



# the washtenaw land trust journal

A publication of the Washtenaw Land Trust • Volume 4 • Number 2 • Summer, 2005

## land protected

Conservation agreements • 1446 acres  
Nature preserves • 139 acres  
Land transfers • 122 acres  
Total acres • 1,708

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Photo by George Waldman

**W**ashtenaw area farms reaped a bountiful harvest in this year's round of funding under the federal Farm & Ranchland Protection Program (FRPP), which provides matching funds to protect working farms throughout the country. From a program budget of \$110 million nationwide, \$3 million was allocated to Michigan. The Washtenaw area received approximately 93% of the Michigan allotment.

### Local successes

In addition to the Washtenaw Land Trust, other local awardees included the Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy, the City of Ann Arbor's Greenbelt Program, and Ann Arbor Township.

The 2005 award represents the Land Trust's third matching grant under the program. The Land Trust was awarded a grant in 2002 to protect the Carolyn Strieter farm in Freedom Township on Parker Road. Then, in 2003, the Land Trust received a second grant to protect the Jim & Charlotte Vershum family dairy farm in Bridgewater Township outside Manchester. The Land Trust's new \$215,000 challenge grant will protect a 43-acre parcel in York Township near Saline, part of the farm owned by Mr. Kendall Rogers. A land preservation agreement will protect the land from being developed, while allowing Kendall to continue farming as he always has.

### Protecting farms, protecting nature

The federal Farm & Ranchland Protection Program is one of the many tools available to the Land Trust to protect the working farms and natural areas of our community. The benefits of protecting working farms go well beyond expansive views and rolling vistas, though those are nice, too. Farmland can protect the natural features of land in ways that strip malls, turf grass lawns, and parking lots cannot.

Local farms, with their open fields and adjoining fencerows, can provide corridors for plants and animals, giving birds, mammals, amphibians, and

## Regional Land Preservation Sweep

Local farms account for 93% of statewide federal allotment

other critters the food, water, shelter, and space they need. Farmlands can protect clean water by filtering pollutants from runoff, and by providing pervious surfaces that recharge the water table and reduce the risk of flooding. The meadows, pastures, and hay fields protect clean air by absorbing carbon dioxide and reducing greenhouse gases.

### Next steps

Right now, the Land Trust is busily raising the money to meet its portion of the 3-to-1 matching grant for the Vershum project, awarded in 2003. We plan to complete this project this year. Fundraising for the newly-awarded Rogers project will begin soon. To meet the new challenge, the Land Trust will raise and contribute about 25% (\$152,000) of the total project's worth, and Kendall has generously agreed to donate a portion of the value.

Longer term, the Land Trust is partnering with Washtenaw County, local nonprofits, and other entities on strategic planning for land preservation, so that we can all make our time and money go further to sustain the character that makes our community special.

## The Land Trust's Federal Grant Awards

**2002:** Protects 74 acres in Freedom Township (Carolyn Strieter's farm.) This project was completed in 2003.

**2003:** Protects 69 acres in Bridgewater Township (Jim & Charlotte Vershum's dairy farm.) The Land Trust is raising its portion of the 3-to-1 match for this project, scheduled to be completed this year.

**2005:** Protects 43 acres in York Township (Kendall Rogers' farm.) Fundraising for this project will begin soon.

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**OUR MISSION:** Washtenaw Land Trust protects farmland and natural areas in and around Washtenaw County.

# Far Country

By Susan Lackey  
WLT Executive Director



Michigan residents are split about evenly into two camps (and no, I'm not taking about '—ganders' vs. '—ganians'.) There are those who think four seasons provide the perfect way to enjoy the beauty of our state, and those who think we have a little too much weather, and wish they lived elsewhere. I'm guessing I'm talking mostly to the first group.

Nature has blessed this state with outdoor opportunities that vary from the marshes of Monroe to the mountains of the UP. As we enjoy them this summer, let's not forget the beauty around us right here at home: rivers – the Huron, Raisin, Saline; lakes – suitable for swimming and fishing and just doing nothing; forests – the largest in the Lower Peninsula; working farms – knitting together the small communities that still make up much of our county.

These beautiful places are as much at risk as the wild areas of the North Country. And they are accessible to us every day, not only when we're able to sneak away for a week or a weekend. The Washtenaw Land Trust and other voluntary groups are key players in the efforts to keep these areas available for us to enjoy right here at home.

