



the washtenaw land trust  
**journal**

A publication of the Washtenaw Land Trust • Volume 3 • Number 2 • Fall, 2004

**land protected**

Conservation easements • 589 acres  
 Nature preserves • 129 acres  
 PDR • 800 acres  
 Land transfers • 122 acres  
 Total acres • 1,640

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Photo by George Waldman



Photo by George Waldman



Photo by Suzanne Brucker Heiney

Volunteers and members of the Community Farm of Ann Arbor tend the fields, feed the animals, and share in the bounty of the land. The Washtenaw Land Trust recently helped complete a project with the owner that will protect this organic farm forever.

**A Community Farm Protected:  
 Washtenaw Land Trust completes farmland project**

**T**hanks to a cooperative effort between a landowner, a group of farmers, and the Washtenaw Land Trust, a Lima Township farm will remain protected forever.

The 10-acre organic farm, which is located along South Fletcher Road, is owned by Isabelle Joy Yingling and has been farmed since the early 1990s by the Community Farm of Ann Arbor, a cooperatively owned Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) farm.

This property was protected through the purchase of development rights (PDR). The conservation

easement placed on the property restricts its future use to agriculture or open space.

Funds for this project are being raised by the members and supporters of both the Community Farm of Ann Arbor and the Washtenaw Land Trust. Both

*See Community Farm Protected, Page 7*

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**OUR MISSION:** Washtenaw Land Trust works to protect farmland, natural areas and open space in and around Washtenaw County, and to educate members, local officials and the public on land use issues.

# Far Country

By Wayne Say  
WLT Interim Executive Director



## Land Trusts Agents of change, For the Long Term

Land trusts are wonderfully unlikely institutions, capable of enabling much good work and outcomes. Beginning in 1891 with the "Trustees of Public Reservations" in Massachusetts, well before the 501(c)3 land trusts of today, trusts have evolved as a way for private land owners to assure that the values of land, so dear to their owners, are protected for the very long term. Rights conveyed to trusts are a pact between generations of owners and between the owner and the land itself. The institution is an enlightened demonstration of a maturing relationship between people and land, indeed, between people and nature. Land trusts reflect the "Land Ethic" championed by the famous Aldo Leopold, author of the moving, quietly provocative "Sand County Almanac."



A land ethic ... reflects the existence of an ecological conscience, and this in turn reflects a conviction of individual responsibility for the health of the land. - Aldo Leopold

I am privileged to be serving the Washtenaw Land Trust, and this column allows me to highlight some of the significant roles the WLT plays. The WLT is:

A **Voice and Conscience**- human dominion brings responsibility.

An **Agent of Smart Change**- finding ways to advocate for nature, local nature, as land uses change.

A **Guardian** of ecosystem functions and products- defining and protecting "Nature's Estate."

A **Counselor/Advisor** to land owners and units of government- we have valuable expertise in securing external resources.

A **Convener** of shared interests- focus and leverage through collaboration.

A **Trustee** for land, and rights in land, for all time.

Thanks to all our members, friends and partners for your support.

Photo courtesy of the Aldo Leopold Foundation, [www.aldoleopold.com](http://www.aldoleopold.com)

# Notes From The Land

## Land preservation on the ballot

Several land preservation proposals are on local ballots for November 2, including:

**Bridgewater Township** voters will decide on a 0.25-mill levy to generate matching funds for the purchase of development rights (PDR) on farmland and open space throughout the township.

Voters in **Scio Township** will decide on a 0.5-mill tax increase that would allow the township to acquire land or interests in land to preserve farmland, open space, wildlife habitat, and scenic views; to protect drinking water sources and the water quality of rivers and streams; and to provide new parks, recreational opportunities, and trails.

In **Meridian Township (Ingham)**, voters will decide on extending a 0.2793-mill levy for pedestrian and bicycle pathways for an additional 30 years and extending a 0.3190-mill parks millage for 13 years.

## Michigan Agricultural Preservation Fund Board adopts final criteria

In September, the State of Michigan Agricultural Preservation Fund Board (APFB) announced that it had adopted final criteria for scoring and awarding grants to local units of gov-

ernment for community farmland preservation efforts. The APFB was established in 2000 under Part 362 of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, Act 451 of 1994 as amended.

## Washtenaw County Comprehensive Plan

The Planning & Environment Department of Washtenaw County has been soliciting feedback for its Comprehensive Plan, recently approved by the Washtenaw Board of Commissioners. The plan is available from [www.ewashtenaw.org](http://www.ewashtenaw.org); select the Quicklink for Planning, and then scroll down.

