

Heron Tracks



The Official Newsletter of the Chippewa Watershed Conservancy

Volume 22, No.1

Animal Tracks in Winter

There is no better time than the middle of winter for a walk at Sylvan Solace Preserve to see animal tracks. On Saturday, January 24, 2015, Mike LeValley, the Environmental Educator for the Isabella Conservation District, began our program by giving participants a chance to see and feel the winter pelts of a variety of mammals, including deer, coyote, fox, raccoon and mink. Originally billed as a snowshoe walk, the limited snow depth caused us to reconsider and simply make it a boot walk. Nevertheless, there was still plenty of tracking snow and Mike led an enthusiastic group both on and off-trail, to see a variety of tracks left by deer, fox, rabbit, raccoon, mink, mouse and shrew denizens of the preserve. Mike also used a shovel to scrape off snow cover to show the elaborate system of trails that mice create in winter to move around while avoiding the watchful eyes of predators. Temperatures in the low 30's, no wind and a beautiful blue sky made for a good day to be in the woods. Unexpected mid-winter encounters included green sedges growing in an unfrozen puddle near the Chippewa River; an active spider in a web, midges flying about, and a brief swoop across the river by a Barred Owl. Many thanks to Mike for an educational and entertaining day.



Winn Elementary Students Learn at Audubon Woods Preserve



Frogs and salamanders are pleasant surprises when encountered on a cool October day, but the 4th and 5th Grade students of Winn Elementary School encountered both during a science field trip to the Audubon Woods Preserve. Mike LeValley, Environmental Educator for the Isabella Soil Conservation District, who led the visit, says this is the third year in a row for many of these students, who began coming as third graders. This time they were focused on tree and leaf identification. We are always happy to have young explorers on the preserves.



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Random Notes

The Importance of Nature Play. Some time ago, I commented on Richard Louv's book, "The Last Child in the Woods," I still highly recommend it. In this book Louv paints an alarming picture of a generation growing up not knowing the natural world, and in many cases actually fearing it. Kids are becoming increasingly disconnected from nature because of the wired world we live in and the structured activities that have become so much a part of our lives. Now there is another publication I want to encourage everyone to read. The Pennsylvania Land Trust Association (PALTA) has published a guide to nature play which can be downloaded free on our web site (Go to NEWS, then click on Nature Play Booklet). PALTA points out that unstructured, frequent childhood play in informal outdoor settings powerfully boosts the cognitive, creative, physical, social and emotional development of children. We agree. Nature play also prevents fear of nature and encourages young people to keep nature in their lives as they grow. Please take a look at this publication and think about how we can get children reconnected to nature. It is critically important that we work to re-establish our children's awareness of and appreciation for nature, not only for their physical and creative well-being, but also because our children are the future stewards of the land. If they no longer have an emotional and well-grounded connection to the natural world, who then will care about protecting the land for the generations yet to come?



Legacy Giving. Here is a brief reminder to consider legacy gifts in your estate planning. Contributions by will, trust, other forms of written designation, life-income arrangements and endowment gifts, all represent forms of legacy giving. Any individual, at any point in their life, can create a legacy gift. It can be as easy as naming a charity on the beneficiary form on a savings, checking or pension account, or through a more complex instrument like a charitable trust. All these gifts represent a powerful and meaningful way for individuals to create a philanthropic legacy for their community and the organizations they care about. I encourage anyone thinking about a legacy gift to the Chippewa Watershed Conservancy to discuss the options with your financial or estate planner and learn what may work best for you. If you plan to make the CWC a beneficiary of a legacy gift, please let us know.

