

Chippewa Watershed Conservancy
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(989) 644-5045

C·H·I·P·P·E·W·A
WATERSHED
CONSERVANCY

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Volunteer Opportunities

Do you have a helping hand that is itching to help the Conservancy? We can regularly use help with mailing newsletters, conducting membership drives and fund appeals. If you have computer skills and familiarity with MS Word or MS Excel, we are developing new mailing lists that can be compiled from home. Following are several opportunities available now:

- Capital campaign fund appeal
- New membership appeal mailing list development
- Sylvan Solace Butterfly Garden maintenance
- Golf Tournament Fundraiser Committee
- Education and publicity outreach
- Spring Banquet Committee
- Stewardship Committee



Call the office at (989) 644-5045 to volunteer or to get more details on these opportunities.

2006 Board of Directors

John Mitchell: President
Tim Odykirk: Vice-President
Lori Rogers: Secretary
Keith Frame: Treasurer, Investments
Donna Buckley: Sylvan Solace Monitor
Sue Ann Koppmeyer
Don Nagler
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CWC Land Protection Successes

17 Easements- 2,862 acres
8 Preserves - 135 acres
Total - 2,961 acres

County	Acres
Clare	1,966
Gratiot	103
Isabella	361
Mecosta	60
Montcalm	471

HERON TRACKS



Heron Tracks

The Official Newsletter of the Chippewa Watershed Conservancy

Volume 14, No. 3

Seventh Annual Butterfly Walk at Sylvan Solace

More than a dozen enthusiasts participated in the seventh annual butterfly walk at Sylvan Solace on June 16th, led by CWC Executive Director Stan Lilley. A total of 14 species of butterflies were found, perhaps just a little down from normal years due to the dry weather and lack of blooming plants. The focus was the butterflies, but the outing always yields opportunities to admire other interesting animals and plants. The walk this year turned up Praying Mantis, Wood Frogs, Indigo Buntings, Gray Catbirds, Chipping Sparrows, and House Wrens. Plants included Monarda, New Jersey Tea and Black Locust, the larval host plant for the Silver-spotted Skipper. The youngsters stopped at the butterfly garden to search for Monarch butterfly caterpillars on the blooming Butterfly Weed. Prairie Smoke, Black-eyed Susans and three species of grasses were also doing well in the garden, which features native and drought-tolerant plants. The photos are courtesy of Cathy Murray.



Ryan Schafer leads grandpa, Everett Schafer and the rest of the group in the search for "What's out there."



Eric and Ryan Schafer enjoy the opportunity to touch a male Monarch butterfly before it is released.

In this Issue Fall 2007

- Butterfly Walk
- Memorial Grove
- Executive Director's Corner
- President's Statement
- Director Profile
Donna Buckley
- Tamarack Creek
Easements Signed
- Donor List
- Science Facts

Memorial Grove Gets Remake

This issue of *Heron Tracks* went to press before renovation of the Sylvan Solace Memorial Grove display was scheduled for completion. Thanks to Laura Yuncker, of Absolute Granite in Mt. Pleasant, our old brass memorial plaques are being replaced by a beautiful black granite slab. All of the memorial names previously displayed on the brass plaques have been permanently etched into the new granite surface. We are grateful to Absolute Granite for generously donating not only the slab and installation cost, but also the cost of etching all of the existing names.

For a donation of \$100, additional names may be added to this commemorative monument, a display that should last virtually forever. If you would like to add names to the new permanent granite memorial, please call the office at (989) 644-5045.



