



## Couple Protects Nearly One Mile of River

Jim and Beth Wallace of Freeland have a lot of memories tied to their land along nearly one mile of the West Branch of the Cedar River in Gladwin County. Used for family vacations, they watched their family grow as they tended their northern retreat.

Previously used for pasture, the 90-acre property was primarily open field when Jim and Beth purchased it. Over the years, Jim painstakingly restored the land. Today, the wooded property is an oasis for their family.

"We have a beautiful place up there," said Beth. "It's a lot of work. I don't know how he does it, but he does."

To ensure the land they love continues to be cared for, the Wallace family signed a conservation easement with The Little Forks Conservancy. A conservation easement is a permanent, legal agreement between a landowner and The Little Forks Conservancy which determines the uses of the property to best preserve its natural resources forever.

For Jim and Beth, the conservation easement is the culmination of their work restoring their land and protecting their stretch

of the West Branch of the Cedar River.

Jim said, "The more you improve the land, the more you start thinking about the environment. We made it for our kids to play. Now, life has gone by and we're looking at it as a place for our grandkids to play."

Beth added, "That's the way life is – memories keep growing."

"That's what this document is really all about," added Jim. "When we first got the property there weren't many trees... and now I'm proud to be a certified member of the American Tree Farmers Association. I've seen it grow and now the wildlife

can enjoy it and my grandkids can enjoy it."

Jim's work with conservation began in the 1970's. "When I was first up there," he said, "I saw my first bluebird. Bluebirds were a dying species then and people were starting to put up bluebird houses. With my special friend and neighbor, Dave Young, we built 50 bluebird houses."

Another neighbor, Norm Engel, told Jim about the Conservancy. "It's also been good to have an excellent working relationship with my neighbor Norm Engel about the environment and the Cedar River," Jim added. Mr. Engel signed

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



*This stretch of the West Branch of the Cedar River will be protected forever thanks to a conservation easement by James and Elizabeth Wallace.*

## From the Director: Sustainability is About Caring



### 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 & Kathryn Whalen, 119 acres

#### –2006–

- Blanche Stark, 79 acres
- Shellenbarger Land Company, 80 acres

A common theme I hear from landowners is how our landscape seems to change so gradually over the years that one day they look up and the land no longer looks how they remembered it.

Because the conversion of land occurs over some time in our community, stewardship of our natural resources receives less “air play” than the consumption of our natural resources. Stewardship, as I was taught, implies caring for a resource so that it is available for future generations. Today it is often referred to as sustainability, but the main concept is, in my opinion, careful stewardship.

When I read about what our forests were like before Michigan’s lumbering days, I cannot help but wonder how our landscape would look today if, instead of clear cutting, forest harvests had been selective cuts. Would we

have a healthier timber industry in the state and more manufacturers of wood products? Would we also have cleaner streams and more varieties of wildflowers and wildlife? Would the “Wolverine State” still have wolverines?

With our community now talking about sustainability, what are we doing to manage our resources today to make sure someone generations from now is not sitting in an office writing an article wondering “What if our waters had been managed better?”

I have been working for The Little Forks Conservancy for more than 15 years now and have had the opportunity to work with a number of landowners who have a shared vision for their land – a vision to manage their land to conserve important natural resources that provide a benefit to everyone.

These landowners are taking steps slowly, over the course of many years, to protect stream banks, wildlife habitat, farmland and forests. They spend a substantial portion of their lives caring for their property—nurturing it, restoring it and helping it.

Then, as the years pass, these landowners look

for a way to ensure that the hard work they’ve put into the land is protected for their grandchildren and great-grandchildren to enjoy.

Our cover story about the Wallace family is a perfect illustration of this cycle of stewardship. As we were talking at the signing of their conservation easement, Mr. Wallace shared many stories of restoring his property. At the end, he told us how his first project to provide habitat to bluebirds turned into another project and then another until he looked around and was struck by the amazing property he has.

It occurred to me then that the slow change of our landscape doesn’t always have to be for the worse. That sometimes one project can turn into another project until we look up and see all that we have accomplished.

So while we celebrate the Wallace family and their commitment to the land, the Conservancy is looking ahead to the next project and the next.

