



# LANDMARKS

Newsletter of the Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy

Spring 2024



The white-breasted nuthatch has an announcement...

Photo by Charles Scott

## SMLC Achieves National Accreditation

By Jill A. Lewis, Executive Director

What does long-term sustainability mean for a land conservancy? Preserving, protecting and stewarding the lands we own and are responsible for is not a short-range endeavor. Instead, land conservancies have a perpetual responsibility to care for these properties and resolve problems as they crop up. Long-term sustainability means having enough resources, expertise, and engagement to effectively do this.

The Land Trust Accreditation Commission (the Commission) was established as an independent program of the Land Trust Alliance in 2006 for the purpose of establishing a voluntary accreditation program, and the following:

- Build and recognize strong land trusts
- Foster public confidence in land conservation
- Help ensure the long-term protection of land

In February, SMLC was awarded national accreditation from the Commission. SMLC provided extensive documentation over an 11-month period and was

subject to a comprehensive third-party evaluation prior to achieving this achievement. This was a longstanding goal of the organization for more than 15 years!

*"It is exciting to recognize Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy with this national mark of distinction. Donors and partners can trust that the 471 accredited land trusts across the country are united behind strong standards and have demonstrated sound finances, ethical conduct, responsible governance, and lasting stewardship."*

*Melissa Kalvestrand, Executive Director, Land Trust Accreditation Commission*

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# LANDMARKS

A newsletter published by:



## Conservation is in our Nature.

8383 Vreeland Road  
Superior Township, MI 48198

734.484.6565

[smlcland.org](http://smlcland.org)

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### Our Staff

Jill A. Lewis

*Executive Director*

[jlewis@smlcland.org](mailto:jlewis@smlcland.org)

Alan McTaggart

*Stewardship & Outreach Specialist*

[amctaggart@smlcland.org](mailto:amctaggart@smlcland.org)

Kathy Hammond

*Office Specialist*

[info@smlcland.org](mailto:info@smlcland.org)

## Message from the Executive Director, Jill A. Lewis



I am elated that SMLC is now accredited! So many people helped make this a reality through the years, too many to name. From staff to board directors to committee members, funders and donors, volunteers and partner organizations, and our amazing application consultant, Sarah Naperala. I've always loved the quote, "It takes a village," and that truly encompasses this endeavor for

SMLC and this achievement. **Thank you!!**

If you would like to celebrate this honor with SMLC and enjoy an outdoor potluck too – please mark your calendars for the biennial **Picnic at the Farm** in September (page 3).

In late 2022, SMLC was awarded a \$50,000 grant from the DNR to help advocate for and work with local landowners on the **Forest to MI Faucet** Initiative (page 8). SMLC is excited to be working on this project with our team of staff, consultants and specialized contractors. By the time you receive this issue, we will have hosted a tree planting event at our LeFurge Woods Nature Preserve utilizing a method called "pocket forests". This method, that uses a small-scale approach in more urban environments, is taking off in the U.S. See this 2023 article from the New York Times to learn more: <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/24/climate/tiny-forests-climate-miyawaki.html>. Additional preserve events planned for 2024 include two prescribed burns at our Lost Lake and Sibley Prairie-West Prairie nature preserves and another tree planting at Lost Lake.

Further reflecting on 2023, our 5th Red Barn Bash was a blast. Many thanks to **Honorary Chair, Dan Ezekiel**, a Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commissioner and SMLC friend for his music, thoughts, and look-back on how far land conservation has come in Washtenaw County. Additional appreciation goes to **hosts William and Vivienne Young** for sharing their amazing restored barn, all of the sponsors and donors, and to everyone who helped make this event so special. **Thank you!**



**Eastern bluebird**

*Photo by Charles Scott*

Finally, in September, Alan McTaggart, Stewardship and Outreach Specialist, joined the team. If you are in the area, stop by and say "hi". Please see the Annual Report on pages 4-7 for more 2023 highlights.

**Thank you** to our donors, funders, Eco-Logical Leadership Club (ELLC) members, volunteers, and conservation project partners. It's because of you that we can continue to do the work that sustains nature, wildlife, and all of us too.