Throughout the summer months, we'll continue our efforts to preserve these special places...while taking some time to enjoy the weather as well.

One of the things we'll be enjoying this summer is the opportunity to shop our local farmers markets. On page 7 of this newsletter, you'll find a list of those here in the area. Locally grown produce, ripened in the field, reflects the tastes of the soil and the growing season, and is a treat that can't be duplicated by even the best grocery store. Added to this is the pleasure of talking to your neighbors, and actually getting to know the family who has made that little taste of heaven possible. (Fresh tomatoes!)

Finish this newsletter over your morning coffee. Put it down. Now – go out and enjoy everything our community has to offer in the out-of-doors.

# Notes From The Land

## Land preservation on the ballot

Land preservation will be on the ballot in **Webster Township** on August 2, with a 0.5-mill proposal to protect natural areas and farmland.

For more information, visit: [www.websterneighbors.org](http://www.websterneighbors.org).

## State Ag Fund, local cooperation

Local communities are working to be eligible for the **State Agricultural Preservation Fund** this fall. The Land Trust is collaborating with county and local governments to coordinate applications and organize informational sessions for interested landowners.

Washtenaw communities expected to be eligible include Pittsfield, Scio, and Ann Arbor Townships, and may also include York, Webster, Dexter, Freedom, Superior, and Northfield Townships. Contact the Land Trust at 734.302.LAND (5263) for information.

## Dexter's historic Gordon Hall offered for sale

The University of Michigan has announced that they will be selling Gordon Hall and the surrounding property. In the early 1840s Judge Samuel Dexter, founder of Dexter village, built the house now listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Named for Judge Dexter's mother, Catherine Gordon Dexter, the Hall was given to U-M in the 1950s and has been vacant since 2001. The Dexter Area Historical Society and the

County Historic District Commission are convening stakeholder meetings to determine if and how this historic Hall can remain a public resource.

## Suzie Heiney promoted to Operations Manager

The Land Trust is pleased to announce that Suzie Heiney has been named Operations Manager. In this new position, Suzie will be responsible for overall office and financial management and will act as a liaison to the Board of Trustees.

Suzie joined the Land Trust in April 2003 after working as an information technology manager with Accenture. She has a bachelor's degree in business from Kalamazoo College, where she graduated magna cum laude. Suzie lives in the historic district of downtown Ypsilanti with her husband, Bob Heiney.

## Water Quality plans for Grand River Watershed

The Upper Grand River Watershed Council has received funding from the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) to improve water quality and reduce pollution in the watershed through voluntary landowner education and compliance. The Council is working with townships within the watershed to establish plans and programs. The Upper Grand River watershed includes most of Jackson County and parts of Washtenaw, Hillsdale, Eaton, Calhoun, and Ingham Counties.

# the washtenaw land trust journal

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# Estate & Tax Planning Workshop Planned for Sept. 22

In this day and age, if you're a landowner who wishes to simply preserve your family lands or leave your land to your children, you are faced with navigating complicated inheritance and tax law.

By understanding land protection options and strategies, landowners can plan ahead and avoid undesirable situations like one that might force heirs to sell the family land to pay off estate tax bills.

Steve Small, the nation's leading authority on private land protection options and strategies, will be in southeast Michigan on September 22 for a workshop targeted to professional advisors. The workshop will teach

lawyers, accountants, estate planners, financial planners, and other interested parties the details behind estate and tax planning as it relates to real estate property.

"You can't just do nothing," writes Steve Small in his book series, *Preserving Family Lands*. "If you care about your land, you must do something. If you don't plan, the land will be gone."

Family lands can be protected, and they can be passed on to the next generation. You (or your advisors) can learn how at "Estate & Tax Planning: Land Protection Strategies" - details below.

## Across the Board



By Charity Steere  
WLT Board Member

No matter how far my family moved we always came back to the Waterloo region and the Waterloo Recreation Area. And for the past thirty-five years, I've been privileged to live right in the heart of this 20,000 + acre treasure.

The largest holding in the Michigan State Park system, only 30 minutes from Ann Arbor, Waterloo offers campgrounds, sixteen accessible lakes, beaches, amazing geology (the glaciers stopped here!), hiking trails, equestrian trails and more.

This green area is truly a treasure, and a bit of a hidden treasure. Many Washtenaw County residents have not explored this lovely resource. I urge you to do so. It's a treat.

