

Vol 25, Winter 2010



# Conservancy helps finance 186 acre Upper Bushman preservation project in Independence Township

#### **Inside this issue:**

- Recognition for Members, Donors, Partners and Volunteers
- Thread Creek Farm is preserved forever
- Tom Bullen Award, Blue Heron Award, Stewardship Awards
- Coming event : Great Blue Heron Open Golf Outing

With help from your land conservancy, Independence Oaks County Park near Clarkston will expand by 186 acres when a purchase agreement for what is called the Upper Bushman Lake property is signed. The parcel is one of the most significant high quality green spaces in Oakland County. "NOHLC has longed viewed Upper Bushman Lake as Independence Township's #1 priority for natural resource protection.

More than 700 acres of Independence Oaks habitat are directly influenced by water quality from the Upper Bushman Lake property which is the headwaters area of the Clinton river," said

Sue Julian, NOHLC President.

The property's \$2.836 million purchase price will be paid for with \$1.74 million from the Oakland County Parks, \$945,000 from a Michigan Department of Natural Resources Trust Fund grant, a contribution of \$16,000 from NOHLC as well other sources to be finalized soon. The NOHLC donation will come from a fund created primarily from multiple small donations from residents within Independence Township. "We are so grateful to the many long-time

Continued on pg 2

#### **Leaving Tracks**

By Katie Anderson, NOHLC Executive Director

February gave me my first snowshoeing adventure in Michigan. It was a brief but refreshing trek through the forest of Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, where I saw tracks inscribed by porcupine, rabbits, raccoons, mice, squirrels, and birds. I was reminded of the pure fascination I had as a child, running outside into the freshly fallen snow watching my tracks appear behind me. Unlike larger species who find moving through deep snow difficult (hence the snowshoes), these busy, quiet often unnoticed critters hop around without falling through the snow leaving behind evidence of their secret lives.



Have you taken a child you know out into the snow to discover the mystery of animal tracks? Winter is a perfect time to do this. Try out our Kimball Preserve near downtown Clarkston for an "in the snowy wood experience".

Speaking of tracks left by those who have gone before, many NOHLC supporters mourn the loss in 2009 of Janet McCord (see page 4) and Fred Roeser, both of whom left their footprints on local land conservation. Their passing makes some of us ask ourselves, "What tracks will I leave?"

In this Annual Report you will learn the "mission accomplished" details of our efforts at new preservation (See "Thread Creek Farm" and "Upper Bushman"). You'll read how our stewardship group makes sure we don't lose sight of what we *do* have (See "Land Stewards"). You'll want to be aware of our conservation planning efforts for the future. We want to keep a sharp focus on what is now unprotected in your community, but worthy of protection (See "Mapping Our Green and Blue Future"). And of course, we thank and acknowledge 2009 support without which we would be unable to protect the nearly 1200 acres we have, nor can we protect more like it.

Often with tracks, we see none of the track-makers. They went before. That is part of their magic. But they left something of themselves so we can "see" them now. You too can write your spirit into the earth, by supporting land protection that lasts forever.

#### Upper Bushman preservation continued from page 1

supporters who recognized the urgency to protect the largest single intact parcel in the township and made extra contributions to the project," said Julian. The pristine property features a 31-acre lake within its boundaries. It is situated northeast of Independence Oaks County Park and bordered by Sashabaw and Oak Hill roads. The corners of the two properties connect tip-to-tip through wetlands creating opportunities for a boardwalk connector trail. Ownership is expected to transfer by the end of March.

"We are beyond pleased to add this jewel to our system and to be able to preserve it for generations to come," commented Dan Stencil, Executive Officer of Oakland County Parks and NOHLC Board Member. "This acquisition will allow for the preservation of nearly 1,000 acres of contiguous habitat in the headwaters of the Clinton River. The property also has a hardwood-conifer swamp which is rare in the state. Walking this land you really get the feel that you are in northern Michigan."

Independence Oaks offers more than 14 miles of nature trails. The Upper Bushman Lake property, according to Stencil, already has a number of "two track" trails established. "Oakland County residents have spoken and their overwhelming response is they want the Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission to maintain and create more trails for walking, hiking, biking and equestrian use," Stencil said. Stencil projects the property will be available for public use by late 2010/early 2011.