# What is the ELLC, and How Can I Join?

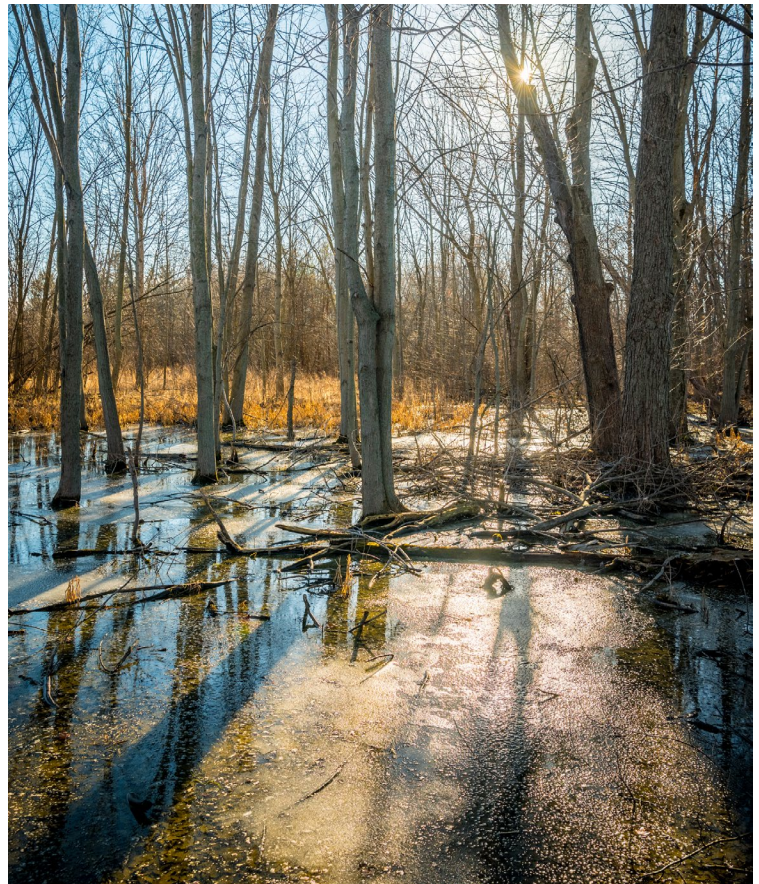
By Jill A. Lewis, Executive Director

The SMLC Eco-Logical Leadership Club (ELLC) offers conservation-minded donors an opportunity to support SMLC’s mission at a leadership level. The annual gift minimum is \$1,000 in unrestricted donations and this can be renewed annually if the donor chooses to do so. These gifts help leverage foundation, corporate, and project funding.

**“We are reminded of the importance of SMLC’s work every time we drive through the ever-expanding urban sprawl of SE Michigan. However, we appreciate it even more when we’re walking through one of our great nature areas! By supporting SMLC, we’re trying to do our part to help its mission.”**

**Mitch & Lori Hall, ELLC Members**

SMLC is extremely grateful to our ELLC members for supporting our mission and ongoing conservation work. If this is of interest to you, please consider joining the current 26 ELLC members in 2024. Please contact Jill Lewis at [jlewis@smlcland.org](mailto:jlewis@smlcland.org) to learn more.



**Vernal pool at Springhill Nature Preserve**

*Photo by Luke Tracy*



## Picnic at the Farm and Accreditation Celebration

**Date:** Sunday, September 8, 2024

**Time:** 1:00 - 4:30 pm

**Place:** Conservancy Farm  
8383 Vreeland Road  
Superior Charter Township, MI 48198



- Sound Finances
- Ethical Conduct
- Responsible Governance
- Lasting Stewardship

Help celebrate SMLC’s national accreditation at this year’s Picnic at the Farm. The idyllic low-key and family friendly event is always an enjoyable time. SMLC provides grilled items and drinks, you provide a potluck side dish or dessert. An educational presenter (TBD) will end the event with interesting critters. Bring your family and friends and enjoy the best of late summer at the Farm.

2024 Corporate and Individual sponsorships are available and appreciated. Please contact Jill Lewis at [jlewis@smlcland.org](mailto:jlewis@smlcland.org) for more information.

# President's Report

By Jim McIntyre, SMLC Board President

Reflecting on SMLC's successes and challenges in a given year is an element of my role that I truly enjoy. This year, we've seen the organization reach several significant milestones—helping us to make our 35th Anniversary year one of the most exciting and energizing years we've ever experienced. Certainly, our most significant milestone has been our recent push for accreditation, and it's worth recapping here.

Preparing for the Land Trust Accreditation Commission's (LT Commission) application took several years. 2023 saw the culmination of this effort with SMLC submitting our pre-application in February and our application in June. This application was followed by a call with the Accreditation Commission's review team, where we fielded questions about our submissions.

In late November, we submitted the Additional Information Request, the last step in the application process. While SMLC wouldn't hear back regarding the final decision until early 2024, it was a relief to know the application was complete and that our efforts had set the organization up for many years of continued success.



**Red Barn Bash Honorary Chair, Dan Ezekiel**

*Photo by Joel Geffen*

reporting was aligned with the current LT Commission requirements.

Our past work included creating several new policies to ensure that our operational processes were aligned with the LT Commission standards. Policies were also checked for alignment with our other policies and the Bylaws. Thank you to each and every Director for the



**Red Barn Bash costume contest winners**

*Photo by Jim Weiner*

countless hours you devoted to the creation, review, and implementation of all our accreditation-related materials.

