



Landmarks

Newsletter of the Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy

Spring 2009

The Conservancy Farm – an SMLC place of vision

By Jill A. Lewis, Executive Director

In 2005 Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy purchased the Conservancy Farm located on Vreeland Road in Superior Township, Washtenaw County. At the time, the historic farm had seen better days, but the 99 acres including a farmhouse and outbuildings was full of promise.

Today, SMLC has created a unique place where local gardeners and farmers can practice organic growing techniques and SMLC’s staff can work in a place of quiet natural beauty.

Although it is unusual for a land conservancy to own a working farm, for SMLC this has proven to be a positive blessing. The Farm is located in the heart of the Superior Greenway, is across the road from SMLC’s LeFurge Woods Nature Preserve and is next to Washtenaw County’s newly acquired Meyer Preserve. This location is practical.

Staff can easily oversee the Superior Township properties owned by SMLC and can assist the County with their local stewardship needs. Finally, the Farm’s location makes it an ideal place from which to show visitors and stakeholders the Greenway from a visual perspective.

SMLC has a history of protecting agricultural land in addition to natural land. Our latest conservation easement on the Bob Schultz Farm added to the Superior Greenway in 2007. Located down the road from the Schultz Farm, the Conservancy Farm is another way SMLC can demonstrate our commitment to a productive rural way of life.

In 2005, SMLC began the Community Organic Garden program carving out space where local gardeners could grow their own vegetables in a community setting. Although the clay soil has been tough to work

with, gardeners who stuck with it and focused on soil improvement can now boast of healthy organically grown crops. The Conservancy provides the land, water, and when available, hay and manure. Gardeners provide an annual donation to the Conservancy and their own seeds, plants and labor.

Also in 2005, the Conservancy continued some of the prior farm lease arrangements with local farmers. Today, SMLC continues both of those relationships and has also added 4 additional local farmers to the SMLC farm land use program, 3 of whom are new to the farm in 2009. This year, the farm proper will be fully farmed using organic practices by 5 area farmers and the goal is to have all 99 acres farmed using organic practices within the next several years.



The Conservancy Farm in Washtenaw County serves as a focal point for gardeners, farmers and visitors of the Superior Greenway.
Photo by Rich Lawton

If you visit the Farm this summer you might see the following

crops in production:

- market vegetables (some farmed using plow horses)
- oats and wheat
- soybeans, potatoes and peanuts
- hay (some farmed using plow horses)

Both programs are run by the staff and overseen by the new Conservancy Farm Committee and its

continued on Page 3...

Inside:

2008 Annual Report - Year in Review	3-7
New Online Land Protection Survey	5
2008 SMLC Contributors	6 & 7
Superior Greenway Expands	8
More Conservancy Farm News	9 & 10
Superior Land Conservancy News	11

Landmarks

A newsletter published by:

Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy

8383 Vreeland Road
Superior Township, MI 48198

734.484.6565

www.SMLCland.org

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Our Staff

Jill Lewis

Executive Director

jlewis@SMLCland.org

Wendy Pellerito

Office Manager

wpellerito@SMLCland.org

Jack Smiley

Director of Land Protection

jsmiley@SMLCland.org

Scott Tyrrell

Stewardship Coordinator

styrrell@SMLCland.org

Our Mission

The Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy conserves natural land and open space - including forests, wetlands, meadows, agricultural land, and places of scenic beauty - to provide habitat for wildlife and to enrich the lives of people.



Message from the Executive Director Jill Lewis

Greetings. As I write this, spring has sprung and the earth is beautiful. Green trees and colorful flowers, animals and birds on the move, people out and about – enjoying nature as they bike, walk or run errands.

For SMLC, spring is also a time to reinvigorate ourselves and begin to implement our winter plans; and we have many! A few highlights are showcased below.

This February, our board participated in the first formal step towards Land Trust Alliance Accreditation, a guided organizational assessment. This assessment showed SMLC what we have to work on or improve in the next several years so that when we apply for Accreditation, we are ready. It also showed what SMLC is already doing well.

In July, SMLC will present an implementation plan based on the assessment to our board for approval. This plan will guide SMLC during the next 3-5 years and it covers operational and programmatic elements.

Our board also modified the structure that guides our relationships with our local divisions, Monroe County and Superior land conservancies in April. SMLC's board will vote on that this May and the modifications will allow SMLC to meet

newer financial and land trust standards in a better way than before.

Finally, our Land Protection Committee has created a public-input online survey that will allow interested citizens to identify properties that may match SMLC criteria and be worthy of further SMLC consideration (See article on Page 4).

