



LANDMARKS

Newsletter of the Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy

Fall 2025



Coming together to protect Lost Lake: SMLC and Six Rivers Land Conservancy.

Photo by Kurt Jung

Let's Protect What We Love About Southeast Michigan - Together

By Megan Motil, SMLC Consultant and
Jill A. Lewis, Executive Director

We live in a truly special corner of the world. Southeast Michigan is full of natural beauty - peaceful woods, winding rivers and streams, wide-open meadows, and farmland that's been in families for generations. These places aren't just scenic. They're where fish and wildlife find a home and where we go to walk, reflect, and breathe a little easier. Over the years, Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy (SMLC) has worked hard to protect special places where you can spend time outdoors - places like the Superior Greenway, the Sibley Prairie, and the Lost Lake Nature Preserve. And we're here to help make sure those places and more stick around - for our kids, our grandkids, and for everyone who calls this region home.

However, our natural areas are under pressure. Development continues to spread, climate change

is shifting weather patterns and stressing local ecosystems, and weak environmental protections are causing real harm to water quality and wildlife. Too often, it's our most vulnerable urban and rural communities who end up facing the worst of these problems.

SMLC's has worked to help resolve some of these issues through saving and stewarding local lands. Now we have a new scientifically-based strategic plan that's focused on protecting the most important prairies, wetlands, and forested areas in southeast

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LANDMARKS

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Conservation is in our Nature.

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Message from the Executive Director, Jill A. Lewis



Many thanks to everyone who contributed to this summer's **Trailblazers for SMLC campaign**. The purpose of this effort was to: 1. help SMLC stay sustainable in 2025 by supporting local land conservation in the midst of turbulent times; 2. raise awareness about the importance of land conservation and SMLC's mission; 3. encourage people to visit SMLC's nature preserves; and 4. move SMLC forward faster through new donor engagement. These goals are still relevant as we complete 2025 and enter 2026 in the midst of economic and governmental uncertainty.

Earlier this year, SMLC completed the Forest to Mi Faucet project that was funded by the Michigan DNR. Two prescribed burns were conducted at SMLC's Conservancy Farm and Sibley Prairie Nature Preserve – West Prairie site. Additionally, SMLC hosted a volunteer tree planting activity at the Conservancy Farm where fruit and other native trees were planted in homage to rural cultural heritage. This opportunity resulted in a handful of needed and desired land restoration projects, new and renewed landowner outreach through the Washtenaw County Conservation Collective, and promoted how forests contribute to cleaner drinking water.



This summer, SMLC offered to assist Superior Charter Township with the management planning of their new Birdsong Preserve. We hired a consultant, Dana Wright, formerly Legacy Land Conservancy's Stewardship Director, who worked with Alan. Together they produced a natural areas management plan for the Township's use. This was SMLC's contribution to the Preserve's acquisition by the Township this year.

Finally, SMLC's Board of Directors adopted our new Strategic Plan this past July. The plan guides organizational work for the next five years. SMLC is already working on many of the goals including: reviewing possible land acquisition projects in Washtenaw and Wayne counties, evaluating the Conservancy Farm's historic buildings, and assessing our fund development program and activities thanks to consultant Desiree Worthington. We could use assistance to reach the plan's ambitious goals. You can help make a difference now. Your 2025 gift of support helps our organizational sustainability and success. Please consider donating before year-end and **thank you!**



SMLC is proud to be a recipient of the 2025 Columbia Retail Store Grant

Program — a program that supports local land trusts by raising funds through customer donations at Columbia Sportswear retail stores. Through the Tough Mother Funder charity checkout program, donations made at checkout in Q4 2025 will support our work to save natural areas and open spaces in southeast Michigan. Shop your local Columbia store and support SMLC at the same time!



