

# HERON TRACKS

The Official Newsletter of the Chippewa Watershed Conservancy  
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**CWC** | CHIPPEWA  
WATERSHED  
CONSERVANCY



# Executive Director's Corner

## CHIPPEWA WATERSHED CONSERVANCY HIRES NEW DIRECTOR

The Chippewa Watershed Conservancy (CWC) announced the appointment of Kathy Ann ("Katie") Randall as Executive Director. A former resident of Michigan, Katie served as a Board member, assistant to the President and volunteer to the CWC while attending Central Michigan University and Michigan State.

CWC President John Mitchell noted, "Katie brings a diverse background in conservation. She will hit the ground running, taking over in late August, and will carry the CWC forward as we seek accreditation renewal with the Land Trust Alliance and continue our successful program of wildlife habitat protection."

A dual major in Environmental Studies and Political Science, Katie holds a master of science specializing in environmental policy and

law from the University of Idaho College of Forestry, Wildlife, and Range Sciences. Katie worked for a variety of conservation organizations including park districts and land trusts, and remains adjunct faculty, teaching conservation ecology to online students.

Katie replaces Stan Lilley, the first Executive Director of the Conservancy. Under Lilley, the CWC raised its protected lands to 4,895 acres including the recently completed Bundy Hill project.

### Katie's Own Words

Thank you, first of all, for the incredible welcome. It means so much to me to feel that I am surrounded by such a knowing and good-hearted community. Your level of commitment to this organization and to the landscape you call home shows



in your expressions of time and energy. I have complete respect for all of you, and will work to continue the legacy your level of stewardship displays.

I look forward to seeing more of you in the field, with family-oriented programming, events to celebrate our natural heritage, and outings designed to acquaint you with the important work you support. Watch for Chip Chat to arrive in your email and follow us on Facebook for upcoming dates and times.

## Bundy Hill Update

### The Signs are Up!

...and we're ready for visitors. However, we strongly recommend everyone wear orange or bright colors during hunting season. As with most of our preserves, the surrounding areas nearest Bundy Hill allow hunting. Although hunting is not allowed on any of our preserves, we stress that you exercise caution when you're out and about enjoying the great outdoors. Please do not hesitate to let us know if you see a blind or tree stand inappropriately placed on preserve property. It is just as easy for hunters to make mistakes, especially just into preserve lines.

In the meantime, autumn is a beautiful time of the year to take a walk. We have 20 preserves located throughout the area. See our website at [www.chippewawatershedconservancy.org](http://www.chippewawatershedconservancy.org) > "Preserves" for locations and descriptions. Enjoy!





# President's Statement

## Forward

I'm not a geologist, and I don't play one on TV. But from my layman's perspective the beginning of a new geologic age is marked by a line in the stone and a change in the fossil record.

The CWC has undergone such a change; saying goodbye to our first ED in the form of Stan Lilley and hello to our second in Katie Randall. We will inevitably see change in the organization because the special talents and perspectives of leaders inevitably translate into slightly different patterns of development. Such change is not only inevitable, it is healthy. It is akin to evolutionary change in a species as we adapt to a changing world and continue to make the CWC the most effective organization possible.

What will not change is our Mission – the protection of natural habitat and open space in our five county service area.

We are the only private sector organization in our service area focused on the preservation of wildlife habitat for its own sake. We are the only organization that operates not on behalf of people, but on behalf of the wild creatures who cannot act for themselves. We are the only organization that believes to its core that it is in the protection of wildlife and its habitat that our own species also benefits. We know that human use of our protected lands must be compatible with our Mission – that the test of everything we do is whether it promotes the protection of natural habitat and open space.

We also know that in a world with changing climate that the one hope for nature is to have significant protected areas where adaptation to a changing climate can occur. The forests we protect today will not be the forests of future generations. But only if there are forests can nature find a way forward; sort out a way to adapt to change.