#### Five New "Land Steward" Awardees

NOHLC recognized five volunteers who have attained the status of "Land Steward" in 2009. Accepting NOHLC green fleece vests reading "Land Steward" at the recent Annual meeting were:

- Joan Harbaugh Emily DuThinh Sue Julian
  - Lora Perkins Kathy Rollins

(for information about the Land Steward Program, please see page 3)

#### Wonder In Conservancy Work

By Sue Julian, NOHLC President

No matter the season, there is wonderment and adventure in conservancy work. Five explorers from NOHLC walked out on the ice of a bog in January and discovered scarlet pitcher plants poking through the snow perched atop hummocks of sphagnum moss. Four other investigators just reviewed our latest easement and came upon 30-40 wild turkeys sheltering in the woodlot. More NOHLC volunteers turned out to clear a walking path on one of our small properties and were surprised by the naturalness of the wetland nestled in the middle of a residential area.



Connection to nature motivates many of our supporters who devote generously of their time and money. Increasingly, however, a different kind of volunteer is needed to preserve these special places forever.

A modern conservancy needs planners, financial managers, researchers, office workers, lawyers, fundraisers and organizers to guard its properties. NOHLC is no exception. It has chosen to respond vigorously to external forces that threaten the permanence of lands we hold. In 2009 we embarked on a process leading us to Accreditation by the national Land Trust Alliance. We can earn their Infinity symbol by putting our internal house in order. Throughout the 38 years of our existence, our many volunteers have done the right thing, but have not necessarily documented all the steps that are now required by the IRS and new laws; that's where we need help.

So this is a call to all who support our mission—the outdoor people and the people with indoor skills—to step up and help us be the best possible guardian of the fields, streams, wetlands and woodlands of the headwaters of the Clinton, Huron, Flint and Shiawassee rivers. The fragile wood frog emerging from the ice depends on you. The last blue heron soaring up and away in fall depends on you. The savannas of summer and the forever beautiful flush of marsh marigolds blooming in spring depend on you.



#### It's Your Backyard

By Joan Harbaugh

Good things are happening in conservation in Northwest Oakland County and at your Land Conservancy.

Soon it will be time to schedule workdays at Preserves and Easements. Dave

McCarty, NOHLC Board member, got a head start this winter by cutting down many dead ash trees near the trails in the Nels Kimball Sanctuary in Independence Township. Some trees are too large to move without cutting into logs but many can be moved to line the trails. Need strength training in a healthier environment than a gym? Gather friends, neighbors and relatives and make it a fun outing.

Want more passive exercise? Just walk the well-marked trails. In early spring the wildflowers are lovely and you can enjoy the twists and turns of this arm of the Clinton River. Location: behind Mesquite Creek restaurant with access to the Preserve at Perry Lake Rd. cul-de-sac. Take Clarkston Rd. to Perry Lake Rd. just opposite the Library.

In spring and summer we'll continue to grow a prairie at the Voorheis/Beardsley Preserve on Clintonville Rd. just opposite Maybee Rd. Watch for workdays on the website at www.nohlc.org. Think early spring after a winter that has, thus far, been kind to Michigan! If you are interested in joining us in Stewardship or have questions, give me a call at 248-625-3316 or e-mail me at joanharbaugh@att.net.

#### **Land Steward Program**

"Earning the Green Vest"

The newly created **Land Steward Program** is designed to enrich the experience of NOHLC stewardship volunteerism. Attaining and being recognized as a "Land Steward" means that a volunteer has demonstrated Stewardship knowledge, technique, effort, leadership and a desire to advance his/her land stewardship skills and achievements.

#### **Program Requirements**

- Program enrollment
- Trained as Property Inspector
- Completed 6 hours or more of Stewardship training
- Completed two property inspections
- Recorded 50 + Stewardship volunteer hours within one calendar year.

(Land stewards receive a special fleece vest. Additional hours and training are recognized annually with pins to be worn on the vest.)

#### To enroll in the program for 2010,

please contact the NOHLC office at (248) 846-6547 or email admin@nohlc.org.



#### Carolyn Wood Honored with Tom Bullen Award for 2009

At the Conservancy's Annual Member Meeting in January, Carolyn Wood received the Bullen Award. She joined the conservancy in 1995 having moved to Clarkston from Farmington Hills.

Perhaps it was the Clinton River flowing aimlessly through the back of her property or her love of gardening and all things natural that led her to join kindred souls in volunteering for NOHLC.

