

# Nature News

Quarterly Newsletter of the Cadillac Area Land Conservancy



Fall 2013

## A Balancing Act

The Cadillac Area Land Conservancy wants its easement holders to be able to use the natural resources on their property, **IF** (and it's a big if) using those resources will not endanger the environment, disrupt wildlife corridors or destroy the natural beauty of the land. We have easement holders who farm or harvest timber, taking advantage of their property's resources while still preserving its innate conservation values.

However, using the minerals **beneath** a piece of property is a little trickier. Extracting minerals by mining, drilling or extracting could have a detrimental effect on the land—disturbing the flora, disrupting the watershed, destroying animal habitats or, perhaps, polluting the whole environment. There is currently a great deal of controversy about the safety of fracking, and while CALC does not take a stand on the practice, we expect an easement property to retain its original look and feel.



CALC is willing to work with landowners to maximize their mineral development rights as long as the minerals can be extracted while preserving the surface of the property. For instance, Larry and Margo Copley have a 40-acre farm under easement with CALC. Several months ago they went to a meeting held by gas speculators and were told that if the neighbors banded together and signed on the dotted line, there could be big money for all of them. Larry and Margo realized they could not allow gas speculators to drill **on** their property based on their easement language, but they could allow drillers to drill **under** their land, so they could still get in on the deal. (The Copleys report that shortly thereafter, the speculators packed their bags never to be seen again.)

To do “due diligence,” before CALC enters into an easement agreement, we must know for certain that a land owner actually owns the mineral rights. This will require a title and/or mineral title search. If the mineral rights were sold, their current owner will have to be involved. If you have questions or concerns about your mineral rights, call the office at (231) 775-3631 or e-mail us at [calc@calc-landtrust.org](mailto:calc@calc-landtrust.org).



## Annual Meeting and Turtle Talk

More than 40 people joined us at the Carl T. Johnson Hunting and Fishing Center on September 19<sup>th</sup> for our annual meeting. After mingling time, Chair Larry Copley whistled the group to order.

The evening's business of the evening began with the election of officers:

Larry Copley (Chair), Steve Cunningham (Vice Chair), Margo Copley (Secretary) and Fred Sprague (Treasurer). Lindsey Hall was thanked for her years as treasurer. Larry announced that Brian Maturen has taken over the monitoring of easements from Craig Pullen who is now working in Traverse City. Larry pointed out that Craig had done a great job of getting our easements in order and conducting the annual monitoring.



Kama Ross, with the Wexford Conservation District, encouraged forest landowners in Wexford and Missaukee Counties to look into the Qualified Forest Program (QFP) that encourages private forestland property owners to harvest timber in a sustainable fashion based on a forest management plan. Call Kama at (231) 775-7681, ext. 3 or e-mail her at [kama.ross@macd.org](mailto:kama.ross@macd.org) for details and free, on-site assessment by a professional forester.

Next we heard from Representative Phil Potvin who chairs the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, responsible for funding the QFP program. Rep. Potvin talked of the important work done by land conservancies and the importance of timber harvesting by private landowners.



After the business of the evening we were treated to Pat Laarman's program on the Eastern box turtle. Although a technology glitch prevented us from seeing all of Pat's great photos of the elusive box turtle, we all came away with a great appreciation for Michigan's only terrestrial turtle.



Pat, a Forest Service employee and graduate student at Grand Valley State, has been studying the ecology of the eastern box turtle in the Manistee National Forest. Using radio telemetry, he has been able to identify the turtle's choice habitat—upland forests with patchy sun—and preferred nesting areas—open grasslands. The female has a home range of 50 acres; males 25. Amazingly, the box turtle overwinters by burrowing only about 10" into the mineral soil. It's believed that this gentle turtle has a life span of 50 years or more, but their population is declining.

The eastern box turtle is protected in Michigan; you are not allowed to possess them, and you certainly wouldn't want to eat one because they often feed on poisonous mushrooms, making them poisonous to humans. To help protect the turtle be careful when you mow; set your blade above 6". Closing dirt roads in prime nesting areas may also help. As we learn more about the turtles' lifestyle, we may be able to manage our man-made activities to avoid disturbing this protected animal.



Thanks, Pat, for your program and your work. We'll look for a return visit when your study is done!



## Forestry Field Day

Head to the Eggle Family Farm on Saturday, October 12, from 10:00 am—12:30 pm, for a Forestry Field Day. This field tour sponsored by the Wexford Conservation District will show how landowners, foresters and loggers can work together to accomplish stewardship goals and sustainable practices for northern hardwood, aspen and red pine management. You can watch a hands-on, interactive demonstration of timber marking for harvest and discover ways to enhance wildlife habitat with forest management activities. Don't forget to stop by CALC's information booth!

The Eggle Farm is located at 15885 County Line Road in Sherman Township. The tour is free, but please call (231) 775-7681, ext. 3 or email [Theresa.Williams@mi.nacdn.net](mailto:Theresa.Williams@mi.nacdn.net) by October 10<sup>th</sup> to register.



# Congratulations

Our congratulations and appreciation to Glenn and Berniece VerBrugge and Bill and Janine Rzepka, named philanthropists of the year by the Cadillac Area Community Foundation at their annual dinner on September 10th. CALC co-founder George Rock and his wife Vickie received this honor last year.

*We make a living by what we get.  
We make a life by what we give.*

~ Winston Churchill

## EarthCache on Waldeck Island

We expect more traffic on Waldeck Island trails now that geocachers Patrick and Barbara Darrigan have placed an EarthCache on the island.

Unlike the typical geocache which has a container at a specific longitude/latitude for people to find using a GPS, an EarthCache has no container to find, but instead tries to teach a geo-science lesson. In this case the lesson is about endorheic basins. Stoneledge Lake is an endorheic basin, meaning it has no inflow or outlet of water. Endorheic basins are found throughout the world and vary in size from small lakes to large bodies of water like the Caspian Sea.



With no specific container to find, geocachers will hike the trails to find information to answer geo-science questions, but won't need to leave the trails. One of the reasons the Darrigans chose to place the cache on Waldeck Island is because of the great trails and the abundance of wildlife. They tell EarthCachers to, "Have fun, hike the trails, view the blue herons and enjoy the beauty," and, "remember to Cache In; Trash Out."

Our thanks to Patrick and Barbara who placed the cache on Labor Day. This specific EarthCache may be found on the geocaching website ([www.geocaching.com](http://www.geocaching.com)) with cache number GC4KMYH. Go to <http://www.earthcache.org/to> learn more about EarthCaching.



*Love the trees until their leaves fall off,  
then encourage them to try again next year.*

~ Chad Sugg



## Speaking of Nature

Mark R. Tercek, author of *Nature's Fortune: How Business and Society Thrive by Investing in Nature*, explains why he wrote this book.

“Nature is the foundation of our well-being. It ought to come first. It’s what the most vulnerable people among us depend on most. I want people to begin to understand that a healthy natural world drives economic progress and human vitality. Nature is the asset on which our economics, our sustenance, our livelihoods and our ways of life depend—whether we live in a hut on the Serengeti or in a condo in Manhattan. Therefore, we need to invest in our natural capital—our lands and waters—to secure our economic future. That investment is essential, not a luxury....We need to start talking about the value of nature in new ways that make it relevant to more people.”

### CALC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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- Chris Schumacher, Corridor Marketing



### Mission Statement

*The Cadillac Area Land Conservancy protects ecologically significant, scenic, and farm lands for current and future generations and fosters an appreciation of the natural environment in Missaukee, Osceola, Wexford and northern Lake and Mason Counties.*



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