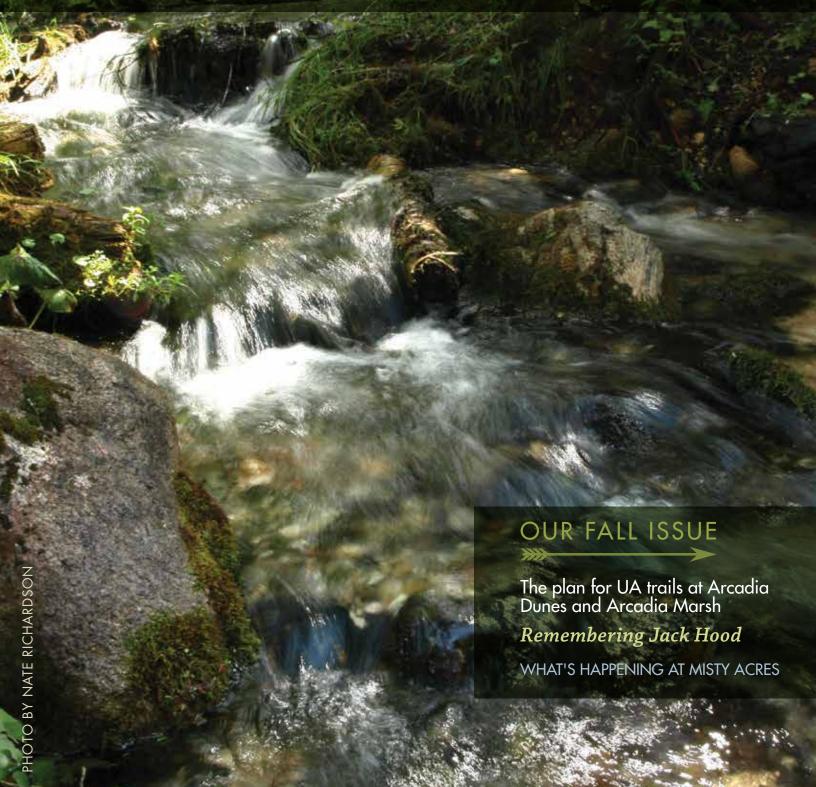


Iandschusses FALL 2015 | VOL. 65 | GTRLC.ORG

Protecting Significant Natural, Scenic & Farm Lands, & Advancing Stewardship, Now & For All Future Generations





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Dear Friends,

Fall is always an invigorating time in Northern Michigan. We feast on fresh apples, squash, cider and other seasonal staples from our local farms, and sweeping fall colors give us the distinct sense that another "Up North" winter is just around the corner.

It's also a time when many of our supporters give special consideration to their giving, which we as an organization value so greatly. Every single gift — large or small,

financial or otherwise — helps us carry out our mission to protect and care for our region's special places.

As Traverse City and its surrounding attractions continue to appear on top ten lists across the country, more and more people want to move here. This increased awareness of our region's special qualities coupled with an increasingly bright economic climate creates the perfect recipe for development at a pace not seen for nearly a decade.

Steadily increasing development pressure threatens our farmland, woods, shoreline and open spaces, making the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy's work more important than ever. We are feverishly working to protect several key parcels of land, and we're very excited to announce these successes soon.

This issue contains a tribute to Jack Hood, our founding board chairman and one of my most important mentors. Jack knew development pressure would be a constant threat to the region's unique charm, and he strongly believed in the importance of a vigorous and active land trust to balance our region's inevitable growth.

GTRLC is only as strong as those who believe in and support our work, and, as always, we thank you for your generosity, commitment and love for Northern Michigan. Best wishes for a happy and healthy end to 2015.

Glen Chown, GTRLC Executive Director

MEET DAVID FOOTE

A Michigan native with a long history in land protection was selected to head up

the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy's stewardship efforts.

David Foote, 39, began work as Director of Land Stewardship in June. This position was last held by longtime GTRLC land steward Abby Gartland, who passed away in January.

The Director of Land Stewardship oversees a team of staff members and volunteers who are primarily responsible for improvements to and maintenance of the GTRLC's nature preserves.

Foote, originally from the St. Joseph area, spent about 13 years working on substantial land and water protection projects in Florida, first for Broward County — which encompasses the greater Ft. Lauderdale area — and then the South Florida Water Management District.