## We have protected almost 4,900 acres in our five county area

We have ensured that roughly 600 acres of nature preserves will remain in perpetuity; land we own and are sworn to protect. We know that more is needed and we will, of course, continue to seek additional land protection opportunities. But we also will continue the

sometimes hidden task of growing an organization sustainable for all time.

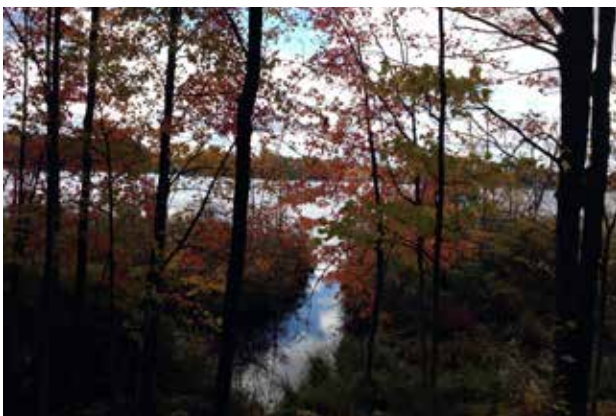
## During 2017 we will seek re-accreditation; an affirmation of our practices by the Land Trust Alliance Accreditation Commission

We will also continue our efforts to build sustainable funding to increase our capacity to steward our lands and reach out into the community to involve an even larger portion of the population in our vital efforts to protect more habitat, more open space.

Of course it is Katie who will lead that charge. Katie brings to the job a diverse background of service in a wide variety of environmental causes in equally diverse geographical areas. She has served in both administrative and stewardship capacities. She wears her enthusiasm on her face. We hired Katie because we know that she will help find that way forward.

As capable as she is, Katie needs the help of each of us. This job is far too big for one person. We need the ideas, the support, and sometimes the muscle and sweat of a whole lot of people who care. We need you.

Join us on an outing. Continue to support our efforts. Volunteer. Together we go forward with new leadership and renewed vigor.



## CITIZEN SCIENTISTS NEEDED

We can indeed use your help. If you took the stewardship class from Stan Lilley, or you feel you have the expertise and would like to contribute your time and energy to a very worthy cause, please do not hesitate to sign up as a volunteer land steward and monitor. Here are the plusses: a day out in one of our managed natural areas enjoying everything nature has to offer, observing wildlife, monitoring the landscape and its values, taking notes and pictures, and generally being the citizen scientist we need. Call or send us an email at [cwc@chippewawatershedconservancy.org](mailto:cwc@chippewawatershedconservancy.org). We're all in this together.

# CWC Summer Programs

## PHOTOGRAPHY AT SYLVAN SOLACE

Photograph enthusiasts gathered at Sylvan Solace for our annual Photography Contest. Congratulations to Stan Lilley, People's Choice winner, for his picture of a Pearl Crescent Butterfly, featured on the cover of this newsletter. Here are some honorable mentions:



Photo by Stan Lilley



Photo by Deb Simmons



Photo by Stan Lilley



Photo by Cathy Murray



Photo by James Simmons



Photo by Diana Moreau

## MUSHROOMS AND MORE

Even a relatively flat area such as Sylvan Solace Preserve can yield interesting facts about the pre-settlement history of the land. In September, Isabella Soil Conservation District Environmental Educator Mike LeValley led a walk around the preserve to see what clues are out there.



We held two mushroom walks this summer, one at Hall's Lake and one at Sylvan Solace. Led by our local expert, Sister Marie Kopin, each walk yielded a variety of mushrooms.



# Upcoming Events

We have some wonderful, family-friendly events scheduled for this fall and winter. Please visit our website for more information and to register, [chippewawatershedconservancy.org](http://chippewawatershedconservancy.org).

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## NOV. 12 - 7 P.M. "HOOTING SEASON"

Under the waxing Full Beaver Moon of November, we'll learn to call for the great hunters - the owls - and learn where they nest, how they hear their prey, and how they see. That "wise old owl" turn of the head is more than just a phrase! Meet at the Neely Preserve section of the Hall's Lake Natural Area. Parking is available along Old State Road ("the slant road"). Bring flashlights, but plan on using them sparingly. We'll be using our "night eyes" for this one!

