

Nature News

Quarterly Newsletter of the Cadillac Area Land Conservancy



Winter 2013

Fullfilling Our Mission

CALC's 2012 Annual Report - by Larry Copley, CALC Chair

Many times our newsletter celebrates successes and fun times had by all. Yet our mission statement is never far from sight. Here at CALC we always try to keep it in the forefront.

Although we have not added any new easements or preserves lately, it is not due to lack of effort—and we have the tired band of volunteers to prove it! Yet our never-ending work is rewarding. We are optimistic that we will find more of those very special landowners who can understand the importance of protecting their land and are willing to follow the easement process. We will be there to help when they come forward.

If you look back through the *Cadillac News* during the last 8 years, you'll remember that the Wexford County Landfill had reports of chemical seepage even though they used cell liners that, at the time, met government standards. They thought they were protecting the environment with what was state of the art at the time.



Making a comeback after DDT

If you go back further in our region's history, you find that DDT was sprayed profusely in a misguided attempt to help farmers be more productive. Both incidents show that well-meaning people tried to help the environment with the best tools they had at the time.

Conservancies also began with invigorated volunteers who did everything they were told to do to preserve land. Then the Land Trust Alliance (LTA) realized that these well-meaning groups needed guidance if the conservancy movement was going to maintain itself and make easements enforceable. Our job became more complex. Conservancies became increasingly aware of all the legal problems that might occur. Consequently, model easement language became much more definitive and lengthy. The model evolved into a document that is clearer and more proactive which helps both the conservancy and landowners understand their responsibilities and rights.

The Cadillac Area Land Conservancy is now well along the way to catching up with today's standards. The LTA accreditation process we have mentioned in past newsletters involves our volunteers going step-by-step through many pages of standards and making sure our documents meet those standards. At this point we meet the standards that allow us to purchase liability insurance being offered through an arm of LTA. This insurance will allow us to protect our easements in perpetuity. Thanks to people like you, we have enough funds on hand to afford this very important insurance.

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Fullfilling Our Mission...cont.

As we mentioned in our endowment request, some conservancy standards say we should have \$10,000 in reserve for each easement or preserve we hold. Currently we have only \$3,000 for each of our 17 properties, just reaching the minimum acceptable for LTA accreditation. These funds were accrued thanks to people like you who so generously support us and to our volunteers who save us many dollars in labor.

We have been working diligently to protect more land. Although the LTA standards make the paper-work more complex, we continue to provide guidance to prospective easement and preserve donors.

In November, we had one easement close to consummation and were disappointed when the landowners decided they wanted to be able to develop the property's mineral rights in an unrestricted manner. This presented a quandary to our board. Since our mission is to protect beautiful land, how could we in good conscience allow unrestricted mineral development? Sadly, after many volunteer hours working with the landowner, the easement did not come to fruition, but the door is always open.

We have another potential easement where we are unable to locate the owner of the mineral rights and one where we are working with the owner of the mineral rights to hammer out an agreement. We have had two prospects in Mason County with large tracts owned by multiple owners. After investing several hours educating the parties, one is now pending and we have hope for the other. We were also presented options for a small preserve near Harrietta and one near Manton. Both were lovely properties. One, however, was far removed from what our standards say CALC will accept and the other was prohibitively behind on their property taxes. These are the kind of heartbreaks we've experienced in 2012.

We are not giving up and we know you won't give up on us either. If a batter with a .333 batting average hits 1/3 of the time, they are considered a star. We think a landowner considering an easement is a star. We will work with them and when that special one comes along and makes an easement, the world will be a better place for all of us.



Dick Loughmiller

In The News

Hope you saw the very nice article, "Saving the Land," in the December 28th issue of the *Cadillac News* about our very own Dick Loughmiller

and his role in CALC. The legacy trust he established last spring will help insure CALC's future.

"We have an amazing environment in northern Michigan," said Loughmiller. "I want to keep it that way for my children, grandchildren and future generations to enjoy." We couldn't agree more!

Good News

The Land Trust Alliance reports that the enhanced tax incentive for conservation easements was renewed for 2012 and 2013 in the bill passed to avoid the 'fiscal cliff.'

More good news: the charitable deduction has been left largely intact with some limits for higher-income donors.

Congress still has many budget and tax battles ahead, but land trust leaders will continue to work to build economically vibrant communities that are healthy places to live, work and play.





**It's time for our favorite activity of the year—
acknowledging your generous financial support.
Look for Cadillac Area Community Foundation donor
acknowledgements in the Spring newsletter**

GUARDIAN \$1,000 +

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Hansen Family Foundation
JoAnn Gulyas Trust

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PROTECTOR \$250 - \$499

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Doug Nelson
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Don and Anita Samardich
Chris Schumacher
John and Dana Ten Elshof



Chris Schumacher and friend

Tracking Martens

Wildlife biologist Chris Schumacher spoke to a full house at the annual meeting. Chris has been tracking the elusive Pine Marten (*Martes americana*) for the Little River Band of Ottawa Indians.

The Pine Marten was once a resident of Michigan, but by the late 1920s logging and trapping had nearly eliminated this small weasel. In 1985, as part of restoration efforts, 40 martens from Canada



were released in the state forests of northern Michigan. Chris says the animals in the Manistee National Forest seem to be healthy, but they don't seem to be expanding their territory, possibly because of the lack of connecting habitat – those wildlife corridors that CALC tries so hard to protect. The very cautious martens seem to avoid traveling through open lands. For the Ottawa Indians, the marten is related to the health of the forest and the health of its people.

During the business meeting retiring CALC board members Steve Cunningham, Mary Newhouse and Dave Smith were recognized for their years of service on the CALC board. Dave, missing from the photo, was unable to attend the event.



Steve Cunningham and Mary Newhouse

CALC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- **Larry Copley, Chair**
- **Fred Sprague, Vice Chair**
- **Margo Copley, Secretary**
- **Lindsey Hall, Treasurer**
- **Richard Harvey**
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OTHER VOLUNTEERS

- **Garth Aslakson, Easement Baselines**
- **Bob Hess, Easement Baselines**
- **Vicki Long, Website**
- **Pat Paveglio, Newsletter**
- **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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