

THE LITTLE FORKS CONSERVANCY



Winter 2010

Preserve Today, Ensure Tomorrow

Issue 49

An exciting Challenge awaits for Riverview

When the Little Forks Conservancy announced our Riverview land acquisition project to purchase 419 acres along the Tittabawassee River, we knew that there would be challenges along the way.

The Conservancy's Riverview project is a \$1.5 million campaign to purchase and preserve two adjacent parcels of undeveloped land along two miles of the Tittabawassee River in Homer Township, Midland County. Featuring vernal ponds, extensive wetland complexes, mature woods and 120 acres of highly productive farmland, Riverview Natural Area will be a place where families can hike, cross-country ski or just enjoy the beauty of nature.

The Conservancy is excited to announce that we were recently awarded a challenge grant from The Carls Foundation.

For new contributions or pledges for Riverview

received through December 31, 2010, the Foundation will match every dollar up to a total amount of \$25,000. That doubles your gift!

"We have been seeking a grant from The Carls Foundation for many years because of their support for land conservation primarily in the northwest lower peninsula," said Douglas Koop, executive director of The Little Forks Conservancy. "It is very exciting for us to begin what we hope is a long-term relationship with the Foundation."

The award of The Carls Foundation grant comes on the heels of a grant from the Charles J. Strosacker Foundation. In December, the Foundation awarded a \$75,000 grant to aid in the purchase of Riverview.

"We greatly appreciate the Charles J. Strosacker Foundation's support of this project," added Koop. "Their contribution moves us another step closer to



Riverview

Nature has no substitute.

ensuring that this important natural space is available to our community for generations to come."

Since the start of fundraising in July 2008, the Conservancy has raised nearly \$1.1 million. The Conservancy has received several foundation grants for the project, including a \$200,000 pledge from The Dow Chemical Company for the Riverview Natural Area. In order to permanently hold all 419 acres, the Conservancy

must raise an additional \$415,000 by December 2011 including The Carls Foundation match.

The Conservancy has begun creating trails and offering guided visits to the property. Full access will be available when the fundraising for acquisition is complete and a parking area is established.

For more information about Riverview Natural Area, visit www.littleforks.org or call our office at (989) 835-4886.

OUR MISSION:

The Little Forks Conservancy permanently protects land with natural and cultural resources that add to the quality of life in our community.



It's Time for Maple Syrup!

Look inside for details



From the Director: Bright Prospects for 2010

2010 is starting out on a bright note. New signs of green growth are all around us. It is not just the early spring weather. I mean, really – two weeks of 60 degree weather in March – that should help lift everyone’s spirits. And locally we have been promised thousands of new “green” jobs. I hope you are as optimistic as I am right now.

Most telling of how The Little Forks Conservancy is bouncing back can be found on page 7 in the list of our Business Partners for Conservation. Last year we had 6 annual sponsors and 4 additional sponsors

for the Green Tie Gala. This year, you will see 21 local businesses who have committed to helping protect land. If you know any of these business owners, or leaders in the larger businesses, please thank them for supporting us in 2010.

We are ready to hit the ground again and work with private landowners to sustain the natural resources found there. A particularly exciting part of our work this year will be to expand our earlier successes in the Cedar River watershed. The Cedar River is home to the only designated Blue Ribbon trout stream in the Tittabawassee River watershed and it will take the actions of many private landowners to ensure its continued viability.

But the Cedar River

watershed is not the only place we will be actively working this year. Landowners along the Pine River and Tittabawassee River are exploring conservation easements on their lands. These projects may soon protect 80 acres of land and 5,000 feet of frontage along those rivers.

All of these successes are owed in part to supporters like you. Without your continued involvement during the ups and downs, we could not successfully protect our environment.

Conserving land now helps guarantee that our natural resources will

remain healthy and vibrant for generations to come. This year, while we work to complete new projects, we are also responsible for monitoring the more than 2,000 acres under conservation easement and stewarding the preserves we own by improving access and trail so they are available for your use and enjoyment.

We have a very busy year planned and I hope you will join us again in 2010 to protect the special lands that add to our unique quality of life, surrounded by abundant natural resources.



