

# HERON TRACKS

The Official Newsletter of the Chippewa Watershed Conservancy  
Volume 25 Number 2 Summer 2018







Steve Pung, CWC Board President

# President's Statement

**Transition : a passage from one state, stage, to another : change. b : a movement, development, or evolution from one form, stage, or style to another.**

It's fitting that I start off this President's Letter with the definition of transition. The CWC has been undergoing a transition as John Mitchell steps back from his role as president and I assume that position. We all are grateful for his leadership and legacy as one of the founders and principal force in the growth of the Conservancy. I am personally grateful for the mentoring John has provided me and which he continues to do. We have also progressed to a new Executive Director, Jon Breithaupt. John brings many new ideas and has a passion for

this organization, protecting wildlife habitat and creating natural space along with providing outdoor recreational opportunities. We have become a mature organization with a dedicated board of directors, strong institutional knowledge, and a capacity for growth along with a financially sustainable future.

Transition is the evolution and development both of individuals as well as organizations. We have plans to increase our membership and support. Jon is actively attending many community functions to create a better awareness of the CWC and our mission of protecting habitat and open space. We continue to grow, placing additional acreage into conservation easements and adding preserves for future generations to enjoy the beauty of their natural habitats. Our board and volunteers have created an ongoing extensive program of activities and opportunities for education and enjoyment--from the guest speaker series at the library in Mt. Pleasant to environmental education, guided hikes, and volunteer stewardship opportunities at our preserves. We are building

new trails at Bundy Hill. Jon Breithaupt leads volunteers every Thursday in this effort to expand the trail system at this wonderful preserve. Trail Development is going well. Volunteers are meeting in the parking area at Bundy Hill at 5:30 pm each Thursday helping construct a new Summit Loop and Ridge Trail.

Transition also leaves legacies. Featured in this newsletter is an article spotlighting Don and Nancy Nagler. Their foresight and generosity in donating the Sylvan Solace Preserve created a wonderful legacy and a rich treasure to be enjoyed by many future generations. With 78 acres of public land, two miles of multi-use trails, and 2,000 feet of Chippewa River frontage, this is one of the crown jewels of the Conservancy.

I am enjoying my new role as President at the CWC. With it comes new opportunities for increased involvement and learning. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the many supporters and members of the Chippewa Watershed Conservancy, our donors and volunteers that continue to play a vital role in helping us grow.

Thank you for being a part of it.

## Board Leadership Changes at Conservancy

For the first time since founding the Chippewa Watershed Conservancy in 1985, John Mitchell will not be at the helm of the organization. First publicly announced at CWC's Annual Spring Banquet on April 19th, 2018, Steve Pung, former President of Isabella Bank, has assumed the role of President of the Board of Directors, effective January 2018. Mitchell will remain on the Board of Directors as Treasurer.

"Right now there is strong leadership in (Pung) and in our new executive director Jon Breithaupt," Mitchell said. "I'm looking forward to a new role and to what we will accomplish."

He and a friend—the late Bob Ball—had an idea in 1985 to create a non-profit to protect land around the Chippewa River, but didn't have the people to make it a reality; it was nine years before the first iteration of what the organization is today was founded.

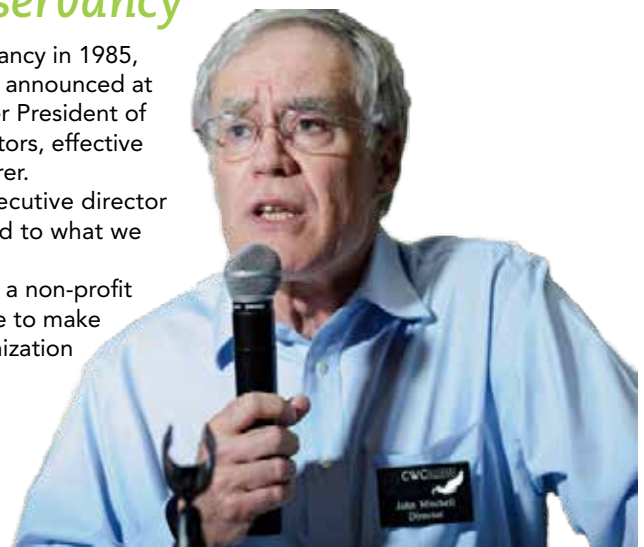
"The future CWC sat as a folder in my desk drawer until 1994," he wrote. "That spring several people...independently came to me and described what they thought this community needed; a private non-profit organization dedicated to protecting nature and giving people access to the river and other natural resources."

