

Nature News



Quarterly Newsletter from the Cadillac Area Land Conservancy

Winter 2011

The Snowshoe Express

It's wintertime—time to get out the sleds, the skis, and the SNOWSHOES! This issue is devoted to snowshoeing in a very special place—Waldeck Island, our very own 14-acre nature preserve in Stone Ledge Lake. This beautiful property was given to us by George and Vickie Rock. It's open to the public for hiking, bird watching, nature observation and, of course, snowshoeing. Strap on your shoes and come on out!

See next page for directions to Waldeck Island



The Joys of a Winter Walk

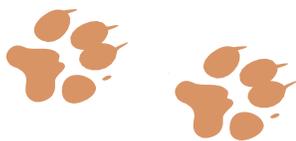
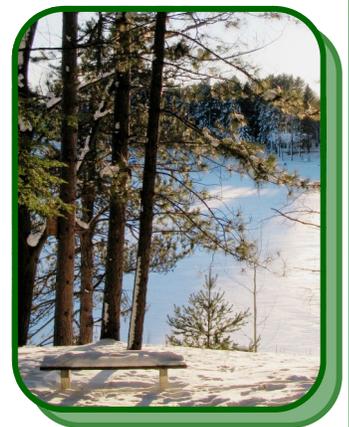
by Ruthann French

It was a cold, blustery January morning when we headed out for a hike on Waldeck Island. Six inches of fresh powder made ideal snowshoeing conditions. There was a good packed-snow base to support the shoes and the depths were ideal for cross-country winter travel. I strapped on my old snowshoes and headed out. As we crossed the causeway leading to the island, we were struck by the beauty of the snow-laden conifers guarding the entrance to the island. We made our way across the trackless landscape with the west wind swirling snow from the forest cover at our backs. We walked a short distance to the east side of the island and down to the frozen lake shore. We stood and watched a fisherman on the lake ice. Then we tucked ourselves back into the concealing trees, grateful for this island donated by the Rock family.

As we continued our trek up the Hemlock ridge to a snow covered bench, I paused at a scenic overlook of Stone Ledge Lake. We continued around the outer trail stopping to look north across the frozen bayou marsh where in a few short months the peepers and wood frogs will come alive in their shrill spring choruses. In the winter silence we proceeded on the snowshoes that made our walk over fallen limbs and buried stumps much easier.

Moving past a brushy thicket we realized we were not the only ones on the island that snowy day. A set of fresh fox tracks crossed the trail ahead of us.

Mr. Fox was probably looking for a meal earlier in the morning. We completed the loop trail, spotting the tracks where we'd entered a short time earlier. We left the island with a new appreciation for winter walks on snowshoes and our Waldeck Island Nature Preserve.



Protecting Land in Wexford, Missaukee, Osceola and Lake Counties





Snowshoes

by Larry Copley



Viking snowshoes, a gift from the Rocks, were made in Cadillac.

Northwest Michigan provides some of the best terrain for people of all skill levels to enjoy the silent sport known as snowshoeing. For those of us who love experiencing the beauty and serenity of hiking in fresh fallen snow, leaving the noisy motorized world far behind, winter provides an adventurous treat. Snowshoes originated in Asia between 4000 and 6000 B.C. However, in North America we borrowed the snowshoe from Native Americans to allow for fur trade during the deep snow months. Without snowshoes, both Native Americans and European settlers would have been imprisoned in their wigwams and cabins several months of the year in our snowy northern climes.

To maximize your snowshoeing enjoyment use the right sized and shaped snowshoe. Size depends on your gender, weight, and physical condition. The size of the shoe should be the smallest that will support your weight on top of the snow.

The shape depends on snow conditions and where you intend to travel.

- Bear paws are oval in shape and used in thick woods and hilly areas.
- The popular Michigan or Algonquin snowshoe is tear-drop shaped with a narrow tail and upturned toe for floating over our “lake effect” snow. It’s the most versatile—good on trails or in the open woods.
- The Ojibway has an outer frame of two long pieces fastened in an upturned point and a long tail for traveling long distances in open country.
- The modern aluminum snowshoes with synthetic decking are popular and easy to care for but don’t seem to have the aesthetic appeal of the traditional wooden snowshoes.



Whichever style you choose, we hope you get out to Waldeck Island and experience the beauty of a winter’s day. Your heart will thank you for the exercise as well as the peace and quiet!

Getting To Waldeck Island

Waldeck Island Nature Preserve is located north of East 50 Road between M-115 and South 43 Road. The entrance is off South 43 Road on Fredrich Strausse Court. You can park in the cul-de-sac. Waldeck is an island, but you won’t need your ice skates. There’s a causeway leading to the island.



Need a map? Search for Stone Ledge Lake, Cadillac, Michigan on Google Maps.

In every walk with nature one receives far more than he seeks.

~ John Muir





Ties To the Land - Coming March 19!

CALC is presenting the highly acclaimed *Ties To the Land* program thanks to funds from our ACE grant. The two-part program from Oregon State University provides the tools and resources to help land owners make the decisions necessary to pass their land from one generation to the next. It's been given throughout the nation and has helped thousands of families achieve multi-generational stability for their land. For more information call Ruthann at (231) 775-7084.



SESSION 1: Saturday, March 19 – 12:00 noon - 4:30 p.m.

Where: **Johnson Hunting & Fishing Center** (across from Mitchell State Park on M-115)

Cost: **\$50 per family includes materials and fees for both sessions**

Register: Call (231) 775-7084 by March 7 to register

SESSION 2: Will be held mid-April; details TBA

Foundation Donors Ensure the Future

These generous people made donations to CALC's endowment fund at the Cadillac Area Community Foundation in 2010. The endowment provides funds for the future protection of our easements.

If you would like to help protect the land and enjoy the tax benefits of foundation giving, contact the Cadillac Area Community Foundation at 201 North Mitchell Street, Suite 101, Cadillac; phone (231) 775-9911, or visit their website at www.cadillacfoundation.org.

Thanks to these families and businesses:

- Anonymous
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- Arthur Stenman
- Glenn Verbrugge
- Richard Westmaas
- Wexford County Herbal Society
- Deloris Williams





More Member Donations

We have received more donations since our last newsletter. Thank you—we would not exist without you! Donations may be sent to the Cadillac Area Land Conservancy, 124 ½ North Mitchell Street, Suite 115, Cadillac, MI 49601. You can also donate online at www.calc-landtrust.org



Stewards (\$500 +)

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- Mike & Leslie Pratt
- Deanna Pring
- Kari Shankland
- Alan & Jolyn Stockwell
- Wexford County Herbal Society

Protectionists (\$100-\$499)

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- Lake State Forest Consultants
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