

Livingston Land Conservancy

*Protecting the Natural Heritage and Rural Character of
the Greater Livingston County Area Since 1991*



Oak Wilt and the Right Time to Prune Your Trees

Molly Wozniak – GILLS CISMA

With temperatures beginning to cool, now is the best time to prune your oak trees to prevent the spread of oak wilt. Oak wilt is a fungal disease spread when certain beetles feed on sap from fresh cuts in the tree. While feeding, they transfer infectious spores into the tree. Once infected, the disease can spread from tree to tree through its root system.

Oak wilt can be identified by oak trees rapidly wilting and losing their leaves from the top down. The leaves can be green, brown, or a mottled mix of both. Symptoms tend to appear in June through September. Spore samples must be tested in a lab to officially confirm the presence of the disease. The DNR's official "no prune" time frame for oak trees is between April 15 – July 15, but the best time to prune oak trees is in the winter when the trees are dormant and the beetles are not active.

Oak wilt has been confirmed in Livingston County. If you suspect you have oak wilt, reach out to the lab at Michigan State University to submit a sample <https://www.canr.msu.edu/pestid/submit-samples/oak-wilt>. To learn more or find a professional in the area, visit MichiganOakWilt.org. I'm also available at gillscisma@gmail.com for all of your invasive species concerns!

Board of Directors

Sara Thomas, *President/Land Protection, Howell*

Rob Stanford, *Vice President, Williamston*

Gary Edwards, *Treasurer, Fenton*

Marcee Wardell, *Secretary, Howell*

Abby Carrigan, *Director, Fenton*

Molly Wozniak, *Director, Burton*

Bob Pawlowski, *Newsletter Editor*

Rick Thomas, *Land on the Horizon Fundraising Event Coordinator*

Meeting Dates & Times

We meet the second
Monday of every month
at 7:00 p.m.

Meetings are at the HERO
Building (Old Hartland
Twp. Hall) 3191 Hartland Rd.
Hartland, MI.

September 14, 2026

October 12, 2026

November 9, 2026

December 14, 2026

January 11, 2027

**Livingston Land Conservancy
P.O. Box 236**

Brighton, MI 48116-0236

810-229-3290 (voice mail)

livingstonlandconservancy@gmail.com

What's in a Word – "Stewardship"

Rick Thomas

We talk a lot about "stewardship" of our (at the moment) 10 nature preserves and 8 conservation easements under the permanent protection of the LLC, but what does that really mean? Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines stewardship as "The careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one's care." To our LLC volunteers, that's at the heart of what motivates us to endure hot and humid summers, freezing cold winters, insects/ticks, gnarly Prickly Ash, Multiflora Rose, Autumn Olive thorns, tall grass, rutted farm fields, and bush-whacking through deep shrub thickets. It's this kind of sometimes grueling field work that is vital to our mission of protecting and maintaining our nature preserves and enforcing the rules of the conservation easements held on privately owned land.

All year round you will find us monitoring our properties, which means walking our boundaries and interiors, making notes and taking photographs of potential damage, trespassing, or just interesting natural features and conditions. In rare instances when the LLC must use legal means to enforce our mission, these notes and photographs are vital. (cont. page 4, bottom)

Meet our Newest LLC Board Members and Stewardship Contractors!

Sara Thomas

Some say the conservation and environmental movements are the realm of old hippies. Never have we felt so good about disagreeing with that! After the recent board election, half our board for 2026-2027 are in their early 30s or under, and they all have serious credentials in science, planning, and digital marketing. Joining Sara Thomas, Rob Stanford, Gary Edwards, and Marcee Wardell, the Board welcomes Abby Carrigan and Molly Wozniak as Directors for a two-year term expiring in 2028.

Abby is a graduate of MSU with a B.A. in Social Relations and Policy, with Minors in Sustainable Agriculture & Food Systems and Human, Environmental & Economic Geography. She currently is studying for her Master's Degree in Urban & Regional Planning at U of M, while also working as a planning intern for the Livingston County Planning Department. Molly holds a B.S. in Fisheries and Wildlife from Lake Superior State and an M.S. in Biology from the University of Central Arkansas. She is the Invasive Species Coordinator for the Genesee, Lapeer, Livingston and Shiawassee Counties Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (GILLS CISMA). (See her separate article on oak wilt on page 1.)