In those positions, he worked in coastal restoration, farmland protection and other efforts strongly valued by the GTRLC in the Grand Traverse region.

After years of dealing with the often complex legal documents and terminology connected with land

protection work, Foote studied and earned a law degree from Florida International University, giving him a very practical boost to his overall knowledge of land protection and enhancement.

"David has a unique skillset that makes him perfect for this position," GTRLC Executive Director Glen Chown said.

Foote's strong technical background, in addition to his passion for Michigan and ability to work well with GTRLC's staffers, volunteers and supporters, make

him a fantastic addition to the team, Chown said.

Foote is glad to be back in Michigan, and he's particularly excited to be in the Grand Traverse region.

"I really like that people here take protecting their regional identity seriously," he said. "This area is known for its orchards, its agricultural production, its beautiful views — and they want that to be a part of their identity forever."



DAVID FOOTE,
Director of Land Stewardship

Restoring Grasslands for the Next Generation

A regular check on a private piece of land in rural Grand Traverse County led to substantial native grasslands restoration work.

After the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy works with a private landowner to secure a conservation easement — which permanently protects land against development — it is GTRLC's responsibility to periodically monitor that easement to ensure compliance.

Large swaths of native grasses will soon grow on Wayne Rowe's 120-acre centennial farm property near South Boardman, the result of a conversation he had with GTRLC easement manager Vic Lane as Lane completed a scheduled check of the property a few years back.

Plenty of non-native vegetation had cropped up on the land, which Rowe and GTRLC protected with an easement in 2001. Rowe wanted to re-establish native species to benefit grassland birds and improve his property's overall ecological health.

"He really has a desire to leave his land better than

it was," Lane said. "It's something his family did for him, and that he wants to do for the next generation."

Lane assisted with drafting a grasslands restoration management plan, which allowed Rowe to apply for a Natural Resources Conservation Service cost-share grant. He then coordinated partners to help Rowe implement the project.

GTRLC generally does not have an active role in land management on private property, but this was a situation where a little help went a long way.

"In recent years we've been thinking that there's been a missed opportunity in cases where landowners need assistance," Land said. "There might be a role we can play in not only protecting those lands from development, but also to enhance those lands we're protecting."

Rowe, who was grateful for GTRLC's assistance, is glad to have taken an active step in improving his land for future generations.

"I'm not doing this for myself," he said. "I'm doing this for my family."



Above all else, Jack Hood knew how to get people talking — and listening.

Among the many talents attributed to the charming and passionate founding chairman of the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy, his ability to bring people together and get them working toward a common goal was as crucial as could be during GTRLC's birth and formative years.

His leadership instilled confidence in nearly everyone who interacted with the fledgling organization, friends and associates said, setting a clear path for success and growth in a time when neither was guaranteed.

"He definitely had those intangible leadership qualities. I think some of it was God-given, but other parts, he earned it," GTRLC Executive Director Glen Chown said. "He just had this tremendous ability to bring people together."

Hood, 90, died in July. The former United States Marine, educator, activist and lifelong outdoor enthusiast served on a steering committee formed in 1990 when Rotary Charities decided to explore the possibility of a land trust in the Grand Traverse region. When GTRLC was officially founded in 1991, he served as the first board chairman.

Though he only served one term on the board, he remained closely connected to GTRLC until his death, often appearing at events and supporting the organization — and its staff members — in nearly every way possible.

"I feel like I've lost a dear, dear friend," Chown said.
"He was an extraordinary human being, and

REMEMBERING A FOUNDING FATHER JACK HOOD 1924 - 2015

to know Jack was to love Jack."

In addition to his founding father role at GTRLC, Hood also served as an instructor at and eventual director of the Interlochen Arts Academy, headmaster at The White Mountain School in New Hampshire, interim headmaster at The Pathfinder School and an educational consultant for what is now known as the Michigan Department of Natural Resources.

Hood grew up on a small farm in northern Minnesota and enlisted in the Marines in 1943, serving in the Pacific Theater. After the war he attended Central Michigan University, where he met his first wife, a native of Traverse City.

In the early days, the success of — and the even creation of — a land trust in the Grand Traverse region wasn't even close to a sure thing. The Leelanau and Little Traverse conservancies had recently formed, but there was no one to cover Grand Traverse, Benzie, Antrim, Kalkaska or Manistee.