And I thank you for your support of The Little Forks Conservancy. Together, we can build upon our successes to create a better, healthier place to call home for generations to come.

## COUPLE, continued

a conservation easement with The Little Forks Conservancy in 2007 to protect 190 acres directly across the Cedar River from the Wallace family.

Both properties were protected through grants from the State of Michigan to protect the water quality of the Cedar River watershed. The Conservancy's first grant conserved over 500 acres and more than 20,000 feet of lake, river and creek frontage. The Conservancy received its current grant in 2009 to update the watershed's management plan and to purchase conservation easements.

Elan Lipschitz, the Conservancy's land protection specialist, said, "The protection of this land helps to permanently protect a significant portion of the only stretch of blue ribbon trout stream in



Jim and Beth Wallace with Land Protection Specialist Elan Lipschitz

the Tittabawassee River Watershed. The Wallaces have done many good things to improve the land and we are very grateful for their dedication to permanently protecting the land."

Beth, a nurse, concluded, "The property would not be nearly as enjoyable without the work [Jim's] done. I guess we're both caregivers. He's a caregiver

to the land and I'm a caregiver to people."

And now, the Wallace family knows that Jim's hard work will be preserved and appreciated for generations to come.

*For more information about conservation easements or the Cedar River Project, contact our office at 989.835.4886 or [info@littleforks.org](mailto:info@littleforks.org).*

## Preserve Guides Available Now!

Discovering our preserves is easier than ever with our new Preserve Guide. Featuring both the Averill Preserve and Riverview Natural Area, the Preserve Guide has directions and important information about our preserves.

In addition, each property now has its own trail map.

Get your preserve guide and trail maps at [www.littleforks.org](http://www.littleforks.org) or stop by our office.



## Gifts in Tribute

The following contributions were made in honor or in memory of a friend or loved one.

**In Memory of Willow Pilaske**  
Eugene and Deana Beckham

**In Memory of Luke Larimore**  
Eugene and Deana Beckham

**In Honor of Theresa Guthrie**  
Eugene and Deana Beckham

**In Memory of Morgan Brubaker**  
Janet Brubaker

**In Honor of Ed Janus**  
Tim and Deb Broderick



## Project Partners

### -2007-

- David & Anna Spencer, 154.5 acres
- Norman & Patricia Engel, 190 acres
- George & Sue Lane, 80 acres
- Robert & Susan Piesko, 140 acres
- Richard & Kathy Shellenbarger, 73.4 acres
- Jon & Elizabeth Ringelberg, 70 acres
- Gerald & Pamela Schmiedicke, 80 acres
- Elizabeth Levi, 8.5 acres

### -2008-

- Robin & Ardith Arbury, 219 acres
- L. Charles Christensen, 200 acres

### -2010-

- Robert & Cheryl Duda, 24 acres
- Michael & Kathy Helmick, 30 acres

### -2011-

- The Hubert Family, 40 acres

### -2012-

- James & Elizabeth Wallace, 90 acres

## Explore Our Preserves!

Join Us for One of These Great Hikes

### Meet the Property!

**July 18**

**7–8:30 p.m.**

Go behind the scenes with Executive Director Doug Koop and discover The Little Forks Conservancy's Averill Preserve. Meet Doug at the Averill Overlook to explore Averill's lumbering history. Learn about the Conservancy's efforts to restore this 74-acre preserve. There's a lot to see at the Averill Preserve!

### Cool Critters: Bug Exploration at Averill

**July 28**

**10 a.m.–noon**

Insects serve an important role in maintaining our environment. Check out some of the coolest critters that thrive at the Averill Preserve. Join leader Denny Brooks on Saturday, July 28, to see what we can catch. We may even spot a few butterflies!

### Meet the Property!

**August 15**

**7–8:30 p.m.**

Go behind the scenes with Executive Director Doug Koop and discover The Little Forks Conservancy's Riverview Natural Area. Enjoy the view of the Tittabawassee River from the high banks of Riverview Natural Area. There is a lot to see at Riverview Natural Area!



## Out and About

Have you seen us lately? Here are a few of the places you may have seen our board and staff.

