



Kearsley Creek by Dawson Barnes

Help us Cool the Kearsley Creek

It is a memorable experience to stand beside a clear creek and listen to the gurgling water and contemplate the flow of life. Kearsley Creek, in Brandon Township, is such a stream. In its headwaters area, before it reaches the Flint River, its cold waters even support brown trout.

Blue Heron Headwaters Conservancy has embarked on a program to keep it that way. We are working to acquire land along its banks and to convince other land owners to take measures to protect the creek.

Changes threaten even the most beautiful sites. Inexorable development adds warmer water to the stream as it washes off roofs, driveways and lawns. Cutting the trees that shade the water also disturbs the banks and adds sediments that smother the insects the trout eat.

Our collective future can take a different path. The Land Trust Alliance has given our conservancy a small grant to start charting this different course. On a short stretch of the creek, we are measuring water temperatures and recording the bank cover to prepare for planting more trees to stabilize the stream.

Clean Water is Essential for Our Quality of Life

A critical step is to purchase riparian land in some cases and, in other cases, to convince the owners to place conservation easements along the creek side area. Partnership in preserving the land and water connection is important. The donors who support Blue Heron's actions are central to developing these partnerships, one parcel at a time. We continue to preserve land and water, and you do, too. Thank you.

Your Support has Made a Great Impact

Here are a few of the projects we completed thanks to you.

- Outdoor workers and volunteers installed new signs and checked boundary markers on half of our properties. We will continue this project in 2024.
- A grant from Cornell's Laboratory of Ornithology has concluded with initial prairie restoration at the Voorheis Beardsley Preserve. Additional work to maintain the prairie and add a planting visible from I-75 will depend on further donations.
- We cut buckthorn, removed bittersweet, pulled garlic mustard and treated phragmites. The battle against invasives continues.
- Our outreach program educated the public with 5 outdoor tours, 5 children's programs and 10 talks.
- "Straight line winds" cracked many oaks at the newly purchased Butterfly Preserve. We cut downed limbs and stacked them in a gully where they will help slow erosion.
- We repaired damage from several incidents of trespass. Also we replanted trees deliberately cut on one easement; thwarted an attempt to claim preserved land through adverse possession; and reversed a grab of easement land for personal use. These violations have consumed the energies and assets of the conservancy.



By removing invasive species, we make room for beautiful natives such as this bottled gentian



Kids learn about bats at one of our library programs

Oakland County Values Conservation

In October, we received Oakland County's 2023 Oak Land Award during the Trail, Water & Land Alliance's fall conference. The award recognizes community partners who preserve green infrastructure in Oakland County. We share this award with all of our supporters, who also advance the mission of land preservation.

Future Conservationists: Boy & Girl Scouts



Girl Scouts & turtle protectors

Conservation is a Community Effort

Dedicated advocates of Clarkston's beloved nature and historic charm, former Mayor Eric Haven and Nancy Haven generously offered their home, hospitality and connections for a BHHC garden party fundraiser. On a July evening, guests enjoyed food, drinks, raffles and a presentation about the Clinton River. Guests completed a nature scavenger hunt while exploring the Haven's lakeside home and the various native flowers blooming across the property.

The Havens' guests learned about the benefits of planting native, the ecosystem services provided by wetlands, local priority conservation areas such as Depot Park and the impact of their donations. The Havens are heavily involved in the recreational projects and planning of Depot Park, a public space in the heart of Clarkston that also includes 39 acres of overlooked wetlands.

Immediately following the event, BHHC received an anonymous donation of \$10,000. We believe that this donation is one of many results of the

We have had a long-standing partnership with both the Boy Scouts and the Girl Scouts. We provide opportunities for them to help nature and earn badge requirements, and in turn, they help us complete important projects.

Some of the activities they completed this year include: making turtle protectors for nesting turtles, building a bridge at one of our preserves, turning a pocket park into an urban tree lot and making native seed balls.

We Provide Volunteer Opportunities for all Ages

We plan on expanding our outreach to include more scouts. Thanks to Eagle Scouts Claire Beutler & Daniel Szailer, to Boy Scout Troop 185 and to the Girl Scouts who attended our turtle program. It is our great privilege to work with these future conservationists.



Nancy & Eric Haven

educational and entertaining efforts from the staff, volunteers, board and Eric & Nancy. Thanks to all involved.



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Come visit us in our new office (right next to our old office). We are in Suite #1 at the same address 7150 Dixie Highway in Clarkston.

Would you like to save paper & receive electronic mail? Scan here to let us know.



Join us for our virtual annual meeting on February 24, 2024