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 & Kathyryn Whalen, 119 acres

-2006-

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

-2007-

- David & Anna Spencer, 154.5 acres
- Norman & Patricia Engel, 190 acres
- George and Sue Lane, 80 acres

- Robert and Susan Piesko, 140 acres

- Richard and Kathy Shellenbarger, 73.4 acres

- Jon and Elizabeth Ringelberg, 70 acres

- Gerald and Pamela Schmiedicke, 80 acres

- Elizabeth Levi, 8.5 acres

-2008-

- Robin and Ardith Arbury, 219 acres

- L. Charles Christensen, 200 acres

Get ready for the Maple Syrup Sale

The snow is gone and that means one delicious thing: it is time for fresh maple syrup!

Conservation easement donors Gerald and Pamela Schmiedicke and Jon and Elizabeth Ringelberg are once again offering The Little Forks Conservancy pints of fresh, natural maple syrup made from trees on their protected property.

The Schmiedickes and their neighbors, the Ringelbergs donated conservation easements to the Conservancy in 2007, protecting a total of 150 acres of

forest and farmland in Grant Township, Clare County.

Each spring, the Schmiedickes and Ringelbergs tap their maple trees to harvest the sap that becomes maple syrup. On the Schmiedicke's farm, they boil down the sap to make the syrup. They distribute the maple syrup regionally.

We expect the syrup will be available in the middle May. Due to the weather, pints are limited. However, they are reporting that the syrup will be of exceptional quality so get your order forms in right away!



THE LITTLE FORKS CONSERVANCY Maple Syrup Order Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Number of Pints: _____

x \$13.00

Total: _____

Thank You!

While supplies last. You will be notified when your order is in. Orders will available for pick up at the Conservancy's office. Payment is due at pick-up.

Project to update Cedar River watershed management plan begins

The Little Forks Conservancy has begun working with several project partners to update the Cedar River Watershed management plan.

The update will ensure that the plan meets the standards of the Environmental Protection Agency's 319 water quality program criteria. The University of Michigan-Flint will spearhead these efforts.

Sara McDonnell from University of Michigan-Flint stated, "Throughout 2010 we will be working closely with watershed residents to identify key areas for protection and potential projects that restore and protect water quality."

As part of the process, a public meeting will be held in early summer to gather

input from local stakeholders and the general public on the plan revisions.

"The original watershed plan has resulted in an amazing number of completed projects benefiting the water quality of the Cedar River," said Elan Lipschitz, land protection specialist. "This update will build on the good work that has been done in the watershed."

The original watershed plan was completed by the Gladwin Conservation District in 2001. The plan provided a framework for addressing the water quality issues impairing the health of the watershed. The plan built upon previous cooperative efforts with the conservation district and the



The North Branch of the Cedar River as it flows through Richard and Kathy Shellenbarger's conserved land.

Leon P. Martuch Chapter of Trout Unlimited to inventory the Cedar River.

The watershed plan identifies the importance of protecting land in the watershed. The Conservancy was able to use the plan to leverage grant funds to acquire conservation easements along the waterways

and wetlands in the watershed.

The watershed management update was funded by a grant from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Environment.

For more information about the Cedar River project, visit our website at www.littleforks.org or call (989) 835-4886.

Michigan conservancies protect a total of a half million acres

Land conservancies in Michigan have protected more than one half million acres of natural, scenic and working farms and forest lands.

The Heart of the Lakes Center for Land Conservation Policy (Heart of the Lakes) 2009 Annual Acres Protected Survey found that Heart of the Lakes member land conservancies have permanently protected 509,125 acres as of the end of 2009.

“Protecting more than one half million acres is an exciting achievement for Michigan,” said Rachel Kuntzsch, Executive Director of Heart of the Lakes. Heart of the Lakes is a statewide coalition of individuals and organizations dedicated to land conservation, including 27 member land conservancies.

“The lands protected by

Michigan’s conservancies provide significant public benefit for local communities and for the state.”

Every county of Michigan is home to at least one land conservancy dedicated to protecting its valued land.

Projects undertaken by land conservancies are selected because they provide a public benefit such as protecting water quality and wildlife, keeping working farms and forests in production, or supporting community goals for scenic lands and outdoor recreational opportunities.