But as you explore the back roads and trails, be aware that this resource, southeast Michigan's last, best chance for a truly expansive wild area, exists in a changing environment. Much of the land within the park boundaries is still privately owned and as a result, is subject to the same development pressures as any other open space. If all these private in-holdings were developed, the character of the recreation area would change dramatically.

Fortunately, there are already many preservation-oriented landowners in the Waterloo area. Washtenaw Land Trust, over the past two years, has begun to work with them to help them keep their land as it is today, forever, open and green. I'm lucky enough to get to help in that effort.

There are exciting things beginning to happen for preservation out here. We'll keep you posted on progress, but in the meantime, come out and enjoy what you're helping to save.



Photo By Suzanne Brucker Heinley

*Hepatica flowers in bloom at Waterloo Recreation Area, southeast Michigan's last, best chance for a truly expansive wild area.*

### Save the Date!

## Estate & Tax Planning: Land Protection Strategies

with

### Steve Small

The nation's leading authority  
on private land protection options and strategies

**September 22, 2005, 8:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.**  
Ann Arbor, Michigan  
Workshop targeted to professional advisors  
(lawyers, accountants, estate planners,  
financial planners, etc.)

- Learn firsthand how land protection agreements can impact estate planning and tax planning
- Earn continuing education credit (where applicable)
- Receive an update on the possible changes to conservation tax code
- And much more....

Workshop fee will be \$75.00 and includes the 3 books in Steve Small's "Preserving Family Lands" series, a \$56.00 retail value.

➔ To add your name or your advisors' names to the list to receive registration information, contact us at 734.302.LAND (5263).

*This workshop is made possible through the support of:*



# Protecting Our Land, Preserving Our Legacy

## Together, we did it!

The Land Trust is delighted to report that we have met our fundraising goal to protect the Ann Arbor Community Farm property in Lima Township. This long-term project is finally complete.

Thanks to a conservation agreement, a long-term lease, and the generosity of everyone who contributed time and money, the farm will be able to provide delicious food for many future generations.

The land, located along Fletcher Road south of Chelsea, is owned by Isabelle Joy Yingling and has been farmed since the early 1990s by the Ann Arbor Community Farm, a cooperatively owned farm. Isabelle, the Community Farm, and the Land Trust completed an agreement in 2004 to protect the 10-acre farm, and together the money has now been raised to fulfill that agreement.

Since Isabelle first moved to the land in 1989, she had always felt that the only way to justify living on the land was if she were using it and being a good steward.

"But it was too much for me to farm the land (myself)," explained Isabelle. "So way back twelve years ago, I called the Community Farm to see if they knew of any other groups like theirs that might be interested in a place. And they had just been notified that they had to leave the land that they were working at the time, so they said, 'We're looking for a place!'"

Isabelle recalls people from the farm coming up to her to say, "Thank you so much." She would always respond, "No, thank you - you have given me the reason to stay on this land."

The Community Farm is a member-owned farm that grows fruits and vegetables for their members, who buy shares of the season's harvest. The farm uses organic and bio-dynamic methods to restore and maintain balance in the soil. Two full-time farmers and several apprentices do the primary farm work, growing the crops and raising the farm's cows, goats, chickens, and bees.

"It is up to us to decide what land will be available for our children's children to grow their food upon," said Anne Elder, one of the farmers.

The farm was one of the stops on the Washtenaw Land Trust's Farmland Preservation Tour on Saturday, May 21 (see story page 6.)



**Protected: Bronwyn Kistler meets a friendly goat on Isabelle Joy Yingling's farm, home to the Ann Arbor Community Farm. This land was protected through an agreement between Isabelle, the Farm, and the Washtenaw Land Trust.**

This project is the culmination of over a decade of perseverance and hard work by everyone involved," said Jim Crowfoot, Land Trust Board member and long-time champion of this project. "It represents a unique partnership; it brings together the

landowner, the farmer, the land trust, and the community."

*The Community Farm has shares available for the 2005 season. Contact farm managers Paul Bantle or Anne Elder at 734-433-0261 for information.*

### About the Yingling/Community Farm Project

- Protects 10 acres of organic, biodynamic farmland in Lima Township, Washtenaw County
- Development rights voluntarily sold to the land trust through a conservation agreement in May 2004
- Fundraising completed in May 2005
- Protects the farm's prime agricultural soils, which consist entirely of "prime farmland" and "farmland of local importance" as classified by the USDA and the Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Protects the natural character along Fletcher Road and the property's natural resources and watershed values

### Policy Spotlight: Protecting Private Conservation

This past January, the Congressional Joint Committee on Taxation proposed drastic cuts in tax benefits for legitimate, voluntary donations of land and land preservation agreements. The Senate held hearings on this issue in June.

