



A Letter from Glen Chown

DEAR FRIENDS,

Our mission at GTRLC is clear and strong:

Protecting significant natural, scenic and farm lands – and advancing stewardship – now and for future generations.

These days, I've been thinking a lot about one particular word in our mission: Scenic. Significant natural and farm lands are easy to define with our Priority Land Atlas, which uses scientific criteria to determine the most valuable land in our service area. But when it comes to scenic land, the situation gets decidedly more subjective. Beauty, as the old adage goes, is in the eye of the beholder.

I've always been awestruck by the view looking south from the first platform at the Green Point Dunes Nature Preserve. This "Sound of Music" view, as I've always called it, is special in more ways than one. Aside from the stunning panorama of Lake Michigan shore, sandy dunes and beautiful coastal forest it provides, it also makes me think fondly of the lasting friendships we forged during the Coastal Campaign.

Sometimes a favorite view might be less natural. Ask my wife Becky, and she'll tell you that she's especially fond of the view of the idyllic Maple Bay Farmhouse along U.S. 31, particularly when it's surrounded by a blazing yellow field of sunflowers.

Our ongoing work to restore the farmhouse has preserved the historic character there while making the overall scene pop with a vibrancy not seen in years.

With an impressive legacy of protected lands – nearly 41,000 acres and counting – there's certainly no shortage of views to be enjoyed. From the rolling fruit farms of the Old Mission Peninsula and the scenic ridges that frame the Boardman River Valley to the quiet beauty of the Rapid River as it spills through a lush forest of cedars and hemlocks at Seven Bridges, the choices are almost endless.

So, I wonder, what's YOUR favorite view – and why? Perhaps it's a spot that makes you feel "home," or that simply takes your breath away every time you visit. Maybe it's significant or important for reasons beyond the view itself. How would life be different if that favorite view was obstructed or made inaccessible by development? How do these views allow you to heal and bolster your mental health?

I'd love to hear from you as we work to better define the importance of scenic viewshed protection. Please email me at myfavoriteview@ gtrlc.org and let me know. I look forward to reading about the scenic views that you all hold dear.



Glen Chown GTRLC Executive Director

Leader of the Pack

VOLUNTEER SALLY MANKE ADVANCES GTRLC'S MISSION BY LEADING HIKES

The sweeping views of Lake Michigan from the top of Old Baldy or Green Point Dunes never cease to amaze Sally Manke, and the hikes that lead to these views always instill in her a sense of calming and peace.

And while Sally certainly doesn't mind making these journeys alone, it's much more fulfilling when she can lead a group and share the experience.

"I just so enjoy seeing people experience these places, whether it's their 70th time or their first time," she said. "There's just nothing better."

Sally has served GTRLC as a volunteer steward for more than a decade, helping to care for preserves near the Lake Michigan coast. In addition to her important stewardship work, another

huge contribution to GTRLC is her willingness to lead multiple public hikes during the winter months. These hikes have engaged hundreds of people over the years, generating awareness and good will for GTRLC.

"We can't thank Sally enough for being such a tremendous ambassador for the Conservancy," said Nate Richardson, who coordinates volunteers for GTRLC. "She helps us advance our mission by getting people excited about the work that we do."

Sally lives in Arcadia and taught multiple subjects in the Onekema middle and high schools for more



than two decades before retiring. She now runs an online quilt shop and teaches art quilting at seminars around the country. Her husband has deep roots in the Arcadia area that stretch back generations; his grandfather even served as the village's first blacksmith.

Sally first became involved shortly after the Coastal Campaign - an ambitious \$35 million

> campaign that resulted in the protection of Arcadia Dunes and Green Point Dunes - at the urging of longtime GTRLC volunteer and fellow hike leader Paula Dreeszen.

She knows that engaging people with the land is the only way to make sure people will be enthusiastic about conservation,

now and into the future.

"By sharing all of this, you make sure that when the next campaign comes along, people will listen," she said. "Look at Arcadia Dunes.... people can stand there and say, wow, 15 years ago, somebody had a vision and made this happen. What



Sally Manke (center) leads a group hike along the coast.

If you are interested in volunteering, email Nate Richardson at nate@gtrlc.org.

can we look back on 15 years from now?"

Keep an eye on the events calendar at www.gtrlc.org for the spring hike schedule, which will include the popular May wildflower hikes led by Paula Dreeszen.

GTRLC.ORG 3 Love the land. Pass it on.

'Second to None'

LEORIE VINEYARD TO BE FOREVER PROTECTED BY CONSERVATION EASEMENT

For years and years, as he made the trip to Traverse City from his home in Leelanau County, Bernie Rink's eyes would drift across Grand Traverse Bay and land on a large, conspicuous scar on Old Mission Peninsula.

That scar – or gouge, or scrape, or gash, depending on who you were talking to – was a large gravel pit. Rumor has it that gravel beneath the Cherry Capital Airport runways came from that pit, as did

the gravel for countless other projects throughout the region over the years.

But there's something decidedly more scenic for Rink's eyes to settle on now, as that scar has for many years been a productive and beautiful vineyard – a vineyard he proudly helped plan nearly 30 years ago.

"I really enjoy the fact that it's nice and green again after driving into

town all those years and seeing it as a big gouge in the earth there," Rink said. "It's a good feeling."

Now, thanks to the foresight of property owners Bill and Susie Janis, the 18-acre Leorie Vineyard will be forever protected with a conservation easement donated to the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy. Because the many features that make it a truly world-class vineyard would also make it a prime site for housing, its protection is especially sweet.

"We're just so thrilled for the opportunity to protect this truly remarkable piece of land," GTRLC Executive Director Glen Chown said. "For many different reasons, this one would really have been a shame to lose to development."

Janis acquired the gravel pit not long after he bought a house overlooking the property in 1988. He was

compelled to purchase it after the previous owner began plans for a housing development there, something he hoped to avoid. But once he became the not-so-proud owner of an old gravel pit, he needed to figure out what to do there.

After tossing around a few other ideas – a Christmas tree farm was among them – he consulted with Rink, a librarian and pioneering winemaker who years earlier had established

Boskydel Vineyards, the first commercial winery on the Leelanau Peninsula. Rink, now 91, was quick to see the potential for a vineyard.

"He said, 'My gosh Bill, this site is second to none," Janis recalls. "There's nothing like this around here."

Among other factors, the property's elevation, air drainage and proximity to the water make it an



Red wine grapes flourish at Leorie.



excellent grape-growing location. A wooded ridge surrounding the vineyard helps trap heat early and late in the season, something that is particularly beneficial for the red wine grapes that grow there.

In a region dominated by white grape varieties, those reds – merlot and cabernet franc, to be specific – were planted on a whim, Janis said. The whim panned out, as the vineyard is now known for the red wine it produces (though about half is planted with white varieties). Black Star Farms gets them all, producing a special label wine with the reds.

Because of its natural features and exceptional red grape growth, Leorie is one of the most unique properties not just on Old Mission, but throughout the entire region.

