



Currents

Help us protect Lake Huron beauty

Hess Property

WITH A NEW MATCH GRANT!

BY LAURA JUSTIN
Executive Director

Some folks may not realize everything that goes into our decisions to accept a conservation easement or a preserve. I could easily fill this entire newsletter with those considerations but that might be a little boring. Instead, I will focus on just one aspect, which is funding. HeadWaters requires that each project we accept be fully funded before we proceed. The costs involved range from administrative work to legal fees, travel expenses and stewardship costs, in perpetuity. It can add up to a significant number.

HeadWaters has to balance preservation of land with preservation of the organization. We want to protect as much of northeast Michigan as possible

while understanding that we have limitations. So when an opportunity for a rare and important property is presented to us, we look for your help to make it happen.

A gem of land on Lake Huron is being gifted to HeadWaters by Dr. George Hess. The property includes 600 feet of shoreline, unique natural communities and rare plants. Previous studies by Michigan Natural Features Inventory have confirmed the property's significant biodiversity. This tract contains coastal fen, limestone cobble shore, wooded dune and swale complex as well as a significant interdunal wetland! *And to put it all in layman's terms, this place is amazing!*

And not only do we have the generous donation of land by Dr. Hess, we have also been offered a way to double every penny raised for this project up to \$7,500! The Twyman Family Match Grant will help us to reach our goal of \$15,000 by doubling each donation we receive! This is one of the rare and glorious moments when we can have a **WIN-WIN-WIN** for land protection!

With your help, we will preserve these rare communities that contain Houghton's goldenrod, Lake Huron tansy, English sundew, and can support the Hines emerald dragonfly and eastern Massasauga rattlesnake. With your help, we can conserve something beautiful, together, forever.

Neumann Conservation Easement

**New
Location!**

ANNUAL Appreciation Picnic

at the Neumann Conservation Easement

The grills will be smoking with delicious food & you're welcome to bring a dish to pass. Wine and beer will be available to enjoy in your complimentary, hand-painted wineglass.

Saturday, August 6th from Noon-2:00

7763 Welch Trail, Grayling, MI – just east of Lovely Lovells!
PLEASE RSVP to 989-731-0573 as soon as possible!

** We apologize for any inconvenience due to the change in venue!*

Join us at the 4th Annual ...

Hotshots for HeadWaters Sporting Clays Fundraiser

Preserving the land and water of northeast Michigan for sportsmen to enjoy!

Saturday, August 27

9:30 a.m. Sign in - 10:00 a.m. Start

Donation Request is \$100—Includes
a delicious lunch, hot off the grill and 100 targets