Help Needed. Thanks to a \$1,000.00 Community Action Mini-grant from the Saginaw Bay Watershed Initiative Network (WIN), we are going to construct a deer and rabbit enclosure at the Kabana Preserve. This is a community education and demonstration project to show the effects of deer and rabbit browsing on natural space. We will build an 8' high fenced "enclosure" of approximately 50' x 50' along one of our popular trails with good public visibility. One part of the enclosure will allow rabbits in, but exclude deer, while another portion will keep both out. The purpose is to demonstrate how effective deer and rabbit management will return a healthy understory, including wildflowers such as trillium and others. This is a many-years project to help establish how quickly and what species will return when not subjected to heavy browsing. If you would like to help with the construction, please call the office (989-772-5777) or email us at info@ChippewaWatershedConservancy.org. There is also a \$1,000.00 match requirement, and we are still looking for another \$800.00 to meet the match. You can help by sending a contribution to us, and mark it for "Deer Enclosure Project." We will get underway this spring.

Save the Date. All you 5k runners (and fun walkers), save Saturday, May 2, 9a.m. on your calendars for our Hall's Lake Hustle. Check the web site for details about this event.

20th Anniversary Banquet Sponsors Sought

We are looking for 20 sponsors to step up in support of our 20th Annual CWC Spring Banquet, which is scheduled for Thursday, April 23, 2015, by contributing \$200.00 each to underwrite the cost. Well, make that 19 sponsors, because Ann Brockman has already stepped up to become the first 20th Spring Banquet Patron!

You don't have to attend to be a sponsor, and your entire \$200.00 contribution is tax-deductible. Want to be recognized as a Patron family? How about as a Patron business? You will be acknowledged by name at the banquet and in the newsletter as a 20th Banquet Patron. And you will have the good feeling of knowing that you are helping to ensure that all of the proceeds generated by the banquet go to support the mission of the Chippewa Watershed Conservancy to preserve open space and wildlife habitat.

So how about it? Are you ready to join with Ann Brockman to step up and become a 20th Spring Banquet Patron? Just send a check to CWC, P.O. Box 896, Mt. Pleasant, MI 48804-0896, or contribute online. Mark your contribution "20 for \$200" and we'll include you on our Patron list.



Today

You've heard it before – that 'Endless Nowness' thing. Tomorrow never comes. All we have is today. Anything that gets done gets done Today because it is always Today. Tomorrow, if it ever came, would just be a new version of Today and Tomorrow would, well, I think you get it.

So those New Year's Resolutions you made to exercise more, or read more, or maybe to get more involved in the CWC are actually resolutions to change Today. If we don't do them Today, we never will.

And Today just happens to be the day that we need you to send an email to [I Want to Help Today](#) and say that you want to get involved.

Maybe that involvement is helping find something really great for the Spring Banquet Silent Auction, or maybe it is helping with trail maintenance, or maybe it is selling raffle tickets, or maybe, just maybe, it is something no one else has thought of but which would help the CWC protect more land, more wildlife habitat, more open space.

Or, get this, maybe you want to get involved and like most of us just don't quite know how. Maybe the getting involved is more important than the what. Maybe this is the moment that you say that being there is what matters. You simply cannot put off the fact that you want to do more to protect this Earth. And the CWC is a darn good place to start.

I'll help you connect with the person who can use your helping hand and your smiling face.

And one thing I promise is this; I'll do it Today.

John Mitchell

New Deer Exclosure Study Area in the Works

The Saginaw Bay Watershed Initiative Network (WIN) has awarded the Chippewa Watershed Conservancy (CWC) a \$1,000.00 Community Action Mini-grant in support of our Hall's Lake Deer Exclosure. The CWC will provide a matching \$1,000.00 for the project, which is designed to show the effects of browse damage by deer and rabbits on the forest understory. An area of approximately 250 square feet will be protected with 8-foot high fencing to exclude deer and rabbits on one portion, and only deer on another portion. The aim of this multi-year project is to demonstrate how effective deer and rabbit management may return a healthy understory including wildflowers such as trillium and others. This will serve as a local community education tool to show how scientific study can be used to provide decision-making input for future stewardship of natural space, and the results will be used to help inform our consideration of deer management (hunting) as a tool on our properties.