"In hindsight, we made a mistake," Janis said. "If we had known what could be grown there in terms of a quality red, the whole place would have been planted with red." "Everybody, and I mean everybody, thought that once Bill was done with his vineyard, that this property would be developed and gone."

The site is now managed by Craig Cunningham, a seasoned vineyard manager who has worked on hundreds of sites from Manistee up to Charlevoix for more than 25 years. He's now mostly retired, but still works at Leorie in large part because he just loves it there.

"This is the number one site out of all the sites I've worked on, hands down," said Cunningham, who has worked at Leorie since 1994. "If people were to say, regardless of size, which is your favorite, it would be this one. It has a priceless presentation of what this region has to offer."

Because of the stunning views the site offers and its proximity to town, Cunningham and many others



assumed it would eventually be developed. The property would allow for as many as 15 high-end home sites had it been available for that purpose, and there likely would have been no shortage of interested developers.

"Everybody, and I mean everybody, thought that once Bill was done with his vineyard, that this property would be developed and gone," he said. "And that obviously isn't going to come to pass, which is wonderful. Bill has made major contributions to this region, and he wants this to be part of his legacy."

Janis had heard of the concept of a conservation easement before, but hadn't paid much attention until recently when he briefly considered selling the land. As he thought about his beautiful vineyard plowed away to make room for houses, his stomach turned.

"If that was to happen, regardless of the amount of money I would have received for the land, I would be very, very disappointed," he said. "The most important thing here is that forever and a day, this property is never going to be developed."

And for Janis, it's more than just preserving the physical beauty of the land. He wants to honor the hard work of the people who helped make Leorie into the well-respected vineyard that it is today.

"Some great people have been involved in it and put in a lot of effort, and they've been really instrumental in the success there," he said.

Janis is a proud Michigan State University graduate, and he's also excited about the future of educational opportunities at the vineyard. Cunningham has worked closely for years with MSU researchers on a variety of initiatives, from insect monitoring and trapping to non-insecticide pest treatment, pruning technique studies and much more.

The property's size, mix of grape varieties and location near town make it a perfect classroom, Cunningham said. MSU graduate students have



Workers tend to the vines at Leorie.

"If people can do what I did, it's really a win-win for everybody."

studied pest control on the property, and local Northwestern Michigan College students have learned about viticulture, landscaping and other fields of study.

And although his decision wasn't financially driven, the tax savings tied to conservation easements also were appealing to Janis, he said. He encourages other landowners to explore conservation easements for their properties.

"If people can do what I did, it's really a win-win for everybody," he said.



Children go for a hike at the North Street Nature Trail.

Building Strong Communities

CHARLIE KEHR MEMORIAL TRAIL CONNECTOR, CENTRAL LAKE TRAIL EXAMPLES OF COMMUNITY CONSERVATION

Some of the most important projects completed by GTRLC don't rank high on the acreage scale. Sometimes, they aren't even measured in acres at all.

This is often true of projects in which GTRLC responds to a specific community need. These "community conservation" projects help cities, villages, townships and other communities in our area achieve their recreation and resource-based placemaking goals.

"Our organization wants to be at the forefront of helping communities maximize their outdoor recreation opportunities," GTRLC Executive Director Glen Chown said. "Part of that means we must be

responsive and ready to help when these communities seek our expertise to get things done."

Community conservation projects sometimes do involve acquisition of sizeable chunks of land. GTRLC's purchase of the Sand Lakes 160 parcel last

year – a move that protected the route for the immensely popular Iceman Cometh mountain bike race, as well as several other races and events – is These "community conservation" projects help cities, villages, townships and other communities in our area achieve their recreation and resource-based placemaking goals.

a great example of protecting land to fill a community need. We are also helping Benzie County's Homestead Township acquire a beautiful 52-acre parcel with 1,500 feet of frontage on the Platte River, fulfilling a years-old community desire to have a public park there.

Two other recent projects show that something as simple as a new trail or trail connector can have an equally huge impact.

The first is the Charlie Kehr Memorial Trail Connector along Crystal Lake. This planned stairway will connect the Mary Margaret Johnson trail in the beautiful Railroad Point Natural Area with the popular Betsie Valley Trail, which passes along the lake a short (but currently impassible) distance below the natural area.

"Right now we have two wonderful assets in Railroad Point and the Betsie Valley trail that are right next to

> each other, but there's no easy way to get from one to the other," said Benzie County Parks Commissioner Ann Bourne. "This stairway will connect the two and give a big boost to recreation along Crystal Lake."

The stairway, to be completed this year, will be named in honor of



Linda and Charlie Kehr.

Charlie Kehr, a former GTRLC board member and Benzie parks commissioner who was a key player in many outdoor initiatives in Benzie County.

"Charlie believed strongly in the importance of recreation in our county, and he was instrumental in getting a lot of things done to improve outdoor experiences here," Bourne said. "It's fitting that such a useful project be named in his honor."

Kehr died in 2016. His widow, Linda, said he would be humbled and deeply honored by the name.

"He worked hard on both projects – as chair of the county parks and recreation commission in acquiring the Railroad Point property for public use, and as a founding member of the Friends of the Betsie Valley Trail," she said. "Though many others were involved and instrumental in these projects, Charlie was the common denominator. As the 'connector' who helped put these two resources together, an actual physical connector in his honor makes perfect sense."

Over in Antrim County, GTRLC recently helped the village of Central Lake build a popular new trail on 40 acres of village-owned land. There's a landfill and gas wells on the property, but village officials knew there was also plenty of recreation potential.

"We had the 40 acres, but what were we to do with it?" said Rob Tyler, a village council member. "The Land Conservancy provided the vision and the direction as to how to utilize these acres in the best way possible."

As luck would have it, the conversation began when Tyler's wife, Maggie, ran into some GTRLC AmeriCorps members at the nearby Glacial Hills Pathway and Natural Area. She realized the Conservancy might be the perfect organization to help with

the Central Lake piece, and they reached out with a request for assistance.

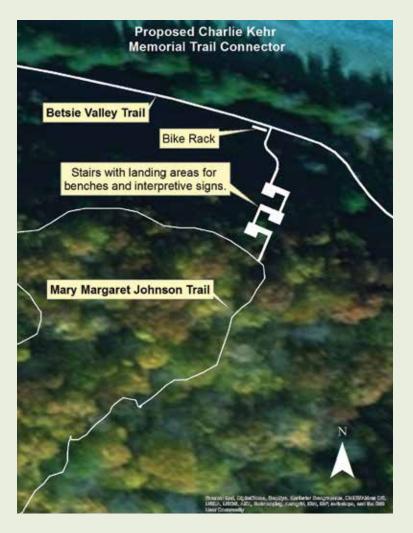
After looking at the site, GTRLC Land Stewardship Specialist Steve Lagerquist determined that the topography would be ideal for a roughly one-mile trail. He then planned the trail and helped the village apply for and receive a grant from the Health Department of Northern Michigan to cover costs tied to trail construction, signage and more.

