



# The Chikaming Legacy

Newsletter of Chikaming Open Lands

Spring 2011



COL's Members Work Together to Preserve 30 Acres Along the Galien River

Chikaming Open Lands is proud to announce its latest protected property of 30 acres along the Galien River in Chikaming Township. This purchase brings COL's total protected property to 955 acres in southwest Michigan.

This beautiful property contains bluffs and floodplain forest along the Galien River with approximately 1,500 feet of frontage. Growing there are diverse native plants, including the state-listed Prairie Trillium (*Trillium recurvatum*). It provides an important overflow area in the Galien, where the river is fully connected to its floodplain which allows the standing water to infiltrate the soils, reducing downstream flooding, erosion and water pollution. The buffer provided to the Galien is more than 100 feet on both banks, and is regularly inundated. The tree canopy is mature and relatively diverse, with trees of a variety of ages. Oaks, maples, sycamores, were all documented on the property, along with cherry, green ash, and American Elm. There is also a healthy under-story featuring such species as spicebush, young beech, bladdernut, and hawthorn. This type of forest cover, combined with a waterway,

is an important stopover and breeding site for many species of birds. It is also important for protecting water quality. Additionally, this property is in close proximity to other easements which helps COL work toward creating a "green belt" of conservation.

Steve Smith, COL's President, commented, "The protection of this property is a unique first for COL. It's really the first time we went to the membership and asked them to help fund a specific project. I think this is significant in light of the amount of money collected in order to make this happen."

Indeed, if you've attended one of COL's events or have been a member for at least a year, you would have heard about this property. Money raised from the first annual fundraiser in September was dedicated to the protection of this property along with other direct appeals to the membership.

Smith said, "We are grateful to our membership for their support and encouragement. If it wasn't for them, it would be more difficult to do our important work in this area. Thank you!"



# The Chikaming Legacy

## Mission

COL is dedicated to preserving open space and the diverse, natural character of southwest Michigan.

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COL is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. All contributions are tax deductible to the full extent of the law.



## From the President . . .

*Dear Members and Friends of Chikaming Open Lands,*

As a friend of mine told me when I worked for AT&T some 15 years ago, change is the only constant in the evolution of business. At COL we have gone through many changes since our founding, embracing change as an opportunity to evaluate our goals, refine our work plans, and strengthen our organization. This spring has been just such a time.

In early March Randy Rood, our Executive Director since June 2009, resigned to pursue other interests. As we said in the email to members at the time, Randy's contributions helped COL reach a new level of organizational accomplishment and we wish him the best.

The Board has begun a search for a new Executive Director and hopes to have one by this summer. In the interim, Johanna Humbert has been promoted to the full-time position of Development and Marketing Specialist. She is also acting as our Office Manager and coordinating day-to-day activities of COL. Beth Denton continues as our part-time Newsletter Editor, and Outreach and Event Coordinator. Board members have also stepped up, taking on special projects and programs as needed. Finally, we have contracted with Peg Kohring, Midwest Director of The Conservation Fund, who has been a mentor to COL since our incorporation in 1999, to assist us in land protection projects in the Galien River watershed.

During this transition, we especially appreciate your trust and financial support. I want to thank all of you who supported our year-end appeal to protect the beautiful 30-acre property along the Galien River in Chikaming Township. On December 22, 2010, we closed on that property because of your generous support, and it is now protected forever.

With a number of other properties in the protection pipeline, I assure you that COL will continue to grow and succeed, discovering new opportunities in the challenges and adjustments change brings.

Sincerely,

President



# Membership News



## Honoraria & Memorials

### In honor of . . .

*Linda Anderson*, from Ms. Jean W. Sharp  
*Adelyn Bogert*, from Amy, Nicholas & Carroll Bogert  
*George B. Girton*, from Mary L. Fox  
*Sue & Melvin Gray*, from Mr. & Mrs. Steven F. Gray  
*Mike James*, from Mr. & Mrs. Vaughn Culp  
*Dorthe Kelly*, from Mr. & Mrs. Robert Lindsay  
*Mary McDowell*, from John Bokina  
*Dottie Pattishall's Birthday*, from Nancy & Walter Aque  
*Kathy Richland Pick*, from Mr. & Mrs. James A. Cherney  
*Jean Smith*, from Ms. Jean W. Sharp