Directions to Neely Preserve, Hall's Lake Natural Area: From M-20 West, south on Rolland Road to W. Broomfield Road. West on Broomfield to the jog southwest which becomes Old State Road. The preserve parking area is on your right.



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## DEC. 17 - NOON "ALMOST CHRISTMAS"

Nature is preparing for the long season ahead, and you can help! Join us at Sylvan Solace Preserve, where we'll have some fun finding signs of wildlife and collecting woodland items to make wildlife treats. How many winter wildlife homes will you find? Who lives there? We'll have a tailgate session to make treat-filled presents to give to our newly discovered wildlife friends - just in time for Christmas!

Directions to Sylvan Solace Preserve: Parking area located from the south side of W. Pickard Road, between Gilmore and Littlefield Roads.



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## JAN. 14 - 7 P.M. "UNDER THE WOLF MOON"

The waning moon will still feature plenty of light for a lovely evening ski under the moonlight. If you have headlamps, you may certainly wear them. The trail is simple and navigates easily in the dark, but if the timing is right, we should see shadows and outlines once our eyes adjust. If the weather does not cooperate with a winter coating, plan on walking the trail for a nighttime adventure looking for eye shine and listening for the sounds and sights of nocturnal animals on the move. We'll end the evening with a tailgate warm-up in the parking area. From Mount Pleasant, Sylvan Solace Preserve is located on the south side of W. Pickard Road between S. Gilmore and S. Littlefield Roads.



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## FEB. 11 - 2 TO 4 P.M. "SNOWSHOE BUNDY!"

Looking for hills to climb and summits to conquer? We're on our way on Saturday, February 11 from 2 to 4 p.m. at Bundy Hill. Snowshoeing is a perfect way to visit our newest preserve and check out the view from the top. If the weather does not cooperate, we'll tackle the hill in hikes to see what we can see. Bring binoculars and cameras to record your adventure. We'll meet in the parking area off W. River Road. From Mount Pleasant, take W. Pickard to S. Rolland Road; north on S. Rolland to W. River Road; left on W. River Road to Bundy Hill, just .2 of a mile west of Wyman Road on your left.



# Food for Thought



Wikipedia: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beaver>

In the fall of the year, when small wild animals strike out on their own, they often find themselves in conflicting and threatening situations. For instance, when beavers (*Castor canadensis*) reach maturity at three years, they instinctively leave the confines of the lodge and family and head out to establish their own territory. Beavers are not alone in sensing the need to start their own broods. You may or may not notice the roadsides increasingly littered with raccoons and skunks at just this time of year when the urge to disperse is at its peak. Beavers, just like the rest of us are concerned with mating, sheltering, rearing young, and feeding offspring. Even though they may not travel far from their original family lodge, strong instincts drive them to choose unfettered and yielding spots for food and shelter. And once they do, they begin the task of building – often to the chagrin of landowners.



Beavers are large rodents (Order: Rodentia), with incisors built for business. Their teeth grow at a continuous rate making them very effective at girdling and taking down useful trees. Some species of trees are girdled by the beaver and left to die off with no effort to remove them. The fact is, there are some trees that beaver does not like to eat or use for lodges or dams. Those trees are simply in the way and compete for the real food or building material desired by the beaver. Hence, beaver manage their creek, pond or lakeside frontage for prime woodland. However, the beaver's idea of managing its woodlot very often does not coincide with a landowner's idea of non-flooding, exceptional prime real estate with waterfront views.



## So I offer you different food for thought

Beavers contribute to the dynamics of a healthy ecosystem in several ways. They create new wetland habitat – one of the most diverse and valued ecosystems on earth. Wetland values include providing natural filtration systems which purify water entering groundwater systems. Wetlands slow down the process of erosion by reducing the abrasion created by high-flow currents and raise the groundwater table by concentrating water overhead. If the wetland area is not maintained by the constant influx of water, succession will take place, eventually leading from meadow to woodland – creating, even more, habitat types.