Generous Donors Provide Trailblazers Campaign Match

By Misty Callies, Event Planning Committee Chair

Bill and I have been traipsing about Michigan for most of our lives, particularly in Superior Township where we live, where SMLC's headquarters reside, and where it has its greatest presence. On the busy rushing roads of southeast Michigan, the popular Superior Greenway presents a landscape to view; it also provides an extensive network of trails for us dog walkers and birders and a contiguous corridor for native flora and fauna. But our chats with many of those strolling the local preserves tell us SMLC is not the household name it should be. Folks aren't aware that SMLC is the organization - frequently in partnership - behind the preserved woods, meadows, and ponds, the rare remnants of Michigan's former terrain, the trails and picnic spots. And as with most non-profits, a shortage of funds and volunteers means SMLC often struggles to meet the demands of its mission.

Our goal, then, is for SMLC to become a household name with the staff, volunteers, and funding it needs to fulfill its mission. We would also like to see our community - YOU - help SMLC move forward faster. For the Trailblazers for SMLC campaign this past summer, we offered a one-to-one match of each new dollar and each new donor up to \$10,000, doubling the gift.

Our hope, of course, was that our enthusiasm would be contagious, and that our story would help others understand the need and follow through, as best they could, with the promotion and support SMLC needs.

The campaign started - exuberantly! - with donations, modest yet significant because they came from new folks, tumbling in. A lengthy pause followed, rekindled midway with a few healthy jolts of giving, but the ending was inspirational, with a real flurry of generosity that helped us surpass both our match and SMLC's total fundraising goals! We are deeply touched and humbled, and particularly appreciative to all those new supporters and ongoing donors who reached back into their pockets to give a bit more.

Our sincere thanks to all of you!

Misty Callies and Bill Secrest



**Southeast Michigan
Land Conservancy**
Trailblazers for SMLC

Thank you to our sponsors!

**Bill Secrest & Misty Callies
Matching Gift Sponsors**



SMLC is deeply grateful to all of the individuals and volunteers who helped make this fundraising campaign a success



Trailblazers for SMLC Campaign - Results -

Total Campaign \$: Goal was \$20,000

Raised nearly \$35,000!

New Money Raised: Goal was \$10,000

Raised more than \$13,200!

SMLC's Strategic Plan and YOU

By Jill A. Lewis, Executive Director

SMLC's new 5-year Strategic Plan is the result of two years of discussion and review by the Board and Executive Director with input from donors, funders, partners, volunteers and staff. SMLC's planning was facilitated by consultant Megan Motil.

The plan's premise is ambitious and needed: to change the pace of local land conservation in southeast Michigan through scientifically-based planning, professional execution and passionate volunteer assistance, and a groundswell of community and partner support. The goal is to protect our region's prairies, farmland, wetlands, woodlands and more in order to save what remains.

At the same time, SMLC needs more volunteers at all levels to join the team and pitch in. We could use more:

- Board directors and committee members who are willing to serve in a vibrant, growing and passionate organization;
- Public workday and event volunteers who are willing to show up, help out, and leave satisfied after a good day of work done; and
- Key volunteers who want to contribute over longer time periods on special projects or preserve maintenance and watcher needs.

Additionally, as our Trailblazers for SMLC campaign proved this summer – people want to give to land conservation – they just need to be asked. Ongoing funds are needed to support work big and small including: expanding our land acquisition and land restoration efforts, hiring and retaining new and existing staff; and providing the tools, equipment and supplies for our operational and programmatic needs; to name a few.

You don't have to be a conservation expert or have a lot of money to make a difference. There are so many ways to get involved:

- **JOIN** - Get involved by signing up for SMLC's e-newsletter or coming out to one of the many outdoor events. Sign-up for the monthly e-newsletter: info@smlcland.org and include your full name and email address.

- **ACT** - Pitch in by helping to plant trees, remove invasive species, or lend a hand on a local trail. Check out SMLC's activities calendar at smlcland.org.
- **EXPLORE and share** - Hike the public trail at one of SMLC's preserves with a friend or family members, learn about ways to protect your land and leave a legacy for generations to come, or share the benefits of helping nature with others.
- **GIVE** - Chip in to save local woods, wetlands, prairie and farmland now and forever. Your charitable donation helps protect, preserve and manage natural areas and open spaces for the animals, the plants, and all of us. Donate online at smlcland.org via PayPal or Network for Good.

Visit smlcland.org and our social channels at Facebook, Instagram and Linked-in to learn more and get involved. We'd love to hear from you.