In addition to providing a clear vision and action plan for the future, the plan is important to local land preservation efforts because one requirement for application to the State of Michigan's Agricultural Preservation Fund (see above) is that the applying entity must have a recently-updated comprehensive plan that includes an agricultural preservation component.

## Northfield farmland rezoning overturned

On May 18, residents of Northfield Township voted 2 to 1 for "No rezoning" of a key parcel of farmland in their township. Rezoning opponents are celebrating this success in their ongoing battle to protect the open spaces and rural character of their community.

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Photo by Suzanne Brucker Heiney

**Shared smiles after protecting the McKeachie parcel: from left to right, Larry Zahn of the Glen Devon Condo Association, land donor Virginia McKeachie, WLT President Theresa Schenk, and land donor Bill McKeachie.**

## Land donors help establish neighborhood park

**E**arlier this year, Virginia and Bill McKeachie approached the Washtenaw Land Trust to see what options were available for protecting a small woodland area that they owned in Webster Township. The McKeachies were interested in protecting their two-acre green space by donating it to the land trust.

Typically, the Washtenaw Land Trust manages donated lands as public nature preserves. Since the relatively small size of this property made it inappropriate for a WLT-managed public nature preserve, the land trust worked with the McKeachies to explore other options.

The solution was found by partnering with the neighborhood association adjacent to the parcel. The Glen Devon Condo Association agreed to purchase the woodland parcel from the Washtenaw Land Trust after a deed restriction was placed on the land to prevent its future development.

The end result is a win for everyone: The Glen Devon neighborhood gets a new woodland park, and the McKeachies may qualify for tax benefits and are glad to have protected their land.



### Thank you...

to Whole Foods Market for selecting the Washtenaw Land Trust for its "Canister Days" program this summer. All proceeds will go to the South Fletcher Road organic farmland project (see cover story, page 1.)

*"Whole Foods Market is delighted to support Washtenaw Land Trust," said Susan Bellinson, Marketing Director at Ann Arbor Whole Foods Market. "Part of Whole Foods Market's core mission is to support locally grown and organic foods. Our values are compatible with Washtenaw Land Trust's."*

## Across the Board

By Suzanne L. DeVine  
WLT Board Member



**I**n our attic, we have maps of a plan for the West Bloomfield region of Oakland County. The plan was developed by my great-grandfather and grandfather. If they had succeeded in implementing their plan, at least part of Oakland County would look very different than it does today. No oversized houses on tiny lots; no strip malls backing up to lakes. But the Depression made it impossible to hold onto large tracts of land. And so, much of it was sold and developed into what we see today.

Many years later, my grandfather donated a beautiful wooded tract to a school. The land was not subject to any conservation easement – he'd never heard of such a thing. He just made an outright gift with a letter stating his intent to have the land preserved in perpetuity as a nature area. After my grandfather died, the school board voted to sell the land to a developer. Fortunately, there was a public outcry, and local residents ultimately succeeded in a campaign to buy the land from the school for use as a park.

Whenever I think that I have enough to do with triplet toddlers, a high school swimmer, and a law practice, I am recharged by the thought of my grandfather's attempt to preserve a bit of the vision that he and his father had for the West Bloomfield area. If only he had had the information and resources that are available to landowners in our region today. The Washtenaw Land Trust, together with local, state, and federal public programs such as the Washtenaw County Natural Areas program, the Ann Arbor Greenbelt, and Ann Arbor Township Open Space Programs, offer options that make continued farming viable and preservation of open spaces economically attractive. The work of Washtenaw Land Trust is critical to the way our region will look in the future. It is exciting to be involved in this work.

# Family Lands Protected: The Beckwith Conservancy

Story by Suzanne Brucker Heiney

**F**ran & Campbell Laird donated the nature preserve known as the Beckwith Conservancy, after Fran's family name, to the Washtenaw Land Trust in 1999. Fran & Campbell, who had moved to Pennsylvania, plan to return to Michigan next year. Suzie spoke by phone with Fran from her home in Radnor, Pennsylvania.

**SH:** *What do you see when I say the words "Beckwith Conservancy?"*

**FL:** First, I see 30 acres of land that is preserved, that cannot be built on or developed. I see lots of possibilities for use by the people of Stockbridge, and by the people of the Washtenaw Land Trust and anyone who is interested in nature. I see a place for people to walk and find quiet and spiritual renewal.

**SH:** *What do you see for the future?*

**FL:** In the future, I'd love to have a project to restore the open field to the meadow it used to be, to do a prairie restoration in the clearing. My husband is working on the project of trying to rebuild the bridge. I think the Land Trust has done a great job already in marking trails, putting up the benches, and giving the preserve, especially in the last year, a lot of attention.

