



landscript

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

PHOTO BY ELLIE JOHNSON

Our Annual Report
The Latest on Timbers
What's New at Maple Bay

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We could not be more grateful for your generous support.



Dear Friends,

One of the best things about land trust work is that it is very tangible; you can see the impacts daily. But sometimes I need to remind myself to stand back and really look at the value and importance of measuring our successes and the impact they are having on our community. From that lens, 2013 was a remarkable year for the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy. Here are some of the highlights:

-  **Restoration efforts at our Arcadia Marsh Preserve** — one of Lake Michigan's most important coastal wetland systems — were given a huge boost when we conducted our first controlled burn there to combat invasive species. Nature has an amazing ability to heal, particularly when helped along by sound science and cutting-edge management practices. However, none of us could have foreseen the speed and scope of the beginning stages of the marsh ecosystem's recovery, now happening right before our eyes. Like the mythical phoenix rising out of the ashes, a profusion of native marsh grasses and wildflowers have come back like gangbusters. Over just one season, the average summer stream temperatures at the downstream end of the marsh decreased by a whopping ten degrees. With the quality of the cold-water streams in the marsh dramatically improving, valuable fish species are returning. As we look at the big picture of Great Lakes restoration, take pride in the fact that your regional conservancy, along with our valued partners, are leading the way to demonstrate what is possible.
-  **Our land protection program also had a banner year** with 1,120 acres brought under permanent protection, including the 1,080-acre Reiley Farm conservation easement that protects four headwater streams crucial to water quality in the Chain of Lakes. Current owners of this centennial farm, Herb and Florence Reiley, estimate they have planted fifteen million trees on the property in the course of their lifetime! Their outstanding stewardship prevents sediment- and nutrient-loading into the Grand Traverse Bay watershed and represents a great example of just why the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative and our partnerships with private landowners are so important to the future of a region where abundant clean water is arguably our most important asset.
-  **We were thrilled last December when the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund approved over five million dollars in land acquisition grants** to the suite of projects that protect natural resources and expand recreational opportunities described on pages 4-5. Public land and recreational access are critical economic drivers for our region, which is why the Conservancy is now partnering with our foundation community and our local chamber of commerce to improve the way we quantify economic impacts so that this information can be made available to policymakers. We are fortunate to live in a community where so many people care passionately about their natural resources, and we are deeply grateful for your support and your love of northern Michigan!

 I firmly believe that the more people experience firsthand the beauty of our amazing portfolio of protected lands, the more support there will be in the future for our land protection and stewardship efforts. **Last year, our Access to Nature Program made remarkable progress with significant trail improvements at Glacial Hills in Antrim County (see story on page 24) and with the expansion of the Arcadia Dunes trail system, enjoying support from Camp Arcadia and the National Civilian Conservation Corp Program.** We are also helping to spearhead one of Michigan's first water trails in the Chain of Lakes and East Grand Traverse Bay, where people can view many miles and thousands of acres of Conservancy-protected land from canoes or kayaks. We are confident that many of these same people will also support our land stewardship and water-quality protection efforts once they become more connected to our organization through such experiences. This is also why we are partnering with the Experience 231 smart-phone app and the Sleeping Bear Birding Trail; the latter features much of our protected land in the M-22 corridor areas of Manistee and Benzie counties, two communities that are thankful for the infusion of new eco-tourism-related revenue.

The tremendous accomplishments described above are the result of a lot of hard work by many active volunteers and a very talented staff. As I think about the impact we will be having on this community for generations to come, I am reminded of an evening in the dead of winter this past January when I was ice fishing with my fourteen-year-old son on Bowers Harbor. It was time to go, and all of a sudden we looked over our shoulders to see a giant full moon rising over the protected farms and woods of the Old Mission Peninsula. It was shining to the west toward Power Island and Neahtawanta and casting long shadows on the ice. As I looked at my son's rosy cheeks illuminated by the moonlight, Martin broke the silence, remarking in hushed tones, "Dad, this really is an amazing place to live. We are pretty lucky, aren't we?"

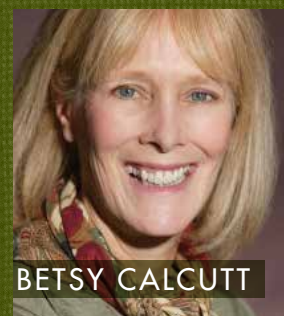
Yes, and we are also fortunate to recognize the generous support of people like you who make it possible to preserve this remarkable setting for generations to come.


Glen Chown,
GTRLC Executive Director

GTRLC WELCOMES NEW BOARD MEMBERS



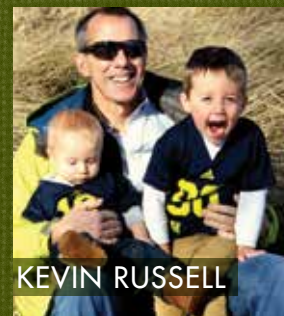
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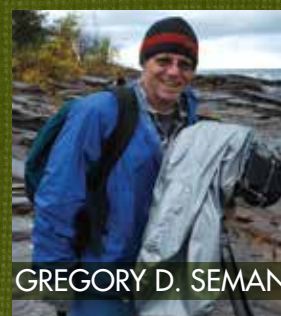
BETSY CALCUTT



BOB GARVEY



KEVIN RUSSELL



GREGORY D. SEMAN

Learn more about the entire GTRLC Board of Directors at www.gtrlc.org/about/board

Our devoted volunteer Directors give hundreds of hours of their time, lend their considerable life experience to our efforts, and dedicate their contributions to the Conservancy. We can't thank them enough!





REGION RECEIVES ONE QUARTER OF ALL MICHIGAN NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND GRANTS FOR LAND ACQUISITION

Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy helped to secure \$5.1 million in Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund grants — more than one-quarter of the total \$19 million approved for land acquisitions throughout the state during the last grant cycle.

While the Conservancy played a significant role in securing the properties under consideration for the grants, the awards were made to local units of government (and in the case of the Old Moorings project, to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources), which will own and manage the properties. The five projects awarded funding will protect 500 acres of land, a significant portion of which was slated for development.

With projects like these, the Conservancy provides technical assistance on the transaction side — securing options, arranging

appraisals, conducting environmental due diligence work — and sometimes writes the grants and raises funds for all or a portion of the required local match for projects with local units of government. For example, the Conservancy raised \$100,000 toward the match requirement for the Bowers Harbor Park addition (see below), which will be owned by Peninsula Township.

Those all-important matching funds help to leverage grants, like those from the Trust Fund, and are raised locally through individual donations and corporate and foundation support.

“The bottom line here is that we could not do these kinds of projects without donor support,” says Glen Chown, executive director. “And look at the leverage here: \$5.1 million in grants to protect

natural resources and enhance our region's recreational assets.”

Here's a look at the five conservation awards received here in northwest Michigan.

Bowers Harbor

The Trust Fund grant of \$626,800 for Bowers Harbor Park on the west side of Old Mission Peninsula will expand the beloved local park to more than triple its size and enhance its recreational uses to include wetland viewing areas, picnicking, and a one-mile loop trail with expansive views of the bay. The planned 40-unit condominium subdivision for this 59-acre property, circumvented by this acquisition, would have negatively impacted water quality in the harbor and in Grand Traverse Bay.

GTRLC has been working to protect large parcels threatened by development around Bowers Harbor for over 20 years. Successes have included the Pyatt Lake Preserve (the Conservancy's first-ever acquisition); the Kroupa and Hemming farms, with hundreds of acres and well over a thousand feet of shoreline; forests and shoreline land in and around the Neahtawanta Resort; and the historic Bowers Harbor Inn property. According to Chown, "This acquisition will add another crown jewel to the necklace of protected land surrounding Bowers Harbor."

