

Chippewa Watershed Conservancy
P.O. Box 896
Mount Pleasant, MI 48804-0896
(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
- Carls Foundation Matching Grant 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
Tim Odykirk: Vice-President
Lori Rogers: Secretary
Keith Frame: Treasurer, Investments
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Sue Ann Kopmeyer
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CWC Land Protection Scorecard

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

HERON TRACKS



Heron Tracks

The Official Newsletter of the Chippewa Watershed Conservancy

Volume 14, No. 1

Help Us Name our Newest Preserve

Thanks to a generous donation from a couple who wish to remain anonymous, we have a new preserve in Isabella County. The 2.2-acre parcel of land at the northwest intersection of Wing and Nottawa Roads consists of an approximately half-acre pond surrounded by cattails and associated wetland vegetation. On the north side is a strip of higher ground. This is a prime location for amphibians, especially Western Chorus Frogs. It is also a stopover area for Soras and Virginia Rails in spring and summer. We presently have no plans to do any trail or recreational development, but you are welcome to walk the property any time (no dogs, please; it is a preserve).



If you have an idea for a name for this new preserve, go to www.ChippewaWatershedConservancy.org/nameit and let us know by April 4, 2007. The Board of Directors will determine the winning name and we will announce it at the spring banquet on April 19. The winner will receive a CWC limited edition hat and we will be marking the property with signage reflecting the winning name.

Memorial Grove Gets Remake

If you have visited the Memorial Grove located at the north trail intersections at Sylvan Solace recently you have no doubt noticed that the wooden mount and brass memorial plaques are showing the effects of the elements. Thanks to a generous below-cost offer by Absolute Granite of Mt. Pleasant we will be redoing the display. All of the current names will be etched on a beautiful black granite slab, which will replace the existing wooden display. We will have a sample of the new material and etching on display at the banquet. If you would like to add names to the new memorial, please call the office at 989-644-5045. From now through the date of the banquet, April 19, 2007, additional memorial names can be added to the new display for \$50 per name. After the banquet the cost for additional names will be \$100, but this new display should last virtually forever.

Emerald Ash Borer Update

The Michigan Department of Agriculture (MDA) has revised the Michigan Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) quarantine areas to prevent further spread of these beetles that are killing our Ash Trees. All areas where this invasive pest is known to exist are now quarantined. The movement of any deciduous wood should be limited and to move wood out of the quarantine areas is unlawful. For detailed information about EAB, and a map of the quarantine boundaries will be available online at www.michigan.gov/eab or www.emeraldashborer.info. Help save our Ash Trees, do not move firewood!

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In this Issue

Winter 2007

- Help Name Our New Preserve
- Memorial Grove Refurbishment
- Emerald Ash Borer Update
- Executive Director's Corner
- Call for Silent Auction Items
- Spring Banquet Information
- New MPACF Fund for the CWC
- MPACF Grant help's meet Carls Foundation Challenge Grant
- CWC Awarded Two Dow Grants
- President's Statement
- New Tax Laws Encourage Easement Creation
- Science Facts
- 4-H Camp Easement Completed
- Web Site Updated

Executive Director's Corner



Stan Lilley,
CWC Executive Director



Should I Care?

Does it alarm you to know that we are losing 10 acres of open space to sprawl every hour in Michigan? What better reason than this to care about what our future will look like? Of course planned growth is critical to the future of Michigan. But so is the preservation of the core values that mean so much to us here – the rural character of our area, the scenic views, the wildlife habitat, the water quality, these are the legacies we want to pass on to future generations. The least onerous way to do this is through proactive measures such as our preserve acquisitions and our assistance to landowners who want to place voluntary permanent conservation easements on their properties to preserve critical habitat and open space. The alternative, restrictive zoning is effective but often controversial. You will see an article in this issue about new tax breaks that further provide encouragement from the federal and state levels for voluntary land conservation. Yes, we should all care.

This issue of Heron Tracks includes the details and reservation form for our annual spring banquet, scheduled for April 19th, at Buck's Run. Based on the replies to our survey last year, we will be returning to our traditional buffet-style dinner. **This year coffee will be free.** We have a couple of exciting raffle opportunities. The first, a two-night stay for two at the Grand Hotel (not available over a weekend) on Mackinac Island, with ferry tickets and carriage tour and butterfly conservancy tour is valued at \$1,200, and you could be a winner for as little as a \$10 investment. The more exercise-oriented supporter might prefer our second raffle item, a beautiful 2007 Schwinn Sierra GS 23-speed mountain bike. We are working on a better and larger array of silent auction items than ever. Our featured speaker is a local CMU biologist whom many of you know. So be sure and buy your raffle tickets and get your reservations in early. We're going to have a great time.

