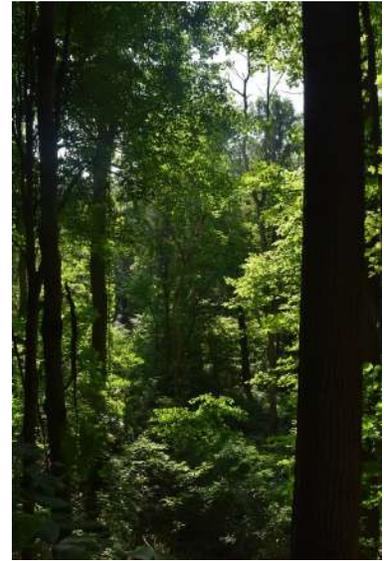




# CHIKAMING OPEN LANDS

SUMMER 2018 NEWSLETTER



## Cementing a Legacy: The Chris Thompson Memorial Preserve

***When our executive director,*** Chris Thompson, passed away unexpectedly two years ago, we all experienced an enormous sense of loss. How would we fill the hole he left in our organization? How will we carry on his conservation work in a way that appropriately honors his legacy?

As we worked through the ensuing period of reflection and rebuilding, there was one thing we knew we wanted to do right from the start: acquire a new nature preserve, dedicated in Chris' memory, that would not only be ecologically significant, but would provide an outdoor space for members of the community to enjoy.

This spring, we found it: a large tract of open space located at the confluence of some wonderful existing natural areas, including

Warren Woods State Park, Chikaming Township Park and Preserve, and our own recently acquired Merritt Family Preserve.

Located on Warren Woods Road in Chikaming Township, the 49-acre property is full of potential, with large swaths of open fields, woodland, and frontage on the Galien River.

Upon acquiring the property, Chikaming Open Lands will manage it as a nature preserve, forever protecting the natural landscape. The preserve will be open to the public for outdoor recreation, providing not only local residents, but the thousands of visitors who flock here each year a place to enjoy the natural beauty of this area.

*(Continued on page 5)*

# Letter from the Executive Director

## Board of Directors

Linda Puvogel, *President*  
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Bill Racine, *Treasurer*  
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Ellen Frankle  
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Clay Robinson  
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Executive Director

**Stacey LaRocco**  
Project Coordinator

**Casey Struecker**  
Education & Outreach  
Coordinator

**Jen Thompson**  
Development & Marketing  
Manager



## Chikaming Open Lands

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Dear Members and Friends,

With summer in full swing, I wanted to take a moment to share with you what is new and exciting at Chikaming Open Lands.



Over the past two years, we have significantly expanded our programs and activities to help us connect with the community. We have the tried-and-true favorites – guided hikes in our nature preserves, kayak and canoe trips on the Galien River, and our monthly Stewardship Days. We've also added a few new ones – take our “#10trail Challenge” in July and win prizes for hiking in our local preserves and parks, or attend our “Munchin’ on the Preserve” lunch and learn series throughout the summer on a variety of conservation issues.

We also have several significant land protection projects in the works. They include the donation of a 30-acre nature preserve in New Buffalo Township, and the acquisition of a new nature preserve on the Galien River in Chikaming Township that will be dedicated in memory of our late executive director, Chris Thompson. You can learn more about the property and our fundraising campaign in the featured article.

On the organizational side, this is also an important year for Chikaming Open Lands as we apply for reaccreditation from the Land Trust Alliance, the national coalition of land trusts. It is a significant distinction for a land trust and this will be our second reaccreditation. We are also in the final year of our current 5-year strategic plan and are developing a new plan to guide us through the next five years. With both undertakings, we will be asking for input and comments from our members and the community, so keep an eye out for more information on how you might provide feedback.

Of course, all of our activities, programs and projects are only made possible with your support, and we greatly appreciate the commitment of our members, volunteers and friends. Be sure to check out our website and follow us on social media for up-to-date information on our programs and events. I look forward to seeing you this summer.