Old Moorings

Old Moorings Place in Old Mission Harbor, at the northeast tip of Peninsula Township, is one of the largest undeveloped properties left on East Grand Traverse Bay. A grant of \$2.5 million will secure eight acres of land with 525 feet of sandy frontage — right in the heart of Old Mission Village's historic district. Not only is this a scenic focal point in the community, but as a natural harbor, it will provide increased public access to East Bay — popular for fishing and scuba diving — with protection from summer winds and access to deep water. The property was slated for development with ten large homes and a common dock area. Now, the natural assets of the property will be preserved and public boating access expanded.



Dair Creek

The 240-acre Dair Creek property, with 6,000 feet of frontage on Dair Creek just north of Crystal Mountain, is a sanctuary for wild turkeys, bald eagles, red-shouldered hawks (state threatened species), box and wood turtles, otters, and ruffed grouse. The southern Benzie County property, once part of the Stone family farm, was acquired

through a \$700,000 Trust Fund grant; it had been on the private market for a year. Clearing trees and planting grass down to the creek for development would have degraded the quality of the creek and raised its water temperature. Because Dair Creek is one of the main cold-water tributaries to the Betsie River, it plays a crucial role in fisheries as the primary producer of wild steelhead in the watershed.



Boardman Valley Nature Preserve

Garfield Township has visions of creating a trail system along both sides of the Boardman River, and the recent \$270,000 Trust Fund grant will get them considerably closer to making it a reality in the years to come. The two parcels that will be acquired as part of this project total more than 30 acres, with 2,500 feet of river frontage. The new properties will improve access to the Boardman Valley Nature Preserve and increase public enjoyment of the park with plans for picnic pavilions, playgrounds, restrooms, trail and path additions and improvements, and other amenities, making it an ideal destination for area residents.

Strombolis Lake

Home to five kettle-hole lakes, the largest being Strombolis Lake, this 160-acre upland forest property will be a pleasant addition to the state's land consolidation efforts to preserve large blocks of contiguous land. The \$1 million acquisition grant will help to sustain the wildlife corridor in northeast Grand Traverse County; if developed, changes to the ecology would be detrimental to the surrounding state forestland and take away usable hunting land.

The VASA single-track trail skims the western boundary, and a state snowmobile trail runs along the northeast corner of the property, which is located off Strombolis Road, north of Supply Road. With its oak and pine forest, the property is home to a number of species, including deer, ruffed grouse, and wild turkey. 🌿

MEET THE LAND PROTECTION TEAM

They are financiers, botanists, deal negotiators, biologists, risk mitigators, businessmen, and above all, conservationists. Meet our astute Land Protection Team, and read about what really makes them tick....

Matt McDonough, *Director of Land Protection*

Three factors greatly inspire Matt McDonough about his work in land protection here in northwest Michigan: the permanence of the work (“the natural

areas we protect are not going away; what we do is in perpetuity”); the people (“I just like working with people, and we only work with willing landowners”); and the problem-solving (“very few land conservation projects are simple; we do everything from negotiation, to risk mitigation, to keeping the landowners at the table for two to three years until the deal closes”).

McDonough has been with the Conservancy since 2000. After working exclusively on conservation easement and land acquisition projects for eight years, Matt now directs the land protection program, while continuing to work on high-level land projects with governmental partners and innovative financing strategies.

Progress to McDonough is in the quality, not the quantity of the projects. “What’s really rewarding is seeing other people on a piece of property that wasn’t public before,” says McDonough. “We’re protecting land for preservation *and* public use.”

Years ago, McDonough had a hand in securing the last privately owned property on Traverse City's West Bay waterfront. “Now when I’m downtown with my kids, there’s not one time that I don’t turn my head and I see people on it, and think, ‘Man, I had a little part in that.’”



Brian Bourdages, *Farmland Program Manager*

Before coming to GTRLC, Brian Bourdages worked for several years as a land protection specialist with the Leelanau Conservancy. Now focusing on farmland protection,

Bourdages says, “I’ve learned that rural agrarian families are not quick to trust. Building relationships with farm families can take a really long time, and I find the quality of the people I get to know well worth the effort.”

Bourdages works with farmers and farm families who want to use various farmland protection methods to ensure northwest Michigan farmland keeps being farmed well into the future. “For generations, Michiganders could afford to basically ignore the importance of agriculture as our second largest economy because the automobile manufacturing sector was both the lifeblood and the pride of the state. Getting Michigan residents to understand how important the agriculture sector is to the state has been a slow process as a result.”

What keeps Bourdages awake at night? Situations where the pending sale of a conservation easement he’s working on is the difference between folks being able to keep their family farm or having to sell it. “That will keep you awake.”



Chris Sullivan,
*Land Protection
Specialist*

While living in the Pacific Northwest, Chris Sullivan was drawn back to Traverse City in 1999 by the opportunity to protect Bullhead Lake in Long Lake Township, where he fished as a kid and spent time in the surrounding woods. “The idea of the Conservancy working with the Township to protect that from becoming a condominium development was incredibly appealing to me.”

That same drive has continued through his years with GTRLC, where today he focuses on land protection efforts in Benzie and Manistee counties. Sullivan says that project-related details are often difficult and complex, and there’s not always a clear path to a good outcome. Creativity in problem-solving and being mindful of the good work that’s been accomplished are part of the mix.

“A lot of my favorite places as a kid that I grew up either looking at or running around in are now subdivisions,” says Sullivan. “It’s nice knowing that some of the places I take my family to now are already protected. Hopefully they won’t have that same sort of feeling of loss that I have looking at places where we used to recreate.”



Todd Vigland,
*Land Protection
Specialist*

Todd Vigland began his career at GTRLC with seasonal stewardship work and then spent four years in Maryland preserving farmland and Chesapeake Bay shoreline. In 2002, Vigland returned to the Conservancy and now works extensively in the Chain of Lakes and Jordan River watersheds.

Inspired by both the opportunity to preserve the landscape and by the extent to which people want to help with the effort, Vigland sees the conservation movement building momentum.

In his work at the Conservancy, Vigland assembles the expertise and resources needed to accomplish priority land protection initiatives, while remaining cognizant of ever-changing business and government climates. “We don’t forget that we operate in the same economic and political marketplace as everyone else.”

What is Vigland’s point of pride? “I’m most proud of the relationships that are made along the way. We work closely with many truly remarkable people.”



PHOTO BY ANGIE LUCAS



PHOTO BY DANA VANNOY

PROTECTION OF TIMBERS RECREATION AREA CLOSER TO COMPLETION

FINAL FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN BUILDS MOMENTUM

It's been a long and winding road, ten years in the making, to properly and permanently transform the former Timbers Girl Scout Camp into a protected area of land. With 260 acres, including 9,000 feet of water frontage on three lakes and a mere 10-minute drive west of Traverse City, the conservation of this property is monumental for our region.

The new Timbers Recreation Area is close to becoming a reality; the process accelerated last winter with the promise of a \$2.1 million match grant from the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund to help purchase the property. While the matching grant was announced at the end of 2012, funds are ending until Long Lake Township (which will eventually own and maintain the property) and GTRLC secure their part of the match: an additional \$890,000 by the end of June.

And with nearly \$500,000 of that left to raise over the next few months, the pressure is on. Glen Chown, executive director of GTRLC, says that failure is simply not an option with so much at stake in creating a

permanently protected recreational asset so close to town and with the opportunity to leverage the MNR Trust Fund dollars.