### In memory of . . .

*Luther Buchele*, from Joan Buchele  
*Lester W. Buczek*, from Mrs. Lester Buczek  
*Jane Henkle*, from John & Ruth Magdzinski  
*Diane Hollatz*, from Mr. & Mrs. Timothy Falconio  
*Robert S. Ingersoll*, from Mr. & Mrs. Stephen Smith  
*Warren Ingersoll*, from Ms. Yvonne Boyer, James & Martha H. Davis, Mr. & Mrs. Roger Fross, Mrs. Sylvia Gordon, Ms. Leslie Harris, Mrs. Warren Ingersoll, Mr. & Mrs. Ralph Rydholm, Mr. & Mrs. Charles Schwartz, Jr., Mr. & Mrs. Stephen Smith, & Mrs. Patricia Werhane  
*Mel Johnson*, from Mr. & Mrs. Kenneth, W. Carlson, Mr. & Mrs. Roland Foote, Ms. Barbara Gorczyca, Wallace Haight & Carol Vanauken-Haight, Mr. & Mrs. Leo Mendenhall  
*Jean Lucas*, from Mr. & Mrs. Guy Arvia, Mr. & Mrs. Clifford T. Beckman, Mr. & Mrs. Carl Christ, Chikaming Country Club Women's Golf Association, Mr. & Mrs. Charles H. Dale, Mr. & Mrs. Carl Franzon, Lillian Gilruth, Ms. Wendy Lindquist, Arlene & Bernard Lindquist, Mr. & Mrs. Kent Lindquist, Mr. & Mrs. Robert Lindsay, Mr. & Mrs. James N. Lynch, Keith & Mary Anne, McLean, Mr. & Mrs. Robert Meeks, Mrs. Russell J. Parsons, Sandy & Bill Rosenthal-Nemeth, Ms. Nancy Sheila Simonian, Dr. & Mrs. Lewis Smith, Mr. & Mrs. Stephen Smith, Ms. Claudia A. Sprovtsoff  
*John D. Purdy*, from Marilyn & Tom Cahill, Mr. & Mrs. Eugene Clapp, Ms. Caro Parsons, Mr. James D. Parsons, Robert Parsons & Victoria Herget, Mrs. Russell J. Parsons, Mr. & Mrs. William Racine, Ms. Linda K. Strohl  
*William K. Stevens*, from Mrs. Anne Stevens, Mary S. Williams  
*Adrian Van Ginhoven*, from Mr. & Mrs. James Veldman  
*Philip C. White*, from Mrs. Phillip White  
*Quincy White*, from Mr. & Mrs. Frederick Lighthall

In 2010, COL members accomplished great things! You learned about Raptors and Mud Lake Bog; you celebrated land protection at the Barn Benefit (and maybe you even won a wonderful raffle prize!); and then you rallied to protect 30 acres along the Galien River.

Well done!

This year is just taking off, and we already have improvements to help you be more involved.

To start, we have a \$5,000 1:1 challenge grant from the **J. A. Woollam Foundation** to match new and increased giving during our membership campaign. For example, if you gave \$100 last spring and give \$125 this spring, Woollam will match the \$25 increase. Don't worry, when we send your letter in a few weeks, we'll remind you what you gave last year. We want to make it easy for you to meet the challenge! (Please refer the guide at right to learn more about membership levels.)

Member Benefits Guide	\$30-\$49	\$50-\$99	\$100+
Complimentary subscription to <i>The Chikaming Legacy</i> newsletter	X	X	X
Name listing in newsletter, annual report and on website	X	X	X
Complimentary admissions to "Live Bat Encounter" on July 23	1	2	4
Complimentary admissions to Voyageur Moonlight Excursion on June 15	1	2	4

Looking for information about protecting land? Make your first stop **our newly relaunched website, [www.chikamingopenlands.org](http://www.chikamingopenlands.org)**. There you'll find information about getting involved by protecting your own land or volunteering. You can also catch up on all of COL's activities, learn more about the Sima Marsh or our existing protected properties, or on a rainy day just sit back and enjoy the photo gallery.

**We encourage you to subscribe to electronic delivery** of our newsletter and periodic activity updates. If we had your e-mail address on file, by now you will have received an e-mail encouraging you to receive our newsletter via hyperlink. If you did not receive an e-mail from us, please visit our website and subscribe to the electronic newsletter in the lower left-hand corner of any page. We promise not to bombard you with lots of spam, and you can always "opt out" if you change your mind!

As you can see, there are plenty of ways to stay connected with COL and to put your membership donations to good and efficient use. Be on the lookout for your membership letter in early May — we look forward to hearing from you.



## Be sure to support our organizational friends!

**Love Creek Nature Center**  
[www.berriencounty.org/parks/](http://www.berriencounty.org/parks/)

Check out their spring programming for April wildflower walks, journey to a frog pond, dune hikes, and more!

**Fernwood Botanical Garden and Nature Preserve**  
[www.fernwoodbotanical.org](http://www.fernwoodbotanical.org)

Offering many interesting educational opportunities including the Piet Oudolf lecture on June 3 and summer camps for kids.