Sincerely,

Ryan J. Postema  
Executive Director

# Help Preserve Our Cherished Open Spaces



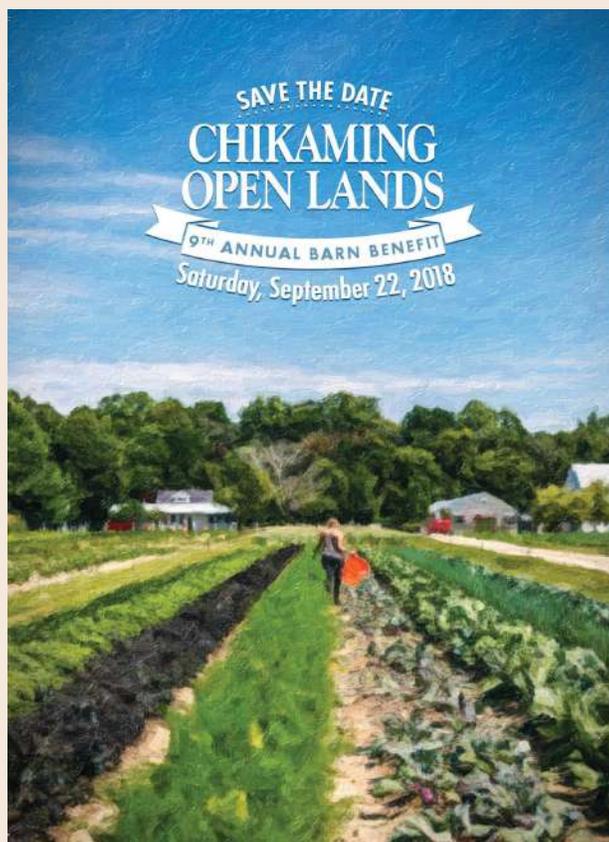
As we head into the busy summer season, we'd like to ask you to renew your membership for 2018 with a gift to Chikaming Open Lands.

Your support will make certain our cherished natural places will be preserved forever. It will help ensure our Lake Michigan waters are clean and safe. It will instill a lifelong love of nature in our kids through our environmental education program, the Mighty Acorns. It will create trails, educational signage and interactive trail markers in our nature preserves. Your renewed support makes it all happen.

Please renew your membership with a gift to Chikaming Open Lands today. Together, we can determine what our local landscape will look like 100 years from now.

A return envelope is enclosed for your convenience, or you can donate online through our website: go to [chikamingopenlands.org](http://chikamingopenlands.org) and click the green "Donate" button at the top right corner of the homepage.

Thank You!



## Save the Date! Chikaming Open Lands' 9th Annual Barn Benefit

**Saturday, September 22, 2018**  
**Granor Farm**

Dust off your cowgal and cowboy duds for another fun country-themed party!

Enjoy cocktails and hors d'oeuvres from Froehlich's, live and silent auctions, and the company of great people in a beautiful outdoor setting.

This year's Barn Benefit will once again be held at Granor Farm on Warren Woods Road amongst bright red barns and rows upon rows of organic vegetables, herbs and flowers. Proceeds benefit Chikaming Open Lands.

# Introducing the #10Trail Challenge

Welcome to the #10Trail Challenge! During the month of July, get outside, explore the trails of Michiana, take fun photos, and win prizes!



Here's How it Works!

## Step 1. Fill out the participation form.

Before you start, fill out a participation form and register for the #10Trail Challenge. You can find the form on our website: [chikamingopenlands.org/10trailchallenge](http://chikamingopenlands.org/10trailchallenge).

## Step 2. Hike the Trails!

At any time during the month of July, go out and explore what Michiana has to offer! Chikaming Open Lands is proud to partner with other non-profit land trusts, township park boards, and Berrien County to bring you these 10 nature preserves: Robinson Woods Preserve, Jens Jensen Preserve, Turtle Creek Preserve, Love Creek Nature Center, Galien River County Park, Chikaming Township Park and Preserve, Harbert Road Preserve, Ambler Flatwoods Nature Preserve, Hoadley Nature Trail, and Kesling Nature Preserve.

## Step 3. Take a Selfie

Once you are out on one of the 10 trails look for the #10Trail Challenge picture frame selfie stations! Snap a pic and tag us on Instagram by using #10trails AND #chikamingopenlands. You can also tag us on Facebook or email us the selfie picture at [col@chikamingopenlands.org](mailto:col@chikamingopenlands.org). By submitting your photos, you give us permission to share them on our website, Instagram page, Facebook page, or in print materials.

