

CHIKAMING OPEN LANDS
CELEBRATES



A Decade of Land Preservation
1999-2009

October 10, 2009
Chikaming Country Club

A Decade of Land

Chikaming Open Lands is the invention of founding members Peter and Jean Van Nice and Steve and Jean Smith. Together they created and nurtured what would become the first land trust in Berrien County, with the idea and conviction that more needed to be done with respect to preserving open space and the diverse natural characteristics in southwest Michigan.



*The power of imagination makes
us infinite.*

John Muir

and Preservation

Chikaming Open Lands Milestones

- 1999** Chikaming Open Lands (COL) was incorporated on December 11, 1999, by founding members Peter and Jean Van Nice and Steve and Jean Smith.
- 2000** Peter Van Nice becomes the first president of the Board of Directors and the organization gains its 501 (c)(3) status.
- 2001** Soon thereafter, COL records its first fee-owned property, the Eleanor O'Connor Wilson Woods Preserve, a 5-acre parcel for the purpose of protecting a high quality dune forest in Chikaming Township.
- 2002** As a community partner and advocate for parks, recreation and open space, COL helped raised over \$230,000 for the acquisition of the 267-acre Chikaming Township Park and Preserve. Additionally and with the generosity of the Sima family of New Buffalo, COL acquires the Louis J. Sima Great Lakes Marsh Preserve.
- 2003** COL is awarded a \$3,500 grant from the Berrien Community Foundation to hire a botanist who will create a natural features survey of the Louis J. Sima Great Lakes Marsh.
- 2004** COL purchases a building in Lakeside from the *Lakeside 13*, a local group of civically-minded women. The building is rehabbed and becomes the office. Additionally, COL is awarded a grant from the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation which is used for capacity building.
- 2005** COL hires Jean Brokish as its Land Protection Specialist. She is the first employee. COL is awarded a 3-year grant from the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality totaling \$1,054,000 in an effort to improve the water quality of the Galien River watershed. George and Andrea Platz become the first to donate a conservation easement.
- 2006** An administrative assistant is added to staff and Jean Smith becomes the president of the Board of Directors.
- 2007** COL applies for accreditation from the Land Trust Alliance. This is a very large undertaking which takes staff and board 700 hours collectively to accomplish.
- 2008** COL becomes one of the first 39 land trusts in the country to be accredited by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission, an independent program of the Land Trust Alliance. Jean Brokish moves to Hawaii and Elizabeth Nellums is hired as the Land Protection Specialist. Steve Smith becomes president of the Board of Directors.
- 2009** Randy Rood becomes COL's first Executive Director.

The Event Sponsors

This event is made possible through the generous support of the following organizations:

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Van Nice Foundation

Wightman Environmental



This Evening's Itinerary

6:00 p.m. Celebration Opens

Cocktails and hors d'oeuvres served

6:30 to 7:00 Program

Welcome and Opening Remarks

Stephen Smith, President, Chikaming Open Lands

"Chikaming Open Lands - A Decade of Land Preservation"

Presentation by Randall Rood, Executive Director, Chikaming Open Lands

Acknowledgments

Jean Smith, Chair, Development Committee, Chikaming Open Lands

8:00 p.m. Celebration Concludes

Thank you for coming tonight! We sincerely appreciate your steadfast interest and support of the Chikaming Open Lands mission.



The Work of COL

Land Protection Activity

Land protection activities over the last decade resulted in the preservation of 24 properties totaling 832 acres of open land. Accomplishments include providing technical and financial assistance leading to the acquisition of the 263 acre Chikaming Township Park and Preserve and the establishment of 21 conservation easements totaling 410 acres brought about by the enthusiastic cooperation of the private land owners listed below who support our mission. In addition, we acquired two (2) properties with outstanding natural attributes totaling 161 acres of open land. These include the Eleanor O'Connor Wilson Woods Preserve in Chikaming Township which is a high quality dune forest and the Louis J. Sima Marsh Preserve in New Buffalo Township consisting of 156 acres of great lakes marsh - one of very few remaining in the Great Lakes basin. The Board of Directors wishes to acknowledge and thank the Louis J. Family of New Buffalo and the 21 private land owners who granted conservation easements throughout the Galien River Watershed.



*Louis J. Sima Great Lakes Marsh
156 acres*



*Eleanor O'Connor Wilson Woods
5 acres*

Land Protection Report Card

Name of Protected Property	Acres	Preserves	Conservation Easements	Ownership
Chikaming Township Park and Preserve	263	*		Chikaming Township
COL Assistance	263	1		
Louis J. Sima Marsh Preserve	156	*		Chikaming Open Lands
Eleanor O'Connor Wilson Woods Preserve	5	*		Chikaming Open Lands
COL Owned Preserves	161	2		
Drier Grove	10		*	George and Andrea Platz
Galien Meadow	33		*	Diane DeWitt
Jasper Buffer	3		*	Mike Jasper
Weesaw 40	40		*	Mike Jasper
Mt. Zion Prairie	12		*	Daniel Whitman
Johnson Creek	35		*	Melvin and Nancy Johnson
Flynn	38		*	Melvin and Nancy Johnson
Squaw Creek	77		*	Sarett Nature Center
Blackjack	9.5		*	Dr. Stan Showalter
Riverside Woodland	31		*	Werner and Sue Petterson
Silent Giants	18		*	Robert and Vicki Wagner
El Topo	3.5		*	Jane Grimmins
Deer Creek	7.5		*	Doug and Valerie Miller
Covenant Farm	29		*	Dan Dale and Pat Wilcoxon
Three Corners	3		*	John Byrdak
Happy Trails	7.3		*	Rob Smith and Rocky Roberts
Hanover	8.6		*	Terry Hanover
Priest	8.3		*	Elsie Priest
Maple Haven	4.5		*	Stan and Martha Detweiler
The Sanctuary	30		*	Sanctuary Condominium Assoc
Church of the Mediator	2		*	Church of the Mediator
Conservation Easements	410		20	
Totals	834	3	20	

Extraordinary Support

On the occasion of our 10th Anniversary, the Chikaming Open Lands Board of Directors wishes to gratefully acknowledge the following individuals and organizations for their extraordinary support of our mission to preserve open space and the diverse natural character of southwest Michigan.

Donor Honor Roll

Diamond Members (Over \$100,000)

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Eugene Goldvasser and Deone Jackman
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Riviera Homeowners Association
Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy
Southwest Michigan Planning Commission

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Past and Present

Board of Directors Present

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Greg Kaiser, Vice President
Paul Miller, Treasurer
George Lucas, Secretary
Linda Anderson
Ron Farina
Terry Hanover
Don Hermann
Jon Janott
Mike Jasper
Kip Miller
George Platz
Jean Smith (*Past President*)
Peter VanNice (*Past President*)

Board of Directors Past

Tom Doepker
Don Flinn
Mike Heckathorn
Jean VanNice
Jon Vickers

The mission of Chikaming Open Lands is to preserve open space and the diverse natural character of southwest Michigan.



Chikaming Open Lands

14913 Lakeside Rd.
PO Box 291
Lakeside, MI 49116
269-469-2330

www.chikamingopenlands.org