SMLC's \$1 Million "We Care" Campaign will fund all of this and many other program and operational needs – thank you to all of you who gave to us at the end of 2008 as part of this campaign. You should have recently received your Spring Appeal Letter – let us know if you didn't and we'll get one to you right away. You can also give to us safely and easily online at www.SMLCland.org.

This issue highlights our Conservancy Farm, a special place for SMLC and the local community. Our farm committees worked hard this winter and we have a number of new farmers and gardeners joining us in 2009. We hope you enjoy reading about the Farm and stop by to visit soon.

Thanks for your continued support and interest in Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy. We look forward to more successful land protection in the future with your help.

Jill



Photo by Scott White





Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy 2008 Annual Report



By James T. Weiner, President

The Year In Review

I was recently elected President of the Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy (SMLC). I have served on the Board of Directors since 2005 and during that time I have been both Secretary and a member of the Land Protection Committee (the committee that reviews potential properties for protection). While volunteering for SMLC I have been involved in land acquisitions, wetland mitigation projects and organizational issues. However, I have a long way to go to match the contributions that my predecessors, Jack Smiley and Rick Simek, have made to the SMLC.

In 2008 SMLC celebrated its 20th anniversary. This milestone shows the dedication volunteers, members, donors and partners have to our mission of land conservation throughout Southeast Michigan.

In these 20 years SMLC has protected over 2,400 acres throughout Southeast Michigan. Admittedly, SMLC's land protection seems to be centered in Superior Township, however, only 689 of the 2,400 acres are actually located in Superior. I believe that this misconception came about because

our most visible properties, and many active supporters, are located there. SMLC's 689 acres in Superior Township—including the LeFurge Woods Nature Preserve—are the foundation for the Superior Greenway. The Superior Greenway consists of over 1,800 acres of land protected in partnership with the State, Washtenaw County, Superior Township, and various landowners.

In 2008, SMLC began to refocus its attention on stewardship. Our Stewardship program consists of caring for our 13 nature preserves and monitoring our numerous conservation easements. In 2008, SMLC's staff began creating, or revising, individualized management plans for each of our preserves. These plans consist of such things as land use management plans, rules for visitor access, and even community relations. Staff, with numerous volunteers, also continued work minimizing invasive species, expanding trails, and making improvements. Additionally, in preparation for Land Trust Alliance (LTA) accreditation, SMLC updated and formalized its monitoring program for conservation easements and is

working with landowners to ensure the easements are being respected.

In the past year, SMLC also continued the organizational changes necessary to ensure that SMLC will be sustainable for another 20 years. These included hiring a full-time Executive Director, revising our committee structure to assist the Board, and implementing specific policies required by federal and land trust regulations and formally committing to become accredited by LTA. I am pleased to relay that we are on track to pursue accreditation in only a few short years.

However, none of SMLC's achievements could have happened, or will continue, without your support. We appreciate all of you who give of your time and resources to help SMLC and our mission of protecting and preserving natural land and open space in Southeast Michigan.

On behalf of all of us here at SMLC, I thank you and I look forward to another great 20 years.

James T. Weiner

continued from cover...

older subcommittee, the Community Organic Garden Committee. The Conservancy Farm Committee began meeting this past September and will be working on the Farm's vision and short-term goals this summer.

Future plans include:

- continued renovation and historic preservation of the farmhouse and outbuildings
- caretaking of the old orchard
- creating a new visitor parking lot
- demonstration programs for farmers and gardeners interested in organic practices

Finally, SMLC hosts our annual Conservancy Farm Picnic for all local and southeast region supporters in September. This popular potluck event includes historic outbuildings tours, animal and insect educational opportunities, and a chance to hear about the latest Conservancy happenings in person. Watch for notifications from us in our monthly and weekly email outreach messages this summer.

To view the garden and farming please visit 8383 Vreeland Road. To learn more about SMLC, please visit www.SMLCland.org.



Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy 2008 Annual Report

SMLC Begins Survey of Important Properties Do You Know of Land Worthy of Protection?

The Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy is requesting your help in identifying important properties in the 7-county southeast Michigan region which are worthy of protection (Wayne, Oakland, Macomb, Washtenaw, Livingston, Monroe and St. Clair counties). These may be pristine natural habitats, wetlands, farm land, or even urban parks and natural areas. Preference is weighted towards larger properties, however, smaller properties may be considered if they possess important natural or cultural features.

The goal of this survey is to identify and prioritize properties to help guide land preservation efforts in the region. The Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy intends to share this information with other conservancies, government agencies and potential funders in an attempt to develop a comprehensive land conservation strategy.

To suggest property which you feel is worthy of preservation, please visit SMLC's web site at www.SMLCland.org to download a copy of the

survey form. Completed survey forms may be returned by mail, or emailed to info@smlcland.org. Thank you very much for your interest in land conservation!