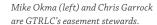
Trail construction began in July, with local volunteer crews and GTRLC's AmeriCorps crew doing much of the trail finishing work. The results exceeded expectations, Tyler said, as the North Street Nature Trail is already a huge hit with people of all ages.

"It's been unbelievable. I never thought we'd have that much usage on the trail," Tyler said. "It's been great to see."

Tyler and other Central Lake officials are grateful to GTRLC for its role in the process.

"I don't think we could have done this without the Conservancy," Tyler said. "We didn't have the vision to plan it on our own, plus the Conservancy gave us the expertise on exactly how to do it."







Monitoring Men

EASEMENT STEWARDSHIP TEAM BUILDS RELATIONSHIPS, **ENSURES CONSERVATION**

Securing land for public recreation has always been a huge part of the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy's efforts. Its expansive portfolio of preserves and natural areas offers countless opportunities to get out and enjoy the natural world that surrounds us.

But of all the land protected by GTRLC since its inception in 1991, more than half is private. And while these lands aren't available for public use, their protection benefits us all. These private protected lands safeguard water quality, preserve

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wildlife habitat, protect scenic views and ensure the future availability of quality agricultural land.

Most of this private land was protected through the use of

conservation easements. These voluntary legal agreements permanently restrict the way land can be used, regardless of owner, in order to protect the land's conservation values. GTRLC works with the landowner to create the easement, taking into account the landowner's wishes and the Conservancy's conservation goals.

A key part of this arrangement is regular monitoring to make sure the terms of the easement are upheld. This is required not only by the Conservancy's own rules, but also by the Land Trust Alliance, which provides accreditation to GTRLC and hundreds of other conservancies across the country. And because of the tax benefits tied to easements, the Internal Revenue Service also requires regular monitoring.

Enter Mike Okma and Chris Garrock, the Conservancy's conservation easement stewards. They are responsible for regular monitoring of more than 230 easements totaling more than 20,000 acres scattered throughout GTRLC's five county service area.

"These people protected their land because they love it, and it's really neat to be able to visit with these conservation heroes and hear their stories," Okma said. "I love hearing why they felt it was important to protect their land, and it's great to have an in-person opportunity to thank them for that decision."

> Okma and Garrock work hard to build relationships with landowners. They make every effort to keep landowners in the loop, sending them notifications and inviting them to join in on their monitoring visits. Aside from the

fact that they're both friendly fellows, this relationship building is an important part of their work.

"The most important thing in terms of risk management with easements is having a genuine relationship with the land owners," Okma said. "Open communication and good relationships can help prevent problems before they occur, and all of that relationship work goes a long way if you ever get into a situation in which a potential problem needs to be resolved."

Each easement is monitored once a year, mostly during the spring and summer. Most are visited and walked on foot, and others are enrolled in the Conservancy's aerial monitoring program. Many easements selected for aerial monitoring are large properties, often with natural features that make ground access difficult or very time consuming. Those easements eligible for aerial monitoring still receive an on-the-ground visit at least once every other year.



About two miles of Manistee River shoreline are protected by this 380-acre easement in Manistee County. Easements like this must be monitored on a regular basis.

Although minor violations occur from time to time, the vast majority are rectified after a simple conversation with the landowner.

"People don't usually deliberately or maliciously violate easement terms – it's usually a misunderstanding or misinterpretation," Okma said. "Our goal is to reach a resolution that works within the four corners of the easement and still lets the landowner meet their needs."

GET INVOLVED

If you are interested in protecting your land, visit www.gtrlc.org and check out our Landowner Information page. Or contact Land Protection Director Jesse Wolff at (231) 929-7911 or jwolff@gtrlc.org

Roughly 70 percent of the easements held by GTRLC were granted by people or families who still own the land, but that number is likely to steadily decrease in the coming decades as the land is sold or transferred. Although a land buyer should in theory be aware of restrictions on their land, any lack of understanding or willingness to abide by easement terms could lead to problems down the line.

"We need to be prepared for future challenges to these easements, especially as the land starts changing hands at a more rapid pace," GTRLC Executive Director Glen Chown said. "Good communication will be even more important going forward."

Okma and Garrock attempt to keep track of land sales involving easements, though the task isn't easy. If they do find out about a new landowner purchasing a property with an easement, they send a packet of information and strive to get a monitoring visit set up to talk through the easement.

"Hopefully we can meet with the landowner in person that first year – that's really important in terms of getting the relationship started on the right foot," Garrock said.

Generations of Giving

SUPPORTERS SHARE GRANDPARENTS' PASSION FOR PHILANTHROPY

In their formative years, Ed and Elyse Rogers' three grandchildren looked forward to few things more than making the trip up north to the family cottage on Elk Lake.

They swam in the lake's crystal clear waters, hunted for frogs in all the ponds they could find, gathered around bonfires and ran around on the grass until they collapsed from exhaustion. Like countless other seasonal visitors from downstate

or beyond, they found the region's calming beauty and open spaces to be a welcome change from the hustle and bustle of busier urban areas.

"I brought one of my good buddies from Ohio up to Elk Lake, and he was just in awe of how clear the lake was," said Kevin Tate, who has been

visiting the region for his entire life.
"The natural beauty of it is like nothing you've ever seen before."

And as with so many thousands of other seasonal visitors from far and wide, a visit to the Grand Traverse Region was about much more than the abundant natural beauty. Kevin, along with his sister Amanda Baker and cousin Kaila Bryzgalski, got to spend quality time with their grandparents and with each other. In their full-time lives they were scattered across the Midwest, but they always remained connected to the cottage on the shores of Elk Lake.

"For all of us, the lake also represented family," Amanda said. "We grew up going to the lake and we always reunited there. It's a special place."

The three grandchildren are now donors to the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy through their role as advisors in the Edward & Elyse Rogers Family Foundation, started by Ed and Elyse a few years ago. After all of their experiences "Up North," they felt strongly that it was their duty to help protect the

natural wonders that shaped their memories.

"We want to be able to give our children and future generations the same wonderful experience and retreat to nature that we had growing up," Amanda said. "We'd like it to stay pristine and beautiful."

Ed and Elyse started visiting the Grand Traverse region more than 50 years ago,

eventually building the Elk Lake home that became the site of so many wonderful memories. The couple has a long and well-recognized history of philanthropy, both personally and professionally.

Elyse served as assistant vice president of the Herbert H. and Grace A. Dow foundation, interim president of the Midland Area Community Foundation and on several nonprofit and business boards. Ed worked for Dow Chemical Company for nearly 40 years, serving for a period as president and CEO of Dow Chemical Japan. Like Elyse, he's also served on many boards.



Elyse and Ed Rogers.

They began giving to GTRLC in 1992, just a year after the organization was founded. After seeing firsthand how development can change the character of a region, they wanted to support an organization dedicated to preserving the Grand Traverse area's wild and beautiful places.

"Nature is under tremendous pressure worldwide, and anything we can do anywhere to help it is a step in the right direction," Ed said.

