

Nature News

Newsletter of the Cadillac Area Land Conservancy



Winter 2025



Peckham 100 Acre Wood

Landowner donates 120 acre riverfront property to CALC for nature preserve
Conservancy partners with Missaukee County and Lake Township to create quiet recreation area

120 acres of pristine forest with 1,800 feet of frontage on the Clam River has been donated to Cadillac Area Land Conservancy by Geoffrey Peckham and Patricia Melzer. The couple has requested that the preserve be named, "Peckham's 100 Acre Wood" in honor of this land having been owned by two different branches of the Peckham family for nearly 80 years. The Conservancy's plan is to keep this land undeveloped and open to the public for quiet recreational activities such as hiking, picnicking, fishing, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, kayaking, and canoeing. The land conservancy will permanently preserve the natural condition of the property while partnering with Lake Township, in Missaukee County, who will own and manage this gift as a public nature preserve.

"Donating land to a land conservancy is one option for landowners to preserve their land," said Cadillac Area Land Conservancy, Chris Gentry, Executive Director

"We are protecting this beautiful 120-acre property with a permanent conservation easement and Lake Township will manage it for public use. The Clam River is a prized trout stream with frontage on both sides of the river. This nature preserve will help to protect the river's trout as well as other fish and wildlife. While a conservation easement doesn't require public access, in this case, the vision is to make the property open for public use. The partnership between CALC and Lake Township will make this vision a reality."



Geoffrey Peckham and Patricia Melzer signing documents donating property to CALC

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



CALC is Celebrating 30 years in 2025

CALC was founded by George Rock and Tom Rensberry in the fall of 1995. Both men had a strong land ethic and wanted to protect their property from future development. When the search began for an organization to partner with, they realized that no one was concentrating their efforts in the west central region of Michigan. Thus, they made it their goal to create a Land Conservancy to serve this area of the state and its broad variety of demographic and land use patterns.

CALC has now grown to include individuals, families and businesses that believe the protection of our land is critical in retaining the quality of life that makes this region unique. Our goal is to enhance the beauty and diversity of our communities through the preservation of natural land.

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In Celebration of 30 Years

CALC has several fun events planned throughout 2025 to celebrate our 30th Anniversary. Ongoing throughout the year is the 30 miles for 30 year challenge. We will also be at the April Earth Day event in Cadillac, a spring nature walk at one of our easements in May (botany and birds). We will also be at the Cadillac Art Fair in the Cadillac Commons in July (with a silent auction for CALC inspired art by our own members). The year will end with the annual meeting and celebration event on October 19. Stay tuned for more details!



30 Miles for 30 Years!

Join CALC in celebrating three decades of land conservancy work with an exciting do-it-yourself trail challenge. Explore the CALC preserves, public lands, preserves, parks and trail systems in the CALC service area. Track your progress and achieve personal goals. It is free to join the challenge and each participant who completes 30 miles between now and August 30, 2025 will receive a commemorative patch and decal. When you've completed the challenge, submit this log sheet (available at calc-landtrust.org) to CALC or drop off at the

**Congratulations to Margo Copley for being
the first to submit her walking log!**

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Remembering Reggie Sprik

Some will remember Reggie as a ballplayer and some will remember him as the musician who played at dances and social functions. Many who remember him from such times are now approaching 100 years old. Younger generations will remember him from his book "Rowing Against the Waves" which vividly describes life during hard economic times.

We at the Cadillac Area Land Conservancy remember Reggie and his late wife Marilyn for protecting a beautiful forest and pond which has been in the family since 1917. When acorns fall from oaks that are well over 100 years old, when ice forms on a secluded pond deep in its valley, and when breezes ruffle the leaves on the high ridges, those who are fortunate to find their peace of mind in this bit of creation will remember Reggie.



2025 Save the Dates

Sunday, April 27 - Earth Day Celebration in Cadillac Commons
Saturday, May 31, 9:30am - Birding and Botanical Walk at the English Easement
July 18-19 - Art Fair in the Cadillac City Park. CALC will be there—Come support us!
October 19 - Annual Meeting and Anniversary Celebration



Thank you to everyone who donated so generously in 2024. Our donors are...

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In Memory of Tom & Marguerite Harris
Chris Harris

In Memory of Raymond Carrie
Arnie and Linda Borish

In Memory of Jacob Westmaas
Jenny and Marlene Stilson

In Memory of Robert and Julie Borak
Irene Borak

In Memory of Gerald & Olive Rose and
Wexford Fox Ranch
Richard Deuell

In Memory of G. Ronald Vaughan
Ann Vaughn

In Memory of Doris Falk
Linda and Arthur Squires

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

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Cadillac, MI 49601

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calc@calc-landtrust.org

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* 2024 donation to Cadillac Area
Community Foundation endowment fund

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Mission Statement

To protect natural, scenic, and farm lands 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

Looking back and looking forward

Throughout 2023 the Cadillac Area Land Conservancy's Board of Directors engaged in a strategic planning process to guide our organization over the next five years. The result was the 2024–2028 Cadillac Area Land Conservancy Strategic Plan. In 2024 we've been actively involved in implementing this plan.

Active land preservation effort this past year include:

- With landowner partners, we have protected an additional 380 acres of natural, scenic, and farm lands via four conservation easements and a property donation.
- We are, as this is written, actively engaged in working on developing and finalizing two more conservation easements on family farms.
- Four serious conversations are taking place with land owner partners expected to develop into active conservation easements in the coming years representing a potential 200 more protected acres.
- Partnered with a local township to develop 120 donated acres into a public preserve while preserving the conservation values through a conservation easement.

While the above actions related to CALC's First Strategic Goal, there have been other steps taken over the year in working toward growth in other strategic goals. Here is how we are progressing.

- Initiated a new more modern website (calc-landtrust.org) to facilitate more efficient conservancy communication and information.
- Implemented a new office software that offer efficient member, donor, and partner communication.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Chris Gentry
OPERATIONS MANAGER
Sue Conradson

Contact us at:

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

- CALC engaged outside experts and consultants to help with baseline and conservation easement development.
- Our dedicated volunteer conservation easement monitoring team has assured all current 2855 acres of protected land is in compliance with conservation easement requirements.

The board has been busy, too. The group has:

- Created new and expanded committees to better address the growing needs of the organization.
- Outdated bylaws and articles of incorporation have been updated.
- Special events have been conducted to celebrate volunteers and community.
- Special events are planned in 2025 to celebrate CALC's 30th Anniversary.
- The Board has been working to update our land protection and preservation policies.
- A Land Trust Alliance grant has funded development of a comprehensive communications plan to us better tell the conservancy story in our region.

Finally, I'd like to give some recognition to Norma. Her dedicated service as CALC office manager has been instrumental in keeping the conservancy on track and growing. I personally have benefited from her knowledge, counsel, and guidance in many areas over the past four years.. Norma, thanks so much! We have welcomed Sue Conradson as our new Operations Manager. Welcome Sue!

As always it is important to note that the work of the Cadillac Area Land Conservancy is perpetual. We could not do our preservation work, now and in the future, without the dedication and involvement of volunteers, landowners, donors, and other community partners. Protecting natural, scenic, and farm lands in our local area takes all of us. Thank you to all who have supported CALC over the years.



Clam River as viewed from the Peckham 100 Acre Wood Preserve