"There is a tremendous sense of urgency," says Chown. "We have the opportunity to purchase this remarkable property for a very reasonable price that would have been unthinkable just a few years ago, when the value was double what it is today."

In fact, nine years ago, when negotiations around the sale of the land began, Timbers was valued at \$6.25 million. By 2012, the appraised value was \$3.2 million, and \$2.7 million became the final purchase price. (The land was purchased for Long Lake Township by interim buyers Don and Gerry Oleson, who are holding the property until the grant funds arrive. If all goes as planned, their "loan" will be repaid and the property will change hands to the Township in July.)

When the deal is officially sealed, community members and visitors alike will be able to enjoy Timbers Recreation Area in a natural setting in perpetuity. The area has water frontage on three lakes, one of which, Fern Lake, has the rare attribute of being completely undeveloped. Other assets include a trail system for hiking and biking, wildlife viewing opportunities, and a kite-flying area.

Matt McDonough has led the protection work on the Timbers Recreation Area for GTRLC, and he says that with the project's many moving parts, it could have been easy to lose sight of its impact.

"The biggest things are size, diversity of habitat, and diversity of recreational opportunities, all within a 10-minute drive of Traverse City," says McDonough. "We've worked on other properties of this size and with these assets, but all these qualities so close to town is pretty remarkable."

McDonough looks forward to taking his kids out to get muddy at Timbers after Sunday dinner because it's so close to home. "Within 10 minutes, you're on a hiking trail, listening to loons, looking at a lake that's undeveloped. You feel like you're in the U.P."

Despite the short time it takes to get to Timbers Recreation Area from our region's most populous city, the fundraising path has been arduous, with two years of work applying for grants, enlisting the interim buyers, holding fundraisers, and building awareness with individual donors, foundations, and others who are concerned about regional conservation.

Several individuals have made leadership-level "stretch gifts", and the Long Lake Foundation and the Long Lake Association are working to get the word out around the lake about the need to support the project. Chown is hopeful that local foundations will also "pitch in" as the close-out phase approaches this spring.

Some the final funding will also come through moneys redirected by the Long Lake Township board that were originally intended to build a library, a project that did not come to fruition.

Former scouts and staffers of Timbers Girl Scout Camp also have been involved. While alumnae of the camp are sad that it was closed, they are relieved that the GTRLC is preserving the land and they are supportive of the project.

Shelby Reynolds, who worked as a counselor and staff member for four summers in the 1990s, began her involvement with the Timbers transition in February of 2012, when she learned about GTRLC's work to preserve the property. She started a Facebook group with the 30 camp alumnae with whom she was in contact. The group quickly grew and now numbers over 300 members.

"Alumnae are excited to think that they'll be able to continue to visit the land over the years and are happy to know that it will not be developed into private homes or businesses," says Reynolds.

Reynolds, along with alumnae Shari Hintz of Traverse City, Jen McKerverey of Washington, D.C., and Kim Turnbull of Alaska, organized and orchestrated a reunion and garage sale in October, with 100 alumnae who traveled from as far away as England, Alaska, and California to attend. Alumnae events have raised nearly \$30,000 for Timbers Recreation Area.



PHOTO BY DANA VANNOY

Reynolds has her heart and hundreds of volunteer hours invested in the preservation of Timbers, knowing that part of the spirit of scouting she learned at camp is alive and well.

"When the land is protected and turned into a park, the trails and water will continue to be available for people to appreciate and take care of, and it will continue to provide opportunities to challenge ourselves physically and mentally."

This story illustrates the tenacity it takes to protect and conserve our region's loveliest land and water assets. GTRLC is thankful for local communities like Long Lake Township, individuals like Shelby Reynolds and Don and Gerry Oleson, and countless other volunteers and philanthropists who are committed to preserving places like Timbers — even through a decade-long process.

To learn more about how you can support the efforts to protect this land and create the Timbers Recreation Area, please contact Glen Chown at glenchown@gtrlc.org or by phone at 231-929-7911.



The former campers and staff members of the Timbers Girl Scout Camp are playing an active role in protecting this property. Their support and enthusiasm is exhilarating. Inspired by her years at Timbers, a generous former staff member has offered a second very special challenge grant to be sure that the Timbers is here forever, for everyone. Every gift made by, or in honor of, past staff and campers will be matched, dollar for dollar, up to \$25,000!



PHOTO BY DANA VANNOY

FOR SALE: *BEAUTIFUL OLD LODGE*



Clustered around the western end of Timbers Recreation Area are some of the old camp buildings. Because Long Lake Township does not have the capacity to take care of all of these, it will be selling a five-acre piece of property along Timbers Trail on which rest the lodge (troop house), the caretaker residence ("Ernie's cabin"), the camp office, and a workshop.

The lodge has five large bedrooms (two of which have fireplaces), a commercial kitchen, and a fireplace in the living room. While not on the waterfront, it overlooks the recreation area and is in a beautiful wooded setting, next to 260 acres of land that the owners can walk out their back door and use.

Interested parties should contact Matt McDonough, director of land protection, at **231-929-7911** or **matt@gtrlc.org**.

TIMBERS RECREATION AREA

The following donors made gifts and/or pledge payments to this project between January 1 and December 31, 2013. A full listing of all gifts and pledges will be included in a future newsletter when fundraising has been completed.

DONORS OF \$10,000 OR MORE

*Rick & Kate Dahlstrom
Kevin & Ann Kitchin
Long Lake Township
Mary Obelnicki &
Craig Silverstein
Angela Pohl &
Jonathon Yanover
John & Kim Wagner*

DONORS OF \$5,000 - \$9,999

*Robert & Elaine Brooks
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Serendipity Endowment at the Community Foundation

*Patricia Tabbert in memory
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Nate Reynolds
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Forest Lodge Association
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Kenneth & Jo Marks
Lynn & June Rayle
William Smith
Margaret Strong
Allen & Maureen Terbeek
Timbers Alumni*

DONORS OF \$250 - \$499

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Walter Kramer
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in honor of Jennifer McKervery
Roger & Stephanie Nelson
Angela Pohl & Jonathon Yanover
Bridgett Daniel Smigiel
Mark, Laura & Kathy Spencer
Peter & Barbara Springsteen
Christina Wilfling
Deb Young*

TIMBERS GIFT VIA LONG LAKE LIBRARY FUND

We are grateful to the following donors who gave to the Long Lake Township Library Fund and agreed to reallocate their generous gifts to this project:

DONORS OF \$5,000 OR MORE

Gail & Dan Dall'Olmo
Barry & Linda Lishawa
Donald & Ginny Oleson

DONORS OF \$1,000 – \$4,999

Nick & Theresa Boudjalis
Timothy Cartwright
David & Cheryl Garvin
Karen & Bill Rosa

DONORS OF \$1 – \$999

Otto & Kathy Belovich
John & C. J. Cartwright
Gary & Irene Church
Barbara Crumpton
Angela Friske
John & Leslie Hays
Gary Hondorf
John & Connie Linnerson
Timothy Peterson



2013 GIFTS IN-KIND

Our heartfelt thanks to:

Eric Stehouwer for the gift of a metal bridge.



Diane Dupuis for the donation of an iPad for staff use.



Megan Olds for the donation of her beloved Subaru wagon for staff use.



DONORS OF \$1- \$249

Joanie Abbott in honor of Shelby Reynolds
Anna Bachman
Robert & Leslie Bacigalupi
Gerald & Barb Brief
Doug & Susan Burns
Munawar & Joanne Butt
John & C. J. Cartwright
Ginny Cashbaugh
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Michael & Carla Windover
Carolyn Wolf
Kelly Wood
Randy & Joan Woods
Helen Wransky
Heidi Zwerk in honor of Lisa Rossell-Riccobono



Protection Program and its successful millage campaign. While the Michigan AFT office no longer exists, the national organization still maintains an interest in and a commitment to the success of farmland preservation in northwest Michigan.