## Step 4. Win Prizes!



The first 20 entrants that hike all 10 trails and send us their selfies win a pizza from Three Oaks' favorite new eatery, Patellie's!



Hike 5 to 9 of the trails, send us your selfies, and you'll get a sammie of your choice from those connoisseurs of the sandwich arts, David's Delicatessen in New Buffalo!



Hike any 3 or 4 trails, send us your selfies, and get a free coffee, latte, tea, or any other beverage of your choice from our favorite place for a cuppa, Infusco in Sawyer!

For more details and to sign up, go to our website at [chikamingopenlands.org/10trailchallenge](http://chikamingopenlands.org/10trailchallenge).

# Cementing a Legacy

*(Continued from page 1)*

Our plans for the property include developing a trail system, improving public access, and restoring the open fields to prairie. Offering access to the Galien River is another possibility we will explore for the future. It is also an ideal field study location for the local elementary school children participating in our Mighty Acorns environmental education program.

The property holds significant ecological value as well. Preserving the forested area along the Galien River provides benefits to wildlife, including migratory songbirds. In fact, Audubon has designated the Galien River corridor from Lake Michigan to New Troy as an “Important Bird Area”. Moreover, protecting upland, wetland and riverfront areas improves water quality in the Galien itself and ultimately, in Lake Michigan.

Completing the acquisition of this land requires an investment of \$555,000. Chikaming Open Lands has committed one-third of that cost, using funds previously received from The Pokagon Fund for ongoing land acquisition. This, in addition to individual gifts we've already received in support of a Chris Thompson memorial project, means that we currently have more than half of that amount in-hand. To secure the remaining funds, we are seeking grants from foundations and organizations as well as gifts from individual members and friends of Chikaming Open Lands. We have until September 30 to raise the full amount to purchase the property.

Chris was passionate about preserving land in our community—for environmental and ecological reasons, of course, but his vision went further than that. He felt strongly that Chikaming Open Lands' natural areas should be welcoming and available for everyone in our community to enjoy; and that our conservation goals should not just be in the service of trees and rivers and wildlife, but also of *people*—making their lives better by enriching the places where they live, work and play.



*Former Executive Director Chris Thompson*

In the two years since he passed away, we at Chikaming Open Lands have been committed to realizing that vision. One of our highest priorities is to connect the people we serve to the land, providing the kinds of outdoor experiences that are proven to make people healthier and happier, and to bring all members of our community together.

The acquisition of this property will allow us to create a welcoming place where our entire community can enjoy the beautiful natural landscapes that make this region so special. We can think of no more fitting way to honor Chris' memory.

Please consider making a gift in support of the acquisition of the Chris Thompson Memorial Preserve. To make a gift online, visit [www.chikamingopenlands.org/ctmp](http://www.chikamingopenlands.org/ctmp). You may also mail a check using the enclosed envelope. Please make a note that you would like your gift to go towards the Chris Thompson Memorial Preserve. If you have questions or would like further information, please contact our office at (269) 405-1006.

# Upcoming Programs



## Munchin' on the Preserve: The Benefits of Composting

June 27, 11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., Chikaming Township Park & Preserve. Want to learn how composting can benefit you and your garden? Nancy Carpenter from Berrien County Conservation District will share her knowledge on how to properly compost food scraps and yard waste at home during this summer lunch and learn series!



## Chikaming Open Lands & Fernwood Botanical Gardens Present...

**Green Screens: An Environmental Film Festival. Sponsored by HORIZON BANK**

### Death by Design

July 11, 7:00 p.m. at the Vickers Theatre. *Death By Design* exposes the international electronics industry and shows how even the tiniest devices have deadly environmental and health costs. Filmmaker Sue Williams investigates the three issues most affected by our digital addiction and uncovers an alarming story that we all need to hear. Contact Fernwood to buy tickets: (269) 695-6491.



## Going Native: Backyard Native Landscaping

July 14, 10:00 a.m. to Noon. Learn the many benefits of "going native" at the beautiful restored prairie on the lakefront property of Peter and Jeanie Van Nice. Participants will be guided by expert environmental consultant Jack Pizzo of The Pizzo Group in sourcing varieties of native grasses and wildflowers, creating a landscape plan, and selecting suitable native ornamental substitutes for some popular non-native flowers and shrubs.