The grandkids grew up. Amanda is an attorney in Cleveland,

Kevin works in IT in Columbus, and Kaila works in Chicago for a chemical company. In Kaila's role, she helps customers from throughout the Midwest find environmentally responsible disposal solutions for their hazardous and non-hazardous waste.

Kaila's career path was influenced by her time in the Grand Traverse region. Time spent on nature hikes with her family reinforced the importance of protecting the natural environment, and she ended up studying Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences at Purdue University before landing her current job.

"As a kid, I noticed over time how many houses were being developed on Elk Lake and Torch Lake and really how precious fresh water access is and continues to be," she said. "The outdoors is truly where I felt and feel the most grounded, and I wanted to make sure that was around for other people to experience, too," she said.

As they go on to have their own families, the value of protection seems even higher.

"We had a pretty awesome childhood, running around outside and having so much fun. I want my kids to have those same experiences and opportunities to use their imagination outside of technology," Kevin said.

The grandchildren are proud to carry on the family tradition of philanthropy, looking to their grandparents as examples of what it means to give.

"It's really inspiring to see how much they've given back to all the various communities they've been involved in – I don't think there's a single

community they've lived in that they haven't touched in some way – and they never ask for thanks," Amanda said. "They've embraced a personal mission that with the ability to give comes the responsibility to do so, and they've passed that on to us."

Ed and Elyse are thrilled that the grandchildren are following in their footsteps.

"I'm a big believer that philanthropy is learned, it takes thought and it takes someone pointing out the value and the enjoyment of it," Elyse said. "I'm proud of the kids because they really have been so thoughtful."



Kevin Tate, Amanda Baker and Kaila Bryzgalski.

Love the land. Pass if on. GTRLC.ORG 13

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A New Path for All

UA TRAIL PLANNING UNDERWAY AT ARCADIA MARSH

The wonders of one of GTRLC's most ecologically dazzling preserves will soon be much more accessible for people of all ages and abilities.

Planning is underway for a Universally Accessible (UA) trail at the Arcadia Marsh nature preserve in northern Manistee County. The roughly ¾ mile trail will extend from the existing parking area along M-22 to a new parking area off St. Pierre Road.

The elevated boardwalk trail will follow and extend upon the existing footpath, which is prone to getting so muddy in spots that it can be nearly impassible. Tall plants along the existing trail also make it hard for visitors to see their surroundings, especially in the warmer months.

"Going to the marsh is super cool now, but this new trail is going to make the experience even better," said Steve Lagerquist, GTRLC Land Stewardship Specialist. "This is going to offer easy access for everyone, plus much better viewing of everything because you'll be elevated enough to see over the vegetation."

A series of bumpouts with benches, multiple elevated observation decks and three small fishing piers will add to the experience. As with

the Overlook Trail at Arcadia Dunes, which opened in 2017, the entire trail will be designed to meet UA standards. Studies have shown that such trails are useful not

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Also like the Overlook Trail, careful steps will be taken to minimize impact on the ecosystem. The trail largely follows an old narrow-gauge railroad track that supports the current path.

"Because this is such a dynamic and important ecosystem, and because there are so many sensitive habitats, we really wanted to keep this trail on the already disturbed portion of the preserve," said





A rendering of a section of the trail.

Senior Preserve Steward Angie Lucas. "We selected that corridor specifically because it's already been impacted."

Trail construction will begin after nesting season in 2018 and wrap before nesting season in 2019, another conscious effort to minimize impact. In addition, about a third of the trail will be closed every year from early April to mid-June to avoid disturbing certain sensitive species as they nest.

"We've been doing bird surveys since 2013, when we were first planning this trail," Lucas said. "Based upon that data, we'll have a seasonal closure of a section of it to minimize human disturbance."

This trail and its amenities will allow visitors to enjoy a very special preserve that protects one of the last remaining Great Lakes coastal marshes. These marshes are nearly as productive as tropical rainforests in terms of biomass per acre, offering habitat for scores of threatened and rare species. It's estimated that as much as 80 percent of this type of habitat that once existed throughout the Great Lakes basin has been destroyed.

GTRLC's stewardship team, in partnership with several other organizations, has completed extensive restoration work at the marsh since acquiring it more than a decade ago. Aside from substantial invasive species remediation, one of the most important restoration efforts at the marsh

involved rerouting Bowens Creek from an old ditch back into its original, It's estimated that as much as 80 percent of this type of habitat that once existed throughout the Great Lakes basin has been destroyed.

meandering channel. This added more than 3,700 feet of riverine habitat and also dropped the temperature in the creek by 10 degrees, improving habitat for trout, sculpins and other cold-water species.

As with the years-long environmental remediation process, GTRLC reached out to partners and stakeholders for input with design and placement of the new trail. Brian Allen is a member of the Benzie Audubon Club and former GTRLC board member who helped with bird monitoring in preparation for the trail.

"With the recent high water levels in the marsh, the elevated trail will make it much easier for both birders and wildlife enthusiasts to enjoy the marsh," he said. "I am looking forward to having the platforms to gain some elevation and a better view. This may also reduce the risk of acquiring ticks and may make it more comfortable and inviting to the public."

To support this project, contact Anthony Rupard at arupard@gtrlc.org or (231) 929-7911.

ARCADIA MARSH

NATURE PRESERVE

1 of 16

REMAINING
COASTAL MARSHES ON
THE LAKE MICHIGAN
COAST OF MICHIGAN'S
LOWER PENINSULA

ARCADIA MARSH
PROTECTION HISTORY



An estimated 80% of Michigan's coastal marsh habitat has been destroyed.

- Arcadia Marsh
- Other Remaining Coastal Marshes
- Parcels GTRLC is Actively Fundraising to Protect



10

DEGREES COOLER

improving habitat for trout, sculpins and other cold-water species 231
BIRD SPECIES

documented by staff and volunteers, including eBird volunteers

17

species are state endangered, threatened or of special concern



28

FISH SPECIES

documented by staff and partners



201

PLANT SPECIES

documented by staff and volunteers

1

state-threatened plant species: wild rice

305

ACRE PRESERVE

helps protect Lake
Michigan water quality
by filtering pollutants and
contaminants from a
16,000 acre watershed

MARSH RESTORATION

3,700

FEET OF RIVERINE HABITAT

added when re-routing Bowen's Creek from an old ditch



6

ACRES OF SHALLOWS

constructed for wildlife habitat and feeding





An Extraordinary Gift

KINGSLEY SCHOOLS TO RECEIVE **NEARLY 500 ACRES FOR OUTDOOR EDUCATION**

If you're looking for Boone Scharp, he's probably outside. And on most days, he'll be joined by a group of school kids eager to stretch their legs and breathe in the fresh air.

"I'm so excited I can't

science and wilderness leadership even stand it." at Kingsley Area Schools. On top of that, he leads a popular and very active Outdoor Adventure Club there. Talk to Scharp even briefly and you realize that few things are more important to him than

Scharp teaches environmental

getting kids to appreciate the outdoors.

