

HERON TRACKS

The Official Newsletter of the Chippewa Watershed Conservancy
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Photograph by Stan Lilley



Meet Our New Executive Director

The CWC is pleased to announce that we have hired Jonathon (Jon) Breithaupt (Breit Up) as our third Executive Director. Jon is no stranger to the CWC. He served as an intern under the tutelage of Stan Lilley. Jon is a CMU graduate with a degree in Recreation, Parks, and Leisure Services Administration with a concentration in Outdoor and Environmental Recreation. While at CMU Jon served as founder and president of the Parks and Outdoor Recreation Coalition. He also holds an associate degree in Business Administration from Northwestern Michigan College. He is currently enrolled in an online Master of Natural Resources Stewardship program at Colorado State University.

Jon has experience with the US Forest Service as a Forestry Technician, with Colorado Parks and Wildlife, Isabella County Parks and Recreation, the National Park Service, and with the CWC; all in a wide variety of capacities. He has extensive leadership experience as well. Jon brings an infectious enthusiasm to the cause. On behalf of the Board of Directors, we look forward to Jon's efforts to raise the CWC to a new level of success in protecting the natural resources here in our Central Michigan area.

Stop by the office to meet Jon or send him a message on our Facebook page.



President's Perspective



John Mitchell, CWC Board President

Autumn leaves are beginning to drift past our windows as they make their one solo flight. It is their one moment of individuality before joining their

brethren carpeting the forest floor. It looks like an ending; but in reality is the beginning of a new cycle. New buds are forming, ready to burst forth in next spring's warmth. Trees are preparing for a new growing season. Nature is in transition.

In transition. That pretty well describes the CWC right now.

We just hired Jon Breithaupt as our third Executive Director. Jon is uniquely skilled to move the CWC to a new level. Exciting times are ahead. We also reorganized the CWC committee structure. To top it off, we have several new projects in process. These are busy times for your Board of Directors. But like those new buds, it brings promise of growth.

We have established four standing committees: Executive, Governance, Relationships, and Lands. The Executive Committee is made up of the four officers

and acts on behalf of the BOD, as needed, between BOD meetings. Governance works to ensure good management. Relationships endeavors to increase membership and resources and to build a strong presence in the community. Lands is responsible for recommending new projects and for stewardship of both easements and preserves.

We are seeking interested individuals to serve on Governance, Relationships, and Lands. If you have an interest in building a better CWC; if you would like to help but are not quite sure how; if you want a task that fits your interests and available time; give me a call at 989 330 2929 or drop me a note at the CWC office, 306 S. University Ave., Mt. Pleasant, 48858.

We need you. You can make a difference. In fact, you are exactly the person we are looking for.

Until then, see you on the trails.

Member Spotlight

Karen Green received her first camera, a Kodak Instamatic model, at age 11. Encouraged by her artistic parents, she always enjoyed being out in nature, and with this new camera developed a fascination with capturing events that, as she says, "people walked by and didn't notice."

Karen graduated to a 35 mm camera after college and continued snapping photos at every opportunity. She is self-taught, absorbing basic rules of photography and learning by trial and error. She had taken a few day classes to further her knowledge, but really "got into pictures" after her retirement in 2010. Some of her favorite photography involves macro shots--looking at nature close-up.

Karen says, "Being in the woods is my 'happy place'. I go to enjoy nature and to find the calmness that I always experience there. There is always something new to discover. After I retired, I joined Chippewa Watershed Conservancy and the Chippewa Valley Audubon Club. It is great to share the love of nature and wild places with other like-minded people." She has graciously shared her talents in photography with the CWC.

Here are some of Karen's most recent pictures from Hall's Lake Natural Area, Sylvan Solace, and Audubon Woods. You can view more of her work at karensnaturepics.weebly.com.



On Saturday, August 19, 2017 the Chippewa Watershed Conservancy dedicated our newest preserve, Bundy Hill. Preserving our natural resources is the goal of the CWC, and with Bundy Hill we also preserve a part of Central Michigan Area history. The dedication ceremony celebrated the natural beauty, the history, and expressed a thank you to the community and the McNeel family that made the purchase of this property achievable.



To get ready for the event the CWC Board of Directors and community volunteers met and cleaned up the Autumn Olive and debris that had accumulated over the years.



In 2015 CWC started work on the fund raising necessary to acquire this land from the McNeel family. The family joined us in the dedication celebration. Wakelin and his family came from California, Amie came from Seattle and Ross came from Michigan.



