



CHIKAMING OPEN LANDS

Summer 2023 Newsletter

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STEWARDSHIP NEVER STOPS

If you could make a positive impact that would last a lifetime, would you? What about an impact that would last forever?

Chikaming Open Lands runs on a network of land stewards who make an eternally lasting, positive impact on the natural landscape of Berrien County. Made up of volunteers, donors, and staff, this network of stewards directly improve and protect the land through their sweat equity, donations, and passion. When Chikaming Open Lands creates or acquires a nature preserve, we make a serious, permanent commitment: protecting, managing, and caring for (or “stewarding”) that preserve *forever*. Through your support of COL and land stewardship, you can contribute to that lasting impact.

Land stewardship is the process by which we care for the land and ensure it maintains as much of its natural character as possible. When land is well-cared for, precious habitat is protected and native wildlife can flourish as nature intended. That might sound simple enough, but what exactly does this land stewardship “process” look like? In reality, it can look like a lot of different things.

Sometimes, the land stewardship process is very physical and involves using tools and chemicals to remove and contain invasive species that threaten our native wildlife. It includes planting native plants, conducting prescribed burns, and engaging in other land management practices that benefit native wildlife, such as prairie mowing.

Land stewardship also involves keeping tabs on our progress: we take wildlife inventories, measure water quality, and monitor plants to ensure our efforts are truly making a difference. Other times, land stewardship comes in the form of education. We teach the next generation about how they can best care for the surrounding environment so they can carry on our mission and work after we are no longer here. Stewardship also includes advocating for the well-being of our lands and the wildlife that dwell within them — because they cannot speak for themselves.



If you think that sounds like a lot of work, you're right, but it is incredibly important, rewarding work. It is work that considers the past, present, and future all at once. It is work built on a promise to keep our natural areas natural. It is work that invests in a world we will not personally live to experience, but still value.



It's also work that we cannot do alone. A critical aspect of land stewardship is the involvement of the community, both to help us manage COL preserves and for financial support. Effectively taking care of the lands we protect requires a host of resources — time, funding, and elbow grease, to name a few.

That's part of the reason we depend so heavily on our volunteer stewards, donors, board, and community — we need all hands on deck in order to have lasting success.

So, while the word “stewardship” might conjure up thoughts of hard work, sweat, and getting your hands dirty, we hope that you will think of it as something more. It is the commitment to take care of the land for as long as possible however you can, whether that's by coming to a stewardship workday, making a donation, or simply by spreading the word about Chikaming Open Lands. Together, we can preserve the open spaces and natural rural character of Berrien County before eventually passing the torch to future generations for them to protect and enjoy . . . forever.

Summer Stewardship Days

June Stewardship Day

Sat. June 10, 10 am - 12 pm

Myron Perlman Nature Preserve

Want a sneak peek of our new preserve? Help us clear the trail and be one of the first people to hike our newest property, Myron Perlman Nature Preserve!

July Stewardship Day

Sat. July 8, 10 am - 12 pm

Grand Beach Marsh Preserve

You can help the marsh thrive! Join us for a rewarding summer morning spent clearing invasive shrubs and vines.

August Stewardship Day

Sat. August 5, 10 am - 12 pm

Chris Thompson Memorial Preserve

Get your loppers ready! We are extending this trail system along the beautiful Galien River. This will be a rugged workday off the trail and along the side of a ravine.

We like to be prepared!

Advance registration for stewardship days is encouraged.

To register, please contact Dan Engel, COL Stewardship Coordinator, at dengel@chikamingopenlands.org or call (269) 405-1006.

HELP PRESERVE OUR CHERISHED OPEN SPACES

Join us to make our community a better place to live, work, and play.

Your gift to Chikaming Open Lands 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 support makes it all happen.

Together, we can determine what our local landscapes will look like 100 years from now.

Scan the QR code to make your donation today!



Mark Your Calendars for our Annual Benefit!

Saturday, August 12, 5 pm - 7 pm

Join us for a fun and relaxed evening with cocktails, hors d'oeuvres, a silent auction & raffle, and good company in a beautiful rural setting. The event will be held at a stunning 30-acre property, complete with wildflower gardens and a renovated barn. Proceeds benefit Chikaming Open Lands. For more information, please contact Jen Thompson at (269) 405-1006 or jthompson@chikamingopenlands.org. Tickets go on sale mid-July.



With Thanks to Our Sponsors:



SUMMER EVENTS AND PROGRAMS

June

Forest Bathing

Wed. June 21, 10 am - 1 pm

Sugarwood Forest
Preserve

Want to reconnect with nature and release stress? Join us with ANFT Certified Forest Therapy Guide Karen Joy from Nature Therapy of Michiana for a morning of recentering at Sugarwood Forest Preserve.

July

Goat Hike at Verdant Hollow Farms

Wed. July 19, 10 am - 11:30 am

Verdant Hollow Farms

You've goat to be kidding! Goats can help control invasive plants? Join us to learn about Verdant Hollow Farms' mission while hangin' with the herd.

August

Fungus Among Us Hike

Mon. August 28, 10 am -
11:30 am

Edward and Elizabeth
Leonard Wildlife Preserve

Join COL and Charlie Haven from Covenant Farm as we learn about the fungus that's among us.

Reading in Robinson Woods Series

Tues. June 6, July 11, &
August 8

10 am - 11:30 am

Thurs. June 8, July 13, &
August 10

4:30 pm - 6 pm

Robinson Woods
Preserve

Bring storytime outside with COL! Join us at Robinson Woods Preserve for story time under the famous "Mighty Oak" this summer.

All events require pre-registration.

To register, please contact Grace Ball, Education & Outreach Coordinator, at gball@chikamingopenlands.org

#10Trail Challenge

July 1 - July 31

Northwest Indiana
and Southwest Michigan

On your mark, get set, hike those trails! We are so excited to bring back the #10Trail Challenge for its sixth consecutive year. Each July this hiking challenge highlights trails throughout Northwest Indiana and Southwest Michigan. To earn prizes, participants must hike at least 10 of the 15 featured trails, snap photos at each selfie station, and tag us on social media. Last year brought record breaking registration numbers with many of the participants taking it further and completing the Extreme 15! Check out our events calendar to see this year's featured locations.



Kayak and Brews Series

Mon. June 26, July 31, August 28, &
September 25

2 pm - 5 pm

Galien River Marsh & Ghost Isle
Brewery

Explore the Galien River Marsh with Chikaming Open Lands and Ghost Isle Brewery! This guided kayak tour starts at the City Boat Launch in New Buffalo and takes participants upstream through the Galien River Marsh. After the tour, participants are invited back to Ghost Isle Brewery to enjoy discounted food & drinks with a front row view of the beautiful Galien.

For more information on COL events,

scan the QR code or visit
www.chikamingopenlands.org/events.

