



Great Birds and Wildflowers at Audubon Woods



Jim Dealing discussing a technical aspect of birding by ear with Cil Lorand (inset: Trillium in bloom)

On May 15, a group of 14 led by CWC volunteer and expert birder Jim Dealing visited the Florence Maxwell Audubon Woods Preserve west of Mt. Pleasant in search of migrating and resident birds. A two-hour walk through mature hardwood forest above the banks of the Chippewa River yielded 36 species including sought-after favorites such as Osprey, Yellow-throated Vireo, Scarlet Tanager and Acadian Flycatcher. An added bonus was the presence of wildflower expert CWC volunteer Cathy Murray, who pointed out many species of wildflowers and shrubs and offered her fascinating descriptions of the origins, uses and historical names of various plants.

The trip was a re-introduction to the property for many since the transfer of ownership from the Chippewa Valley Audubon Club to the CWC.

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Would you like to help us get greener and be rewarded at the same time? Sign up to receive your newsletter by e-mail. What's the reward? You'll receive your newsletter in color! Send an e-mail to cwc@cmsinter.net with the words "sign up" in the subject block and we'll add you to the list. (We will never share your e-mail address with an outside organization.)

SAVE YOUR ASH TREES

The Emerald Ash Borer is an exotic pest from Asia and was first discovered in southern Michigan in 2002. It caused the death of millions of ash trees in Michigan and still threatens millions more. Evidence of infestation are "D" shaped exit holes on branches or in the trunk.

Remember to help in protecting against the spread of the Emerald Ash Borer and other invasive insects by not moving firewood.

Healthy Ash Tree



Unhealthy Ash Tree



For updated information, call **800.325.0023** or visit www.emeraldashborer.info

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Executive Director's Corner

Random Notes



What a great time we had at this year's annual spring banquet! I was privileged to have an opportunity this year to be the featured speaker. I can't adequately tell you how much I enjoyed showing some of my personal pictures of the lesser seen and threatened residents of our watershed and to share the songs and calls with you who were in attendance. I think it was apparent from my enthusiasm that I take very much to heart that part of our mission that deals with protection of wildlife habitat. It is easy to see and understand why we work to preserve our scenic vistas and landscapes, but often a little more difficult to remember the Grasshopper Sparrows, Soras or Northern Leopard Frogs and the myriad other animals and plants that live hidden lives yet rely so completely on our wise stewardship of the land for their existence. It was immensely satisfying to me to be able to play the calls of the American Bittern and Virginia Rail, neither of which sounds very melodic or birdlike, and associate for you the face of the animal creating that sound. There is nothing like the "a-oonk-a-chunk of a bittern at night to get my blood racing.

I am personally very grateful to all who attended the banquet and bought raffle tickets and made bids on silent auction items as well as to you who have responded to fund appeals or contributed in so many other ways to protect habitat for future generations to know and love as we do. Without your support nothing would happen.

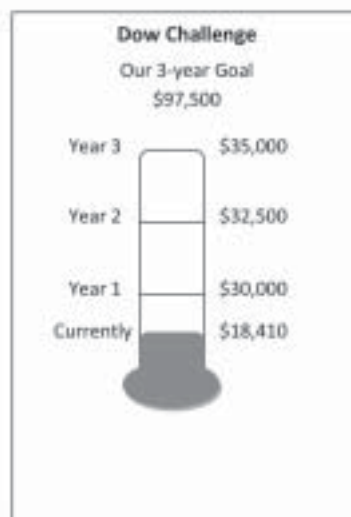
These are challenging economic times and yet, these are exciting times. Thanks to you, we are still making things happen. As you read this we have recently dedicated the Gene and Olga Neely Preserve, 22 acres of wonderful wildlife habitat along the shore of Hall's Lake in western Isabella County purchased with substantial contributions from Linda Neely and Peggy Minert, supplemented by the land acquisition fund contributions of so many of you. If you have been to Halls' Lake, you know how important the natural shoreline on the eastern half of that lake is. If you haven't been there, take a canoe and paddle, for it is a local gem. Or walk the new preserve and listen to the wildlife that exists there because of your support. Even more recently, we have completed two conservation easements adding another 70 acres of permanently protected land, 30 acres in Gratiot County and 40 acres in Montcalm County. Thanks to the efforts of local landowner John Bush, I have been invited to speak to 27 of his neighbor families along Ryan Creek, near Big Rapids later this month to talk to them about conservation options for landowners. John and two of his neighbors have previously met with me. Even in challenging times people want to learn how they can preserve our natural heritage for the future. Without your financial and volunteer support nothing would happen.