During the period 2002-2005, NOHLC brought fourteen new properties under its protection. It was during this fast growing time that Carolyn stepped up to chair the Stewardship Committee. When Carolyn Wood steps up-THINGS GET GOING! Carolyn lead volunteer efforts with the energy and skills needed to schedule, track, and document the physical inspections of 48 properties totaling over 1100 acres. Where properties needed remediation, she organized workdays to remove invasive plants.

Recently Carolyn has become known as the Pearl Mesta of NOHLC. The driving force behind the ever-successful **Wild Night Out** benefit auctions and fundraisers, she chaired **Wild Night Out Goes Country, Wild Night Out Swamp Stomp and Wild Night Out Flower Power.** Our thanks to Carolyn for being one of many who lead the way for conservation.

## Thomas K. Bullen Award

Given annually, our most prestigious award recognizes outstanding service and support for NOHLC that is sustained over the years.

This award is named after Thomas K. Bullen, a visionary who saw the need for and established the Independence Land Conservancy as one of the first Conservancies in Michigan.



#### Those Who Have Gone Before Us

#### **Akin To Nature**

with love, gratitude, and in celebration of Janet McCord poem by Jeanie McCord

She was an explorer akin to nature and fancied the wildflower fields. She embraced the pond's wooded acres for the secrets they would yield.

She studied Jupiter's Io, and snorkeled the tropical seas. She was up on the latest brain research with intellectual curiosity.

Politically active when it came to environmental injustice. Her passion was undefeatable. The gravel giants were disgusted. She painted with transparent colors and encouraged others to explore their talents, and with preludes of creating art she gave to each of us more balance.

I loved her creative playfulness she swept any of life's dullness away. She could cook and garden artfully and make any day a welcome day.

She lives in our hearts and minds with inspired exploration.
With courage and an artful eye and with passionate determination.

Janet McCord died in 2009. She was a longtime member and supporter of the conservancy. She designed our first great blue heron logo proudly shown on the first annual report in 1973. She served ably as both Director and Auditor between 1972 and 1990.

Kimball Preserve - Photo by John Meyland

## Mapping Our Green and Blue Future

We are developing a new focused plan for headwaters land and water protection employing the latest GIS mapping and modeling tools available through Oakland County Planning Services. Called our Strategic Conservation Plan, its goal is to:

- Inspire action (ours and others)
- Create a vision and a plan to accomplish it
- Improve decision-making
- Enhance our fundraising
- Document a compelling story
- Improve stewardship
- Enhance credibility with stakeholders

Do you love maps? Do you want to learn more about the green and blue that needs conserving your own community? Want to join in the process?

Contact Katie Anderson at mail @nohlc.org or call 248-846-6547

#### 2009 Blue Heron Award

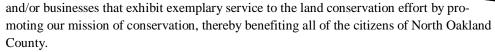
Presented to

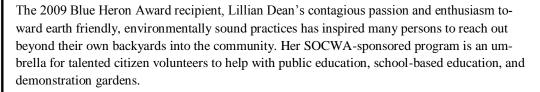
#### Lillian F. Dean, FAICP

Environmental Education Consultant

#### SOCWA Healthy Lawns & Gardens Program

We proudly award our prestigious Blue Heron Award annually to those individuals, corporations, governments





Gardeners, community leaders and interested citizens from throughout Oakland County and beyond have attended and benefited from her educational programs. As a result, they too act as volunteers, group educators and enlightened business operators spreading the word and exercising earth friendly environmental practices on urban, rural, recreational and conserved properties including many of NOHLC properties.

Lillian's work to improve local landscapes began in 1992 when she organized Michigan's first Master Composter Program for citizen volunteers. The project launched her work with SOCWA, the Southeastern Oakland County Water Authority. In cooperation with SOCWA office staff, her Healthy Lawns and Gardens education program has expanded to include citizen and municipal education on topics such as healthy soils, invasive plants, rain gardens, composting, earth-friendly lawn care, native plantings, the Treekeeper program, and more.



#### **NOHLC** Website

Have you seen the NOHLC website lately? Go to **www.NOHLC.org** and get the latest upcoming NOHLC information! See what our mission is all about, get maps and information on NOHLC protected properties. Meet the board and staff, learn what tax incentives there are for preserving land, keep track of NOHLC events and meetings on our calendar, get the latest links in conservation and learn what you can do to help preserve "the woods, fields, streams, wetlands and natural resources " <u>right here in our own backyards.</u>

# Protecting 97 acres of farm, woodland & stream

On the last day of 2009, Virginia and Michael Knag and NOHLC's Executive Director, Katie Anderson, met at the Genesee county courthouse to execute and file the Conservation Easement donated by the Knags to permanently protect the conservation values of 97 acres of their 140 acre farmstead known as Thread Creek Farm.