- Elan Lipschitz and conservation easement donor Glenn Sanford held a meeting at The Pere Marquette District Library in Clare to discuss our land conservation program. Our thanks to the Library for generously providing their space.
- Elan Lipschitz met with landowners to speak about our Cedar River Project. Many thanks to the Seebeck Family Foundation for graciously opening the Lodge at the Gladwin County Recreational Area for us.
- The Kiwanis Club of Midland hosted Doug Koop for a presentation on the Conservancy's history and recent activities.

## On the Land



This Michigan Lily, or *Lilium michiganense*, was spotted recently along the trail at Riverview Natural Area. A native perennial, it can grow up to 5 feet tall. It is sometimes confused with naturalized asian tiger lily. Spot something on our preserves? Be sure to share it on our Facebook page!

## New Members Elected to Board of Directors

Three talented professionals have joined the Board of Directors at The Little Forks Conservancy. Kristen Jones, Chuck Martin and Bill Thomson were elected to the Board in May.

Kristen Jones is an attorney with the Midland firm of Cline Close Dyer PLC, practicing in the areas of business law, real estate, and estate planning. Chuck Martin is a horticulturist and curator of woody plants at The Dow Gardens. Bill Thomson is president of Midland-based McMahan, Thomson & Associates, P.C.

"We're thrilled to welcome Kristen, Chuck and Bill," said Board President Eric Brubaker, "They bring diverse skills to the Conservancy, but they share a love of our mid-Michigan community and our environment."

Jones, who holds a J.D. from Wayne State University

Law School and a B.A. in Economics from Albion College, relocated to Midland from Southeastern Michigan with her husband Josh and their two young daughters, Libby and Mackenzie. They love this area of the state and north because of the beautiful landscape and scenery one can get to in such a short drive.

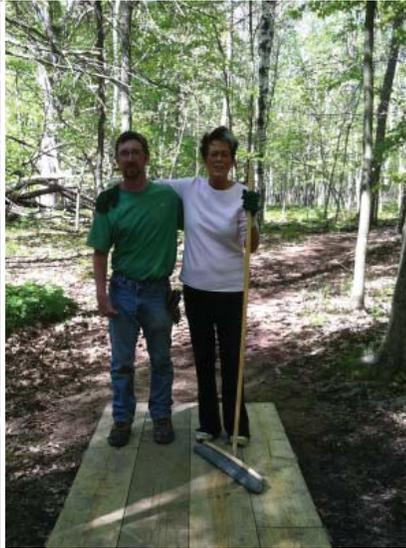
Jones added, "I look forward to the opportunity to volunteer on the board of The Little Forks Conservancy in Midland. I feel it is one of the small things I can do to preserve some landscape for future generations."

Martin received his Bachelor's degree in Ornamental Horticulture from Michigan State University, a Master's degree in Ornamental Horticulture from the University of Wisconsin in Madison and

an MBA from Northwood University. He joined The Dow Gardens in 1984. He also pens a weekly article on plant varieties and culture for the Midland Daily News. Martin is extremely grateful to his wife Beth, who also has a Bachelor's degree in Horticulture, for editing all his articles.

Thomson holds a bachelor's degree in accounting from Michigan State University and is a certified public accountant. Thomson has been "actively involved in outdoor activities in one form or another since Boy Scouts," he said. He also serves as chairman of the Board of CBM of Midland, treasurer for the MSU Alumni Association of Midland County, and president/treasurer of Michigan Saginaw Valley Brittany Club.

# Summer Stewardship Season in Full Swing



**Day of Caring:** Employees of Midland County Offices donated their time to build two boardwalks at Riverview Natural Area as part of United Way of Midland County's Season of Caring. Our thanks to: Bridgette Gransden; Keith Gransden; Gabe Gransden; Ross Ahlich; Roger Garner; Milissa Allen; Wade Lamblin; Brian Nichols; Tom Wilmot; Kevin Varner; Mike Krecek; and Chris Cantrell.



**Boy Scouts Help Out:** Eagle Scout candidate Aidan Saggars along with parents and boy scouts from Troop #767 build a boardwalk at Riverview Natural Area. Together, they placed 48 feet of boardwalk on our trail loop. Take a walk at Riverview Natural Area to admire their hard work!

## Thank you!

Our volunteers have been quite busy already this year! We'd like to thank the following individuals for donating their time and energy to help us at our preserves!