WIN is a volunteer organization that focuses on opportunities to better link the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of Saginaw Bay communities in order to sustain and improve the region's quality of life. Eleven area foundations and corporations work together as a network to support WIN projects. More information about WIN is available on its website at www.saginawbaywin.org.

Info from the Intern - Coniferous Tree Information - Jon Breithaupt

It's winter time and our beautiful Great Lakes State is covered with a white blanket of snow. Many plants and wildlife are hibernating, as a means of self-preservation, but there is a number of unmistakable evergreen trees that seem to flourish during this time of year. The vast majority of these evergreens are known as coniferous trees. They retain their leaves throughout the year, unlike their deciduous counterparts who part ways with them in the fall.

The word conifer means "cone-bearing" in Latin. Conifers keep their seeds in cones, which open up as temperatures warm. These seeds are referred to as "naked seeds", the opposite of deciduous seeds which are surrounded by a fleshy fruit or a nut. Coniferous leaves differ from the broad leaves of deciduous trees such as maple, oak, elm and beech. Their leaves are mostly needles like pine or spruce, or scale-like like cedar. Any trees with a cluster of more than one needle, called a fascicle, is a species of pine.

Furthermore, coniferous trees are considered softwoods because of the composition of their wood, in comparison to deciduous trees which are referred to as hardwoods. Since conifers are a hardy plant that can withstand intense winters, they're often found in large concentrations in the northern part of the northern hemisphere in forests known as boreal forests. Now that you know a little more about coniferous trees, try and identify some for yourself!





We have a number of new faces to talk about. First are two new members of the Board of Directors.



Kathy Johns is a lifelong resident of Mt. Pleasant and very excited to be a member of the Chippewa Watershed Conservancy Board. In 1942, her grandfather built their family cottage at Halls Lake, in Isabella County, and she became involved with the CWC during the Halls Lake Land Acquisition Project. Since Halls Lake is so near and dear to her heart, she wanted to give back to the CWC by becoming more involved with the organization.

Kathy is also a member of the Mt. Pleasant Women's City Club and served as president during 2012 – 2014, is active in her son's Boy Scout troop, is the boys' cross country parent representative for the Mt. Pleasant High School Sport Boosters, volunteers for Ace of Diamonds' Haunted Yard, and is the producer for Fancher Elementary School's annual Mock Rock.

Kathy and her husband, Alan, have three children: Travis, Ashley and Ryan.

Marnie Basney is a Realtor since 1996, which gives her a good working understanding of land use and principles. She graduated from Central Michigan University in 2005 with her Bachelor of Science degree, double-majoring in Biology, Natural Resources Option; Environmental Studies, Environmental Science Concentration. During that time, she created the first web site for the Isabella County Recycling Center, served on the Board of Directors for the Recycling Center, was Vice-Chair for the Board of Directors, and did her internship there, and eventually landed the position of Environmental Education Specialist. From there, she went to Oahu, HI to serve as Environmental Specialist as a civilian contractor for the Army. Returning to MI, she also worked for the United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service as Soil Conservation Technician, was detailed to the NRCS Area Office in Flint to serve as Soil Conservationist, and ended her two-year term with NRCS doing wetland determinations.



Marnie enjoys recycling, spending time in the outdoors, "recycling houses," and conserving our resources at every opportunity. Marnie grew up in Mecosta County on her fourth-generation family farm where she has a cabin, and likes to visit there as many weekends as possible.



Louise Nielson Hammer has been working part-time for the CWC since April 2014. She has been largely responsible for the new e-newsletter and for content input for the Facebook page. Have you wondered why we have steadily been increasing our presence on social media? Well, wonder no more. It's because Louise has been hard at work.