"This is not goodbye, just a change in focus," he wrote about stepping down as president. "A renewal for me as for the CWC."

It was that foresight and dedication from Mitchell that made the CWC what it now, Breithaupt said. "Without John's countless hours spent negotiating deals with landowners, motivating other to contribute to our cause and raising awareness of the necessity to protect wildlife habitat and open space, our community would not be the same," he said.

For Breithaupt, new projects will grow on the foundation Mitchell helped to build.

"I'm thankful to work under his leadership and excited about the direction our organization is headed.," Breithaupt said. "John has extensive knowledge of the environmental challenges that face our region and he has nurtured many invaluable personal and professional relationships over more than three decades at the helm of the Chippewa Watershed Conservancy."



# A Conservation Conversation



Jon Breithaupt, Executive Director

As the season shifts to spring, evidence of growth abounds in the natural world. Sap flows, birds chirp, flowers emerge and a resurgence of chlorophyll fills green leaves. Much like the natural world, Chippewa Watershed Conservancy too is fruiting with life. We're now offering more environmental education outings than ever before. Experts in fields such as botany, dendrology, geology, mycology and more share their time and knowledge to provide our supporters a deeper connection and understanding of the world around us.

In the near future, look for CWC to branch out in the realm of environmental education by actively working to connect the next generation of conservationists to nature – our region's children. Land protection through nature preserve acquisition and conservation easement will always remain at the core of our mission. As conservancies mature, they begin to realize they must fulfill an essential human service component to the work they do. I believe there is a niche we can fill in the Central Michigan region and it involves supplementing active land protection with people-focused programs that get folks out on our land. Environmental education with children, trail construction volunteer outings and our Business Adopt-a-Preserve program are just a few examples how we can add value to people's lives and ensure the long-term sustainability of our organization.

Speaking of growth, we've already made tremendous strides in advancing our organizational capacity. Katelyn Maylee, who joined us as a paid intern, brings a wealth of knowledge and passion for environmental conservation. You might catch her maintaining some of our hiking trails, coordinating volunteer

stewardship outings or indoors creating property maps using GIS software. We're currently recruiting for a new development coordinator position to take our flourishing organization to the next level. I've been out in the community preaching the gospel of the Conservancy since taking over in October 2017. I'm confident our best days are ahead of us.

I hope you will buy-in to my vision and join us on the exciting path we are travelling on.

**"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."**

**Margaret Mead**

**Please join us for another successful year by renewing your CWC membership today!**

## JOHN BUSH INKS SECOND CONSERVATION EASEMENT

In rural Colfax Township, Mecosta County, John Bush made a vision a reality by permanently protecting 78 acres under a conservation easement with Chippewa Watershed Conservancy. Named after the former landowners and godparents of John, the Martz Conservation Easement preserves riparian corridor along a designated trout stream, restored grasslands for butterfly habitat and workable farmland that will remain in a natural state in perpetuity. John was delighted to close on his second conservation easement with CWC on May 2nd 2018.

When asked about why he felt moved to conserve his land John said, "As I grew up and saw two parcels our land sold, divided, and developed, I knew that if I was to honor and preserve the gifts of nature and the gifts from my ancestors, I would have to do something to get in the way of having that ever happen again. I was troubled as I pondered the responsibility that I felt. Then one day, I discovered the

Chippewa Watershed Conservancy. Their mission to 'set aside land to preserve open spaces' fit perfectly into what I was trying to find."

CWC's 39th conservation easement borders the Jacobson Easement – which totals 36.5 acres – on two sides. It is only a few miles away from John's 92-acre easement which is also located on Ryan Creek. The Hayes Conservation Easement, totaling 118 acres, is nearby.

CWC has now forever protected nearly 4,700 acres under conservation easement.W



***"I am a part of the land that I own and it has become a part of me. I became a part of the land while growing up. I walked and worked and played on the land and I listened to the stories told by my parents as they talked of their childhood, teenage, young adult, and then adult years -- as they became a part of the land." ~ John Bush***



# Member Spotlight

## Dr. Don and Nancy Nagler

The year 1996 will forever be a special year for Chippewa Watershed Conservancy and the people of the Central Michigan region. Twenty-two years ago, Dr. Don and Nancy Nagler left one the greatest conservation legacies imaginable by donating the 78-acre Sylvan Solace Preserve to CWC. This locally loved natural area protects an undeveloped section of the Chippewa River, a variety of forest communities and offers 1.5 miles of scenic trails to explore.