Kuntzsch added, “The protection of Michigan land and natural resources is not only beneficial for Michigan’s environment,

it is absolutely critical for our economy. Combined, Michigan’s land-based industries (agriculture, tourism

and forestry) contribute more revenue to Michigan’s economy than any other industry. The protection of

the land on which these industries depend is crucial for the future success of Michigan’s economy. Protecting more than one half million acres of Michigan land is a tremendous success for Michigan residents and businesses.”

Conserving Michigan’s diverse land base benefits Michigan residents and businesses. Michigan’s working lands, comprised of 19.3 million acres of forest and

over 10 million acres of farmland, provide food, fiber, wood sources, and jobs for citizens. The Great Lakes surrounding Michigan are the largest source of fresh water on the planet. The state’s 38,000 miles of rivers and streams are a world-renown and high-quality fishery. Protected wetland systems that flow into these waterways help filter out sediment and pollutants, purifying our fresh water resources. Michigan parks, beaches, and open space that provide outstanding recreational opportunities, connect us to the natural world, and influence where people choose to live, work, and play.

For more information about the Heart of the Lakes Center for Public Policy, visit www.heartofthelakes.org.



Enhanced Federal Tax Incentives Expire

Enhanced income tax incentives for landowners who donated conservation easements expired at the end of 2009.

In a press release, the Land Trust Alliance stated that Congress “will try to reinstate the enhanced deduction for easement donations in 2010, and to make the incentive retroactive to January 1st.”

Under the enhanced tax incentives the landowner’s maximum donation was

increase to 50% of the individual’s adjusted gross income (AGI) or 100% of the individual’s AGI if they were a qualified farmer or rancher. The landowner could carry forward any unused portion of the deduction for 15 years.

Without the enhanced tax incentives in place, deductions for donating conservation easements are

returned to their 2005 levels. A landowner’s maximum deduction for such a donation in 2010 is limited to 30% of an individual’s AGI in the year of the donation, with the remainder of the donation being carried forward for a maximum of five additional years.

These limits are applied according to the law in the year of donation.

Conservation easements donated in 2009 can continue to utilize the enhanced incentive, but if the incentive is not renewed in 2010, an extension in 2011 will not apply to this year’s donations.

As of press time, both the House and Senate had passed a one-year extension. However, the Senate made several changes to the bill the House adopted, which will require additional action by the House.



Riverview

In preparation for the recognition sign that will be placed on site at Riverview Natural Area, we are asking all of our donors to review their names. Please check the list below for your name and contact us if this is not how you wish to be listed. There will be two additional opportunities for corrections. Final corrections must be made by December 2011.

3M Scientific Anglers	Vernon and Dorothy Fauver	Dr. and Mrs. James Leming	Robert and Gwen Snyder	<i>In Honor of Thomas Misner:</i>
Anonymous	Brad and Lynda Fedorchak	Charles Lentz	Dave and Carlene Spitnale	David Misner
Charles Amble	Carol Feider	Hal Locker	Colette St Louis	
Lon and Denise Andersen	Mr. and Mrs. Richard Foley	Carl and Sheree Lovell	Don and Jean Stagg	<i>In Honor of Mrs. Philip White:</i>
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David and Leslie Armentrout	The Dow Chemical Company Foundation	Mr. Maddox and Ms. Garvey	Mr. and Mrs. William Stavropoulos	
Beverly Babb	The Rollin M. Gerstacker Foundation	James Malek	Mr. and Mrs. Phil Stephens	<i>In Honor of Rachel White:</i>
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Melissa Barnard and Rick White	The Charles J. Strosacker Foundation	Walt Marfechuk	Robert Strom	<i>In Memory of Gene Arnold:</i>
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Elizabeth Evans		Sandra Simmons		
Richard and Charmond Evans		Jim and Pam Singer		
Robert and Dotty Everett		Richard Skochdopole		
		Patricia Smith		

Help us make sure our sign is correct

If your information is not correct or missing, please contact our office at: (989) 835-4886 or info@littleforks.org.

Thank you!

Thank you!

The Conservancy thanks our 2009 donors for their generous support. Their contributions were greatly appreciated. We apologize for any errors or omissions.

