

# Nature News

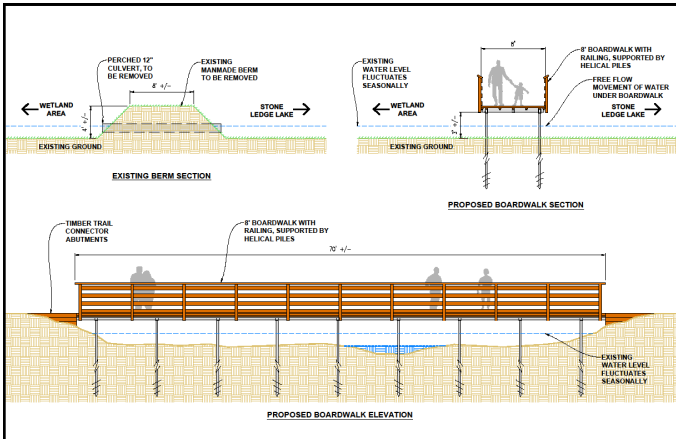
Newsletter of the Cadillac Area Land Conservancy



Fall 2023

## Waldeck Island Preserve Update

As many readers know, in early 2022 Michigan DNR awarded a grant to the Cadillac Area Land Conservancy that will enhance fisheries habitat and public access at our Waldeck Island Preserve. The Stone Ledge Lake Fisheries Restoration Project will remove the earthen berm currently separating the lake from the adjoining wetland. This will restore the natural free-flowing hydrologic connection between the wetland and lake. Public access for hiking will be improved by the replacement of the berm with a modern boardwalk between the preserve entry area and the island.



While it was hoped for this project to be well underway at this time delays were encountered that necessitated the need for project bids to be resubmitted. The timeline for the project now is to have the excavation performed this fall, materials for the walkway to be secured over the winter, and final construction to take place as early in the spring of 2024 as weather permits.



CADILLAC AREA  
Land Conservancy

## 2023 ANNUAL MEETING WITH GUEST SPEAKER

Sunday, October 8th @ 2:30 p.m.

### GUEST SPEAKER RON RADEMACHER

Date: Sunday, October 8, 2023

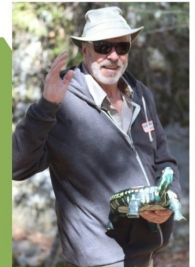
Time: 2:30 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Cost: No fee to attend - Public Welcome!

Location: Carl T. Johnson Hunting and Fishing Center  
6087 M-115, Cadillac, MI 49601  
North of canal on M-115 with plenty of parking

[www.calc-landtrust.org](http://www.calc-landtrust.org) to find out more!

RSVP to [calc@calc-landtrust.org](mailto:calc@calc-landtrust.org) or by calling 231-775 3631.



## Kohn Family Nature Preserve Timber Cut Notice

Sometime in September CALC will perform a clear-cut on 9.3 acres of the Kohn Preserve. CALC's Forest Management Plan specifies this work to encourage strong regeneration and new growth, primarily Aspen, to promote better wildlife habitat as well as reduce unwanted species in the area.

The Kohn Preserve is located on the Manistee River and surrounded by state land. It is harder to travel to than our other preserves. Located north of Mesick on 12 Road. Visitors can combine an excursion with a hike on the North Country Trail which goes by the state gate marking the entrance to the preserve. Check out the CALC website for detailed directions.

Just be cautious during September as there may be forestry equipment on site.



## Volunteers make it happen!

Besides volunteer board members who provide governance, policy and procedure oversight there are many volunteers who roll up their sleeves and get things done on CALC preserves.

Many thanks to:

**Dan Valley** for mowing trails and parking lot at Johnson Preserve

**Denny O'Hara, Fred Sprague, Paul Drysdale** for clearing the trail at Kohn Preserve

**Richard Harvey, Sam Hogg, Dave & Jan Guest, and Kerry Sprigg** for many jobs at the Oliver Preserve

**Vicki and Matt Long** for great work at Waldeck Island Preserve

And others at the work bee on June 3 - **Dave Zandstra, Pete Swearengen, Shari Spoelman, Gary VanHouten, Bob Weir, Dick Bense, Rosemary Rokita, Larry Waldo, Eric Seguin**

Also, there are a number of people we don't even know – those that take initiative to pick up litter, clear trails, mow overgrown areas. We know it happens and appreciate it.

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Shari Spoelman, Chair**  
**Marco Menezes, Vice-chair**  
**Sam Hogg, Secretary**  
**Marty Williams, Treasurer**  
**Sue Conradson**  
**Cyndy Foley**  
**Dave Foley**  
**Matt Long**  
**Vicki Long**

**Dennis O'Hara**

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**  
**Chris Gentry**

**OFFICE MANAGER**  
**Norma Roelfsema**

**Contact us at:**  
[www.calc-landtrust.org](http://www.calc-landtrust.org)  
231) 775-3631  
[calc@calc-landtrust.org](mailto:calc@calc-landtrust.org)



Jean with her beloved Joey

### **Kathryn Jean Gierke 1936-2021**

Jean retired from Cadillac Area Public Schools after a long career as a teacher and counselor. Many remember her as an esteemed colleague who really cared about students. When she passed she remembered CALC with an estate gift. Her interest in land conservation seems to have stemmed from her friendship with George Rock. She must have realized serving kids and supporting area conservation are important in ensuring community quality of life into the future.

