



Chikaming Open Lands
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DIRECTORS

- Al Chapman
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- Jean Smith
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Did You Know?

- Garlic Mustard was first reported in New York in 1868. Now, Garlic Mustard is most abundant in the Northeast and the Midwest.
- Garlic Mustard seeds remain dormant from 8-20 months and the seed bank remains viable for five years.
- Garlic Mustard tolerates sun to full shade, moist floodplains to dry, sandy sites, and a wide variety of soils.
- Disturbed areas are most susceptible to the invasion of Garlic Mustard, where it can dominate within 10 years. A study in Illinois in 1999, found a mean rate of spread at 5.4 m per year in high-quality, undisturbed forest, with annual means increasing from 9.0 m in year one to 31.8 m in year eight.
- Garlic Mustard produces several phytotoxic chemicals, which inhibit the growth of native species.
- Garlic Mustard is edible! It adds a tangy, garlic zing to salads, cooked greens, and pesto.



The Chikaming Legacy

Newsletter for

Summer 2006

C H I K A M I N G O P E N L A N D S

Natives and Invasives
Second Saturday Series

A native plant is a tree, shrub or other plant that existed in the Midwest prior to European settlement. There are many reasons we should protect and promote the native species in our woods, landscapes and wetlands.

Native plants are adapted to the growing conditions here, allowing them to survive cold winters and hot, dry summers. They are also more resistant to disease and insect problems and provide food and shelter for native birds and insects. Planting native species is a way to re-establish our natural diversity and restore our regional landscapes.

Invasive plants alter the ecosystem by displacing native species and reducing plant diversity. One example common in our area is Garlic Mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*).

Chikaming Open Lands will present the Second Saturday Series focusing on Natives and Invasives. The three sessions will focus on *Woodlands, Landscapes and Gardens, and Marshlands*. Please see the schedule in the Announcements for more information.

We hope you will join us to learn more and to explore natives and invasives in our landscapes!



Allegheny Serviceberry (*Amelanchier laevis*) is a native plant found on moist sites throughout North America. The fruit is eaten by many birds and small and large mammals.



Garlic Mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*) is an invasive plant which is widely distributed in Michigan, affecting more than 28 counties and has negative impact on several species, such as, salamanders and mollusks.

P A R T N E R S I N T H E G A L I E N W A T E R S H E D



President's Letter

Dear Members and Friends,

I feel honored and privileged to serve as the new president of COL. Our founder, Peter Van Nice, had a vision for preserving land in our area and under his leadership we moved from a vision to permanently protecting over 400 acres. Since the inception of COL, our area has witnessed phenomenal growth and pressure from development. The COL Board is committed to continuing to adhere to our mission of "preserving open space and the natural character of Southwest Berrien County."

With that in mind, COL has instituted a lecture series this summer entitled *Second Saturday Series*. Our hope is to provide educational programs that will be informative, interesting, and create a greater awareness of some of the issues and challenges we are facing as we try to protect the uniqueness of our area. Please join us for our first series on Natives and Invasives. The dates and locations are included in this newsletter.

Since opening our office a year ago, we are fortunate to hire Jean Brokish as our Land Protection Specialist. Her responsibilities involve overseeing a \$560,000 grant from the DEQ to protect the Galien River Watershed. Additionally, we have addressed the need for us to hire an administrative assistant to help her. I am pleased to welcome Heather Hillegas to the COL staff. Her energy, enthusiasm, and concern for land preservation make her a wonderful addition to COL. Please stop by the office to meet her.

I look forward to working with our Board, our staff, members, and volunteers to preserve what makes this area unique.

Respectfully,

Jean Smith

New Staff: Heather Hillegas

Hello Everyone! My name is Heather Hillegas, newly hired here at Chikaming Open Lands. I am very excited to have the opportunity to assist Jean Brokish and the Board of Directors as well as being able to learn new and exciting things about preserving our lands here in Southwest Michigan.

I grew up in Stevensville, Michigan. After graduating from Lakeshore High School, I received my Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration from Siena Heights University in December of 2004. Now, my plans are to start my MBA at Valparaiso University this fall and see where life takes me after that journey.

I look forward to meeting new people, getting to know the community and learning how to make a difference to help preserve our land. Personally, I feel that it is important to preserve the land around us because I want my children someday to see where I grew up and how lucky we are to live near Lake Michigan.



Announcements

Second Saturday Series

Natives and Invasives

We hope you will join us for our upcoming sessions. For more information and reservations, please call Heather at COL 269-469-2330 or email info@chikamingopenlands.org

Landscapes & Gardens

July 8, 2006 @ 10:00 am
Van Nice Home
14340 Lakeside Road, Lakeside
(Park on the Road)

Marshlands

September 9, 2006 @ 10:00 & 11:30 am
Louis J. Sima Marsh
(Meet at New Buffalo Beach Parking)
Reservations Required for Boat Tour

Chikaming Township 150th Celebration

Join Chikaming Open Lands to celebrate the 150th anniversary honoring Chikaming Township on Saturday, July 22 for an exciting parade, food, live music, and fun. For more information, please visit www.chikamingtownship.org.