Wetlands at LeFurge Woods Nature Preserve.

Photo by Jim Robertson

Conservancy Farm & Schultz Farm Paid Off!

by Jack Smiley

In 2008, the Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy paid off all of the remaining loans which were used to finance the purchase of both the Conservancy Farm and the development rights to the Schultz Farm. This was a significant accomplishment since the Conservancy borrowed several hundred thousand dollars in order to pay \$2.4 million in cash at closing for these properties.

These two purchases were the largest in the history of the Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy. SMLC paid \$1.1 million to acquire the Conservancy Farm, and paid over \$1.3 million to acquire the development rights to the Schultz Farm in Superior Township. Even though the Conservancy was able to raise significant funding for these purchases - including a \$790,000 federal grant - we still needed to borrow money to make up the shortfall.

Fortunately, a number of members made low and zero interest loans which enabled us to close on these properties in a timely fashion. SMLC could not have protected these key properties without the generous loans provided by members!

SMLC also received several multi-year pledges which enabled us to plan our repayment schedule. Even though we still have a few pledges outstanding, we can proudly report that all of our loans have been paid in full.

Thank you to everyone who either donated money, made a pledge, or provided a loan. Working together, both the Conservancy Farm and the Schultz Farm are now protected – and the Conservancy is debt free!





Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy 2008 Annual Report

SMLC welcomes new Board Directors in 2008

In November 2008, the SMLC board voted in 2 new directors, Maura Jung and Barry Wauldron for 3 year terms each starting in January 2009. This brought the total number of directors to 11.

Maura Jung is a trained naturalist and educator who is currently a science consultant with the Oakland Public Schools. Maura has also worked for the Cranbrook Science Institute and as a Park Naturalist for the Huron-Clinton Metro Beach Metropark. She received her Bachelor of Science in Natural Resources from the University of Michigan and her Doctorate of Education from Wayne State University.

Barry Wauldron is an educator who is currently teaching at the University of Michigan-Dearborn. Barry also has an academic background in urban planning and historic preservation and has worked for the Washtenaw County Historic District Commission. He received his Bachelor of Science in Earth Science and his Masters in Geography, both at Eastern Michigan University.

Maura currently serves on the Executive Committee as an At-large Officer while Barry serves as a member of the Conservancy Farm Committee. Please help us welcome both.

SOUTHEAST MICHIGAN LAND CONSERVANCY'S 2008 AWARD RECIPIENTS

- JACK R. SMILEY LEGACY AWARD -
to
JACK R. SMILEY

Thanks for everything you have done
on behalf of the Conservancy.
Without you, our 20 years of success
would not have been possible.

- VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARD -
to
MARION MORRIS

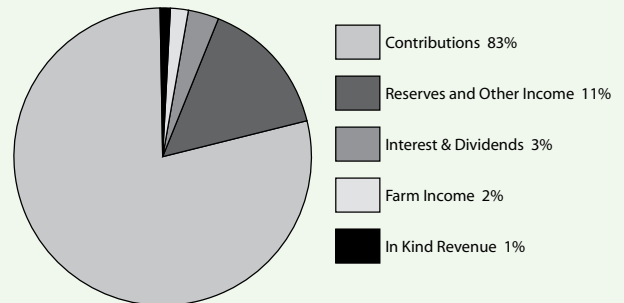
To a wonderful neighbor,
the spirit of generosity lives in you
and we are very thankful
for everything you have given us.

- SMLC BOARD RECOGNITION AWARD -
to
RICK SIMEK

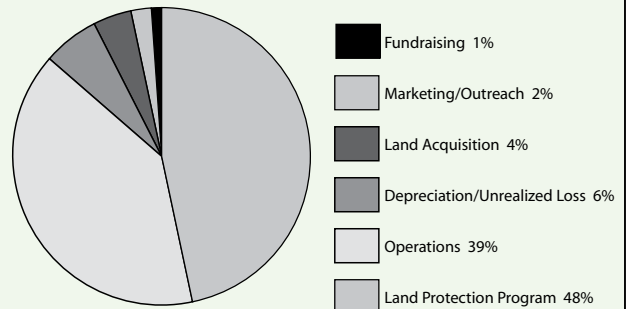
Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy
is grateful for
your leadership and wisdom.
Thank you for leading us
with focus and poise during our transition.

2008 Financial Report

Revenue \$246,406*



Expenses \$246,406*



* unaudited



Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy

2008 Annual Report

Thank you for supporting land protection in 2008!

The Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy greatly appreciates the gifts from all of our supporters in 2008. Your contributions are what make it possible to continue protecting natural land and open space in southeast Michigan.

