

Nature News

Quarterly Newsletter of the Cadillac Area Land Conservancy



Spring 2017



CALC Adds Another Preserve!

The Cadillac Area Land Conservancy has been given another important piece of property that is now open as a public nature preserve — the Kohn Family Nature Preserve. This 22 acre area includes 4,300 feet of the Manistee River shoreline. (The river is listed as a special, unique area in the Wexford County Master plan.) It's an unbroken natural area, a canoe resting place and a forested scenic backdrop for hikers using the North Country Scenic Trail. Not only scenic, the property is a natural habitat for water fowl and upland game birds such as ruffed grouse, as well as whitetail deer, black bear, squirrel, etc. Furthermore, the land abuts US Forest Service land which creates an even larger natural habitat area.

How did we secure this gem? It was bequeathed to us because the Kohn family loved the land and believed in preservation and protection. When the late Deborah Kohn, retired Traverse City school teacher, inherited family property in 2003, she activated plans put in place by her mother, Grace, before Grace's death at 95. Grace and her husband, Lloyd, owned a home in Mesick, a 160 acre farm northwest of Mesick (now protected from development by a CALC easement) and the oxbow in the Manistee River south of Buckley (our new preserve).

Deborah's dad loved the river property and she had pleasant childhood memories of being there with him. He came and got her when the dog found a raccoon nest in an old tree stump. He wanted her to see them and took photos so she would always remember it. The family treasured this property and wanted it to be kept in its natural condition for future generations to enjoy.



Deborah Kohn

In 2005 Deborah placed a CALC conservation easement on this river property. She had seen the farm directly across the river undergo extensive development with several home sites. As canoers paddle the Manistee River there is now that subdivision on one bank and the Kohn Family Nature Preserve with scenic banks covered with mature trees on the other. The 2005 easement protected the land from development while Deborah retained ownership. Upon her death, it was willed to CALC, who has opened it for you to enjoy.

You can help us take advantage of this beautiful gift—we will be looking for volunteers to place signs and keep an eye on the preserve. How about you?

(Exact location and directions to reach this preserve are on our webpage—<http://calc-landtrust.org>. Look under Public Preserves)





Get out there!

Spring is here! Shake off your winter funk and get out in the fresh air. This is a great time to visit one of our nature preserves. The birds are back and spring flowers are emerging.

Bob Hess sent us a report about the things he saw when visiting the Waldeck Island Nature Preserve last year looking for a suitable spot for Sandy Hansen's viewing platform. Excerpts below:

"Just after driving a stake to mark the spot, a bald eagle flew across the wetland and right over the newly marked site."

After the platform was complete, Bob said, "I saw a deer on the far shoreline in the water, belly-deep like a moose. I watched it feed on submerged plants for over an hour. I stayed 'til sunset and watched a brood of wood ducks swim below the platform, heard a marsh wren, plus other marsh birds plus woodland birds singing in the woods behind me. As I was leaving, a great blue heron caught my attention with its loud, raspy call."

After Bob and Tom Anderson mulched a new foot trail, they walked the main trail to remove downed trees and debris. "Laying in the middle of the trail was a freshly dropped, and in perfect condition, pure white tail feather of an adult bald eagle."

According to the Harvard Medical School's *Harvard Health Letter*, the benefits of being out-of-doors include:

- 1) Your vitamin D levels will go up
- 2) You'll get more exercise
- 3) You'll be happier
- 4) Your concentration will improve
- 5) You may heal faster

(http://www.health.harvard.edu/newsletter_article/a-prescription-for-better-health-go-alfresco)

So get out and enjoy the wonders of our natural world, sit and enjoy our two new benches and take a child with you if you can!

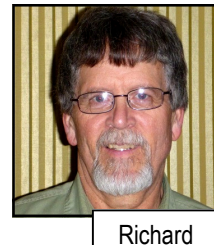
I am unboreable in the great outdoors.

~ P. J. O'Rourke

Thanks

Long time CALC board members Richard Harvey and Nathan Piwowarski have served their terms on the board; but, don't worry, they'll still be volunteering.

Richard is in charge of easement monitoring and Nathan helps with the legal duties. Thanks to both!



Richard



Nathan

CALC is always looking for board members willing to work hard and who care deeply about the land. If that's you, give us a call! (231)

Taxes got you down?

