



Conservation Easement Landowner Newsletter

Conserving the Land, Water, and Scenic
Character of Leelanau County

Spring 2017

Photo by Michael Schwartz

Welcome Message

This is my 6th year managing the conservation easement program for the Conservancy. I am excited to say I have now walked all of your conservation easement properties at least once, if not every year. Being able to bring my daughter, Selah—now 18 months—with me on Fridays has been a treat. She loves the woods and being outdoors. I think I have an aspiring birder on my hands as she notices their sounds and is obsessed with owls.

Often I tell people I have the best job ever—and it truly is! I have the opportunity to walk the most beautiful places once a year and work with amazing people who care deeply about their land. Thank you for all that you have done to keep Leelanau County a special place by



Yarrow with daughter Selah in March 2017.

helping to preserve its land, water and scenic character. We just protected our 167th property along County Road 651 bringing our total to nearly 9,000 acres protected with private conservation easements.

We welcomed two new conservation easement landowners in 2016—folks who bought an already protected property. We are also planning some key events with partners that we hope you will also attend.

In this newsletter, I focus on forestry and farming topics as we have both natural land conservation easements and agricultural conservation easements. Each conservation easement is unique to the property and each landowner has different goals for their property. With all the forest pests, changing climate and concerns with invasive species, I will do my best to keep you informed and send information that seems important to pass along. As always, if you have any ideas about topics for our annual gathering, please do not hesitate to call or email me.

Happy Spring,

Yarrow Brown
Conservation Easement Program Manager

Please contact me if....

- You plan to conduct forestry activities on your property or would like to learn more about forest management, pests and diseases to look out for.
- You would like to set up a specific time for us to monitor your property OR if you want us to look for invasive species or specific features while monitoring. Our monitoring staff has various skills and we are eager to help you learn more about your conservation easement property.
- You are selling your property. We can help explain the terms of the conservation easement to potential buyers and help the Realtors with maps or language that describes the features of your protected property. Also, we have a Conservation Buyer Program where we list protected land that is for sale. <http://leelanauconservancy.org/land-protection-and-stewardship/conservation-buyers/>
- You plan to exercise one of your reserved rights in your conservation easement.
- You have a question about your conservation easement or would like a copy of your conservation easement.

Yarrow Brown, Conservation Easement Program Manager, 231-256-9665, ybrown@leelanauconservancy.org

New Conservation Easement Monitor

This year we are excited to welcome Leah Robison as our Huron Pines AmeriCorps member. Leah is a Stewardship Technician who is helping with various stewardship related projects, including monitoring about half of our conservation easements. Leah is also helping with the water quality program.

Leah is from Saint Paul, Minnesota and is a graduate of Drake University in Iowa, where she studied Environmental Science and learned about the conservation issues concerning prairie ecosystems. Leah was previously an AmeriCorps member at a refugee connection center in Des Moines, Iowa. She worked on a team to assist in agriculture education including English classes, business development, and farmers' markets. After graduation Leah moved to Northern Wisconsin to conduct field research, collecting data on soils, small mammals, fish, and insects. Leah is very excited to be living on the Leelanau Peninsula and to serve with the Conservancy to continue to develop her passion for conservation.



DID YOU KNOW...

..... Did you know White Pines are Michigan's tallest trees?

..... By the early 1900s, beavers were almost extirpated from North America, Europe and Asia due to trapping and the subsequent draining of lands for agriculture? Beaver dams and wetlands are landscape features that reduce surface water flow and contribute to landscape diversity, species diversity, and regional plant succession. <http://www.beaversww.org/beavers-and-wetlands/articles/wetland-engineer/>

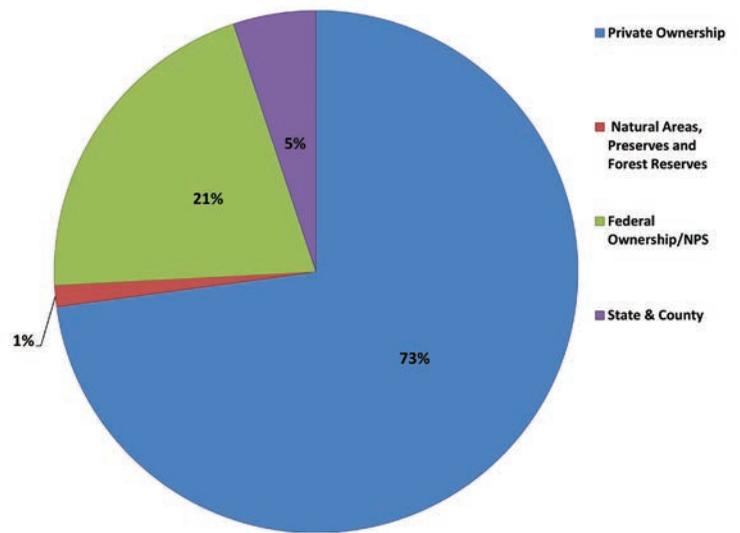
..... Did you know there are land management plans, such as a forest stewardship plan, that landowners can have developed? These plans can help guide land management and help landowners to apply for programs and conservation financial assistance. See page 4 for more details

.....Did you know that we now print on Forest Stewardship Council approved paper?