Gifts from Foundations & Organizations

\$50,000 and up

The Carls Foundation
Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan
Washtenaw County Parks & Recreation Commission

\$25,000 - \$49,999

Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan - William & Lisa Ford Fund
Anonymous

\$15,000 - \$24,999

Anonymous

\$5,000 - \$14,999

Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan - Fred G. & Stephanie Secrest Fund

\$1,000 - \$4,999

The Conservation Fund

Under \$1,000

Ann Arbor Bivouac, Inc.
Arbor Farm Market
BetterHealth of Novi
Big George's of Ann Arbor
Bombadill's Cafe
Country Garden Club of Northville
Dan Cameron Family Foundation
Downtown Home & Garden of Ann Arbor
Four Seasons Garden Center of Oak Park
Friends of the Detroit River
Gannett Foundation
Pfizer Foundation Matching Gifts Program
Saint Michael Parish of Sterling Heights
Todd's Services Inc
Whole Foods Market of Ann Arbor
Wild Birds Unlimited of Royal Oak
Ypsilanti Garden Club
Zonta Club of Northwest Wayne County Area

Gifts from Individuals

\$1,000 - \$4,999

Donna Chrzanowski
John Copley & Jan Berry
Patsy Knoop
Jim & Pat Robertson
William L. Secrest & Misty Callies
Andrea & David Serafin
Brad Tomtishen & Lynda Oswald
Marianne Udow-Phillips & Bill Phillips
Alan & Peggy Van Kerckhove
Anonymous

\$500 - \$999

Nur Akcasu & Jeffery Hannah
Holde H. Borcherts
Andrew Dettling
Marilyn & Jeffrey Gilbert
Jane & Dan Hayes
Helen Jeter
Robert M. Johnson
Maura & Kurt Jung
David & Valerie Malaney
Eric & Monica Malloy
Emily Nietering
John & Gwen Nystuen
Will & Barbara Scott
Philip & Jeanne Smith
Betty Welsh
Anonymous (2)

\$250 - \$499

Carla K. Bisaro
Brian Carroll
Susan Dines & Laurie Gendron
Daniel & Martina Ezekiel
Neil & Mary Hodges
Ed Palermo & Gabrielle Todd
Jay Schlegel
Barbara Siepierski
Ati & Jennifer Tislerics
Craig Tylenda
Jon & Linda Walton
Henry & Dorothy Zelisse
Anonymous

\$100 - \$249

John Allison & Julia Miller
Doris Applebaum
Robert & Kathy Asselstine
Linda Baes

Brenda Baker
Jocelyn Baker
Rosalind & Robert Barnsdale
Fran & Bill Beckley
Shirley Brehm
John Brinley & Ann Schott
Carolyn Buell
Anita Burck
Denise & Jim Burrows
Tim & Carol Burton
Delwyn & Maurice Callies
Terry Carroll
Neil & Jeanne Chapel
Jesse Christian & Juanita Logan
Thomas Clough
Richard Cobb
Charlotte & Larry Davenport
John Dempsey
David Dickinson & Jeannine Laprad
John & Catherine Diefenbacher
Wayne Ewy
Florence Gasdick
Steve Geiringer & Karen Bantel
Julian Gilbert
Beth Gilford & John Alden
Ina Hanel & Michael Gerdenich
Carole L. Hann
Kimberly A. Harber
Jeffery Head
Fred & Celeste Hoitash
Charles & Doris Hoitash
Anna Holden
Ronald Houtz
Susan Jaranowski & William Sickon
Lynne Ellen Kaiser
Joe & Linda Kanamueller
Deborah Kanter & Leon Pescador
Stephen & Rachel Kaplan
Bob & Emily Kemnitz
Richard Kent
Michelle Kolozsvary
Theresa Kowalczyk
Diane Krause
Marianne Lembfeld
Rose & Laran Lerner
Mary Lesser & Roy Money
Sally Lunn & Bob Krzewinski
Gerard & Rose Matuszak
Timothy Mc Kay
James & Sharon McDonald
Lori & Jim Mercier
Richard & Jeanne Micka
Dorothy Mundle

Barb & Joe Parker
Joanna Pease
Sally Petrella & Paul Stark
Morand & Jan Piert
Phillip Poole
Bruce & Vera Proper
Bill Quinn
Dan & Rosemary Rieder
J. Robert & Leslie Rock
Josephine Rood
Bret & Kathryn Row
Mr. & Mrs. Sayed
Norman & Marjorie Scott
Peter Scott
Steve & Darlene Secrest
Elvera & David Shappirio
John G. Spencer
Dorothy Sweda
Dave Thomas
Paul & Barbara Trojan
Scott Tyrrell
James Weyman
Jennie Williams