Executive Director's Corner



Stan Lilley,
CWC Executive Director

Partnerships

2007 has been a very important year for forging new partnerships and building on old ones. Twice this year we have featured information about the threat of Emerald Ash Borer to our ash trees. The Isabella County Parks and Recreation Department sponsored the summer edition of our newsletter, which included a color insert on the ash borer threat. We worked jointly with the Isabella County Soil Conservation District, Isabella County Parks and Recreation Department, MSU Extension/Isabella County 4H Association, Isabella County Material Recovery Facility, Mt. Pleasant Parks and Recreation Department, Central Michigan University Student Environmental Alliance, and the CMU Residence Hall Assembly to establish the area's first consolidated Earth Day celebration, a well-attended event held at Mill Pond Park. We pledged a contribution to support the City of Big Rapids Department of Public Works request for a Michigan Natural Resources Trust Funds grant to acquire an important natural area within the city limits. We worked with the Muskegon River Watershed Assembly to protect 16 acres of filterstrips in Mecosta County along Tamarack Creek. We met with members of the Boards of Directors of four of our neighboring land trusts in the Lake Huron Alliance for a one-day workshop to build trust, discuss topics of mutual concern and begin establishing areas where we might maximize our resources through joint collaborative efforts. All in all these various partnerships have done much to extend knowledge of the CWC and our goals and mission to a wider audience with similar or complimentary interests and to improve our ability to preserve land in a way we couldn't do by ourselves. I look forward to continuing these and additional cooperative projects in the future.

I am very pleased to report that we have met the first year's CWC Now and Forever endowment challenge from the Herbert and Grace Dow Foundation. The Dow Foundation has stated that any funds raised in excess of \$25,000 this year may be applied to the \$25,000 challenge for next year, so we are more than happy to continue to receive endowment contributions to apply toward next year's \$25,000 matching challenge. As I stated in the last issue of *Heron Tracks*, increasing our endowment funds is vital to our future success because it will help us to ensure that we are here to keep the promises we have made to our easement donors to monitor their lands in perpetuity. Contributions to our endowment funds stay there. We will use the interest to help to sustain our operations while your principal remains to generate more interest. There are three endowment funds you can choose. Two are administered on our behalf by the Mount Pleasant Area Community Foundation – the Chippewa Watershed Conservancy Fund or the Bill Brehm/CWC Stewardship Fund. Contributions may be sent c/o the Mt. Pleasant Area Community Foundation, P.O. Box 1283, Mt. Pleasant, MI 48804-1283, to either fund. Or you may contribute directly to the CWC-maintained endowment fund by sending your contribution to CWC, P.O. Box 896, Mt. Pleasant, MI 48804-0896. All of these funds allow tax deductible charitable contributions, preservation of your principal and the knowledge that you are helping us stay in business for the long term.

Unfortunately, the interest from our endowment funds is not yet adequate to sustain our annual operations and we are still in need of several thousand dollars to meet this year's operating budget. So please continue to give generously. Does your employer have a matching contribution program? If so, you can increase the value of your contribution by designating the CWC to receive a matching contribution. If your employer doesn't yet have a matching program, why not ask them to consider starting one?

We would like to get out and tell our story to more people, especially beyond Isabella County. If your social, civic or business group is looking for a speaker, please tell them to call the office at (989) 644-5045 or email me at cwc@cmsinter.net to arrange for a presentation ranging from 15 minutes to an hour.

CHIPPEWA WATERSHED CONSERVANCY



PO box 896

Mount Pleasant, Michigan

48858-0896

Ph.(989)644-5045

Fax (989)644-5045

Executive Director - Stan Lilley

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Vice President - Tim Odykirk
Secretary - Lori Rogers
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Scientific Board

Nancy Atwood
John Grossa
Richard Moreau
Gilbert Starks
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Yes! I want to support the protection of critical natural habitat by supporting the Chippewa Watershed Conservancy.

Donation Amount: \$

Payment Method:

Check Enclosed

VISA Master Card

Account# _____

Name on Card _____

Billing Address _____

Expiration Date _____

Signature _____

This is a one-time gift

Please charge my account \$ _____ quarterly
(Jan 15, Apr 15, Jul 15, and Oct 15) until I rescind this pledge

OK to acknowledge in the newsletter

Please keep my gift anonymous

This gift is in memory of _____

(Your envelope and stamp will allow more funds to go to our conservation programs)



Donor List (May 16 – September 15, 2007)

Thank You for Your Support!

Contributions Allocated to Herbert & Grace Dow
Foundation Endowment Challenge

Gerald Carter	Muskegon River Watershed Assembly
Gary Collins	Susan Schiller
W. Larry Collins	Gilbert Starks
Mt. Pleasant Area Community Foundation	Diane Tope (In memory of Esther & Jack Brewster and Carl Brewster)

Thank You Volunteers; we are grateful to all of the volunteers who have so generously given of their time and resources.