Rotary Charities' then-director Rob Collier, himself relatively new to town, wanted to head up an effort to explore a land trust. While people recognized the need for conservation, he said, doubts and opponents swirled about. Among the main concerns were that a conservancy would hurt the tax base by removing too much land from the tax rolls, and that Traverse City-based power brokers would have undue influence on surrounding counties.

Chown recalls that even some connected to Rotary thought a land trust was a bad idea.

"There were plenty of Rotarians who were nervous and reluctant about starting a conservancy," he said. "There was no guarantee that it would be successful."

Collier knew Hood from Rotary. Hood's community connections meant he was well-trusted, Collier said, and

his ability to bring people together was simply unmatched. He was, in short, the perfect board chairman.

"Jack wasn't viewed as threat — he was truly viewed as a collaborator," Collier said. "He had this great way of putting people at ease and saying 'Look, we're all here because we love this place, so let's work together.'"

Hood's deep appreciation for conservation and natural resources — his entire career up to that point involved these passions in one way or another — was a major bonus.

"He saw the conservancy as just a phenomenal opportunity," Collier said. "He got the vision right away, and his passion really helped us. When Jack talked, people listened."

things and made sure Chown was free and available to focus on making land deals and building support in the community.

Chown said this effort can't be underscored enough, as he wouldn't have been able to accomplish nearly as much in those early days without a unified board behind him.

"Imagine if I had board issues to deal with instead of meeting with landowners, making relationships with donors, talking to community leaders," Chown said.

"He really kept the whole organization focused on the right thing, and that was to hit the ground running and establish a track record of success."

"JACK WASN'T VIEWED AS THREAT — HE WAS TRULY VIEWED AS A COLLABORATOR," COLLIER SAID. "HE HAD THIS GREAT WAY OF PUTTING PEOPLE AT EASE AND SAYING 'LOOK, WE'RE ALL HERE BECAUSE WE LOVE THIS PLACE, SO LET'S WORK TOGETHER.'"

Gil Bogley, publisher of the Traverse City Record-Eagle at the time, also served on the exploratory committee and on the initial board once the conservancy was formed. He said Hood was a "first-class consensus-builder" who brought people together with an infectious smile and the perfect personality.

"He had all of the qualities of leadership — the humility, the willingness to listen to other people's ideas," Bogley said. "He was also funny, and (people) go a long way toward wanting to work with people who have a sense of humor and don't take themselves too seriously."

Perhaps some others could have filled Hood's shoes during those formative years, Bogley said. But the impact likely wouldn't have been the same.

"Nobody could have done it better," Bogley said.

After Rotary eventually agreed to provide the initial funding for GTRLC, Collier, Hood, Bogley and others interviewed and hired Chown — who at the time worked as the associate director for land protection for the Little Traverse Conservancy — as the organization's first executive director.

Hood was a profoundly important mentor for Chown, who was just 29 at the time. But beyond providing guidance for the young and energetic executive director, Hood also completely handled the board side of

Greg Reisig, one of those early board members, said Hood was the perfect man to help the fledgling organization determine its identity.

"He was a strong, decisive leader at an important time," Reisig said. "And he was very, very committed to land conservation."

Chown remains impressed and thankful that Hood, who had already retired after a long and very accomplished career, got involved with the heavy workload of starting a new nonprofit.

"He could have just relaxed, watched birds and spent time in the outdoors," he said. "But he didn't. And that really was a tremendous undertaking."

Hood was also a visionary, Chown said. He foresaw the importance of protecting farmland in a time when farmland preservation received a fraction of the attention of other conservation efforts, even insisting that it be placed in the initial mission statement. He also hammered home the significance of stewardship when most of the focus was on land protection/alone.

"He truly was ahead of his time," Chown said.



When Naomi Borwell entrusted the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy with her beloved and scenic Misty Acres, she had a clear vision.

That vision — public education combined with natural preservation — is now reality as GTRLC staff continues to improve the property and engage the community through a variety of partnerships.

"Naomi knew how special this property was, and she wanted the public to be able to enjoy it like she did," said Vic Lane, a GTRLC easement and forestry specialist who oversees Misty Acres.

Borwell's beautiful property, willed to GTRLC upon her death in 2010, straddles the Benzie-Manistee County line. The roughly 600-acre parcel — now managed as Misty Acres: The Borwell Preserve — includes more than 360 acres of highly diverse hardwood forest and wetlands, a working farm and more than 6,200 feet of frontage on the Betsie River.