“West Michigan’s fruit belt is one of the nation’s most threatened and unique agricultural resources,” says Andrew McElwaine, president and CEO of AFT. “According to ‘Farming on the Edge,’ AFT’s report on loss of farmland, more than 85 percent of U.S. fruits and vegetables are grown in the path of development, like the Grand Traverse region, making it that much more important to save farmland here, before it is gone forever.”

Brian Bourdages, farmland program manager at GTRLC, says that AFT’s support has really come full

With citizen support and a recent American Farmland Trust Grant, GTRLC preserves threatened farms and keeps Acme farmers growing

More than 85 percent of our country’s produce is grown in the path of development

This spring, American Farmland Trust (AFT) will award Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy a \$110,000 grant for additional farmland protection in Acme Township. AFT is a national conservation organization dedicated to protecting farmland, promoting sound farming practices, and keeping farmers on their land.

Grant funds will allow Acme Township to purchase agricultural conservation easements from local farm families to ensure, in perpetuity, that the land remains available for farming and is not sold for commercial or residential development. The impacted farms are Sayler Family Farm and farms that are part of Shoreline Fruit.

The grant is testament to the spirit of this small Grand Traverse County community — a community that believes so strongly in preserving its farming heritage that it backed its convictions through a 10-year farmland protection millage, voted on in 2004.

Now, on the cusp of completing that millage, Acme is being generously recognized for its steadfast support and commitment.

Coming Full Circle

Ten years ago, the Michigan office of AFT was instrumental in the creation of Acme’s Farmland

circle. “American Farmland Trust sees this as an opportunity to wrap up the first round of Acme’s funding and close the loop on their involvement,” says Bourdages.

The grant rewards the success of the Acme program and will help leverage the last of Acme’s millage revenue, which will have protected a total of 800 acres — the equivalent of more than 600 football fields — by June 2014.

Leveraging Citizen Support

With the pending completion of the Sayler and Shoreline projects, Acme millage funds will have helped to complete a total of seven farmland protection projects and served as leverage for a range of support from other sources, including the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, the Clean Michigan Initiative, USDA NRCS Farm and Ranchland Protection Program, AFT, and participating landowners. For every dollar that citizens contributed through millage dollars, an additional dollar was yielded through leveraged and matching funds.

“It’s fantastic to know that we’ve effectively doubled the taxpayer’s value with this program, even as we faced some of the most difficult financial times in our country’s history,” says Jay Zollinger, Acme Township supervisor. “The success of the millage and the consequent flow of incoming support attests to the hard work and conviction of everyone involved and how much we all wanted this program to prosper.”

Recognizing the Beneficiaries: Saylor Family Farm and Shoreline Fruit

The AFT grant will be used to purchase agricultural conservation easements at both Shoreline Fruit and the Saylor Family Farm.

Saylor Family Farm has been in continuous operation by the same family for six generations, giving it historical significance for the region. Rick and Donna Saylor, who currently own the farm, and their four daughters who all grew up there, take great pride in holding the original deeds — from U.S. President Franklin Pierce, who presided from 1853 to 1857, and U.S. President James Buchanan, who presided from 1857 to 1861 — granting ownership of the farm.

The farm sits along bucolic Saylor Road and is perched high over the vast Yuba Creek Natural Area. Protection of the farm's 140 acres will complete a continuous block of protected farmland and natural land that will extend over more than 1,100 acres.

AFT funds also will aid in the purchase of a conservation easement at Shoreline Fruit on property immediately south of, and sharing a border with, the 450-acre Maple Bay Park and Natural Area owned by Grand Traverse County and GTRLC.

The owners of Shoreline Fruit include Cherry Bay Orchards (Gregory family farm) and Cherry Ke (Veliquette family farm). These two family farms are the largest tart cherry-growing operations in northern Michigan.

The Shoreline Fruit easement will secure at least 130 acres, with an option to purchase a conservation easement on the remainder of the farmland when additional funding becomes available.

Because of the farm's proximity to Maple Bay Park and the Petobego State Game Area, its protection will help safeguard the groundwater that feeds tributaries to Petobego Creek, which leads to the east arm of Grand Traverse Bay. "There's a really critical natural land and water-quality protection piece of this farm protection project too," says Bourdages.

Another benefit to protecting this particular farm is its proximity to other protected open space and farmland and its location along US-31. "It's part of a very prominent and high-quality scenic view from the highway, so residents will be assured that view won't be tarnished by future development," says Bourdages. In fact, the farmland encompasses a significant portion of two prominent viewsheds identified in Acme Township's master plan.

All of the other large farm protection projects have been completed in the interior of Acme Township, not as

prominently situated. "So this is a really critical project," says Bourdages. "Everybody can see and enjoy the aesthetic benefits."

Reinvesting in Agriculture and Rural Development

The project will demonstrate economic benefits as well. Shoreline Fruit operates a production facility that processes dried cherries and tart cherry concentrate. The owners plan to use funds from the sale of the easement to invest in plant expansion, creating new jobs and increasing production capacity.

The processing of agricultural product to increase its economic value, as is the case at Shoreline, is known as value-added agriculture; it supports both farmers and producers.

"Value-added agriculture is among the region's best bets for sustained, high-wage economic development over the next 10 to 20 years," says Doug Luciani, president and chief executive officer of Traverse City Area Chamber of Commerce and Traverse Bay Economic Development Corporation.

Promoting Public Health

Finally, whereas factory farms pose threats to public health, family farms are better stewards of the environment and promote improved public health. Farmland conservation easements allow small and mid-size growers to maintain and protect their farming enterprises while channeling fresh, locally grown food into the community. By their mere existence, local farms in Acme can safely and inexpensively promote healthy choices for regional residents.

Preserving Local Farming History

Agricultural conservation easements also keep farmers doing what they do best: farming. And they encourage new farmers to enter the fold. An astonishing 70 percent of all farmland in the United States is going to change hands in the next 20 years and, at present, there are not nearly enough growers to keep our country's small- and medium-size farms from being converted to a use other than agriculture.

Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy is among a small but growing sector of the land trust community that is directly addressing the need to keep our threatened agricultural land in production and to develop entry points for land access for new farmers.

Want to learn more? Contact Brian Bourdages, GTRLC farmland program manager at brian@gtrlc.org or call **231-929-7911**. Or dig deeper at www.gtrlc.org.

FARMABILITY PROGRAM GAINS STEAM

FarmAbility, a term-easement conservation program to support farming in the north US-31 Corridor, is making significant progress! The program unites three essential components. First, landowners can enter into a 10-year conservation

easement agreement and receive a modest annual payment. Second, in addition to the annual payments, enrolled farm families can receive financial support for succession planning, for work toward verification under the state's environmental assurance program (MAEAP), and for addressing food safety on the farm or an associated farm business such as a farm market. Finally, the program is administered in partnership with the Grand Traverse Conservation District, the NW Michigan Horticultural Research Station and MSU Extension's Center for Regional Food Systems, making access to programs sponsored by these organizations free or at a reduced cost to FarmAbility Program participants.