Early in 2023, SMLC received fair compensation for the removal of a large quantity of trees from our Morris-Reichert Nature Preserve. This was a result of the expansion of a utility easement on the property. Special thanks to SMLC's attorney, Jim Weiner, for developing an innovative new model for calculating the conservation value of these lost trees and ensuring that SMLC was adequately compensated. As a side note, the areas that were disturbed by this work have been reseeded with a mixture of native grasses and wildflowers that will restore the beauty of this parcel.

Of course, a year can't pass without reviewing the various ways we've improved our preserves... sometimes by choice, sometimes by necessity. Several Conservancy Farmhouse repairs will help to extend the life of our Office. SMLC also improved our parking lots at Lost Lake Nature Preserve and the Conservancy Farm that maintain accessibility to these properties. LeFurge Woods Nature Preserve was improved with the addition of native shrubs, replacing an invasive hedgerow along the main entrance trail; we're hopeful this will facilitate a greater variety of birds that frequent this site in the future.

Finally, I offer my sincerest appreciation and gratitude to SMLC's Staff, Board of Directors, Committee Members, Volunteers, Donors, Neighbors, and Partners. Everything we do, we are only able to do because you care...and for that, I thank you.





# SMLC welcomes new Committee Leadership

By Jill A. Lewis, Executive Director

Richard Barnes joined the Finance Committee in the Spring of 2023 after moving from Minnesota to Michigan to be closer to family. Dick retired after a long career in Finance and Operations including leadership positions with two NASDAQ companies. He has a strong interest in the environment, land conservation and served on the Board and Finance committee of several nonprofits prior to SMLC.

The Land Protection Committee added Steve Hall and Jack Lanigan this past fall. Steve is a current shareholder / attorney with Tilchin & Hall, P.C. He is also the past chair of the Oakland County Bar Associations' Real Estate Committee and has a professional interest in real estate and estate planning. Jack Lanigan is a Certified Professional Geologist formerly with DEQ's Office of Oil, Gas, and Minerals. He has more than 30 years of consulting experience within environmental, remediation, and regulatory programs serving federal, state, and industrial sector clients.

Allison LaPlatt Weaver, a Certified Nonprofit Professional, joined the Event Planning Committee in the Spring of 2023. Allison is the Manager of Special Projects for United Way of Southeast Michigan and has a background in volunteer management and donor engagement. She was instrumental in helping plan and implement our successful Red Barn Bash last October.

Welcome to our 2023 new Committee Members!



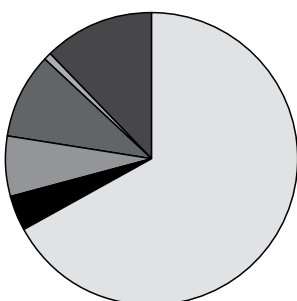
SMLC is deeply grateful to all of the other businesses, individuals, and volunteers who contributed to our Red Barn Bash, especially to: Boisvnu and Company, By the Pound, Margolis Nursery, Plastipak/Absopure, and Slow Farm.

**Red Barn Bash Event Hosts: Bill & Vivienne Young**

**Get Email Updates from SMLC**  
 Don't miss out on the latest Conservancy news, events, and announcements. If your address has changed, be sure to let us know that too.  
 To sign up, please send an email to: [info@smlcland.org](mailto:info@smlcland.org)

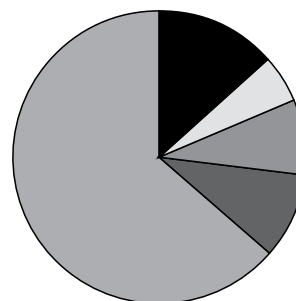
## 2023 Financial Report

Revenue and Fund Transfers  
\$321,061\*



- Contributions 67.01%
- Fund Transfers 12.13%
- In-Kind Donations 9.3%
- Investment Income 6.7%
- Event Revenue 3.93%
- Program Income 0.92%

Expenses  
\$301,883\*



- Land Protection 63.37%
- Mgmt. & General 13.49%
- Mktg/Outreach 9.55%
- Fundraising 8.21%
- Depreciation 5.38%

\* unaudited



# Thank You

*for supporting our Mission in 2023!*

The Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy extends appreciation to all of our generous donors. Your 2023 contributions made it possible for SMLC to continue to protect and preserve natural lands and open space in southeast Michigan.

We apologize for any errors and omissions. If something is incorrect please let us know.