Scott Bellinger for help with oil industry information
Donna & John Buckley for trail maintenance at Sylvan Solace
Mike Brockman for Web site management and production of *Heron Tracks*
Todd Diederich for legal assistance
Jonothan Krajenka for carbon sequestration research
Pat Lilley, for labeling, mailing newsletters
Diane & Michael Morey for stewardship at Sylvan Solace
Cathy Murray for Autumn Olive removal at Neyer Preserve
Rob Strom for removing fencing at Sylvan Solace

Golf Committee Forming

We are exploring the possibility of establishing a golf benefit fundraiser event and need volunteers to serve on the committee. If you would like to help us work out the details and determine the viability of a golfing fundraiser, please call the office at (989) 644-5045 or email us at cwc@cmsinter.net.



Tamarack Creek Easements Signed

On June 25, 2007 the CWC concluded a cooperative agreement with the Muskegon River Watershed Assembly (MRWA) of Big Rapids with the signing of four conservation easements in Montcalm County collectively called the Tamarack Creek Project. This project was made possible by funding to the MRWA from the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality/U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and a matching grant from the Wege Foundation to support nonpoint source pollution control efforts in the Muskegon River Watershed. As a water quality enhancement effort to reduce the amount of phosphorus, nitrogen, agricultural pesticides and sediments entering our groundwater supply, farmers have been paid to plant grassy filterstrips along county drains on their land to act as a buffer before runoff from the fields enters the drains. Installation of the grassy filterstrips is funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture / Natural Resource Conservation Service (USDA/NRCS) covering 90% of the cost while the farmers pay a 10% cost share for installation. The USDA/NRCS program creates temporary conservation easements lasting 10 or 15 years. This Tamarack Creek project goes one step further and pays four landowners, Ora Kohler, Charlie and Judy Kohler, Marcia and Marshall Rutledge and Ken and Vicki Rader, an additional sum to place just over 16 acres of filterstrips into permanent conservation easements. While 16 acres may seem small, these 25 to 50-foot wide filterstrips are effectively buffering over 3.7 miles of county drains.

This project was a unique collaboration between the CWC and the MRWA. The MRWA provided the funding and prepared the easements and baseline documentation using templates and guidance from the CWC. The MRWA does not hold conservation easements, so they were signed and will be held by the CWC, who will be responsible for annual monitoring. The MRWA also provided a generous endowment to help ensure the annual monitoring is conducted.

Charlie Kohler said, "This land has been in our family since the 1800's. I want to continue to take care of the land as my ancestors would have wanted. This is one way to help do that."

We anticipate other opportunities to work with the MRWA in the future.



MRWA Executive Director Gary Noble, CWC Executive Director Stan Lilley and Jessica Burrows, who completed the baseline documentation.

New Membership Contest Offers an Exciting Reward

We are pleased to announce our brand new membership drive contest with an exciting chance to win a reward for your help. Anyone who recruits a new CWC member between October 15 and April 15 will be eligible for a drawing for a prize to be awarded to one lucky winner. The winner will be drawn during our annual spring banquet on April 17th. Courtesy of Chef Hermann Suhs, our prize winner will receive a \$100 gift certificate to be used at any of Chef Hermann's venues in Cadillac, Michigan. You might choose to dine at Hermann's European Café, Three Star-rated by the Mobil Guide and winner of the Silverspoon Award and the Golden Fork Award. You might choose an overnight stay at Hermann's Hotel, with seven large, individually decorated rooms featuring four poster beds and floral artwork by a local watercolorist. Or maybe you would rather make a purchase at the Chef's Deli, Opa's Butcher Shop or the Icelandic Wine Bar. No matter what your choice you'll be treated to a unique experience that you will be talking about for a long time. For more information about Chef Hermann check his Web site at www.ChefHermann.com. Don't wait to get started. Every new member recruited means an entry in the drawing. Ten new members mean ten chances to win. Want to give a gift membership? That's OK too. Any donation of \$25 or more from or on behalf of a new person qualifies for membership in the CWC. For a donation form, go to our Web site at www.ChippewaWatershedConservancy.org and click on the "Donate to the CWC" link. From there, click on either the standard monetary donation link or the Herbert and Grace Dow challenge link. Just write your name at the bottom of the form as the "sponsor," and give it to your new member. You will be automatically entered in the drawing when we receive the completed form and contribution. If you want a membership form sent to you, call the office at (989) 644-5045.