Although the importance of conservation donation as a tool for national environmental preservation seems to be widely accepted, it is likely that there will be some impact to conservation policy.

At a minimum, the Land Trust Alliance, the nationwide umbrella organization of land trusts and conservancies, will likely move forward with its proposed land trust accreditation process based on its Standards and Practices.

The Washtenaw Land Trust has reconfirmed its support of these Standards and Practices as the ethical and technical guidelines for the responsible operation of a land trust.

We are continuing to track this issue and to work with our legislators to protect private conservation.

# Where We Work: The Greenbelt and Beyond

When Ann Arbor voters approved the Parks and Greenbelt proposal to protect land both within and outside city limits, it was a great success for the protection of the special natural areas and the working farms of our community.

Although we don't receive funding from the Greenbelt program, we are partnering with it, and it allows the Land Trust to concentrate our efforts outside its 12-mile diameter.

Much of our region's undeveloped land lies beyond the Greenbelt boundaries:

- around the Waterloo Recreation Area in Jackson and Washtenaw Counties, an important block of protected natural land which is significantly fragmented with private in-holdings becoming more and more susceptible to development;

- in the rural areas south and west of Ann Arbor, which are the most likely places for working farms and the supporting agricultural infrastructure to remain viable economically;
- in the wetland areas of Lodi and Scio Townships, which provide water quality protection, groundwater recharge, wildlife habitat, and greenway corridors;
- along river corridors such as the Saline River between Milan and Saline;
- ...and many other areas.

Working together with local and regional governmental entities, organizations, businesses, landowners, and interested citizens, we can all make a lasting difference for the preservation of the many special places throughout the region.

*Originally published in "Making A Difference," an occasional newsletter for the leading supporters of the land trust's efforts.*



Photo by Catherine Marquardt

**Ladyslippers on land protected by a conservation agreement donated by Ann Gosline to Washtenaw Land Trust in 2003.**

## Land Stewardship Update Sharon Hills Nature Preserve



**The Land Trust's Janaé Reneaud takes a break during a stewardship workday.**

Thank you to everyone who gave up a Sunday afternoon in early May to help at a stewardship workday at the Land Trust's Sharon Hills Nature Preserve. Volunteers cleared new trails, cleaned up existing trails, and picked up trash.

This public nature preserve, located in Sharon Township, was donated to the Washtenaw Land Trust in 2000 through the generosity of David & Ellie Shappirio, Sally Allen, and John

Allen & Edith Maynard. The trail system at the 67-acre preserve leads hikers along rolling hills to open fields, oak-hickory forests, and kettle wetlands.

The Land Trust's nature preserves are open to the public, so you are welcome to visit. For directions: [www.washtenawlandtrust.org](http://www.washtenawlandtrust.org).



**Jim Tolen (and Riley) are neighbors of, and frequent volunteers at, Washtenaw Land Trust's Sharon Hills Nature Preserve.**

### You can help!

Keep updated about upcoming workdays: Contact us at 734.302.LAND (5263) or [info@washtenawlandtrust.org](mailto:info@washtenawlandtrust.org) to be added to our volunteer contact list.

## An Endowment for the Future

The Land Trust is pleased to announce that we have established a professionally-managed external fund for our General Endowment.

Endowment funds have grown steadily over the years, and JP Morgan (Banc One) will manage these funds as we enter the next phase of building the endowment.

Securing appropriate financial reserves for the future is an important stewardship duty for the Washtenaw Land Trust. We must monitor and care for our stunning natural areas and working farms for years to come.

Bequests are a critical source of support for the Washtenaw Land Trust as we work to preserve more land. With the General Endowment, your estate planning and endowment contributions can leave a lasting legacy of conservation.



# Board Bio

**Cedric Richner**

**Profession:** Co-founder of Richner & Richner, L.L.C, an Ann Arbor-based fundraising consulting firm.

**Education:** I am a graduate of Hillsdale College.

**Home:** Scio Township. Although we are contributing to sprawl on our one-plus acre lot, we are eradicating the invasive Honeysuckle, Autumn Olive, and Garlic Mustard, and we have cut the size of our lawn in half since we bought the house in 1996. It is my penance for a guilty conscience.

