



The Chikaming Legacy

Fall 2006

CHIKAMING OPEN LANDS

Welcome New Directors



Terry Hanover is a woodworker from New Troy in Weesaw Township, Michigan. Although his work involves cutting down trees, he also has great interest in preserving green space. Terry graduated from Western Michigan University with a Bachelor's Degree in Industrial Arts. Before devoting his life to woodworking, he taught for three years.

Terry is Chairperson of the Recreation Committee of Weesaw Township and serving as President for the Friends of New Troy. Recently, Terry has become involved with COL because of the efforts to preserve green space and create filtering strips for the water. For Terry, this is an important legacy to leave for future generations.



Linda Anderson is from Plymouth Michigan. In 1980 she transferred to St. Joseph, Michigan with Guardian Photo, a national photofinisher. She worked with National and local retail accounts in Southwestern Michigan, Northern Indiana and Chicago including Kmart, Revco, Meijers and independent camera and drug stores training personnel and setting up marketing programs.

I hope to help Chikaming Open Lands grow as an organization and help to increase its presence in the community. Both my husband Chuck and I have enjoyed the beautiful community of southwestern Michigan for over 30 years.

PARTNERS IN THE GALIEN WATERSHED



The Chikaming Legacy

President's Letter

Dear Members and Friends,

This summer for Chikaming Open Lands has been a busy and productive one. We introduced our Second Saturday Series and held three events with topics focusing on native and invasive plants in our landscapes. We, also, held an informational meeting for landowners on habitat restoration. Jack Pizzo & Associates provided an informative slide show, Jean Brokish, Land Protection Specialist for Chikaming Open Lands, discussed conservation easements and George Platz gave his comments on why he put a conservation easement on 10 acres of his property. The COL Board and volunteers partnered with The Conservation Fund August 19th for a Galien River clean up. At one site on the river volunteers pulled more than 50 tires out of the river.

It has been heartening for Chikaming Open Lands to see an increased level of support from our members as well as an increase in new membership. Our members are the heart of the organization and support us in our endeavors. Often members will ask what volunteer opportunities are available and they are varied from serving on a committee, to Galien River clean up, to helping with a particular event. Please call or stop in our office and speak with Pat Moon, our volunteer coordinator, about opportunities. Chikaming Open Lands, also, has an extensive library with books and articles on land preservation and conservation. Please feel free to avail yourself of these educational resources.

Chikaming Open Lands is pleased to welcome to our Board two new directors, Linda Anderson and Terry Hanover. They both bring backgrounds and a love for conservation that will help us in our endeavors. Both became involved as volunteers enabling them to gain a better understanding of what we do. Terry is on our Land Protection Committee and Linda is involved with outreach and community education. Further information about them is included in the newsletter.

Thank you for your membership and support of Chikaming Open Lands!

Happy Fall!

Jean Smith

Volunteers are essential to the success of Chikaming Open Lands. We are always looking for help with river clean-up and property maintenance which includes pulling of invasive plants and planting of native plants.

We can also use the talents of botanists and Fundraisers.

Please call 269-469-2330 to find out how you can help.



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New Tax Law Encourages Conservation

More than 25 years ago, Congress decided that private land conservation was important and enacted tax benefits designed to encourage and sustain donations of land and conservation easements to qualified organizations such as COL. At the end of August, those incentives were enhanced by a new federal tax law which will make available to landowners and farmers with modest incomes tax savings not available before.

COL has been primarily engaged in acquiring voluntary conservation easements. In the typical easement, the landowner donates the development rights to all or part of their property and agrees to restrictions that will forever protect natural, scenic and other conservation values of the land. The land stays in private ownership and the owner continues to use and manage the property and then is able to sell it or pass it on to family.

The new law provides that in reporting income taxes landowners who donate a qualified conservation easement before January 2008 can deduct its appraised value up to 50 percent of the donor's adjusted gross income. Farmers, whose farming income is more than 50 percent of their gross income, can deduct up to 100 percent of their adjusted gross income. The new law provides that when the landowner's income in the year of the donation is not enough to permit full use of the deduction, the balance can be carried forward and deducted for as much as 15 additional years, or until the full deduction has been realized.

Commenting on the enhanced tax incentives, Jean Brokish, COL's Land Protection Specialist, says "Establishing voluntary conservation easements is a critical part of meeting the goals of the Galien Watershed Project. It is my hope that the enhanced benefits will encourage landowners who have been considering a conservation easement but are waiting for the right time."

"The new tax benefits are a real testament to the importance of conservation on private lands."

Call Jean Brokish at the office: 269-469-2330 to learn more about this exciting conservation news.



The owners of this 30-acre woodlands are working with COL to establish a conservation easement, and appreciate the increased tax deductions now available for such qualified donations.



Chikaming Open Lands
P.O. Box 291
14913 Lakeside Road
Lakeside, MI 49116
269-469-2330

DIRECTORS

Linda Anderson
Al Chapman
Don Flinn
Terry Hanover
Greg Kaiser
George Platz
Jean Smith
Steve Smith
Jeanie Van Nice

Did you Know?

The Galien River was named after Rene Brehant de Galinee, a 17th century mapmaking missionary.

The word “Watershed” refers to all the land area that drains to a common outlet. The Galien Watershed covers 112,222 acres in Michigan and Indiana. The majority (82,665 acres) is in Berrien County.

Over 160 linear miles of rivers and streams are flowing through the Galien Watershed in southwest Michigan.

Land use in the Galien Watershed is primarily agriculture / pasture (70%), followed by forest (22%) and urban (5%), with the remaining 3% being streams, lakes and wetlands.

The watershed is home to more than 50 plant species and 10 animal species listed as threatened or endangered. Their survival depends on you.



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Second Saturday Series a Success

This summer Chikaming Open Lands hosted a series of field events informing members about native and invasive plants in our landscapes. Directors Jean Van Nice and Sue Peterson were instrumental in organizing the series, and special thanks go to the volunteer speakers Pat Underwood, Steve Bornell and Heidi Gray.



Pat Underwood, naturalist for Berrien County Parks, demonstrates proper paddle technique.



Adventurous guests explored the Galien River Marsh aboard a 30-foot replica of a Voyageur Canoe. Jean Smith captains a group of COL members, with Pat Underwood assisting at the rear of the vessel.



At Left Steve Bornell presented a program on using native plants in gardens at the Van Nice Home July 8th, 2006.

Chikaming Open Lands would like to do another Saturday Series next year and would appreciate any input you might have for topics.



Volunteers Work Tirelessly



Volunteers join forces with Chikaming Open Lands and The Conservation Fund to “Clean Up the Galien” on August 19, 2006. More than 30 people pitched in, including this dedicated group gathered by the tires they pulled from the river (L-R) John Haman, Kent Lindquist, Don Flinn, Kevin Underwood, Lynne Haman, Pat Underwood, Kip Miller and Steve Smith.

Plotnicks Welcome Galien Steering Committee



Chikaming Open Lands is grateful to Beth and Harvey Plotnick for hosting the Galien Steering Committee Meeting in June. The Plotnicks shared their experience of restoring prairie and wetland buffers on their Judy Lake property. In this photo, Peg Kohring (on right with back to camera) points out some of the prairie plants and explains their role in improving water quality.

The Steering Committee Meetings are open to anyone interested in learning more about the Galien Watershed Project. The next meeting will highlight work completed by the Road Commission to reduce road impacts on the river. The meeting will be held on November 6th. Call the office for location and time.