Lewiston Sportsmen's League
7689 Sheridan Valley Rd., Lewiston, MI 49756

**Register by August 15 to be entered
to win a flat of shotgun shells!**

**Raffles, Prize Giveaways
Silent Auction
& more!**



Register at
www.headwatersconservancy.org
or call 989-731-0573

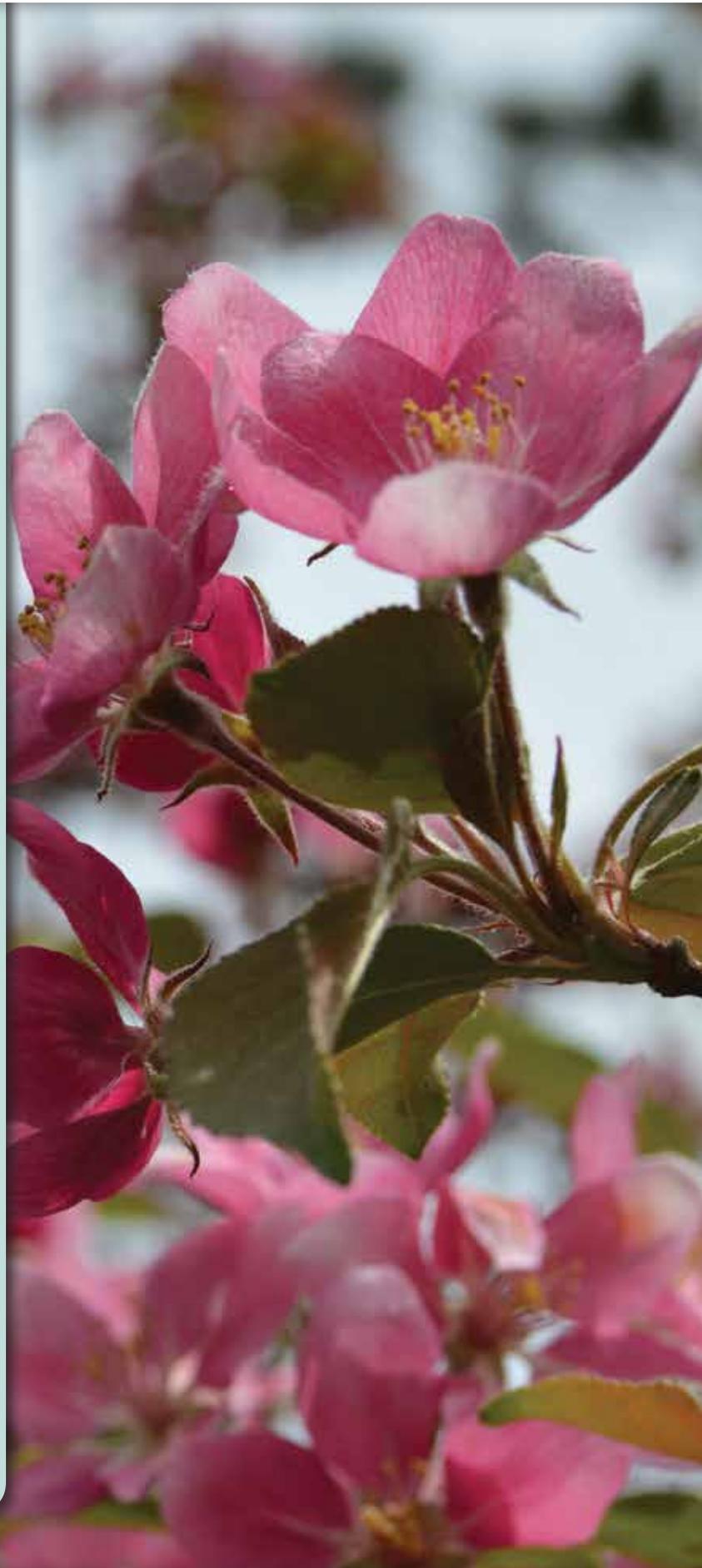
75 APPLE TREES

BY VIRGINIA PIERCE

Board Member and Conservation Easement Donor

For those of us who care about conservation, trees are hugely important. They are important to wildlife for food, as well as shelter from enemies and the blistering hot days of summer. To my husband Don Inman and me, trees are hugely important. If you're reading this, conservation is important to you too. So you may be interested in a project we embarked on this year; to plant and protect seventy five trees. These are apple and crabapple trees, favorites of grouse, turkey, deer, and many other birds and animals.

We heard about a grant, available through the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) for this sort of thing, and determined it was a great opportunity to create some diversity in an area that is primarily blueberry, huckleberry and grass. We applied for and received a small grant for the project. We have virtually no experience with planting and caring for fruit trees, but have learned so much in the several months between grant application and putting roots in the ground. Of course, we expect to learn much more over the course of a few years. We hope our education won't come at the expense of the trees. The first thing we learned should have been obvious: whatever can go wrong will. Organizing a project like this was a little like juggling several balls in the air. It is important that none of them crash to the ground. However, with the help and expertise of neighbors and friends, it has been an exciting and rewarding process. Nearly every day, we travel to the north side of our property to examine new growth, or to water, or just to look at the trees. These puny little stems carry the genetic material to provide so much, not only for wildlife, but for us too. We'll watch them grow and bear fruit; and hopefully watch them provide for the wildlife that never ceases to fascinate and entertain us.



PLAYING WITH FROGS: A GATEWAY TO FIELDS ON EARTH AND BEYOND

BY CHRIS ENGLE
Contributor

I am a proud stay-at-home dad and, until Paige goes to preschool in the fall, I'm her teacher too. Our classroom is the great outdoors and we have no lesson plan. The things she learns, the things she tells her mom at dinner, the things she talks about over her bedtime story all mostly come from whatever she picked up and held in those little hands that day. She gravitates to living, breathing, squirming things, the slimier the better.