You can help SMLC reach our big dreams and goals.

Photo by Charles Scott



Healthy Ecosystems Include Us

By Shawn Severance, Parks Naturalist and Educator with
Washtenaw County Parks | Edited by Alan McTaggart

A variety of native nut, fiber, and fruit trees were planted near the Conservancy Farm's Community Organic Garden in April as part of the Forest to Mi Faucet project. These included bur oak, swamp white oak, basswood, red oak, hackberry, elderberry, and paw paw. This planting will, hopefully, mature over the years to provide an example of forest polyculture in a modern farm and garden context.

Note: there isn't one universally recognized indigenous term for "forest polyculture".

Imagine the abundance of the land when a thousand small fires burned beside a creek, smoking fish and boiling down sap. *Mazhii'igan*, which translates into English as "a cut-over clearing", is an Ojibwe word for the clearings that occurred in the Lower Peninsula at the time of European contact. These clearings were a place of endless bounty.

"The scene was beautiful beyond description. The timber consisted of large oak trees standing several rods apart and the intermediate space between them was covered with bright green grass and beautiful flowers. The whole country had been burnt over every fall or spring, I presume, for centuries, and everything had been destroyed except these giants of the forest. It did appear as if one-half of the vegetation was flowers."

~ J.W. Wing, June 1839

In the lexicon of memory and history, the *Mazhii'igan* must have contained abundant wild fruits. This nourishing abundance was created by, and for, people. Forest edge plants such as sumac, pawpaw, hawthorn, hackberry, grape, plum, cherry, and mulberry were, and continue to be, important food sources for Indigenous people. The nuts of hickory, oak, hazel, walnut, chestnut, and beech provide a stable source of high-value nutrition for bread and milk. The basswood and the dogbane provide fiber that can be woven into rope. The elderberry and the pine are healers of winter ailments. If you walk with an elder, you will discover the forest is full of gifts waiting to offer themselves to you. When we bring these

plants together in a garden, we are reintroducing old friends. Then, we could allow nature go where she wants in the space that we share. Conservation is a quilt, pieced together from imagination.

"In eastern North America, people practiced rain-fed agriculture with sunflower (*Helianthus annuus*) and squash as staple crops, whilst altered[sic] forest composition through selective planting. Fire management was practiced from the Midwest to the east coast."

~ Koch et al (2019)



Two of the saplings planted at Conservancy Farm: a basswood (L) and a bur oak (R).

Photos by Alan McTaggart

The extent and complexity of pre-Columbian agricultural systems is unknown to us, but the climate record indicates it must have been considerable. Between 1500-1600 CE, Indigenous populations were decimated by disease, warfare, and slavery. When untended fields reverted to forest, enough carbon was captured to contribute to the coldest part of the Little Ice Age. Indigenous forest polyculture is a natural community in its own right.

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Our Goals for Prescribed Fire

By Alan McTaggart, Stewardship & Outreach Specialist

The Forest to Mi Faucet project accomplished many things for SMLC's land restoration and outreach, but none were quite as successful as the prescribed fires. The DNR's F2MiF grant provided funding for a selection of restoration activities, and the burns took place at three of our nature preserves: the Conservancy Farm, Lost Lake, and West Prairie. All were conducted by Plantwise, who also removed some of the woody invasives at Lost Lake for the tree planting last fall.

Between the three nature preserves, 32 acres were burnt, with each burn unit containing a mosaic of fields and forests. At the Conservancy Farm and Lost Lake, a significant amount of tallgrass prairie in the midst of active restoration areas were burned, and the resulting fires were continued into the surrounding forest. In both habitats, the fire helps to return



Conservancy Farm just after the prescribed burn (top) and the same field in late September (bottom).

Photos by Alan McTaggart

nutrients to the soil as well as impede invasive species and promote native plant growth in ensuing growing seasons. These ecosystem benefits constituted goals SMLC had for the fires, and evidence of those benefits could be seen within the first year. Native grasses grew as tall as they ever have and wildflowers were more visible than ever during their respective bloom-

ing seasons. The fires also killed buds on invasive woody plants in many spots, producing a meaningful reduction in the spread of those populations.

