESOURCES IN MY COMMUNITY.

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Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

E-mail: _____

Phone: _____

\$5,000

\$1,000

\$500

\$250

\$100

\$50

\$25

Other: _____

I would like to make an additional contribution of \$_____ to the Land Fund.

Please send me information on protecting my land.

Donations are tax deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law.