Is That All There Is?

Many of us are retired or facing retirement in the (hopefully) near future. We have, or soon will have, the experience of recognizing that whatever resources we have is all we will have to last us for the rest of our life. It is like paddling a canoe on Lake Superior and feeling the cold slap of a wave on the face. We pay attention.

We all know that as our community develops, there will come a day when no more natural habitat is available. That day, like retirement, is both inevitable and fast upon us.

We've done a great job in protecting almost 3,000 acres. But we all know we cannot rest here.

You can do your part:

- 1) Read the article about the membership contest. When we add new members we expand the base of support and generate new resources to protect more acres. You can make a significant difference by recruiting just one new member.
- 2) Read the Executive Director's report about the Herbert and Grace Dow Endowment Challenge. When you contribute to the Endowment Fund you ensure our ability to manage the acres we have already protected.
- 3) Help us make contact with just one landowner. Make this the month you take that little step that means so much.

This is our conservancy. The success of the CWC is OUR success. We should be very proud of what we have done together, and even prouder of what we are about to do.

Margaret Meade said it so very well: "Never doubt that a small group of committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that has".

See you on the river,
John

Director Profile – Donna Buckley



Donna Buckley has been involved with the Chippewa Watershed Conservancy since its founding in 1985 as the Isabella County Nature Conservancy. Donna, co-owner of Buckley's Mountainside Canoes in Mount Pleasant, has spent a lifetime in natural settings and on the water. "I love rivers and wild land," she says, "and I think it's important to preserve natural habitat for the future."

Donna and husband John Buckley are stewards of the Sylvan Solace Preserve and Donna visits 4-5 times weekly to pick up trash, make sure the trails are unobstructed or generally to check on the condition of the preserve. She and John winter in Florida and are also long-time volunteers at Everglades National Park.

"Being a part of the CWC was a no-brainer for me," she states simply. "It's all about the habitat."

(Note: This is the first in a series of profiles of the CWC Board of Directors. It is their opportunity to provide background and speak to you about why they are involved. All of our Directors are unpaid volunteers whose work is critical to the success of the CWC).



Our Vanishing Wetlands

It has been estimated that Michigan is losing 1,000 acres of wetlands yearly. Michigan's wetland statute, Part 303, Wetlands Protection, of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, 1994 PA 451, as amended, defines a wetland as "land characterized by the presence of water at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances does support, wetland vegetation or aquatic life, and is commonly referred to as a bog, swamp, or marsh." The definition applies to public and private lands regardless of zoning or ownership.

Most people are familiar with the cattail or lily pad wetland found in areas with standing water, but wetlands can also be grassy meadows, shrubby fields, or mature forests. Many wetland areas have only a high ground water table and standing water may not be visible. Types of wetlands include deciduous swamps, wet meadows, emergent marshes, conifer swamps, wet prairies, shrub-scrub swamps, fens, and bogs. Michigan's wetland statute recognizes the following benefits provided by wetlands:

- Flood and storm control by the hydrologic absorption and storage capacity of wetlands.
- Wildlife habitat by providing breeding, nesting, and feeding grounds and cover for many forms of wildlife, waterfowl, including migratory waterfowl, and rare, threatened, or endangered wildlife species.
- Protection of subsurface water resources and provision of valuable watersheds and recharging ground water supplies.
- Pollution treatment by serving as a biological and chemical oxidation basin.
- Erosion control by serving as a sedimentation area and filtering basin, absorbing silt and organic matter.
- Sources of nutrients in water food cycles and nursery grounds and sanctuaries for fish.

About 80 percent of the 80-acre Marl Lake Conservation Easement and 20 percent of the 349-acre Stearns Conservation Easement in Montcalm County consist of wetlands that are permanently protected due to the foresight of George and Dorothy Douglas and Don and Karen Stearns.

Source: **Michigan Department of Environmental Quality**, Montcalm County Final Wetland Inventory Map, December, 2006.



View of flooded hardwoods on the Marl Lake Easement