Otsego County offers no shortage of places for us to explore. She collects pine cones during our yearly springtime bonfire at the county park. She plays with the minnows I catch for her at the beach. Fall brings mushroom-gazing hikes at HeadWaters' Sturgeon River Preserve and we ice fish in winter.

In between are camping trips across the Northern Lower and Upper peninsulas where we take in waterfalls and forests as a family. She's accumulated three ticks so far this season, though I tell her it's just pine sap I'm plucking off her scalp with tweezers. We do this

stuff together because it's the same stuff I grew up doing with my family and friends, ticks included. My best childhood memories were born from it and, just like any parent, I love to see the same joy in my kid.

It's my hope this sense of wonder leads her into a field where she is happy. So far it seems she's destined for a career that involves caring for animals – veterinarian is a traditional go-to for a four-year-old girl – but any job in the environmental sciences is a noble one and her horizons are bound to expand as she gets older.

The job potential for Paige's generation go so far beyond the horizon that we don't even know what they are yet. Allow me to stretch your imagination for a moment. A couple years ago I saw Fred Haise speak at North Central Michigan College. Now in his 80s, Haise was the lunar module pilot for Apollo 13, NASA's doomed third attempt at landing on the moon in 1970. At the end of his talk he took questions from the audience. I stood up and told him briefly about my toddler daughter's

then-budding interest in space and asked what career path would be best for her to choose should she ever want to go to the stars. "She could become a pilot," he said, falling back on NASA's tendency to select fighter pilots like himself as the program's first astronauts. "Or an engineer," he added, which he also was. Then he paused for a moment, looking like he was thinking about how the space program is evolving right now to frontiers far beyond Earth orbit. "Or she could be any kind of scientist," he shrugged.

He's right: For the first time in human history, Mars is actually within our grasp. It is possible the private firm SpaceX will land astronauts on our neighboring planet in 2025 and NASA is planning a manned landing in the 2030s. It won't just be military pilots and engineers going on the journey. Because of the possibility that bacterial life is or has been on Mars, all kinds of scientists will be taking the trip -- geologists, chemists, microbiologists and the like.

I think any graduate of the sciences will say they found their spark by playing in the dirt as kids. A single fossil, a flower, a frog, no matter how mundane to us grownups, can mean the world to a child's imagination and lead them on a lifetime of exploration. As her dad and teacher, it's my duty to show her the way.

As a society, it's our duty to make sure our kids, grandkids and generations far beyond have plenty of places to explore here on Earth. That mission, I think, is the most noble of all.

– Chris Engle is an avid outdoorsman and freelance outdoor columnist in Hayes Township, Otsego County. He can be reached at englemobile@gmail.com.



Paige Engle, amused by a mushroom, crouches for a closer look during a hike with her dad at the Sturgeon River Preserve.

TURTLE *Crossing*



As spring turns to summer in northern Michigan, vehicle traffic increases on our roadways. Wildlife movement increases at this time as well, and deceased animals on the roads become a heartbreakingly common sight. When a deer bounds across the road, it typically happens too fast for a driver to react. Not surprisingly, when a turtle crosses the road looking for a nest site or mate, it does so considerably slower. Michigan is home to ten species of turtles, including two threatened species and two of special concern. Turtle populations have been impacted by wetland loss and shoreline development. As a member of HWLC, you are already helping to protect important turtle habitat in northeast Michigan, and you can also do your part to help turtles survive a road crossing.

Keep an eye out for turtles while you're driving, especially near wetlands and ponds. If you spot a turtle crossing the road, slow down and do your best to avoid hitting it. If it is safe to do so, pull over and move the turtle to the side of the road or ditch in the direction it was traveling. To move a small turtle, gently grasp it on each side of its shell behind its front legs, and hold it low to the ground as you move it in case you lose your grip. If the turtle

has a long tail, it is likely a snapping turtle. Snapping turtles have very long necks and can be aggressive, and can easily reach around and bite. If you need to move a snapping turtle or are uncomfortable picking up a turtle, use a long, blunt instrument, such as a shovel, to gently slide the turtle across the road.