2006 was a busy year. We acquired three new preserves, including the 25-acre Williams-Blackburn Preserve, purchased at below market value thanks to the Tom and Marje Williams and Mary and Erv Lewandowski families and major donations from the George M. Blackburn family, Michael and Rhea Dow, Barb Grewe and Central Michigan Inns, the Mt. Pleasant Rotary Club challenge and the many contributions from our staunch regular supporters. We added 3 conservation easements, including one on the 40-acre Isabella County 4H Camp. We've seen our past successes and our future goals validated by substantial support grants from the Mt. Pleasant Area Community Foundation, the Herbert H. and Grace A. Dow Foundation, The Carls Foundation, and ESRI. In short, we grew by all measures: acres of land protected; community exposure; and foundation support. We will be working hard to continue to build on the great successes we had last year and to ensure we meet our promises into the future.

With a June 1st deadline to meet the Carls Foundation challenge we still need approximately \$12,000 to take full advantage of the \$40,000, dollar for dollar match. And with the new Herbert and Grace Dow endowment challenge just underway, we need \$25,000 this year and \$25,000 next year to fully achieve that dollar for dollar match. I know with your continued support we can do this. Thank you and please help us to keep spreading the word.

Congratulations to Marl Lake easement donors George and Dorothy Douglass of Montcalm County, on their 50th wedding anniversary, February 14, 2007.

Silent Auction Items Sought

Are you looking for a way to give something other than cash to the CWC? We are looking for new and gently used items for our silent to be held at the annual spring banquet on April 19, 2007. Suggested items include: artwork, photographs, bird feeders and houses, nature books, gardening items, educational materials, optics, gift items, jewelry, ceramics, regional items such as maple syrup, soaps, candles, honey etc. If you have something that you think might generate spirited bidding, mail it to the CWC office at 6801 W. Airline Rd., Weidman, MI 48893, or call 989-644-5045 for pickup by April 9.



Spring Banquet and Silent Auction - April 19, 2007

Please join us on Thursday, April 19, 2007 at Buck's Run for the Annual CWC Spring Banquet



This year's guest speaker is Central Michigan University Biologist, Dr. Jim Gillingham. Jim will give a unique and interesting presentation on the reproductive habits of the Tuatara, a rare New Zealand reptile.

Our dinner returns to the traditional buffet style format featuring Cherry Pecan Pork Loin, Fresh Whitefish and Lemon Pepper Chicken.
No charge for Coffee.

Two great new raffle opportunities: One is a Mackinac Island getaway, including two nights for two persons (not available for weekend stay) at the renowned Grand Hotel, plus ferry tickets, a carriage tour and entry to Wings of Mackinac Butterfly Conservatory. The second is a 2007 Schwinn Sierra GS 23-speed mountain bike. Winner to choose bike details and get custom-fit.

Silent Auction opens and Social Hour begins at 5:30 p.m. There will be many new items to bid on this year. Food will be served at 6:30 p.m.

Please send your reservations in early. Raffle tickets will also be available at the door.

2007 Spring Banquet Reservation Form

Reservation Name _____ Number in Party (\$25 per person) _____

Mailing Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ E-mail (optional) _____

Dinner selection (Quantity) Pork _____ Fish _____ Chicken _____

Raffle Tickets (1 @ \$10) _____ (3 @ \$25) _____ _____ Mackinac Island _____ Mountain Bike

I am including an extra, tax deductible contribution of \$ _____

Total Amount Enclosed \$ _____

Mail to: The Chippewa Watershed Conservancy, P.O. Box 896, Mt. Pleasant, MI 48804-0896
The Chippewa Watershed Conservancy is a qualified 501(c)(3) organization. Federal Tax ID 38-3181796; MICT # 1818676; Raffle License # R89756. **Advance reservations preferred.** Call 989-644-5045 if you plan to attend but can't pay in advance.



New Tax Laws Encourage Donations of Conservation Easements

Two recent pieces of legislation now are good reasons to consider donating a conservation easement (CE) in 2007. In December 2006 Governor Granholm signed into law Public Act 446 of 2006, eliminating the “pop-up” tax on the transfer of land enrolled in a permanent CE. Land (not buildings on the land) enrolled in a CE will not have the taxable value of the property “popped up” to the State Equalized Value upon transfer of ownership. This means a potential direct tax savings of hundreds or thousands of dollars per year for new owners of the land. In cases where land has been held in a family for years, this may mean the difference between heirs being able to hold on to the land or having to sell it.