As with any restoration activity, follow-up is required to see long-term results. A variety of local ecosystems, especially the more open ones like tallgrass or lakeplain prairie, are fire dependent. Hand removal and use of herbicides along with future fires will be important to build upon the F2MiF efforts.



Michael Solomon (L) and Hayden Allie (R) at Bell Creek Nature Preserve.

Photo by Alan McTaggart

THANK YOU to Our 2025 Seasonal Assistants

Michael Solomon – Nature Preserve Monitor

SMLC was happy to welcome Michael back for a second summer in this role. He helped SMLC achieve our annual goal of monitoring all 18 nature preserves before year-end by assessing 14 sites including capturing data points and taking photos. On top of his day job at the U of M Dearborn Environmental Interpretive Center in Dearborn, he's also worked as a nature educator with Superior Charter Township on occasion and is helping to coordinate the MI Naturalist class this year. The conservation world thanks Michael for his contributions.

Hayden Allie – Field Assistant

Hayden was the seasonal Field Assistant from late June – end of September. He helped extensively with the posting of more signage around SMLC preserves, an important project we're proud to have mostly completed this year. He is a recent graduate of the U of M - Dearborn and continues to work in municipal maintenance with the City of Woodhaven. He has a very promising future in conservation, and we are excited to see where his next steps lead. Field season would have been much more difficult without him, so we extend our humble thanks.

