



# News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 21, 2014

## FOR MORE INFORMATION:

- Jill A. Lewis, Executive Director, Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy, (734) 484-6565, [jlewis@smlcland.org](mailto:jlewis@smlcland.org)

## DONATION OF SIBLEY PRAIRIE PROPERTY PROTECTS RARE MICHIGAN HABITAT

Land donation protects 39 acres in Wayne County

**Superior Township, MI** – Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy (SMLC) announced today that it recently acquired a 39 acre property, located in Brownstown Township, Wayne County, for natural areas preservation and public recreation.

The property will be added to SMLC's Sibley Prairie Nature Preserve. SMLC and other conservation organizations are working to protect the 400-acre Sibley Prairie, the largest prairie remnant in Michigan.

Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy received the property from Glen Shaw Jr. and Patricia Shaw as part of a deal that included placing a Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) Conservation Easement on the property. SMLC is the designated Steward for the property on behalf of the MDEQ.

After the closing, James T. Weiner, SMLC Board President, said:

" SMLC is excited to participate in saving 39 acres of the remaining prairies in and around Brownstown Township, Michigan. This acquisition is a small step in saving part of what is one of the last of Michigan's rare prairies in southeast Michigan. I hope that the public appreciates the unique beauty of this area so that such prairies may be preserved for future generations."

### Conservation Values

- The property's most important feature is a rare remnant of lakeplain prairie which is endemic to the great lakes region. This unique habitat is home to many rare or threatened plant species.
- The property is integral to preserving the natural character of Brownstown Township and much of the historic landscape of Michigan. It is comprised of mostly forested wetlands with pockets of open prairie.
- Wildlife habitat includes the forested wetlands, emergent marshlands, ponds, streams, prairie remnants and old dune features.

- This property wholly contains a historic prairie remnant called “Beech-Daly Road” which was identified in a regional survey conducted in 1995 titled, “A Survey of Lakeplain Prairie in Michigan”. It is one remnant of several that make up the Greater Sibley Road Prairie Complex.

### **Partnership Arrangement**

The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality holds the conservation easement on the property. This arrangement provides two layers of land protection and ensures that the property will always remain a natural area. SMLC worked closely with Redwood Acquisition to get this property protected.

"Redwood Acquisition is proud to have supported the donation of the Beech-Daly prairie remnant site to Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy. We wanted to partner with an organization that would steward the property in line with the MDEQ requirements and also provide a valuable community benefit. SMLC fit the bill! We look forward to visiting the new preserve once it is open to the public." said David Conwill, Redwood's President.

### **Future Goals**

Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy plans to establish the property as a nature preserve open to the public for passive recreation and on-site education. Hiking trails and demonstration sites will provide visitors with opportunities to enjoy a beautiful urban landscape while also learning about natural areas restoration. SMLC Executive Director, Jill A. Lewis, stated:

"The Sibley Prairie is unique, rare and very special. It is important to save it now and to facilitate public access so that all of us can appreciate why southeast Michigan prairies are ecologically important. SMLC looks forward to bringing the prairie to the people as we begin to steward a portion of this valuable community resource."

SMLC is currently fundraising for its Sibley Prairie Land Protection Project. Local contributions received by December 31, 2014 will be matched dollar-for-dollar up to \$75,000 by The Carls Foundation. Anyone interested in donating can send a check to SMLC, 8383 Vreeland Rd., Superior Township, MI 48198. Please let SMLC know the gift is for this project.

### **About SMLC**

*Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy is a 501(c)3 nonprofit and qualified conservation organization that was established 26 years ago. SMLC has protected approximately 3,410 acres across southeast Michigan through the conservation of natural lands and open space to provide wildlife habitat and to enrich the lives of people. SMLC has a history of conserving land in partnership with Federal, State, and local governments and other conservation organizations.*  
[www.smlcland.org](http://www.smlcland.org)

*SMLC is a member of SEMIWILD, a partnership that promotes land conservation and natural areas recreation in southeast Michigan.*

###