

HERON TRACKS

The Official Newsletter of the Chippewa Watershed Conservancy
Volume 25 Number 1 Winter 2018



Photo by Stan Lilley



John Mitchell, CWC Board President

President's Statement

County Nature Conservancy) was incorporated in 1985. The CWC grew out of the interest in conservation and natural resource access that I shared with the late Bob Ball. We had the idea. But we didn't have the critical mass of people to make it happen. The future CWC sat as a folder in my desk drawer until 1994.

That spring several people, including John and Donna Buckley, Tom Stewart, Scott and Lori Bellinger, and Dave Shepherd independently came to me and described what they thought this community needed; a private non-profit organization dedicated to protecting nature and giving people access to the river and other natural resources. I smiled and politely informed them that they were the new BOD. We had no choice but to go forward and do what we had been spouting off about. We stumbled a bit, not knowing quite how to do this. We were, as I like to say, a rag-tag bunch of rabble-rousers huddling around a campfire. But we had the good sense to add Ted Kjolhede, and George Blackburn, and Don Nagler (and over the years dozens of other people) to the board.

It was at this time that we drafted a Mission statement. A Mission that with only minor editing, stands today. "The CWC is dedicated to the protection of natural habitat and open space in the counties of the Chippewa River". To wit; Clare, Isabella, Gratiot, Mecosta, and Montcalm. Although the Chippewa River also flows thru Midland and Osceola counties, they are served by other conservancies.

This Mission defines who we are and what we focus on. It speaks to our dedication to the habitat and all the creatures the habitat supports. What we do is not about us and what we get out of habitat protection. What the CWC does as an organization, what we are dedicated to, is the protection of natural habitat for nature's sake.

No one else does it quite the way we do

Locally, we have very successful county and city parks departments largely focused on public recreation. Rightly so for they are taxpayer funded

and taxpayer accountable. The CWC is privately funded and accountable to our donors and governmental oversight to ensure we use tax-deductible donations to meet our stated purpose. Public recreation on our lands is a good thing – if it does not materially detract from their value as natural habitat and open space. Walking trails? Sure, if we route them around rare and threatened species. Canoe launch? Sure, if contained to a small area and funds protection of more river habitat. Community needs change and organizations change to meet those needs; but our niche has always been as advocates for nature for nature's sake.

In 1996 we recorded our first habitat protection success. We received a small parcel along the Chippewa River adjacent to Deerfield Park from Katie McNeel, and shortly thereafter, Sylvan Solace, the 78-acre jewel, from Don and Nancy Nagler. We wrote what at that time was the largest private Conservation Easement in the state to protect 1647.5 acres in Clare County; and as they say, never looked back.

But the CWC did not exactly take off. By 2004, 10 years after the re-birth, we had about 6 easements and 4 or 5 preserves. We were volunteer staffed by the BOD, and we were routinely raising about \$10,000 per year. It was at that point that we did the smartest thing we had done to date – we hired Stan Lilley.

Stan was the right person, with the right skills, at the right time. He changed the CWC from all-volunteer outfit into a professionally run, accredited, and respected organization. The number of completed projects grew steadily and now exceeds 50. With the recent push past 5,000 acres the CWC has now protected, thru ownership or conservation easement, 8 square miles right here in our local community. Accreditation. The increase in protected lands. The increase in our financial resources. None of that would likely have happened, and certainly not as quickly, without Stan.

When some future archaeologist unearths the foundations of the CWC; they will mark the hiring of Stan as the beginning of a new geologic era for the CWC. The era of professional staff.

A New Beginning

This is not goodbye.

I am pleased to report that Steve Pung has succeeded me as CWC President. This change affirms the CWC's commitment to continuous improvement and renewal. It is always difficult to say goodbye to a role that is as fulfilling as the past 32 years have been for me. However, the only thing that really matters is that the CWC grows into an organization that is not dependent on any one person, and by making this transition we demonstrate this level of maturity as an organization. Personally, I rejoice that we are marching forward. It has always been a little difficult to look a landowner in the eye and say we will be here forever when we had only experienced one President in the history of the organization. It seemed a bit delusional in the face of human mortality to not institutionalize leadership renewal.

