

Nature News

Newsletter of the Cadillac Area Land Conservancy



Winter 2024



Project at Waldeck Island Preserve is complete!

By Chris Gentry, *CALC Executive Director*

The week before Christmas construction of the bridge linking Waldeck Island to the “mainland” was completed. This brings to conclusion CALC’s project, in partnership with the DNR, to restore the historic connection between Stone Ledge Lake and the wetland to the north.

Readers will remember CALC received a grant from the DNR’s Division of Fisheries in 2021. The project provided for the removal of an artificial, manmade berm with the goal of improving fisheries habitat in Stone Ledge Lake. The bridge that replaced the berm provides safer access to the island.

Gosling Czubek provided the engineering, design, and construction management with Pete’s Excavating and RCI Construction handling the contractor work. Many thanks to all of them.

We’d like to thank the DNR for the grant funding as well as guidance throughout the planning. Also, we have much appreciation for the private donors who contributed to necessary matching funds. Signage recognizing all will be installed this spring. In the meantime, stop by the preserve and check it out.



❖ Protecting Land in Wexford, Missaukee, Osceola and northern Lake and Mason Counties ❖



Building a bigger, better birdhouse

By Connor Larr, *Cadillac News*

Taken From Cadillac News
 "Today in History" Column 12-20-23



Pictured is a clip from the Dec. 20, 1998 edition of the Cadillac Evening News. Mike Davis, left, and Drew Hamlet build a wood duck house from cedar boards. The two are in Michelle Cook's advanced biology class at Cadillac High School.

“There’s not
 enough hollow
 trees anymore,”

David Renaud

Cadillac High School biology teacher Michelle Cook grew up with a father who loved the outdoors. He loved hunting, and enjoyed doing his small part in improving animal habitat. Friday, Cook’s father, La-peer County resident Dave Renaud, visited her class and spoke about wood ducks — about how their numbers have dipped and about what these students could do to turn that trend around. “There’s not enough hollow trees anymore,” Renaud said. “They’re lumbering even on state land, and taking big trees. Hollow trees have to be mature trees. Wood ducks need hollow trees to live.” Cook invited her father to help kick off a research project her students are conducting. The project: trying to improve the habitat of wood ducks in the Cadillac area. Nine students in Cook’s advanced placement biology class built duck habitats. Led by Renaud, students hammered together 24-by-11-inch boxes. In February or March, the students will nail the duck boxes 10 to 12 feet up on dead trees on Stoneledge Lake’s Waldeck Island, part of the Cadillac Area Land Conservancy. Every year, Cook said, her classes will check on the boxes and note if they are used. Cook likes to involve her students in extracurricular projects. In the past, her classes have built bluebird houses and placed them at Kettunen Center, placed rip-rap rocks along Lake Cadillac and built terraces on steep banks along the Pine River. “I’m always looking for projects for the kids to do — projects that involve some kind of science,” she said. “We also do these types of projects, so kids will take responsibility for things here in the community.” Cook’s students liked the idea, too. “It’s a good idea,” said senior Drew Hamlet.

2024 Save the Dates!

Saturday, June 8 - Preserve Work Bee and Picnic
Sunday, October 6 - Annual Meeting and Guest Speaker
More Information to Come!



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Mission Statement

To protect natural, scenic, and farmlands for current and future generations, and foster an appreciation for the environment in Missaukee, Osceola, Wexford, and northern Lake and Mason counties.



Director's Corner

Chris Gentry, Executive Director

DO YOU KNOW WHAT A CONSERVATION EASEMENT CAN DO?

(adapted from a newsletter by our friends at the Six Rivers Regional Land Conservancy)

When a property is considered for preservation, it typically has natural, agricultural, scenic or historic values and attributes that make it worthy of preserving for the future. A conservation easement can be just the tool to use to keep that land preserved. It's a legal document/agreement that is developed together with a land owner and the Cadillac Area Land Conservancy (CALC). It's designed to restrict and/or allow certain uses of the land and is custom-tailored to meet the needs of the landowner(s). Conservation easements are retained in perpetuity and are attached to the property forever – offering peace of mind that the land is preserved for generations to come.

- Each is uniquely designed to meet the goals of the landowner and the conservancy.
- Managed to protect unique habitat, species, natural/ historic character, or open space.
- Create or add to important habitat corridors. Protect native natural communities.
- Protect and preserve threatened and endangered species.

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OPTIONS FOR PROPERTY OWNERS RELATED TO LAND CONSERVATION:

- Donate a conservation easement to CALC on all or part of your property - you retain ownership and we'll help protect it. The easement can restrict certain things like any future development on the land, and/or allow things like recreational trails or fishing access, though public access is not a requirement. A gift of a conservation easement may provide you and your estate with significant tax deductions. A stewardship gift is often requested to assist with enforcing the restrictions of the conservation easement on the land over time.
- Donate your land to CALC and we'll protect it permanently – you can do this now or upon death using a Will or Living Trust.
- Donate your land with a retained life estate – you can live on it the rest of your life.

Cadillac Area Land Conservancy currently holds 21 conservation easements covering 2413 acres of land in our five-county service area. To gain a better perspective of how much land this is, it represents an area of approximately 3.75 square miles! If you or someone you know is interested in protecting/preserving their property, contact CALC to get started today.