## Munchin' on the Preserve: Water Quality in Michigan

July 18, 11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., Chikaming Township Park & Preserve. Join Erik Elgin, Water Resource Educator at Michigan State Extension, as he talks about water quality in our wetlands, lakes and rivers; how to monitor and protect our local waterways; and what type of wildlife calls our aquatic habitats home during this summer lunch and learn series!



## Chikaming Open Lands & Fernwood Botanical Gardens Present...

**Green Screens: An Environmental Film Festival. Sponsored by HORIZON BANK**

### Five Seasons: The Gardens of Piet Oudolf

July 25, 7:00 p.m. at the Vickers Theatre. *Five Seasons: The Gardens of Piet Oudolf* is an immersive and meditative documentary that reveals how the revolutionary landscape designer, Piet Oudolf, upends our conventional notions of nature, public space, and, ultimately, beauty itself. Contact Fernwood to buy tickets: (269) 695-6491.



## Marsh Meander in the Voyageur Canoe

August 18, 10:00 a.m. to Noon  
Meander through the channels of Chikaming Open Lands' Louis J. Sima Marsh and enjoy the natural beauty of one of the richest habitats in the world. Space is limited, so reserve your spot early!

# Upcoming Programs



## Munchin' on the Preserve: All About Beekeeping

August 22, 11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., Chikaming Township Park & Preserve. Explore the world of bees with local beekeeper, Charmi Keranen. Charmi will talk about the process of beekeeping, hive life cycles and what the bees need to make it through winter. She will also be bringing some of her local honey for you to sample during this summer lunch and learn series!



## Hunters of the Night: Owls

August 25, 1:00 to 2:00 p.m., New Buffalo Township Library. Get an up close and personal look at our local owls! Lake Milton Raptor Center, a wild bird rehabilitation center, will bring some of their resident owls to have a family-friendly meet and greet with these amazing creatures.



## Owl Nest Box Building

September 6, 6:00 to 7:30 p.m., Chikaming Open Lands Office. Build a screech owl nest box to attract owls to your own backyard. We will help you assemble an owl nest box kit and provide information about the proper placement to best attract an owl. Participants will also learn about screech owl life history and distribution in our area.

**More information on these and other programs offered throughout the year, including how to register, can be found on our website: [chikamingopenlands.org/events](http://chikamingopenlands.org/events).**

## We Are Applying for Renewal of Accreditation!

Chikaming Open Lands is applying for renewal of accreditation by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission, an independent program of the Land Trust Alliance. The program recognizes land conservation organizations that meet national quality standards for protecting natural places and working lands in perpetuity. Chikaming Open Lands was among the first group of land trusts in the United States to be accredited when the program was initiated in 2008.

The Commission invites public input and accepts signed, written comments on pending applications. Comments must relate to how Chikaming Open Lands complies with national quality standards.

These standards address the ethical and technical operation of a land trust. A full list of standards can be found online at <http://www.landtrustaccreditation.org/help-and-resources/indicator-practices>. Comments on Chikaming Open Lands' application will be most useful if received by December 14, 2018.

To learn more about the accreditation program and how to submit a comment, please visit [www.chikamingopenlands.org/accreditation](http://www.chikamingopenlands.org/accreditation).





## Chikaming Open Lands

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# Help Us Care for Our Protected Properties

Chikaming Open Lands carefully protects and manages each of our protected properties to ensure it retains its natural integrity for future generations to come.

We host a Stewardship Day monthly from March through November, when volunteers remove invasive plant species, clear debris, build trails, or install signage.

Each workday includes an educational component like plant identification, guided nature walks through the properties, and more. Join us for one of them!

**July 14 @ Robinson Woods Preserve**

**August 11 @ Flynn Woods Preserve**

**September 8 @ Wilson Woods Preserve**

**October 13 @ Burns Prairie Preserve**

**November 10 @ Dayton Wet Prairie Preserve**

All workdays are from 10:00-Noon. More info is on our website: [chikamingopenlands.org/events](http://chikamingopenlands.org/events)