With the recent hiring of Jon Breithaupt as ED and all the plans for growth that he has already set in motion; with the shuffling of the roles that Steve Pung and I play; and with an incredibly strong, diverse, dedicated, and talented BOD; the CWC is poised for a burst of growth in capacity. In the coming years you will see more staff, more projects, more stewardship, and a more financially sustainable CWC than you have ever seen before.

For me it is a dream fulfilled.

So what is my future role? I will serve as Treasurer and as a member of the Executive Committee for the coming year. I chair the Lands Committee and serve on the Finance sub-committee of Governance Committee. And, of course, I will be there for whatever the CWC asks of me. **As I said, this is NOT goodbye.**

I would like to take the opportunity to reflect, however. And so I offer A Brief History of the CWC.

The Chippewa Watershed Conservancy (then known as the Isabella

Stan brought us one other thing – our new ED, Jon Breithaupt. Jon began his involvement with the CWC as a student intern under Stan's tutelage. For the short time since Jon graduated from CMU, he has an amazing wealth of conservation experience. He has already made his mark on this organization. I am confident we are in good hands.

I'll leave a formal history to other less biased hands. But I do offer this one last observation. The history of the CWC, the chronicle of our success, is ultimately written by all of us. Our members, our BOD and staff, our donors, our volunteers. Each of us plays a vital part and it is our collective effort that makes possible each preserve, each conservation easement, each landowner served, each acre of protected habitat. Thank you for being part of it.

See you on the trails.

Conservation Conversation

By the time you are reading this article I will have been in my current position for about four months. I'm very excited to have the opportunity to grow and advance our effective conservation group. In the short term, expect to see at least two environmental education events per month, even in the middle of winter, under my leadership. We have plans to host a variety of volunteer opportunities so folks like you can join us in constructing sustainable trail systems or controlling troublesome invasive species.

Currently, we have multiple conservation easement projects underway to protect additional acreage in our service area. In the long run, I hope to add multiple paid staff members who will assist us with fundraising, marketing and outreach, and land stewardship.

Another goal of mine as Executive Director of CWC is to forge effective partnerships between the Conservancy and area businesses. We have revamped our annual business sponsorship program and launched a new business adopt-a-preserve program that will allow local businesses to lend a hand in caring for the land in exchange for valuable marketing of their work and a sense of accomplishment and altruism.

In terms of acquisitions, we've got our eye on a parcel of land downstream of the city of Mt. Pleasant where a vacuum of public access currently exists. This could evolve into a campaign to purchase and develop the site by as early as the summer of 2018. Stay tuned for details.

I'm excited about the direction CWC is headed. I hope to see you at one of our educational or volunteer events.



Jon Breithaupt, Executive Director

My office door is always open – never hesitate to stop in at our location on University Avenue across from the Veterans Memorial Library or drop a line to introduce yourself. I look forward to building relationships with all of you.

Projects on the Preserves

In cooperation with several different partners, we are excited to complete important special projects on our preserves that will add value to them. Thanks to a grant from the Isabella Wind Project of Apex Clean Energy, we have added a variety of tools essential for constructing and maintaining a more sustainable trail system at our Bundy Hill Preserve. The current trail has serious erosion issues and does not provide a high-quality hiking experience. The grant gave us the opportunity to acquire a backpack blower, string trimmer, hand tools, wayfinding signage and funding to support an intern to assist with the trail construction project. The goal of this work is to establish a non-motorized trail system that will ensure proper water drainage, protection of natural resources and provide a more enjoyable visitor experience.

Thanks to a matching grant from Saginaw Bay Watershed Initiative Network, we will be able to install three bulletin boards on our preserves – one each at Audubon Woods Preserve, Bundy Hill Preserve and Halls Lake Natural Area. The bulletin boards are important for disseminating information to visitors on topics such as recreational opportunities, upcoming events, preserve rules and regulations, how to support the Conservancy, and more. The grant also provides funding for an educational brochure and trail map for Bundy Hill Preserve as well as 'Living History Trail' signage which will interpret the rich history of the area. Special thanks to Judy and Larry Schaftenaar, Remus Historical Society and Old Settlers Reunion for providing matching support to make these exciting projects possible.

