

HERON TRACKS



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The Official Newsletter of the Chippewa Watershed Conservancy

Volume 14, No. 2

Carls Foundation Challenge is Met

We have exceeded the \$40,000 Carls Foundation/Chippewa Watershed Conservancy Preservation Challenge. A pair of \$15,000 contributions in late March has pushed our total from June 1, 2006 to March 31, 2007 to \$66,921.75. These two generous donations by Linda Neely and Peggy (Neely) and Alan Minert will be used for a land acquisition project in memory of Harry and Olga Neely. While it is always great to receive substantial contributions from individual donors, we are also thrilled to note that we received 148 contributions of \$100 or less. This grass roots level of support for our land acquisition efforts is also especially gratifying. Thank you to all of the individuals and businesses that helped us to complete this project two months early. And thank you to the Carls Foundation for matching the first \$40,000 contributed.

Earth Day Event Provides Opportunity

On April 21st the Chippewa Watershed Conservancy joined with other local groups and organizations including Mt. Pleasant City Parks, Isabella County Parks & Recreation, Isabella County Recycling Center, Isabella Conservation District, CMU Student Environmental Alliance, Greentree Natural Grocers, Krapohl Ford and others for the first annual Earth Day celebration in Island Park. A beautiful early spring day and lots of interactive exhibits brought a large crowd and a great opportunity to make the public aware of the goals, purpose and successes of the CWC while promoting a healthy environment.

Lori Rogers, Sue Ann Koppmeyer, Stan Lilley and John Mitchell staffed the CWC table and had a popular plant and animal identification quiz. They also handed out promotional CWC hats and tote bags provided courtesy of Isabella County Parks and Recreation to quiz participants.



This newsletter features information about the emerald ash borer (EAB). With the warm weather upon us, you will be able to notice signs of EAB infestation. Please take the time to read the enclosed material and let's do what we can to slow down the movement of this pest. This information and continued education about EAB in Isabella County has been provided by the support of the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe, working with the Isabella County Conservation District, MSU Extension Office and the Isabella County Parks and Recreation Commission along with the Michigan Department of Agriculture, and a number of other local organizations, townships and municipalities.

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Executive Director's Corner



Stan Lilley,
CWC Executive Director

As I look back over the past year I'm truly proud of how far we've come. You needn't look beyond the success of the campaign to acquire land for the Williams-Blackburn Preserve to see how much we've grown in capability. In a year's time we raised \$127,500 to make the preserve a reality. That campaign marked several firsts for the CWC. It was our first project on the east side of Mount Pleasant. It was our first effort to acquire developable land under eminent development pressure. Its proximity to the Pohlcot Golf Course, the Mt. Pleasant Municipal Airport and the highly popular Soaring Eagle Casino & Resort made it a serious target for development. The land is now forever preserved as an island of tranquility and a place to escape to nature amid the nearby hubbub. It was our first targeted fundraising effort. For the first time we were able to point to a specific parcel with the message, "If you contribute, here is what we will be protecting." And finally, it was a first opportunity to rally a neighborhood and local businesses and social groups and foundations and individuals behind a call to save this one little piece of riverfront, this one little piece of high bluff for the benefit of all of us and for the generations yet to come. It was clear proof of what we can accomplish together.

In the area of fundraising we have met one challenge. All of your great support has guaranteed that we will receive a \$40,000 matching land acquisition grant from the Carls Foundation. We are well on the way to meeting 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 may be applied to the \$25,000 challenge for next year. Wouldn't it be wonderful to qualify for the total \$50,000 match a year early so that those funds could start generating interest a year early? I can't emphasize enough how critical this project is because it will help us to ensure that we are here permanently 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 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. 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.