Another thing I'd like to add is a sign near the entrance that this was given in memory of my parents and my sister. My mother and father were very important to the Village of Stockbridge, and this was given to recognize all the gifts that they had given to the community.

**"If you have a piece of property that has a special meaning and special natural features that you would hate to see disappear, it is possible to protect it"**

**SH:** *You chose to donate this land as a public nature preserve. What factors went into this decision?*

**FL:** My parents had always been very open about letting people wander through the woods. I just felt that I should keep that spirit of openness and accessibility - and of "welcomeness" - that my parents always had.

**SH:** *What did you find challenging about the project?*

**FL:** It was a long process within the family, but we're glad that we did it because caring



Photo by Suzanne Brucker Heiney

**Volunteers paint trail markers at a stewardship workday at the Washtenaw Land Trust's Beckwith Conservancy in Stockbridge. This public nature preserve was donated to WLT by Fran and Campbell Laird in 1999.**

for the land and preserving it for the future is a big project, and we didn't want our children to have to deal with that in the future. We feel confident that we made the right decision.

**SH:** *What suggestions do you have for improving the process of donating land or development rights on land?*

**FL:** First you make it known that this is possible, and make a simple outline of the steps that you take. I think if more people knew... it's a matter of knowing it's a possibility, that if you have a piece of property that has special meaning and special natural features that you would hate to see disappear, that it is possible to protect it.

**SH:** *When Lora Beckwith came back to visit the preserve, she mentioned that when she was young she was always being reminded not to step on the trees. And when you look at the trees now - they're huge!*

**FL:** (Laughing) That must have been the fifties when those trees were planted, all these little tiny 6-inch trees, planted by the FFA, the Future Farmers of America, from Stockbridge High School.

**SH:** *Development pressure seems to be increasing in our region. What changes do you notice the most?*

**FL:** Well, driving down the old country roads, which used to have just farmland, it's now just like suburbia. So I notice that very strikingly. When I lived in Stockbridge as a child, it was a rural com-

munity. Now, the distinction between city and village and country is being erased.

**SH:** *What would you tell other landowners who were considering protecting their land?*

**FL:** I would encourage them to think seriously about it. If you value open spaces and open land, you must protect it now, not wait.



Photo by Suzanne Brucker Heiney

**Portage Creek curves through the Beckwith Conservancy. The Lairds donated this property to the Washtenaw Land Trust to honor the memory of Fran's parents and her sister.**

# Land Trust Transitions

Story by Theresa Schenk, WLT President

As the pace and scale of land use change quicken, the work of the Washtenaw Land Trust grows more important. We are committed to addressing the challenges and to making a difference in land protection for the long-term. It means ramping up our activity to get ahead of the accelerating pace of change affecting our natural lands and our farm lands. It means building the capacity to think big. Thus we are making changes in staff leadership, in approach, and in new alliances.

First, staff: Our former director, Bill Hanson, has departed and we wish him well. It is our good fortune to have persuaded Wayne Say to join us as interim executive director. Wayne brings 35 years of experience as a leader of a variety of environmental initiatives, in the private sector, with non-profits, and with the University of Michigan School of Natural Resources and Environment. His breadth of experience and commitment to land pro-

tection will help us navigate the transitions we need to accomplish. The other talented and motivated people on our staff will continue to make a difference in conservation work—development director Janaé Reneaud and administrative director Suzie Heiney.

Next, as a leader, our approach needs to be even more outgoing and engaged. As a land trust, we have distinct qualities. We are positive and proactive, and we are private (and therefore nimble) and personal (we deal only with those interested in preserving land). We are beginning to understand how our activities can be more energetic, creative and effective. To that end, we will be contacting you about our first-ever capital campaign. It aims to raise funds that will leverage a federal grant for farmland development rights.

Last, we are exploring new alliances. It is not enough to react to land/easement offers. While we will always be responsive to potential land donors, to make a difference, we will explore partnerships and col-

laboration wherever it makes sense and results in land conservation gains.

Thank you for your interest and support of land conservation. We welcome your questions or suggestions.

## Jackson-area land preservation

The Washtenaw Land Trust was one of several speakers at *Preserving Your Rural Land*, an informational workshop held this past spring.

Landowners in the Jackson County region had the opportunity to learn about land preservation options from a wide variety of experts, including land trusts, real estate attorneys, appraisers, tax assessors, and representatives from federal and state programs.

This event was sponsored by the Henrietta Conservancy Conservation & Recreation Conservancy and by People and Land (PAL).