\$50 - \$99

David Bishop
James & June Coyne
John & Judy Dellinger
Eric & Vivian Ellsworth
Suzanne Goodrich
Suzanne B. & Robert L. Heiney
Terry Lee Lansing
Marjorie Paqualle
Patricia & Terry Patton
Tam Perry
Heidi Smith
Lois-Jean Ulrich

Up to \$50

Charles & Roberta Anderson
Eric & Pat Appleberry
Elizabeth Appleyard
Tom & Rosemary Assenmacher
Cathy Bach & Brian Hazlett
Paul & Nancy Bailey
Thomas & Sylvia Barnabei
Lawrence Barnard
Dr. Burton Barnes
Janis Beard
Nina Bell
Dietrich Bergmann
David A. Betts





Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy

2008 Annual Report

Ralph Beuhler
Janis Bobrin
Cheryl & Don Bord
Tom Boulan
Cynthia & Glenn Bourland
Leonardo Brito
Howard Bromberg
Dean Brossy
Mrs. Betty Brower
Karen & Richard Brown
Allison Carey
Carola Carlier
M. Judy Carr
Paul & Pat Carson
Nancy Caviston
Dick & Sue Chase
Dr. Carl & Cathy Christensen
Hasi Cislo
Thomas Clack & Alice Clack
Scott & Marjorie Colburn
Kevin & Dorothy Conway
Stephen & Carole Cook
Marx Cooper
Roger Corpolongo & Ela Jiga
John & Marcia Covert
Cynthia Cox

Julie A. Craves & Darrin O'Brien
Philip Crookshank
Dr. Rane Curl
Prashant Datar & Aruna Gurudutt
Lillian & Walter Dean
Monte & Kristen Del Monte
Arthur Dewar
Danny & Claudia Dionne
Joan Doman
Carol Dubuque
Robert Duchene
Chloe Duke & Mike Kozura
Nancy E. Dunn
Dr. & Mrs. Gerald Dupler
Jim Edwards
Lynn & Doris Ehrle
Dave & Marcela Emerson
John Etter
Susan Falcone & Tom Mcclanahan
Marie E. Feeley
Chris & Rosemarie Fielding
Rod & Karen Folland
Tom & Cathy Freeman
Milton French
Ron Gamble
Charlotte & Dr. Orin Gelderloos

Joellen Gilchrist
Debra Glen
Marion & Art Gold
Sandra Gonzalez
Allan Goode
Margy & Jack Goodnoe
Camilla Gorham
Chris Goulat
Ruth Graves
Jerry Greener
Robert Grese
Ken & Mary Grunow
Estelle Gubow
J. Rodney & Maryanne Guest
Mary Guest
Carol & Lionel Guregian
Roger & Caroline Hackett
Donald F. Haidys
Lynn & Lois Hansen
Rachel Brett Harley
Ruth Hart
Beth Helmbold & Dave Siemieniak
Elizabeth Hill
Annette Hodesh
Mary & Carl Hopfner
Kathleen Iler
Sue Jagodka
Margaret Johnston
Margaret Kaminski
Tony Kadow
Rich Kato
Marty & Hedi Kaufman
Robert & Judy Kelly
Susan Kennedy & John O' Sullivan
Kathleen Kepner- Thomson
Young-Chun & Yeon-Ok Jang Kim
Tom Koerner
Assane Koulibali
Carol & James Ladley
Kathy Laughlin
Lisa Lava- Kellar
Donald & Dorthea LeFurge
Roy & Lynda Lindhardt
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Del Moore
Peter & Marion Morris
Susan Morse
Arthur & Lauren Mullen

Noel Mullett
Gregg & Sheryl Nathanson
Virginia Nelson
Timothy Nestorak
Michael Niemi
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Jim & Laura Paulson
Tom & Wendy Pellerito
Jane Perrin
Roger E. Place
Barbara & Ralph Powell
Steven Przybylski & Michelle Deatrick
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Janet Pierce Raisch
Kaye Robine
Alissa Ruelle
Grant & Stephenie Ruttinger
Glen Sard & Gary Clark
Linda Scherdt
Peter Schriemer
Barbara Schueler & Leon Ringl
Fred R. Secrest
Harry & Mary Beth Sheehan
Bonnie Shirley
M. R. & Razia Siddiqui
Sherrie Siefman
Rick Simek
Jack R. Smiley
Dorothy & Jack J. Smiley
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Caryle Spence
David Stark
Victoria Straub
Harold & Shirley Strom
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Sandy Suarez & Jimmy Boutin
Nara Subramanian & Gayathri Raman
A. C. Tanner
The Cable Family
Eileen Trzcinski & Reinhold Cordella
Lauri Tyre
Carl & Sue Van Appledorn
Jane & John Van Bolt
Doug & Lila Vincent
Anita Walters
Ellen Elliott Weatherbee
James T. Weiner
Bill Welsh
Joan Wheeler
Scott Williams
Charlotte & David Wirth
Lynette Wolfsberger
Amanda & Carl Woodward
Julie Woodward & Drew S. Prosch- Jensen
Joseph & Judith Wysocki
Tad & Wanda Wysor
Mary Clare Yates
Timothy & Lynne Zacharias