Thank you Jean!

### *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.*



## Author of “Back Roads” book series to speak at annual meeting Sunday, October 8th in Cadillac

By Dave Foley, *CALC Board Member*

If you're a fan of Michigan history, like to visit those “off the beaten track places,” or just enjoy discovering what our state has to offer, you and Ron Rademacher have a lot in common. And he's willing to share just about everything he knows about Michigan. Author of six books, creator of three websites, publisher of a newsletter, radio personality and star of his own twice-a-month podcast, Rademacher has this state covered from all angles. How he went from a fashion designer to a writer about Michigan lore is an improbable tale.

In a recent interview I had with Ron, he told me that for 17 years he worked in the fashion industry designing clothes and shoes. “I found myself working long hours and traveling all over the world. Then my mother became ill and I returned home to the farm to take care of her. With my career on hold, I needed something to do.” Out in the barn Ron found woodworking tools. Although he had never done any woodworking, he decided to make wood and twig rustic furniture. Encouraged by his results, in 1988 he began traveling to art fairs and found genuine interest in what he had to offer. “That's how I got involved in my “Back Roads” project. I had an old truck that would only go 50 miles per hour, so I had to stick to the back roads,” Ron told me. “On these trips I discovered some fascinating stuff about Michigan, so I put together a website and began writing about what I had



Ron Rademacher will present his program “Oddities and Rarities” at CALC’s Annual Meeting on Sunday, October 8 at 2:30 p.m.

found and this led to getting requests to do presentations” he added. “The idea for the books was proposed by a publisher who attended one of my presentations. He convinced me that, while the website was an excellent way to promote the back roads, there was another audience that loved reading books.”

Checking his website, I discovered Rademacher had published six books in his Michigan Back Roads series – *Road Trips*, *Trail and Treasures*, *Oddities and Rarities*, *Best Kept Secrets*, *3 Day Getaways*, and *Quick and Easy Getaways* as well as a children's book, *Bob the Turtle*. His next project is another “Road Trip” book featuring new destinations and relating “How things can sometimes go awry.” The working title is “Misadventures with Helga – Michigan Back Roads”. Ron also mentioned that he is currently working a project involving Cadillac which will be part of a writing project that he is finishing up.

Rademacher has developed quite an online presence including 3 websites. Each month he publishes a news letter that appears in the

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website [travelinmichigan.com](http://travelinmichigan.com). Those looking specifically for information on northern Michigan and the Upper Peninsula should check out [www.upnorthmichigan.com](http://www.upnorthmichigan.com). His site, [www.michiganbackroads.com](http://www.michiganbackroads.com) is his homepage and covers information on his publications and latest projects. Rademacher puts out a twice a month podcast which can be found at [www.mibackroads.com](http://www.mibackroads.com).

When I asked Rademacher about how he manages to come up with material that is not commonly known, he told me that a good source is old Michigan history books. "Rumor plays a part as well," he added. "You hear about a place. It may be nothing or by talking with locals you may actually get enough of an idea that you can find the location. One of my favorite sources are the folks you find sitting in the back of restaurants in small towns. I will get a cup of coffee, sit down with these locals and start a conversation. They have been living there a long time and if you're lucky they may pass on some helpful information."

Ron pointed out that he visits each locale that he writes about and takes 99% of the photos that he uses noting that "one of the basic principles for my books and websites is that I don't write about anything that I haven't seen with my own eyes. The last thing you want, is to travel to an attraction only to find that it is no longer there or is nothing like the description."

Ron Rademacher will be the featured speaker at CALC's annual meeting to be held at the Carl T. Johnson Hunting and Fishing Museum on Sunday, October 8<sup>th</sup> at 2:30 PM. The meeting and presentation is free to the public.



## Director's Corner

*Chris Gentry  
Executive Director*

This year the CALC board of directors has been engaged in a comprehensive strategic planning initiative to set priorities for the organization in the coming years.

Sarah Naperalla, an organizational planning consultant with much experience working for and with land trusts, was engaged to facilitate the process. Sarah met with the board in January and then jumped in planning the various phases of the work. Twenty individual interviews along with CALC board members and key volunteers took place in March and April.

During May and June a number of focus groups were conducted to begin gathering wide ranging community input on CALC's future priorities.

This was all followed up in July with an online community survey to cast a wider net for input into our land trust. The survey also served to create a broader awareness of CALC as 65% of responses were from people who had no previous connection or knowledge of CALC.

These steps were all in an effort to collect community data that will assist the board in examining their mission and priorities. Data is being compiled for presentation to the board in September at which time the board will begin to develop CALC's next strategic plan. The board will meet over four sessions with "homework" in between to put it all together.

I really appreciate the board's commitment, time, and diligence in this effort. and very thankful for the wonderful participation by those who provided input.

CALC's next strategic plan should be set by year's end.

Many thanks to all!