- Dave Anderson, who mowed the trails at the Averill Preserve in May.
- Ed Elliott and Glenn Sanford, who continue their work to remove invasive species at the Averill Preserve.
- Randy Kursinsky, who has been monitoring Riverview Natural Area.
- Ed Elliott, who built a brochure container for trail maps at Riverview Natural Area.
- Jim and Alice Morgan, who donated a two-seat kayak to assist with our programs and annual monitoring.

## Explore Our Preserves!

Join Us for One of These Great Hikes

### Fungi in the Forest August 22

**9:30 a.m.–noon**

Karen Breternitz of Chippewa Nature Center will be your guide as we explore the dense forest of Riverview Natural Area for fungus. Bring your camera for a slow-paced 1.5 mile hike. We will meet at the parking area on Wheeler Road and caravan to the northern trails.

**Directions and more can be found at [www.littleforks.org](http://www.littleforks.org).**

## Upcoming Work Days

Lend a hand at our preserves! We need your help on the following work days:

**Averill Preserve  
July 18  
10 a.m. to noon**

**Riverview Natural Area  
July 24  
6 to 8 p.m.**

**Averill Preserve  
August 14  
10 a.m. to noon**

**Call our office to sign up today!**



### Stewardship Tools Needed

You can help us complete our summer stewardship by donating one of the following tools or supplies:

Cordless drill  
Drill bits  
Circular saw  
Heavy duty loppers  
Backpack sprayer  
Chainsaw  
Tree puller

Garden tools  
Fire rake  
10" Folding saw  
Water cooler rack  
Garden cart  
Tool bag

# President's Annual Report

I am pleased to submit my President's Annual Report on Report on the activities of the Conservancy in 2011. This year marked a significant milestone for the Conservancy – the completion of our largest, and most ambitious, land project.

Thanks to the generous support of the Herbert H. and Grace A. Dow Foundation, we reached our \$1.5 million dollar goal in April to complete the acquisition of Riverview Natural Area. My congratulations to staff and the board – past and present – who lead this project to its successful completion.

Knowing that we would retain ownership of all 419-acres, we turned our attention to developing trails for public access. Elan was busy over the spring and summer leading volunteers with several projects in order to prepare the property for visitors.

In September, we were able to unveil their hard work at a dedication ceremony. A new trail has been created thanks to Conservancy volunteers and volunteers from Chippewa Nature Center and the Arnold Center. Local scouts from Boy Scout Troop #763 installed barriers at the parking area and 65 feet of boardwalk along the new trail. Interpretive signs discussing important natural features of the property were designed by graphic design students at Central Michigan University.

While our work on Riverview continued, we still

## STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 2011

### UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS

#### *Support and Revenue*

Grants and contributions	\$ 187,411
Investment income	1,007
Change in value of beneficial interest	(5,109)
Net assets released from restrictions	
-For specific purposes	451,229
-Time restrictions expired	<u>33,000</u>

**Total support and revenue** **667,538**

#### *Expenses*

Conservation program	231,070
Administration	40,142
Fundraising	<u>23,951</u>

**Total expenses** **295,163**

**Change in unrestricted net assets** **372,375**

### TEMPORARILY RESTRICTED NET ASSETS

#### *Support and revenue (grants and contributions)*

Restricted for programs in future years	33,000
Restricted for specific purposes	411,936
Change in value of beneficial interest	(9,296)

*Net assets released from restrictions* (484,229)

**Change in temporarily restricted net assets** **(48,589)**

**Change in net assets** **323,786**

Net assets at beginning of year 1,972,457

**Net assets at end of year** **\$ 2,296,243**

had an active year for our other land programs.

In January, the Hubert Family donated a conservation easement to protect the 40 acres along over 4,000 feet of the Pine River that their family had owned for more than six decades. Over the years, the family planted thousands of trees, restoring it to the beautifully wooded property it is today. Fred Hubert, Rosalie

Miller and Maurice Miller reached the decision to protect this special land and worked through the process together to make it a reality. The Conservancy is so pleased to be a part of protecting this amazing family property.

