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Oceola Township

Sara Thomas, *Land Acquisition & Stewardship Chair*  
Genoa Township

#### Meeting Dates & Times

We meet the second Monday of every month at 6:15 p.m. at the Livingston Land Conservancy field office located at 10315 E. Grand River Avenue, Suite 403 at Fonda Place in Brighton.

March 9, 2015

April 13, 2015

May 11, 2015

June 8, 2015

Livingston Land Conservancy  
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# LIVINGSTON LAND CONSERVANCY

Spring, 2015

Volume 16 Number 1

## 2014 — Year in Review

### Land Acquisition

The Conservancy currently has 640 acres under preservation in the greater Livingston County area and the value of these properties stands at approximately \$1.2 million dollars. As described in earlier newsletters, the “Bullard Lake Nature Preserve” was added to our list of protected properties in December, 2013 and the land was generously donated by Mr. Arnold Becker. The dedication for BLNP was held on May 22, 2014 and the large turn-out, mainly from homeowners near the lake, reflected the interest and support that this preserve has in the local community. People also enjoyed the opportunity to walk the property and see what was actually being protected. And finally, there are other acquisitions in progress, but we will report on those as they come to completion in the future.

### Land Stewardship

Stewardship is an important duty that the Conservancy performs yearly on all existing properties. The overall condition of the property, any use violations, and notable plant and animal species are accurately documented. Tasks include: fixing/replacing signs, clearing paths, cutting brush and fallen trees, removing invasive plant species, and walking boundaries. Monitoring and review of all our properties were performed in 2014 and here are a few stewardship highlights for the year:

- **Bullard Lake Nature Preserve (Hartland Twp.)** - the newest preserve had boundary signs posted, a front fence/gate installed, and a large, old tree fort removed to prevent liability issues. A spring dedication was held to showcase the property to area residents and the general public.
- **Northumberland Nature Preserve (Handy Twp.)** - a spring bird outing was conducted.
- **Charles & Albert Parker Families Nature Preserve (City of Brighton)** - had PlantWise review the potential for significant invasive species removal with the use of fire and some herbicide to fight Autumn Olive, Glossy Buckthorn, Asian Bittersweet, and Phragmites. A proposal is still pending to potentially make that happen in 2015. Partnered with students from the Charyl Stockwell Academy to maintain the trail and to install several beds for native pollinators.
- **Arthur M. Pasinski Memorial Preserve (Oceola Twp.)** - a planned burn on the west 20 acres had to be postponed due to the weather. However, we are moving forward in early spring of 2015 to attempt it again.
- **Round Lake of Hartland Nature Preserve (Hartland Twp.)** - a spring clean-up was held and a wooden fence installed at the entrance to prevent vehicle entry. A bird outing was conducted in early spring and a swamp walk held in late summer. Had to remove a large tree that had fallen in a neighbor's backyard; confirmed that the lights hung on the island to play ice hockey on the canal several years ago were removed due to liability concerns; and we are pursuing new preventative measures to prevent trespass from non-residents to the lake on the north side.
- **Unadilla Nature Preserve (Unadilla Twp.)** - a more thorough review of the furthest southern portion of the property was done along with additional boundary signs installed and areas of trespass blocked.

### Membership

We continue efforts to increase the general membership, Board members, and the number of active volunteers. Having a base of dues-paying members provides a foundation to the organization and covers funds needed early in the year to support operating costs (mailings, insurance, etc.) as well as money for land acquisition and stewardship. For an organization of our size, we should have 8-12 Board members; at this time we have 6 Board members. The

## 2014 — Year in Review (continued)

more volunteers we have, the more things we can obviously get accomplished through-out the year. If you know of anyone who would like to join us in any of these capacities, please contact us directly.

One yearly event that we hope all members will attend is the Conservancy Annual Meeting. This past year, the meeting was held on June 11th at the Brighton District Library. Dr. Allen Kurta (Eastern Michigan University) was the featured speaker and he gave an excellent talk on bats in MI. He also spoke on the white nose syndrome, a major problem facing bats across the country that is resulting in high mortality for many bat populations. Looking ahead, please join us for this annual event in June, 2015.

The LLC holds elections just prior to the annual meeting. In 2014, Dennis Dawson (1-year), Meredith Bohdan (2-year) and Brian Hartmann (2-year) were all elected as Board members; term length as noted in parentheses. Jan Thurston acted as election coordinator which really helped out a lot for this event. June also marked the month that Robert Henshaw stepped down from serving on the Board. Bob was head of the Communications Committee with major responsibilities for both print and e-version of the newsletter. He also was a major contributor to stewardship efforts on our properties. Thank you Bob for all your time and effort on behalf of the Board and the Conservancy!