## Gifts from Foundations & Organizations

### \$25,000 & up

U.S. Treasury Department (ERTC)  
Anonymous

### \$5,000 - \$24,999

James A. & Faith Knight Foundation

### \$1,000 - \$4,999

Anne L. Spencer Trust  
Busch's Fresh Food Market  
DePorre Family Foundation  
Domino's Pizza, LLC  
Food Art Catered Affairs, Inc.  
Mackinac Bridge Authority  
Plymouth Orchards & Cider Mill  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service/PFW  
Whole Foods Market  
Zingerman's Community of Business

### \$500 - \$999

International Transmission Co. (ITC)  
REI - Michigan  
Sierra Club-Beverly Hills, MI  
Standard Printing  
Washtenaw Audubon Society  
Washtenaw Ski Touring Club

### \$250 - \$499

Atla Gas/Washington Gas Matching Gift Program  
Bright Funds  
By the Pound  
Centered Body Work  
Couzens Lansky, P.C.  
Google Matching Gift Program  
Guardian Plumbing  
Kroger Community Rewards  
Margolis Nursery  
Michigan State University Extension  
Orchard, Hiltz & McCliment (OHM)  
Slow Farm

W.K. Kellogg Foundation  
Matching Gift Program

### \$1 - \$249

Al Dente Pasta  
Amazon Smile Foundation  
Ann Arbor Symphony Orchestra  
Boisvenu & Company, P.C.  
Country Garden Club of Northville  
Dixboro General Store  
Earthshare of Michigan  
Detroit Red Wings Charitable Donations  
GM Giving  
Marie Krull - Sew What  
Microsoft Matching Gift Program  
PayPal Giving Fund  
Purple Rose Theatre  
Toyota Matching Gift Program  
Witches Hat Brewing Company  
Yockey Giving Fund

## Gifts from Individuals

### \$10,000 & up

Maura Jung <sup>ELLC</sup> (Kurt Jung Family-Morgan Stanley GIFT)  
James Weiner  
Anonymous

### \$5,000 - \$9,999

Jim Hewitt  
John Schlansker <sup>ELLC</sup>  
William Secrest & Misty Callies <sup>ELLC</sup>  
Anonymous

### \$1,000 - \$4,999

Chris & Michelle Andrzejak  
Brenda Baker  
Karl & Christine Brenner <sup>ELLC</sup>  
Carolyn Carr <sup>ELLC</sup>  
Brian and Susan Corcoran Giving Fund <sup>ELLC</sup> (Fidelity Investments Charitable Fund)  
Sean Cronin <sup>ELLC</sup>  
Mary Emmett <sup>ELLC</sup>  
Mary Ericson <sup>ELLC</sup>  
Bryan Garchar <sup>ELLC</sup>  
Jeffrey & Marilyn Gilbert <sup>ELLC</sup>

(Fidelity Investments Charitable Funds)  
Art & Marion Gold <sup>ELLC</sup>  
Mitch & Lori Hall <sup>ELLC</sup>  
(Vanguard Charitable Fund)  
Jeffery Hannah & Nur Akcasu <sup>ELLC</sup>

Bonnie & Gary Hollander <sup>ELLC</sup>  
Lee Jasinski  
George & Nancy Kasdorf  
Richard Kent <sup>ELLC</sup>  
Diane Krause <sup>ELLC</sup>  
Eric & Monica Malloy <sup>ELLC</sup>  
James & Michelle McIntyre <sup>ELLC</sup>  
Robert & Jennifer Moll <sup>ELLC</sup>  
Bill Phillips & Marianne Udow-Phillips <sup>ELLC</sup>  
James Reynolds <sup>ELLC</sup>  
The John and Marilyn Rintamaki Family Charitable Fund (AYCO Charitable Foundation)  
Ann Robbins <sup>ELLC</sup>  
Dr. Bonita Singal <sup>ELLC</sup>  
Brad Tomtishen & Lynda Oswald Charitable Fund <sup>ELLC</sup> (Schwab Charitable Fund)  
Jonathan & Katie Trevathan <sup>ELLC</sup>  
Dan & Lily Secrest and Stephen & Darlene Secrest (Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan-Fred G. & Stephanie Secrest Fund)  
Christopher Welch  
William & Vivienne Young  
Anonymous

### \$500 - \$999

Richard & Joyce Barnes  
Brian Carroll  
Ken & Sarah Dani  
Eva Deck  
Hugh & Mary Garton  
Dan & Jane Hayes  
Ron Kustra  
Ati & Jennifer Tislerics  
Anonymous

### \$250 - \$499

Daniel Bizer Cox  
John Brinley & Anne Schott  
Jesse & Juanita Christian  
Jim Conant

Darry & Tobi Dusbiber  
Chris & Anne Flanagan  
Ken & Mary Grunow  
Geoffrey Hancock  
Neil & Mary Hodges  
Stephen Kelley  
Allison LaPlatt-Weaver  
Sean Malone  
Peter & Marion Morris  
Jon & Amanda Richards  
John Rogers  
Ryan & Kristi Rozek  
Glen & Gary Sard  
Ken Schwartz & Ellen Bunting  
Kenneth Shaw  
Barbara Siepierski  
Barbara Trojan  
Craig Tylanda  
Donald F. Wojack  
Anonymous