Are you thinking about a conservation easement or do you know someone who may be interested? The FAQs section of our Web site, www.ChippewaWatershedConservancy.org, will provide answers to the most commonly asked questions and clarify the most common misconceptions about easements. Act now to take advantage of the "pop up" tax protection on transfers of ownership of land under conservation easement as signed into law by Governor Granholm. Remember too, the expanded charitable contribution benefits for conservation easements enacted by federal government as part of the Pension Protection Act will expire at the end of 2007 unless extended by Congress. Details on these programs can be found at the "New Tax Laws..." link on the Web site. Call the office at (989) 644-5045 if you want more information.

If you missed this year's annual spring banquet you missed a chance to bid on some new and exciting silent auction items. One that generated a lot of bidding interest was a fossil donated by Dave Shepherd. Hand crafted nest boxes and Jerry Jalouszynski's bat houses were popular. We also had some beautiful pottery and art work created by local artists. To all of the businesses and individuals who contributed items for the silent auction, thank you. Your contributions are a key factor in making our major fundraiser a success. If we missed anyone in our thank you elsewhere in this newsletter we apologize. We greatly appreciate the support of everyone.

Join us for the annual butterfly walk at Sylvan Solace Preserve on W. Pickard Rd., between Gilmore and Littlefield at 10 a.m., June 16th. Meet in the parking lot.



The CWC and Global Warming

We decry the community change that threatens our wildlife habitat and quality of life. In the short run it is the greatest threat. Long-term Global Warming (or Climate Change if you prefer) may well prove the greater challenge.

This summer the CWC is studying how it can play a role in fighting global warming. We have taken on a student intern to study this question. Jonathan Krajenka is completing a master's degree in political science. His role will be to develop a position paper on CWC involvement in carbon credit trading programs and how the CWC can promote efforts to reduce greenhouse gases.

One program, the Michigan Conservation & Climate Initiative, is already available to landowners. Qualified landowners can receive CO₂ trading credits for management practices, such as grassland plantings under CREP, which sequester carbon. Those credits are then sold on their behalf on the Climate Control Exchange (CCX). A second program of more general interest is expected to be made available later this year. One of the ways landowners can qualify for these programs is by placing a conservation easement on their land.

My personal position is that it is essential to monetize carbon. We manage most effectively what we can quantify in impact on our bottom line. By creating a verifiable system which benefits those who sequester carbon and allows carbon emitters to find the lowest cost method for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, society will most efficiently reduce its CO₂ emissions, just as the trading of SO₂ credits has helped reduce the emissions causing acid rain.

Already in Europe, to a much greater extent than here in the States, companies are seeking ways to demonstrate their concern for global warming by offsetting the CO₂ emissions caused by their business. When companies, or individuals, buy carbon credits they provide an economic incentive to the owners of those credits to reduce CO₂ emissions.

Conserving land will never solve the problem by itself, but it is one of the simplest methods. Likewise, payments for those credits will not generate large sums for landowners; but do provide one more incentive for land protection.

It is reasonable to estimate that the lands the CWC protects collectively sequester something on the order of 3,000 tons of CO₂ per year. While this is a small amount, it is good to know that we are on the right side of the balance sheet. As our landowners sign up for CO₂ credit programs, we will better understand our impact on CO₂.

One thing is already clear. You fight global warming every time you do something to support the CWC. Sign up a new member, make a contribution, volunteer, or simply wear your CWC hat. When we protect habitat, we fight climate change.

- John Mitchell



Eastern Garter Snake (*Thamnophis sirtalis sirtalis*)

- **Description:** Medium sized (18 – 54 inches) snake with extremely variable color pattern. The background color may be black, brown or olive green. Three yellow, white or greenish stripes, one on the center of the back and one on each side, may be sharply delineated or dull and obscured. The belly is pale yellow, greenish or blue. Butler's Garter Snake and Northern Ribbon Snake are similar in appearance and can be separated by the position and number of scale rows on the side. In Eastern Garter Snake, the stripe occurs at rows 2 and 3 above the large belly scales.