Louise has lived in the Mt. Pleasant area since 1987. She has been very involved in the music industry, having a bachelor's and master's degree in music, and owning and operating Hammer Music Studio. The Hammers have a great love of the outdoors, and enjoy spending leisure time kayaking down the Chippewa River, and walking, biking and cross-country skiing the local trails in Isabella County. She and her husband Roger have 4 children, and 3 grandchildren. In her spare time she enjoys quilting, reading, cooking and learning how to do new things!



And finally, we are pleased to tell you about **Jon Breithaupt**. The article in this newsletter about conifer trees is his first. We'll let him tell you a little about himself.

Hello everybody. My name is Jonathon Breithaupt. I am a junior at Central Michigan University studying Recreation and Park Administration with a concentration in Outdoor and Environmental Recreation. I was born and raised in Traverse City, Michigan. My interests are dendrology (study of trees), public land and protected area management, hiking, mountain biking, camping, soccer and essentially anything outdoors.

I am ecstatic to be interning at the CWC. As an intern, I will be running outreach campaigns on Facebook and on Twitter – which was just recently added to the Conservancy's social media repertoire. I will perform trail maintenance, invasive species identification and removal, photograph nature preserves and conservation easements, plan some fundraisers, and may even lead an interpretive nature hike or two. I am also looking forward to contributing to the CWC's newsletter as a writer

with a recurring piece titled, "Info from the Intern".

It is an honor and a privilege to be working with the area's premier nonprofit land conservation group. I am looking forward to wearing a variety of hats and assisting in any way necessary. Hopefully I can meet some of you and we can get to know each other.



CHIPPEWA WATERSHED CONSERVANCY 20th ANNUAL SPRING BANQUET

Thursday, April 23, 2015

Bucks Run - Golf Club



1559 So. Chippewa Road
Mt. Pleasant MI 48858

SILENT AUCTION & SOCIAL HOUR BEGIN 5:30 PM
Music by Charlie Walmsley

Great Variety of Items

DINNER 6:30 PM

\$50 Advanced Tickets/ Reservations
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**MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
MR. DAN WYANT, DIRECTOR**

Meet the Director

Our guest speaker is Mr. Dan Wyant, Director of the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality. His appointment in January 2011 by Governor Rick Snyder marked a return to public service for Wyant, who was director of the Michigan Department of Agriculture for nine years before he departed in 2005 to be President and Chief Operating Officer for the Edward Lowe Foundation. He brings a clear strategic vision to the DEQ and a proven track record for helping opposing interests find common ground. Wyant holds a bachelor's degree in food systems management from Michigan State University and a master's in business administration from American University in Washington, D.C. A native of southwest Michigan, he and his wife live in East Lansing.

A Tradition of Land Preservation

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Raffle Tickets: 50/50 1 ticket @ \$ 10 _____

3 tickets @ \$ 20 _____

Send to

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P.O. Box 896
Mt. Pleasant, MI 48804-0896

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CWC is a qualified 501(c)(3) organization. Federal Tax ID 38-3181796. MICT # 1818676. Raffle License # R30427.

Advance reservations preferred.

Call 989.772.5777 if you plan to attend but cannot pay in advance.



“A lot of good things are happening in the upper part of the Saginaw Bay Watershed, and they often go unsung. Well, tonight we are going to sing about the work of seven women who have made special and unique and important contributions to the quality of life in our communities.”

So said CWC Executive Director Stan Lilley at the 3rd Annual Fall Fundraiser sponsored by Dianne and Mike Morey, of Bandit Industries. This year’s event, titled, “A Salute to Women,” was held at Camille’s on the River in Mount Pleasant, and raised nearly \$8,000 in new contributions to help the CWC preserve important open space and wildlife habitat and provide recreational and education opportunities to the public.

Certificates of appreciation were given to these women for their work in a wide range of ways:

Lynn Dominguez, an Associate Professor in the Recreation, Parks and Leisure Services Department at Central Michigan University (CMU), who is a nationally known canoe and kayak instructor of not only students, but other instructors, and who is a strong advocate for “Leave No Trace” recreational use of our rivers.

