



News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 29, 2023

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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

SOUTHEAST MICHIGAN LAND CONSERVANCY EARNS NATIONAL RECOGNITION

Demonstrating a strong Commitment to Public Trust and Conservation Excellence

Superior Township, MI – One thing that unites us as a nation is land: Americans strongly support saving the natural areas and open spaces they love. Since 1988, Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy (SMLC), has been doing just that for the people of southeast Michigan. Today, SMLC announced that it has achieved national recognition – joining a network of more than 470 accredited land trusts across the country that have demonstrated their commitment to professional excellence and to maintaining the public’s trust in their work.

“The Land Trust Commission’s accreditation certifies and elevates SMLC’s ongoing work to conserve local woods, wetlands, prairies, and open spaces”, says Jill A. Lewis, SMLC’s Executive Director. “SMLC is helping the planet where we live, work, and recreate, here in Southeast Michigan, and the Commission has recognized our adherence to land trust standards and best practices as part of what we do.”

SMLC provided extensive documentation and was subject to a comprehensive third-party evaluation prior to achieving this distinction. The Land Trust Accreditation Commission awarded accreditation, signifying its confidence that SMLC’s lands will be protected forever. Accredited land trusts steward almost 20 million acres of land across the country – approximately one-third the size of the State of Michigan or the size of the following national parks combined: Yellowstone, Grand Canyon, Glacier, Everglades, Denali and Yosemite!

"It is exciting to recognize Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy with this national mark of distinction," said Melissa Kalvestrand, Executive Director of the Commission. "Donors and partners can trust that the more than 470 accredited land trusts across the country are united behind strong standards and have demonstrated sound finances, ethical conduct, responsible governance, and lasting stewardship."

SMLC’s conservation priorities include the beautiful 538-acre Lost Lake nature preserve in Genesee and Oakland counties; the Sibley Prairie in Wayne County, home of the globally rare lakeplain prairie habitat; and the Superior Greenway, in Washtenaw County. The more than 3,500-acre Greenway is a corridor of protected lands, hiking trails and prime birdwatching in Washtenaw County. Superior Greenway partners include: SMLC, Washtenaw County’s Natural Areas Preservation Program, the City of Ann Arbor’s Greenbelt program and Superior Charter Township. SMLC recently established a public parking area and hiking trail at the Secret Nature Preserve in Washtenaw County and a new public footbridge and trailhead at the Sibley Prairie Nature Preserve – West Prairie site in Wayne County.

“The SMLC Board of Directors is immensely proud of this organizational accomplishment, and all of the staff and volunteers, past and present, who helped make Land Trust Accreditation happen,” says James McIntyre, SMLC Board President. “Our legacy is built upon the foundation of working in partnership, saving meaningful and important local landscapes, and increasing awareness of the value of natural places – being accredited supports our future success and sustainability.”

SMLC is one of more than 1,300 land trusts across the United States according to the Land Trust Alliance’s most recent National Land Trust Census. A complete list of accredited land trusts and more information about the process and benefits can be found at www.landtrustaccreditation.org.



Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy is an accredited 501(c)3 nonprofit and qualified conservation organization that frequently partners with Federal, State, and local governments to achieve shared conservation goals. During the past 36 years, SMLC has protected nearly 3,500 acres across southeast Michigan through the conservation of natural lands and open space to provide wildlife habitat and to enrich the lives of people. www.smlcland.org

The Land Trust Accreditation Commission inspires excellence, promotes public trust and ensures permanence in the conservation of open lands by recognizing organizations that meet rigorous quality standards and strive for continuous improvement. The Commission, established in 2006 as an independent program of the Land Trust Alliance, is governed by a volunteer board of diverse land conservation and nonprofit management experts. www.landtrustaccreditation.org

###