If you find an injured turtle or other animal, contact one of two licensed wildlife rehabilitators in northeast Michigan:

- Nature's Kingdom Wildlife Rehab in Herron (989-727-3893) or Harrisburg (989-335-5786)
- A.R.K. Association to Rescue Critters in St. Helen (989-389-3305)

For more information on turtles and other Michigan wildlife, visit www.michigan.gov/wildlife

During our spring bird hike at Wakeley Lake Natural Area in late May, we had the opportunity to observe multiple Blanding's Turtles, a species of special concern in Michigan. The forests at Wakeley Lake are managed for old growth, so trees are left to mature. Some of these trees will inevitably die and come down, which creates ideal habitat for a wide variety of wildlife, especially small mammals and ground



nesting birds. Blanding's Turtle requires this large woody debris near shallow water and wetlands, plus adjacent upland habitat for nesting. Phil Huber, a Forest Biologist with the U.S. Forest Service, graciously agreed to lead our hike again. We decided to walk the trail around Wakeley Lake, and as we approached the shore we heard loons calling and watched the sun come up over the lake. By the time we made it around the lake, the forest was considerably quieter, but we had seen or heard 40 different bird species! Thanks to the varied habitats surrounding Wakeley Lake, our list included waterfowl and nine species of wood warblers. We hope you can join us next year for another great hike!



INTERN JOINS HWLC

Greetings, ladies and gentlemen! My name is Alan McTaggart and I am the new Stewardship and Outreach Assistant here at HeadWaters Land Conservancy. This position gives me my first real exposure to the northeastern part of Michigan and I must say I am already enjoying it. This region offers the splendor of wilderness in many ways, whether it's the winding waters of the Au Sable River, the forests and rolling hills of the Pigeon River Country, or the shore of Lake Huron. This area offers wonderful opportunities to conserve pristine lands and educate people about them and I am happy to now be part of the effort to do that.

I was born in Ashland, OH in 1994 but my family moved to Houghton, MI before I turned one, so the western Upper Peninsula always has been and always will be the fatherland to me. I lived there from that time right up until I left for college and in all those years in the UP, I gained a great appreciation and understanding of wild places. It is because of this that I became passionate about going into conservation of some sort, and I carry that passion with me to this day.

My college years began in the fall of 2012 at Central Michigan University and ended with my graduation in the spring of 2016 with a Bachelor of Science in Biology with a concentration in Natural Resources. During that time I was involved in environmentalism and science in many ways as I was part of our student chapter of The Wildlife Society as well as CMU's Student Environmental Alliance. Through these organizations I got exposure to all aspects of environmental preservation whether it be wildlife management, use of GIS software, stewardship and land management, or grassroots political organizing.



My primary task at HeadWaters Land Conservancy (besides what Libby and Laura tell me to do) will be to help plan, organize, promote, and run outreach events. Educating people about nature and getting them to enjoy it, regardless of their background, is fundamental to the success of conservation efforts and I am thrilled to be working in that capacity. As far as conservation easements go, I'll be the first to admit that I know next to nothing, but that will just make it all the more fun to learn about that side of HeadWaters' work and to assist in the monitoring and protection of those lands. I know this job has many things in store for me and I look forward to those new experiences and the people I will get to work with. What can I say, the job has been great so far and I see no reason why that should change!

Sincerely,

Alan William McTaggart,
Stewardship and Outreach Assistant



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~ Pass it on!**



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Event Calendar 2016

SATURDAY, AUGUST 6

Annual Appreciation Gathering
at the Neumann Conservation Easement.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 27

4th Annual Hotshots for HeadWaters Sporting
Clays Fundraiser at Lewiston Sportsmen's
League in Lewiston.