The clock is ticking on the Dow Challenge. At first glance, with \$18,000-plus in contributions, it might appear that we are well on the way toward meeting the Herbert and Grace Dow Foundation challenge with another six months to go on the first year's \$30,000 dollar for dollar match. But don't let that lull you into complacency. We need to raise \$97,500 over three years to take full advantage of the challenge and the Dow Foundation has graciously allowed us to roll any excess contribution in the first year over to the second year and the second year over to the third. So let's keep moving forward. Who knows what next year will look like, or the year after? We need to meet the full challenge soon rather than later. We are also deeply cognizant of the fact that many grants have been scaled back or cut completely due to the severe depletion of investment funds over the past year. We are extremely appreciative that the Dow Foundation has remained fully committed to supporting our operations.

Sylvan Solace Butterfly Walk

June 20, 2009 9:30 a.m. to noon Join a local butterfly expert as we explore the old fields of this first of the CWC preserves, west of Mt. Pleasant

Please call the CWC office at
(989) 644-5045 or email us at
info@ChippewaWatershedConservancy.org
for details and any changes regarding any
planned activities



The Herbert H. & Grace A. Dow Foundation has pledged to match dollar-for-dollar all contributions up to \$30,000 in Year 1; \$32,500 in Year 2; \$35,000 in Year 3.

Amounts in excess of the match amount in the first year may be counted toward the second year; in the second year may be counted toward the third year.

Please help us to take full advantage of this generous challenge. In these tough economic times we need your help more than ever. Send in your check today to CWC, P.O. Box 896, Mount Pleasant, MI 48804-0896.

9 A Transition

Don Nagler has served with distinction on the Chippewa Watershed Conservancy Board of Directors since 1999. Recently, citing the need to devote himself to other of life's endeavors, Don has resigned from our board.

Don remains dedicated to the cause and we are happy to report that he will continue to serve in several ways. Don has agreed to join the Governance Committee and also to serve on the CWC Board of Advisors.

Don has, first and foremost, brought recognition and credibility to our cause throughout the central Michigan area. Don has been the source of many important contacts. Perhaps most important among those, he personally recruited long-time CWC vice-president, Tim Odykirk, to serve on the CWC BOD. Don's cogent remarks and his sagacity during board discussions have consistently helped us center our discussions. Many of our decisions bear the mark of his wisdom. We will miss his presence.

Don and his wife, Nancy, donated 78-acre Sylvan Solace, our flagship preserve, in 1996. Sylvan Solace is our only preserve with significant public usage. It is the public face of our system of preserves with more than a mile of nature trails, a third of a mile of Chippewa River frontage, birdhouses, butterfly garden, and is home to our memorial. Don and Nancy donated Sylvan Solace at a time when the CWC was but a fledgling organization. Their faith in our efforts, as demonstrated by that most generous gift, gave a great boost to CWC efforts and helped us build the successful organization you see today.

The Chippewa Watershed Conservancy is a stronger and more effective organization because of Don's gift of his knowledge, time, and effort to this, our common cause.

Thank you, Don.