**WLT Board Member Since:** Early 2004

**Outside Activities:** I currently serve on the Director's Council of Nichols Arboretum and Matthaei Botanical Gardens at the University of Michigan. Spending time with my family, hiking in the woods, and building a never-ending rock wall at our home are great passions right now.

**On WLT Board Because:** I am passionate about preservation of all kinds: historic and environmental preservation, and trying to preserve resources by making informed consumer choices. Small groups of people actively pursuing good ideas can and has proved to be the most effective way to ultimately cause change.

The Land Trust has already made great strides in helping individual landowners in voluntarily exercising their property rights for the greater good of our region. The Land Trust's mission is one worth celebrating. It is an organization that has the potential to have an even more profound positive influence on our rapidly changing environment. I am proud to be associated with Washtenaw Land Trust.

## Farm Tour highlights Lima, Freedom Township protected farms

Peter DeLoof and Sara Bassett know that local farm families leave a long-lasting legacy that runs with the land. They have lived at "the old Blumenauer place" for nearly 10 years, but it is no closer now to being referred to locally as "the DeLoof-Bassett place" than it was on the very first day they moved in. They've come to understand that it will be known as "the old Blumenauer place" well into the foreseeable future.



*Investigating the farm equipment at "the old Blumenauer place"*

Their farmland was one of the stops on the Land Trust's Farmland Preservation Tour on Saturday, May 21. Attendees took a bus-ride through western Washtenaw County to visit two local protected farms, and they learned about farmland preservation success stories along the way.

### Peter & Sara's farmland

Peter, who serves on the Land Trust Board of Trustees, and his wife, Sara, moved to their farm in 1996. They conserved a portion of their farmland through a governmental Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program, which compensates landowners for agreeing to conserve their land's agricultural and natural features.



*Farm managers Paul Bantle and Anne Elder lead a tour*

Peter & Sara are restoring the farm's historic outbuildings. The prior owners, the Blumenauer family, purchased the 100-acre farm in about 1915 and grew oats, fruits, and vegetables, and raised cattle, chicken and sheep.

Tour guests met Land Trust board members, staff, and fellow members, learned more about farmland preservation from Peg Kohring of the Conservation Fund, and followed self-guided tours around the farm.

### The Community Farm

The tour's second stop was a farm on Fletcher Road south of Chelsea. The farm is owned by Isabelle Joy Yingling and has been farmed since the early 1990s by the Ann Arbor Community Farm, a cooperatively owned farm. Isabelle, the Community Farm, and the Land Trust completed a conservation agreement in 2004 to protect the farm (see story page 4.)



*Yingling / Community Farm, one of the stops on the Farm Tour*

Tour attendees snacked on homemade pizza and locally-made cheeses before going on tours of the farm with farm managers Paul Bantle and Anne Elder.

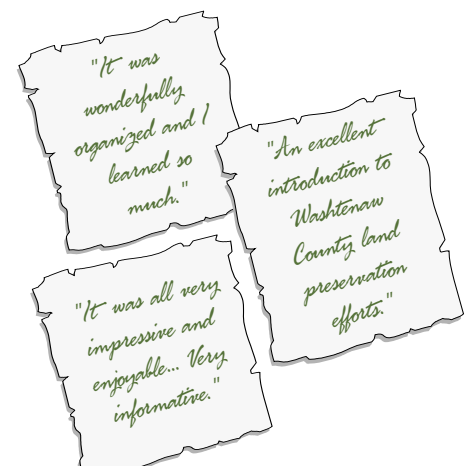
### Protecting land for the long haul

A wide variety of tools are available to preserve farms such as these. The Farmland Tour highlighted a few of them, including conservation agreements and purchase of development rights (PDR) programs.



*A swallow overlooking the kettle lake at Peter DeLoof and Sara Bassett's farm*

For their part, Paul & Anne of the Community Farm and Peter & Sara in Freedom Township will continue to be good stewards of their land, so that the farms will still be around for the next generation.