Through a recent partnership with the Benzie Conservation District, children participating in that organization's "Nuts 4 Nature" program explored the farm, woods and wetlands at Misty Acres. In the four-day program, 16 children between the ages of eight and 12 spent time learning about water and soil quality, agriculture, forest ecology and much more.

"The diversity of Misty Acres is something we were so excited about," said Aimé Merizon, outreach coordinator for the Benzie Conservation District. "It's super fabulous."

In addition to the variety of ecosystems packed into the preserve, the Borwell's former residence — which features a great room — was the perfect place for rainy day activities, Merizon said.

"We were just really thrilled," she said. "We hope we can come back next year!"

GTRLC also recently partnered with the Manistee Conservation District to offer a forest ecology and plant identification hike. Misty Acres boasts a very high level of botanical diversity in its forests and wetlands, making it ideal for such an event.

"Misty Acres was a great classroom for that because there's just so much going on there," Lane said.

Lane said GTRLC will continue to seek out educational partnerships in the future, as well as offer its own educational opportunities. Regular hikes are planned for the preserve, as are continued amenity improvements that will enhance and expand public access.

After receiving the property, GTRLC had several immediate issues to address before opening to the public. Facility improvements had to be made, along with limited contamination cleanup and installation of a parking lot, trailhead and kiosk for the wooded portion of the preserve.

With the help of longtime Borwell friend and property caretaker Barry Reed, who was hired by GTRLC to manage the preserve, conservancy staff also worked to implement better farming practices. The Borwells had a small herd of Belted Galloway cattle, but farmed them on a hobby basis and did not focus on sustainable farming practices.

By implementing rotational grazing and other practices, the GTRLC made the farm a true showcase for ecologically responsible farming.

"Part of having more to show and stories to tell out there is having something that we've done that fits with sustainability and the model farm we're trying to create," Lane said. "Rotational grazing gives us that."

Misty Acres is also being used by Michigan State University for research into the production of grass-fed beef over a three-year period. The intention of this research is to determine feasibility of producing, processing, and consuming local grass-fed beef in the Grand Traverse region. The program also includes research on soil nutrients and some education in the form of pasture walks.

In addition to agricultural work, GTRLC is also working to develop long-term public access and stewardship plans, both for the farm and the rest of the preserve.

For more information about Misty Acres, contact Vic Lane at vlane@gtrlc.org or (231) 929-7911.

SAFEGUARDING THE REGION'S MOST SPECIAL PLACES FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

Friends throughout our region support the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy because of a strong interest in our land, our water, our wildlife and our future. Many arrange planned gifts — accomplished through estates, trusts, annuities, insurance policies, beneficiary designations and other planned giving options — to ensure their vision and support can last well beyond their lifetimes.

These members of our Vanguard Society have an impact on land conservation far into the future, helping to ensure the places we save today will be protected and cared for forever.

Planning for a conservation legacy offers the satisfaction of supporting a vital cause, the excitement of knowing your gift will make a positive impact and — in many cases — substantial financial benefits to you and/or another beneficiary through tax advantages or life income.

"Planned giving allows me to view the gift as a living extension of my family and of our shared desire for future generations to have the opportunity to experience



themselves as part of a larger, breathing world," said GTRLC supporter Anne Warren.

We will work closely with your financial advisor to design a gift planning option that will meet your personal, financial and charitable goals, all while safeguarding the region's most special places for future generations.

For more information, contact Anthony Rupard, Director of Development, at 231-929-7911, or arupard@gtrlc.org.

GTRLC.ORG: A Fresh New Look and a Streamlined, Intuitive User Experience

The Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy launched a new website designed to enhance user experience and better promote GTRLC's efforts.

The website is designed to be more userfriendly than ever before. In addition to a fresh new look, it offers a more streamlined and intuitive navigation so visitors can find what they need right away.

Preserves and other protected areas are now searchable by activity and location, and property pages are designed to provide a single location for trail maps, hunting rules, volunteer activity, directional maps and much more.



CHECK IT OUT: VISIT WWW.GTRLC.ORG

Improving access to Arcadia's wonders

NEW TRAILS WILL BENEFIT FAMILIES AND VISITORS WITH MOBILITY ISSUES

In the spring of 2007, Kate Pearson hoped to help Eula Pray fulfill what would be one of her final wishes.