### \$1 - \$249

Susana Adame  
Cathleen Adams  
Mike Adsit  
Cheryl Allerding  
Richard Altschuler  
Edmund Ammen  
Charles & Roberta Anderson  
Lisa Appel  
Doris Applebaum  
Joyce Arakelian  
Paul & Nancy Bailey  
Keith Bennett  
Laura Bien  
Jane Blumental  
Ralph Bonanata  
Glenn & Cynthia Bourland  
Leonardo & Cathy Brito-Valladares  
Thea Brown  
Carolyn Buell  
E. James & Anita Burck  
Stephanie Buttrey  
Julia Caroff  
Michelle Carroll  
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Amy Churchman  
Stephen & Carole Cook  
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Carol Cramer & Thomas Longworth  
 Philip Crookshank  
 George & Christina Cunniffe  
 G. Geoffrey Dampier  
 Elisabeth Daumer  
 Olivia De Bear  
 Jonathan Dean & Denise Tanguay  
 Donald & Anne DeMallie  
 Monique & Dennis Deschaine  
 Linda Jo Doctor & Elliot Ginsburg  
 Robert & Linda Duchene  
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 Eric & Vivian Ellsworth  
 Daniel & Marina Ezekiel  
 Susan Falcone & Tom McClanahan  
 Chris & Rose Fielding  
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 Wayne Fisher  
 Betty Franks & Joseph Silvis  
 Fae Fuerst  
 Carol Furtado  
 Ron Gamble & Faye Stoner  
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 Anusha Geethangani  
 Joel Geffen  
 Irgard & Mike Gellety  
 Michael Gerdenich & Ina Handel-Gerdenich  
 Tom & Ann Gladwin  
 Jack & Margaret Goodnoe  
 Ed Gordish  
 Ruth Graves  
 Kyle Grazier  
 Herbert & Patricia Green  
 Linda & Richard Greene  
 (includes Give Lively Foundation)  
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Kurt & Liz Hagemeister  
 Steve & Pam Hall  
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 Lee & Pamela Larson  
 Adrienne Lenhoff  
 Corey Leon  
 Mark Higbee & Kate Levin  
 Jill Lewis

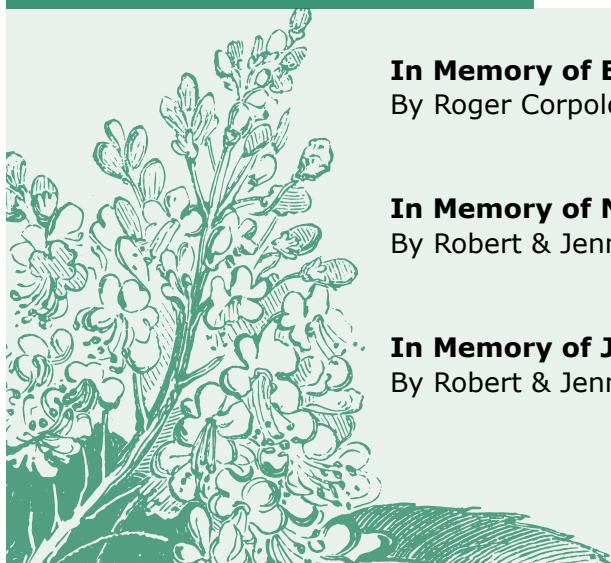
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 Paul Lobos  
 Amanda Louks  
 Andrew Magsam  
 M. Mann  
 Michael & Joan Martin  
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 Wayne McGarrah  
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 Dale Petty & Jeannine Palms  
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 Anonymous

ELLC Ecological Leadership Club



## Memorial Donations



**In Memory of Ela Jiga**  
 By Roger Corpolongo

**In Memory of Nancy Lynn Mularski**  
 By Robert & Jennifer Moll

**In Memory of Joseph Kling Kammer**  
 By Robert & Jennifer Moll

**In Memory of Kathryn Larkin**  
 By Robert & Jennifer Moll

**In Memory of Donna Chapman**  
 By Mike & Denise O'Brien

**In Memory of Daniel R. Sard**  
 By Glen & Gary Sard





## Connecting Healthy Forests and Clean Drinking Water

*By Meagan Hoffman, SMLC Project Contractor*

Forest to Mi Faucet, led by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources' Forest Stewardship Program, is a new program aimed at explaining the connections between Michigan's 20 million acres of forest and drinking water for 10 million Michiganders. Twenty conservation partners working on Forest to Mi Faucet, including SMLC, are planting 60,000 trees along rivers and lakes, protecting important forests with conservation easements, educating landowners about forest stewardship, and helping protect the sources of our drinking water.