A materials donation from Home Depot of Mt. Pleasant will allow us to complete the loop trail at Audubon Woods Preserve. Currently, there is no safe way to cross a small, intermittent stream that drains the preserve. The donation will allow us to construct a small foot bridge to safely cross the stream and limit impacts to this sensitive natural feature. Every third Sunday of the month from April through October we will be hosting volunteer stewardship work sessions. Be sure to keep up to date on environmental education and volunteer opportunities by visiting the events tab on our Facebook page or by checking out the events page on our website.

Thank You To Our

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Thomas Williams by Benn Williams
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Donations In Honor Of

Doug Valek by Nancy Rivard

Thank You Volunteers

Easement and Preserve Monitoring: David DeGraaf, Marilyn & Gordon Fosburg, Keith Frame, Dyke Heinze, Stan Lilley, John Mitchell, Richard & Diana

Moreau, Cathy Murray, Roger & Louise Hammer, Larry & Judy Schaftenaar, David Shepherd, Tom Stewart, Eric Torgersen, and Charlie Walmsley

Programs: Sister Marie Kopin, Mike LeValley

Stewardship Trails: Malcolm Fox, Dr. Bob Dvorak and the Spring Semester 2017 CMU Natural Resource Management (RPL 470) class and Dr. Lynn Dominguez

Applied Trails Research: Dr. Jeremy Wimpey

Hall's Lake Stewardship Committee: Kathy Johns, Larry and Judy Schaftenaar, John & Cil Lorand, Adonna Kennedy, Kathy Johns

Bundy Hill Stewardship: Katelyn Griffis, Jaime Griffis, Sadie Moreno, Adam Moreno, Megan Moreno, Bruce & Kelly Moss, James & Debra Simmons Marilyn & Gordon Fosburg, Sue Ann Kopmeyer, Mike LeValley, Steve Pung

Bundy Hill Event: Sheri Sponseller, Pamela Peach Burke, Linda Howard, Pita Pit, Daniel Bracken, Bruce Gartner, Diana Green, Larry & Judy Schaftenaar

Photography and Videos: Tyler Knowles Photography, Karen Green

Our 2017 Business Sponsors

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Mt. Pleasant Area Community Foundation
Little Forks Conservancy
Apex Clean Energy Holdings, LLC
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CWC PROTECTED LAND

County	Acres
Clare	2,494
Gratiot	149
Isabella	939
Mecosta	491
Montcalm	816
Midland	8
Gladwin	270
36 Easements	4,617 Acres
22 Preserves	626 Acres
1 Government Transfer	(2 Acres)
TOTAL	5,245 Acres

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Steve Pung, *President*
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WINTER/SPRING CALENDAR

**Logging History of Michigan
Veterans Memorial Library
February 28, 7-9 pm**



Chippewa Watershed Conservancy board member and Isabella Conservation District environmental educator, Mike LeValley, will give an indoor presentation about the fascinating history of logging in Michigan.

**Where's the Green?
Audubon Woods Preserve
March 17, 10 am - 12 pm**



Celebrate St. Patrick's Day with David DeGraaf, retired director of Forest Hill Nature Area, at Audubon Woods Preserve by searching for flora that are beginning to display the green pigment, chlorophyll. David will help us identify other plants and animals as well.

**Michigan Spring Wildflowers
Veterans Memorial Library
March 28, 7-9 pm**



Spring wildflowers of Michigan will be the topic of this indoor presentation with Chippewa Watershed Conservancy board member and Isabella Conservation District environmental educator, Mike LeValley.

**Land Stewardship and
Monitoring Workshop
March 29, 6 pm - 8 pm**



Learn about techniques for natural area management with CWC staff, including invasive species control and removal, trail building and maintenance, Conservancy preserve and easement monitoring requirements and more. We will meet in the large conference room at Mt. Pleasant Area Community Foundation located at 306 S. University Ave., Mt. Pleasant.

**Volunteer Stewardship Outing
Sylvan Solace Preserve
April 15 - 10 am-1 pm**



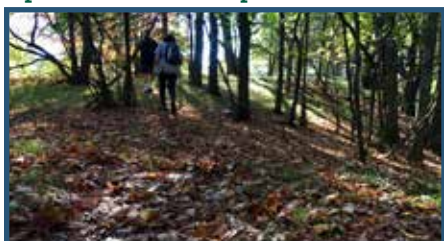
Join the CWC at our Sylvan Solace Preserve for an environmental stewardship volunteer session. We'll clean up our trails to get them ready for the season, pick up trash, restore our trailhead area and work to control invasive species. Every third Sunday of the month from April - October we will be hosting volunteer outings on the preserves.