Memorial Donations

In memory of David D'Aguilar Wood

by Mr. and Mrs. D. A. Adams
Jane Clarke
Ruth and Ed Judd
Sarah Lantz
Susan Lind
George & Beverly Menham
Christopher Scott
John W. and Arlene Shy
Kenneth and Mary Spear
Ellen Stross
Betty Utter

In memory of Dorothy & David D'Aguilar Wood

by Jack & Nancy Kropf

In memory of Ethan Gilbert

by Marilyn & Jeffrey Gilbert
Mary Lesser & Roy Money

In memory of Arthur N. Matthews & Jerome Sleicher

by Lynn H. Ehrle

In memory of Kathy Waggoner

by Lauri Tyre

In memory of Kermit (Kit) L. Carson

by Paul & Pat Carson

In memory of Martha Langham

by Linda Baes

Conservancy Stewardship News

by Scott Tyrrell, Stewardship Coordinator

SMLC is gearing up for a busy spring of stewardship out on the preserves. Many people assisted with the myriad of projects going on at the preserves and at the Conservancy Farm over the past fall and winter. Invasive species removal events on Wednesday evenings and Saturday afternoons have been well attended and productive. Volunteers who came out in 2008 to pull garlic mustard at Kosch Headwaters and LeFurge Woods nature preserves were successful at getting all of the weed out of the woods that we could find. This means that if we keep up the effort we have a good chance of preventing this aggressive plant from taking over the rich native diversity of these special woodlands.

Congratulations to **Timothy Nestorak** who achieved the rank of Eagle Scout on May 3, 2009 for leading a project that involved construction of a foot bridge over the creek that runs through LeFurge Woods Nature Preserve. Also thanks to **Ian Gardiner** who built a sturdy wildlife viewing platform at the Springhill Nature Preserve as part of his Eagle Scout candidate project; and much appreciation goes to **Adam Dewicki** who is leading a project to install an entrance information kiosk and 42 bluebird nest boxes at Morris-Reichert Nature Preserve for his Eagle Scout project.

Many thanks to the volunteers from the **University of Michigan Engineering Council Honors Society** for helping with work on the barn foundation, brick walkway, and invasive species removal at the



L to R: Shawn, Matt, and Jamal pull garlic mustard at the Kosch Headwaters Nature Preserve in May 2009. Photo by Scott Tyrrell

Conservancy Farm. **Hank Beekley** and **Patrick Pelley** were also invaluable in going the extra mile to help get the brick walkway done. **Chris Fielding** gets an extra nod of appreciation for help with careful work on the walkway as well as repairs on a recently donated antique table and other farmhouse repairs. And thanks to **Ed Palermo**, **Gabrielle Todd** and **Jung Park** for some very muddy garden pathway repair work.

Thank you to **Robert Ayotte** for leading tours and doing plant inventories out on the preserves. A big thank you to **Gary Grosshans** for plowing the snow out of the farm driveway over the winter and repairing the erosion gullies in the SMLC farm fields this spring. Special thanks goes to **Brett Parks** for working on SMLC Oral History Project with Jack Smiley.

And only through the enthusiastic contributions of dozens of **volunteers** were we able to get several mailings out to supporters over past months.

It takes many hands to support the work of the Conservancy and keep it moving forward. You can help! Helping the Conservancy consists of removing invasive species all year long, trail clearing, and general preserve maintenance. **If you are interested in joining SMLC for preserve workdays or helping out at the farm and you would like to receive e-mails for these project announcements, please contact Stewardship Coordinator Scott Tyrrell (styrrell@smlcland.org/734.484.6565).**

SMLC launches Corporate Adopt-A-Preserve Program

This summer SMLC will rollout our new corporate Adopt-A-Preserve program. Corporations can sign up to be **Neighborhood, Local** or **Regional** sponsors.

Participants choose which SMLC preserve(s) they are sponsoring, give an annual Stewardship Fund donation and sign up employees for SMLC stewardship workdays.

For more information, please contact Jill at 734-484-6565 or jlewis@smlcland.org.