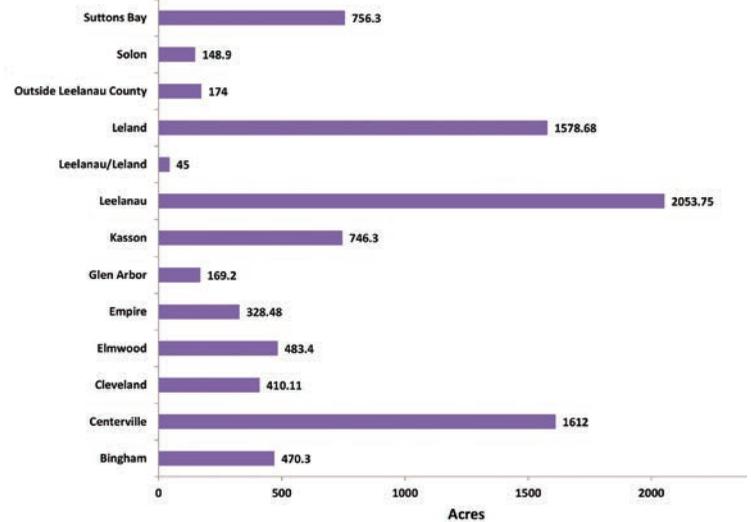


Photo by Michael Schwartz

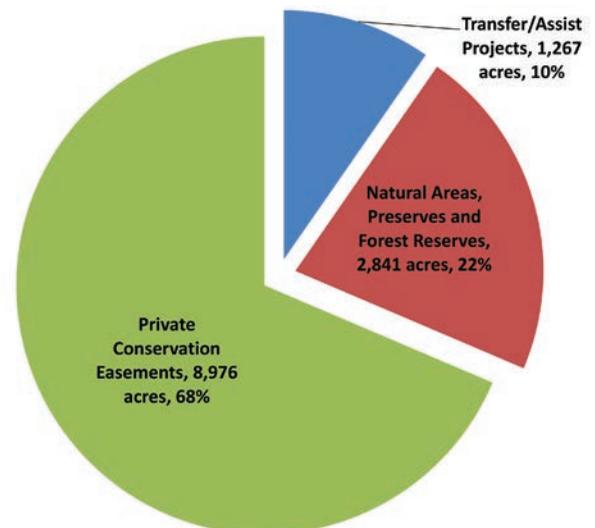
Leelanau County Public VS Private Land



Total Private Conservation Easement Acres By Township



Leelanau Conservancy Protected Land



SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY

The Nature Conservancy published an article a few years ago about a project in the Upper Peninsula involving their work with a forestry consultant, John Fosgitt. I found it on my desk this week and decided to re-read it. The information is very relevant to some of the projects we are working on at the Leelanau Conservancy. Palmer Woods Forest Reserve comes to mind. While this is a property we own and manage as the Leelanau Conservancy, we have many conservation easements that do allow for active timber management. Some protected properties do not allow for timber management, but may allow for other activities such as wildlife improvement projects or ecological restoration.

This article brought to light the scale of land protection The Nature Conservancy is involved in in the U.P. They manage commercial timberland on over 23,000 acres, but they also purchased a conservation easement to protect 10 times that much land (TNC 2012). This ensures the land will be sustainably logged in perpetuity. This may be seen as controversial to some, but John Fosgitt and the Nature Conservancy see this as a “step towards revolutionizing logging practices and improving forest health nationwide.” This project is referred to as the “Big UP Deal” because it added up to be the biggest conservation deal ever officially completed in the state of Michigan.

To restore the health of the Nature Conservancy property, Fosgitt, a forester with Compass Land Consultants, has

turned the parcels into laboratories where he ‘systematically tests different approaches to restoring the forest.’ “We are not trying to create a presettlement forest,” Fosgitt says, “we’re letting natural processes be our guide.”

It is the Nature Conservancy’s practice to have each timber harvest audited to comply with the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). An FSC stamp guarantees that a timber company harvests trees sustainably, pays a just wage, adheres to safety standards and maintains wildlife habitat.

