



Conservation Easement LANDOWNER NEWSLETTER

*A newsletter for owners of land protected
with a conservation easement*

Spring 2004

CONSERVATION EASEMENT PROFILE

Camp Wildwood Conservation Easement

30 acres
Long Island, Les Cheneaux

In the early 1990s, the Kurtz family, along with the Shaw family at the other end of Long Island and the Goehring family on adjacent Birch Island granted conservation easements on their beloved islands, ensuring that they would forever be preserved in a natural state. Here are some of Bill Kurtz's thoughts on their efforts to protect their historic family camp, Camp Wildwood.

What brought your family to the Les Cheneaux?

My grandmother bought a sweater in Ann Arbor for a forthcoming camping excursion with her husband Doc Chase in 1899. The clerk insisted the best camping was in the Les Cheneaux. The rest, as they say, is history.

What do the islands mean to you now?

The islands are a very special place, full of the magic of nature, peaceful, a place where you can leave behind, albeit for a moment, the cares of a compressed and increasingly difficult world.

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This fifth issue of the Little Traverse Conservancy's *Conservation Easement Landowner Newsletter* was written to provide you with a variety of important topics related to conservation easement stewardship and land matters. Inside, you will find stewardship and land program information of concern to every conservation easement landowner. If you'd like more information on any of these topics, or other related topics, please contact Melissa Hansen or Cindy Mom at the Conservancy office:

(231) 347-0991
3264 Powell Rd.,
Harbor Springs, MI 49740
or email:
melissa@landtrust.org
cindy@landtrust.org

Camp Wildwood Conservation Easement, Long Island



courtesy Bill Kurtz

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What motivated you to protect your portion of Long Island with a conservation easement?

Conservation of the Les Cheneaux Islands has long been a concern of my family. I feel we owe it to the foresight of those who brought us to Long Island, to ourselves, and to those who shall come after. "The generations cometh and goeth, but the land abideth."

Would you add some thoughts about your concerns for the future of the region?

Our concern is that over-zealous, impulsive development of the area will begin an irreversible cycle which will ultimately destroy its natural beauty. Land use, township planning, assessment, taxation are all issues that need to be dealt with by all elements of the community - local citizens, summer citizens, township officials, land conservation groups such as Little Traverse Conservancy, county officials, and so forth - working in unity, not disparity.

Any words of advice for others who might be considering an easement?

No matter how large or how small your parcel of land, learn about the issues, support those who are working to preserve your environment, support the Conservancy, explore an easement, be an advocate for preserving the beauty of the land, remembering that preserving the beauty is preserving the value as well.

Both Long Island and Birch Island are protected with conservation easements (right). Below, the original cookpot used by Bill Kurtz's grandmother is still used and kept at its historic location in the camp.



courtesy Bill Kurtz

Planning to sell your conservation easement protected property?

Please be sure to notify the Conservancy if your property changes ownership. The best line of defense against easement violations is early contact with new landowners. This allows us to promote understanding of the easement terms and gives us an opportunity to inform them of the monitoring process and stewardship procedures, ultimately helping us maintain the land's long-term protection.

RECENTLY PROTECTED



Todd Parker



From top to bottom:
120-acre Gamble Conservation Easement, Emmet Co.;
250-acre Seidel Conservation Easement, Charlevoix Co.;
240-acre Betsy River Conservation Easement.

Meet Your Stewardship Staff



Stewardship Coordinator, Melissa Hansen (left) and Stewardship Specialist Cindy Mom.

Cindy Mom, the Conservancy's new Stewardship Specialist, is the most recent addition to the Conservancy staff. A native Michigander, Cindy grew up in southeast Michigan, and also enjoyed many vacations and visits with friends and family in northern Michigan. She studied art, theatre, and environmental studies at Kalamazoo College and Western Michigan University, finally earning a degree in film and video from Columbia College in Chicago.

For the last six years, Cindy worked at Essex County Greenbelt Association, a land trust in northeastern Massachusetts. While she loved living in the seaside towns of Gloucester and Rockport, Cindy always felt homesick for Michigan.

Cindy looks forward to getting to know this part of the state better, and especially having the opportunity to learn about Michigan's native flora and fauna.

Melissa Hansen, the Conservancy's Stewardship Coordinator, has worked for the Conservancy since 1994. Her role involves overseeing the management, maintenance, and monitoring of Conservancy nature preserves and conservation easements. Melissa earned a Bachelor of Science from the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources of Michigan State University.

Monitoring Schedule by County

Landowners will be notified via letter regarding monitoring dates approximately two weeks prior to monitoring visits. All landowners are welcomed and encouraged to accompany stewardship staff during monitoring visits. Weekend visits available by appointment.

