

Nature News

Newsletter of the Cadillac Area Land Conservancy



Winter 2023

Improvements being made to Carl T. Johnson Nature Preserve

By Dave Foley, *CALC Board Member*

Not to be confused with the Carl T. Center Hunting and Fishing Museum and Heritage Park Trails located on the north side of Mitchell State Park near the Canal, the Carl T. Johnson Nature Preserve can be found a ½ mile south of M55 on 33rd Road near Benson Road. In 1997 Carl T. Johnson, renowned bear hunter and founder of the Michigan Conservation Foundation bequeathed 39 acres to the Cadillac Rotary Club. About half of the land had been used for growing alfalfa and corn and another 20 acres was a beautiful hardwoods. Before his death, Carl T. planted the farm fields to red pine and consulted with a local forester to conduct a conservative timber harvest of the hardwoods. However, the land, which had been purchased from Sam Swanson in the 1940s, was to remain in its current open and wild character.

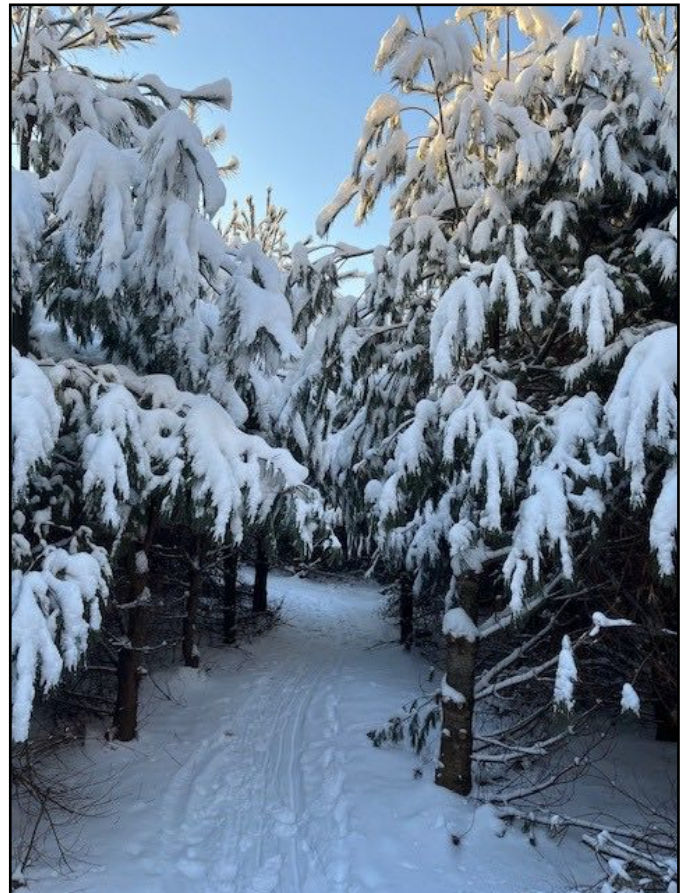
The Cadillac Rotary Club was reluctant to own land and after splitting the proceeds with CALC from the timber sale that Carl T. had planned for, it donated the land to the Conservancy. This portion of the land today is maintained as a sustainable forest with a mix of hardwoods and conifers.

In 2018 volunteers from Cadillac Christian Reformed Church and Boy Scout Troop 125 created a mile of wood chipped path. Along the route are several benches as well as signage identifying trees and explaining conservation practices. At various points plaques with QR codes allow hikers with phones to access information about nature, tree identification, land forms, and the land's history. 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 species vegetation are being added to fill in sections that used to be meadow and farmland.

In 2022 the Cadillac Christian Reformed Church again hosted 40-50 teens from all over the United States and Canada. This group known as SERVE, does service projects. In 2018, and again last year, the kids from SERVE worked on developing a trail system through the Johnson land. Last summer they were there again, cutting a path through the pine forest when thunderstorms ended their effort. This fall, with a chainsaw and brush cutters, four CALC members, Chris Gentry, Steve Cunningham, Dan Valley, and Dave Foley finished the loop.

The trail system consists of 3 trails. Starting from the 33 Road parking area, the evergreen loop on the west side of the property is a mile in length. The hardwood loop on the west side is about ¾ miles. The prairie loop in the center measures about a quarter mile. CALC hopes to put up signage marking the trails in the coming year. There is also access on the north side, coming off Valley Forge Road.

The land is virtually flat with no hills making it accessible to all who like to walk, bike, run, walk, cross-country ski, and snowshoe.



The new path leads you through the tall pines at Johnson Preserve. Chris Gentry and Steve Cunningham hard at work last summer clearing the way for the new walking path.



