

HERON TRACKS



Heron Tracks

The Official Newsletter of the Chippewa Watershed Conservancy

Volume 15, No. 2

CWC Completes Two Acquisitions Building on the Future

On April 8, 2008, the Chippewa Watershed Conservancy completed the purchase of a seven-acre tract of land on the Chippewa River opposite the Mineral Springs subdivision in Isabella County's Deerfield Township. This property lies on the west side of the Chippewa River and will provide a riparian buffer along some 520 feet of the river. CWC Executive Director Stan Lilley said, "This parcel is directly across the river from our 1-acre Wakelin McNeel Preserve and has been added to the existing preserve."

While it is not yet marked, there will be public access available via a 66-foot ingress/egress easement along the south side of the Urie Drain. We are now protecting 770 feet of Chippewa River frontage in the area and have completed a vital link of protected land there between the Deerfield County Nature Park and the Mt. Pleasant Schools Memorial Forest. This not only offers an uninterrupted wildlife corridor between the two larger parcels, but it also provides a scenic buffer that ensures a continuous natural viewscape from the river for a stretch of several miles.

Our land protection efforts began with the donation of a 1-acre parcel for the Wakelin McNeel Preserve on April 5, 1995 in memory of the late Wakelin McNeel, Jr. This additional land was purchased from the McNeel family at a bargain sale price. "Wakelin McNeel, Jr., had a long-time and well-deserved reputation for his conservation interests in the area. We are grateful to the family as well as to our supporters and members for making this expansion of the original preserve possible," said Lilley.











On April 10, 2008 the CWC bought a 1.1-acre parcel of land in Gratiot County, on the north edge of the Village of Riverdale in Seville Township, from Frank Hyde, of Alma. This land will provide public access while at the same time protecting approximately 500 feet of the Pine River from future development. It also adjoins the Fred Meijer Heartland Trail. Mr. Hyde said, "This land has been in my family for many years. I'm happy to see it go to the Chippewa Watershed Conservancy."



Frank Hyde executes the deed at Isabella Abstract & Title Co., transferring his property to the CWC.

"We are working on additional projects in this area and will be seeking public comments on possible future uses," said Lilley. "We have deferred naming this parcel for the time being," he said.

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Executive Director's Corner



Stan Lilley,
CWC Executive Director

Saving the Woods

If you haven't read Richard Louv's book, "The Last Child in the Woods," I highly recommend it. In this book Louv paints an alarming picture of a generation growing up not knowing the natural world, and in many cases actually fearing it. Kids are becoming increasingly disconnected from nature because of the wired world we live in and the structured activities that have become so much a part of our lives.

"I like to play indoors better 'cause that's where all the electrical outlets are," reports a fourth grader. But it's not only computers, television, and video games that are keeping kids from nature. The proliferation of new organized sports activities, from bowling to hockey to soccer leagues has reduced the time available for kids to just be kids in the out of doors, engaging their imaginations and exploring the plants and animals that share our planet. As a result, for example, a 2002 British study reported that kids are far more able to identify Pokemon characters than they can name "otter, beetle and oak tree." Louv refers to this widening gap between children and their knowledge of the natural world as, "nature deficit disorder." Organized sports are an important aspect of early childhood development, but there must still be room for seeing and understanding nature and how we all fit in with every living organism. Louv brings together a body of research that shows exposure to nature not only teaches kids science and creativity, but it also offers dramatic therapy for depression, develops skills in problem solving and critical thinking and improves overall physical and emotional health.

I want to encourage all who read this to take Louv's warnings to heart. Take a child outdoors this summer. We have a butterfly walk scheduled at the Sylvan Solace Preserve on June 14, beginning at 9 a.m. If that date isn't convenient, consider one of the remaining field trips of the Chippewa Valley Audubon Club. See their Web site at www.ChippewaValleyAudubonClub.org for details. Or visit one of the great mid-Michigan facilities available such as the Chippewa Nature Center in Midland County or Forest Hill Nature Area in Gratiot County.