In August the President signed legislation increasing the maximum allowable deduction for a charitable contribution of a CE and increasing the length of time over which a deduction may be claimed. The deduction may now be spread over 16 years rather than 6 years. For most landowners the maximum allowable deduction was raised from 30 percent of Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) to 50 percent. **But for landowners who earn 51% or more of their income from farming, the maximum allowable amount is 100% of AGI.** This law is effective for donations made from January 1, 2006 through December 31, 2007. After that, it will revert back to previous provisions, unless Congress extends it before the expiration date.

See additional details on the Web site, at www.ChippewaWatershedConservancy.com or call the office, 989-644-5045 with questions.

4H Camp Easement Completed

On November 7, 2006, the Chippewa Watershed Conservancy (CWC) assisted the Isabella County 4H Camp Association Board of Directors in completing a voluntary conservation easement on the 4H camp at Coldwater Lake. The signing of this agreement by Don Kistler, President of the Isabella County 4H Camp Association and John Mitchell, President of the CWC, ensures that the 40-acre parcel will be forever preserved to protect the recreational, scenic and wildlife values of the land. Ownership of the land remains in the hands of the 4H Board and the Conservancy will not be involved in the operations of the facility. The CWC will hold the easement and will be responsible for annual compliance monitoring to ensure the terms of the agreement are being met.



View of the 4-H Camp main lodge

CWC Executive Director Stan Lilley stated, “This is an important piece of land at Coldwater Lake that had a high potential for home site development. We are very glad to be able to help the 4H Association ensure that the area is always available for 4H activities in Isabella County. We believe that this is what the original donor of the property intended more than 50 years ago.” The site was originally given to the 4H Clubs of Bay and Isabella Counties by Laura Hyslop, of Weidman. The Isabella 4H Camp Association became the sole owners in 1999.

An additional benefit to this easement is its proximity to both Coldwater Lake Family Park and the CWC’s Coldwater Lake Preserve. These three parcels are now permanently protecting 93 acres of land, including nearly half a mile of Coldwater Lake shoreline and more than 800 feet of Coldwater River frontage for public use.



New Fund Created at MPACF

CWC supporters Michael and Rhea Dow of Charlevoix have created a new fund at the Mt. Pleasant Area Community Foundation (MPACF) to benefit the Conservancy. The fund will be called the William Brehm/Chippewa Watershed Conservancy Stewardship Fund, in memory of Mr. Dow’s long-time business partner, the late William Brehm, of Mt. Pleasant, who passed away on September 24, 2006. Mr. Brehm, a well-known Central Michigan businessman, was the founder of Chippewa Beverage Company, the owner-operator of the Mt. Pleasant Holiday Inn, and established the Holiday Greens Golf Course and The Pohlcat Golf Course among his many enterprises. Dow said, “Bill was a long-time business partner and friend and I wanted to do something of importance to his local community in his memory.” With the creation of the fund the Dows also provided an initial \$10,000 contribution, thus making it possible to immediately begin drawing on the interest created to support stewardship activities on the CWC preserves, such as trail maintenance, invasive species control, and signage.

Speaking for the family, Barbara Brehm-Grewe said, “My Dad cared about the community and about the landscape, as you can tell by how he laid out the Holiday Greens and The Pohlcat. He didn’t just rip things up, but tried to incorporate important natural features into his plans. We are grateful to the Dows for this gesture and I’m sure Dad would be pleased.”

CWC Executive Director Stan Lilley said, “We too, are grateful to the Dows. For those who donate to this fund, not only may contributions be eligible for federal tax deductions, but they may also qualify for State tax credits. And when you make a donation to this fund you know that we will never touch your principal. We will only use the interest generated by the fund, so your contribution will always be there providing support. We hope that people who may not have previously known about the CWC, but knew Mr. Brehm will take advantage of this opportunity to make contributions in his memory, and help our stewardship efforts in the process.”

Mt. Pleasant Area Community Foundation Awards \$2,900

On December 29, 2006 the Mt. Pleasant Area Community Foundation (MPACF) Board of Trustees awarded a \$2,900 grant to the Chippewa Watershed Conservancy. The grant is to be used to help us receive a dollar-for-dollar matching grant from the Carls Foundation in furtherance of our land acquisition program to preserve open space and wildlife habitat. CWC Executive Director Stan Lilley said, “This is a big boost to help to us meet the Carls Foundation challenge. The great news is this contribution will result in a total of \$5,800 in new land acquisition funds thanks to both of these foundations. We believe this grant will demonstrate to the Carls Foundation and to other potential future funders that we have critical local support for our projects.” The grant money was disbursed from the Unrestricted Funds, which are permanently endowed funds of the MPACF.

