



Nature's Observer

...Preserving Our Farmland and Parks...

Farmland in Lapeer County is disappearing at an alarming rate.

Between 1987 and 2002 the County of Lapeer lost almost 40,000 acres of farmland to development - about the size of two townships. In addition, from 1997 to 2002, over 41 farms were lost, covering over 2,200 acres of agricultural land. This trend is not slowing down.

County Parks are in jeopardy.

County park facilities are aging - with no funds available for renovation. Also the funding to operate these parks may be eliminated if the State of Michigan does not restore revenue sharing to county government.

So what's being done?

Passage of a millage in August of 2006 for 0.6 mills for eight (8) years to preserve our farmland and our parks.

The millage is planned to be split between farmland and parks. The current proposal is for 70% to go to the Farmland Purchase of Development Rights Program; 30% to county and local parks.

The county-wide Farmland Purchase of Development Rights Program is completely voluntary. It provides choices, not regulations, for private property owners.

The funds obtained through this millage will be used to leverage potentially millions of dollars in state and federal grants to Lapeer County - money that is currently split between other counties in Michigan - but not us.

For more information please contact Leo Dorr at (810) 664.5647 or email Ken Elwert, Marketing Committee Chair, at

HelpNow@

PreservingOurFarmlandAndParks.org.

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Wild Lapeer

Join environmentalists from around Lapeer County on Saturday, April 29, from 10-4 at the Lapeer Courthouse Square. This event will be a day of family fun though learning, exploring, and experiencing the natural world. This year many of the programs and activities will focus Michigan's natural resources and open spaces. Wild Lapeer will offer several programs and presentations specifically about open space and farmland preservation and how it effects YOU.

- Native Michigan Snake &

Reptile Program (hands on)

- Exploring Farmers Creek & Guided River Adventure (hands on)
- Natural and locally grown luncheon
- Michigan Moths & Butterflies
- What's so great about organic food? (presentation)
- Storyteller LaRon Williams
- Impact of fresh, healthy foods on learning & behavior (movie)

- Great Lakes Geology (hands on)
- Horse drawn carriage rides (\$3/person)
- Wild & Rural Photo Show (display)
- Pioneer Farm Tools (hands on)
- Conservation District Tree Sale
- "Preserving Our Parks & Open Spaces" Proposal presentation & discussion 10:30 & 2:30

No Farmers = No Food! By Robert E. Nelson, Jr.

As you travel the countryside,
The fields are planted far and wide,

To orchards, vineyards,
beans, wheat, corn and rye,

Which assures our future food supply.

Farmers toil to dusk from dawn,

With machines and strong back brawn.

Their risk are many and rewards to few,

But still they grow the food for you.

They use the highways and roads,

To move machinery and produce loads.

Share the roadway with farmers and not be rude,



Because he is out there struggling to produce you food.

Salute that farmer for his endeavor,

Not cussing him with your mouth full ever.

Food is plentiful on the grocers shelf,

It does not get there by itself.

Farmers risk their neck, their money and their muscle,

So growing, processing, and storing food you needn't hustle.

There's planning, planting and harvesting too,

Before food is ready for you.

So praise that farmer regardless of your mood,

Because you must remember:
NO FARMERS, NO FOOD!

Letter from the President

Two landowners have taken advantage of the Great Lakes Bioregional Land Conservancy's land protection program in the past few months.

Carl Riseman has donated the deed to a ten acre parcel of property in Dryden Township to the Conservancy. Leo and Genevieve Dorr have donated the development rights on 50 acres of farmland they own in Lapeer Township.

The Riseman parcel is mainly wetlands adjacent to the Polly Ann Trail, just around the corner from General Squier Park in the headwaters of the Belle River. We have begun preliminary discussions with the Friends of the Polly Ann Trail in the hope of providing a wildlife observation area for folks utilizing the trail. The Friends have done an outstanding job in creating the Polly Ann trail from the Oakland County line to Imlay

City.

The Dorr parcel is a part of the original historic Apache Ranch southeast of Lapeer. This donation assures that at least a part of this farm will



remain available for agriculture production in the future.

Every month we are getting more inquiries into the donation of farmland development rights to preserve family farms. New federal tax laws make these donations more attractive to landowners and allow for the opportunity of passing on the family business to the next generation.

If you would like to see the Riseman parcel developed for

wildlife observation, the Board is looking for a few members to serve on a planning committee. Members will serve with volunteers from the Polly Ann Trail to plan the use of the property and oversee the installation of any structures which might be built. This is an exciting opportunity for the Conservancy to work in partnership with a well established group in developing a community use for our property. Members interested in serving on this committee or working on the project should contact me at (810) 793-0282.

Sincerely

Joe

Joseph Stock
President

Sutherland Happenings

Searching for Woodcocks

April 8 7:30 pm

Lead by Linda Hoogterp

Hadley Historical Society Monthly Meeting

May 4 7:00 pm

Geocaching talk to follow meeting

Mother's Day Nature Walk

May 14 3:00 pm

Lead by Linda Hoogterp

Bird walking

May 20 8:00 am

Lead by Fred Townsend

Bike the Trails

June 4

Lead by Neil Riche

Bring your own bike!

"There is no disgrace or shame in losing in a fair, clean and honest contest, BUT there is neither honor nor glory in winning an underhanded, manipulated or dishonest contest."

**GREAT LAKES
BIOREGIONAL LAND
CONSERVANCY**

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Sutherland Nature Sanctuary
810-797-4643

Conserving nature for the future!

TO:

We're on the Web!
www.gblbc.lapeer.org

Membership Form - Please Join Us!

If you have not already renewed your membership for 2006 it's never to late! (memberships are good January to December)

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

(for electronic version of our newsletter and other important updates!)

_____ Family (\$25)

_____ Individual/Student/reduced membership (\$20)

Mail a check along with this form to: GLBLC, PO BOX 303, Lapeer MI 48446. Checks can be made payable to: Great Lakes Bioregional Land Conservancy. Please contact Amy Elwert for more details at amy@elwert.org or 810-245-6653