When asked about why he initially purchased the property Don joked, "we bought Sylvan Solace to give my daughter a place to ride a horse. I think she gave that hobby up after three weeks." Don estimates that he, along with the help of his family, planted over 5,000 trees on the preserve, many of which have reached maturity. The name Sylvan Solace can be traced back to Don's grandfather, who owned 60 acres in Sylvan Township, Osceola County, near Ewart. "As a child, we would head north to the original Sylvan Solace and harvest Christmas trees each year," Don noted.

Don, a well-known Mt. Pleasant MD (retired) and conservation visionary, began serving on the Chippewa Watershed Conservancy Board of Directors in March 1999. The preservation and conservation of natural habitat has always been of great importance to him, especially relative to human use. After coming to practice internal medicine in Mt. Pleasant, he became active in the Sierra Club and the Chippewa Valley Audubon Club. He served for twelve years on the Isabella County Parks and Recreation Commission, most of them as chairman, along with another well-known former CWC Director and long-time area conservationist, the late Bob Ball. His involvement in the development of Coldwater and Deerfield Parks and the beginning of Herrick and Meridian Parks were especially satisfying accomplishments.

Don is the youngest of three children. He grew up in Iowa City, Iowa and pursued an undergraduate degree at Earlham College where he met his future



wife, Nancy. Dr. Nagler earned a Doctor of Medicine Degree in Internal Medicine from the University of Michigan Medical School and helped open the Mid-Michigan Davis Clinic in Mt. Pleasant – the region's first medical center.

Don recently informed us that he and Nancy will be moving to Woodbury, Minnesota to be closer to family. We thank him for his many years of service to our region.



## KATELYN MAYLEE JOINS CWC TEAM

Please welcome Katelyn Maylee to the team as our new intern for the field season. She will be helping with trail maintenance and construction, invasive species management and marketing and outreach initiatives. Katelyn is a lifelong resident of the Mt. Pleasant area. She earned a bachelor's degree in Environmental Science and Recreation, Parks and Leisure Services Administration from Central Michigan University. She is excited to work with the Conservancy and is passionate about helping protect, maintain and promote the enjoyment of the beautiful lands in and around the place she calls home. Outside of the office, Katelyn enjoys fishing, hiking, running and trying new recipes.







# Bundy Hill

## IMPROVEMENTS

Several strategic community partnerships are the driving force behind important recreational improvements at Chippewa Watershed Conservancy's (CWC) Bundy Hill Preserve. The 100-acre natural area, located in Broomfield Township in Isabella County, protects mature forest, rolling hills and the tallest point in Isabella County.

A grant from Apex Clean Energy has provided funding for various hand and power tools and a stipend for an intern to support construction of a new sustainable hiking trail system at the preserve. The nearly two-mile hiking trail will traverse high ridges, varying forest communities and will connect visitors to the top of Bundy Hill at 1,270 feet above sea level. The trail will be built primarily by volunteer labor under direction of CWC staff.

CWC's Trail Building Thursdays event has mobilized volunteers to help construct the new and improved trail system. Every Thursday from 5:30-8:30 pm volunteers WWmeet at Bundy Hill Preserve to clear the trail corridor, remove down trees and debris, and grub the new trail tread. All tools will be provided. Volunteers are encouraged to bring their own gloves and eye protection. CWC will supply a limited number of safety glasses and gloves.

A matching grant from Saginaw Bay Watershed Initiative Network (WIN) will support the installation of an informational bulletin board, The Bundy Hills History Trail and the creation of a trail map and preserve brochure. Generous matching contributions were provided by Remus Historical Society, Old Settler Reunion, Inc. and CWC members Larry and Judy Schaftenaar. DeWitt Lumber of Mt. Pleasant graciously donated split-rail fence for the trailhead area of the preserve as well.

A grant from Bay Area Community Foundation will provide roadside wayfinding signage along county roads to help guide visitors to the preserve. Long term plans at Bundy Hill Preserve include an improved gravel parking lot and directional signage on M-20.