John Mitchell

CWC Membership

Many of you have been CWC supporters for a long time, many since the beginning. We sincerely appreciate that vote of support; that contribution of your financial resources to this cause. Without your support we simply would not exist and almost 5 square miles of wildlife habitat would never have been preserved. It is not unusual for nonprofits to struggle over the concept of membership versus support. The CWC is certainly no exception. For many years we sought support via our spring banquet and an end of year fund appeal. If we had a special project that needed funding we would send out a special appeal. As we reached a stage in our growth where we hired a permanent staff presence our appeals for support have naturally come more frequently, including an annual summer fund appeal. With these multiple appeals have also come the questions, "Am I a member? When is my membership due?"

After much discussion and careful consideration the CWC Board of Directors determined that we need to establish a clearly defined membership period as well as continue to have support appeals. Before you think that this is simply another ask for more money, rest assured we are not adding another layer to the mix. Here is how we plan to conduct membership and fund appeals.

The CWC membership year will run from July 1 to the following June 30. This will replace what has been the annual summer fund appeal for the past several years. As a member, you will receive a membership card so that you will know when membership renewal is due and so that you have something that you can show to others to demonstrate your support for the CWC. Yes, of course, we will send a renewal reminder. Members will receive the newsletter three times a year. At higher membership levels unique CWC memorabilia of special invitations to events will be offered over time. We are also working with some business sponsors to offer discounts to CWC members who show their membership card. This will begin with a small number of our most active business supporters in the first year and we hope, will expand to include more businesses in the future. We see this as a positive step for everyone involved. You, as a CWC member, will have better sense of "belonging" to the CWC. Our business sponsors will benefit because our members will be encouraged to visit businesses where they receive a discount. The CWC will benefit because we believe a membership basis will eventually result in more support of our activities from both individuals and businesses.

Why create a summer membership period now? For several years we have received significant support from the Herbert and Grace Dow Foundation. This support has allowed us to have the critical staff presence, without which we would not have the reliable and professional capability critical to protecting habitat in this community. This year the foundation converted us to a Challenge Grant format. Whereas in the past we received funds up front, this year we must raise our share first and at the end of the year the foundation will kick in their share. This shifts the urgency of our fundraising needs. Soon you will receive a membership renewal notice. We hope you will consider this your time to make a contribution to support CWC efforts on your behalf. Your donation in the next month will demonstrate to the foundation that we have the continued support of our community. And your donation will be matched dollar-for-dollar by the Herbert and Grace Dow Foundation.

We will continue to run the annual spring banquet as our major fundraiser. We will still have a year end fund appeal. From time to time we will still have limited fund appeals to support specific projects. But you will know when we are running a fund appeal and when we are asking for membership renewal. Thank you for your understanding as to the need for this change in how we operate. Your CWC is doing great things. You are doing great things thru your conservancy. Together we will protect more land, more wildlife, more of this community we all call home.



Tim Odykirk has served on the Board of Directors since January 2000. He has been the CWC Vice President since October 2001 and is also the long-time Chair of the Banquet Committee. Many of our successes with the annual spring banquet can be directly attributed to the energy and past food services/event management experience of Tim.



“I became an active member of the CWC because of the importance of protecting key habitats within our community,” he says. “There must be a balance between all the uses of land in our community, land we all share because nature does not know property boundaries.”

Tim, an attorney, works at the Central Michigan University Center for Charter Schools. An involved and active parent as well, he also serves the community as a member of the Mt. Pleasant School Board.

“Our community needs an organization which takes on the role of being the steward, or protector, of important habitat for the long term. The CWC is a professional and dynamic organization in this cause, and I enjoy being a small part of this,” he says.

(Note: This is the sixth 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).

Annual Spring Banquet Held

The Annual CWC Spring Banquet was held on Thursday, April 16th, at Buck’s Run Golf Course near Mt. Pleasant. Despite the tough economic times more than 120 people attended and \$6,000 was raised to support future activities. This year’s raffle winner was Bob Kjolhede of Livonia, Michigan, who opted for the naming rights at the CWC’s 25-acre preserve at the north end of Coldwater Lake. Bob will talk it over with family members and submit a suggested name to the Board of Directors for approval. We will announce the new name in a future issue of *Heron Tracks*.

