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on forest management. Often times, forest management and wildlife management go hand-in-hand.

Another excellent reference is *Managing Michigan's Wildlife: A landowners guide*. This free online resource was created by the Michigan DNR and the Michigan United Conservation Clubs. Topics include habitat planning, forest management, wetland management, grassland management, cropland management, backyard management, species management, and a resource directory. The guide is available at: [http://www.michigandnr.com/publications/pdfs/huntingwildlifehabitat/Landowners\\_Guide/index.htm](http://www.michigandnr.com/publications/pdfs/huntingwildlifehabitat/Landowners_Guide/index.htm)

The Michigan DNR website and the websites of most other state natural resource or wildlife agencies also have lots of helpful information about wildlife management.

One important thing to keep in mind is that wildlife management plans are not "quick fixes," but desired results will likely take years to come to fruition (which is a good reason to plan well and begin soon).

Wildlife Management Projects that may be suitable for your property include:

- Plant native shrubs along woodland edges or on the border of fields to provide food, escape cover, and nesting areas.
- Plant conifers to provide windbreaks and shelter belts (benefitting both people and wildlife).
- Preserve a narrow unmowed strip along edges of hayfields.
- Create shallow ponds where conditions and easement provisions allow.
- Plant "food plots" of grains like rye, sunflower, and corn specifically for wildlife to use.
- Save some "snags" (standing dead trees) and "wolf trees" (large, wide-spreading, short-trunked trees) in your forest to provide food sources and nest/den sites.
- Install nest boxes or platforms for species like wood duck, bluebird, and barred owl.
- Plan tree harvests so that wildlife benefits in the long term in addition to realizing economic gain from timber sales. For example, some cutting can favor the regeneration of oak, an important wildlife food tree. Cutting cedar forests can negatively impact deer and other wildlife by diminishing thermal cover in winter.
- Rejuvenate old orchards through trimming to increase fruit production.
- Create rock or brush piles to provide escape cover next to food-producing areas, as well as nest/ den sites for a variety of wildlife.
- Create ½ - 2 acre "wildlife openings" in large forested tracts to create edge effect.



### Monitoring Schedule Spring, 2008

#### Ground Monitoring

Charlevoix and Cheboygan Counties: April 14 to May 23

Mackinac and Chippewa Counties: July 14 to August 22

Emmet County: September 8 to October 31

Monitoring is critical to the continued protection of the natural resources safeguarded by the conservation easement. Monitoring establishes a record of responsible stewardship, detects violations early, and helps maintain good Conservancy and landowner relations. It requires staff to visit each easement property, observe the boundaries and interior of the property, and document any changes. LTC monitors conservation easements at least annually, utilizing both ground and aerial monitoring methods. A two-page monitoring report is kept in a permanent file as part of a continuous record of easement properties.

The monitoring technique depends on the size and location of the easement and whether or not reserved rights have been exercised on the property since the last monitoring visit. The larger and more remote easements that are typically monitored by air must also be monitored by ground periodically.

The 2008 easement monitoring schedule is listed above. LTC also notifies easement landowners by mail well before the monitoring visit. Landowners are welcome to accompany staff on monitoring visits, except during aerial monitoring (unfortunately there isn't room in the plane!). If the scheduled dates do not work for a landowner, alternative arrangements can be made.

#### Aerial monitoring

All counties April 14 to May 23

Notification letters will be sent to landowners 2-4 weeks prior to monitoring their property.

# Conservation Easement Landowner Newsletter

A newsletter for owners of land protected with a conservation easement - Spring 2008



## CONSERVATION EASEMENT LANDOWNER PROFILE

### Encouraging Wildlife

KIRK AND MARIE THORNE FELL IN LOVE WITH NORTHERN MICHIGAN while attending Ferris State University, fishing on the Pere Marquette River and exploring the outdoors whenever they could. While Kirk's work took them out of state, in 2001 the couple started looking for a large tract of land that would be their "up north" getaway and eventually their retirement home. Around this time, Little Traverse Conservancy was launching its conservation buyer program which linked conservation-minded buyers with large properties that were going to be permanently preserved with conservation easements. "I knew the minute that I walked onto our property that I wanted to purchase it," Kirk said, explaining that at its highest point, you can see the Straits of Mackinaw, Bois Blanc Island, Lake Michigan, and Lake Huron. The Thornes were a perfect match for the conservation buyer program and became involved with the conservation easement from the start.

Kirk said that putting a conservation easement on his land was pretty painless because his main intentions for the land were to do a variety of things that would encourage more wildlife to use it. One of the first things he did was to post wildlife cameras throughout the land. "I've had eight active cameras up and running since we bought the land in 2003. We've photographed coyote, bear, deer, bobcat, porcupine, and turkey," Kirk said. "Every time I'm up — about once a month — I check the cameras, clear them, and reload." (See right for some of Kirk's photos and page 2 for more information about wildlife cameras.)

The cameras have helped the Thornes understand what is currently using the land, but Kirk is doing other things to invite wildlife to his land. "We have three active food plots which are really important for the larger animals, especially in that part of Michigan. The biggest thing we're doing for other wildlife now is building habitat shelters," Kirk said. To create the shelters, the Thornes have used 10" plastic pipe, creating a "T" that becomes shelter for the creatures that use them. They then take brush and branches and pile it over the pipes. "Since doing this, we've noticed a large increase in rabbit and grouse using the land," Kirk said explaining that the habitat offers the animals more places for nesting and protection from bad weather, as well as places to hide from predators.

Another thing that the Thornes included in their conservation easement was the ability to create a pond which they hope to create this summer. "This region is a major migratory corridor with its proximity to so many water bodies," Kirk notes. "We hope that the pond will help provide resting and feeding habitat for migratory birds and we plan to work with the local Michigan State University extension office to stock it with native species."