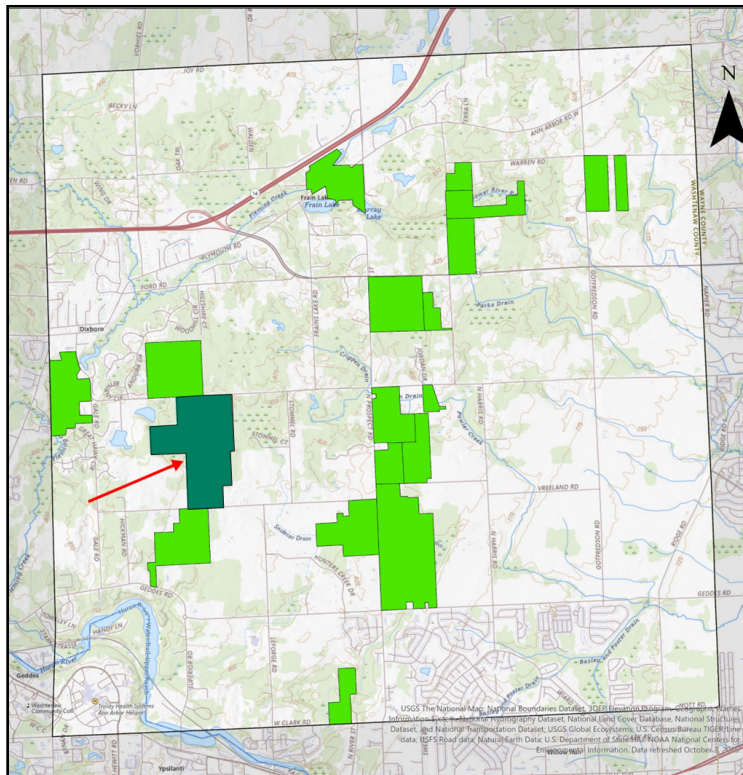


The Birdsong Preserve - Management Planning

By Alan McTaggart, Stewardship & Outreach Specialist

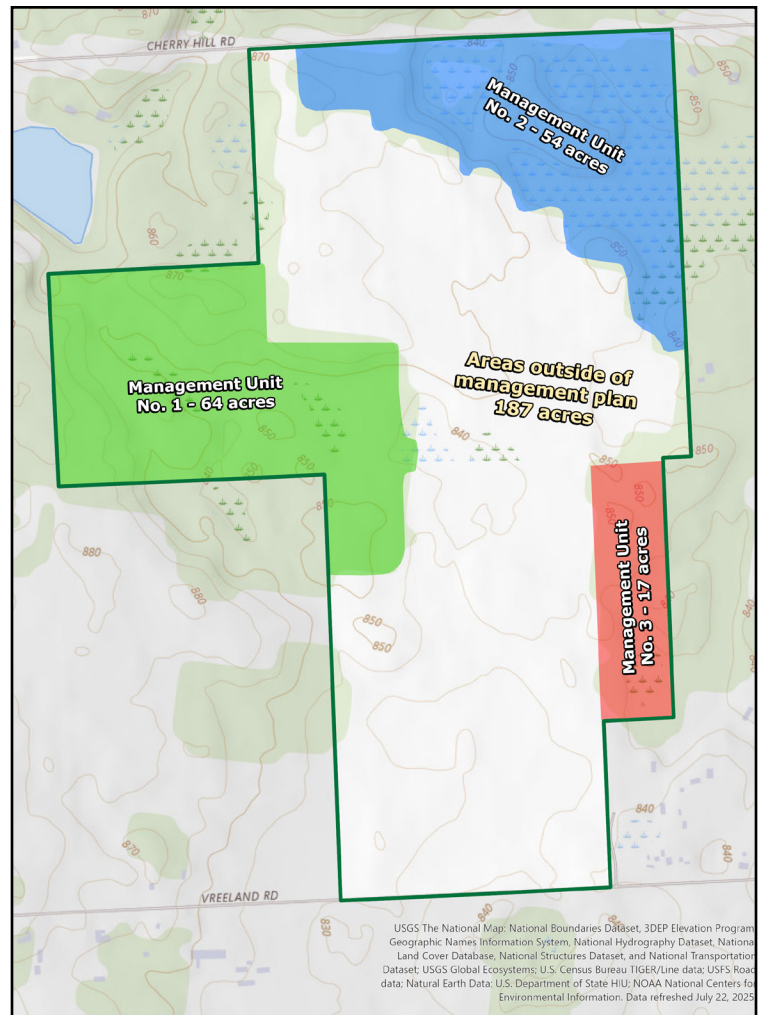
The Superior Greenway got much bigger this year! Thanks to Jack Smiley and the Michigan Land Conservancy, 322 acres of natural areas and open space in Superior Township are permanently protected and soon to be transferred to the Superior Township government. This acreage is the new Birdsong Preserve which is located between Cherry Hill Road and Vreeland Road.

SMLC assisted in this project by offering to produce the Preserve's natural areas Habitat Management Plan this past summer. SMLC engaged Dana Wright, a naturalist and habitat restoration/management expert, to spearhead the project. SMLC's Stewardship & Outreach Specialist, Alan McTaggart, assisting with the site assessment and mapping.



Map 1. All publicly accessible protected areas in Superior Township. The arrow indicates the specific location of the Birdsong Preserve. The preserve is bordered on the north by Cherry Hill Rd. and on the south by Vreeland Rd.

Map by Alan McTaggart



Map 2. Birdsong Preserve's three new habitat management units

Map by Alan McTaggart

The Preserve is a mosaic of recently farmed fields, hedgerows, shrubby thickets, and mature southern-mesic hardwood forest, with small wetlands present in each of those areas. The natural areas management plan covers the three main "wooded" areas of the preserve with Unit 1 containing the highest quality, mature hardwood forest and Units 2 and 3 being wooded, but with a much higher prevalence of invasive species. The locations of units can be seen on Map 2.

The three units comprise 135 acres: about 42% of the total preserve. Recommended management activities include hand-removal and herbiciding the small populations of invasive plants in the most ecologically desirable areas. More degraded areas will follow, with prescribed fire being used occasionally throughout in the years following initial removal.

Many thanks to our volunteers...

To the **Landmarks** and **Update** newsletters contributors: Brenda Baker, Misty Callies, Rhonda McGill, Megan Motil, Theo Poling, Shawn Severance, Bill Sverdlik, and Kim Williams-Guillen.

To our **Landmarks** and **Update** photographers: Michael Durham, Joel Geffen, Kurt Jung, Richard Kent, Laura Myatt, Theo Poling, Charles Scott, Bill Sverdlik, and Jim Weiner.