Pearson, a charitable giving specialist with the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy, knew Eula, a longtime GTRLC donor and supporter, wanted to see a blooming field of trilliums. Eula's health was declining, and the retired schoolteacher wouldn't be able to walk more than a few feet without use of a wheelchair.

Pearson checked around with GTRLC's stewardship team for ideas. Her best option was to drive Eula as far as she could

into Green Point Dunes, open the car door and let her peer into the forest. There were a few flowers within view, but the bulk of them were further into the woods.

Eula, then 97, was as close as she could get to the beloved flowers she treasured in her youth.

"I was so disappointed that I couldn't get her further into the woods," Pearson said. "We came all that way, but we just couldn't get her close enough to what she really wanted to see."

GTRLC is embarking on a mission to make sure people of all ages and physical conditions have access to nature, and it begins with plans at Arcadia Dunes: The C.S. Mott Nature Preserve and nearby Arcadia Marsh. Planning and fundraising is now underway for a new Universal Access trail and overlook at the dunes and another trail at the marsh.

"We want to make sure that everyone, regardless of age or ability, can easily access the wonderful natural resources and beautiful views in our region," GTRLC Executive Director Glen Chown said. "So many fantastic people came together to help protect these treasures, and they — and others — should be able to enjoy them for as long as they live."

The new dunes trail, called the Overlook Trail at



Photo taken at Galien River Park in Berrien County showing "Switchback" trail design, similar to the proposed UA overlook trail at Arcadia Dunes.

Arcadia Dunes, will be a firm path that easily allows people to get through the forest to a platform overlooking the lake.

Though details are still being finalized, the trail is planned to be six feet wide and about a half mile long, utilizing a series of switchbacks to make the gradient manageable for wheelchairs and strollers. To minimize disruption to the ecosystem, it will be built along an old two track cleared years ago for a planned development.

The platform will be about three quarters of a mile south of where the existing trail ends at Old Baldy, No changes will be made to the existing trail or natural overlook at Old Baldy.

The trail will benefit people in wheelchairs and other wheeled devices. It will also help families with strollers, who can only do so much on conventional trails that are often hilly, unstable and far too uneven for wheels. And people with knee or leg issues will benefit from the even surface.

"It's not only about older people with mobility issues," Pearson said.

The Overlook Trail is expected to help keep the natural overlook at Old Baldy as undisturbed as possible. There is no platform there, and there are no plans to build one.



"Part of the reason we're building an alternate trail is to take the pressure off Baldy," GTRLC Stewardship Director David Foote said. "Since it's been protected, it's been getting a lot of use. Many people will likely choose to take an easier alternative route to get to an overlook."

A separate trail at Arcadia marsh is also in the planning phases. Early iterations of that plan call for nearly 2,000 feet of boardwalk along an existing ridge. Like the Overlook Trail at the dunes, this boardwalk would allow for people of all abilities to easily traverse varied terrain.

For more information, contact Kate Pearson at (231) 929-7911 or kpearson@gtrlc.org.



THE PROTECTION PUZZLE

GTRLC Works Diligently to Preserve Our Region's Special Places

An agreement between the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy and a landowner who wants to protect his or her land sometimes involves many years, a few twists and turns and perhaps a few bumps in the road.

But when a piece of property is finally protected forever in a way that satisfies the owner's wishes and GTRLC's conservation requirements, everyone involved feels the satisfaction of time well spent.

"I view it from the very beginning as a partnership," said GTRLC Land Protection Specialist Chris Sullivan. "Part of my job is making sure it's a good fit for both of us, and I enjoy the story problem of it too. What their needs are, what our goals are and then having those mesh together."

Sullivan works with fellow land protection specialists Matt McDonough and Todd Vigland on GTRLC's land protection team. Each has at least 12 years of experience at GTRLC alone, and all share a tremendous passion for

preserving our region's special places.

Since its formation in 1991, GTRLC has protected more than 39,000 acres of land and 120 miles of shoreline in Grand Traverse, Antrim, Kalkaska, Benzie and Manistee Counties. Current and former GTRLC land protection

specialists are responsible for more than 200 conservation easements, 100 municipal assists and the acquisition of 34 properties managed as conservancy nature preserves.

GTRLC land protection staffers were



more or less reactive in the early days, said McDonough, who heads the land protection team. They worked to protect land as they heard about threats, quickly moving to lock things up. As the organization grew, staff and board developed land

protection criteria – size, proximity to existing protected land, threatened or endangered species habitat and more – and began to targeted outreach to landowners in crucial areas.