## WLT hosts presentation on Washtenaw County land program

Washtenaw Land Trust was pleased to host Tom Freeman, Superintendent of Park Planning for Washtenaw County, as a special guest speaker at the “Friends of Washtenaw Land Trust Summer Reception” this past June.

The event, held at Matthaei Botanical Gardens, was sponsored through the generosity of Toyota Technical Center, USA, Inc.

Over 50 land trust members and friends attended this informative presentation and learned about the county’s land preservation program, known as the Natural Areas Preservation Program (NAPP). This program, approved by Washtenaw County voters in 2000, is in its 3rd year and has acquired over 750 acres to date.

The program’s goal is to identify and acquire parcels of land which, through long-term preservation, will contribute to the preservation of the natural, ecological diversity and heritage of Washtenaw County and complement the existing net-

work of publicly and privately protected lands. As appropriate, the county collaborates with local, state and federal government agencies and with non-government organizations such as the Washtenaw Land Trust.

The lands acquired by Washtenaw County under NAPP are open to the public for passive recreation uses such as hiking, bird-watching and nature study.

Photo by Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation



Give Online  
[www.washtenawlandtrust.org](http://www.washtenawlandtrust.org)

If you would like more information on Washtenaw County’s Natural Areas Preservation Program (NAPP), please contact Tom Freeman at 734-971-6337, extension 323.



## Board Bio

**Karl R. Frankena**

**Profession:** Principal in the Ann Arbor law firm of Conlin, McKenney & Philbrick, PC, specializing in real estate law.

**Education:** 1964 graduate of University of Michigan Law School.

**Home:** Resident of Superior Township with his wife, Gloria, and her two dogs.

**WLT Board Member Since:** 1978

**On WLT Board Because:** "I had been active in local conservation matters & had been one of the founding members of the local chapter of the Sierra Club. When my tenure ended as a member of the Board of Directors of the Sierra Club, I was open to the invitation to join the Board of what was then the Washtenaw Land Conservancy."

Karl was a director and treasurer of the Washtenaw Land Conservancy for more than 20 years before it merged with the Potawatomi Land Trust and later became the Washtenaw Land Trust.

## A Summer Picnic with the Land Trust

Land trust members and supporters gathered on a lovely weekend in July for the Washtenaw Land Trust Summer Picnic, held at North Lyndon Park. Attendees enjoyed a family-friendly potluck and learned about current land trust projects.

One highlight of the afternoon was a fascinating guided hike led by Mike Kost, Ecologist and Associate Program Leader with Michigan State University Extension.



The hike followed along some of the North Lyndon Park's woodland and wetland trails. Hikers learned about native Michigan plants, the threat that invasive species can pose to native plants, and the importance of land stewardship.



Among the attendees at this year's picnic were Pam Byrnes, candidate for State Representative, 52nd District, and Congressman John Dingell, 15th District, seen here talking with Mike Kost.



## Upcoming Events

### November 19

The Washtenaw Land Trust is planning a **Michigan PDR Workshop** on the new application process and guidelines for the Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) through the State of Michigan's Agricultural Preservation Fund. The speaker will be **Rich Harlow**, Program Manager

with the Michigan Department of Agriculture's Farmland Preservation Office. The workshop will occur **November 19, 1-3 p.m.**, and is targeted to local government officials, planning commissioners, landowners, and other interested parties.

groups will continue to work together to raise the remainder of the funds for the project (approximately \$14,000.)

"We're pleased that we have been able to work with Isabelle to protect her property," said Theresa Schenk, Washtenaw Land Trust President. "We commend Isabelle and the Community Farm for their dedication and vision."

Isabelle said that she had always wanted to be a steward of the land, ever since moving to the property in 1989. "I wasn't making a sacrifice," she explained. "I was just following through on what I had wanted to do for years."

For the Community Farm, this project means more than just development rights changing hands around them on the land that they cultivate. The farm managers, Paul Bantle & Anne Elder, have long been awaiting the day when they would have a plot of soil that would be theirs to cultivate for the long term. Because of a long-term lease signed between Isabelle and the Community Farm, Paul & Anne can be assured that the soil they are currently cultivating and improving will remain fertile ground for their fresh, organic produce for a very long time.



Photo by George Waldman

**Preparing for spring planting: the Conservation Easement on this farmland restricts its future use to agriculture or open space.**

The Washtenaw Land Trust is grateful to each of the many individuals who have contributed to this project. Thanks to you, we have raised more than \$37,000 for this project and have only around \$14,000 left to raise. Each day we are closer to our final target. Thank you!