It is critically important that we work to re-establish our children's awareness of and appreciation for nature, not only for their physical and creative well-being, but also because our children are the future stewards of the land. If they no longer have an emotional and well-grounded connection to the natural world, who then will care about protecting the land for the generations yet to come?

Endowment Challenge Continues

We are continuing to work hard to meet the second year of the Herbert H. and Grace A. Dow Foundation (The Foundation) endowment challenge. In November 2006, The Foundation pledged a \$50,000 dollar for dollar match over two years, for every dollar we raise for endowment. We met the first year challenge slightly ahead of schedule and hope to do the same again this year. We must still raise another \$8,000 in endowment contributions by November 14, 2008 to receive the full second year match.

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. Please help us to meet the \$25,000 challenge again this year.



Top Ten Reasons for Recruiting a New CWC Member

10. *Fight Climate Change: Each acre we protect sequesters 1-2 tons of carbon per year. Think of membership dollars as paying your carbon tax.*
9. *A Place of My Own: Each new preserve gives you have another place to walk.*
8. *Today is Tomorrow: Today is yesterday's tomorrow and that is when you said you'd do this.*
7. *We're In This Together: If we each do a little, a lot will get done.*
6. *It will make our community a better place to live.*
5. *Membership Forms Have Feelings Too: The form in this newsletter will feel bad if you don't use it.*
4. *Your Friend Might Actually Thank You.*
3. *It Feels Soo Good.*
2. *Forever is a Fairly Long Time: We all want the CWC to be here beyond our lifetime. Recruiting a new member is the best way to ensure that future.*
1. *The Reason that Matters Most to You.*

John Mitchell

Audubon Club to Transfer Properties

On May 14, 2008 the Chippewa Valley Audubon Club (CVAC) voted to transfer their two properties in Isabella County totaling 45 acres to the Chippewa Watershed Conservancy. Outgoing CVAC President Gary Kramer said, "This has been a difficult decision for many of us. We've owned the properties for many years." One of the CVAC founding members, Hud Keenan, said, "The club, with intent to conserve some natural woodland habitat, purchased the property over 40 years ago. Managing a woodlot with volunteer efforts has always been difficult but is more so today than ever." Members noted that now, many years after the original purchase, an organization is in the community which performs the task that the CVAC originally had in mind. That group is the Chippewa Watershed Conservancy. Kramer summed up the CVAC move, saying, "We felt that now is the time to make the transfer so that we ensure that the properties remain forever protected."

The properties consist of two nearby, but unconnected parcels in Deerfield Township, both bordering on the Chippewa River. The first, a 40-acre parcel located at the NW intersection of Wing and Gilmore Roads, was acquired from the Isabella County Sportsman's Club in 1964. It is 100% wooded, virtually all mature hardwoods. For at least the past three years the property has hosted a Louisiana Waterthrush apparently singing on territory. This bird, commonly found in the southeastern U.S., is a State-listed Species of Special Concern in Michigan. The parcel was named the Florence Maxwell Wildlife Sanctuary in memory of a founding member and first president of the CVAC. Maxwell was a native of Isabella County, teacher of Biology and very active in the Detroit Audubon Society. She retired to the family farm near Mt. Pleasant and then devoted much time to establishing the local Audubon club. She encouraged the club to adopt the Audubon Screen Tour Programs. Receipts from these lectures formed the basis for the purchase of the property. Over the years it has come to be generally known as the "Audubon Woods," in the community.

The second parcel is a 5-acre tract located about 250 feet upstream that is currently accessible only from the river. This land was sold to the CVAC for one dollar in 1994 by the late Robert Ball and never formally named. Bob Ball was another prominent Isabella County conservationist and it is in his memory that the CWC's Bob Ball Award for significant contributions to conservation in central Michigan is given out each year.

We will report additional details in the next issue of *Heron Tracks* about the transfer and how we plan to work with the CVAC in an advisory role to continue to protect this land forever. Thanks to Hud Keenan for providing the historical background for this article.