This year the featured speaker was CWC Executive Director Stan Lilley, who kept the subject matter close to home with a program on the threatened and under-seen wildlife and plants of the Chippewa River Watershed. Attendees were entertained with a PowerPoint presentation that included not only pictures, but many recordings of birdsong and amphibian calls from residents of the watershed not often seen.

CWC President John Mitchell presented the Robert Ball Award for significant contributions to conservation in Central Michigan to a surprised Sue Ann Koptmeyer, Director of the Isabella County Parks & Recreation Department and a member of the CWC Board of Directors. Sue Ann was recognized for her selfless contribution of hundreds of hours to the projects and programs of the CWC, including her service for many years on the Banquet Committee and pickup of donations for the silent auction portion of the banquet. Sue Ann’s dedication to the CWC as well as the work she has done as Director of the county’s park system has been an inspiration to us all.

Prominently displayed this year was an early 1900’s-era hand-made quilt from the estate of Alyce Peterson, for whom the Alyce J. Peterson Natural Area in Mecosta County is named. The quilt, believed to have been made by Alyce or her mother at the former family farm site near Stanwood.

As always, we are grateful to our supporters for great attendance at the banquet and for all the contributions you make to the successes of the CWC.



President John Mitchell presenting Sue Ann Koptmeyer with the Robert Ball Award

Earth Day Event at Island Park

Occasional drizzle and chilly winds may have reduced the number of attendees at the Third Annual Isabella County Earth Day observation at Island Park, but that didn’t dampen the enthusiasm of those who visited. The CWC was one of many exhibitors at the event, held on Saturday, April 25th from 1 – 3 p.m. The CWC exhibit included our display outlining the important conservation work we are doing through-out our five-county area. We told visitors about the mission and goals of the CWC, answered questions about conservation easements and invited visitors to CWC preserves. In recognition of Earth Day we handed out educational crossword and word search puzzles about the water cycle, groundwater pollution and recharge of the aquifer.

CWC President John Mitchell and Dianne Wilson, representing the Ruth Britten Trust, inked permanent conservation easements on two adjoining parcels on June 8, 2009. The two easements, to be known as the Willard “Wink” and Ruth Britten North (30 acres in Gratiot County) and South (40 acres in Montcalm County) Easements, are named for the late parents of Dianne (Britten) Wilson, Nancy (Britten) LaClair and Mike Britten, who grew up on the property, located just west of Riverdale.

These easements represent a first for the CWC, providing permanently protected land straddling two county lines. The Britten North Easement includes a sizeable portion of leased farmland for hay that also provides habitat for ground nesting bird species. The western 6-8 acres are a seasonal wetland buffer along a five-acre pond which is partially included in the easement. The Britten South Easement includes a 3-acre wooded seasonally flooded/semi-permanent pond as well as two additional ephemeral ponds. About 80 percent of the South Easement is made up of wetland and wetland soils.

The property has been in the Britten family for more than 85 years and was previously used for both dairy and hay operations. Historically, ice was cut from the lake and sold to local Riverdale ice houses.