**Trail Building Workshop
CWC Office
April 21. 10 am-4 pm**



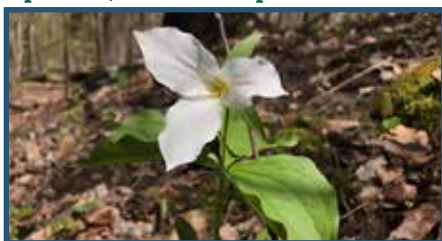
A trail building workshop will be presented by Jeremy Wimpey, Ph.D., from Applied Trails Research, and the CWC. A two-hour classroom presentation will run from 10 am - 12 pm at the conference room of Mt. Pleasant Area Community Foundation followed by training in the field from 1-4 pm at our Bundy Hill Preserve.

**Earth Day Trail Building
Bundy Hill Preserve
April 22. 10 am-1 pm**



Commemorate Earth Day at Bundy Hill Preserve! We will begin construction of a sustainable trail to the top of Bundy Hill. Meet at the Bundy Hill Preserve 10 am. Bring water, gloves and eye protection.

**Spring Sensations
Sylvan Solace Preserve
April 28, 10 am-12 pm**



David DeGraaf, retired director of Forest Hill Nature Area, will lead a sensory hike around the trails at Sylvan Solace Preserve. Signs of springtime will be identified using sight, hearing, feeling, smelling and maybe even tasting!

**Stewardship Volunteer Session
Audubon Woods Preserve
May 20, 10 am-1 pm**



Come to Audubon Woods Preserve for our third Sunday monthly volunteer session. We will clean up trails, pick up trash, remove invasive species and more! Bring gloves, water and eye protection.

23rd Annual CWC Spring Banquet



1559 S. Chippewa Road
Mt. Pleasant, MI 48858

Thursday, April 19, 2018

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

“The Cultural, Natural and Environmental History of the Chippewa River Watershed”

Carey Pauquette and Judy Stevens Pamp, Presenters

Also Featuring:

- Silent Auction & Social Hour, 5:30 pm
- Deluxe Dinner Buffet, 6:15 pm
Prime Rib and Champagne Chicken
- 50/50 Raffle
- Old Town Heron 11xt Kayak Raffle
- Live Auction
South African Trip for two at Zulu Nyala Heritage Safari Lodge

**\$60 ADVANCED REGISTRATION,
\$65 AT THE DOOR**



Carey Pauquette was born and raised in the northwest corner of Isabella County and started her career working for a small nonprofit organization concentrating on public outreach in Grand Rapids in 2002. She moved on to government with a position as the Environmental Educator for Isabella County in 2005, followed by working for the Isabella Conservation District for several years, providing diverse experience through a variety of positions. Accepting the position as Water Quality Specialist for the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan in 2008, she has been there ever since, with a promotion to Environmental Manager in 2016.

Carey has served on the Chippewa Watershed Conservancy (CWC) Board of Directors since 2013, proud to support such a valuable community nonprofit organization. Land preservation is an important aspect of environmental protection. Carey was also a board member for the Saginaw Basin Land Conservancy (SBLC) from 2012 – 2017.

Judy (Stevens) Pamp, AKA Waabanoqua is the Assistant Director of the Ziibiwing Center of Anishinabe Culture and Lifeways. She is a teacher,



curriculum writer, traditional dancer, story teller, Black Ash Basket artist, floral beadwork artist, author and a member of the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan. She served as the Chairman of the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan's Tribal Education Advisory Board for over 10 years. She chairs the Isabella County Roundtable for Diversity & Inclusion Education Committee and serves on the Michigan Indian Education Council board.

Judy is the president of the International Relations Council Mt. Pleasant Area that promotes cultural activities and students exchanges between Okaya, Japan and Mt. Pleasant, Michigan. She traveled to Japan in 2014 and performed a Water Ceremony and shared Anishinabe teachings with the citizens of Okaya.

2018 SPRING BANQUET RESERVATION FORM



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\$60/person

(\$65 at door)

50/50 Raffle Tickets \$ _____

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