

Nature News

Quarterly Newsletter of the Cadillac Area Land Conservancy



Summer 2020



Celebrating Our 25th!



Over the last 25 years CALC has been fortunate to have had many dedicated, enlightened, and hardworking board members whose volunteer contributions of time, energy, and money have sustained CALC and created the organization that exists today. Neither of its founders, George Rock nor Tom Rensberry, could have imagined that CALC would be so successful 25 years later.

How it all began ~ by Tom Rensberry



George Rock

In 1995, two stubborn (Tom's words not ours!) Cadillac men wanted to put their properties into a conservation easement to protect them from future development. They needed a land conservancy to accomplish this. The only existing Michigan conservancies were in Traverse City and Petoskey or at the national level. None of them were interested in these properties unless their owners were willing to pay a large amount of money to cover all the costs associated with placing them in a conservancy, as well as all future expenses for auditing and managing the properties.



Tom Rensberry

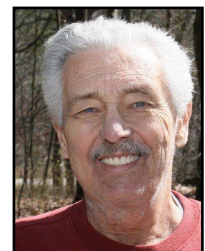
Fate stepped in when Tom Rensberry had a chance encounter with George Rock. The men had not known each other previously, but by the end of their conversation they had decided to start their own conservancy in Wexford County which would be known as the Cadillac Area Land Conservancy (CALC).

The three counties they proposed to service were not nearly as affluent as the counties serviced by the Traverse City and Petoskey conservancies. Our counties had miles of public lands almost bordering city limits. Why should people be concerned about "open spaces" and putting some limitations on development? It was a hard sell, but they were committed to the effort.

The two men were fortunate to find a knowledgeable attorney in Petoskey, who also represented the Petoskey Conservancy. He agreed to get them started and assist along the way at no fee.

Tom and George worked diligently to set up CALC, but George was the driving force and became "Mr. CALC." He remained active in CALC until his age curtailed his involvement.

CALC's first board of directors had seven members including George Rock, Tom Rensberry, and Richard Loughmiller. They were all dedicated and understood the need to protect open spaces that could not be developed. Richard went on to be CALC's president for a number of years and, upon his death, left a sizable endowment to CALC. We owe them a lot.



Richard Loughmiller

❖ Protecting Land in Wexford, Missaukee, Osceola and northern Lake and Mason Counties ❖



Sold!

We are pleased to announce that the Kohn Farm has been sold. The proceeds from this sale will be invested and used to further our mission. The farm is protected by a CALC easement.



The farm was one of three pieces of property bequeathed to us by Deborah Kohn, a longtime CALC supporter. She left us a home in Traverse, a 160-acre farm northwest of Mesick and a 22-acre piece of property with over 4,000 feet of Manistee River shoreline, now a CALC nature preserve. The

Kohn family loved the land and believed in preserving and protecting it. We're so glad they did.

Special thanks to Fred Sprague for all his hard work related to the sale and all the tasks related to the Kohn gifts.

Getting Out; Staying Safe

Recreate responsibly by following these simple guidelines:

- Know Before you Go — Check the status of the place you want to visit. If it is closed, don't go. If it's crowded, have a backup plan.
- Plan Ahead — Prepare for facilities to be closed, pack lunch and bring essentials like hand sanitizer and a face covering.
- Explore Locally — Limit long-distance travel and make use of local parks, trails and public spaces (like the CALC nature preserves). Be mindful of your impact on the places you visit.
- Practice Physical Distancing — Keep your group size small. Be prepared to cover your nose and mouth and give others space. If you are sick, stay home.
- Play It Safe — Slow down and choose lower-risk activities to reduce your risk of injury. Search and rescue operations and health care resources are both strained.
- Leave No Trace — Respect public lands and waters, as well as Native and local communities. Take all your garbage with you.
- Build an Inclusive Outdoors — Be an active part of making the outdoors safe and welcoming for all identities and abilities

(And have fun!)

Beetles Call for Change

Easements are permanent; they last as long as the land. An easement property typically has a forest management plan that must be followed. The new owner of the Kohn farm requested a modification to the forest management plan on his property, moving a red pine harvest date from 2025 to 2020.

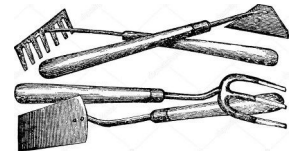
Why would we consider accepting a modification? Because bark beetles are infesting his red pines and that could cause significant timber loss.



How did we decide whether or not to accept the modification? Two board members and the CALC forester met with the owner and his forester. After observing the tree damage, and with our forester's agreement to the change, a recommendation was made to the board to accept an addendum to the forest management plan. A requirement to do another review in 5 years was added. The board agreed to the addendum; the change was allowed.

A reasonable request and board action allowed a modification to the forest management plan of the easement. This is CALC in action protecting the land and its resources.

Have Tools; Can't Work



The Hansen Family Foundation has been generous once again and given us the funds to buy tools for our work day volunteers - shovels, rakes, saws and the like. Of course under present conditions no work days are scheduled. Thanks to Tom Anderson for purchasing the tools we'll need when we are able to get back to work. Stay tuned.