Leaving the courthouse Ginny, whose connection to the farm and the land run deep, said, "I just knew this was the right thing to do. I have peace of mind knowing that the farm will be protected in perpetuity and can be appreciated by generations beyond my life. I have enjoyed the farm because of the actions taken by my ancestors to preserve it over these many years."

Having been continually farmed by Virginia's family for six generations, the family still uses the original buildings. Virginia is the great-great-great granddaughter of Jonathon Davison. John C. Evatt, deceased in 2008 was a fifth generation farmer who passed down the property to his daughter Virginia Evatt Knag and her husband Mike Knag.

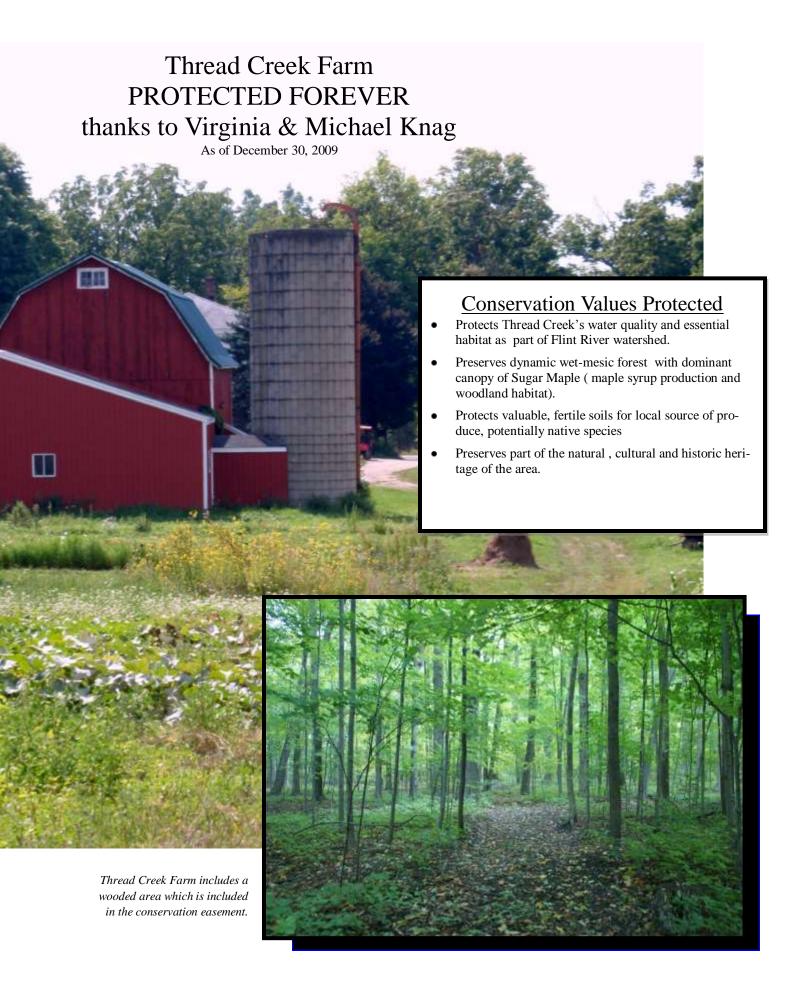
They produce native Michigan perennial flowers, sweet corn, pumpkins, and raise a small herd of cattle and turkeys. They open their farm to school groups in the Fall and their roadside stand also provides produce to the public. "I am pleased that we can now focus more on stewardship, than the financial burdens of farming," Ginny said.

The easement drafted and negotiated by Frank Aiello, Thomas M. Cooley Law School Associate Professor and editor of the newly-drafted Michigan Model Conservation Easement, provides for two zones of protection. The "Habitat Zone" covers the riparian area including Thread Creek and the wooded area, while the "Agricultural Zone" allows for ecofriendly agricultural practices. The Baseline documentation which serves as a permanent record of the land's conservation values was prepared by Kathleen Rollins, NOHLC Land Steward. The management plan for the property is being prepared in collaboration with Virginia's niece, Shannon Walker, forestry student at MSU. David McCarty, a

NOHLC board member and volunteer, will install permanent NOHLC boundary markers.