The Conservancy also expanded its conservation program with the launch of the Sustainable Lands Partner Program. Our newest

**Continued on next page**

## PRESIDENT, continued

program is designed to be a first step for landowners interested in conserving their land. Landowners who enroll in this program are recognized for sustainably managing the natural resources of their land. Based on the response from the pilot program in the Cedar River watershed, the Conservancy is expanding the program to our entire service area.

Our work in the Cedar River watershed reached an important milestone, as well. Over the past two years, the Conservancy and University of Michigan-Flint have worked with many organizations and individuals in Gladwin and Clare County to update the Cedar River Watershed Management Plan. The revised plan was completed this year and approved by the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality. From this effort has been the creation of the Cedar River Watershed Steering Committee, a community effort to continue to improve the watershed by implementing the watershed plan.

We also had another active year for our stewardship program. Once again, we monitored all 23 conservation easements in our care. Thanks to Doug, Elan and volunteer monitor Eldon Enger for fulfilling our commitment to our conservation easement lands.

In addition, it was a busy year for activities at the Averill Preserve.

Our Tuesday Afternoon Stewardship Team was hard at work removing autumn olive and other invasive species. Many thanks need to go to Ed Elliott and Glenn Sanford for leading our Tuesday Afternoon Stewardship Team. A major project this year at the Averill Preserve was completed by Eagle Scout Candidate Spencer O'Hare and his scout troop. They removed the old fence at the Overlook and rebuilt a new fence in its place. The completion of the Riverview acquisition and our stewardship at Averill Preserve continues to help us expand our programming and events. Many thanks to our friends at Chippewa Nature Center – Dennis Pilaske, Tom Lenon, and Karen Breternitz – for leading interpretive hikes at Riverview Natural Area. We are also grateful to Dennis Brooks, who once again lead a hike on the cool critters of the Averill Preserve. We are looking forward to developing more opportunities for our community to explore our preserves.

This year saw many changes to our Board of Directors. We welcomed several new board members. The Conservancy is very fortunate to be

joined by Kathy Brooks, Greg Dardas, Jon DeGroot and Steve Scott, who bring a passion for conservation and diverse skills to our board. Regrettably, we said "so long" to three board members, Maureen Craig, Geof Kusch and Glenn Sanford. We are grateful for their dedication to the success of the Conservancy. While Maureen and Geof have relocated, Glenn continues to be involved in our Averill Preserve Tuesday Afternoon Stewardship Team.

As always, ensuring stable funding remains a priority to the Conservancy. We are grateful for the continued support of our community. This year, the Conservancy established the Sustainers Circle to recognize donors who make an annual contribution of \$500 or more to the Operating Fund. We are grateful for the response to this program and look forward to recognizing the generous contributions of these individuals.

As the Conservancy celebrates our 15th anniversary, I am truly proud of what we have accomplished this year and look forward to new opportunities and challenges as we continue our work.





The Little Forks Conservancy  
105 Post Street  
Midland, MI 48640

Fun • Free • Family-Friendly

## Nature Discovery Day



Friday, August 17  
10 a.m. to noon

Explore The Little Forks Conservancy's 419-acre Riverview Natural Area and enjoy:

- Hands-on Activities for Kids Ages 5 to 10
- Self-Guided Scavenger Hunt
- And More!

More details at [www.littleforks.org](http://www.littleforks.org)

celebrating **15** years

Help us celebrate our 15th Anniversary! Give a gift for the first time and the J.A. Woollam Foundation will match your gift. Haven't given in a while? The Foundation will match your gift. Already a member? Give an additional amount and the Foundation will match your increased giving!

Join the 15th Anniversary Challenge today by giving online at:

[www.littleforks.org](http://www.littleforks.org)

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Kathy Brooks	George Lane
Eric Brubaker	Chuck Martin
Greg Dardas	Jan McGuire
Jon DeGroot	Dan Rader
Bill Gebo	Steve Scott
Bethany Goodman	Bill Thomson
Jill Gushow	Jerry Ziarno
Kristen Jones	

### STAFF

Douglas Koop  
*Executive Director*  
Elan Lipschitz  
*Land Protection Specialist*  
Joelle Ferguson  
*Communications Specialist*

Phone: 989-835-4886  
[www.littleforks.org](http://www.littleforks.org)  
[info@littleforks.org](mailto:info@littleforks.org)