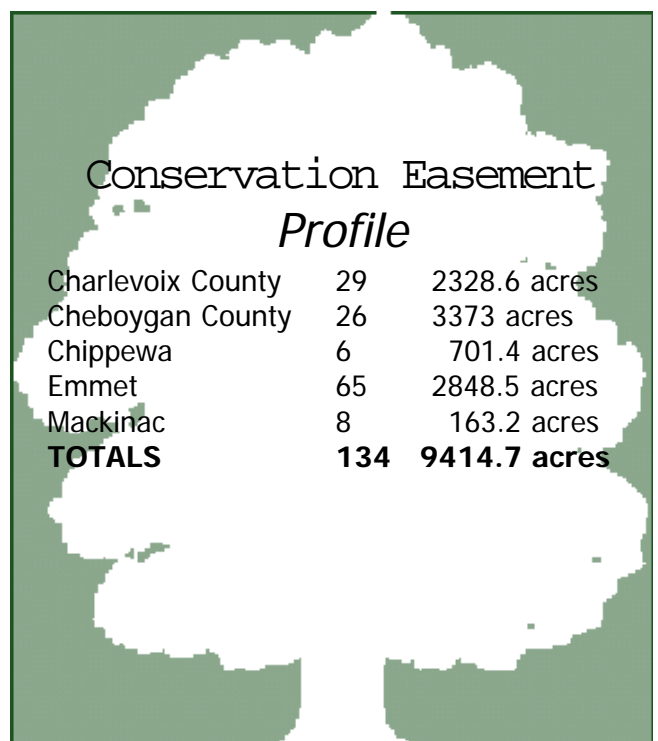
The monitoring schedule is dependent upon timing of snow melt and leaf-out. The schedule may change accordingly.

Ground Monitoring

- **Charlevoix County** April 19 - 30, excluding weekends
May 4 - 28, excluding weekends
- **Cheboygan County** May 4 - 28, excluding weekends
- **Emmet and Chippewa Counties** Fall
- **Mackinac County** Summer, by boat

Air Monitoring

- Fall for Emmet, Mackinac, and Chippewa counties
- Spring for Charlevoix and Cheboygan counties



Backyard Stewardship: Yard and Lawn Care Choices

by Cindy Mom

Follow these guidelines to minimize your impact on surface waters, help maintain a healthy watershed, and manage for wildlife. These choices also make good budget sense, and can lead to an aesthetically pleasing yard, while simultaneously giving you more time to play and less time spent working on your lawn.

1. Know Your Site

Is it sunny or shady? What kinds of soils do you have? Don't try to grow grass where a woodland garden, shrubs, mulch, or groundcover would be more appropriate. For new lawns, creeping red fescue requires much less nitrogen per square foot than bluegrass, so will lessen the need for fertilizer later.

2. Reduce the Size of Your Lawn

By decreasing lawn size, you can save money, spend less time on lawn maintenance, decrease noise and air pollution and petroleum consumption, and increase the biodiversity of your yard.

3. Be Creative

Dare to be different! Preserve or restore natural vegetation with a diverse, low-maintenance mixture of native trees, shrubs, and ground covers. Allow some of your lawn to become a natural meadow with grasses and perennials that will attract butterflies and birds. Expand foundation plantings around buildings to decrease lawn size and add interesting color and texture to your yard. If you have a scenic vista or waterfront view, prune a corridor through the trees for a partially screened view rather than a wide-open one.

4. Maintain Shoreline Buffer Strips

Naturally vegetated buffer strips along the peripheries of lakes, streams and other wetlands are critical to the health and water quality of those water bodies. Buffer strip benefits include runoff filtering, shoreline stabilization, preservation of fish and wildlife habitat, a screen against noise, and enhancement of views. If your yard includes waterfront, consider maintaining natural trees, shrubs, ground covers, and emergent aquatic plants instead of lawn down to the water's edge.

5. Choose Native Plants

Use native trees, shrubs, ground covers, wildflowers and grasses that are already well-adapted to the northern Michigan climate and soils. Birds and wildlife will benefit from the berries and seeds of native plants. The Michigan Native Plant Producers Association (found at www.nohlc.org/MNPPA) has contact information for native plant nurseries in Michigan, as well as a complete list of Michigan native plants and seeds that can be used for landscaping.

6. Test Your Soil

Before applying fertilizer, test your soil to determine which nutrients, if any, are needed. Soil testing is available through your local Michigan State University (MSU) Extension office for under \$10.

7. Fertilize Sparingly

If fertilizer is required, use the smallest amount of fertilizer possible to maintain good grass cover. Do not use a fertilizer containing phosphorus unless a soil test indicates a need for it. Even a small amount of phosphorus added to a lake or stream can stimulate excessive growth of aquatic plants and algae.

8. Avoid Pesticides and Herbicides

Use chemicals in your yard only as a last resort. If you decide that weeds must be treated, follow the directions explicitly, and use the minimum amount of herbicide possible. Use an eyedropper or a small paintbrush to apply liquid herbicides. Avoid pesticide/herbicide and fertilizer mixtures, as they are more likely to end up contaminating the water supply. If your lawn is maintained by a lawn care company, be an informed consumer and don't be afraid to say no.

9. Raise Up the Mower Blade

Proper mowing will produce a healthier lawn, which in turn can withstand more stress, pressure from pests and disease, and require less water and fertilizer. Set your lawn cutting height at 2.5 to 3.5 inches, and make sure your mower blades are sharp. Allow the nutrients from lawn clippings to recycle back into the lawn.

10. Water Wisely (or don't even water at all!)

Remember that the more you water, the more the grass grows, and the more you need to mow. If a hot, dry summer turns your lawn brown, don't worry. Your grass will recover when it rains. If you must water, do so early in the morning to cut down on evaporation. One inch of water in seven days is a good rule of thumb.

In addition to finding more information on the web, contact our Watershed Council:

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426 Bay Street

Petoskey, Michigan 49770

Phone: (231) 347-1181 Fax: (231) 347-5928

email: info@watershedcouncil.org

website: www.watershedcouncil.org