

NORTH OAKLAND HEADWATERS LAND CONSERVANCY

2012 Annual Report



The North Oakland Headwaters Land Conservancy (NOHLC) is a private, non-profit, donor supported organization with 40 years' experience in preserving open space in northwest Oakland County. Over 1,400 acres have been preserved, with parcels ranging from 1/2 acre to over 100 acres.

NOHLC's mission is to conserve the woods, fields, streams and other natural resources in the headwaters area of the Clinton, Shiawassee, Huron and Flint Rivers.

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Introduction

Dear Conservation Supporters,

So ends another adventurous year for NOHLC. Two accomplishments stand out from your Conservancy's 40th year of protecting land: First, the completed purchase of a conservation easement on 250 acre Camp Wathana in Rose Township. This project, many years in the making, supports Campfire USA's mission of providing a wondrous environment for children to discover and learn about the natural world around them, while protecting in perpetuity one of North Oakland County's ecological gems.

NOHLC's second major accomplishment of 2012 was earning accreditation from the Land Trust Alliance Accreditation Commission. Through a rigorous evaluation process, this designation confirms that NOHLC operates according to LTA's Standards and Practices, ensuring to supporters, partners and landowners that your Conservancy is ready and able to meet the challenge of protecting important land in perpetuity.

NOHLC enters 2013 with another reason for great excitement: The arrival of new Executive Director Marie Donigan. With her experience in planning, landscape architecture and three terms in the Michigan legislature, Ms. Donigan is poised to lead NOHLC into a new phase of conservation.

As has been the case since its inception in 1972, none of this would be possible without our many committed supporters and volunteers. We thank you for your continued dedication, and invite you to reach out to us anytime to let us know what's important to you as supporters of NOHLC.

Yours,



Chris Benedict
NOHLC Board President

NOHLC has interests in 54 properties totaling 1400 acres in six communities.

The organization's mission is to protect the unique character of the natural resources and quality of life for the communities and future generations of northwest Oakland County.

None of this would be possible without our many committed supporters and volunteers!

NOHLC BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND STAFF

2012

Executive Director

Susan Julian

Administrative Associate

Penny S. Mason

Board President

Chris Benedict

Secretary

Cory Johnston

Treasurer

Collin Walls

Past President

Susan Julian

Directors

William S. Edwards

Kirk Falvay

Melanie Foose

Chet Koop

David McCarty

Bette Moen

Paul Rabaut

Dan Stencil

Performance Auditors

Katie Anderson

Mary Blanchard

Sue Topping

Events Coordinator

Susan Jones

2013

Executive Director

Marie Donigan

Administrative Associate

Penny S. Mason

Board President

Chris Benedict

Vice-President

Kirk Falvay

Secretary

Susan Julian

Treasurer

Marilyn Zigarac

Past President

Susan Julian

Directors

William S. Edwards

Melanie Foose

Bette Moen

Paul Rabaut

Collin Walls

Performance Auditors

Mary Blanchard

Events Coordinator

Susan Jones

SUMMARY OF 2012 ACTIVITIES

1. New Protected Properties

Camp Wathana: With the generous support of a \$100,000 grant from the Carls Foundation and a successful fundraising campaign, NOHLC completed the purchase of a conservation easement on 250-acre Camp Wathana in Rose Township. This easement protects large portions of two pristine lakes and a variety of wildlife habitats. The purchase also supports Camp Fire USA SEM which is maintaining one of Southeast Michigan's few remaining children's camps.

2. Accreditation

In August 2012, NOHLC received the honor of accreditation by the Land Trust Alliance, a national organization working to strengthen the ability of local land trusts to preserve land. Gaining status as an accredited land trust signifies to potential partners, donors and other stakeholders that NOHLC operates under the highest of ethical principles with sound, effective practices. Two grants from Advancing Conservancy Excellence, a program of Heart of the Lakes Center for Conservation Policy, aided NOHLC in organizing its records and accountability procedures.

Throughout the nearly three-year long process of application preparation, NOHLC staff, Board and volunteers labored tirelessly to develop and implement policies and procedures that provide improved efficiency and accountability in all areas of operation. Everyone involved with the accreditation effort emerged with an in-depth understanding of industry-best standards and practices, an improved familiarity with NOHLC's inner workings and far greater appreciation of its history and those who have successfully guided the organization for 40 years. Special thanks go to consultant Celeste Rabaut, whose contributions and efforts went far beyond what she signed up for as coordinator of the accreditation team, and Paul Rabaut who guided internal efforts.

3. Stewardship

Conserving land is not accomplished by merely acquiring a property or easement. NOHLC has an obligation to steward the properties under its care, maintaining their conservation values in perpetuity. This means monitoring its properties at least annually, maintaining or restoring features and ecological functions and addressing any actions which violate agreements or harm conservation values.