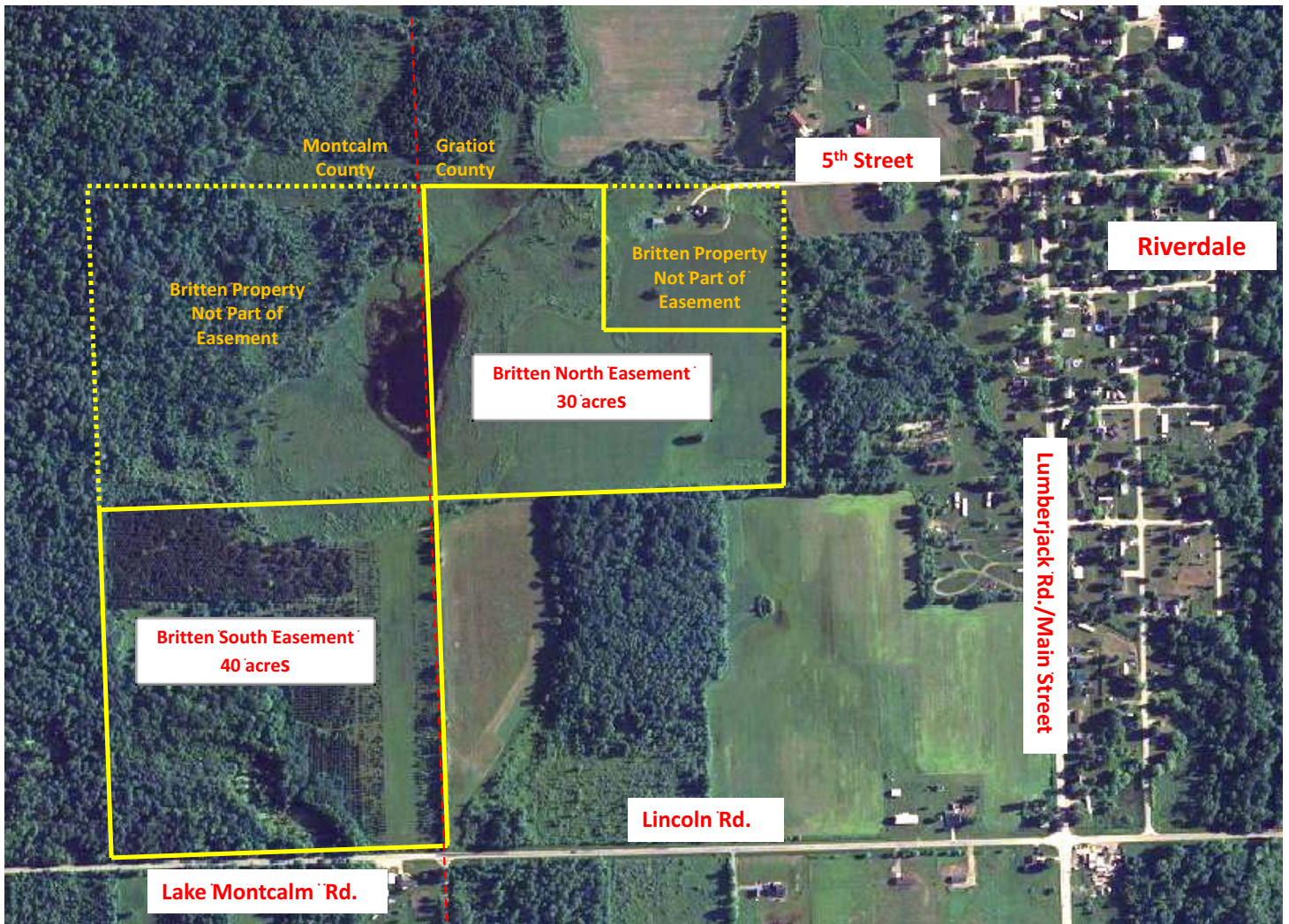
Dianne Wilson said, “My parents were people of simple pleasures. The land gave them a way to raise a family and provided entertainment for all.” She has fond memories of her father running the new John Deere tractor on the farm, then heading to the lake to ‘cast for fish.’

“The evening hours are wonderful, with full sight of the sunset, the smells of night, and numerous creatures to be seen; true peace,” she says. “We need to keep this land as we saw it growing up, and as our parents saw it from the kitchen window every morning, to be enjoyed by future generations, with a safe place for wildlife and a few rules for humans.”

Indeed, we are inspired by the vision.