Washtenaw County's Meyer Preserve adds 139 acres to Superior Greenway

by Richard Kent, Land Protection Committee Chair

In August of 2008, the Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission (WCPARC) became the owner of 139 acres in Superior Township, Washtenaw County. The preserve has since been named the Meyer Preserve to acknowledge the family which long held land in the Township. The 139 acres consists of two parcels on Prospect Road at the intersection of Vreeland Road, a 55 acre parcel located northeast of the intersection and an 84 acre parcel to the southwest. The preserve consists mainly of open agricultural land, with about 45 acres of valuable woods and wetlands, and makes a significant contribution to the two mile long Superior Township Greenway.



Wetlands, woodlands and fields at the Meyer Nature Preserve in Superior Township.
Photo by Scott Tyrrell



Washtenaw County's new Meyer Nature Preserve, located adjacent to the Conservancy Farm Preserve and LeFurge Woods Nature Preserve adds 139 acres of protected land to the Superior Greenway between Canton and Ann Arbor.

The County purchase of this land, through its Natural Areas Preservation Program, was made financially easier through collaboration with the Ann Arbor Greenbelt Program, the Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy and Superior Township. WCPARC contributed 52% of the cost. The Greenbelt program provided most of the balance, but smaller, still important, contributions were made by SMLC's Superior Land Conservancy (SLC) division and Superior Township.

SMLC also agreed to participate in management of the land. Last fall invasive species, in the hedgerow along Vreeland Road east of Prospect, were removed with the help of funds provided through SLC. Over the winter a county contract was signed by a local farmer, Gary Grosshans, to farm the approximately 65 acres of productive agricultural land on the preserve. At present no parking area has been built to service the Meyer Preserve, but parking is available at SMLC's LeFurge Woods Nature Preserve across Prospect Road from the 84 acre parcel. Please exercise caution in crossing busy Prospect Road if you park in the LeFurge parking lot.

Get email updates from SMLC

Don't miss out on the latest Conservancy news, events, and announcements. If your address has changed, be sure to let us know that, too. Send an email to Wendy at:
wpellerito@SMLCland.org

More Conservancy Farm News

Local farmer grows crops the old-fashioned way

By Wendy Pellerito

In 2008, local farmer Hank Beekley started using draft horses to work about 5 acres of farmland at the Conservancy Farm. He does it pretty much the way it was done before gasoline-powered machines became available. Recently, Hank took some time out of his busy schedule to answer some questions.

Wendy: *Hank, you and the team of horses you use to plow your leased farm fields at the Conservancy Farm are very popular with the Farm's visitors. What can you tell me about your horses?*

Hank: We have two draft horses. Each weighs about 1700 lbs. and both are 17.3 hands at the withers (approx. 69 1/2" tall at the top of their shoulders). Kassey is a black English Shire we have had for four years. She is 14 years old and came from

England when she was two. She has had three foals all before we owned her. Jubilee is a brown Belgian horse with a blond mane and tail we have had for about a year. She is 15 years old and has had ten foals.

W: *What got you interested in farming in the first place?*

H: I have been interested in farming since I was young. I especially liked the big draft horses and the idea of working with them

to farm. When we got Kassey I started to pursue using her as more than a riding horse. I took a clinic on driving horses, started raising chickens for meat and eggs, and sheep for wool and meat. I found I really like raising and working with animals. I also started reading several magazines dedicated to small sustainable farming, with an emphasis on farming with horses.

W: *What do you enjoy about farming here at the Conservancy Farm?*

H: It has been great to be at the Conservancy Farm and meet a lot of people who are interested in producing good local food and with a passion for preserving farmland, woodlands and wetlands for the next generations. There are many different backgrounds, knowledge bases and passions in the people I have met. It is interesting and rewarding to be a part of the Conservancy community.

W: *You are a member of the new SMLC Conservancy Farm Committee, has that had any impact on your own farming or goals?*

H: As a member of the Farm Committee I have been amazed at the work that goes into keeping the Conservancy going. I am excited to see

how the small part of land that I work fits into the goals the committee has for the farm: improving soil quality, increasing diversity, being educational and providing local, sustainable food.

You can read Wendy's full interview with Hank and see more photos of Hank, Kassie and Jubilee at work on the SMLC website: www.SMLCland.org



Visitors to the Conservancy farm have good chance of seeing Hank, Jubilee and Kassey working in the fields throughout the summer. Photo by Scott Tyrrell

W: *What are your long-term farming goals? What are your plans for 2009?*

H: Long term, I would like to use the horses to raise market crops and small grains for people and hay and feed for our chickens, sheep and horses. For this year we plan on putting in a hay field, feed corn, pumpkins, popcorn, an assortment of market garden crops and some cover crops.