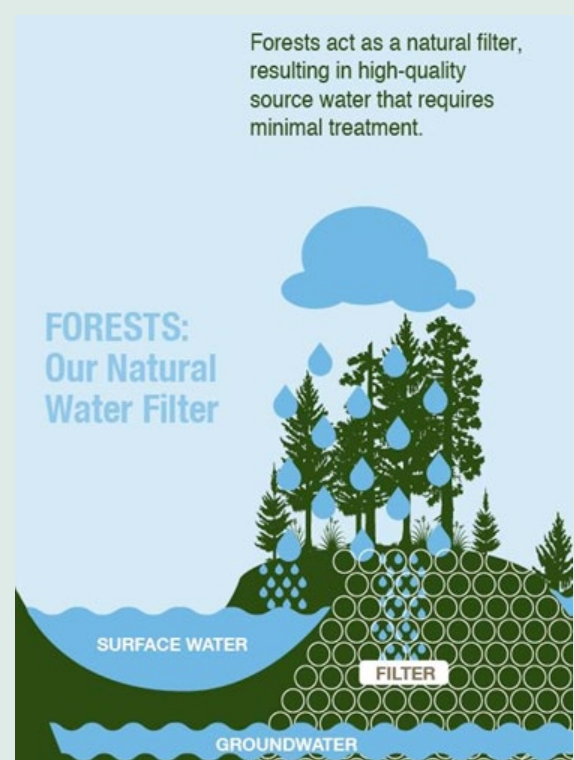
The Great Lakes contain 20% of the Earth's available freshwater and nearly 6 million people get their drinking water from a Great Lake. This includes residents in Macomb, Monroe, Oakland, St. Clair, Washtenaw and Wayne counties who get their drinking water from Lake Huron and Lake Erie. The water quality of the Great Lakes and the rivers that flow to them is dependent on the land that contains their headwaters. Better than any other land use, forests provide the best water quality and protect the sources of our drinking water. If the drinking water in your tap comes from a well, river or Great Lake, a forest helped keep it clean before it was treated and delivered to your home.

SMLC is dedicated to protecting the land that protects our water. We are excited to be a Forest to Mi Faucet Initiative partner. Our project goals of empowering landowners to better manage/protect their woodlands; hosting tree planting events near rivers, lakes and streams; using prescribed fire for ecological restoration of forests; and educating the public about how forests contribute to their drinking water quality align with our mission.

## Planting Trees for Water Quality

Trees provide many benefits for us called ecosystem services. One of the benefits they provide is cleaner water. Clean water has a direct effect on our well-being, survival and quality of life. Covering about half of Michigan, forests deliver clean water to our rivers, inland lakes and the Great Lakes. What are some of the ways they do this? The leaves and branches on trees intercept rainfall as it falls from the sky and runs along the ground slowing the movement of water.

Forests have undisturbed soil and a layer of leaves on top that reduce runoff, limit erosion and filter pollutants. This is unlike parking lots, rooftops, lawns and farm fields that quickly transport pollutants like oil, salt, fertilizers, chemicals and trash into storm drains, streams, rivers and lakes without being treated. Forests also absorb large amounts of water quickly and then release it slowly to reduce flooding in heavy rain events. Finally, trees are also able to use and store nutrients such as phosphorus and nitrogen that can cause harmful algal blooms and can trap wind-blown dust and contaminants before they reach surface water. Planting trees empowers people to feel like they are making a real difference in their community and as a steward of Michigan's land and water!





## Refreshing Local Water & Our Chapter Steering Committee

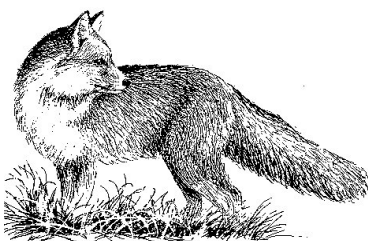
*By John Park and Brenda Baker, STC Committee Members*

When the Superior Township Chapter (STC) hosted the Winter Walkabout at Cherry Hill Nature Preserve in February and Spring has Sprung at Springhill at Springhill Nature Preserve in April, people of all ages and diverse backgrounds joined us from near and far to relax and enjoy a welcoming respite of learning, breathing fresh air, and community-building.

At each of these preserves, observant visitors can see vernal pools, springs, and other hidden water features that filter water for the forest, even as the forest shades and protects the water along with the plants and creatures that live there. The forest and the water do their work quietly in the background, maintaining the ecosystem for people to enjoy and other living things to use—all with the beneficial byproduct of helping to purify our local groundwater!

The STC welcomes two new members to our Steering Committee. A Professor of History and Philosophy at EMU, Mark Higbee offers practical insight and experience with outreach and encouraging effective participation among members, having served as Vice-President of EMU-AAUP (American Association of University Professors Chapter). Believing in the power of nature in shaping and transforming a young person's life, Mark hopes to continue contributing to the growth of Superior Township's preserves.

John Park is currently serving local nonprofit Willow Run Acres (WRA) and Superior Township as an AmeriCorps member, helping coordinate the completion of their official partnership: Clay Hill Community Farm & Garden (CHCFG). A part of Gen Z, John is alarmed by the growing impact of commercial development and consumerism on our environment and access to clean water. Stewarding local forests, like those we enjoy on our hikes, can help.