- **Habitat:** Woodlands, meadows, marshes, brush piles. This species prefers damp places that support its favorite foods, earthworms, frogs, toads and small fish.

- **Range:** Common throughout Michigan.

Many humans have a natural aversion to snakes, but garter snakes are harmless, though individuals vary in temperament. Some flatten their bodies and attempt to bite when approached, while others make no attempt to bite, even when frightened or threatened.

Source: *Michigan Snakes, A Field Guide and Pocket Reference*, Holman, J., Harding, J., Hensley, M., and Dudderar, G., Michigan State University, 1999.



Eastern Garter Snake found at the Carter Easement in Isabella County, during an annual monitoring visit, May 2007

Wildflower Study at Neyer Preserve

CWC supporter Cathy Murray has been conducting an independent wildflower study at the Neyer Preserve for the past five years. A wildflower aficionado, she has seen first-hand the damage to native wildflowers caused by Whitetail Deer. Cathy began to demonstrate this problem by using woven wire livestock fencing to partition a small plot of the understory beneath the ashes, beeches and oaks of what is now the Neyer Preserve, in her neighborhood. Over the years she has been able to observe the remarkable difference between the deer-grazed surroundings and her protected plot. She has recently added two more protected plots. Cathy does close-up wildflower photography and will use the plots to document all of the stages of development of selected plants, including bud development, flowering and seed development. Says Cathy, "It's really quite amazing how the wildflowers are able to come back when they have some protection from browsing deer."



Clockwise from top left: Bloodroot, Hepatica, Trillium and Trout Lily are doing well within the protected plot area. Photos by Cathy Murray

Nest Boxes Ready at Sylvan

On a cool and cloudy late March Saturday four volunteers from Central Michigan University's Wildlife Society met CWC Executive Director Stan Lilley at Sylvan Solace to clean and refurbish bluebird nest boxes for the new season. Over the past several years the nest boxes of the preserve have played host to many species of cavity nesting birds, including Eastern Bluebird, Tree Swallow, House Wren, Black-capped Chickadee and White-breasted Nuthatch. Even flying squirrels have taken advantage of the boxes. As the old fields on the north end of the preserve transition to woodland, the trend has been more and more to an increase in House Wren numbers. Cleanout of wren nests from season to season is critical because the industrious little birds endeavor to fill up all of the available space within the boxes with sticks. Many false nests are built by wrens, thus taking space from other nesters if the boxes are not monitored and cleaned out regularly. Thanks to Wildlife Society volunteers, Clay Wilton (President), Jessica Julius, Sarah Schrader and Kara Boden for their help. And thanks too, to the Mount Pleasant General Federated Women's Club and to Don Stearns for constructing and donating nest boxes.



Wildlife Society volunteers remove an old wren nest from a box – left to right, Sarah, Clay, Jessica and Kara



Spring Banquet Nets \$4,000

More than 100 supporters attended the 2007 CWC Spring Banquet, held on April 19th, at Buck's Run east of Mount Pleasant. The event included a return to our traditional buffet style dinner featuring Buck's Run favorites. Our guest speaker, Dr. Jim Gillingham, Director of Central Michigan University's Beaver Island Biological Station, gave a very entertaining and informative presentation of his research on the endangered lizard-like Tuatara of New Zealand. Congratulations to our raffle winners: Mackinac Island Grand Hotel Getaway winner, Jerry Jaloszynski; Schwinn Mountain Bike winner Dan Milan; and Bud Fisher, winner of the card raffle, Agawa Canyon train trip for two. This year's silent auction included many new items, such as a kayak, a beautiful fossil, hand-thrown pottery, photography and art prints, sports memorabilia and bird and bat houses. An acknowledgement to all of our silent auction donors is included elsewhere in this newsletter. Thanks to CMU Wildlife Society volunteers Heather Shaw and Clay Wilton, and to Paul Hannah, for assisting in the setup and for manning the reception table. CWC Executive Director Stan Lilley announced the Board of Directors selection of the winner of our "Name That Preserve" contest is Sharon Milan, who combined the first three letter of one road intersection and the last three letter of the other road to create "Winawa Preserve." All are invited to visit the newest preserve, located at the northwest intersection of Wing and Nottawa Roads, west of Mount Pleasant. CWC President John Mitchell announced this year's award winner of the Bob Ball Award for significant contributions to conservation was CWC Vice President Tim Odykirk, who has donated countless volunteer hours to the CWC and has headed the Banquet Committee for the past several years.