"Our whole goal was to just let

them know that we exist and the land preservation options that are available to them through us," McDonough said. "We're still closing deals today from people who got a letter from us 20 years ago."

After years of successful land protection in the region, GTRLC has established a reputation as a great resource for any person, government or agency looking to protect or acquire land.

Each land deal is different, McDonough said, but nearly all require considerable amounts of time, energy and money to finalize.

"Some people think that we just walk on to a beautiful piece of property, shake hands, raise the needed funds and pat ourselves

on the back, but there's so much more that goes into it," McDonough said. "There are so many hard costs and so much time associated with getting a deal on paper."

Land deals of all kinds often require tremendous amounts of internal

GTRLC PROTECTS LAND THROUGH THREE PRIMARY METHODS:



CONSERVATION EASEMENTS:

A conservation easement is a voluntary agreement between GTRLC and a private landowner that restricts development on a piece of property for perpetuity, regardless of the owner. GTRLC, which either purchases these easements from the landowner or receives them as a donation, is responsible for regular monitoring to make sure terms of the easement are upheld. GTRLC has secured and monitors about 215 of these easements.



MUNICIPAL ASSISTS:

GTRLC frequently assists communities in creating public parks and natural areas by providing expertise in fund acquisition (from private and public sources), land purchasing, land improvement, stewardship and much more. Some examples of our assists are the Pelizzari Natural Area, Elberta Dunes South and Maple Bay.



DIRECT PURCHASE OR DONATION:

GTRLC raises funds to purchase certain properties, and landowners also donate or bequeath land to our organization. These lands are then managed by us as nature preserves. Popular nature preserves include Pyatt Lake on Old Mission Peninsula and Arcadia Dunes.

For a full list of protected lands open to the public, please visit www.gtrlc.org.

and external legwork to finalize. It's not uncommon for the land team to work with a property owner's attorneys, accountants or other associates over a period of months or years to finalize the terms of an easement or acquisition. One recent protection project took more than 20 rounds of revisions before everyone was satisfied.

"What the majority of people don't understand is these projects can take years to accomplish, and even when you think it's going to be an easy deal, there's always a hiccup," McDonough said.

Then there's the need for environmental assessments, boundary surveys, title checks, appraisals, and other tasks that not only take time, but take money, as the land team needs to hire outside professionals.

Foundations and other financial supporters of GTRLC often require these checks as conditions for matching funds. Aside from that important fact, the land team also wants to make sure every deal will be air tight from a legal standpoint and that each piece of property — especially if it's going to be open to the public — is completely safe for recreation.

"You can't ensure that land will be preserved forever — and open for public use — without doing due diligence, and you can't do that due diligence for free," McDonough said. "Sometimes you find stuff, sometimes you don't, but it still costs money."

Donors to GTRLC's Conservancy Fund ensure that the land team has money available for these crucial tasks. With hundreds of deals under their collective belts, members of the land team make sure every penny is well spent.

"We're incredibly efficient with our donors' funds," McDonough said. "Our land team has over 40 years of combined experience, and there's a tremendous efficiency in executing all of the various tasks that need to be completed to see a project through."

McDonough and the rest of the land team are grateful for the support that lets them get their job done — a job that always leaves them smiling in the end.

"The permanence of our work, I can get emotional just talking about it," he said. "I think, 'Wow, I had one small part in helping to create this public park, or this natural area,' and it just doesn't get any better than that."

Those interested in donating to the Conservancy Fund can contact Anthony Rupard, GTRLC's Director of Development, at (231) 929-7911 or arupard@gtrlc.org



For a young Norm Ulbrich, one time of the year was far more special than any other.

Ulbrich, who grew up in the Detroit area, could barely contain his excitement as his family packed for annual trips to Camp Arcadia. He remembers sitting in the car, fidgeting and eager, hours before it was time to hit the road.

He fondly recalls the distinct scent of trees mingling with beach and lake as his family approached the historic summer camp. His parents met there, and their entire family felt a deep and strong connection to this special place along the Lake Michigan shore.

"As we turned down the dirt road going out to the camp, the sound of the tires on the gravel road got us so excited," he said.