Britten Easements



Scale 1" = approximately 571 feet

This map is not a survey and must not be treated as one

Farm Service Agency Imagery 2005

The CWC partnered with the Isabella County Material Recovery Facility (MRF) on April 11, 2009 to conduct a tire cleanup in Coldwater Township. A dozen volunteers spent the morning picking up tires discarded along the roadside. The MRF provided two trucks with roll-off containers to haul away the collected material.

Stan Lilley, Executive Director of the CWC, said, "We originally planned this project last summer, but by the time we could put it together the grass and shrubs had grown too high to make finding and removing the tires practical."

The morning's effort netted 200 tires, many of which had been illegally dumped in piles along the township's roads some two to three years ago. Lilley said, "Left to lie in roadside ditches and in some excellent cattail marsh habitat, these tires were not only an eyesore, but also posed a health threat as breeding sites for mosquitoes which could be carrying West Nile Virus. We were very pleased to team with the MRF to eliminate these hazards from the watershed."

We would like to thank Loretta and John Davidson, Stephanie Carroll, Brett Fox, Amy Shindorf, Tom Stewart, Scott Bellinger, Lori Rogers, John Mitchell and Stan Lilley for help with the project, and Coldwater Township Supervisor Jim Dague and Trustee Duke Maniteau for helping locate tires for removal.



Loretta Davidson, Amy Shindorf, John Davidson and Stephanie Carroll

Neely Preserve Dedication

When Linda Neely contacted the CWC in March, 2007 she said that she and her sister Peggy Minert were interested in making a substantial contribution for a land acquisition project in memory of their parents. It was to be in Gratiot or Isabella County, and consist of wildlife habitat, either Michigan prairie or wetland. "We just want to know that a piece of natural space is going to be permanently protected," said Linda.



Linda Neely (left) and Peg Minert

This started a search for the perfect property. One that would meet the expectations of Linda and Peggy and with luck, serve as the lynchpin for further acquisition. We looked at many candidates before centering on a 22-acre parcel at Hall's Lake in western Isabella County. This property offered the multitude of positive factors we were looking for. First, much of the parcel includes flooded woodland lakeshore habitat and interior semi-permanent and seasonal floodings that are ideal wildlife habitat. It is a part of the larger 200-acre tract that belonged to the late Betty and John Kabana encompassing the entire undeveloped eastern half of Hall's Lake. This purchase protects more than 1,400 feet of Hall's Lake shoreline and associated wildlife habitat and at the same time protects nearly 2,000 feet of historic Old State Road, the 1800's-era link from Ionia in mid-Michigan to the Mackinac Straits. Acquisition of this parcel protects an important piece of wildlife habitat, preserves a portion of historic road and anchors the plan to further protect

the remainder of the Kabana property, which will ensure that the scenic and rural character of Hall's Lake stays forever protected. What more could we hope for in a 22-acre property than all of that?

About 50 family members, friends and Hall's Lake neighbors attended the celebration, held on-site on the south end of the lake of the Harry E. "Gene" and Olga Shiraef Neely Preserve on May 24th. Linda and Peggy, daughters of Gene and Olga, were presented with framed aerial views of the lake showing the location of the preserve. In sharing her memories of her parents, Linda Neely said, "The area around the family homestead in St. Louis has all been developed. They both loved the outdoors and I know they would be pleased to know that we have permanently protected this land for the future." Peggy Minert spoke of her mother letting the dirt fall through her hands as she evaluated the land for gardening and enjoying the birds and the clean air of a different era. "I can't think of a better way to remember our parents than to protect land for future generations," she said.

After light refreshments of lemonade and cake, many of the group took advantage of a chance to tour the property, walking a newly prepared nature trail, the Neely Trail, created by Larry and Judy Schaftenaar, their daughter and son-in-law, Jenny and Fernando Molina, grandchildren, Benny and Sofie, and neighbor Marty Snyder. CWC volunteer Cathy Murray, a recognized wildflower expert, pointed out many of the blooming and non-blooming wildflowers and plants. An especially exciting find was Nodding Trillium in full bloom. The activities continued with a pontoon boat tour of the property from the lakeside, thanks to Larry Schaftenaar. We are also indebted to neighbor Barb Emery Braendle, who provided dockage, entertained guests waiting to take the boat tour, and allowed all-important restroom visits!