Bees do have a smell, you know, and if they don't they should, for their feet are dusted with spices from a million flowers.

~ Ray Bradbury



Dave Foley's "Under the Radar" Hikes ~ excerpted from a Cadillac News article

In the last couple months, I don't think I've ever seen so many folks running, biking and walking. Apparently it took a pandemic to get people outdoors. When you think of getting out for some exercise in the Cadillac area, the favorite places are the White Pine Trail, the paths at the Carl T. Johnson Outdoor Center, the Clam River Greenway, and the Keith McKellop Walkway. All are excellent choices, but these venues are people magnets. During peak use times on these paths, it sometimes becomes hard to maintain the prescribed 6-feet of separation. In the spirit of promoting Robert Frost's option of going down "The Road Not Taken," I'd like to describe three "under the radar" hikes that are close by, but not commonly visited. The three trails are on nature preserves owned by (CALC) and are open to the public.



Waldeck Island Nature Preserve is located at the northwest end of Stone Ledge Lake; the entrance is just off 43 Road. Here you'll find a parking area and signage identifying the preserve. As you leave the parking lot on the trail, you'll see the Hansen Viewing Platform which overlooks a large pond. In the spring and fall this wetland is a stopping off place for migrating waterfowl and a seasonal home for blue herons, mallards and Canada geese. During peak color, I've come here to photograph the brilliant red and yellow foliage as the setting sun lights up the maple and birch trees.

Much of the hike follows a loop around the island which is heavily wooded offering plenty of shade and some energetic mosquitoes in the summer. The Conservancy has provided a couple benches for those wishing a take a break and enjoy views of Stone Ledge Lake. The preserve encompasses 11 acres and the trail length is just under ¾ miles.

Carl T. Johnson Nature Preserve, once owned by renowned bear hunter and founder of the Michigan Conservation Foundation, this 40 acres was bequeathed by Carl to the Cadillac Rotary Club who gave it to CALC. The property, located off 33rd Road near Benson Road, has a parking lot with another entrance off Joelle Drive. Over the last two years, volunteers from CALC and Troop 125 have created a mile of wood chipped path. Along the route are several benches as well signage identifying trees and explaining conservation practices. Much of this effort was undertaken by Will Gullekson as part of his Boy Scout Eagle project. This is still a work in progress as plantings of native vegetations are being added to fill in sections that used to be meadow and farmland. On hot days, you'll find plenty of shade beneath the forest of hardwoods that line the trail.



Oliver Family Nature Preserve was given to CALC by Bud (Floyd) and Ann Oliver in 2014. The 15 acre parcel of land is just east of the village of Harrietta on 30 ¼ Road (Boon Road). As you arrive, you'll notice dozens of white tubes sticking up in the meadow protecting wild flowers, native grasses and other plants, planted by Bob Hess, Tom Anderson, Dan Valley and other volunteers. From the parking lot there's a half-mile of marked trail reinforced with erosion barriers and steps built by Mark Johnson's Career Tech Center students in his agri-science and natural resources class.

The trail skirts wetlands as it passes through a stand of red pine and meadow lands. Flowing through the preserve is a stretch of Slagle Creek, home to brook trout. If you leave the trail at the north end and cross the railroad tracks you'll enter a 78-acre parcel of the Huron Manistee National Forest which has very limited public access. The Oliver Preserve allows the public to explore this tract of land.

Under the leadership of Larry Copley, who was the chair until 2019 and current chair Steve Cunningham, CALC, with regular work bees continues to make improvements to these three properties.

Although these trails may not provide the challenges serious hikers find on the Manistee River Trail or walking stretches of the North Country Trail, the Oliver, Johnson and Waldeck properties offer a close-to-home walk that's ideal when time is limited and you just need to get away to savor the solitude of the forest.



Muriel Stehouwer

Muriel, one of our treasured donors, has left us. Muriel was an amazing woman who spent her life giving to others. Visit Waldeck Island and sit on the

bench she donated as you reflect on her generous nature.

The plaque on the bench reads: Dr. Ed & Muriel Stehouwer.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Steve Cunningham, *Chair*
Tom Anderson, *Co-chair*
Marco Menezes, *Secretary*
Fred Sprague, *Treasurer*
Cyndy Foley
Dave Foley
Chris Gentry
Sam Hogg
Rose Denny
Marty Williams

VOLUNTEER POSITIONS

Sandy, *bookkeeping*
Brandon Bensel, *website consultant*
Pete Eliot, *finance*
Richard Harvey, *monitoring*
Bob Hess, *preserves*
Pat Paveglio, *newsletter*
Eric Zeitz, *website*

Summer afternoon—summer afternoon; to me those have always been the two most beautiful words in the English language.
~ Henry James

Tax Savings in 2020

The CARES Act allows those who would not normally itemize their taxes to deduct up to \$300 in non-profit contributions from their 2020 taxes “above the line.” This means that if you make a \$300 donation in 2020 you will be able to deduct it from your adjusted gross income even if you don’t itemize. You will still get the Standard Deduction. As always check with your tax preparer for reliable tax information.

P.S. We would, of course, be delighted to accept your donation. ☺

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.