A New Easement Formalized

Last December Victoria Brehm finalized a new Conservation Easement with the Cadillac Area Land Conservancy. The new easement, on 60 acres in Osceola County, allows perpetual preservation of the site.

Dr Brehm's property is a beautiful representation of the area containing forest, wetlands, open area, and agricultural aspects. The diversity of the parcel provides wide ranging wildlife and plant habitats. The unique features of the Osceola County present are now preserved for future generations.

This new easement is Dr. Brehm's second with CALC and is located nearby her original 160 acre easement protected property. We are grateful for Dr. Brehm's donation of a conservation easement on this wonderful property and are proud to partner with her in its long term preservation.



Victoria Brehm and Chris Gentry getting the final easement document notarized - ensuring perpetual preservation of 60 more acres in Osceola County.

*Interested in hearing more about how to preserve your land with an easement?
Call CALC at 231-775-3631 or email us at calc-calc-landtrust.org*

What kind of person donates a conservation easement on his or her property?

By Fred Sprague

Our easements come from a variety of individuals. One common denominator is a love for the land and a desire to see it protected from being ruined. If you think that it also takes a bit of a rebel, then you might want to read "Rowing Against the Waves" by Reg Sprik.

When Reggie and his late wife Marilyn learned of the Cadillac Area Land Conservancy, they worked with us to put a conservation easement on their 52 acres just south of the settlement of Arlene. The land consists of a 40 which has been in the Sprik family since 1917. Reggie, himself, has only been in the family since 1927. The other 12 acres are a narrow accessway. Although it doesn't say so in the book, Reggie will tell you that early on when the pine was logged off the property, they left the oaks because they were too hard to work with given the equipment of the day. Those oaks are now stately, and the 40 is a doughnut of hardwood hills surrounding a lowland with a small, peaceful (except during mosquito season) pond. They reserved a building envelope in the northwest corner for a cabin which is pictured in the book.

The book mentions CALC and the decision for the easement on page 190. The preceding page prints Marilyn's obituary with a request for donations to CALC. Unfortunately the address given is the old address of the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy (to which they also gave an easement), which testifies to the grief and confusion following Marilyn's death.

"Rowing Against the Waves", however, is not a book about land conservation. It is the autobiography of a young boy who grew up in the settlement of Arlene during the great depression with intense longings for athletics, God, music, and travel. It details many successes, and it gives a heartfelt presentation of the struggles for finances.



The book is available from Amazon.

*Photo credit:
Mardi Suhs, Cadillac News.*

Reggie at his family home working on his typewriter.



Thank you to everyone who donated so generously in 2022. Our donors are...

Guardian 1000+

Anonymous
Dr. and Mrs. Lewis Bender
Victoria Brehm
Richard Hansen
Peter Oliver
Sam Hogg and Dr. Lauren Rule
Fred and Sharon Sprague
Kerry Sprigg
Cynthia Sorensen and Henry Reuter

Steward 500-999

Dr. and Mrs. Tom Basch
Irene Borak
Cheryl Brooks
Todd Carlson of Minor Farms LLC
Larry and Margo Copley
Chris and Julie Gentry
Johnson Insurance Agency
Vicki and Matthew Long
Ann Oliver
Lesley Pattison
John and Nancy Silander
Andy and Marietta Smith

Protector 250-499

Bruce Baker
Robert and Rudean Fairman
Mike and Leslie Pratt
Matthew Waterman

Conservator 100-249

Anonymous
Rod and Mary Bellows
Dick and Maria Benschel
John and Lois Bishop
Carolyn and Richard Block
Sperry and Gertrude Claypool
Charles and Leta Mae Corwin
Dr. Charles and Marge Dumanois
Dave and Cyndy Foley
Ruthann French
Robert and Elizabeth Garner
Bill and Wilma Gaylord
Fred and Sue Goetz
Max Gould
John and Andrea Grix
Kari and Paul Hanus

Gerald and Becky Herring
Jim Higgins
David and Joy Hogg
Marilyn and John Irvine
Jeff Johnson and Penny Johnson
Ann Kahner
Kathleen Kelso
Gary and Sandra Koester
David and JoAnne Lawless
Frederick Lawless
James and Sarah Lawless
Duncan Lawrence
Mike and Kathryn Lueder
John McCurdy
Doug and Barb Miller
Joyce Mongar
Edwin and Barbara Patterson
Pat and Leo Paveglio
Patricia Richardson
Gordon and Patricia Roush
Elaine Smith
Shari Spoelman and Gary VanHouten
Reggie Sprik
Linda and Arthur Squires
Cheryl Rock and Jeffrey Dysart
John and Jan Trimmerger
Ed and Julie Van Alst
Ron and Ann Vaughan
Glenn and Berniece Verbrugge
Alison and John Walters
Karen Waterman
Jay Zerwekh