Camp Arcadia — and the entire Arcadia area — only grew in importance to Ulbrich as the years went on. He met his wife Sue at the camp, and two of their children also went on to meet their spouses there. Norm and Sue established a successful accounting firm in the Chicago area, where Sue grew up, but made regular trips to Arcadia and eventually purchased a home there.

Growing up with trips to Camp Arcadia meant tons of hikes in and around the surrounding dunes, and the Ulbrich family's appreciation for and enjoyment of the natural wonders of Old Baldy, the shoreline and the surrounding forests was as much a draw as the camp itself.

Then, in 2003, everything was at risk of changing forever. Much of the property north of the camp, including Old Baldy, was owned by Consumers Energy, who for years let the public enjoy the land. Consumers was looking to sell, and a Texas developer planned a large golf course

surrounded by more than 200 homes. The dunes, the forests, the shoreline and more would be irreversibly altered.

The news was deeply upsetting for many people who valued the area.

"Just the thought of what that kind of development like that would have done to the town, the environment, we thought, 'Oh my gosh,'" Sue said.

For Norm, it was like a bad dream, in every sense of

"Before I'd even heard of that, I had dreams sometimes of being on the beach and there being factories and development there, and I'd wake up in shivers," he said. "When this came up, it was just like a nightmare."

Norm and Sue became involved immediately, attending citizen meetings led by the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy. GTRLC launched what was dubbed the Coastal Campaign, a sweeping fundraising effort designed to purchase and protect more than 6,000 acres in what is now Arcadia Dunes: The C.S. Mott Nature Preserve, the Green Point Dunes nature preserve and an extension of Betsie Dunes Nature Preserve.

"There was a compulsion, we just had to get involved to protect it," Norm said. "The alternative was just unthinkable."

Through a combination of gifts from major foundations throughout the state and private funding -including a substantial gift from the Ulbrichs — GTRLC raised over \$30 million to successfully purchase and protect the ecologically critical shoreline properties.

Sue remembers that the fundraising numbers seemed incredibly daunting at first, but the community came together when it mattered most.

"Initially, when it started, people thought 'We have to at least try, but can we really do it?" she said. "Then, as it got going and the momentum started going it became 'Oh my gosh, we might be able to do this."

The Ulbrichs were overjoyed to have played a role, and they're immensely grateful for the GTRLC's organizational and fundraising roles in the protection process. The passion was there, they said, but it needed to be harnessed.

"We wouldn't have had the resources or the organizational skills to do much about it, so thank goodness there were people at the Conservancy that took it upon themselves to take a leadership role," Norm said.



"There are a lot of willing followers, but without a good leader, there's nothing to follow."

Norm and Sue now give regularly to GTRLC, in large part because of their positive experience in the Coastal Campaign. The fact that they can see, feel and experience the results of their gift money is especially satisfying, and every time they hike the dunes they're reminded that they personally helped preserve treasured land for future generations.

"We give to several great charitable organizations, and it's really rare that you can actually experience the impact of your giving," Sue said. "We give to breast cancer research and so forth, but we can't get hands on with the research. With this, we get out there and walk, and see it ... and to go actually out there and tangibly feel it is so rewarding."

The Ulbrichs give money each year to the Conservancy Fund, an unrestricted fund that funnels dollars to anyplace needed within GTRLC. This is in contrast to funds given for specific projects or initiatives, which can't be spent elsewhere. Norm and Sue said they're aware that it's often more difficult for GTRLC to raise funds for things that are less "glamorous" or pressing than specific projects, and they know these unrestricted dollars are vital to the overall health and goals of the organization.

As donors, they're comforted to know their money is being put to good use throughout the region.

"We get to see how that money is being used. We know that when we're giving that money, it's not being abused," Sue said. "This, again, is tangible. You can see that trails are being maintained and improved, and the other work being done — you can see the dollars are doing something."

As the Ulbrichs enjoy retirement, they also find that their donations to GTRLC keep them active by encouraging them to get out and hike the properties they're helping to preserve.

"As we get older and sit in a chair so much more, it does give us that motivation to get up and get moving," Sue said.

For the Ulbrichs, giving to GTRLC is about much more than themselves and the joy they feel from getting involved or hiking on preserved properties. It's about honoring family members who came before them and making sure those who come after will be able to share the same wonderful feelings and experiences that they did.

"It reflects a respect for our ancestors, our parents and grandparents," Norm said. "It's really a generational thing, and you want to keep it going for your children and grandchildren. It's a privilege and a responsibility to maintain these things."

