

# Nature News

Quarterly Newsletter of the Cadillac Area Land Conservancy



Summer 2017

## A Path Through “Bearadise”

In the 1990s the DNR and the Forest Service mapped the corridors of bear travel radiating out from the Mitchell Swamp. The map was based on a study of 126 bears over several years. CALC board member Tom Harris saw the need to protect these corridors, and for the past 20 years this protection has been a primary goal of CALC.

Although Tom retired from the board many years ago, we are excited to announce that he and his family have protected, with a conservation easement, a key link in the major bear corridor which runs south from the Mitchell Swamp.

The area where bears cross M55 is marked by signs for about 7 miles. The bears frequently cross the road near the center of this stretch where Sixteen Creek begins. The Harris easement protects this crossing from the edge of M55 south to 46 Road. It parallels Sixteen Creek and covers 135 acres including nine lots along the highway—which will never be developed. Within the 135 acre easement is a 4.27 acre building envelope which will concentrate any construction in a small area.

North of this area is federal land and then a bit farther north is a heavily used bear breeding ground owned by Joe Clugston. Joe and his family protected this land with a conservation easement 16 years ago.



Another noteworthy feature of the Harris easement is its mature trees. Punctuated by wetlands, the stately trees on the high ground give large portions of the property a park-like feeling. The easement protects them from being cut until dead or diseased. The Harris family has cared for this property for many years and they share an appreciation of its conservation values and its history which includes relics of an old logging camp, roads and railroads.

Many CALC members will remember our 2014 tour of the Harris property. Thank you to Tom, Marguerite, Chris, Jennifer and Brenten for their care and protection of this piece of “bearadise.”



Wonder who traveled this path? Yes, that's bear hair.



## 2,000 Acres—A Lot of Land!

2,000 is a lot of land; it's more than 3 square miles! With the addition of the Harris easement we have passed the 2000-acre mark.

Of course, this land isn't all in the same place. Nor are our 2,000 acres just any 2,000 acres. These acres have critical conservation values. They protect wildlife corridors, wetlands that form trout streams, scenic areas and animal habitat. What is really amazing is that all of that protection has been donated. Most of it has been donated with conservation easements — the landowner keeps ownership of the land but agrees that the conservation values will never be destroyed. It is important to note that property protected under a conservation easement is not open to the public. It is still private property.



Tom & Marguerite Harris helping CALC protect more than 2,000 acres

As part of our 2,000 acres, however, we do have four nature preserves that are open to the public— Waldeck Island Nature Preserve, the Oliver Family Nature Preserve, the Carl T. Johnson Nature Preserve, and the Kohn Family Nature Preserve. We invite you to visit.



A bear crossing the Harris easement

This 2,000 acre mark is a milestone and a monumental achievement from a dedicated group of property owners and conservation-minded volunteers. Would you like to help? Would you like to be a part of a group including wildlife experts and enthusiastic helpers? We can use board members. We can use work-bee volunteers. We can use easement donations. We can always use money. Check us out at [www.calc-landtrust.org](http://www.calc-landtrust.org).



*Everything good, everything magical happens between the months of June and August.*

~ Jenny Han



## Staying ahead of oak wilt

The Legacy Land Conservancy of Ann Arbor is fighting to stay ahead of oak wilt infections. They tell us that it's very important to sever shared roots before removing infected oaks. When an infected oak is cut down, surrounding healthy oaks who share roots with the infected tree take up the pathogen, spreading the disease faster. The best practice is to avoid working near oaks during warm weather when nicking a tree can spread the disease. For more details on their big project and their solution to a too-warm January/February, visit <http://legacylandconservancy.org/staying-ahead-of-oak-wilt/>



**Reminder: Warm temperatures mean it's time to stop pruning oaks!**







## News From Our Preserves



Take a trip to the Oliver Family Preserve in Harrietta and see the progress! Park your car in our nice new parking lot constructed by Ed Richards of E&S Construction and funded by the Hansen Family Foundation. Stroll the trail which overlooks water much of the way. Enjoy the fact that roots and stumps have been pulled to eliminate tripping hazards. Climb steps on both sides of the Slagle Creek tributary bridge for easier trail access. Pause to sit on the beautiful memorial bench donated by Ann Kahner.

With a good growing season the shrubs planted in the white tubes will continue to grow. The front of the preserve has been tilled and a variety of native grasses planted. In fall, the grasses will be mowed and native wildflowers planted. Tom Anderson and Bob Hess devised ingenious ways to get the planting done. Good job!

All of this has been done to give you a place to go for quiet and solitude, to commune with the natural world and to regenerate from the stresses of your daily life.



**To keep the trail open and free of growing roots that might trip people, we are looking for a volunteer to weed-whack the trail every few weeks during the growing season. The conservancy has a sturdy weed-whacker. Please call (231) 876-0351 if you can help out!**

This preserve is a small gem that has now become "user friendly." Visit often to take advantage of this quiet woods-and-water oasis.



---

The Carl T. Johnson Nature Preserve, on 33 Road just past Benson Road, has undergone its selective timber cut and we are now in the second phase of harvesting the tops and some trees left behind. This will give us a healthier forest in the long run, but will curtail access until it's completed.

**For safety reasons the public should not enter the property until late spring 2018.**

For those of you looking forward to using the property, we do apologize, but we know it will be worth the wait. Cherry Grove resident, Steve Kalisz of Old School Forestry, is supervising the top-wood removal. Later in 2018, Steve has also volunteered to turn the main skid trails into an educational hiking path, with signage explaining ecological and wildlife items of interest. This long term process will, in the end, truly make it a sustainable woodland for all to enjoy.



The beautiful park bench donated by Muriel Stehouwer will eventually be placed on the Carl T. Johnson Preserve, but until the Johnson Preserve is safe to enter, the bench has found a beautiful resting place on the causeway overlooking Stone Ledge Lake on the Waldeck Island Preserve.



## Happy Trails

We wish the best to Max Yancho who has sadly resigned his seat on the CALC board to head to Vancouver to start a graduate program. We appreciate all he's done.

---

## Geocaching CALC Style

Geocaching is a great way to explore our preserves. Several geocaches can be found on Waldeck Island and the Oliver Family Preserve.

Geocaching is an outdoor treasure hunt that uses GPS-enabled devices. You use GPS coordinates to navigate to a specific location posted on a geocaching website. Once there, if you search carefully, you will find a geocache container. It may contain some trinket or a log to sign showing you found the cache. If you take a trinket, it's nice if you leave something for the next person to find.

Geocaching is a great way to get out and enjoy the out-of-doors. Take a kid or two with you!

For more information Google "geocaching."

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Larry Copley, *Chair*  
Steve Cunningham, *Vice-Chair*  
Margo Copley, *Secretary*  
Fred Sprague, *Treasurer*  
Tom Anderson  
Rose Denny  
Tasha Lapinski  
Marco Menezes

### VOLUNTEER POSITIONS

Pete Eliot, *finance*  
Richard Harvey, *monitoring*  
Bob Hess, *preserves*  
Vicki Long, *website*  
Pat Paveglio, *newsletter*  
Nathan Piwowarski, *legal*

## *Thank you!*

Dave McCurdy of Lakeside Title for two title searches at discounted rates.

Our financial advisor Jon LeBaron of LeBaron Financial Group of Reed City for reduced management fees.

Ed Richards of E&S Construction for the great work on the parking lot and steps on the Oliver Family Preserve.

*The great use of life is to spend it  
for something that will outlast it.*

~William James

### *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.*