Build fires. Identify edible plants. Study deer populations. Build a few wood duck houses. Just ditch the digital distractions and get out there.

"It's my whole purpose. These kids are dying for it and they don't even know it. They really don't even realize what they're missing until you get them out there," he said.

"You've got to get them outside and leave the devices behind."

These days, Scharp feels like he won the lottery. Thanks to an extraordinary gift from two sisters, Kingsley schools was the recipient of a 479-acre piece of land a short distance from Kingsley. The wild, undeveloped property is bursting with potential as a site for outdoor learning.

"I'm so excited I can't even stand it," he said. "The sky's the limit. This really is a dream come true."

And thanks to the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy, the property will be protected forever with a conservation easement.

"It's going to be fabulous to have this piece of land dedicated for science and outdoor education, and of course to have it protected for generations to come," said Kingsley Schools Superintendent Keith Smith. "This is such an amazing and generous gift."

The land belonged to Huldah and Gladys Hill, both of whom were raised in Kingsley and attended Kingsley schools. Gladys died in 2011 at "It's one thing to read about the outdoors, and it's something entirely different for the kids to get out there and see it and experience it for themselves."

age 88, and Huldah died last year at 103. In their wills, the sisters instructed that the land be protected from development and transferred to Kingsley schools.

From an ecological standpoint, the land has several exciting elements. It has fen habitat, rich conifer and hard wood-conifer swamps, upland habitat, two cold-water creeks that support brook trout and much more. The fact that it's adjacent to state land on both sides is also important from a conservation perspective, as is its large size. It's the seventh largest of the more than 230 easements GTRLC has secured in its 27 year history.

"This is a really neat piece of land for a lot of different reasons," GTRLC Land Protection Specialist Chris Sullivan said. "We're grateful to have the opportunity to protect such a large piece of land that has such a variety of quality habitats."

Many people in the community assumed the school would sell off the land to raise money, Smith said. But Kingsley is proud of its robust outdoor education programs and was thrilled at the chance to have a classroom of this caliber.

"It's one thing to read about the outdoors, and it's something entirely different for the kids to get out there and see it and experience it for themselves," Smith said. It really engages the kids."

Even if the school district were to sell it many years down the line, the land would still be protected by the conservation easement. This protection was very important to the Hill sisters, said Bob Adcock, a family friend and personal representative of Huldah's.

"Their biggest concern was they didn't want the land to get chopped up and subdivided," Adcock said. "They really wanted it to be left wild."



GTRLC and the school district worked to craft an easement that protects the land's conservation values but still allows the district a small building envelope for potential bunk buildings or classroom space.

In February, Scharp took a group of students to the property to build and sleep in quinzhees, a type of snow shelter. They've also begun discussing habitat plans, building owl and wood duck houses and more.

Monique Nickerson largely grew up with the sisters, who for many years lived in a foster care home run by her parents. Education was extremely important to Gladys and Huldah – particularly Huldah – and she would have been thrilled to see kids on the land, Nickerson said.

"If they would have gifted it before they passed away, Huldah would have loved to get a ride over there just to see the kids using the property and having that experience of learning on the land," Nickerson said. "When I heard that they were going camping on the property, I got emotional. It's just amazing, and it's exactly what Huldah and Gladys would have wanted."

GTRLC Executive Director Glen Chown said he hopes the sisters' example will inspire others to protect their land.

"This really was an act of love, both for the natural world and for their community," he said. "Hopefully others will follow their lead, both in Grand Traverse County and elsewhere."



Upper Manistee Headwaters Preserve.

Active Project Updates

Below are just a few of GTRLC's many active projects. To support any of these projects, or for more information, contact Anthony Rupard at arupard@gtrlc.org or (231) 929-7911

1. Upper Manistee Headwaters Preserve

Our stewardship team continues the transition from a former Boy Scout camp to a nature preserve. We are doing trail and management planning, developing relationships with partners and neighbors, conducting more biological inventories and leading guided hikes (keep an eye on our events schedule at www.gtrlc.org for the latest). We won't be able to open the preserve unless we reach our fundraising goals. We have about \$2.1 million remaining on our \$3.9 million project cost.

2. Maplehurst

We are excited to report that we're close to closing out fundraising on this exciting project. We have less than \$100,000 to go to close out our \$1.8 million private fundraising goal. Demolition of the property's buildings will commence this spring. Prior to that, the Milton Township Fire Department will conduct training burns on three buildings. If all goes according to plan, the property will be transferred to Milton Township and opened to the public by the end of 2018.

3. Sand Lakes DNR Assist

We are completing environmental assessments of this 160-acre property in preparation for transferring the land to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. We have about \$45,000 in remaining fundraising on this project.

4. Timbers Universal Access Trail

See Story on Page 22. We must raise about \$72,000 more for this project.

Aerial view of Maplehurst.





Platte River Park.

5. Platte River Park

In December, the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund approved a grant that will allow Homestead Township to acquire this 52-acre property for use as a public park. After negotiating with the landowner and helping the township apply for the grant, we pre-acquired the property in February and are working through environmental due diligence. Once the state legislature approves the trust fund expenditures, the township will purchase the property from GTRLC. Thank you to everyone who donated!

6. Arcadia Marsh Additions

In September, we added 12 acres to the northeastern corner of the preserve, extending the Preserve boundary east to St. Pierre Road. We are working on the acquisition of an additional 20 acres along the southern boundary of the Preserve that would extend that portion of the boundary south to Chamberlain Road. We hope to close on this property in February. We still need to raise about \$65,000 for these acquisitions.

7. Arcadia Marsh Universal Access Trail

See story on Page 14.

8. Maple Bay Farmhouse

We continue to put the finishing touches on our renovations to the beautiful and historic Maple Bay Farmhouse, allowing it to become a hub for our important work. This project will not only allow us to have functional office space for field staff and meetings, but it will allow us to better engage the public about farmland protection, sustainable agricultural practices and more. We still must raise about \$75,000 for this project.



Maple Bay Farmhouse.

9. Acme Bayside Park

New gardens, universal access, a playground, beach enhancements and more are going in on Acme's shoreline, the next step in a community driven plan to provide needed public access, open views and recreational opportunities along East Grand Traverse Bay. We still must raise about \$135,000 for this project.



Universal Access Coming to Timbers

MICHIGAN NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND APPROVES UA TRAIL GRANT

Many things combine to make the Timbers Recreation Area in Grand Traverse County's Long Lake Township a very special place.

What's a simple walk for Its central location close to the most people can be riddled region's population center means it's with barriers for others. only a short commute for thousands of people looking for an outdoor escape. Frontage on three different lakes - including the entirety of peaceful Fern Lake - and trails through beautiful woods and fields offer plenty to see, hear and enjoy.

But what's a simple walk for most people can be riddled with barriers for others.

"It's quite a distance from the parking area down to Long Lake or Fern Lake, which are two very popular elements of Timbers that people really want to see," Township Supervisor Karen Rosa said. "We got to thinking that that's fine for people who can walk

well, but what about people in wheelchairs, or who would like to take their children in strollers, or that kind of thing?"