If you are looking for more ideas about what you might do to encourage wildlife to your own protected property, see page 3.



## Trail Cameras: Getting to Know Your Wild Neighbors

Ever wonder what kind of animals are wandering around your conservation easement? Trail cameras are an exciting and entertaining way to monitor what comes and goes on your property. Trail cameras consist of a battery powered camera housed in a weatherproof box triggered by a sensor. There are two different types of trail cameras: digital and film. Film trail cameras are cheaper than digital trail cameras but have the added cost of processing. While more expensive, digital trail cameras offer more tools and flexibility. Expect to pay anywhere from \$60-\$500.

When choosing a trail camera here are some things to consider:

### Trigger Time

The time elapsed between when the camera first detects motion and when an image is taken is termed “trigger time.” Trigger times vary from almost instantaneous to as long as 6 seconds.

### Detection Range

This is the furthest distance at which a trail camera is able to detect motion. Distances range from 30 feet on the low end to past 100 feet.

### Detection Zone

The angle of view captured by a camera varies from as little as 5 to a full 90 degrees.

### Memory

The number of photos a camera can take before you need to change the film or download the images. This varies greatly.

### Flash Type

For night photography, use either an incandescent flash or an infrared flash, which is invisible to wildlife. A strong infrared flash is considered best.

### Battery Life

The length of time you can leave your camera outside before you must change the batteries (varies from days to weeks).

### Security

It is advisable to invest in a secure locking system for your camera to ensure it cannot be stolen.

Here are a few suggestions for where you might place a trail camera:

### Food Plot

Place a trail camera overlooking a food plot or feeding area. Use a camera with a wide detection and range zone. You want to capture a picture of anything that steps out of the woods into the camera’s view. Secondly, use a model with a strong flash. When using a weak flash it’s very common to see nothing but a set of glowing eyes in the middle of a food plot.

### Trail

Place a trail camera adjacent to a well-used trail. In this instance, using a trail camera with a fast trigger time is most important. Animals will be moving fast enough to elude slow cameras. Also, use a trail camera equipped with an infrared flash. The infrared flash won’t spook game and it’s faster than a standard incandescent flash.

In 2007, 2,873 acres of land were protected through the Little Traverse Conservancy with conservation easements.



## Conservation Easements by County

	# Easements	Acres
Charlevoix County	58	3,205
Cheboygan County	41	5,507
Chippewa County	14	3,469
Emmet County	99	4,028
Mackinaw County	12	271
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>224</b>	<b>16,480</b>

## Selling your Conservation Easement Property?

Please notify our office as soon as possible so we can ensure that the new owners are aware of and understand the conservation easement.

## Managing Conservation Easement Property For Wildlife and Biodiversity

One of the most important reasons for establishing a conservation easement is to protect wildlife habitat. Wildlife habitat is defined as the area or environment in which a specific animal lives and which provides the four basic requirements for it to survive:

- food
- water
- shelter or cover, and,
- space (in which to roam, establish territories, avoid predators and humans, etc.).

Virtually every easement project lists preserving habitat for native animals in the purpose section of the easement document, and species of wildlife and types of wildlife habitat found on the property (e.g. hardwood forest, conifer swamp, and meadow) are usually listed in the conservation values section.

Wildlife includes all species that live freely in the natural environment (both well-known game species like deer, bear, rabbit, and grouse; as well as lesser-known species like hog-nosed snake, wood frog, red-bellied woodpecker, and sphinx moth). Wildlife management is the manipulation of populations and habitats to increase, sustain, or decrease numbers of certain species.

Most people know something about wildlife management just by exposure to the popular media: MDNR management of public land for white tailed deer through certain forest practices; reintroduction of extirpated species, like moose in the U.P.; and special efforts to protect threatened and endangered species like Bald Eagle and Kirtland’s Warbler. In the past, most management has been for game species, but in recent years managing for a wide variety of wildlife (biodiversity) has become widely practiced.

Placing a conservation easement on a piece of property is one of the most effective forms of wildlife management because it prevents the loss of habitat by the development of natural land. However, if you are interested in wildlife or protecting biodiversity, and if your easement permits it (most easements do), there may be much more that you can do by developing and implementing a wildlife management plan.

Wildlife management plans can be quite simple or very



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- complex, but most follow a basic five-step approach:
- Determine the species of wildlife that presently live on or near your property,
  - Select the species you want to manage for and learn about their habitat requirements,
  - Identify the habitats present,
  - Prescribe management actions to manipulate the habitat, referencing publications and consulting with experts as needed, and,
  - Implement and maintain the plan.

An excellent reference publication is *Landscaping for Wildlife* by Carrol Henderson. This 150 page book (available from the Minnesota DNR for \$10.95) lists 16 basic, possible components of a wildlife management plan, eight of which are vegetative and eight of which are structural:

### Vegetative Components

- conifers
- grasses and legumes
- butterfly, bee, and moth plants
- hummingbird plants
- summer plants
- fall plants
- winter plants
- nut and acorn trees

### Structural components

- feeders
- water
- dust beds and grit
- salt
- cut banks, cliffs, and caves
- brush and rock piles
- snags
- nest boxes

Plants are the basis of the food chain of which every animal is part. Herbivores such as deer, rabbits, and insects convert plant energy directly to flesh. Carnivores, such as hawks, owls, bobcats, predatory insects, and insect-eating birds, in turn feed on the herbivores. This complex food web would collapse without plants. As such, vegetation largely determines the types of animals that can live on a plot of land and vegetation management is the key component of most wildlife management plans. You may recall that last Spring’s newsletter focused