### Fundraising

The major fundraising event for the Conservancy during the year is Land on the Horizon, which this time was held at historic Howell Opera House, in downtown Howell, on September 5th. The Opera House was a great venue and there was music, good food, a cash bar, silent and live auctions, as well as a playing card raffle for an iPad. Rick Thomas was our auctioneer for the live auction and we thank Rick for doing that again this year. Almost \$9000 was raised during the evening. A big thank you goes out to everyone who made this event possible. We couldn't do this without you! In December, we sent out Year End Appeal letters and were thrilled to receive over \$8000.00. Fantastic! Your donations are greatly appreciated and it's your loyal support that allows us to work on the mission of preserving land in Livingston County.

Last year, we wrote to you that the Conservancy was establishing a legal defense fund. Such a fund would be used in the defense process against any legal challenges to land directly owned by the LLC or held in the form of conservation easements. We have approximately \$15,000 at this time in the fund and our intent is to add money on a yearly basis until we reach the goal of \$50,000. This number is a guideline set by the Land Trust Alliance for future accreditation.

### Communication, Education, Outreach and Outings

Patti Nicholson set-up a children's Earth Day program on April 26th at the Pinckney Library that generated a lot of interest from both kids and parents. Later in the year in July, Patti held a second event at the Pinckney Library on edible wild plants and demonstrated this by providing garlic mustard pesto and crackers. On May 17th, an information table was set-up and manned by Patti and Roy Schwarz at the Heron Day event held annually at Kensington Metro Park. As noted in the Stewardship section, students from the near-by Charyl Stockwell Academy planted butterfly friendly plants and mulched the trail at the Parker Preserve on June 10th. The LLC set up information tables at the Farmer's Markets in Brighton and Howell in July; we thank member, Jan Thurston, for organizing this effort. Roy Schwarz was invited to speak to the Brighton Rotary Club on September 23rd and had the opportunity to talk about the Conservancy and land protection in Livingston County. Two bird watching and hikes were held in partnership with the Huron Valley Audubon Society during the year; we thank Joann Schmidt for setting these up. An early spring outing was held on March 29th at the Round Lake of Hartland Nature Preserve, with a similar outing being held at the Northumberland Nature Preserve on June 28th. In the first outing, snow and cold weather limited sightings, while the second outing had much better weather and more sightings. We hope to have additional outings with the Audubon group in 2015.

### SEMIWILD

As described in earlier newsletters, SEMIWILD is a collaborative effort among nine land conservancies to actively promote and preserve land in SE MI. The LLC received \$5000 in 2014 from a grant received from the Carls Foundation for the SEMIWILD initiative to protect land contained in areas associated with the Huron River watershed. Additional monies, in the range of \$5000-\$10,000, will be received by the LLC in 2015 provided we raise matching funds. Please see the article in this newsletter for full details of this initiative. For more information, go to: [www.semiwild.org](http://www.semiwild.org) or visit SEMIWILD on Facebook. Finally, if you have experience writing grants and wish to participate in land preservation efforts, please contact us.

### Other

In 2014-2015, we have a Masters level candidate with us from the University of Michigan, School of Natural Resources & Environment. Julie McLaughlin is working with Brian Hartman, Sara Thomas, and Patti Nicholson on developing a management plan for the Round Lake of Hartland Natural Preserve and GIS mapping criteria for future land acquisitions.

The LLC belongs to a variety of civic, conservation, and environment-focused organizations and actively participate with these groups. These include: Heart of the Lakes Center of Conservation Policy, Howell Chamber of Commerce, Huron River Watershed Council, Land Trust Alliance, MI Bird Conservation, and the Stewardship Network.

## President's Corner: Roy Schwarz

This newsletter provides a very nice recap of our efforts in 2014 and where things stand right now. It shows that this was a year that built on past efforts while positioning us for the future. Our mission is to protect land and we currently preserve 640 acres (\$1.2) in Livingston County. The monitoring of those 640 acres and the continuing efforts to find more land which we can protect shows the progress we have made in furthering our mission. Involvement in SEMIWILD puts us in active collaboration with other land conservancies in SE Michigan and has yielded funds for land protection efforts, particularly in Huron River watershed areas. The recently audited financial statement of activity shows that we have a sound financial base. We continue to have dedicated members, sponsors and businesses that prove in-kind services and we want to thank everyone for their generous support.