What’s wrong with a forest that is mostly sugar maple? Fosgitt explains: “One of the first things we learn as children is that you don’t put all your eggs in one basket.” And in the woods there is a good reason for this. If there is an exotic pest that invades the UP and targets maples, you are going to lose that entire forest. Not only is this bad for the environment, but it’s bad for the forestry business. The type of forest the Nature Conservancy is managing for is one that has different species, sizes and ages of trees. A forest that provides food and shelter for wildlife naturally protects rivers and streams.

Promoting sustainable timber harvesting and overall forest health is what we hope to accomplish when we work with our private conservation easement landowners. If your conservation easement allows for forest management, please know that we are learning every day and hope to learn along with you when you decide to actively manage your forest for timber. Even if you do not have the ability to commercially harvest timber, there are other programs that you may be eligible for such as wildlife enhancement projects, removing invasive species or ecological restoration.

— Yarrow Brown

Source: The Nature Conservancy magazine-
article by Ginger Strand, 2012 Issue 2

WHY SHOULD YOU HIRE A PROFESSIONAL FORESTER TO ASSIST WITH A TIMBER SALE?

- Data shows that the landowner can make more money while often cutting fewer trees.
- The harvest will contribute to achieving the landowner’s objectives, which often means more trees are left for future harvests.
- The forest, soil, water, wildlife, & other resources are protected & enhanced.
- Any negative visual impact of the harvest is minimized.

<http://michigansaf.org/ForestInfo/ForesterFirst/I-MainForesterFirst.htm>

FOREST STEWARDSHIP PLANS

Did you know there are land management plans, such as a forest stewardship plan, that landowners can have developed to guide management practices on their property? You can also use the plan to apply for conservation financial assistance.

A Forest Stewardship Plan is a custom plan that describes your personal goals, unique forest resources, and suggests management activities. The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) trains and certifies professional foresters and wildlife biologists to write simple yet comprehensive Forest Stewardship Plans. You can use your Plan to prepare for a timber sale, improve wildlife habitat, or to enroll in other forestry programs that require a forest management plan.

The process for developing a Forest Stewardship Plan is simple, but it may take a few months. The primary task for a landowner is to find and hire a certified Forest Stewardship Plan Writer. Below is a link to a list of approved plan writers in our region-wide.

The Forest Stewardship Program provides cost share to lower your cost to develop a Forest Stewardship Plan. This includes a partial cost share of \$225 per plan plus fifty cents per acre up to \$2,500 per landowner. The Forest Stewardship Program is funded by the United States Forest Service and is administered by the Department of Natural Resources.

To learn more visit: www.Michigan.gov/ForestStewardship

Learn more about the Forest Stewardship Council:
<https://us.fsc.org/en-us>

Learn more about sustainable forestry in Michigan:
<http://sfimi.org/>

Plan writers in Northwestern Michigan:
http://www.michigan.gov/documents/dnr/FSP_PlanWriters_NWLP_527319_7.pdf

EYES ON THE FOREST- WE NEED YOU!

The impact of exotic invasive species on our forests in the US is staggering. Effects of these unwanted invaders can affect human and ecosystem health, forest products, property values and outdoor recreation. Thanks to startup funding from the Michigan Invasive Species Grant Program, a team from Michigan State University (MSU) is launching a statewide effort to help residents learn about the risks and impacts of invasive forest pests. This program links research, outreach and communication activities through MSU's Department of Entomology and MSU Extension. The Eyes on the Forest program is targeting three major potential invaders that pose serious threats to Michigan trees and forests: [Asian Longhorned Beetle](#), [Hemlock Woolly Adelgid](#), and [Thousand Cankers Disease of Walnut](#).

All three of these invasive pests can kill their host trees. If any one of them become established in Michigan, it will be extremely difficult to stop them. One way to keep these unwanted invaders out of our woods is to create a network of sentinel trees across the state. The goal is to recruit trained volunteers who agree to "adopt" an individual tree, and periodically monitor and report on the condition of the tree over time. Changes in the condition of the tree are often important clues about what's happening with these pests. The more volunteers, the greater the number of sentinel trees, and the greater the chance that we keep these extremely damaging pests and diseases out!

BECOME A VOLUNTEER

We are looking for people who are interested in serving as a Michigan Sentinel Tree Volunteer. If you are interested, please contact:

Russell P. Kidd, Outreach Coordinator, kidd@msu.edu OR
Dr. Deborah McCullough, Professor, MSU Departments of Entomology and Forestry, mccullo6@msu.edu

For more information on these and other invasive pests and diseases threatening our natural resources, visit the Midwest Invasive Species Information Network (<http://www.misin.msu.edu/>)

Adapted from: http://msue.anr.msu.edu/program/info/eyes_on_the_forest

Photo: Michael Schwartz



The average age of farm operators in the United States is 58. In the next 20 years, an estimated 70 percent of privately owned agricultural land is expected to change hands in the US. Farmers in Leelanau County are not immune to this graying trend. Future viability of agriculture and rural communities in Leelanau depends on the successful transition of agricultural land from current owner operators to the next generation of farmers. Farmer to Farmer (F2F), Leelanau Conservancy's new program, aims to address this need.