Galien Watershed News and Notes

Chikaming Open Lands is making great progress in protecting important riparian lands in the Galien River Watershed. Land Protection Specialist Jean Brokish has spent the last year contacting more than 75 landowners in the watershed with site visits and informational meetings; and efforts continue towards acquiring conservation easements.

Opportunities for you to get involved and learn more about the Galien River Watershed include an open house highlighting landscape restoration scheduled for June 26, and a stream clean-up to be scheduled later this summer. Call Jean Brokish at the office for more information. 269-469-2330.

You Are Invited!

Monday, June 26 will be the next meeting for the Galien Watershed Project to be held at the home of Harvey and Beth Plotnick. Take a stroll on a lovely Michigan evening and learn about their efforts to restore the land to native prairie and forest. The Plotnick farm is located at 13512 Madron Lake Road (call the office if you need directions). The program begins at 6:30 p.m. Refreshments will be served.

Berrien County Youth Fair

Join Chikaming Open Lands at the fair for a watershed display. This is a great way to learn about the local community. The Berrien County Youth Fair takes place August 14-19 in Berrien Springs.

Toast the Great Outdoors!

We thank the J.L. Powell store in Three Oaks for hosting an evening to support COL and the Galien Watershed project. Invitations with more details will be forthcoming.



Living Local in the Fruit Belt

It is my favorite time of year again. The asparagus has proudly brought in the spring and strawberries are waiting to follow suit. I have already purchased and processed pounds and pounds of fresh Michigan asparagus to tide me through those long winter months when the asparagus in the grocery store travels all the way from Peru, some 4000 miles away from my table.

This is the best time of year because we can anticipate an entire summer full of fresh fruits and vegetables; some of the best in the country! In Southwest Michigan we reside in what is known as the fruit belt. Many factors— like sandy soils, proximity to Lake Michigan, and hilly terrain—come together to make Southwest Michigan one of the most productive growing areas in the nation. We stand second only to California in crop diversity.

This translates into better quality of food and superior taste. I proudly support my local farmers. Every weekend, you can see my car traversing the back roads of the country in search of the best fruits and vegetables Southwest Michigan has to offer. Luckily, I don't have to travel far. The landscape is dotted with farm after farm growing the freshest and tastiest produce. Nothing compares to a strawberry or peach picked at the peak of its freshness; the flavor that only a vine ripened fruit can provide.

At a recent lecture by Lee LaVanway, Market Master of the Benton Harbor Fruit Market, he commented that “the new organic is local”. This means knowing your farmers, being able to speak to the person that grows your food and attaching a face to that melon or pepper. As modern consumers, we have gotten so far away from our local food systems and this hurts our local economy. The “big-box” stores have taken over, and we no longer have the one-on-one contact with those individuals that are responsible for our food

I am proud to say, I know who grows my food. Unfortunately, there are few Americans who actually know where their food comes from—let alone who grew it! I urge all of you who live or vacation in Southwest Michigan to make the trip to the farm or the farmers market to buy local fresh produce. It not only helps the local economy, but you will find that the flavor is incomparable and the rewards are remarkable.

Article by Jacquie Johnson

To view “World’s Largest”—The Benton Harbor Fruit Market and Southwest Michigan’s Fruit Belt,” an exhibition dedicated to Southwest Michigan fruit production and the Fruit Market, visit the Fort Miami Heritage Society, 708 Market Street, St. Joseph, Michigan. Admission: \$3.00, free to Heritage Society members. Hours: Tuesday-Saturday, 10:00 – 4:00 pm, Sunday, 12:00 – 4:00 pm. Or visit www.michiganfruitbelt.org for more information.



Local Farmer’s Markets

All of you who live or vacation in Southwest Michigan need to make a trip to our farmers’ markets to buy and support the local fresh produce. It helps the economy, the flavor is incomparable, and the rewards are remarkable. Below are the locations, dates, and times of the farmers’ markets in our area. Come out and enjoy the freshness of picked blueberries, strawberries, cherries, and many more fruits and vegetables.

BRIDGMAN FARMERS’ MARKET AND CRAFT FAIR

Location: Railroad tracks on Lake Street (Shawnee Road) in downtown Bridgman.

Date: June – October

Time: Saturday, 8:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

ST. JOSEPH TODAY FARMERS’ MARKET

Location: Corner of Broad Street and Lake Boulevard

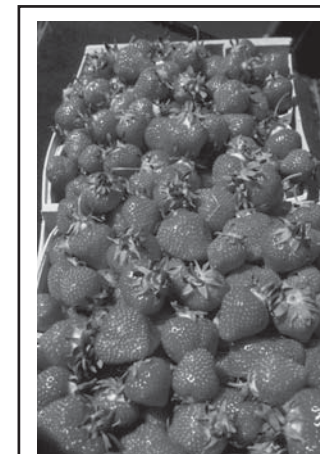
Date: June – Mid October

Time: Saturday, 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.



Blueberries

Photo by Don Vander Molen



Strawberries

Photo by Chris Carey

BENTON HARBOR FARMERS’ MARKET

Location: Mercy Center Parking Lot, 960 Agard

Date: July – October

Time: Wednesday, 10:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.



Cherries

Photo by Don Vander Molen

THREE OAKS FARMERS’ MARKET

Location: Dewey Cannon Park Parking Lot

Date: May 27 – November 4

Time: Saturday, 8:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.