To our **stewardship** volunteers: Hayden Allie, Peter Bednekoff, Esha Biswas, Hannah Briggs, Larry Briggs, Cam Finch, Amy Griffis, Aron Griffis, Raquel Huffman, George Kasdorf, Richard Kent, Wayne McGarrah, Jim McIntyre, Michelle McIntyre, Andrea Meza, Robert Moll, Areej Noor, Theo Poling, Tracy Ringstad, Cassie Russ, Pennie Russ, Willy Secrest, Susan Smith, Natasha Sokolow, Bill Sverdlik, and Dominic Sweeney.

To our **outreach** and **legal team** volunteers: Brenda Baker, Misty Callies, Mary Ericson, Mitch Hall, Heidi Guenther, Allison LaPlatt-Weaver, Rhonda McGill, Jim McIntyre, Bill Secrest, Jack Smiley, and Jim Weiner.

Thanks to everyone who volunteered with SMLC this year!



Volunteers Cam Finch and Theo Poling (L to R) plant trees with SMLC's Alan McTaggart.

Photo by Richard Kent

Superior Township Chapter - Getting the Word Out

By Brenda Baker, STC Co-Chair

Since the Superior Township Chapter's founding in 1991, SMLC has provided publicity for the group's activities through semi-annual "Landmarks" newsletters and event-specific postcard reminders. As technology evolved, the "SMLC News & Events" email list was added, followed by the SMLC Facebook page. All of these are welcome and needed for regional outreach and keeping SMLC members informed about Chapter endeavors and public offerings.

The Chapter supplements these with more localized outreach, such as sharing information about SMLC and nearby nature preserves at Washtenaw Community College's Fall and Winter "Welcome Days" and participating annually in Superior Township's "Superior Day" celebration. It also produces a summer "Update" newsletter, which is distributed to all of SMLC.

One of the Chapter's newer Steering Committee members, Rhonda McGill, has knowledge about graphic design and creates eye-catching flyers about upcoming Chapter events. These are posted on Superior Township's social media and elsewhere, and printed for manual distribution at the Committee to Promote Superior Township's information booth, at Rhonda's very active church, at Superior Township Hall, and other area hotspots. The Superior Township Parks & Recreation Department helps spread the word at its Commission meetings.

Chapter events like hikes or workdays also appear in listings compiled by media outlets and environmental organizations like the Ann Arbor Observer, the U of M Environmental Interpretive Center, and Washtenaw County Parks. Sometimes, SMLC Board members even post Chapter events on Meetup!

Volunteers Wanted!

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 or call 734-484-6565.



Peter Blank

By Jill A. Lewis, Executive Director

Pete Blank is a wildlife biologist and restoration manager with roots in academic research. He works for The Nature Conservancy (TNC) as their Northwest Ohio Program Manager. He oversees management of the Kitty Todd and Great Egret Marsh Nature Preserves in Ohio and manages TNC's Oak Openings Program. Pete is also the current Co-Chair of the Green Ribbon Initiative (GRI) Steering Committee. The GRI is a partnership organization dedicated to protecting the Oak Openings Region in Northwest Ohio and Southeast Michigan and educating the public about its unique habitats, plants, and animals.

Originally from Baltimore, Pete has a B.A. in Earth and Planetary Science from John Hopkins University and a M.S. in Sustainable Development and Conservation Biology and Ph.D. in Ecology – both from the University of Maryland. His graduate research focused on habitat restoration for grassland birds and now he uses that background to help restore habitat for birds and other wildlife.

“I enjoyed my time in academia, but now I get to use my knowledge of wildlife biology and apply that to land stewardship that improves wildlife habitat. I find that extremely fulfilling,”

– Pete Blank, TNC

Pete met SMLC shortly after he began working with TNC six years ago. Since then, TNC has acquired several federal grants to help with stewardship on partner properties in the Oak Openings Region, including SMLC's Sibley Prairie Nature Preserve-West Prairie site. Pete and his team from TNC worked with SMLC staff to identify the restoration goals for the property. These included maintaining and expanding the lakeplain wet prairie and advancing the woodlands to an oak-hickory-dominant canopy. TNC, along with assistance from SMLC staff, conducted invasive species management including brush cutting, herbicide treatments, and whole tree removal – the latter were large invasive trees (including Scotch Pine and European Alder).