F2F is a website that will serve Leelanau County as well as the Grand Traverse Region. The goal of F2F is to connect farmland owners who wish to sell or lease farmland with farmland seekers looking to buy or lease farmland. This website will also link agricultural employers with job seekers.

F2F is a free user-driven resource. Farmland owners will create profiles detailing their land. Farmland seekers will create profiles describing themselves and the characteristics of the property they are looking for. Finally, employers will outline available job opportunities. These profiles will comprise a searchable database on the F2F website (like Craigslist or Zillow, except with an agricultural focus) available to all users.

F2F will launch this spring, and is the result of a partnership between Leelanau Conservancy, the Michigan State University Horticulture Research Center and Taste the Local Difference, and GTRCC.

This program's success depends on your participation! Do you have land for sale or lease? Are you looking for permanent or seasonal farm labor? The F2F website will be online the end of APRIL. This will allow you to create a profile and list your property or job opportunity. Maybe you know a land seeker? Direct them to F2F!

For all inquiries, please contact Sam Plotkin, Farm Programs Manager with Leelanau Conservancy at splotkin@leelanauconservancy.org or (231) 256 9665.

Left: Draft version of the new F2F website.



Landowner Profile- Leo Creek Preserve

Nearly all conservation easement properties are NOT open to the public. However, here is one that is—and we thought you'd like to know about it!

Get to know the Leo Creek Preserve property, which was acquired early in 2016 and is forever protected by a conservation easement with the Leelanau Conservancy, and it is open to the public. The 9-acre property, known as the Leo Creek Preserve and owned by a private nonprofit family foundation, is located alongside the Leelanau Trail in the Village of Suttons Bay. It is being developed as an outdoor ecological and agricultural education center for the community and its visitors. The agricultural area offers a beautiful garden space designed for learning about sustainability and food production. It also serves as a convening space for community gatherings and offers quiet areas for tranquility and reflection.

The Preserve is a great location for education programs and for the public to experience Leo Creek, a beautiful and wide stream flowing swiftly through the woods. A half-mile trail follows the creek and emerges into a 1.5-acre agricultural area. Here you will find 90 heritage blueberry bushes that were a commercial enterprise over 40 years ago and are still

producing fruit. There are plans to extend the Leo Creek trail by another half mile. Much of the parcel is covered in cedar, birch, pine, and oak trees. It is one of the premier birding spots in Leelanau County; sounds of chattering and singing birds fill the air.

The educational programs at Leo Creek will focus on sustainable and practical green living practices as well as our natural world ecosystems and how they are connected to our daily lives. Plans include: Installing a solar drip irrigation system, launching a children's permaculture garden, planting and building large vegetable, fruit, and flower gardens, using permaculture as a foundation, cultivating and donating food grown on the property. The Foundation will also be partnering with the Inland Seas Education Association and Leelanau Montessori on multi-age educational programs for both students and teachers. The Crosshatch Center for Arts and Ecology will host a Seed Saving Workshop there this fall.

For details on what is ahead for 2017 visit their website: <https://leocreekpreserve.com> or follow them on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/leocreekinsuttonsbay/>

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Earth Week Events — Join Us!

<i>Hike It Baby! at DeYoung Natural Area</i>	Monday, April 17th at 10:00 am
<i>Clay Cliffs Garlic Mustard Workbee</i>	Tuesday, April 18th at 10:00 am
<i>Trail Run at Palmer Woods with M22</i>	Wednesday, April 19th at 5:00 pm
<i>Wildflower Rescue Annual Kickoff Meeting</i>	Thursday, April 20th at 10:00 am
<i>Spring Pops Hike at Krumwiede Forest Reserve</i>	Thursday, April 20th at 10:00 am
<i>Chippewa Run Trailbuilding Workbee</i>	Friday, April 21st at 10:00 am
<i>Executive Director's Hike at Kehl Lake</i>	Friday, April 21st at 2:00 pm
<i>Trees Before Leaves Identification Hike at Palmer Woods</i>	Saturday, April 22nd at 1:00 pm
<i>Earth Day Celebration at Tandem Ciders</i>	Saturday, April 22nd at 6:00 pm

To learn more and sign up, visit our website: <http://leelanauconservancy.org/events/hikes/>