Community Organic Garden: five years and growing strong

By Jennie Williams

This marks the fifth growing season of the SMLC Community Organic Garden. We started out with just under a half acre of plowed field and 12 gardeners. We now have the original garden, plus an additional nine plots fenced in and close to 41 active gardeners plus their friends and families coming out regularly. In the past five years, we've organized a Garden Committee that works in the interest of the community of gardeners in line with the mission of SMLC, we've raised a kiosk to

share information, and have donated over 200 pounds of fresh produce to Food Gatherers, not to mention all the vegetables that we've taken home to our own kitchens!

Gardeners at the SMLC Community Organic Garden are of all ages and from all around the region. We make up a unique community with many attributes in common. We like fresh, organic foods. We like to know where our foods come from. We like to be outside, listening to the Sandhill cranes or watching Bluebirds. We like the

sunshine, cloudy days, and we look forward to the rains. We like to lean on a shovel or rake handle, chatting with our neighbor about recipes or tomato hornworms. And we don't mind getting a little muddy.

There are still a few plots available in the Garden. If you are interested in joining this community, contact the garden co-coordinators Jay, jayhschlegel@comcast.net, or Jennie, jennie.williams54@yahoo.com, to show you around the garden.

Superior Land Conservancy Preserving the rural character and natural habitats of Superior Township

by Bill Secrest

Brenda Baker and myself have recently been appointed by the Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy (SMLC) Board as Steering Committee co-chairs of the Superior Land Conservancy (SLC), a local division of SMLC. As the first Chair and Administrative Secretary of the SLC division, formed in 1991, we have been active in the organization in various roles ever since.

SLC's accomplishments over the past 18 years are encouraging and gratifying to those who long for an ecologically sustainable world. In the face of profound market pressures to "pave paradise", SMLC and its local division have managed to protect 1,596 acres of wild and farmed land in our township. In so doing we have demonstrated that unsustainable urban sprawl is not inevitable. We have been able to build coalitions with other environmental organizations, concerned citizens, businesses, and governments at the local, county, state, and federal levels to purchase open space land and preserve our natural heritage.

Proper stewardship is vital in order to truly conserve these lands "in perpetuity." To meet that responsibility, we are recruiting volunteers to assist with essential stewardship activities on five nature preserves in Superior Township. Our needs are for help with tasks such as invasive species management, trail clearing, farm workdays, trash policing, and



Bill Secrest (pointing) led about 30 people on the 18th annual Spring Has Sprung at Springhill nature preserve hike in May 2009

Photo by Scott Tyrrell

tending to bluebird nest boxes. These are activities almost anyone can help with – adults and/or youth, individuals or groups, one time or on a recurring basis. If you and yours are troubled by the current collapse of your world's natural environments, here is your chance to make a difference!

Just as we have over the past 18 years, Superior Land Conservancy continues to be an active and effective presence in the township. We continue to work collaboratively and locally to preserve and protect the special places we all cherish.

To learn more, or to volunteer for any of these opportunities in Superior Township, please contact Bill Secrest (734-482-5957 / wsecrest@hfcc.net) or Brenda Baker (734-482-8084 / BakerPartin@aol.com).

YES! I want to help preserve critical natural habitat in southeast Michigan by supporting Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy.

Total gift \$ _____

Check this box to have SMLC use my gift where it is needed most.

Or, direct my donation:

General Fund \$ _____

Land Protection Fund \$ _____

Stewardship Endowment Fund \$ _____

Please make checks payable to Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy and mail to:

**Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy
8383 Vreeland Rd.
Superior Township, MI 48198**

Or, make a secure online credit card donation at **www.SMLCland.org**

Name _____

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E-mail _____

All donations are tax deductible to the extent provided by law.
The donor received no goods or services in exchange for this donation.
E-mail used for SMLC news/announcements.
SMLC will never give or sell your personal information to any other group.

Wish List

Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy could use the following items:

- modern commercial lawn mower in good working order for mowing preserve trails (retail cost \$10,000)
- heavy duty rototiller in good working order for Garden program (retail cost \$2,000)
- digital projector for laptop program presentations (retail cost \$500)
- 8x10 or 10x12 foot living room rug - excellent condition, keeping with historic character of farm house; please no stripes (this is a meeting space for the Conservancy); call for details (retail cost \$300+)
- brush loppers (preferably with replaceable blades) (retail cost \$25)
- brush saws with replaceable blades - all sizes (retail cost \$15)
- 2 portable & storable 6ft or 8ft banquet tables with folding legs, good condition.

Please contact Scott or Wendy at the SMLC office if you would like to make our wishes come true!

**(734) 484-6565
styrrell@smlcland.org**

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