To date, we have visited in person with over two dozen farm families in Whitewater, Milton, Elk Rapids and Torch Lake townships to share information about the program. As a result we have enrolled 194 acres in Whitewater Township and Elk Rapids Township in the program. An application for nearly 500 acres of additional farmland in Milton Township is currently in process, and we hope to report considerable additional FarmAbility Program enrollment in the coming year! 🌿



PHOTO BY GARY L. HOWE

DONORS OF
\$5,000 OR MORE

The Frey Foundation
Leonard C. Goodman



2014 FARM BILL

On February 7th, President Obama signed a long-awaited Farm Bill into law on the campus of Michigan State University. GTRLC's Executive Director was on hand for the signing at the request of Michigan Senator Debbie Stabenow, the chair of the Senate Agriculture Committee, who was charged with authoring the bill. The bill passed both the House and Senate with strong bipartisan support, and both Representative Dave Camp, our region's immediate past Congressional Representative, as well as Representative Dan Benishek, our current Representative, supported the passage of the bill, along with Michigan's two Senators.

The Farm Bill is the single largest source of funding for the conservation of private lands in the country. We were fortunate to have the opportunity to work with both Senator Stabenow and Representative Benishek to explain to them how the conservation easement programs in the bill, with funding upwards of \$1.3 billion dollars, would help us to preserve the unique farmland of our region, as well as provide needed capital to expand and improve agricultural operations, making our region's agricultural economy stronger. We

are grateful to our friends at the Leelanau Conservancy and the land trust community throughout the country for working in a spirit of close collaboration to advance the important conservation programs in the 2014 Farm Bill, and we look forward to opportunities that will support GTRLC's mission over the next five years.



PHOTO BY GARY L. HOWE



MAPLE BAY UPDATE

It has been a very active year for the Conservancy at Maple Bay Farm. We've been working hard with a dedicated group of volunteers and partners on many aspects of the property, including: maintaining the grounds and buildings, planning for agricultural and public events at the farm that will result in more onsite activities, and implementing a small maple syrup program that will resurrect the historic use of the existing sugar shack.

In addition to the ongoing maintenance and regular workdays that include nearly 300 hours of volunteer time, we completed our short-term stabilization efforts on the old Victorian farmhouse by contracting with Marriage Roofing of Williamsburg to install a metal roof. We are happy to report that it has been shedding snow all winter with ease. Having completed the efforts to improve drainage and shore up the foundation, we now look forward to some exciting opportunities for using the house in the future. We are actively exploring uses for the farmhouse that will support existing Conservancy programs and agricultural

activities at the farm. Thanks to some generous donations of both time and money, the sugar shack has been structurally stabilized with new siding, paint, windows, and new electrical service with lights and outlets. We even tested out new maple syrup processing equipment in March.

Additionally, the Conservancy has entered into a partnership with the Institute for Sustainable Living, Art, and Natural Design (ISLAND) which will make use of approximately 7



acres of land for a fledgling farmer residency: ISLAND will provide a structured program and GTRLC supplies land for beginning farmers to start their own business. The Conservancy is excited about the benefits of this partnership, which include soil building that will result from sustainable agricultural practices, increased awareness of the value of local agriculture in our community, and the educational possibilities that this partnership will bring to the farm.

In 2014 we look forward to continued efforts to make the farm more functional, expand sustainable agricultural practices, and increase use of the property for public engagement activities and events offered by both GTRLC and our partner, ISLAND. 🌿





PHOTO BY ANGIE LUCAS

ACME'S BAYSIDE PARK

"This project is a pipe dream."

"Pipe Dream" — that is what community member said about the vision to create a mile-long public park in Acme Township. Like many communities in Michigan, Acme's landscape and land use have changed since the 1950s. Acme Township boasts 10 miles of shoreline, yet over the years, the cumulative impact of commercial and residential building left little of the shore available to the public.

Pat Salathiel grew up in Acme Township. She remembers the train whistle that blew every day at 4:30 pm and she talks about a time when children would parade with lilac-filled red wagons along Grand Traverse Bay down the two-lane road now known as US-31. Acme's business owners are proud of their community and local farmers are committed to their orchards and vineyards. Some farm families have been working the same land for four or more generations.

The existing Bayside Park along US-31 was a hidden gem. Over 30 years ago, a group of dedicated citizens rallied in support for a millage to purchase the property. In 2006, Pat Salathiel saw a number of properties go up for sale along a stretch of land from Bayside Park to Five Mile Road to the south. That is

when she and other Township residents started talking about a dream to create a mile-long park along Grand Traverse Bay, where kids could walk on the beach and play in the water again. Salathiel, Paul Brink and a group of fellow residents approached and received support from then-township supervisor Bill Kurtz, to pursue the idea of expanding the park. The Acme Board voted later that year to form a citizen advisory committee. The succeeding Supervisor, Wayne Kladder, and the Township Board also supported the new committee in its work to identify strategies and collaborations to move the project forward.

In 2007, the Advisory Committee received a \$5,000 planning grant from Rotary Charities of Traverse City to create a park plan based on public feedback. The public input sessions resulted in a conceptual plan for a new shoreline park that included swimming beaches, fishing, park benches, and changing rooms, as well as a proposal to extend the bike trail from Bunker Hill to the intersection of US-31 and M-72. With the conceptual plan in hand, the Township approached the Conservancy to work together on a strategy to make the vision a reality.

Early steps in 2008 included securing options to purchase property from willing landowners and

applying for a \$3 million grant from the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund for Phase 1 of the project. Over 30 letters arrived in support of the grant application from citizens, business owners, elected officials, and nature lovers. The grant required a \$1 million local match. Despite pressures brought about by recession, generous foundations and individual donors stepped forward with heroic gifts of all sizes. The fundraising goal was met in 2009 and Acme Township became the owner of the Shoreside Inn, Willow Beach, and Knollwood Motel. The Township then managed a “green deconstruction” of many of the buildings. Views of the Bay were visible to the public from the US-31 roadway for the first time in decades.

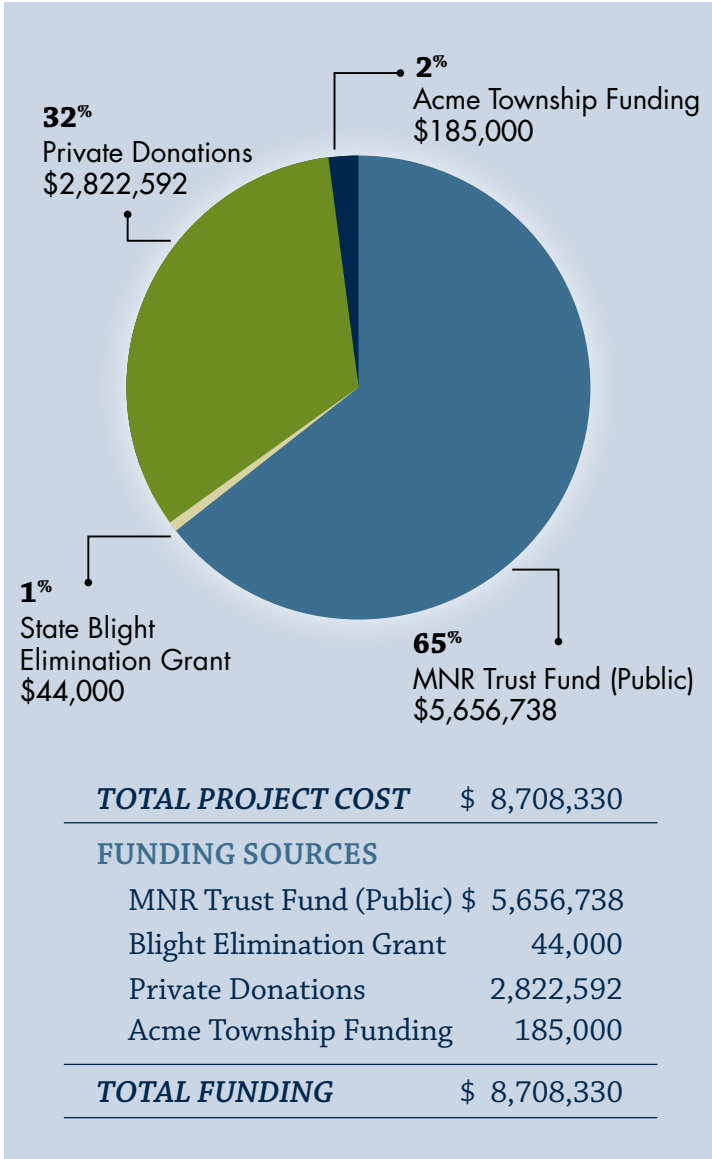
After the success of the first phase, additional landowners were willing to sell, and the Township submitted and received a second grant from the Trust Fund for \$2.26 million. That left about \$800,000 to raise to cover the Trust Fund match and other project costs.