Soon, people of all ages and abilities will be able to enjoy Timbers. The Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund in December approved a \$194,400 grant for a Universally Accessible (UA) trail there. The trail will make it possible for people with mobility issues to enjoy its full beauty.

"We're just so excited to offer this opportunity to people who may have never been able to experience these things before," Rosa said.

> Although all details have yet to be finalized, plans call for an out-and-back trail that will begin at the parking area and go down to Long Lake, then over to the south end of Fern Lake, ending at a small overlook and

fishing platform. As with other such trails, care will be taken to make the path barrier free and within the grade required by UA guidelines, utilizing switchbacks where necessary.

In addition to taking visitors down to the water and through the woods, current plans call for the trail to go right by the striking stone and wood barns that date to when the property was a large vacation estate owned by the Chicago-based Armour family.

"I think those are so unique and will be so beautiful for people to look at," Rosa said. "It's really not something you see every day."

GTRLC is helping to raise about \$72,000 as a local match to the trust fund grant. The Conservancy will also take an active role in planning the trail construction, which likely will begin in 2019.

The Conservancy helped the township protect the natural area beginning in 2012. GTRLC negotiated with the Girl Scouts, who owned the property and ran a camp there for many years, and helped the township apply for a MNRTF grant to acquire the property. The Conservancy also found an interim buyer to hold the property during the application process and raised nearly \$900,000 in private donations to match the MNRTF grant.

Since protection, GTRLC has helped the township manage and care for the land.

"I always love working with the Conservancy," Rosa said. "Everybody there has been so helpful and so supportive, I can't say enough about how supportive GTRLC has been with Timbers and other projects."

GTRLC leadership is thrilled to help with the next exciting phase at Timbers.

"This is going to take a place that is already special to a lot of people and really enhance what it has to



Timbers Recreation Area is beautiful in all seasons.

offer," Executive Director Glen Chown said. "We're really excited that the Trust Fund approved the grant and are ready to get to work helping to make this trail a reality."

To support this project, please contact Kate Pearson at *kpearson@gtrlc.org or (231) 929-7911*



The planned UA trail will end at beautiful Fern Lake, which is entirely contained within Timbers.

THE MISSION

The Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy protects significant natural, scenic and farm lands — and advances stewardship — now and for future generations.

THE CHALLENGE

Despite our many achievements over the last quarter century, GTRLC's mission is more important today than ever. The very attractiveness of the region's natural features, in combination with a growing economy, has generated development pressure on critical properties worthy of permanent protection. The region's growth has placed additional stress on its lifeblood of healthy land and clean waters. In a place and time that cry out for strategic conservation, the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy stands ready to work with willing landowners to meet that urgent need.

THE VISION

By continuing to protect the region's finest natural, scenic and farm lands, the Conservancy will reinforce the foundation of a priceless legacy that all of us will pass on to future generations.

THE APPROACH

2017 YEAR IN REVIEW

Natural Land Protection

- Sand Lakes 160 Trail Connector Arcadia Marsh Addition
- Private Easements

307

Communications 8 Outreach

86 PUBLIC & PRIVATE EVENTS

SIGNS PRODUCED FOR 11 PRESERVES &

5.4K FACEBOOK **FOLLOWERS**

Farmland Protection **PROTECTED**

392 PROTECTED

Volunteers

- Preserve monitoring/projects
- Invasive species control
 Trail building/maintenance
- Office
- Hike/event leader

177 ACTIVE

Conservation Easement Stewardship

EASEMENTS MONITORED

19,170

Development

2,690 = 4,286 = \$9.6

Preserve & Sanctuary Stewardship

1,072 ACRES RECEIVED CONTROL WORK

74.5

TRAIL MILES MAINTAINED ON PRESERVES & NATURAL AREAS

Sound Financial Management



PAGE 26

FOR DETAILED FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Research, Restoration 8t Demonstration

- Vernal pool monitoring w/ MI Vernal Pool P'ship
 Grass-fed beef demonstration at Misty Acres

Board & Staff Development Board approved 5 year strategic plan

.....

- Board updated bylaws and 20 polices
- Staff & board attended working retreat at the proposed Upper Manistee Headwaters Preserve

Community Conservation

- Acme's Bayside Park improvements Universal Accessability @ Arcadia Dunes

2017 **Protection Totals**

699 ACRES **PROTECTED**

MILE OF SHORELINE **PROTECTED**

The Busy Work of Saving Land

A LETTER FROM JENNIFER JAFFE, BOARD CHAIR

Since our founding in 1991, the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy has protected nearly 41,000 acres of land throughout our five county service area. And while each and every land protection victory is worth celebrating, it's important to remember how much work goes into the task of getting these projects to the finish line – and how much work remains once a project is complete.

Each of those land deals can take months or even years to secure. Several noteworthy projects were the result of more than a decade of relationship building with individuals or families before the time was finally right to proceed with protection. And once it's time, there's no shortage of paperwork, environmental assessments and other important due diligence for our dedicated and talented land protection team to tackle.

Once land is protected, it must be cared for. For public preserves and natural areas, that means invasive species removal and monitoring, habitat improvement and more – all in perpetuity! Where applicable, we build and maintain quality trails and constantly stay on top of infrastructure needs. Then there are the unexpected concerns – fierce weather events that down trees, unexpected pests or diseases, dumping or littering – that consume lots of time every year.

Our stewardship team fills this role, putting in long hours to ensure that the special places we protect will always be as beautiful and healthy – and in some cases even more healthy – than when we began caring for the land.

For the thousands of acres of private land protected by conservation easements, it is our duty to continuously monitor these lands to ensure conservation values are preserved. That's hundreds of in-person visits across our large service area and

countless phone calls keeping in touch with landowners (for more on our Easement Stewardship program, see the story on page 10).

Our communications team works to keep our stakeholders informed, our preserves properly signed, our dedicated volunteers engaged and active and our public events planned. The administrative team keeps the office running smoothly, allowing our dedicated professionals to get their jobs done.

We also own two working farms – Misty Acres and Maple Bay – that help us fulfill our mission in part by inspiring landowners to take the best care of their property. While we're fortunate to have these places, they are not immune to the same occasional issues encountered by anyone who owns buildings. Roofs, windows, plumbing and more need to be maintained and repaired.

And because this important work is funded by the private individuals, foundations and businesses that believe in our mission, our fundraising team is always on the go, often working nights and weekends visiting with supporters near and far to secure critical donations for our conservation projects. All the while, our Board of Directors provides the fiduciary oversight needed for our organization to remain robust and healthy for years to come.

In short, there's a lot that goes into the business of protecting land, and our well-educated, enthusiastic staff and board are always working hard to get the job done. But none of it could happen without you!

To those who have supported our incredible team as they fulfill our mission, thank you! With your help, we look forward to continuing to protect all of the things that make our region so remarkable.

Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy Board of Directors

Jennifer Jaffe: Chair

John Collins: Vice Chair

Greg Seman: Treasurer

Cortney Danbrook: Secretary

Kathleen Guy

Paul Brink

Betsy Calcutt

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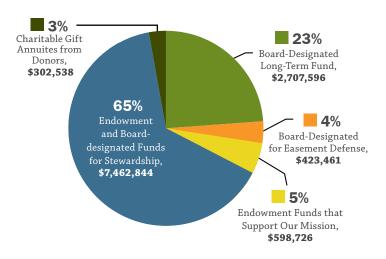
Terrie Taylor

Conservancy Directors give hundreds of hours of their time, lend considerable life experiences to our efforts, and dedicate their contributions to the Conservancy. Learn more about the Board of Directors at www.gtrlc.org/about/board

Love the land. Pass if on.

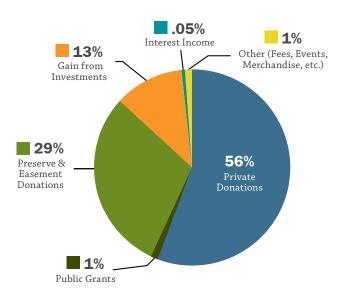
2016-2017 Annual Report

GTRLC Long-Term and Endowment Funds

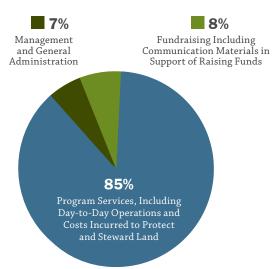


	\$11,495,165	100%
Charitable Gift Annuities from Donors	\$302,538	3%
Endowment and Board-designated Funds for Stewardship	\$7,462,844	65%
Endowment Funds that Support Our Mission	\$598,726	5%
Board-Designated for Easement Defense	\$423,461	4%
Board-Designated Long-Term Fund	\$2,707,596	23%

GTRLC Revenue



GTRLC Expenses

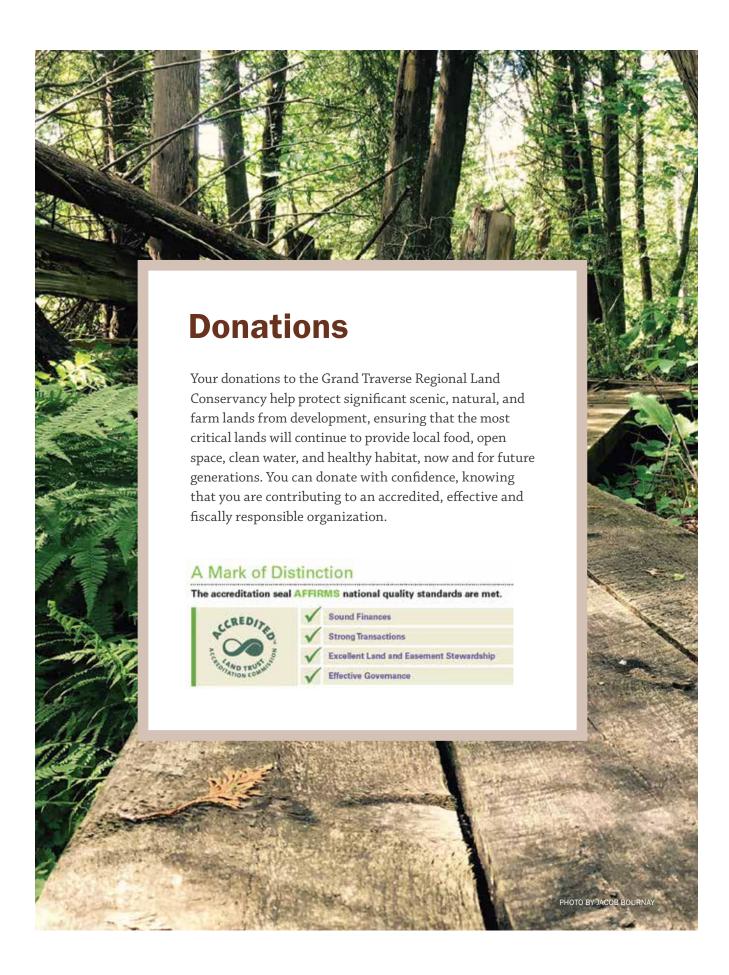


GTRLC Consolidated Statement of Activities for the Fiscal Year

Ended June 30, 2017

REVENUE AND SUPPORT	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	Permanently Restricted	Total
Private Donations	\$2,426,874	\$2,568,899	\$92.694	\$5,088,467
Public Grants	68,896	-	. ,	68,896
Preserve & Easement Donations		2,645,000		2,645,000
Gain From Investments	307,876	847,541		1,155,417
Interest Income	2,407	2,369	-	4,776
Other (Fees, Events, Merchandise, Etc.)	67,502	82,155	-	149,657
Net Assets Released From Restriction:	3,839,120	(3,801,129)	(37,991)	-
	\$6,712,675	\$2,344,835	\$54,703	\$9,112,213
	\$0,712,075	\$2,3 44 ,633	404,700	93,112,213
EXPENSES Program Services Including Day-To-Day Operations And Costs Incurred To Protect And	5,710,207	-	-	5,710,207
EXPENSES Program Services Including Day-To-Day Operations And Costs Incurred To Protect And Steward Land		-	- -	
EXPENSES Program Services Including Day-To-Day Operations And Costs Incurred To Protect And Steward Land Management And General Administration Fundraising Including Communication Materials In Support Of Raising Funds	5,710,207	- -	- -	5,710,207
EXPENSES Program Services Including Day-To-Day Operations And Costs Incurred To Protect And Steward Land Management And General Administration Fundraising Including Communication Materials	5,710,207 461,184	- - -	- - -	5,710,207 461,184 559,610
EXPENSES Program Services Including Day-To-Day Operations And Costs Incurred To Protect And Steward Land Management And General Administration Fundraising Including Communication Materials In Support Of Raising Funds	5,710,207 461,184 559,610	- -	- -	5,710,207 461,184 559,610
EXPENSES Program Services Including Day-To-Day Operations And Costs Incurred To Protect And Steward Land Management And General Administration Fundraising Including Communication Materials In Support Of Raising Funds Total Expenses	5,710,207 461,184 559,610 \$6,731,001	- - -	- - -	5,710,207 461,184 559,610 \$6,731,001





♦ Matching gift ‡ Deceased

THE CONSERVANCY FUND

JANUARY 1 - DECEMBER 31, 2017

The following donors made gifts to the Conservancy Fund in 2017. Your gifts provide the ultimate fund flexibility to protect land, steward lands that have been protected, and meet our day-to-day financial needs, enabling us to thrive as an organization and retain a talented and committed staff.

We could not be more grateful for your generous support.