**2024 Winter Walkabout hosted by STC at Cherry Hill Nature Preserve**

*by Charles Scott*

## Community Organic Garden

*by Michelle Harris, Garden Committee member*

The Community Organic Garden offers an inspiring opportunity for community members to come together and share their passion for gardening, cultivating healthy produce for themselves and vital pollinators in a serene and tranquil environment.

Reflecting on last year, nearly every plot was filled from the outset, signaling our community's need for a space to grow. We witnessed the diverse range of gardening techniques and inventive staking methods showcased by our fellow gardeners. Knowledge was exchanged freely. Our notable successful crops included tomatoes, green beans, collards, peppers, carrots, onions, and squash, while cucumbers proved elusive for many. Nestled among the vegetables were some of the most gorgeous flowers, including stunning Hollyhocks. And, of course, we were all successful in growing weeds. We had the occasional challenge posed by curious critters helping themselves to a snack, but we were also aided by our feathered allies, who helped keep predatory insects in check. Group events, such as workdays and social gatherings, fostered a sense of community that enriched our experience.

The Community Organic Garden is more than just a place to grow food; it is a sanctuary for nurturing connections, fostering growth, and developing a deeper appreciation for the natural world.

## Vernal Pool Patrol

By Dana Wright, SMLC Stewardship Volunteer

If you take a walk in the woods in southern Michigan in early spring, you are likely to hear frogs no bigger than your thumb nail called spring peepers (*Pseudacris crucifer*) announcing their presence from a large puddle covered in green. They are the ones saying PEEP! PEEP!, sometimes so loudly it is difficult to carry on a conversation in their presence.

These puddles in the woods were created as the glaciers melted and retreated 10,000 years ago. As pieces of the thick ice broke off, they settled and compressed soil in low lying places, and were trapped under the soil surface which collapsed as the ice melted leaving "kettle holes". In these low lying areas with relatively impermeable soils, water can collect through precipitation and runoff forming what we call vernal pools. Vernal pools are shallow and often do not hold water year-round which makes them an unfriendly environment for most species to thrive.

However, for a handful of charismatic species these puddles are ideal. In addition to spring peepers there are other amphibians including yellow-spotted (*Ambystoma maculatum*) and blue-spotted salamanders (*Ambystoma laterale*), and many species of aquatic invertebrates such as the aptly named fairy shrimp. Several birds, reptiles and mammal species depend on vernal pools for some or all of their life cycle. Yellow and blue-spotted Salamanders, fairy shrimp, and the wood frog (*Lithobates sylvaticus*) are species who rely on these ephemeral pools for all of their life cycles and their presence indicates a true vernal pool.

Vernal pools are highly vulnerable to disturbance or destruction due to a number of factors including development, converting them to permanent ponds, climate change, and invasive species. SMLC joined with other organizations and individuals a handful of years ago to start the process of mapping and conducting annual surveys to monitor these special ecosystems present on their properties across the state. Finding them and conducting surveys to record the plants and animals present is the first step in managing the surrounding areas to ensure these ecologically significant places are protected. SMLC is looking for volunteers to conduct these surveys. Please let us know if you might be interested!

## Many thanks to our volunteers...

To the **Landmarks** newsletter contributors: Brenda Baker, Michelle Harris, Meagan Hoffman, Jim McIntyre, John Park, and Dana Wright.

To our **photographers**: Joel Geffen, Laura Rodgers, Charles Scott, Luke Tracy, and Jim Weiner.

To the volunteers who have helped with our **stewardship, legal assistance, and outreach**: Carla Bisaro, Misty Callies, George Kasdorf, Jim McIntyre, Robert Moll, Paul Morin, Bill Secrest, Jim Weiner, and Dana Wright.

To those who helped with the **2023 Red Barn Bash**: Beth Bauman, Chuck Bridenstine, Misty Callies, Joey Geffen, Heidi Guenther, Richard Kent, Allison LaPlatt-Weaver, Jim McIntyre, Michelle McIntyre, Nancy Sapp, Bill Secrest, Tom Shaffer, and Jim Weiner.

And *especially* to our dedicated **Committee Members**: Brenda Baker, Dick Barnes, Carla Bisario, Misty Callies, Bryan Collett, Ani Cooper, Michelle Deatrick, Don DeMallie, Mary Ericson, Chris Flanagan, Heidi Guenther, Mike Hahn, Mitch Hall, Steve Hall, Michelle Harris, Ruth Hart, Mark Higbee, Richard Kent, Jack Lanigan, Allison LaPlatt-Weaver, Amanda Louks, Sally Lunn, Andrew Magsam, Jim McIntyre, Michelle McIntyre, Veronica Nehasil, Jacob Olsen-Yesh, John Park, Tony Pitts, Jon Richards, Jim Robertson, Bill Secrest, Shawn Severance, Jack Smiley, Jon Trevathan, Maria Vicini, and Jim Weiner.