Wild Ginger (*Asarum canadense*)

Wild ginger is a member of the birthwort family (Aristolochiaceae). Deep green, hairy, heart shaped leaves with distinctive, prominent venation, and unique purplish-brown colored flowers, with three long, radiating calyx segments, distinguish the species. Flowers are produced beneath leaves in spring-summer (April - July), and are often hidden from view. The first indication that you may have that wild ginger is near is the pungent, sweet ginger fragrance released as make your way through the forest, unknowingly treading on the leaves of this plant.

Wild ginger has slender, elongate, shallow rhizomes, and often reproduces rhizomatously, although it also reproduces sexually through the production of seeds. Seeds include a fleshy appendage rich with oils that attract ants, which act as an important dispersers of this plant. In parts of its range, wild ginger may comprise an important food source for rodents (particularly pocket gophers). The species is also palatable to slugs. Wild ginger is thought to have antibiotic properties, and Native Americans used this plant to treat headaches, intestinal pain, knee pain, arthritis, indigestion, tuberculosis, colic and as a general tonic.

This plant is actually not related to ginger..

Source: **U.S. Forest Service**



Wild Ginger photographed at the Williams-Blackburn Preserve, including a close-up of the flower



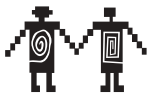
Sue Ann and Millie on the banks of the Chippewa River

Director Profile – Sue Ann Kopmeyer

Sue Ann Kopmeyer is the Director of Isabella County Parks & Recreation. She has served on the Chippewa Watershed Conservancy Board of Directors since 2000. “The outdoors is very important to me in both my professional and personal life,” she says. “I believe it is essential to have an organization such as the Chippewa Watershed Conservancy in our community preserving open space to supplement the available public park land available for future generations. I’m very happy to play a role in preserving additional land.” Her hobbies include hiking and watching all sports. In addition to her CWC duties she is an avid member of the Friends of the Pere Marquette rail trail.

Sue Ann does double duty as co-Chair of the CWC Events Committee and serves a key role in the successful outcomes of the spring banquet activities each year.

(Note: This is the third 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).



Neyer Preserve Mini-BioBlitz is Our First

On May 24, 2008 we conducted our first mini-BioBlitz at the Neyer Preserve. A BioBlitz is a concerted attempt over a period of time, usually 24 hours, to identify all living organisms in an area. The purpose is both to establish the degree of biodiversity and to bring attention to the area being surveyed.

Ours was a modest effort over a three-hour period, so it in no way truly establishes a complete inventory of life on the preserve. In order to thoroughly inventory the area we would have to conduct it day and night, over each season. But the initial effort still yielded 43 flower and shrub species, 20 tree species, 18 bird species, five butterfly species, four fern species, four mammal species, three mushroom species and three fish species.

The most importantly, this event allowed the participants to have fun on the preserve, cross-fertilize each other's naturalist skills and knowledge, and contribute to the database of known life on the preserve. If you would like to participate in a mini-BioBlitz, the next opportunity will be June 28, 2008, at the Winawa Preserve.



Three of the BioBlitz participants, Alicia Shantz, Cathy Murray and Mike LeValley, survey the plant life around a seep draining through the Neyer Preserve.

Upcoming Events

June 14, 10 a.m. Butterfly walk at Sylvan Solace.

This is our 8th annual butterfly walk. We'll walk the fields and identify the insects and plants we encounter. Meet at the parking lot on Pickard Road.

June 28, 9 a.m. Inventory the Preserve - Winawa Preserve.

A 2-3 hour "bioblitz" to inventory all the plant and animal life we can find. Meet at the intersection of Wing and Nottawa Roads, west of Mt. Pleasant.

August 16, 9 a.m. Mushroom Foray at Sylvan Solace.

One of our local mycology experts, Sister Marie Kopin, will lead a walk to identify the mushrooms growing on the preserve property. Meet at the parking lot on Pickard Road.