We are excited about the progress we are making to meet the full \$40,000 Carls Foundation challenge and grateful for the support of the MPACF. This grant pushes us over the \$28,000 mark, but we still need nearly \$12,000 by May 31st to meet the challenge.

Conservancy Awarded Two Dow Grants

The Chippewa Watershed Conservancy has been awarded two grants by the Herbert H. and Grace A. Dow Foundation of Midland. The first is a \$60,000 cash grant, \$30,000 per year for two years, for operational support. The second is a \$50,000 challenge grant, a dollar for dollar match not to exceed \$25,000 per year for two years, for endowment support.

CWC Executive Director Stan Lilley stated, “We are thrilled to receive these new grants. This is clearly a validation of the value and the significance of our work in land conservation here in Central Michigan and we look forward to a long and successful partnership with the Herbert and Grace Dow Foundation.”

The first grant means that we will be able to keep up and even expand our activities over the next two years. The second grant is aimed at helping us sustain a long-term presence. All of the money received under the second grant will go directly into our endowment fund. The interest from that fund will help us to continue to operate into the future. Please help us to take full advantage of these opportunities by making a contribution now. Forms are available on the Web site at www.ChippewaWatershedConservancy.org.



We Are Known By Our Legacy

Future generations will remember us for what we have left them. In the case of the Chippewa Watershed Conservancy we will be judged by what habitat we have saved, and by what we have failed to save. But I expect that there will also be another measure by which future generations take stock of us.

To what extent have we created an organization capable of caring for that land? Such an organization needs members, leaders, and the funds to pursue its purpose.

We have an opportunity, right now, to help ensure that the CWC will have the financial capacity to care for the 2,945 acres we have protected to date. The Herbert and Grace Dow Challenge Grant is admittedly a small step towards an endowment adequate to ensure funds for future land protection. But it is our first real step, and it is essential that we meet this challenge. \$25,000 raised by the CWC will be matched by an equal amount by the foundation. The \$50,000 that we can add to the CWC endowment will provide close to \$3,000 per year every year on and on into the future. Yes, just a step towards a sustainable CWC, but a real and significant start.

No one can predict economic conditions 50 or 100 years from now. Neither can we predict the ability of future generations to raise adequate funds to continue protecting habitat. What it boils down to is that we haven't really protected the land if we haven't set aside adequate funds to monitor and defend it. Many of you have already donated via the year-end fund appeal. Thank you. Thank you for helping ensure the future. Together we will meet this challenge and provide a legacy that will make a real difference in the lives of future generations.

John Mitchell

Donor List (September 12, 2006 – January 31, 2007) Thank You for Your Support

Anonymous (3)	Hans & Dorothy Fetting	Michael Kruscke	Ross & Shelly Rapaport
Norma Bailey	Bud & Mary Ann Fisher	Bob & Pat Lichtman	Ken & Bonnie Schaeffer
Richard & Nancy Beckwith	Mark Freed & Brooke Harrison	Stan & Pat Lilley	John Scheide
Margaret Blackburn	Peter & Nancy Fries	Joan Loveland	Arnout Sellekaerts
Don & Claudette Bosscawen	Marilyn & Gordon Fosburg	Dave & Helen MacGregor	Mary S. Senter
Kathleen Bracken	Keith & Mary Frame	David & Elizabeth MacLeod	Ara & Barbara Sheperdigian
Arlin Briley	Stephen & Teresa Frey	Ruth Magnell	David C. Shepherd
Al & Cindy Bryan	Patricia Gillis	Ronald Marmarelli	Paul Snyder
Roy & Alice Burlington	Katherine & Richard Godbold	David S. Mattern	Bill & Peg Sowle
John & Carol Caldwell	John & Carol Grossa	Douglas McDonald	Winifred Sponseller
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Annette Clark	Dykstra & Phyllis Dykstra	Tom & Gisela Moffit	Warner Stewart & Betty J. Dickey
Richard & Susan Clemmer	Virginia Haight & Gary Kramer	Francis & Mary Molson	Michael Stratford
Larry W. Collins	Roger Hammer Family	Clara Lee R. Moody	Herman & Tina Theeke
Bob & Elaine Connell	Jan Hewlett	Ellen Moss	Bill & Dorothy Theunissen
Harold & Mary Cook	Jim & Kathryn Hill	Jean Murray	Doug & Barbara Valek
Dan & Terri Cowie	Gregory Hoff	Dixie Neier	Sally Van Cise
Michael & Jean Claus	Carl & Carol Johnson	Richard & Joyce Nisbet	Charlie Walmsley
Mary Ann Crawford	Joan Kadler	Drs. Mary & Peter	John & Sandy Warriner
Harold & Beverly Crawley	Lew & Carol Keim	Obuchowski	Robert Welsh
John & Audrey Cumming	Richard & Barbara Kirchner	Tim & Elizabeth Odykirk	James & Diane Wilson
Doris Dale	Bob & Pattie Kjolhede	Bill & Wanda Odykirk	Lucille Wysong
John & Nancy Davis	Ted & Ginger Kjolhede	Dennis & Sandra Olson	Dan & Millie Wujek
Jim & Liz Dealing	Sue & Gary Knight	Dawn Polanco	Basil & Theresa Zimmer
Kimber & Judy DeWitt	Sue Ann Kopmeyer	Dave & Ann Prawdzik	Marilyn Zorn
Woody Eber	John & Petra Krull	Betty Ragan	