Thanks to **everyone** who volunteered with SMLC this year!

We are always looking for dedicated people who want to help SMLC achieve our mission. For more information, please contact Alan McTaggart at [amctaggart@smlcland.org](mailto:amctaggart@smlcland.org) or call 734-484-6565.

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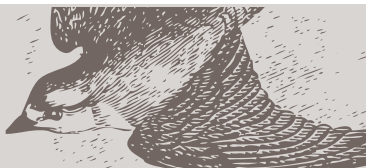


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## The North American Beaver

By Alan McTaggart, Stewardship and Outreach Specialist

Washtenaw County finds itself in a predicament. One of its cutest, cuddliest residents: the famous North American beaver (*Castor canadensis*), is sitting on the fence between being a beloved wildlife species and a nuisance. They are environmental engineers, with their felling of trees and building of dams altering the course of flowing water and proving vital for the riparian ecosystems they reside in. They are also North America's largest rodent and make for a striking wildlife sighting for anyone visiting natural spaces. On the other hand, the very stream-altering actions they are known for create reservoirs that can flood parts of people's land, damaging crops, putting water in basements, and causing other issues.

Human-wildlife conflicts like this form the foundation of some of the conservation movement's greatest success stories. In southeast Michigan, those devoted to nature conservation are working towards a similarly successful resolution on this beaver issue. Representatives of various organizations, including SMLC, have begun meeting to discuss potential resolutions to this issue. In reality, it will take all kinds of solutions because each instance of



**North American beaver**

by Laura Rodgers, Washington Dept of Fish & Wildlife

conflict brings unique characteristics. Trapping and relocation of animals are methods already used, but natural resources professionals must guide policy and practice pertaining to those methods. Landowners can achieve needed results while still allowing the beavers to perform their natural role in the maintenance of a healthy ecosystem. Another promising method is flow-regulation in beaver dams. Devices can be installed into beaver dams that allow some water to flow through while beavers still actively maintain it, resulting in less water buildup on the upstream side. Whatever the solution, there is work to be done to ensure that this key species can live in a sustainable harmony with humans, and it's work that SMLC is proud to take part in.

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*Continued from page 1*

Accredited land trusts steward almost 20 million acres of land across the country – approximately one-third the size of the State of Michigan or the size of the following national parks combined: Yellowstone, Grand Canyon, Glacier, Everglades, Denali and Yosemite! In SMLC's case, nearly 3,500 acres have been protected since 1988 including the Superior Greenway, a birdwatcher's paradise, the 538-acre Lost Lake Nature Preserve and the ecologically rare Sibley Prairie.

*"The Land Trust Commission's accreditation certifies and elevates SMLC's ongoing work to conserve local woods, wetlands, prairies, and open spaces. SMLC is helping the planet where we live, work, and recreate, here in Southeast Michigan, and the Commission has recognized our adherence to land trust standards and best practices as part of what we do."*

When you visit one of SMLC's 18 nature preserves, consider how much effort went into protecting, maintaining and, in some cases, restoring that site. Contemplate the location and how many people in this region can get to that site within a 30 minute or less drive and enjoy a semi-wild place that soothes their soul. Think about the ecology and the natural systems at work on that site that can now heal or continue without interference. Know that your favorite animals, plants, amphibians and insects have a home that is going to be there, forever. This is why we became accredited.

SMLC is one of more than 1,280 land trusts across the United States. A complete list of accredited land trusts and more information about the process and benefits can be found at [landtrustaccreditation.org](http://landtrustaccreditation.org).

Visit [smleland.org](http://smleland.org) for a color version of this newsletter



**Yes!** I want to help preserve critical natural habitat in southeast Michigan by supporting Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy.

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Total Gift

Check here to let SMLC use my gift where it is needed most.

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**Our Mission** *The Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy conserves natural land and open space - including forests, wetlands, meadows, agricultural lands, and places of scenic beauty - to provide habitat for wildlife and to enrich the lives of people.*

## Wish List

SMLC could use the following items:

Item Needed	Retail Cost
3 point hitch tractor wood chipper attachment	\$2,500
4-5 drawer filing cabinet Letter-sized	\$300
Good working order black and white Business Printer	\$250
Heavy-duty poster easels (2)	\$150
Pack of leather gloves for volunteers	\$100
A collapsible outdoor utility wagon for supplies	\$100
New or gently-used folding hand-saws	\$22 each
New or gently-used loppers	\$15 each
Bottled water for thirsty volunteers (24 pack)	\$4 each

Please contact the SMLC office if you would like to make our wishes come true!

**(734) 484-6565 | [info@smlcland.org](mailto:info@smlcland.org)**

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