Donor List (January 16 – May 31, 2009) – Thank You for Your Support

Anonymous	W. Edward Griffith	Clara Lee R. Moodie
Charles Bowden	<i>in memory of Harry & Olga Neely</i>	Alinde Moore
Mr. & Mrs. Bruce W. Chaffee	Paul Gross	Mt. Pleasant Water Dept.
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<i>in memory of Ted Kjolhede</i>	Dianne L. Haas	Michael & Tamara Moutsatson
Betty & Bob Clason	John & Constance Harkins	Joseph Myslivec
Jeff & Arlene Cleveland	Edwin & Ruth Helwig	Dorothy Nugent
Gary Collins	Frank & Kay Hufnagel	Molly Pittsley
W. Larry Collins	John Kabana	Rose Prasad
Bob & Elaine Connell	Adonna Kennedy	Steven D. Pung
Mary Ann Crawford	Steve Kennedy	Rosemary Reid
Harold & Beverly Crawley	Larry & Valerie Kerr	Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe
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In memory of Robert Clute

Anonymous David C. Shepherd Warner Stewart & Betty J. Dickey Larry L. Thomas

Thank You to our 2009 Chippewa Watershed Conservancy Spring Banquet Silent Auction Donors

4 Seasons Floral & Greenhouse	Gee Saint	Ruth Magnell
Alyce Peterson Estate	General Federation of Women's Clubs	Main Frame Gallery
Ann Brockman	Grant Township Recycling Center	Max and Emily's
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Brass Café	Dianne Haas	Pines Golf Course
Buckley's Mountainside Canoe Livery	Isabella County Master Gardeners Volunteers	Amy & Gordon Risendorf
Buck's Run Golf Course	Isabella County MSU Extension	Randy & Brenda Ritter
Chippewa River Outfitters	Isabella County Parks & Recreation	Paul Siers
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CMU SAC	Jerry Jaloszynski	Stacie's Salon
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Fabinelli's	Let's Ride Farms	West Michigan Whitecaps
Firehouse 5 Carwash	Linda Ludy	Ziibiwing Cultural Center

Thank You for Your Time!

Scott Bellinger & Lori Rogers for set up and photos at Neely Preserve dedication. **Mike Brockman** for Web site management and production of *Heron Tracks*. **Donna & John Buckley** for trail maintenance at Sylvan Solace. **John & Loretta Davidson** for Sylvan Solace nest box cleanup. **Jim Dealing** for leading an Audubon Woods Preserve bird walk. **Isabella Bank** for Dow challenge support. **Jo & George Jennings and General Federation of Women's Clubs** for bluebird nest boxes. **Mike LeValley** for Sylvan Solace Preserve photography. **Pat Lilley** for help with mailings and Neely Preserve dedication favors. **Richard and Diana Moreau, Lori Rogers, and Donna Buckley** for work on the butterfly garden. **Tom Mitchell** for easement defense insurance evaluation. **Diane & Michael Morey** for stewardship at Sylvan Solace. **Cathy Murray** for leading a wildflower walk at Neely Preserve. **Lori Rogers** for grant writing. **Larry & Judy Schaftenaar, Fernando, Jenny, Benny & Sofie Molina** for Neely Preserve dedication support and stewardship. **Marty Snyder** for Neely Preserve stewardship. **Barb Braendle** for Neely Preserve dedication support.

We get so much more done because of our volunteers who generously give their time and energy



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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
- 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.

Board of Directors

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CWC Land Protection Successes

24 Easements- 2,938 acres
13 Preserves - 289 acres
Total - 3,227 acres

<u>County</u>	<u>Acres</u>
Clare	1,966
Gratiot	134
Isabella	435
Mecosta	181
Montcalm	511