**Are you interested in being a conservation buyer?**

32 secluded acres in Webster Township at 8622 Zeeb Road, surrounded by many additional acres of conservation area. The home is a restored early American Colonial with 3 bedrooms, 2.5 baths, and pine plank flooring throughout. Asking price: \$649,900.



A portion of this property is protected with a conservation easement held by the

Washtenaw Land Trust. Future subdivision and development of this portion is prohibited. Adjacent parcels are also protected by conservation easements.

For more information about this beautiful protected property, contact Rob Ewing, real estate agent with



Edward Surovell Realtors and strong supporter of the Washtenaw Land Trust: 734-216-5955 or 734-741-5543.



# Will Power

Bequests are a critical source of support for the Washtenaw Land Trust. Please remember the trust in your estate. Call us and we'll help make it happen.



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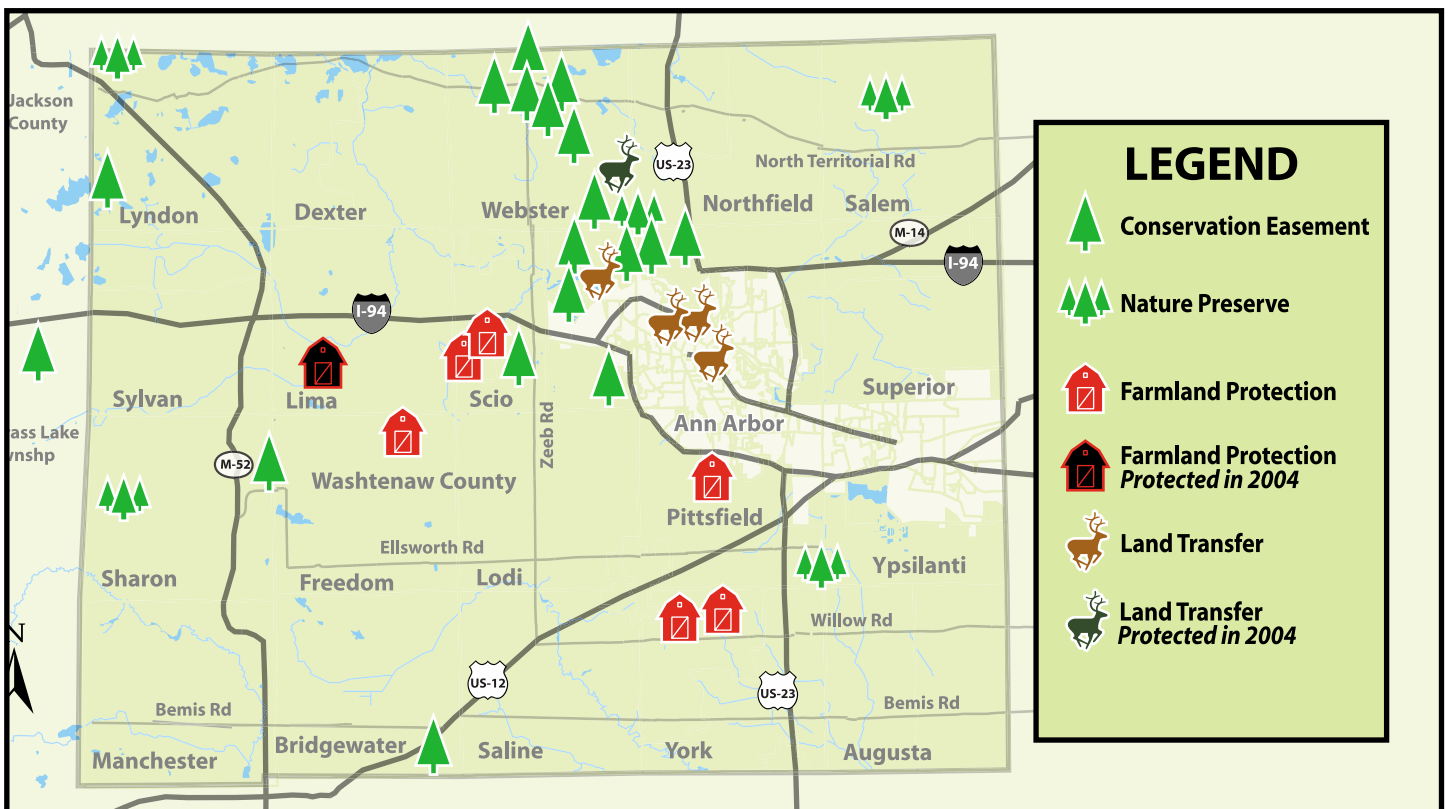
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# WLT Preservation Map



Map created by Mark Wimsatt and Nancy C. Parachini