

Nature News



Quarterly Newsletter from the Cadillac Area Land Conservancy

Winter 2009

New Year • New Direction • New Chair



After 3 years on the Board of Directors, I was elected by members at the Annual Meeting in October to take over the leadership of the CALC Board of Directors. Dick Bensal who served in that capacity for the last 3 years had reached the end of his term. Dick had brought progress to the Conservancy during

his term by working closely with George Rock on the donation of Waldeck Island as the first Preserve ownership for CALC. I would like to thank Dick for his years of commitment to CALC, expanding membership and awareness of land preservation in our local communities.

New directions for myself in the old year brought retirement from a 30 year career with the Wildlife Division of the DNR. With that I now have time to increase my effort with CALC. I look forward to serving with the new co-chair Steve Cunningham to expand land conservation awareness in our service area of Lake, Osceola, Missaukee and Wexford counties.

Steve brings six years of experience on the CALC board as well as a long career with DEQ protecting the state's natural resources.

A parting gift from a project I worked on while at the DNR, is the acquisition of 294 acres north of Division St. on the west side of Cadillac that will become state land (thus protected from development) and included as part of the Mitchell State Park boundary. This land purchase with Natural Resources Trust Fund dollars will protect critical wetland and wildlife habitat along busy travel corridors on the edge of town. Hats off to co-workers at the DNR & CALC member Bob Garner who sits on the Trust Fund committee for bringing state dollars into our backyards for habitat preservation.

CALC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

- Ruthann French, Chairperson
- Steve Cunningham, Vice-chair
- Margo Copley, Secretary
- Della Bednarick, Treasurer
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OTHER COMMITTEE VOLUNTEERS

- Sue Conradson, Clam River Greenway
- John Grix, Endowment Fund
- Fred Sprague, Conservation Easements
- Pat Paveglio, Newsletter
- Brandon Bensel, Website

CALC WISH LIST

CALC is in need of the following:

- Portable Hard Drive
- Digital Camera
- GPS Receiver and extension to transfer data to a PC

Can you help?



FOREVER WILD

~ by Fred Sprague

Forever Wild is the title of the beautiful photo album of the Adirondacks first published in 1966 by Elliot Porter. He took the title from an act of the New York legislature in 1885, declaring that those lands “shall be forever kept as wild forest lands.” These are moving words, and the law was a great victory. Are we so naive as to actually believe it?

In February of 2000, Jack Ward Thomas, retired chief of the Forest Service, repeated a speech that he had given 15 years earlier, at the creation of the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation. In it he said, again, “There are few enough victories for those who are advocates for wildlife and wild places, and absolutely none that are final... Each generation must chose, and many times.”

Dream with me about 100 years from now. There is a new form of transportation. Like cars, it runs on wide strips of pavement. Like chairlifts, people and groups ride in their own gondolas, which they don't own but just use for the trip. Like airplanes, these gondolas travel around 400 miles per hour. Like taxi cabs, they do not run on a schedule, but are available as individuals need them. Like trains, they travel from one station to another, so from Cadillac's civic arena to the convention center in Grand Rapids takes 7 minutes and 12 seconds and costs \$2.00 per person. Vail, Colorado takes a bit over 2 hours.

Now, think about the new road that this would run on, since the expressway has to be kept for cars, which are still used for regular travel. Remember when that expressway replaced Mackinaw Trail? It cut right through wild areas, where hunting blinds and tree stands could still be seen in the median. In 100 years all available land will be filled with houses, but there might be this tempting wildlife corridor filled with trout, grouse, turkeys, rabbits, deer, and bears—none of which votes or pays taxes. And CALC will be in court fighting uphill legal battles to protect those wildlife corridors if easements are violated.

But the future of the land conservancy is not just the law. It is also the people. Protecting nature is not necessarily a rational impulse. If it were, corporations would do so without being forced. Yet for some people--those who give of their time and money to help support organizations like CALC--there is no other choice. They believe that protecting the "wildness" of undeveloped places is one of the most rational choices people can make.