But what is it that we need for the future? We need to grow our membership. This would broaden our organization both financially and volunteer-wise. Second, we need more Board members. An organization of this size, having the assets that we have, should have at least 8-12 Board members; we currently have only 6 Board members. Third, we need more volunteers. To actively steward our properties, we need active volunteers who are willing to go out on the land. We also need volunteers for other activities such as putting together mailings and helping with outing and educational events. Perhaps you see yourself in one of these roles. If so, we hope you will join us in our mission!

*The purpose of the Livingston Land Conservancy is to protect the natural heritage and rural character of the greater Livingston County area by preserving quality natural areas and productive farmland as well as to promote an appreciation and understanding of the environment for the long-term benefit of the public.*

### Fundraising Opportunities

We participate in the VG's "Cash for Class". By logging in at [www.vgs.spartanstores.com](http://www.vgs.spartanstores.com) and clicking on "Manage Account" the Livingston Land Conservancy can be designated in the "Cash for Class" area. Thank you for helping us!

### Livingston Land Conservancy Membership Form -- Annual Member Dues

Membership Category	Individual	Joint Membership
Basic Member	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 25	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 50
Protector	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 50	<input type="checkbox"/> \$100
Conservator	<input type="checkbox"/> \$100	<input type="checkbox"/> \$200
Steward	<input type="checkbox"/> \$250	<input type="checkbox"/> \$500
Guardian	<input type="checkbox"/> \$500	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1,000
Other	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ _____	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ _____

- Members are:
- Committed to the purpose of the conservancy
  - 18 years of age
  - Entitled to one vote per member
  - Assessed annual dues

Member #1

Name (Please Print)

Address

City

State

ZIP

Phone

Email

Member #2

Name (Please Print)

Email

**Make Checks payable to and mail to:**  
Livingston Land Conservancy  
P.O. Box 236  
Brighton, MI 48116-0236

Use PayPal on our website



Please send information about:

- Volunteering
- How to protect my land
- How to include LLC in my estate plans

Livingston Land Conservancy is a private, non-profit organization exempt from taxes under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. All contributions are tax-deductible to the full extent provided by law.

website: [www.livingstonlandconservancy.org](http://www.livingstonlandconservancy.org)

email: [info@livingstonlandconservancy.org](mailto:info@livingstonlandconservancy.org)



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**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**

## JOIN US ON FACEBOOK!

**website:** [www.livingstonlandconservancy.org](http://www.livingstonlandconservancy.org)

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### *Protecting Land in the Huron River Watershed Region Conservancy Participating in Major SEMIWILD Initiative*

After several years of preliminary work by members of ASEMILWILD, the first step will be taken in February on a major effort across SE Michigan that will ultimately result in parcels of land being systematically protected in watershed areas associated with the Huron River. This initiative also involves the Huron River Watershed Council (HRWC), a major partner in this venture. SEMIWILD received a 2-year grant from the Carls Foundation in 2014 to fund activities for the seven land conservancies participating in the initiative, as well as the HRWC. Our Conservancy received a \$5000 payment from the grant this past September. A second \$5000 payment will be made to us next summer pending successful completion of various activities occurring over the next 6-8 months. For year 2 of the grant, we will receive an additional \$10,000, provided we raise matching funds. In the spring, we will send out letters and emails to our members announcing a capital campaign to raise those funds. We are happy to report that some money has already been received in Dec/Jan in advance of the full campaign.

Letters will be going out from the HRWC and conservancies this month to landowners along the Huron River and adjoining watershed lands in an attempt to identify interested landowners. Subsequent meetings will provide information on land

protection in general and also provide information on a specific property where desired. If a landowner is further interested, a free field assessment of his/her property will be performed by a small team of trained volunteers. This assessment will identify the unique natural feature of the parcel as well as the best ways to restore and protect it.

The Livingston Land Conservancy already owns the 30-acre Strawberry Point Nature Preserve in Hamburg Township which has 1700-feet of frontage along the Huron River. Before the Carls grant was submitted, we had determined that the LLC wanted to focus on protecting land along the Huron River in Livingston County to help provide a corridor vital to the river's health and for the benefit of wildlife and plants along the river. The SEMIWILD initiative reinforced that idea and is now providing funds and people, working in a collaborative manner, to make it a reality. If interested in working on the initiative in any capacity, please contact the Conservancy.

**We are members of:**