A complicated cross-easement issue between Mountain Jacks and a marina led to some very complex challenges related to the land deal, and unanticipated expenses on other components of the phase increased the cost of Phase 2. Again, generous donors and foundations ensured that the property could be acquired by the end of the option deadline. By the end of Phase 2, the iconic Mountain Jacks restaurant and the Sun N’ Sand motel property, as well as a vacant lot, were owned by the Township.

Phase 3 launched in 2012 and included land acquisition, building deconstruction, funding for short-term park improvements, and creation of a permanent endowment for park maintenance, for a total project cost of \$1.4 million. A \$379,238 grant from the Trust Fund helped to support the acquisition of the Beach Club motel. Thanks to donors’ gifts, that property and a 15-ft. parcel to its north were purchased by the Township in the summer 2013. We were equally fortunate to receive additional private gifts and grants that allowed the Conservancy to manage a successful demolition of Mountain Jacks, the Sun N’ Sand motel, and the Beach Club properties. Eighty-seven percent of the building and pavement materials from the sites were recycled. The transformation of a built up shoreline to a place to watch the sun going down was a revelation. Fundraising for park improvements and for a permanent endowment to support the park’s long-term maintenance and management was completed in December 2013.



ACME BAYSIDE PARK:
TOTAL PROJECT COST \$8,708,330



Acme's Bayside is not just a park; it is part of a great place. The Township has followed the successful example of Traverse City and other communities that are choosing to plan for and create public beaches, open space, and recreational areas that welcome residents, businesses, and tourists — and that also encourage private investment and tax-base growth. Acme Township's Placemaking Plan, which guides these types of investment, began with public input sessions between May and October 2012 and now includes maps and design concepts for the park, the development of the community's business district, and a desired future related to connected roads, trails, and sidewalks. The Bayside Park is an important element of the plan.

Acme Township is a community that is dreaming big. Throughout the course of this project, there were disagreements and heated discussions, leadership changes at the Township, challenges and obstacles, and significant scope and budget changes. Throughout it all, citizen leaders, elected officials, donors, volunteers, and strong partners persevered and worked together to find solutions.

WHAT'S NEXT

The land acquisition phase of Bayside Park is complete, although additional acquisitions may be possible in the future, pending landowner willingness and fundraising feasibility. Meanwhile, the development and management phase of the nine new parcels that are now part of the



Deconstructing the former Mountain Jack's restaurant

park is in an early and ambitious stage. The Township's Parks and Recreation Committee recently updated the community's parks and recreation master plan. The Township Board approved a new site plan for the park that includes detailed design ideas for the development of new parking areas, walking paths, beach areas, rain gardens, a playground, restrooms, and a canoe and kayak launch. The development of the park, including the use of natural vegetation to handle storm water control on the park site, is being planned with water quality in mind. This work has been supported by The Watershed Center of Traverse City and through a grant from the Coastal Zone Management program of the Department of Environmental Quality.

The Conservancy and the Township are working together on this development phase. Conservancy staff will be providing advice and technical assistance on grants, supporting the creation of park signage, convening meetings and connecting Township leaders with partners who might also want to help steward the park, and establishing the permanent park endowment for the property which will be held at the Grand Traverse Regional Community Foundation. The Conservancy is also committing \$50,000 of the funds raised in Phase 3 as "match" for a public grant that the Township intends to pursue in 2014 for park improvements.

This summer, take some time to visit Acme, sink your toes in the sand, and see the impact of a park protection effort that has been made possible thanks to a dream, and to the leadership of dedicated and generous people who made a choice to work together.



	PROJECT COST	MNR TRUST FUND	ACME TOWNSHIP	OTHER PUBLIC	PRIVATE GIFTS	TOTAL
PHASE 1	\$ 4,008,000	3,006,000	150,000		852,000	\$ 4,008,000
PHASE 2	\$ 3,295,000	2,271,500	35,000		988,500	\$ 3,295,000
PHASE 3	\$ 1,405,330	379,238	–	44,000	982,092	\$ 1,405,330
	\$ 8,708,330	5,656,738	185,000	44,000	2,822,592	\$ 8,708,330

ACME BAYSIDE PARK: ALL PHASES

The following donors made gifts to one or more of the three phases of the Acme Bayside Park project. The listings reflect total giving, including outstanding pledges and gifts made directly to the Conservancy or Acme Township.

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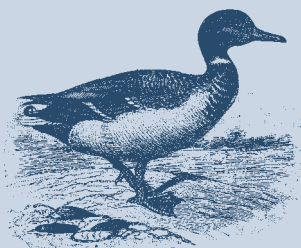
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PHOTO BY GARY L. HOWE

A Future We Look Forward To

As I write this year's message, the wind is howling, snow is drifting, and temperatures from the most recent "polar vortex" are keeping most of us inside to wait out the tempest. What better time to daydream about Spring and one of my favorite visions to seek out in the natural world: morels and trillium popping up in the woods side by side.

We at GTRLC also share a broader vision of a future we look forward to. The strategic plan we adopted in 2013 is guiding our actions to achieve the goals that will fulfill this vision. This vision includes providing our area's residents and visitors with spectacular places to visit – beaches, trails, parks and pristine natural areas. This vision also includes supporting the farming community by providing ways to keep their land in production, support our local economy and preserve the extraordinary vistas their fields and orchards lend to the beauty of our region.

The board is working hard on refining its governance model so we can ensure a culture of organizational stability that provides us with the means to live up to our promises: stewarding lands, seizing opportunities to improve the conservation values in our region, and serving as a solid partner that others can rely on to achieve our shared conservation goals.

One of the sustaining memories in my life is the shared pleasure my father and I found in the natural world. In his waning years he derived tremendous joy from the natural beauty surrounding him. The great naturalist David Attenborough's BBC/PBS series "The Life of Birds" came out around this time, and viewing it was a source of comfort in our ever changing world.