Headwaters of the Flint River- Great Lakes Watershed



#### Thank-you 2009 Members, Donors & Partners

NOHLC appreciates each individual, group, business and institution that has helped us further our conservation mission. Following is a list of gifts and donations made in 2009. Please accept our apologies for any unintentional errors. For corrections, please email us at admin@nohlcv.org or call (248) 846-6547

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Land Trust Alliance

Charles S. Mott Foundation
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tion

Pfizer Foundation

#### Thank-you Volunteers !!! Linda Pudlik



Volunteer (and board member) David McCarty

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Chris Benedict
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Volunteers: Lora Perkins & Kathy Rollins

### **Wild Night Out -**Flower Power Committee

Carolyn Wood, Chairman
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Judy Hensler
Joanne Inskeep
Sue Julian
Laura Moreau
Lois Robbins
Nancy Strole
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#### Thank-you ... 2009 Board & Auditors

Mrs. Arlene Badgley
Mr. Chris Benedict
Mrs. Mary Blanchard
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Mr. Bill Edwards
Mr. Kirk Falvay
Mr. Paul Gambka
Mr. Cory Johnston
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Mr. Jim Reed Dr. Tom Stone

Mrs. Sue Topping Mr. Doug Williams

Mrs. Carolyn Wood



Mr. & Mrs. Tom Hall ride in the Labor Day parade.

#### You Can Help!

- Organizers and committee workers for special events such as the Great Blue Heron Golf Outing, the Wild Night Out Auction, farmer markets or parades. Like to organize parties or get-togethers? Give us a call!
- NOHLC office work: Someone familiar with computers who can do database entry on a regular weekly basis.
- Someone who likes the "old fashioned" filing work
- Simple bookkeeping or assemble Special mailings

**Don't have the time to volunteer** but would like to donate in-kind? The NOHLC office is in need of the following items:

- flat screen monitors—17" and greater laptop computer
- Conference room table (and chairs)
- Tall book case
- To help, please call the office at (248) 846-6547 or email us at admin@nohlc.org.

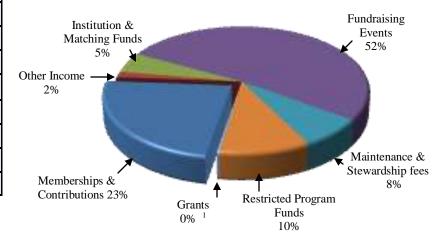


Boy Scout Troop 185 cutting Buckthorn at the Kimball Preserve.

#### **Ever wonder how NOHLC uses your donations?**

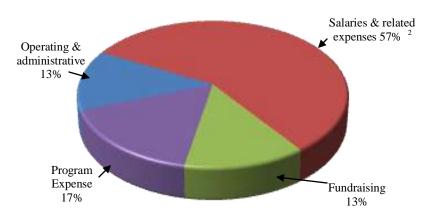
| 2009 Operating Income          |        |
|--------------------------------|--------|
| Memberships & Contributions    | 19,786 |
| Grants <sup>1</sup>            | 250    |
| Maintenance & Stewardship Fees | 6,366  |
| Institutions & Matching Funds  | 4,425  |
| Other Income                   | 1,216  |
| Fundraising Events             | 43,962 |
| Restricted Program Income      | 8,625  |
| Total                          | 84,381 |

#### 2009 Operating Income \*



# 2009 Operating ExpensesFundraising10,932Operating & Administrative11,287Salaries & related expenses 248,408Program Expense13,932Total84,560

#### 2009 Operating Expenses \*



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Editor & Design: Penny Mason Writers: Katie Anderson, Sue Julian Photos: John Meyland, Kathy Rollins, Penny Mason, Katy Anderson Please save paper & postage for 2010 membership renewals. JOIN - DONATE online or use the enclosed envelope today!

<sup>1</sup>Grant income is shown in the year it is expended. A \$12000 grant from the Advancing Conservancy Excellence Program will be used in 2010 for accreditation.



PO Box 285 Clarkston, MI 48347

# Save The Date!

# The Great Blue Heron Golf Outing

Back by Popular Demand!

Monday, July 26, 2010

1:00pm Shotgun Start

at

#### **Davison Country Club**

At I-69 and M-15 Sponsorships Available Now



# Great Blue Heron Open