Those interested in providing a gift to GTRLC can contact Anthony Rupard, Director of Development, at (231) 929-7911 or arupard@gtrlc.org.

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We are blessed to have this place... I thank God I've been able to be here and fly here as long as I have.

Bill Fifer,Green Point FlyersAssociation

The sun shone brightly and strong winds howled through sparse tree cover as Craig Carlson carefully readied his craft and stepped onto a weathered wooden platform.

Whitecaps relentlessly pounded the Lake Michigan shore nearly 400 feet below as Carlson, a member of the Green Point Flyers Association, made his final safety checks. In a sport like this, he knows, there is simply no room for error.

Three men walked with him to the edge, one on each end of his hang glider and one at the nose. They helped Carlson hold his glider steady, and years of experience would tell him when the perfect gust had arrived.

"When I say clear, get clear," he told the men, respectfully but firmly. "Don't doubt me."

As Carlson's glider soared into the air, the others watched and smiled — their turn would come soon enough.

The Green Point Flyers Association — a group of hang gliders and paragliders — owns land just north of the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy's Green Point Dunes preserve in Benzie County. The association, comprised of about 40 owners and dozens of additional members without an ownership stake, has owned the land since the mid-1970s.

The area's predominantly west winds make for a phenomenal environment for soaring. Wind slams into the dunes and shoots straight up in a phenomenon called "ridge lift," allowing flyers to dance along the air for hours at a time.

First time flyers and those who have flown there for years marvel at the area's beauty.

"This is probably one of the most unbelievable places I've ever flown. When you get up 500 or 600 feet and the water is so clear you can still see

the bottom ... it's just absolutely gorgeous," said Bill Fifer, 73, of Traverse City. "We are blessed to have this place... Any time I walk up that ramp and look out, I thank God I've been able to be here and fly here as long as I have."

The association's land is surrounded by land protected by GTRLC – Green Point Dunes Nature Preserve, Arcadia Dunes: The CS Mott Nature Preserve, Elberta Dunes and a preserve on Herring Lake. That fact is not lost on the association's flyers.

"You go down to California, and it's mansion after mansion after mansion, all the way to the cliffs," Fifer said. "Here, it's just incredible natural beauty, and houses are few and far between."

Paraglider Adam Granger, 36, of Traverse City, agrees.

"It's awesome — this is right out our back door and there are no other places in the state that equal this," he said. "My longest flight has been five hours, and you still just can't get enough. This is one of the only places you can find where the shoreline isn't covered in houses."

Gliding is about more than thrills, said Jim Gibson, a longtime glider who serves as the club's safety director. Escaping up into the skies is often more relaxing than anything else, he said, and what you're looking down on plays a big part in that.

"A lot of what we do is for the view; that's sort of the therapeutic aspect of it," he said. "It's really wonderful to be able to fly in such a pristine area."

Carlson said the protected land is wonderful, and not just for the flyers.

"For (GTRLC) to set that stuff aside for everyone to enjoy it, and keep it open for everyone to use, it's just great," he said. "And to know that it is protected in perpetuity is just thrilling."

ARCADIA EXPLORE THE SHORES

The following donors made gifts or pledges to this project including the Arcadia Marsh, Arcadia Beach, and the UA trail at Arcadia Dunes, between January 1 and July 31, 2015. We are so grateful to everyone who helped make this project a success.

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The Community Foundation is a partner to the Land Conservancy and home to an endowment designated to support our work. Over time, many individuals, business, and foundations have given to the Community Foundation for the endowment, which provides a grant each year to support our work now, while also ensuring a permanent resource to benefit our mission for generations to come. Additionally, the Community Foundation is home to several other endowments to benefit specific areas we've protected. Discover more at www.gtrcf.org.

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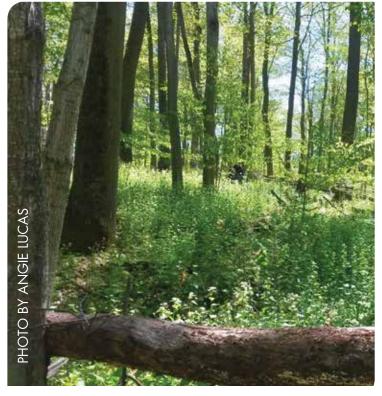
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