PHOTO BY ANGIE LUCAS

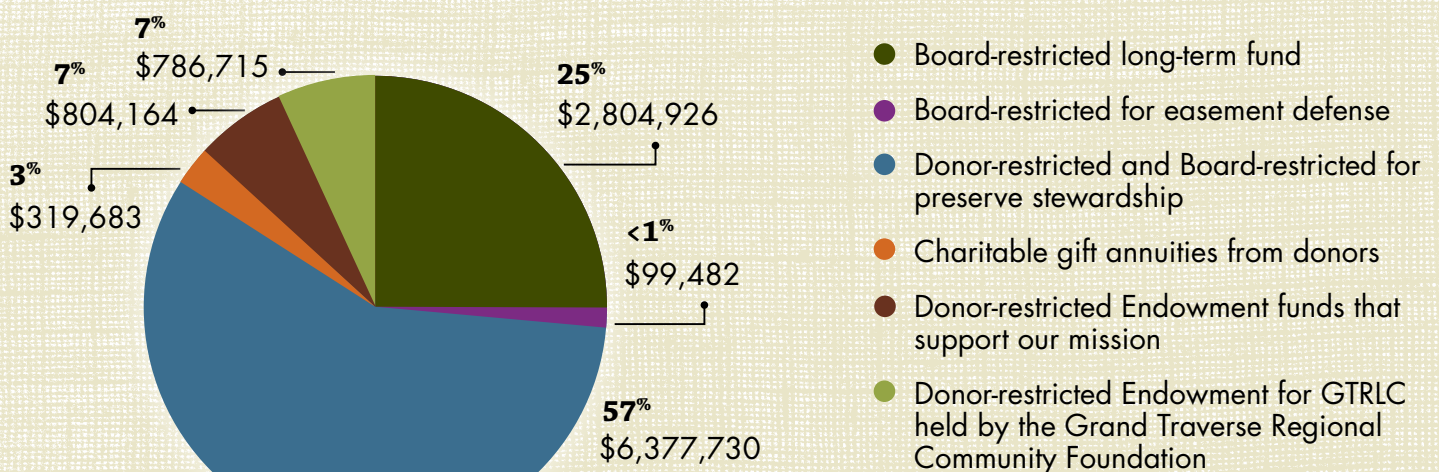
"It seems to me that the natural world is the greatest source of excitement, the greatest source of visual beauty, the greatest source of intellectual interest. It is the greatest source of so much in life that makes life worth living." – Sir David Attenborough

We (at GTRLC) are devoted to preserving the natural world that sustains us. I am so proud of this conservancy and the values we share. Thank you for being part of our community.

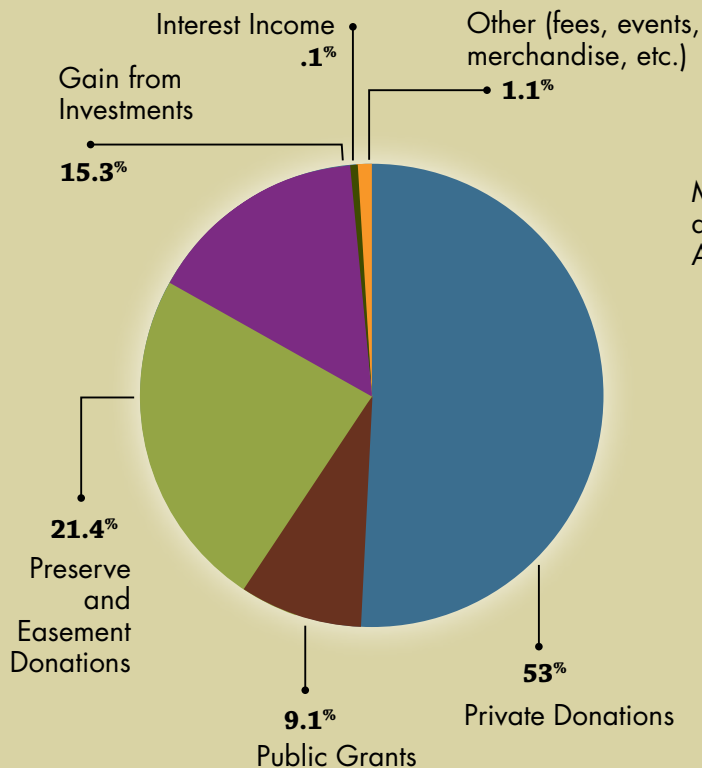
~ **Diane VanderVeen, Chair, GTRLC Board of Directors**

GTRLC LONG-TERM & ENDOWMENT FUNDS

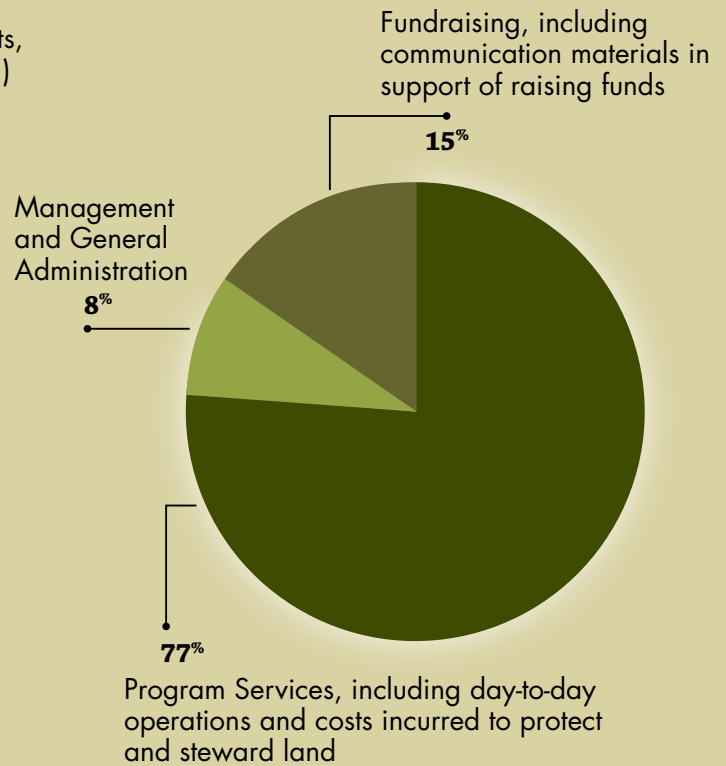
GTRLC holds over \$11 million in long-term and endowment funds. Some of the funds are donor-restricted and help support the ongoing stewardship of easements and preserves.