These grants were focused on protecting rare Oak Openings habitats and the species that depend upon them, says Pete. One of these species is the Blazing Star Borer Moth, a species of special concern in

Michigan which use blazing stars as their host plants. TNC and SMLC staff planted close to 400 blazing stars to increase their availability to the blazing star borer moth and other pollinators. Pete says, “In mid-summer it's just popping with purple flowers, it's wonderful!”

Last spring, Pete and his wife, Erin Parker, walked West Prairie and found 30-40 wood frogs, chorus frogs, and spring peepers in the prairie area. Pete said this was “really cool” because he had always thought of West Prairie as more of a dry prairie site (due to the moths, butterflies, etc.). However, he says, “it's really the tale of two prairies: in the winter / spring, it's a wet prairie, and in the summer / fall, it's a dry prairie.”

When asked about his personal conservation philosophy Pete states, “The environmental crisis is real and it's happening now. There are so many threats to our environment. The time is now to act, we can't wait.” However, what he finds most fulfilling in his job is helping young people who are interested in conservation advance their careers.

SMLC is grateful for our project partners and the people who represent those organizations. Thanks to Pete and his amazing team, SMLC has received the benefit of professional grant administration, land stewardship, and public outreach.

Thanks to Pete and his team!



Peter Blank accepts the SMLC 2022 Community Partner award on behalf of TNC.

Photo by Joel Geffen

Help Save Sibley Prairie!

Sibley Prairie in Brownstown Township, Wayne County, is one of Michigan's most ecologically significant natural areas. It is the state's largest and highest-quality lakeplain prairie remnant, home to several rare plants and animals, including the state-threatened Duke's skipper butterfly. Its rarity has made it a top conservation priority of SMLC.

Recently, the largest property within the prairie complex - 440 acres - was put up for auction, raising alarm in the conservation community. To prevent its loss, the Michigan Land Conservancy, led by SMLC founder Jack Smiley, secured an option to purchase the property. This action temporarily spared it from development, but the clock is now ticking.

Through the Save Sibley Prairie Coalition, partners have until the end of 2026 to raise \$6 million to complete the purchase. To stay on track, they must raise \$500,000 by December 2025.



The Sibley Prairie is home to many wonderful creatures like this wood frog.

Photo by Laura Myatt

This is a truly "now or never" situation. Please join SMLC in helping to protect this irreplaceable resource by contributing today. Visit SaveSibleyPrairie.org to learn more.

Note: please do not send gifts for this project to SMLC, instead see the link above for donation information.

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"We conclude that the Great Dying of the Indigenous Peoples of the Americas led to the abandonment of enough cleared land in the Americas that the resulting terrestrial carbon uptake had a detectable impact on both atmospheric CO₂ and global surface air temperatures in the two centuries prior to the Industrial Revolution."

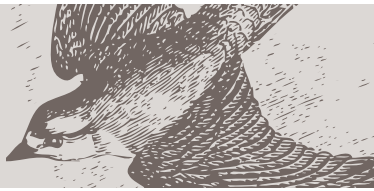
~ Koch et al (2019)

Conservation is falling behind. America's birds continue to decline across the board – 1/3 of birds now need conservation action. We have lost 22% of our butterflies in the last 20 years. The winged ones are struggling to make their way in the age of humans. As much as we wish to share our world with these jewels of the sky, they are still disappearing. What are we missing? Maybe it is as simple as this: humans have always been at the center of the natural community in Michigan. Like Beaver and Bison, we are a keystone species. The other species rely on us to create abundance for them. When we do not fulfil this role, the whole suffers.

13,000 years ago, a small band of Paleo-Indians camped on a river terrace. They shaped Attica Chert into hunting tools, waiting for migrating herds to pass by. Archeologists are now excavating these stone tools from the undisturbed soil below the plow line. Protein residues tells us these tools were used to hunt peccary, hare, and musk ox. Pollen studies tell us that this campsite overlooked meadows scattered with spruce and fir. People were influencing Mazhii'igan long before the familiar oaks, hickories, and maples of the Carolinian Forest. We are the weavers of diversity, but we must remember how.