Music played a large part in the history of Bundy Hill and Bruce Gartner and Daniel Bracken played and sang songs, old and new, celebrating this heritage.



The Remus Area Historic Museum helped in the planning and staging of the event and provided a display of old logging tools.



Larry Schaftenaar researched area history and provided display signs explaining the natural and historical significance of Bundy Hill



Mike LeValley tirelessly led group after group of hikers to the top of the hill, describing the flora, fauna, and geographical landmarks on the property.



Bundy Hill is the highest point in Isabella County. The top is marked with a geodetic marker.



John Mitchell, CWC Board President, gave the formal dedication. He ended the dedication with an invitation to the entire community to come and enjoy our latest preserve and all of the other preserves which are open to the public. Come hike, picnic, and enjoy nature.



You, our donors and supporters, make all of this possible. Thank you.

Field Trip to Peterson Natural Area

This guest article, by Board Member Mike LeValley, appears in its entirety on his blog, midmichigannatureandscience.blogspot.com.

On Saturday August 12th, I led a field trip to the Chippewa Watershed Conservancy's Peterson Natural Area. At 79 acres, Peterson NA is one of the largest preserves in the CWC's inventory. It is also (probably) one of the least visited. Located in Mecosta County, Peterson NA is much closer to Big Rapids (less than 10 miles) than it is to Mt. Pleasant (approximately 40 miles). This distance from Mt. Pleasant puts off the radar for most CWC supporters - if you are going to Peterson Natural Area you are making a time commitment.

Despite the distance from Mt. Pleasant (or in my case from Alma), visiting Peterson Natural Area is worth the effort.

The surprise of the day was finding a Wood Turtle (*Glyptemys insculpta*) in the wet meadow



that runs down the center of the property. The Wood Turtle is considered a Species of Special Concern by the State of Michigan so it is always a thrill to see one. Wood Turtles do frequently spend much of the summer in upland areas, but I didn't suspect that the small stream running through Peterson Natural Area would bring one to the property from the nearby Muskegon River. I actually found this turtle with my feet - while walking through the tall grass of the meadow, I stepped on what initially I thought was a rounded rock. Surprise!

The upland parts of the property (northwest quarter) is very different from the low area along the stream. It is very dry and sandy. The Michigan Natural Features Inventory



pre-settlement vegetation map indicates that Peterson Natural Area was once covered with Beech-Sugar Maple-Hemlock Forest, but the vegetation on this hill is currently more like that found on a Dry Sand Prairie or Oak-Pine Barren. Pre-settlement maps indicate that two areas of Oak-Pine Barren could be found within two miles of Peterson NA in the past.



Near the end of our walk, we found three Monarch caterpillars. All three were in their 5th instar and were almost ready to enter the chrysalis stage. The first two caterpillars were feeding on Common Milkweed plants. The third caterpillar was crawling around on the side of a large rock. In the hours before forming a chrysalis, Monarch caterpillars (and those of other butterfly species) often wander far from their host plant.



If you are interested in visiting Peterson Natural Area, this is the best time of year to do so. The late summer wildflowers in the wet meadow are at their peak and the fall asters and goldenrods will be blooming soon. If time allows, I may try to take one more trip over before the bloom is done.

Thank You

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Thank You Volunteers

Many thanks to all who helped make the Bundy Hill Preserve Dedication a success. Especially noted are:

- Pamela Burke and the Wheatland Music Organization
- Daniel Bracken and Bruce Gartner
- Linda Howard and the Remus Historical Society and Museum
- Tyler Knowles Photography
- Larry & Judy Schaftenaar
- Mike LeValley
- Jack Westbrook
- Marilyn & Gordon Fosburg
- Jaime Griffis and the Bundy Hill Cleanup Crew
- Sherry Sponseller
- Megan McNeel Walsh
- Diana Green and the "Old Settlers"
- Linda Dielman-Bundy Hill Jamboree
- Lisa Yanick Litwiller-The Morning Sun
- Pita Pit
- The McNeel Family, who made the purchase of Bundy Hill possible



The Chippewa Watershed Conservancy is selling 3x3 stickers of the geodetic marker at Bundy Hill. These can be purchased online at squareup.com/store/chippewa-watershed-conservancy or at our office, for \$5 a sticker. Great for gift giving!



CWC PROTECTED LAND

County	Acres
Clare	2,494
Gratiot	149
Isabella	939
Mecosta	491
Montcalm	816
Midland	8
34 Easements	4,347 Acres
22 Preserves	626 Acres
1 Government Transfer	(2 Acres)
TOTAL	4,973 Acres

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