# Outreach

This year's line-up of Outreach Events is sure to please. Please consider joining us — and bring a guest or two!

**Wildflower Road Show Saturday, May 7** It's spring and time to get outside and find the wildflowers! And in our area, early May is the perfect time to do just that. Choosing one spot is too difficult — so we're going to pick a few of them. We'll meet the naturalist at the COL office at 9:45 a.m. and caravan to 2-3 places where the wildflowers are just right. Please join us!



**Voyageur Canoe Moonlight Marsh Excursion Wednesday evening, June 15** The ever-popular canoe trip in a whole new light! The moon will be full on Wednesday and you'll be able to see what the Louis J. Sima Marsh looks like by moonlight. Join Love Creek naturalists Kip Miller and Pat Underwood as we launch Voyageur Canoes into the soft, dark waters of the marsh. *(Members only event. Members qualify for complimentary tickets based on membership level. Not a member? This is your chance join up! This event has limited seating – you must reserve early to ensure participation.)* Photo credit: E. Hollandswort



**Live Bat Encounter Saturday, July 23, 11 a.m.** They say bats are as cute as puppies and now you'll be able to determine that for yourself. The Organization for Bat Conservation (OBC) is coming to the New Buffalo Performing Arts Center to present this exciting program which takes an up-close-and-personal view of these amazing animals. You'll meet a Big Brown bat from North America and hear its high-pitched echolocation with a bat detector, meet fruit bats from Africa and Asia, and come face-to-face with the largest bat in the world, the Gigantic Flying Fox Bat from Malaysia. This beautiful bat has a nearly 6-foot wingspan! OBC's entertaining founder and director, Rob Mies, has appeared on many television shows with his furry, winged friends including The Tonight Show and Late Night with Conan

O'Brien. *(Members qualify for complimentary admission for 1-4 persons based on membership level. Non-members are welcome to participate as well — \$10/adult, \$5/child. Call the office to reserve a spot and visit our website for updates!)*

**The Nature of the Beach Saturday, August 20** Pat Underwood from Love Creek will lead us on a walk of Bridgman's Weko Beach. COL hasn't offered a walk at the beach for some time – this is a great opportunity to satisfy your curiosity about the dunes, the beach, and all its life forms! Check the website for exact time and meeting place.



**2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Barn Benefit Saturday, September 24** Save the date for this year's annual fundraiser which will take place at Middlebrook Farm near Three Oaks, MI. Look forward to amazing raffle prizes, great music and food, along with the satisfying feeling of supporting a cause that benefits us all! More details to come.

### Fall Color Hiking Saturday, October 22

We'll round out the season by viewing the beautiful fall foliage in the area. Check the website for exact time and meeting place.



### Select Saturdays in January & February

Just because summer and fall are mere memories, doesn't mean we need to stop getting together. Depending on snow conditions in January and February, we'll hit the trails at Love Creek for some hiking and cross-country skiing. We'll bring the crock pot, you bring the smiles.



*This year's outreach programming is underwritten in part by grants from the America's Farmers Grow Communities program (presented by the Monsanto Fund) and the Heart of Cook Foundation Fund.*



You might think that a land trust organization such as COL only preserves land — and that’s the end of it. Getting acreage protected in perpetuity is only the beginning of what we do. Once the land is protected, it must be restored and maintained. As you can imagine, there are many steps to this process and funding is always an issue. We are a lucky organization to have such a dedicated membership, as the most recent preserved property on the Galien River proves. Peter Van Nice, the founder of COL, writes below about part of the process involved with one of COL’s preserves, the Louis J. Sima Great Lakes Marsh.



View of the Louis J. Sima Marsh in summer

## What Is This “Stewardship” We Speak Of?

by Peter E. Van Nice, Board of Directors

Mostly, it’s about tending to something you own - like your fridge! But when the fridge finally fails, you buy a new one. Not so with the Louis J. Sima Great Lakes Marsh. And, not so with your own land. When the Sima family donated these extraordinary 156 acres, COL committed not to maintain it “as is”, but to begin to bring it to its previously magnificent state.

The first step was a natural features inventory. That took two years. We learned that the marsh had countless native species; some endangered. We also found that it was under attack from non-native invasive species. These aliens, such as Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*) and Purple Loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*) do not simply “hang out”. They form monocultures, block sunlight, consume nutrients, and slowly over-run the original plant community.

Then came a plan to regain control. With financial support from The Pokagon Fund, the neighbors of the marsh and you, and with advice from JFNew, we initiated the process of recovery. Today, as a result of three years of biological and selective chemical treatments, the invasives are in retreat. We now hope to receive approval to take a very important final step — a prescribed burn. And, soon COL expects to re-introduce native species — like wild rice which once thrived in the marsh — back to their natural habitats.