If you are age 70½ or older, you may now tell your IRA custodian to transfer any amount up to \$100,000* directly to CALC. This distribution would **not** be included in your taxable income, but could fulfill any required minimum distribution requirements. It would not produce an income tax deduction. This outright gift must come directly from your IRA custodian to CALC. Gifts may be made at any time in 2017 and in future years without expiration.



* Whoopee—if you contribute that much money we will put up a sign in your honor!

Lucky us!

Those of us who call Michigan home are lucky to live in a state which is fourth in the nation in the amount of forests we have.





Oaks are a popular tree species. Acorn production is an important food source for wildlife. Annual value of oak stumpage exceeds \$10 million. Oaks are also abundant and important landscape trees. So we're sharing this information from an article on Oak Wilt from an Ann Arbor land conservancy.



Oak Tree by John Ryles

*Great Oak
Acorn ripe
Squirrels harvest
For long
Winter nights*

GETTING AHEAD OF OAK WILT

by Allene Smith,
Land Steward, Legacy Land Conservancy

What is oak wilt?

Oak wilt is caused by fungus *Ceratocystis fagacearum* and is most lethal to trees in the red oak group. That brings six of Michigan's native oak species into the crosshairs: northern red oak (*Quercus rubra*), black oak (*Q. velutina*), Hill's oak (a.k.a. northern pin oak, *Q. Ellipsoidalis*), pin oak (*Q. palustris*), shingle oak (*Q. imbricaria*), and Shumard oak (*Q. shumardii*). I'm sure you can imagine that losing these species en masse would drastically change the communities we call home.

Oak wilt is often referenced as a new forest threat, but it was identified in Wisconsin circa 1940. Similar mortality patterns were recorded in Wisconsin and Minnesota as early as 1912. The disease has become more prevalent in the past 20 years, possibly due to changes in land use and forest management.

How oak wilt impacts trees

Once infected, trees wilt and die rapidly, sometimes within weeks. The most visible symptom is leaf scorching and defoliation. Infected trees often drop leaves while they are still green. The following season, fungal mats (known as pressure pads) develop under the surface of the bark. Cracks form and allow sap-feeding beetles access to the sweet, yeasty-smelling fungus beneath. These beetles deposit spores from their fungal frolic on the next oak they visit and the cycle starts anew. Once oak wilt claims one tree in an area, the disease can spread through connections in the trees' root systems called root grafts.

What can we do?

As with other forest management issues, prevention offers the biggest reward. The beetles that carry spores can only spread the disease to a wounded tree. Consequently, experts recommend avoiding pruning oaks just prior to bud opening to after leaf drop (roughly from April to October). If you must prune during the growing season, use wound paint. If you hire a professional tree service, look for one that is aware of oak wilt and doesn't use climbing spikes.

Remediation for oak wilt is costly and drastically disturbs the treated area, making prevention all the more attractive! Preventing infection through conscientious pruning and maintenance of storm-damaged trees has an impact beyond the individual trees you care for – it impacts the entire forest.

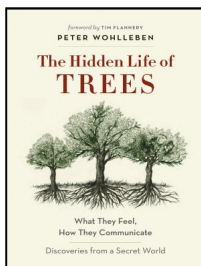
There are many other reasons a tree might be ailing, so proper diagnosis is paramount. If you think a tree near you might be infected with oak wilt, contact your local extension agent or a local forester.





Wood-Wide Web—A Book to enjoy

The Hidden Life of Trees: What They Feel, How They Communicate—Discoveries from a Secret World by Peter Wohlleben was a New York Times bestseller under our Christmas tree. Fred Sprague sent us this book review.



For those of us who have not had a biology course in over 50 years, this book brings us up to date on what science has discovered about trees. Rather than dry facts, we are taught through the delightful use of anthropomorphism—that is, traits of trees are presented in human terms like reaction to pain, communication, and relationships with parents. Beech trees are the leading characters, but oaks, birches, aspen, spruce, and firs all have roles.

Particularly interesting is the role of fungi which enables communication between tree roots that are separated from each other—which has been dubbed the “wood-wide web”.

After reading this book, a walk in the woods will never be the same again. At less than ten cents per page, every page is worth it.

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Thinking Spring

*I glanced out the window at the signs of spring.
The sky was almost blue,
the trees were almost budding,
the sun was almost bright.*

~ Millard Kaufman

*Spring is when you feel like whistling
even with a shoe full of slush.*

~ Doug Larson

April is a promise that May is bound to keep.

~ Hal Borland

*In the spring, at the end of the day,
you should smell like dirt.*

~ Margaret Atwood



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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