Endowment Contributions

Gerald A. Carter
Marvin, Barb & Jeff Litwiller
John & Diane Mitchell
Robert & Dorothy Severson
Don & Karen Stearns

Corporate/Business Contributions

Herbert H. and Grace A. Dow Foundation
Mt. Pleasant Area Community Foundation
Summit Petroleum Corporation
Trendwell Energy Corporation

Contributions in Memory

Mary Ellen Blackburn in Memory of George M. Blackburn
Gerald A. Carter in Memory of Dr. Joyce Ann Carter



Western Chorus Frog (*Pseudacris triseriata*)

• **Description:** A tiny brownish frog, 1 to 1 ½ inches long, with dark stripes on the back and a dark band that runs from the nose to top of front leg, through the eye. One of the first species to call in spring.

• **Habitat:** Wet meadows, marshes, woodlands. Rarely seen after breeding season.

• **Range:** Common throughout the Lower Peninsula, but rare in the Upper Peninsula.

• **Call:** A raspy, rising trill like the noise made by strumming the small teeth of a pocket comb.



Chorus frogs act as a critical indicator species. Because the larval and adult forms occupy different levels of the food chain, anomalies (such as deformities) or a reduction in reproductive success can be linked to problems in either aquatic or terrestrial ecosystems. This makes this species valuable in determining the overall health of both ecosystems. The permeable skin of the western chorus frog also makes it susceptible to contaminants and other external stimuli.

Source: Gardiner, K. 2000. "Pseudacris triseriata" (On-line), Animal Diversity Web. http://animaldiversity.ummz.umich.edu/site/accounts/information/Pseudacris_triseriata.html and Michigan DNR.

Volunteers in Action - Thank You

We are able to accomplish so much more thanks to all of the volunteers who have so generously given of their time and resources.

Diane & Michael Morey for stewardship at Sylvan Solace

Donna & John Buckley for trail maintenance at Sylvan Solace

Mike Brockman for Web site management, production of *Heron Tracks* and prepress work on the raffle tickets

Lori Rogers for grant writing

Ross McNeel for donation of a paper cutter

Sue Ann Kopmeyer and Tim Odykirk of the Banquet Committee for Spring Banquet Planning

Pat Lilley, Kathleen Martin, John & Diane Mitchell, Diane Pifer, and Katherine Valkos for labeling, and mailing newsletters and year end fund appeal

We are able to accomplish so much more thanks to all of the volunteers who have so generously given of their time and resources.

Check Out the Web Site

Thanks to the hard work of Mike Brockman we have made major updates to the CWC Web site. If you haven't been there recently, please check it out. You'll find a map of our service area including the general locations of preserves and easement land. There is an FAQ section that provides immediate answers to the questions most asked by newcomers. There is information about the potential benefits to landowners and families from the recent tax law changes. There is information about how to support our on-going challenge grant opportunities and a link to iGive.com that gives on-line shoppers a chance to have part of the proceeds from their orders donated to the CWC by supporting businesses. There are links to our regional partners and other sites involved in land conservation. The site remains a work in progress and we plan to add more pictures, a "What's New" section and other new features as time goes by. We hope you will not only come back to the site often, but also refer friends and family. If you have ideas for other items that should be on the site, call the office at 989-644-5045, or email any of the contacts shown on our "Contacts" link. Be sure to bookmark the site. It's easy to remember we are at www.ChippewaWatershedConservancy.org.