GTRLC REVENUES



GTRLC EXPENSES

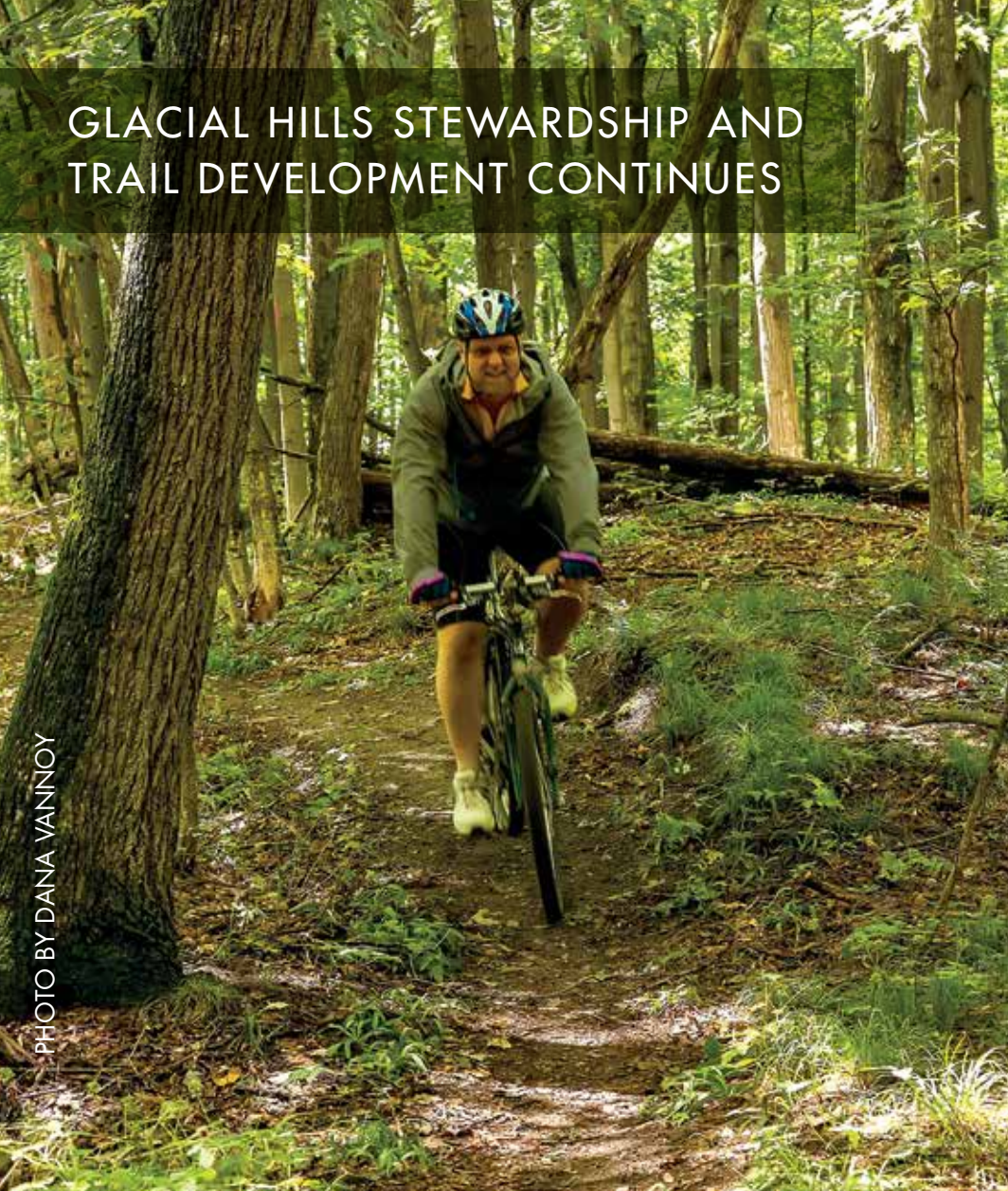


GTRLC CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2013

	UNRESTRICTED	TEMPORARILY UNRESTRICTED	PERMANENTLY UNRESTRICTED	TOTAL
REVENUE AND SUPPORT				
Private Donations	\$ 1,298,227	\$ 1,788,185	\$ 22,110	\$ 3,108,522
Public Grants	215,192	319,856		535,048
Preserve & Easement Donations		1,257,500		1,257,500
Gain From Investments	255,385	641,572		896,957
Interest Income	3,888	119		4,007
Other (fees, events, merchandise, etc.)	36,085	29,678		65,763
Net Assets Released from Restriction	2,142,172	(2,142,172)		
Liens Released on Nature Preserves		(371,302)	371,302	
<i>Total Revenue and Support</i>	<u>3,950,949</u>	<u>1,523,436</u>	<u>393,412</u>	<u>5,867,797</u>
EXPENSES				
Program Services, including day-to-day operations and costs incurred to protect and steward land	2,698,487			2,698,487
Management and General Administration	295,873			295,873
Fundraising, including communication materials in support of raising funds	513,376			513,376
<i>Total Expenses</i>	<u>3,507,736</u>			<u>3,507,736</u>
CHANGES IN NET ASSETS	443,213	1,523,436	393,412	2,360,061
NET ASSETS, Beginning of Year	3,690,133	10,732,304	17,376,264	31,798,701
NET ASSETS, End of Year	<u>\$ 4,133,346</u>	<u>\$ 12,255,740</u>	<u>\$ 17,769,676</u>	<u>\$ 34,158,762</u>

GLACIAL HILLS STEWARDSHIP AND TRAIL DEVELOPMENT CONTINUES

PHOTO BY DANA VANNOY



A few years ago, GTRLC assisted Antrim County and Forest Home Township in acquiring 345 acres of property which consolidated fragmented holdings into a contiguous 763-acre publicly owned block known as the Glacial Hills Pathway and Natural Area. GTRLC's goals for the project include developing a 30-mile trail system that creates access to nature and recreation, protecting the health of the property's forests, and preserving water quality in the Chain of Lakes. GTRLC is now working with Forest Home Township, Antrim County, AmeriCorps, Goodwill Industries, volunteers, and other partners to create a trail system for hiking, biking, snowshoeing, hunting and wildlife viewing. The new trail will provide a recreational destination for residents and visitors in the heart of Antrim County just outside the Village of Bellaire. Short's Brewery, Shanty Creek Resort, and the Bellaire Chamber of Commerce support the project.



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GRANTS FROM STATE & FEDERAL GOVERNMENTS AND OTHER PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

The Conservancy is either a direct recipient or sub-awardee of grant funding from the following state and federal programs and partner organizations.

Sustain Our Great Lakes (a multi-agency initiative)

USEPA – Great Lakes Restoration Initiative

State of Michigan, Nonpoint Source Pollution Program – Clean Michigan Initiative

State of Michigan, DEQ Science and Services

U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resource Conservation Service – Wildlife Habitat Improvement and Environmental Quality Incentives Programs

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – Partners for Fish and Wildlife

State of Michigan, Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resource Conservation Service – Farm and Ranchland Protection Program

Michigan Coastal Zone Management Program, Office of the Great Lakes, the Department of Environmental Quality, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Ducks Unlimited

Northwest Michigan Council of Governments

The Nature Conservancy

Grand Traverse Conservation District

Conservation Resource Alliance



PHOTO BY ANGIE LUCAS

Includes all gifts and pledge payments to Arcadia Marsh, the Universally Accessible trail at Arcadia Dunes, and Arcadia Beach Sunset Station.

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PRIVATE LAND PROTECTION

While the parks and nature preserves we protect are open to and enjoyed by the public, 18,369 acres of the land which we have permanently protected are private properties whose owners have generously granted conservation easements. We monitor these properties annually, often hand-in-hand with the land owners, to answer questions, and to ensure that conservation values—the health and wealth of these precious lands—are maintained forever. **We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the following land owners for their support.**

Acme Township	Cherry Ridge Farms	Robert & Pam Flewelling	John & Mary Lane
Robert & Meredith Amon	City of Traverse City	Chip & Terrie Frey	Bruce & Joanne Langlois
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Bayshore Real Estate Associates #1	Development Engineering	Great Lakes Fishery Trust	Kimberly Mampe
Leon & Shirley Beal	Charles DeYoung	Estate of Anthony Grybok	Robert & Lois Manigold
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Archibald Carey III	Kenneth & Janet Engle	Estate of Oscar H. Kraft	Neahtawanta Resort Association
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	<i>Properties LP</i>		

** Indicates new conservation
easement.*

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Land Champions commit to monthly gifts that support the very foundation of our mission. By supplying a steady and reliable source of income to fund the day-to-day work of the Conservancy, Land Champions allow us to plan and sustain our work more effectively. We are grateful for their commitment and generosity.

<i>Joanie Abbott</i>	<i>Karen Garber &</i>	<i>Megan & Andrew Olds</i>	<i>Chris & Ali Sullivan</i>
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** New Land Champion*



If you would like to learn more about how you can become a Land Champion, contact Anne Brasie, Fund Development Manager, at abrasie@ltrc.org or 231/929-7911.

VANGUARD SOCIETY

By making plans to benefit the Conservancy with future gifts—accomplished through estates, trusts, annuities, insurance policies, beneficiary designations, and other planned giving options—Vanguard Society members will continue to make a difference for land conservation far into the future, helping to ensure that the places we save today will be protected and cared for, forever.

Anonymous (5)

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—John and Nancy Morrison



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January 1 - Dec 31, 2013

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Sincere Regards,

 *The Staff and Board of GTRLC*

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