Tim Odykirk shows off the Ball Award while daughters Kate and Emily, and CWC President John Mitchell look on.



Speaker, Jim Gillingham

Matching Gifts

If your company has a matching gift program you can designate the Chippewa Watershed Conservancy and double the value of your gift.

Leave a Lasting Legacy

Life Estate

Give a gift of your land today and reserve a life estate. This means that you donate the land but continue to live there for life or for a specified number of years. You would continue to pay all the taxes and upkeep while you live there and the land would pass to the CWC when your life estate ends. You may be entitled to an immediate income tax deduction for a portion of the appraised value of the land. You would have the satisfaction of making a significant gift now that benefits the CWC later.

Bequests

A bequest made through a provision in your will, also known as a deferred gift, can have positive, long-term impacts on the CWC's ability to meet its promises to easement donors and to ensure our ability to continue to preserve new lands. By making a bequest in your will or living trust you can make a generous gift without reducing your current income. There are many types of bequests.

A specific or explicit bequest. You may leave a specific dollar amount to the CWC.

A percentage bequest. You may designate a percentage of your estate to the CWC.

A residual bequest. You may designate a specific or percentage amount after other bequests have been made.

A contingent bequest. You may designate the CWC to be a beneficiary in the event one or more of your other bequests cannot be made (if, for example, someone to whom you make a bequest predeceases you.)

Gifts of Life Insurance Proceeds

You can designate the CWC as beneficiary of a life insurance policy and choose a set dollar amount, or a percentage or all of the proceeds. You can also make a gift of a current life insurance policy with a cash value by transferring the ownership of the policy to the CWC.

Retirement Accounts

You can give all or part of your 401(k) or IRA accounts by designating the CWC as beneficiary.

If you plan to use any of these options call the office at (989) 644-5045 to get our Federal Tax Identification Number for use in legal documents designating your wishes.

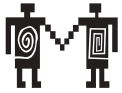
Consult with an estate planner to determine how these options might best benefit you.

Be a land conservation hero. Contribute to the CWC today.

Community Foundation Supports Endowment Challenge

We were pleased to learn, on April 27th, that the Mount Pleasant Area Community Foundation (MPACF) awarded the CWC a \$5,000 grant in support of the Herbert & Grace Dow Foundation Chippewa Watershed Conservancy Endowment challenge. This money will be matched by the Dow Foundation, effectively making it a \$10,000 contribution. CWC Executive Director Stan Lilley said, "We are grateful to the MPACF Board of Directors for their second substantial grant to the CWC in the past year. This is an investment in the future of the Conservancy and shows that the leaders of the Mount Pleasant community believe that we are doing good work that warrants long-term support."

We remind our members and friends that we are now midway through the first year of a two-year campaign to fully meet the \$50,000 dollar for dollar matching challenge by the Dow Foundation. Should we be fortunate enough to exceed \$25,000 in qualifying endowment contributions this year, the excess may be carried over to meet next year's challenge.