Gifts of \$25,000 or more

Anonymous (2)
Community Foundation
Grand Traverse Regional
Land Conservancy
Endowment

Clifford and Norma Fox Barry Hibben Estate of Diane McDonald Jim and Diana Huckle Family Foundation Kathy Magliochetti Robert and Joyce Mims Charles Stewart Mott Foundation James and Debbie Norling Wege Foundation Robert and Pauline Young

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Travis and Joan Bell

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Gifts of \$1-\$999 — Continued

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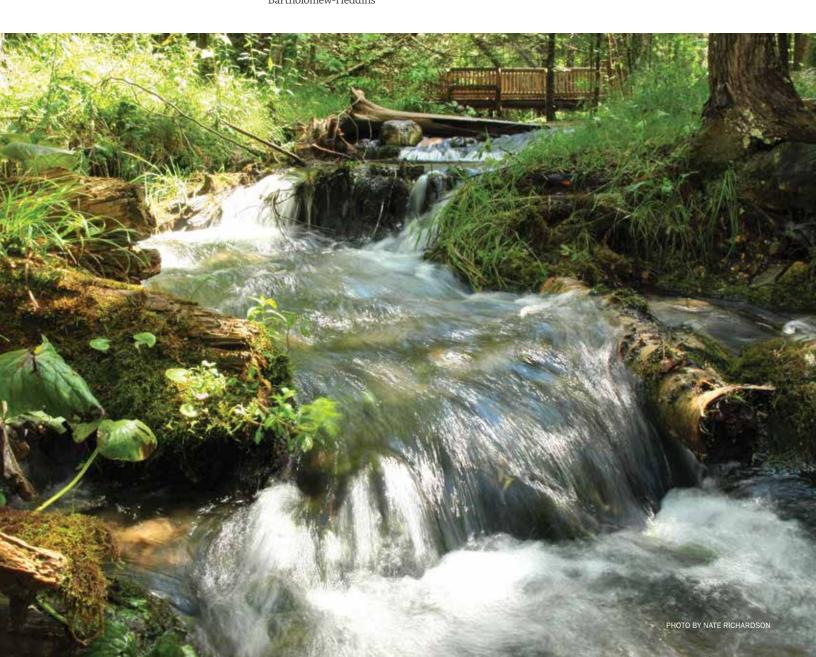
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JANUARY 1 - DECEMBER 31, 2017

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JANUARY 1 - DECEMBER 31, 2017

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JANUARY 1 - DECEMBER 31, 2017

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GTRLC.ORG 47

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JANUARY 1 - DECEMBER 31, 2017

Your honorarium gift provides an enduring tribute to someone or something significant in your life. Gifts were made in honor of the names shown in bold.

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Your gifts directed to the specific projects below help to protect our significant places. Many projects can take years to come to fruition. Your donations support the development of relationships with landowners, as well as our ability to perform environmental due diligence, conduct appraisals, work through negotiations and closings and strengthen our community partnerships.

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While the parks and nature preserves we protect are open to and enjoyed by the public, more than half of the land 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 ensure that conservation values are maintained forever.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the following land owners:

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VOLUNTEERS

Every year, volunteers play a crucial role in the Conservancy's stewardship efforts helping care for 34 preserves and other protected properties spread across five counties. Volunteers built trails, planted trees, made maple syrup, fought invasive species, raised organic produce and grass-fed beef, helped with our outreach, kept our office running smoothly, and led hikes and workdays. We are so grateful you helped care for this land and shared your love for it.

Brian Allen Betsy Calcutt Kirk Duncan Lee Jameson George Marsh Tom Dunn Lee Janssen Robert Marshall Nancy Baglan Bruce Campbell Susan Easlick Anna Jarvis Dave Mathews Cathy Carter Kimberly Balke Ken Engle Deana Jerdee John McCormick Richard Barclay Sally Catanese Mark Cerny Gerri Erickson **Brad Jones** John Meade Paul Bare Eric Chatterson Mary Ferens Brian Keas Audrey Menninga Bonnie Bare Lou Ann Churchill Linda Forster Len Klein Michelle Moore Maddy Baroli Lucinda Clement Joe Frederick Gary Kneale Cheryl Morgan Gerald and Katherine Batka Robert Clement Caroline Garwood Arlene Koons Terry Motley Robert Baum Don Coe Pam Garwood Charles Kraus Paul Moyer Rebecca Beach John Collins Ron Goodale Darrell Lawson Paula Moyer Jo Anne Beemon Doug Cook Michael Grahl Tony Ligi Dave Murphy Terry Griffin Kristen Naidoo Norman Bell **Emily Cook** Barry Lishawa Joe Nerone Darl Bennink Sally Cook Cheryl Gross Don Livingston Nate Crane Kathleen Guy Michele Nerone Audra Bildeaux Jean Livingston Barb Czarnecki Jack Harris Kathryn Lovings Marilyn Niebel Mary Binder Daniel Dall'Olmo Robert Heflin Mike Lubert Michael Niebel Tim Binder Gail Dall'Olmo Cherie Hogan Ben Lundquist Jill Nieland Kenneth Blakey-Shell Cortney Danbrook Bill Holden Sally Lundquist Rick Nieland Kenneth Bloem Dan Mach Arlene O'Brien Kim de Bruin Matt Homan Rick Bobian Joyce Delamarter Jim Huckle Kathy Flynn Mach Craig Olsen Jon Breithaupt Martha Dively Jeanne Hunter Dave Mahan Vicki Olsen Paul Brink Julie Hurd Bryce Dreeszen Rebecca Mang Gail Parry Paula Dreeszen Jennifer Jaffe Sally Manke John D. Paul, Jr Jay Burt

Heide-Marie Post
Royce Ragland
Judith Reich
Leah Robison
Pug Rundio
Kevin Russell
Linda Scribner
Greg Seman
Michael Sipkoski
Betsey Sivec
Michael Skare
Bill Smith
Drew Smith
Evan Smith
Maureen Smyth

Henry Somero
Mary and Cliff
Sorrell
Grant Snyder
Susan Snyder
Mark Spencer
Gretchen Staub
Don Stauffer
Gary Stauffer
Jane Stauffer
Eddie Sullivan
Nancy Story
Angela Strong
Neal Sweet
Bridget Swesky

Jeffrey Swesky
Al Taylor
Terrie Taylor
Maureen Templeton
Elizabeth Trense
Cathy Trense
Cynthia Tschudy
Ron Tschudy
Barbara VanDam
George Voulemenous
Mark Walton
M. Sue Waltz
Barb Watson
Chuck Watson
Flint Watt

Donna Weitz
Shannon Westgate
Dennis Wiand
Karen Williams
Dave Wilsey
Ben Wilson
Deborah Wilson
Todd Wilson
Gera Witte
James Witte
Ellen Wojtowicz
Rick Wojtowicz
Charlene Wylie
David Wylie
Thom Yocum

Pauline Young John Zaloudek

Volunteer groups we work with:

Friends of Glacial Hills Skegemog Wildlife Area Stewardship Committee

Businesses:

Chemical Bank's Chemical Cares Day Volunteers



"Spending time as a volunteer allows me to see how GTRLC impacts life on so many levels. Preserving lands has an effect on our global health, and local communities reap the economic rewards of preserves and hiking trails that benefit our personal health."

Sally Manke, Volunteer



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