Sister Marie Kopin, a local Mycologist who is active in the Michigan Mushroom Hunters Club, and has taught mushroom identification classes for youth, led mushroom walks on CWC preserves and taught classes at the Isabella County Commission on Aging.

Cathy Murray, who has been a driving force in efforts to remove autumn olive and glossy buckthorn, two habitat hogging invasive species, from her Hiawatha Hills neighborhood as well as on several CWC preserves.

Daelyn Woolnough, an Assistant Professor in the Biology Department at CMU, who is conducting research on mussels in the Saginaw Bay Watershed to determine their health and distribution, as indicators of the water quality, and to aid in the protection of endangered species.

Carey Pauquette, Water Quality Specialist for the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe, who, with her team, has been doing water quality monitoring to test for the presence of e. coli bacteria, and who put together a package to qualify the Tribe to apply for EPA Clean Water Act Section 319 funds to fix nonpoint source pollution problems within the Isabella Indian Reservation.

Jane Keon, Chair, and member of the Pine River Superfund Citizens Task Force since the 1990’s, working on pollution and water quality issues on the Pine River in Gratiot County, bringing millions of dollars for environmental cleanup.

Dianne Morey, whose sponsorship of the CWC Fall Fundraiser since 2012 has raised thousands of dollars each year to help preserve habitat, protect water quality and provide recreational opportunities for the public.

This is not an all-inclusive list, and yes, there are men who are doing important work in the watershed too, but on October 27th we recognized the efforts of these special women.

Thank You Volunteers

Heron Tracks Production Mike Brockman

Preserve Stewardship Jon Breithaupt, Marilyn & Gordon Fosburg, Keith Frame, Bob Kohrman, Richard & Diana Moreau, Cathy Murray, Kay Purtle, Larry & Judy Schaftenaar, Roy Schalk, Dave Shepherd, Rocky & Yvonne Symon, Eric Torgersen

Easement Monitoring John Mitchell, Tom Stewart

Birds, Branches & Brunch Jaime Griffis, Kathy Johns, Sue Ann Kopmeyer, Marc Griffis, Boy Scout Troop 604, Adonna Kennedy, John Mitchell, Larry & Judy Schaftenaar, Sarah & Alyssa Elghart, Tim Burley

Fall Fundraiser Event Dianne & Mike Morey, Camille’s, 3 Wishes Floral, Marilyn Fosburg, Kathy Johns, Sue Ann Kopmeyer, Pat Lilley

Discover the Chippewa River Map, Second Edition Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe

Signage and Deer Exclosure Grants Saginaw Bay Watershed Initiative Network

Sylvan Solace Fall Prowl Mike LeValley

Sylvan Solace Snowshoe Walk Mike LeValley, Anne Messinger

End of Year Fund Appeal Mailing Pat Lilley

Deer Exclosure Planning Doug Valek

Outreach and Stewardship Jonathan Breithaupt

We get so much more done because our volunteers generously give their time and energy!

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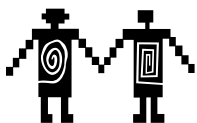
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CWC Land Protection Successes	
31 Easements-	3,737 acres
19 Preserves -	511 acres
1 Government transfer -	2 acres
Total - 4,250 acres	
County	Acres
Clare	1,966
Gratiot	149
Isabella	820
Mecosta	491
Montcalm	816
Midland	8

Staff

- Stan Lilley **Executive Director**
- Louise Hammer **Administrative Program Assistant**
- Jonathan Breithaupt **Intern**



Contributors January 1 - December 31, 2014

Thank You for Your Support

7

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Here is my tax deductible contribution:



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- \$250 (Guardian)
- \$500 (Sustainer)
- \$1000 (Benefactor)
- Other \$ _____
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Protecting Central Michigan's
Valuable Natural Resources

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