2007 Butterfly Walk

CWC Earth Day Activities



Kyle Montgomery and Dan Keller taking the Nature Quiz at the CWC table

On April 26, 2008 the CWC again joined to promote Earth Day in concert with local organizations including the Mount Pleasant Parks and Recreation Department, Isabella County Recycling Material Recycling Facility, Isabella County Parks & Recreation Department, USDA Isabella County Conservation District, CMU Student Environmental Alliance, Greentree Natural Grocery, Papa's Pumpkin Patch and others. This was the second year the event was hosted at Mount Pleasant's Island Park, with information tables, games, and activities for all ages. The CWC table received a good deal of attention as we received community members, talked about projects and our mission, and challenged visitors to a contest to identify pictures of local flora and fauna. We plan to continue participating in this new Mount Pleasant tradition and hope to see more of our supporters out at next year's event.



We were delighted to see nearly 160 people turn out for the annual CWC Spring Banquet on April 17th. Our silent auction was packed with great items to bid on, ranging from autumn berry jelly to pure golden honey and bird and bat houses to handmade pottery and jewelry. CMU professor emeritus Roy Burlington, author of "Diamonds on the Water," shared excerpts from his book and other stories of a lifetime of fishing and outdoor observations. He calmly endured a certain amount of friendly heckling from many in the audience who know him and in some cases were featured in his book. One highlight of the banquet was the drawing for the 50/50 raffle winner. By the time of the drawing the winner's share had grown to \$1,295. Congratulations to the winner, Tim Wolff of Mount Pleasant and a heartfelt thank you to him for his decision to **donate the entire amount** back to the CWC! The fare at Buck's Run was up to its usual standard and the wait staff did a wonderful job of seeing to our needs.

This year the Bob Ball Award for significant contributions to conservation in central Michigan went to an incredibly-deserving couple, Donald and Karen Stearns of Riverdale, who have done it all in support of the CWC. They have donated conservation easements in two phases on 349 acres of their land in Montcalm County, made regular financial contributions, given handcrafted items to the silent auctions over many years, provided leads on potential new supporters, and strongly advocated the CWC to their friends and neighbors. Don Stearns received the Bob Ball paddle on behalf of the couple because, no surprise to those who know them, Karen was "out West," in Utah doing volunteer work with another nonprofit conservation group.



A moment was taken to recognize and remember our colleague, the late Ted Kjolhede. CWC President John Mitchell made an eloquent and poignant plea to all of us who believe in the mission and goals of the CWC to help us to expand our membership and, "Each One Bring One," into the organization this year. Gross revenues were about \$2,000 higher than last year's event.

Thank You to Our Silent Auction Donors

The Chippewa Watershed Conservancy would like to thank all of the business and individual donors who contributed to our 2008 Spring Banquet Silent Auction:

4 Seasons Floral & Greenhouse	Detroit Lions	Isabella County MSU Extension
Alwood's Nursery	Detroit Redwings	Isabella County Parks & Recreation
Ann Brockman	Detroit Tigers	Isabella County Materials
Annette Clark	Don & Karen Stearns	Recycling Center
Anonymous	Doris Dale	Jerry Jaloszynski
Apple Tree Lane	Eagle Optics	Jay's Sporting Goods
Big Apple Bagels	Fabinelli's	JNR Engraving
Brass Cafe	Firehouse 5 Carwash	John & Petra Krull
Buckley's Mountainside	Firstbank	Johnston Elevator
Canoe Livery	Flexible Health & Wellness	Sue Ann Koptmeyer
Buck's Run Golf Course	Mary Frame	Kathleen O'Connor
Chippewa River Outfitters	Frames Unlimited	Kraphol's Ford, Lincoln, Mercury
CMU Student Activity Center	Gee Saint	Let's Ride Farms - Joel Brisbois
CMU Theater Productions	Great Lakes Loons	Linda Ludy
Crankers	Green's Honey Farm	Lori Rogers & Scott Bellinger
Todd Deiderich	Greentree Natural Grocery	Ruth Magnell
	Isabella Bank & Trust	Main Frame Gallery

Thanks also to Cable Channel 3 and The Morning Sun for publicity about the banquet and to the Greentree Natural Grocery for donating the coffee to our banquet participants.

Auction Opportunities Remain- We have three donated auction items from the spring banquet for which you still have an opportunity to bid.