Donor List (February 1 – May 15, 2007) Thank You for Your Support

Contributions Allocated to Dow Foundation Endowment Challenge

Brigitte Bechtold	Jim & Carol Erickson	Lee & Phyllis Jeppeson	Daniel Patterson
John & Donna Buckley	Felix Famoye	John & Diane Mitchell	George & Frances Rouman
William Bulger	Ruth Felter	Mt. Pleasant Area	Beth Samuelson
Dave & Eunice Burgess	Jim & Angie Felton	Community Foundation	Dennis Skriba
Gary Collins	Daniel & Meredith Gall	Richard & Diana Moreau	Muriel Straight
David & Diane Current	Prisca & Alan Gamble	Don & Nancy Nagler	Shawn Zimmer
Tom & Sarah Delia	Jennifer Green	Kathleen O'Conner	Kent & Kathy Warner
Dave & Rosie Ebbinghaus	Gerald & Kathleen Jaloszynski	Bill & Wanda Odykirk	

Contributions Allocated to Carls Foundation Challenge

Peggy & Alan Minert	Julie Murphy	Paul Murray	Linda Neely
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Thank You to Our 2007 Silent Auction and Raffle Donors

Algoma Central Railway	General Federated Women's Club	Motorless Motion
Apple Tree Lane	Gil and Adele Klickstein	Pat Farley
Astor Street Café	Grand Hotel, Mackinac Island	Pat Lilley
Bader & Sons Co.	Granny Annie (Ann Brockman)	Pines Golf Course
Blodgett Oil	Great Lakes Loons	PNR Engraving
Brass Café	Greene's Honey Farm	Pohlcat Golf Course
By Candlelight	Greentree Natural Grocery	Randy & Brenda Ritter
Central Motor Sports	Isabella Bank and Trust	Robaire's Bakery & Doughnut Shop
Charlie Walsmley	Isabella County Parks & Recreation	Roy Burlington
Chippewa River Outfitters	Isabella County Recycling	Ryba's Bicycle Rentals
Chloe Hampton	Jay's Sporting Goods	Saginaw Spirit
Clay Wilton	Jeri Reid Golf School	Sinclair's Irish Pub
CMU Student Activity Center	Jerry Jaloszynski	Stacie's Salon
Cuppa Joe's	John and Petra Krull	Stan Lilley
Dave Shepherd	Johnston Elevator	Star Line Mackinac Island Ferry
Detroit Lions	Kim Kennedy	Tom Stewart
Detroit Pistons	Krapohl Ford Lincoln Mercury	Student Activity Center
Detroit Redwings	La Seniorita	Student Book Exchange
Detroit Tigers	Linda Ludy	Sue Ann Kopmeyer
Don & Karen Stearns	Lori Rogers	Village Inn Restaurant
Don Socha & Bridgitte Bechtold	Mackinac Island Carriage Tours	Wellness Central
Eagle Optics	Main Frame Gallery	West Michigan Whitecaps
Firstbank	Mary Lou Kopmeyer	Wings of Mackinac Butterfly Conservatory
Frames Unlimited	Meijer	Ziibiwing Center

Please thank our donors personally for their support when you patronize their businesses

Thank you to our time donors

Donna & John Buckley for trail maintenance at Sylvan Solace

Mike Brockman for Web site management and production of *Heron Tracks*

Diane & Michael Morey for stewardship at Sylvan Solace

Sue Ann Kopmeyer and Tim Odykirk, Paul Hannah, Clay Wilton and Heather Shaw of the Banquet Committee for Spring Banquet organization and support

Katrina Stock, Sarah Muszynski and Pat Lilley, for labeling, mailing newsletters and Earth Day activity support

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.

2006 Board of Directors

John Mitchell: President
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Lori Rogers: Secretary
Keith Frame: Treasurer, Investments
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Sue Ann Kopmeyer
Don Nagler
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Jerry Jaloszynski
Ted Kjolhede
Greg Schmidt
William Shirley
Paul Siers
Thomas Woiwode

CWC Land Protection Successes

17 Easements- 2,810 acres
8 Preserves - 135 acres
Total - 2,945 acres

County	Acres
Clare	1,966
Gratiot	103
Isabella	361
Mecosta	60
Montcalm	455