



Ortonville Park is a Village Treasure

Ancient cedar trees will be protected with a conservation easement in Ortonville

Where do you find a grove of massive cedar trees, a tamarack swamp, tributaries to Kearsley Creek and a marsh with a pond sporting wood ducks all in the same 47 acres? In the middle of the Village of Ortonville is your answer.

This area was donated to the village in the early 1980s by a nearby subdivision with the idea that it would remain natural and not be turned into an amusement park. Given the terrain and wet conditions, there was little chance of that, but there was controversy when the Iron Belle Trail proposed to utilize the old Detroit Urban Railway railbed that passes along one edge of the property.

That development concept failed, and a new village council was elected to come up with a better idea. Friends Of Ortonville Trail, along with Ortonville Village Manager Ryan Madis, have proposed protecting the area with a conservation easement to Blue Heron Headwaters Conservancy. Pedestrian trails will provide quiet access, and gullies, spanned with short bridges, will make Ortonville Park a treasure for local residents. BHHC is delighted to assist in this



effort. With co-sponsorship of MDNR funding, the exceptional natural features can be preserved and selectively improved. The ancient cedar grove has no equal in Michigan's southern peninsula, and its tranquility can be guarded forever.

Getting Kids Involved in Conservation



Making muddy seedballs is a great way to introduce kids to conservation. Just ask Melissa Zaluski, BHHC volunteer and leader of the Paint Creek 4H equestrian group. Since 2020, her Lake Orion-based 4H group has volunteered for BHHC making native seedballs to spread on our properties.

In addition to seedball making, the group helps with our campaign to save the endangered Poweshiek butterfly. The kids maintain an award-winning pollinator garden at the Oakland County Fairgrounds in Davisburg, where they hand out our brochures and include butterfly conservation in their signage.

"Our youth is very interested in doing what they can for the endangered butterfly," Melissa explains.

The garden is next to the horse barn and is a great backdrop for photos. Pollinator favorites such as black-eyed Susans are both beautiful and a pollinator food source. The group takes their role in providing butterfly habitat very seriously.

"It's great," Melissa says. "I'm pretty proud of them."



Paint Creek 4H volunteers with native seedballs
Pollinator garden at the Oakland County Fairgrounds

Outstanding volunteer: Jean Gramlich

Thanks to Jean Gramlich, 2022 Tom Bullen Award winner for outstanding volunteer contributions. Jean has served on our board for over a decade. We appreciate her steady guidance and vision.

Jean provides scientific information, helps evaluate potential properties, is Stewardship Committee secretary, heads the Governance Committee, recruits new board members and helps raise funds.

Jean has connections throughout the state. She is active in Master Gardeners, Conservation Stewards, and other environmental organizations.



Emily Duthinh and Jean Gramlich



Your Support has Put us Over the Top!



Poweshiek skipperling & massauga rattlesnake

When we realized that land under our protection could help prevent the extinction of an endangered butterfly, we reached out to you to take action. Donations from The Carls Foundation and the Consumers Energy Foundation started the campaign. Then over 126 individuals chipped in to achieve the goal of \$275,000, helped significantly by match funding from BHC volunteers Greg and Michele Petrosky.

BHC has now purchased three parcels in the Davisburg area that contain the fen ecosystem the Poweshiek skipperling butterfly needs. These actions are just in time. Because so few butterflies were found last summer, the only hope of continuing the species is to raise them in a protected environment and re-introduce them to the appropriate habitat.

We have had many partners in this effort. The US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) started a working group of experts from the Midwest and Canada to study the calamitous decline of a once common prairie species. Geneticists, ecologists, population biologists, zoo experts and managers all pooled their knowledge and met yearly for a decade

to come up with a recipe for the tiny insect's survival. As the number of wild species declined, not enough were left for breeding on the land.

Enter John Ball Zoo which, based on earlier work of the Minnesota Zoo, is finding success with "captive breeding." Your conservancy is stewarding the fens of Davisburg as re-introduction sites. Check out the video made by partner Michigan Nature Association (MNA.org) that shows these wildlife warriors at work.

The donors to this conservancy are heroes in this fight, too. In mid-March of 2023 you put us over the top in the Poweshiek campaign to purchase and steward the land which is itself a declining habitat.

Far into the future, over 30 acres will protect little Poweshieks as well as showy giant St. Johns worts and elusive Wilson's snipes and endangered Massasauga rattlesnakes. You can be proud of your fight against the world-wide struggle to maintain a variety of wild species in a location close to home.

BHC Volunteers & donors Greg & Michele Petrosky



Thank You, Volunteers



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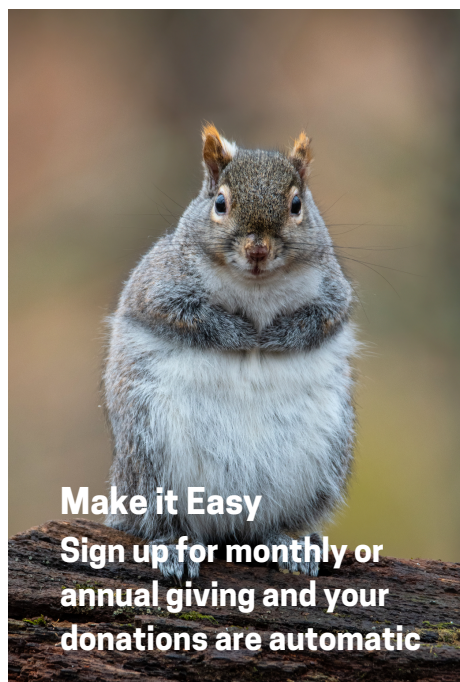
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Come see the Land You Help Protect

You have helped preserve it. Now we are inviting you to see it. We are hosting several property tours from spring to fall. You will be able to sign up on our web site or through our NatureNews email.

May 24 Night Hike in the Prairie at Voorheis-Beardsley in Clarkston

June 10 Kayak Launch Grand Opening in Holly

August 3 Poweshiek Celebration at the Butterfly Preserve in Davisburg

Sept 16 Morning Walk with Fringed Gentian at Davis Lake in Davisburg

Oct 15 Fall Colors at the Kimball Preserve in Clarkston

***Native Plant Sale
June 3
10-4***



***Neiman's Parking Lot
7121 Dixie, Clarkston***

***Sale benefits the Blue Heron
Headwaters Conservancy***