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Foundations

Bay Area Community Foundation
Citizens Bank Wealth Management
The Dow Chemical Company Foundation
The Midland Area Community Foundation
The Edward and Elyse Rogers Family Foundation
The Charles J. Strosacker Foundation
The Rollin M. Gerstacker Foundation



Chippewa Nature Center
Cline Close Dyer PLC
Dan Dan the Mattress Man
The Dow Chemical Company
leuter Insurance Group
Members First Credit Union
Quick Reliable Printing
Simmons Specific Chiropractic

L = Donor also contributed to the Riverview Land Acquisition Fund.

E = Donor also contributed to the Little Forks Conservancy Endowment Fund at the Midland Area Community Foundation.

2010
Business Partners
for Conservation

These businesses have made contributions to the Conservancy's annual operating fund. We

thank them for their support of land conservation to keep our community a healthy and attractive place to do business.



Gold



MEMBERS FIRST CREDIT UNION



Green

BRETT GEHRINGER OF HANTZ FINANCIAL

Simmons Specific Chiropractic



The Apothecary Shoppe PHARMACIES



CLINE CLOSE DYER PLC ATTORNEYS



QUICK RELIABLE PRINTING



the H Dolce Hotel & Conference Destination



CHEMICAL BANK MEMBER FDIC



On Eagles Wings Inn



Rider Type & Design

Out & About

Here are just a few of the places you might have spotted our board and staff members.

- **Call of the Wild.** Land Protection Specialist Elan Lipschitz and Board Member Gerald Ziarno were on hand at the Conservancy's display at North Midland Family Center's Call of the Wild event held on January 29.
- **Dow Gardens Know and Grow Seminar.** Communications Specialist Joelle Ferguson met with a number of mid-Michigan garden enthusiasts during Dow Gardens Know and Grow on a beautiful February 27.

Thank You!

The Little Forks Conservancy would like to thank the following individuals for donating their time and talent:

- Dennis Pilaske of Chippewa Nature Center for leading our snowshoe hikes at Riverview.
- Sarah Cresswell and Kelley Moore for volunteering at our office.
- Gerald Ziarno for donating a wall-mounted projector screen.

PLEASE JOIN US

Help us protect the natural resources that define our community. Your membership saves land right here in mid-Michigan—preserving our rivers, forests and fields now and for generations to come.

Yes, I want to join The Little Forks Conservancy to protect significant natural resources in my community.

\$5000 \$1000 \$500 \$250 \$100 \$50 \$25 Other _____

Please make your check payable to **The Little Forks Conservancy.**

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ E-Mail _____

Please send me information on options for conserving my land.

The Little Forks Conservancy • 105 Post Street Midland, MI 48640

Thank you!



The Little Forks Conservancy
105 Post Street
Midland, MI 48640



Please Excuse Our Mess

Thanks to a grant from the Advancing Conservancy Excellence program, The Little Forks Conservancy is upgrading our database software. We apologize in advance for any errors that may occur as we are transferring our data.

We ask that you review your mailing address above and contact us if it is incorrect. Thank you for your assistance.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Eric Brubaker
Daniel J. Cline
Maureen Craig
Judy Enger
Carol W. Feider
Bill Gebo
Bethany Goodman
Geoffry Kusch
George Lane
Jan McGuire
Elyse M. Rogers
Glenn Sanford
Jerry Ziarno

STAFF

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

Phone: 989-835-4886

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www.littleforks.org
info@littleforks.org

Save the Date

Volunteer Open House

Wednesday, May 5 • 4:30 - 6:30 p.m.

If you've thought about volunteering with the Little Forks Conservancy but weren't sure what was involved, then join us Wednesday, May 5, for our Volunteer Open House. Discover our preserves and learn about volunteer opportunities. During the Open House, you can sign up to volunteer at one of our work days or schedule a group work day to volunteer with your friends.

Riverview Nature Series

The Riverview Nature Series is back! Join us for three exciting trips to the Riverview Natural Area. Attend all three with a Series Pass for \$50/person.

- Put nature in focus on Saturday, May 8, with nature photography.
- Track turtles and frogs with Herpetologist Dave Mifsud, on Saturday, May 22.
- Paddle down the Tittabawassee River on a voyager canoe on Saturday, June 5.

For more information, visit www.littleforks.org or call (989) 835-4886.