*"It was wonderfully organized and I learned so much."*

*"An excellent introduction to Washtenaw County land preservation efforts."*

*"It was all very impressive and enjoyable... Very informative."*

# Thinking Globally, Eating Locally

## Farmers' markets offer some of the freshest eats around

According to LocalHarvest, most produce in the U.S. travels 1,500 miles before landing on your dinner plate. Don't let your veggies be more well-traveled than you are. When you buy locally, you're supporting your neighbors, keeping your dollars at work in the local economy, and helping to keep working farms in the business of growing food rather than stripmalls. Here are some places to start.

### Farmers Markets

#### Washtenaw, Jackson, and Ingham Counties

**Ann Arbor** - 315 Detroit St. in Ann Arbor, Wed. & Sat. 7:00 am - 3:00 pm most of the year.

**Chelsea (Downtown)** - Off of Main St. at Park St. in Chelsea, Sat. 8:00 am - noon May-Oct.

**Chelsea (Community)** - At the Chelsea Fairgrounds off of Old US-12 west of Chelsea, Thu. evenings throughout the summer.

**Jackson (Kuhl's Bell Tower Market)** - 117 Louis Glick Highway in Jackson, Tue., Fri. & Sat. 7:00 am - 3:00 pm May-Oct.

**Lansing (City)** - 333. N. Cedar St., Lansing, Tue., Thu., Fri. & Sat., 8:00 am - 6:00 pm all year.

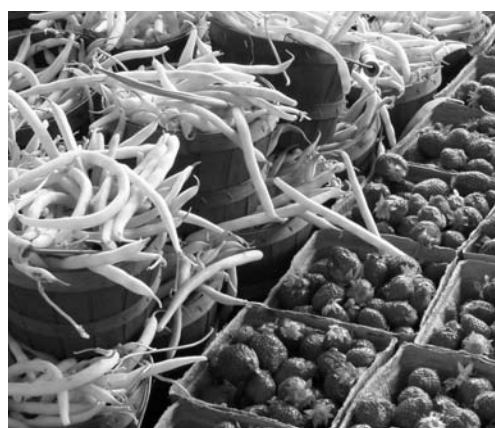
**Lansing (Old Town)** - At Turner & Grand River in Lansing, Sun. 1:00 pm - 4:00 pm throughout the summer.

**Lansing (Allen)** - At the Allen Neighborhood Center, 1619 E. Kalamazoo in Lansing, Wed. 3:30 pm - 6:30 pm Jun-Oct.

**Meridian Township** - In the pavilion behind the township offices at Central Park & Marsh Rd., Sat. 8:00 am - 2:00 pm Jun-Oct., plus Wed. 8:00 am - 5:00 pm Jul-Oct.

**Saline** - On South Ann Arbor St. just south of Michigan Ave. in Saline, 8:00 am - noon May-Oct.

**Ypsilanti** - On the grounds of the historic Freighthouse, 100 Market Plaza in Depot Town, Ypsilanti, 8:00 am - 2:00 pm May-Oct.



Sources: Michigan Department of Agriculture, LocalHarvest

## Volunteer help wanted

Here are some ways you may be able to help:

- Helping at stewardship workdays
- Assisting with clerical/office tasks
- Taking photographs at conservation properties
- Designing graphics/layout for nature preserve signage
- Drawing architectural plans for parking lots at the Land Trust's nature preserves
- Creating ecological management plans or detailed baseline inventories for the nature preserves

Sound like you? Contact us at 734.302.LAND (5263) or [info@washtenawlandtrust.org](mailto:info@washtenawlandtrust.org).

### Washtenaw Land Trust is accepting nominations for the 2005 Preservationist of the Year

The Preservationist of the Year Award is awarded annually to a person or people who have demonstrated their commitment to land preservation. Please submit letters of nomination by August 31, 2005 to Washtenaw Land Trust, 1100 N. Main Street #203, Ann Arbor, MI 48104.

#### Yes! I want to protect our region's natural areas and working farms!

Join the Washtenaw Land Trust, a group of over 1,000 individuals and organizations working together to protect the beautiful natural areas and working farmlands that make our community special.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$30 Individual    | <input type="checkbox"/> \$50 Family              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 Friend       | <input type="checkbox"/> \$250 Champion           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$500 Sustainer    | <input type="checkbox"/> \$1,000 Land Conservator |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$2,500 Benefactor | <input type="checkbox"/> \$5,000 Partner          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$10,000 Founder   |   |

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Please make check payable to Washtenaw Land Trust, or to pay by credit card:

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Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

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# WLT Preservation Map