Yes, you can try this at home! Keep after that garlic mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*) and buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*). You will win. Please e-mail me at [pevannice@aol.com](mailto:pevannice@aol.com) to share “war stories” on the stewardship of your own land.



## Stewardship Work Days

Please meet at the COL office @ 10:00 a.m. on the following days:

June 4, July 2, August 6, September 3, & October 1

## Other News

- COL has protected 27 properties for a total of 955 acres.
- Louis J. Sima Marsh update: According to 2010’s progress report, there has been a 90% reduction of Purple Loosestrife and 95% reduction of Japanese Knotweed. Efforts there continue.
- Thanks to the efficiency of the marsh restoration project, some funds from the AEP grant have been reapportioned to meet stewardship needs at Robinson Woods and Wilson Woods.



# Financial Report

2010 Statements of Financial Position ~ by Fund  
For the period October 1, 2009 through September 30, 2010

I am pleased to report that Chikaming Open Lands ended the 2010 fiscal year with an increase of \$219,914 in net assets before an accounting adjustment. This one-time adjustment was made to be consistent with a policy of not capitalizing gifts of land restricted for conservation purposes into perpetuity, adopted effective October 1, 2009. The adjustment removed from COL's statement of financial condition the appraised value of the Sima Marsh previously recorded.

Audited revenues and expense for the year totaled \$464,564 and \$244,650, respectively. Membership dues and gifts to our Endowment Fund and for our ongoing Land Protection, Stewardship and Outreach activities exceeded \$361,000.

On behalf of the COL Board of Directors, thank you for your continued and essential support of our work at COL!

Respectfully submitted,  
**Paul Miller**, Treasurer

Copies of the audited Financial Statements prepared by Hutter and Associates, P.C. are available for inspection at our office in Lakeside during regular business hours.

	Operating Fund	Stewardship Fund	Endowment Fund	Total
<b>Public support and revenues:</b>				
Public support:				
Membership Dues	102,873			102,873
Grants	24,378	13,500		37,878
Gifts and other donations	129,224	5,000	86,441	220,665
Net assets released from restrictions	<u>15,017</u>	<u>(20,000)</u>	<u>4,983</u>	<u>-</u>
Total public support	<u>271,492</u>	<u>(1,500)</u>	<u>91,424</u>	<u>361,416</u>
Revenues:				
Interest income	255	969	-	1,224
Rental income	18,000	-	-	18,000
Fundraising and special events	36,300	-	-	36,300
Other	1,890	0	11,863	13,753
Realized losses – investments	-	-	(244)	(244)
Unrealized gains – investments	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>34,115</u>	<u>34,115</u>
<b>Total revenues</b>	<b><u>56,445</u></b>	<b><u>969</u></b>	<b><u>45,734</u></b>	<b><u>103,148</u></b>
<b>Total public support and revenues</b>	<b><u>327,937</u></b>	<b><u>(531)</u></b>	<b><u>137,158</u></b>	<b><u>464,564</u></b>
<b>Expenses</b>				
Program	123,897	-	-	123,897
Management and general	106,888	-	-	106,888
Fundraising	<u>13,865</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>13,865</u>
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b><u>244,650</u></b>	<b><u>-</u></b>	<b><u>-</u></b>	<b><u>244,650</u></b>
Changes in net assets before adjustment	83,287	(531)	137,158	219,914
Adjustment for reduction in value of gifted restricted land	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(315,150)</u>	<u>(315,150)</u>
Net increase (decrease) in net assets	83,287	(531)	(177,992)	(95,236)
Net assets, beginning of year	<u>255,202</u>	<u>231,272</u>	<u>1,525,879</u>	<u>2,012,353</u>
Net assets, end of year	<u>\$338,489</u>	<u>\$230,741</u>	<u>\$1,347,887</u>	<u>\$1,917,117</u>

## 2010 Organization and Individual Donors

Chikaming Open Lands wishes to acknowledge the following individuals and organizations for their generous support and assistance during the 2010 fiscal year, and specifically between 10-1-09 and 9-30-10. Note that each donor is listed one time; in the event of multiple gifts, they have been totaled. Please accept our sincere apologies for any unintentional errors or omissions and let us know by calling (269) 469-2330 or e-mailing us at [info@chikamingopenlands.org](mailto:info@chikamingopenlands.org) so that we may correct them in future publications.

### Corporate and Foundation Partners

American Electric Power Foundation  
The Conservation Fund  
Chauncey & Marion D. McCormick Foundation  
The Pokagon Fund  
The Earl & Brenda Shapiro Foundation, and their children Benjamin, Matthew, and Alexandria  
J. A. Woollam Foundation

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### Gifts to the Chikaming Open Lands Fund at the Berrien Community Foundation

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