**Please check the website for additional
events happening this summer!**
www.headwatersconservancy.org

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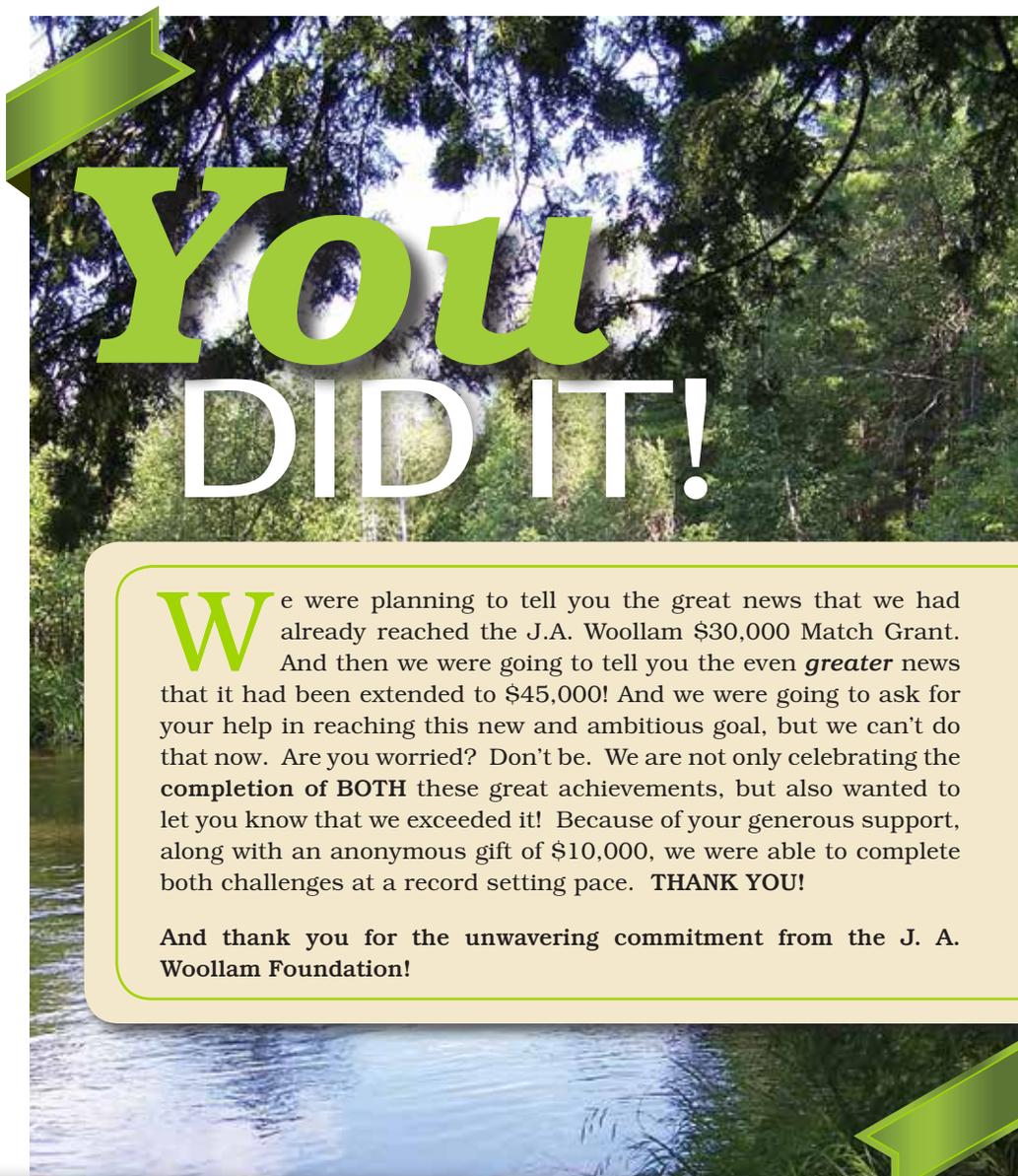
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You DID IT!

We were planning to tell you the great news that we had already reached the J.A. Woollam \$30,000 Match Grant. And then we were going to tell you the even **greater** news that it had been extended to \$45,000! And we were going to ask for your help in reaching this new and ambitious goal, but we can't do that now. Are you worried? Don't be. We are not only celebrating the **completion of BOTH** these great achievements, but also wanted to let you know that we exceeded it! Because of your generous support, along with an anonymous gift of \$10,000, we were able to complete both challenges at a record setting pace. **THANK YOU!**

And thank you for the unwavering commitment from the J. A. Woollam Foundation!