Supporter 50-99

Garth and Jeanne Aslakson
Alan and Pamela Anderson
Beverly Brighton
Tom and Diane Jobson
John and Kimbra Klarquist
Richard Maatman
Doug Nelson
Joyce Oatley
Jerry and Marlene Stilson
Other Contributors
Charlie and Vicki Huffman
Todd Janiak
Ada Lush
Joel and Teresa Money

David Newhouse
Dorothy Stenman
Jim and Pam Tucker
Delores Wurst

Cadillac Area Community Foundation Endowment Giving

Victoria Brehm
Peter and Heidi Eliot
Consumers Energy
Thomas Harris
Itnyre Family
Johnson Insurance Agency
Denise Justus
Joyce Monger
Otter's End Farms
John Smith
Fred and Sharon Sprague
John and Alison Walters

In memory of Robert Borak
Joel and Teresa Money

In memory of Floyd Justus
Denise Justus
Linda and Arthur Squires

In memory of Tom Anderson
Pat and Leo Paveglio

In memory of Tom Harris
Larry and Margo Copley
Rod and Mary Bellows
Pat and Leo Paveglio
Jeff Johnson and Penny Johnson
Delores Wurst
Todd Janiak
Rod and Mary Bellows
Larry and Margo Copley

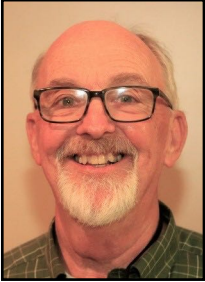
To help support CALC's mission you can donate
online at www.calc-landtrust.org

or mail to
124 1/2 N. Mitchell St., Ste. 115
Cadillac, MI 49601

(231) 775-3631
calc@calc-landtrust.org

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.



Director's Corner

Chris Gentry, Executive Director

The Cadillac Area Land Conservancy has begun a comprehensive planning effort to guide the organization's mission into the future.

After careful consideration, Naperala Consulting, LLC has been engaged to facilitate the work. At the January board meeting, Sarah Naperala was introduced and gave an outline of how the process will play out. Sarah has extensive experience providing planning and facilitation support to land conservancies throughout the state.

What to expect:

Since this is such an important step for the future efforts of our organization, CALC's board wants everyone to be involved in the planning process. That means you! How exciting to help guide the priorities for this land preservation organization into the future.

We're looking forward to the first half of the year to consist of data and feedback gathering steps including:

1. Organizational Assessment survey for board, staff, and key volunteers
2. Personal interviews with key CALC stakeholders, organizations, community leaders
3. Focus groups
4. A community wide survey

Information and input from these efforts will be used to identify priority focus areas that will return the biggest impact for CALC's mission and vision. Once priority areas are identified, the board will develop goals to achieve our desired vision.

It is anticipated that a new CALC strategic plan will be finalized by late fall. We are looking forward to hearing from the community as we get going with this work. If you would like more information, please give Chris a call (231-775-3631) or email (chris.gentry@calc-landtrust.org).

Outdoor writer Jim DuFresne speaks at CALC Annual Meeting



On October 9, 2022, CALC held its annual meeting at the Carl T. Johnson Outdoor Center. After the meeting was called to order Executive Director Chris Gentry gave a treasurer's report noting that a new LTA grant will assist with the Conservancy's upcoming strategic planning process.

Steve Cunningham, outgoing CALC president, was honored for his leadership and many years of service. The Board gave Steve a gift of several of Jim DuFresne's books. An appropriate choice since outdoor writer DuFresne was the speaker.

DuFresne has written more than twenty books – many of them hiking guides for the Midwest. His topic at this event was "Hiking Isle Royale." Backed with a media slide show, DuFresne proved to be an interesting speaker. More than 60 were on hand for this presentation.

2023 Save the Dates!

- Saturday, June 3 - Preserve Work Bee and Picnic
- Sunday, October 8 - Annual Meeting and Guest Speaker

More Information to Come!

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Shari Spoelman, Chair
Marco Menezes, Vice-chair
Sam Hogg, Secretary
Marty Williams, Treasurer
Sue Conradson
Cyndy Foley
Dave Foley
Vicki Long
Dennis O'Hara

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Chris Gentry

OFFICE MANAGER

Norma Roelfsema

Contact us at:

www.calc-landtrust.org
231) 775-3631
calc@calc-landtrust.org