## Upcoming CWC Events

### Trail Building Thursdays

Every Thursday from 5:30-8:30 pm  
Bundy Hill Preserve

### Father's Day Stewardship Volunteer Outing

June 17, 10-1:00 pm  
William's Blackburn Preserve

### Summer Solstice Sunrise Hike

June 21, 5:30-7:30 am  
Bundy Hill Preserve

### Stewardship Sundays Volunteering

July 15, 10-1:00 pm  
Bundy Hill Preserve

### Mushroom Identification Hike

July 18, 9:30-11:30 am  
Hall's Lake Natural Area

### Full Moon Moth Hike

July 27, 9-10:30 pm  
Hall's Lake Natural Area

### Guided Wildflower Hike

August 11, 1-3:00 pm  
Peterson Natural Area

### Stewardship Sundays Volunteering

August 19, 10-1:00 pm  
Hall's Lake Natural Area

### Audubon Woods Mushroom Foray

August 22, 9:30-11:30 am  
Audubon Woods Preserve

### CWC Guest Speaker Series

Veterans Memorial Library  
7-8:30 pm

### Leave No Trace Principles

June 27, Jordan Bruursema

### Renewable Energy Developments in Michigan

July 25, Peter Sinclair

### Whiting Forest Canopy Walk Project

August 29, Kyle Bagnall



# Another Successful Spring Banquet in the Books

The Chippewa Watershed Conservancy's 23rd annual spring banquet was met with resounding success once again. Over 130 people attended the organization's annual major fundraising event on Thursday, April 19th at Bucks Run Golf Club. More than \$18,000 was generated to support wildlife habitat and open space conservation in the Central Michigan region. An eclectic collection of silent auction and live auction items pleased a diverse audience of bidders. Hand-carved prime rib and champagne chicken highlighted the culinary offering of the evening. The night's keynote speakers, Judy Pamp, Assistant Director of Zibiwing Center of Anishinabe Culture and Lifeways, and Carey Pauquette, Environmental Manager of Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan, came together to touch on the cultural and natural history of the Chippewa River Watershed as well as current programs in place to protect it. John Mitchell, founder of CWC and past president of the board of directors, was awarded the Bob Ball Award for his many decades of service to the organization.



**We're  
Hiring!**

The Chippewa Watershed Conservancy is hiring a new half-time Development Coordinator position to support grant writing initiatives, help plan fundraising events, coordinate marketing and public outreach campaigns and come up with creative ways to grow CWC. The deadline for applications is June 15th, 2018. The full position description can be at [www.cwc-mi.org/hiring](http://www.cwc-mi.org/hiring).

## In Memory



We lost an avid supporter and a gentle soul with the passing of Adonna Kennedy (pictured here on the right meeting a new friend, Anne Messinger) on May 15, 2018, at the age of 82. A regular attendee of the annual spring banquet, Adonna rarely missed an outing at the Hall's Lake Natural Area, giving mushroom forays, plant identification walks or other educational events her equal attention. She lived all her life in the Mount Pleasant area and enthusiastically shared stories about her experiences at the family cottage at Hall's Lake over the years. Her last walk with us was all the way to the top of Bundy Hill at the dedication of the new preserve at the age of 81. As she neared the top of the hill she talked about trips there as a young woman with the late Dr. Wakelin McNeel, listening to conservation talks and helping to plant trees. "Look how big the trees have grown," she said. "I may have planted some of these." There was always a joy in her eyes during our walks, as if each encounter with nature were a new discovery. She was dedicated to her family, she was quick to make friends. She will be very much missed by those who were touched by her. If only there were more Adonnas in the world....

## Board of Directors

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**Devin Williams**, by Benn Williams  
**Curt Duvall**, by Sally Mayes

## Donations In Honor Of

**Stan Lilley's Birthday**, by Adonna Kennedy, Judy Anderson, Sue Ann Koppmeyer, and Results Realty

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**Hud & Ann's Keenan's 60th Wedding Anniversary**, by Kieran Keenan

## Our 2018 Foundation Sponsors

- The Herbert H. and Grace A. Dow Foundation
- The Alden and Vada Dow Family Foundations
- Saginaw Bay Watershed Initiative Network (WIN)
- Mt. Pleasant Area Community Foundation
- Homeworks Tri-County Electric Cooperative
- Rotary Club of Mt. Pleasant
- Apex Clean Energy

## Thank you to the following:

- **Mike LeValley, Stan Lilley, and Dave DeGraaf**, for leading educational walks
- **Dr. Bob Dvorak, Dr. Tracy Galarowicz, and Mike LeValley** for their participation in the CWC Speaker Series
- All the many volunteers who helped with the Bundy Hill Trail Building and stewardship on the preserves.

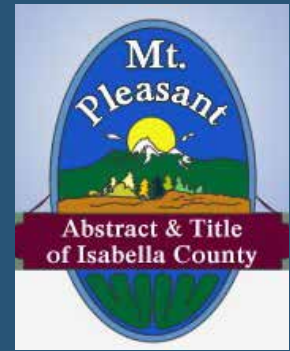
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