

## Crary Property a Miracle Present



You won't find a working oil well in Leelanau County, but you will find many of the benefits of petroleum extraction.

Twelve benefits, to be exact. That's the number of projects funded by the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund here since 1976. The Trust fund receives its revenues from oil and gas leases and extraction

on lands owned by the state of Michigan.

Actually, make that 13 projects with news that the Trust Fund board has approved perhaps the most impressive project yet—purchase of the Crary property in northern Leland Township.

The property will quickly become a landmark destination in Leelanau County, we predict. How could it not? Its 104 acres stretch from north Lake Leelanau westward to a 200 foot bluff overlooking Lake Michigan, the Manitou and Fox islands, and seemingly the world. For the uninitiated, you really need to feel as much as see the Lake Michigan shoreline from such a vantage to understand the magnificent place we call Leelanau.

Now the property is close to being forever preserved, a miracle of some magnitude considering its value for development.

The Trust Fund is a miracle in itself resulting from a compromise forged in 1972 between environmentalists and what would properly be termed “big oil” in today's terms. It will fund half of the property's \$5.8 million purchase. Some 25 percent was provided by the property's owner, Rachel Crary, who will fulfill her father's dream with the transaction. And the remaining 25 percent will be provided with grants and donations to the Leelanau Conservancy, whose talks with the Crarys started 16 years ago. The Conservancy is hoping to offset some of its cost through a federal grant being sought by Leland Township, which will end up as owners of the property. The Leland Township Board was also heavily involved, backing and then lobbying for the grant.

Some of the cost, of course, will be borne by everyone who pays property taxes. The land had a taxable value of \$3.5 million—seventh largest in Leelanau County. We'll all need to pitch in, to some extent, to make up for the loss of tax revenue.

It will be money well spent.

The people associated with the transaction felt deep in their hearts that the property is far too special to present to the generation of Leelanau County residents in a lesser form. We agree.

Miraculous things happen when people share a vision, and are willing to work for it. Considering the season, let's call the impending purchase of the Crary property a Christmas present—a miracle present—for Leelanau residents, present and future.