And we want to give a shout out to our stewardship contractors, Connor Chin, Lead Technician, and Ireland Betzold, Technician, for their field work in monitoring, maintenance and invasive removal, plus Cara Green, continuing with the GIS mapping of our properties. We so appreciate all their efforts!

We also gratefully acknowledge the service of retiring Director Paul Stavros. Thank you, Paul, for your business insights, field stewardship labor, and financial contributions – we know you will still be among our strongest supporters!



New Directors!
Abby Carrigan (left) and
Molly Wozniak (right).



Stewardship Contractors
Connor Chin, Lead Technician,
Ireland Betzold, Technician
and Cara Green, GIS Mapping
(below).



Connor Chin



Ireland Betzold



Cara Green

President's Corner: Sara Thomas

Politics. It's everywhere and seeps into practically everything we do as people. As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, part of our obligation is to be non-political, hard as that might be sometimes. No candidate endorsements. No lobbying of candidates or providing financial support. We can, and do, speak up about issues that affect land use, nature, and agriculture. We feel it is part of our responsibility when appropriate. So when we were contacted by a member of the public about two political candidate signs on our Red Cedar Run Nature Preserve in Fowlerville, we were surprised and a bit annoyed. We have not given permission to any candidate of any party to post signage on any of our owned nature preserves. If you pass one of our protected properties and there is a sign, we want to hear from you. Now, if the property is a conservation easement, (it will say so on the main sign), that is privately held property and the owner has the right to post signage if they so desire. But please don't be mad at us for it. There are some things we can control; but that isn't one of them!

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.

Consider a Gift to the Endowment Fund

Please consider donating to our endowment fund at the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan. This fund was started several years ago, provides a yearly distribution, and can only be used for general purposes. It's a nice, reliable source of income for the Conservancy and we so appreciate the generosity of our donors to help keep the principle balance growing from year to year. To contribute online, visit this link:

<https://cfsem.org/ways-to-give/give-online/agency-endowments/>. To send a check or if you have any questions, contact the Philanthropic Services staff at the CFSM at 313-961-6675. Thank you!!

Livingston Land Conservancy 2027 Membership Form — Annual Member

<u>Membership Category</u>	<u>Individual</u>	<u>Joint</u>
Basic Member	___ \$25	___ \$50
Protector	___ \$50	___ \$100
Conservator	___ \$100	___ \$200
Steward	___ \$250	___ \$500
Guardian	___ \$500	___ \$1000
Other	_____	_____

Send my newsletter by: _____ email _____ paper copy

Make Checks Payable To:
Livingston Land Conservancy
P.O. Box 236
Brighton, MI 48116-0236
Or Use Givebutter

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.

Members are:

- Committed to the purpose of the Conservancy
- 18 years of age
- Entitled to one vote per member

Member # 1

Name (please print)

Address

City

State

Zip

Phone

Email

Member #2

Name (Please Print)

Email



Livingston Land Conservancy
P.O. Box 236
Brighton, MI 48116-0236

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Land on the Horizon fundraiser registration inside!

Facebook: @livingstonlandconservancy
Instagram: Livingston_land_conservancy
Email: livingstonlandconservancy@gmail.com



Upcoming Events

Land on the Horizon Annual Fundraiser

Date: Friday, October 16, 2026

Time: 7:00 pm to 10:00 pm

Where: Lakelands Golf & Country Club, 8760 Chilson Road, Brighton (see flyer inside!).

Farmers Market-Fowlerville: September 19, 2026.

“Stewardship” (cont. from page 1)

When we acquire new properties, we usually install boundary signs as well as a main sign to denote our nature preserve or CE. Signage sometimes get damaged (sometimes naturally, sometimes not) and has to be repaired or replaced. Our tools and equipment take a beating and often require repair. Professional survey work expenses have never been higher. Work days to remove Invasives are nearly endless. Yet the effort goes on, and our volunteers and two paid Stewardship Technicians cheerfully march on. Besides knowing we are supporting an important mission, what’s the best part? Easy. Exploring some unique and beautiful natural areas of Livingston County which can be a rare treat for the hardy crew that makes the effort. Come volunteer with us and we’re happy to show you!

We are Members of:



Land Trust Alliance
Together, conserving the places you love

**Anna, Rick and
John-boundary
sign Installation.**



**Rob, Lewis and
Connor-
monitoring.**