In 2012, the Stewardship Committee and volunteer property inspectors again put forth incredible effort monitoring NOHLC properties, and successfully resolved several minor violation situations. A Stewardship Field Coordinator was engaged to assist with a number of projects, including the removal of invasive species from several properties and the installation of boundary markers to identify protected areas. Stewardship Committee members were also instrumental in preparing reports and documents necessary for the Camp Wathana easement acquisition.

4. Staff

Sue Julian stepped up to serve as NOHLC's interim Executive Director in February 2012. Penny Mason continued her outstanding service as Administrative Associate, and Events Coordinator Susan Jones was again instrumental in facilitating NOHLC's successful fundraisers.

In 2012 the Board of Directors made the decision to hire a full time Executive Director, and in December offered the position to former state legislator Marie Donigan, effective January 2013.

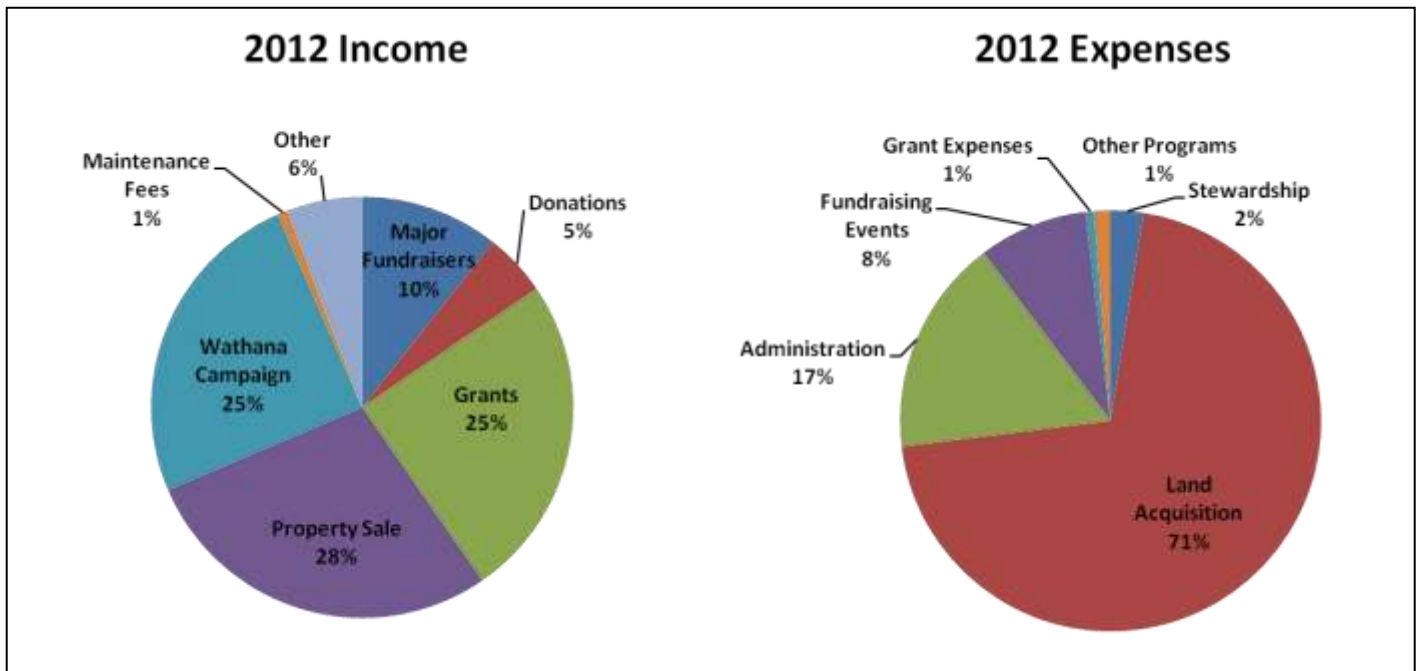
5. Disposition of Assets

- a) Schwartz Preserve: The 13-acre Schwartz Preserve was donated as a life estate in 1999 and NOHLC took possession of the property with the Schwartz's passing in 2011. Because the property's conservation values are protected in perpetuity by a conservation easement, and due to the burdensome expense involved with maintaining the property's residence, NOHLC decided to sell the property. The sale's net proceeds of approximately \$113,500 were distributed among NOHLC's Legal Defense Fund, Land Acquisition Fund and Fred Roeser Stewardship Fund. In conjunction with the sale, the conservation easement on the property was transferred from Six Rivers Regional Land Conservancy to NOHLC.
- b) Springfield Endowment Fund: The Springfield Endowment Fund was established to preserve property for the benefit of Springfield Township residents, and had been administered by joint agreement between NOHLC and the Springfield Site Action Committee (SSAC). NOHLC in 2012 returned sole control of the funds to SSAC, reserving stewardship and legal defense funds for two properties acquired during the joint agreement.