Love of a place and the desire to protect it transcends time and culture. The song "Spencil Hill" was written by Michael Considine, who left Ireland for the United States during the famine, leaving his sweetheart behind. When he realized he was dying, without having earned enough money to bring her across the ocean to marry, he wrote a poem to her that became the folk song now known worldwide. The melody is haunting and wistful even as it is frolicking and gay.

*Last night as I lay dreaming, of pleasant days gone by
My mind be'en bent on wandering, to Erin's isle I did fly,
I stepped on board a vision and sailed out with a will,
'Till next I came to anchor at the Cross of Spencil Hill*

*Enchanted by the novelty, delighted with the scenes,
Where in my early childhood I often times have been,
I thought I heard a murmur, I think I hear it still,
'Tis that little stream of water at the Cross of Spencil Hill.*

Once a thriving settlement with a church and the site of a great horse fair, today Spencil Hill (*Cnoc Fuar Choile*--the hill of the cold wood) is just a cross roads with some abandoned buildings. Yet Michael Considine's love for his homeland has endured to the present because it resonates in everyone. It is this same feeling that keeps all of us in CALC going.



CALC Tax Deductible Gift

~ by Mary Bellows

Please consider naming the conservancy as your choice for memorial contributions. This is a meaningful way to pay tribute to the memory of a deceased relative or friend, to honor a birthday, anniversary, retirement or other special occasion. It provides a lasting memorial in the form of land preserved as open space for future generations to enjoy.

These donations will allow the conservancy to maintain and protect their precious easements in Wexford, Osceola and Missaukee Counties.

To receive a donor card contact CALC at 124 ½ N. Mitchell, Ste 115, Cadillac, MI 49601, call (213) 775-3631 or contact your local funeral home.

CALC Board Works With LTA

The CALC Board has begun a Guided Organizational Assessment Process with the Land Trust Alliance (LTA). With the oversight of Mary Kay O'Donnell, we hope to develop a strategic plan for the growth of CALC. This process is requiring additional time for volunteer board members, but we are committed to this process of assessment and growth. In addition to lots of paperwork, we had a day long retreat in January to develop working objectives for improved operations. LTA will provide a summary report with recommendations for directors, members, and volunteers. We look forward to developing SMART (Specific/Measurable/Achievable/Relevant/Time-bound) objectives.

Visit our website at www.calc-landtrust.org to see updates of our progress.

Students Visit CALC Nature Preserve

~ by George Rock, Activities Director



On a Wednesday in October, students from the Agriscience class at the ISD Career Tech Center visited our Waldeck Island Nature Preserve.

The students retrieved the 8 wood duck houses set around the island. They will be refurbished and installed again next spring. It was

interesting to see the number of bird boxes that had pecking marks around the entrance holes. They are being used!

The busy students also planted 25 white pine trees and picked up trail



Welcome, Mark!

Mark Johnson, the new AgriScience teacher at the ISD, is working with students on Waldeck Island. (see article above)

With a fisheries & wildlife degree from MSU, Mark worked with the Conservation Resource Alliance, where he managed grant driven habitat improvement projects on northwest Michigan rivers and streams. Mark brings with him a passion for the outdoors and outdoor education, and a long list of professional contacts.

During the balance of school year, Mark's program will include units of study in forestry, fisheries, soils and more. "I will be working hard to bring a good balance of classroom activities and hands-on training to the students every day and to impart my own enthusiasm for careers in this field" says Johnson. "Helping out on the island is just one way we can plug into the resource and get the students involved."

Mark lives in Cadillac with his wife and two daughters. He enjoys hunting, fishing, and woodworking.



Thank You! Thanks to everyone who donated so generously in 2008.* Our donors are...

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* *Donations received after the end of the year will be noted in the next newsletter.*

Support this newsletter!

If you have not yet made a donation, but would like to be informed of current Conservancy issues and events, please consider a membership for just \$25 a year. Your help would be greatly appreciated!



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