Are You a Golfer? We have two 18-hole rounds at the Pohlcot Golf Course (Monday - Friday). The Pohlcot, designed by Mount Pleasant native and PGA touring pro Dan Pohl, opened in 1992 and was rated "One of America's 12 Best New Golf Courses," by Golf Digest Magazine. The typical cost to play 18 holes with a cart during the peak season is \$65 each.

Get Fit and Have Fun. We have a six-month individual membership at Central Michigan University's Student Activity Center. The SAC features bowling, a fitness center, swimming pool with six lanes, jogging and walking track, weight training center, basketball, racquetball and volleyball courts, spa and sauna. This six-month individual membership is a \$155 value.

Ready to Relax? How about a half hour bodywork/massage at Flexible Health & Wellness, LLC, 121 S. University, in Mount Pleasant? This is a \$30 value.

If you are interested in bidding on any of these items, please call the office at (989) 644-5045 or email your bid to info@ChippewaWatershedConservancy.org. We will take bids until June 20, 2008.



Donor List (January 17 – May 12, 2008)

Thank You for Your Support!

Anonymous	Leanne Sherwood
Anonymous (Memory of Thomas George Mitchell)	John R. Doherty
W. Larry Collins	Dan & Sharon Milan
Alan & Arlene Quick	Mary Ann Crawford
Allen Demarest	Gordon Risbridger & Amy Shindorf
Donna Hackett	Ara & Barbara Sheperdigian
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Dr. & Mrs. Ronald H. Rolph	Gerald A. Carter

In Memory – Ted Kjolhede

On February 23, 2008 we all lost a legend with the passing of Ted Kjolhede. Many in the Mount Pleasant area and around the State knew Ted as the long-time basketball coach (1956 – 72) and Athletic Director (1973 – 94) at Central Michigan University. Perhaps fewer knew that, among his many community and philanthropic interests, he was an ardent conservationist. A founding member of the Chippewa Watershed Conservancy, he served on the Board of Directors (1995 – 2005) and the Board of Advisors (2006 – 2008). In 2006 he was the recipient of the CWC's Bob Ball Award for a lifetime of support to conservation in central Michigan. We are grateful for all Ted did and thankfully acknowledge the following contributions made in his memory:

Anonymous (27)	ICISD Social Fund
Betty Stephenson	Dykstra & Phyllis Heinze
John & Ann Jensen	Robert G. Weisenburger
Dan & Karen Rau	Friendship Family Program
William & Dorothy Theunissen	Scott Bellinger & Lori Rogers
Dixie Neier	Stan & Pat Lilley
Wood Oil	Ed & Erna Marquardt
Bill & Wanda Odykirk	Robert Kabbe
Charlie Walmsley & Linda Prout	Richard & Barbara Kirchner
Doug & Barbara Valek	Lakewood Public Schools
Ruth Magnell & Wednesday Night Bridge Club	John & Sandy Warriner
Dave & Mary Weisenburger	

Contributions may still be made by sending a check to
Chippewa Watershed Conservancy, P.O. Box 896, Mt. Pleasant, MI 48804-0896.

Thank You

Scott Bellinger for Sylvan Solace memorial plaque publicity
Donna & John Buckley for trail maintenance at Sylvan Solace
Mike Brockman for Web site management and production of *Heron Tracks*
Amy Motz, Pat Block, Scott Bellinger, Dick Bolton and Mike Brockman
for work on a new CWC information booklet and flyer
Lindsay Belonga, Sue Ann Kopmeyer and Tom Stewart for silent auction item pickups
Diane & Michael Morey for stewardship at Sylvan Solace
Lori Rogers & Donna Buckley for helping with the CWC information table at the
Mount Pleasant Earth Day celebration

We are grateful to all of the volunteers who have so generously given of their time and resources

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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
- 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.

2008 Board of Directors

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Lori Rogers: Secretary
Keith Frame: Treasurer, Investments
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Jerry Jaloszynski
Greg Schmidt
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Paul Siers
Thomas Woiwode

CWC Land Protection Successes

22 Easements- 2,868 acres
9 Preserves - 143 acres
Total - 3,011 acres

<u>County</u>	<u>Acres</u>
Clare	1,966
Gratiot	104
Isabella	368
Mecosta	102
Montcalm	471