FINANCIAL CONDITION OF THE CORPORATION

Reduced staff costs, continued diligence in reducing administrative costs, the sale of the Schwartz property and a successful Camp Wathana campaign allowed NOHLC to strengthen its financial position significantly in 2012. The Conservancy’s finances were also bolstered by the ‘wildly’ successful addition of a new fundraiser, and brainchild of Administrative Associate Penny Mason: the Wild Ride in the Countryside.

Looking to 2013, NOHLC is buoyed by the addition of new Treasurer Marilyn Zigarac, who brings 30 years of accounting experience to help oversee financial matters.



ESTIMATION OF VOLUNTEER HOURS-CONTRIBUTIONS

Total Hours—Stewardship:	600	In-kind value:	\$12,000
Total Hours—Land Acquisition:	450	In-kind value:	\$ 9,000
Total Hours—Accreditation:	200	In-kind value:	\$4,000
Total Hours—Office Administration:	1,200	In-kind value:	\$24,000
Total Hours—Fundraising Events	<u>250</u>	In-kind value:	<u>\$ 5,000</u>
TOTAL:	2,700		\$54,000.00

LIST OF ALL PROPERTIES AND INTEREST IN PROPERTIES

- | | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Waterford Hills | 25. Bald Eagle Lake | 49. Tully Lake |
| 2. Cedar Park I | 26. Pine Knob Country Estates | 50. Long Lake Village |
| 3. Schmude Sanctuary | 27. Schwartz Preserve | 51. Oakland Hill II |
| 4. Poquosin I | 28. Haddon Nursery | 52. Gill Landing |
| 5. Poquosin II | 29. Oakland Crest | 53. Thread Creek Farm |
| 6. Steeple Ridge | 30. Bailey Preserve | 54. Hall's Connector |
| 7. Old Sturbridge | 31. Hummingbird Ridge | 55. Camp Wathana |
| 8. Whipple Tree | 32. Whipple Lake | |
| 9. Nolta-Brennan | 33. Liberty | |
| 10. Kimball Sanctuary | 34. Thomson Preserve | |
| 11. Keller | 35. Hidden Ridge | |
| 12. Cranberry Lake | 36. Ingomar Farms | |
| 13. Robert Shell Fen | 37. Victoria Preserve | |
| 14. Oakhill | 38. Dixie Preserve | |
| 15. Deerwood Hollow | 39. Princeton Preserve | |
| 16. Village Park | 40. Rattalee Shores | |
| 17. Heather Haven | 41. Forest Pointe | |
| 18. Round Lake | 42. Clarkston Woods | |
| 19. Voorheis-Beardsley | 43. Davis Lake Overlook | |
| 20. Bridge Valley Reserve | 44. Eaton Wet Meadow | |
| 21. Oakland Hill | 45. Holly Lakeview | |
| 22. Cedar Park II | 46. Hall's Preservation | |
| 23. Springfield Nature | 47. Campbell Easement | |
| 24. Suzanne G. Knorr Preserve | 48. Waterworks Wetlands | |

NATURE AND PURPOSE OF LEASES

NOHLC has not leased any of its property or property interests in its 40 year existence.

NOHLC does sublet the office within its leased office space at the Springfield Township Civic Center.

The office is sublet to the Oakland Conservation District.




Camp Wathana


North Oakland Headwaters Land Conservancy

2013 ANNUAL PLAN


Strategic Priority One: Increase the Pace and Quality of Conservation

-  **Goal:** Based on the Strategic Conservation Plan and 10,000 Acre Challenge, prioritize NOHLC resources and engage stakeholders to increase new preservation.


Strategic Priority Two: Continue Development of Organizational Capacity

-  **Goal:** Ensure corporate structure (Staff and Board) is organized, resourced and able to carry out NOHLC's mission, integrating the work of volunteers


Strategic Priority Three: Increase Outreach and Support Base

-  **Goal:** Increase NOHLC's visibility in the community, leading to more local support and better contact with local governments.

Strategic Priority Four: Funding & Financial Management

-  **Goal:** Build on positive financial position for the Conservancy in 2013 and beyond, with improved and transparent accounting. Ensure financial sustainability.

Strategic Priority Five: Manage current holdings for permanent protection of their conservation values

-  **Goal:** Improve NOHLC stewardship practices according to Land Trust Alliance (LTA) standards.

The full Board-approved 2013 Annual Plan is available upon request at the NOHLC office.