## We're not done yet

These tail-slapping feisty herbivores contribute to the natural

Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, Washington: The Methow River basin provides spawning areas for Spring Chinook salmon, as well as spawning steelhead, cutthroat trout, and bull trout. By reestablishing active beaver colonies to area streams, the partnership helped reestablish key watershed processes that support these fish species. Beaver colonies reintegrate dams into the area surface water, establishing wetlands, expanding habitat, and increasing the regularity of flows. In addition, as the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service and its partners gain a better understanding of the ecological effects of climate change, this project demonstrates an adaptive practice that offsets snowpack loss by storing water in beaver wetlands.

Citation: USDA (9/13/2016). U.S. Forest Service and Coca-Cola Announce the Restoration of One Billion Liters of Water. Web: <https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USDAOOC/bulletins/163d4ee>.

environment in even more ways. Those distinctive stumps degrade faster and turn into more enriched soil, which allows for increased vegetative growth along stream and pond banks, providing shade for fish and protective cover and brooding spots for other wildlife – such as waterfowl. Dead trees left standing become snags – homes to cavity nesters and a natural food source for woodpeckers, sapsuckers, brown creepers, and nuthatches.

Beavers naturally contribute to the biodiversity of their chosen habitats in ways even we cannot duplicate. They are keystone species --the builders of exceptional ecosystems. And that's something we can all appreciate.

# Thank You!

## Volunteers

Many thanks to Sister Marie Kopin and Mike LeValley for leading our summer walks. And thank you to photographers who took pictures of our events, Karen Green and Stan Lilley

## Bundy Hill Volunteers

Thank you to the following who came and helped install our new Bundy Hill signs and posted signs around the borders: Gordon and Marilyn Fosburg, Jamie and Tanner Griffis, Kathy Johns, Sue Ann Kopmeyer, Taylor, Sloan, and Turner Felton, Malcolm Fox and Todd Levitt

## Donors

### New Donors

George T. Neyer  
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### Donations in Memory Of

Jean Shank by Adonna Kennedy and Alan & Kathy Johns

### Donation in Honor Of

Charles Deibel, by Anonymous

## Your Gift to Nature

Our work is never done, and we're proud of that. We have a mission to protect the natural world and invite you every day to play a part. Because this is your Michigan; your habitat, your sanctuary. Surprised? You are every bit a part of your natural world as the trees, the bobcats, and fish in the streams. This is your landscape, and we work hard to ensure its health and beauty for wildlife and for you to enjoy in perpetuity.

### What does that mean for you?

It means that you, your family, your neighbors and friends have places to connect with nature. It means that nature is an essential part of your living environment, thanks to the work that we do, and thanks to you. You care and it shows. To this date, the Chippewa Watershed Conservancy protects 4,895 acres of natural habitat. Much of it is in the form of easements--places where landowners opt to protect their love of the natural world and entrust it to our caretaking. Other places are preserves--areas that were donated or sold to the Conservancy to manage as public lands protected for you to enjoy forever--as wildlife refugia; as places where you can walk and see wildlife and enjoy the act of being in nature. Communing with that part of yourself that is instinctive and fulfills a need for the wild places you love.

So we want to thank you for helping us continue our work. If you can find a way during this holiday season, please help us with a donation in any amount. We would love to have you continue as members or join us for the first time. In any case, we hope to hear from you soon. Enjoy the holidays, and enjoy your natural world.

## CWC LAND PROTECTION SUCCESS

County	Acres
Clare	2,494
Gratiot	149
Isabella	939
Mecosta	491
Montcalm	816
Midland	8

34 Easements	4,284 Acres
20 Preserves	611 Acres
1 Government Transfer	(2 Acres)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4,895 Acres</b>

**7 2/3**  
**Square miles**  
**permanently protected**  
**by the CWC**

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**CWC Wishlist**

Keep us on your Christmas wish list! Donate today!