Modern civilization has created a veneer of lawn, pavement, cars, and grocery stores that obscure the original patterns. Yet the patterns are not lost, they are remembered by the soil, and the old trees. The animist waits for us. If you walk with curiosity, you might discover the quiet heartbeat of a place that has always nourished humans. Mazhii'igan waits for you to slow down and notice that you are part of this ecosystem. She is speaking to you in the language of wild fruit. When you discover, to your delight, a patch of wild blackberries, are you harvesting from an Indigenous garden? Conservation is a garden, where we remember ourselves home.





Bats of Sibley Prairie

By Kim Williams-Guillén, Ph.D.

If you visit SMLC's Sibley Prairie Nature Preserve - West Prairie Site on a spring or summer weekend morning, you'll likely see birdwatchers with binoculars. But what about the nocturnal flyers -- bats? A beautifully conserved mosaic of forest and open wetlands like West Prairie should harbor a diversity of these important animals.

In August 2025, I placed automated bat detectors at several spots in West Prairie to record overnight. These devices use ultrasonic microphones that trigger when bats call. Since each species echolocates at different frequencies and call structures, the recordings let us infer which bats use the habitat without capturing them.

I recorded six of Michigan's nine bat species: big brown (*Eptesicus fuscus*), silver-haired (*Lasionycteris noctivagans*), Eastern red (*Lasiurus borealis*), hoary (*Lasiurus cinereus*), evening (*Nycticeius humeralis*), and tricolored (*Perimyotis subflavus*). This assemblage spans migratory and resident, tree- and cavity-roosting, and both urban-tolerant and forest-



A silver-haired bat (top) and an eastern red bat (bottom).

Photos by Michael Durham

dependent bats. At most locations in Wayne County where I have recorded bats, the highly adaptable, disturbance-tolerant big brown bat dominates; West Prairie was distinctive because Eastern red and silver-haired bats – forest species – were most frequently recorded. Detecting such diversity in just a few nights suggests West Prairie and nearby downriver habitats provide bats with critical roosting and foraging resources like mature trees, snags, canopy gaps, edges, and wetlands.

Continued from page 1

Michigan. We've laid out five big goals to guide our work over the next few years:

- 1. Work with landowners to protect more land, faster** - before it's lost to development forever.
- 2. Step up care for the lands we already protect**, making sure they stay healthy and accessible.
- 3. Welcome more people into our work** - because community-rooted conservation means everyone has a place in nature.
- 4. Build up support from donors and funders** so we have the resources to act quickly and effectively.
- 5. Grow stronger from the inside out**, retaining and building the professional and volunteer team and resources we need to do this work long into the future.

At the same time, money for saving and managing conserved lands is more uncertain. Changes in the

federal landscape have impacted available funds for land restoration and land acquisitions, including for conservation easements on local farms. Additionally, economic uncertainty is impacting some donors and their charitable decisions. Yet, many of the contributions for fulfilling SMLC's mission comes from people like you – who love their local communities and want to work together to protect what makes southeast Michigan special.

We're in a time where the need to act is urgent, but so is the opportunity to contribute something meaningful that will have a lasting local impact. You can help by donating, volunteering, spreading the word and advocating for these lands that make this place home.

We believe Southeast Michigan can be a place where people and nature thrive side by side. It's already happening, and with your help, we can do even more. Let's protect what we love - together.

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.

Or, direct my donation:

\$_____ Stewardship Fund

\$_____ Superior Township Fund

\$_____ Land Protection Fund

\$_____ Stewardship Endowment Fund

Please make checks payable to
Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy and mail to:

Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy
8383 Vreeland Rd.
Superior Township, MI 48198

Or, make a secure online credit card donation at smlcland.org

Name: _____

Address: _____

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All donations are tax deductible to the extent provided by law. The donor received no goods or services in exchange for this donation. E-mail used only for SMLC news/announcements. We will never give or sell your personal information to any other group.

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
Boardwalk materials	\$1,000
Pack of leather gloves for volunteers	\$100
Good working push lawnmower	\$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

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