



Conservation is in our nature.

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 12, 2019

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

- **Jill A. Lewis**, Executive Director, Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy, (734) 484-6565, jlewis@smlcland.org

SOUTHEAST MICHIGAN LAND CONSERVANCY'S 2019 AWARD RECIPIENTS

Presented at the SMLC Picnic at the Farm event on September 8, 2019

Superior Township, MI – *Conservation takes All of Us* is the theme of this year's Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy (SMLC) awards. SMLC honored past Board Presidents; its current long-time Executive Director, Jill Lewis; and several key volunteers at its bi-annual Picnic at the Farm event held this past Sunday, September 8, 2019.

"The SMLC Awards are a way for the organization to honor significant individuals who, through their generous efforts, have greatly contributed to SMLC's success and achievement of our mission", says Jill A. Lewis, SMLC's Executive Director.

"The awards are given out bi-annually at our Picnic at the Farm event - the purpose of which is to thank our members and volunteers for their ongoing support of SMLC."

This year's *Jack R. Smiley Award* recipient was former and long-time Stewardship Committee Chair, Richard Simek, who served on SMLC's Board of Directors for 15 years including 2 years as its President. It is named after SMLC's founder, Jack Smiley, who is locally known for his many years of land protection efforts. The award is given to an individual who has been instrumental in SMLC's land conservation success.

SMLC's Board of Directors gave the organization's first *Executive Director Legacy Award* to Jill Lewis, who has been in her position for the past 11.5 years. During her tenure, she led the efforts that resulted in more than 1,000 acres of protected lands and a 41% increase overall. She also initiated and oversaw the creation of the Superior Greenway Nature Trail, a 1.75-mile public hiking trail located in Superior Township, Washtenaw County, and a number of public access and land restoration projects across the region.

"The Board was extremely pleased to be able to recognize Jill for her many accomplishments over the past 10 years," says Mary Ericson, SMLC Board President. "We look forward to what the next 10 years will bring!"

Additional awards presented included:

- *The SMLC Director's Award:* to **Jonathan Trevathan** for his more than 10 years of Board service, including 2 years as President and 9 years as Treasurer.
- *Legacy Volunteer Award:* to **Charles Scott**, for his many donations of beautiful professional quality photographs of SMLC nature preserves, birds and animals, and outreach events throughout the past 10 years.
- *2019 Volunteer of the Year Award:* to **Martha (Marty) Davis-Merritts** for her cheery help with the database, mailings, and office needs.
- *2018 Volunteer of the Year Award:* to **Mark Even**, for his helpful stewardship contributions of photographs, video, and drone footage of SMLC's nature preserves.

"Our organization depends on committed and passionate volunteers," says Julie McLaughlin, SMLC's Stewardship and Outreach Manager. "We are so grateful to Charles, Marty, and Mark for donating their time, knowledge, and skills to share the SMLC story with people locally and beyond."

The 2019 Picnic at the Farm was sponsored by a number of local businesses including: Busch's, Domino's, and International Transmission Company (ITC).

The complete list of Sponsors can be viewed at www.smlcland.org.

Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy, a 501(c)3 nonprofit and qualified conservation organization established 31 years ago, has protected more than 3,400 acres across southeast Michigan through the conservation of natural lands and open space to provide wildlife habitat and to enrich the lives of people. SMLC has a history of conserving land in partnership with Federal, State, and local governments and other conservation organizations. www.smlcland.org

###