



Currents

**Protecting the
"Up North" You Love!**

Annual Gathering

July 19th, 2008 started as a hot, partly-cloudy day that held the threat of afternoon showers, but the group of members, staff and trustees of the Conservancy who met at Gate's AuSable Lodge managed to get in a great day of food, friendship, and sharing of our excitement for land conservation before the rains came.

The day included lots of time for informal conversation and meeting new friends over a picnic meal of burgers and brats. It was good to be able to put names with faces and hear from several members who have been involved with HeadWaters from the beginning (see the story by Joe Kutkuhn elsewhere

in this issue). Highlights included some great silent auction items, a talk from the University of Michigan Biological Station's Director Knute Nadelhoffer on the station's 100th year of teaching and research, recognition of the long tenure of out-going trustee Steve Qua, and have we mentioned all the great food?

While the unsteady weather kept some of you from attending, we hope to see you next year for a great day of fun, fellowship, and celebration of our continued successes in protecting the land and waters of northern Michigan.

Thanks to all who worked to make this year's gathering a success, everyone who donated or bid on auction items, and a special thank you to our hosts, Rusty and Julie Gates.

Left Bottom: Board President Don Inman (R) presents outgoing board member Steve Qua with a token of our esteem. Left Top: Grillin' our lunch were board members Howard French (L) and Jim Supina.



HWLC GATHERING AT RUSTY'S - JULY 19, 2008

IN THIS ISSUE

Newest Staff Member	3	The Beginning	6
New Federal Law.....	3	Support HWLC	7
Gahagan Preserve	4		

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Growing up in Indiana, summer meant my Dad saying, “Let’s throw a few,” or “Let’s shoot a few,” or “Let’s go fishing.” “Throwing a few” meant playing catch in the back yard. “Shooting a few” meant going up to the school basketball court and playing a pickup game of basketball – hey, it was Indiana. Going fishing speaks for itself. My Dad had, what today we could call a network, of farmers who had ponds on their farms filled with bass and bluegills. We’d go around the pond and cast with spinning gear with “Jitterbugs” and “Crazy Crawlers,” and usually caught a bass or two. On the best pond, we had to keep an eye out for the bull, who did not like us on “his” land. My Dad and I were fearless, but often ran for the fence and reached it just ahead of a snorting, fire breathing bull. Maybe that was why it was the best pond. Rational folks wouldn’t go there just to fish. Dedicated fishermen and women aren’t rational.

Mom sometimes would get in the act by announcing, “We’re having a picnic tonight.” That meant we would take a little charcoal grill, painted in a scotch plaid, down to the river and grill hot dogs or hamburg-

ers while Dad and I would go carp fishing. Carp were the only living things, I think, in the Salamonie River in those days. We’d use Uncle Sam’s carp balls. That wasn’t a commercial brand, but a very special concoction created by my Great Uncle Sam. It started with fermented muskrat’s from his trap line and who knows what else. Let’s just say Uncle Sam didn’t socialize in high society. But he did make great carp balls and lived behind the baseball diamond, where foul balls landed in his huge garden. My Dad in the 1930’s and I in the 1950’s never had to buy a baseball. Uncle Sam was really cool, even though I never saw him in anything but bib overalls.

Another summer treat was going to my Grandparents house for two weeks. Grandma would make my favorite things. Grandpa would make homemade ice cream, and I still use the “secret” recipe when I make it every summer. And every Thursday, Grandpa would leave his Doctor’s office at 11 and we’d go fishing. Grandma would send us off with sandwiches, our favorite cookies and milk in a Thermos. Grandpa had his network too. In this case, it was landowners who had a catalpa tree loaded with catalpa worms – “the world’s greatest bluegill bait”, according to Grandpa. Grandpa was a cane pole bluegill fisherman.

We’d drive to a lake in northeastern Indiana, rent a boat, anchor and wait for the bobber to go down. In the meantime, Grandpa and I would sing fishing songs. “Down by the water in the itty bitty boo, swam three little fishies and the mommy fishy too...,” was one. I sang that one to my first grandchild Andrew, when I held him in my arms the first time. “Gone fishin on a summer day, gone fishin just to pass the time away...,” is one I still hum to myself. I’d sometimes get bored because my Grandpa would not move the boat. He’d just smile, eat cookies, sing songs and ask how my curveball was coming along. Today, I know that was his way of getting away from it all. As I sit by the Black River today, waiting for a hatch, I sometime forget to fish. I just watch the river flow by and listen to its music.

Last summer, in Indiana, in my hometown where my mother still lives, I took a ride to look for the ponds. The pond the bull guarded has been filled in and grows corn for ethanol. The old ponds east of town are also gone, filled in and now have houses.

On the way back to Michigan, we drove though lake country to a little town called Indian Lake, where my grandfather rented a boat from a farmer. The small chain of lakes are still there, but have mini mansions around them and no rental boats. Where can kids go today to fish and get connected to the out of doors? If you haven’t read, “The Last Child in the Woods” by Richard Louv, please, please do so.

Rusty Gates said to me some months ago, “I wish we’d had a land trust thirty years ago on the Au Sable.” We don’t want people to say thirty years from now, “I wish HeadWaters had done more thirty years ago.” All of this is why I come to work every day. Have a great summer and for gosh sakes, take a kid fishing.

– Dave



Welcome To Our Newest Staff Member!!

A lifelong native of Michigan, John Frye grew up in the heart of the northeast Lower Peninsula. Following in his fathers footsteps as an avid outdoorsman and logger, John received

his degree in Forest Technology from Michigan Technological University in the spring of 1998. John is excited to be the new Land Protection Specialist for Headwaters Land Conservancy. In his new position he will be assisting landowners interested in protecting their land, writing conservation easements, and work with other regional agencies to help improve, restore, and protect the quality of their natural lands for the future. When not helping landowners with their conservation easements, he and his wife Wendy have been planting their property with over 22,000 trees and shrubs, and numerous wildlife food plots. You can find John and Wendy spending their free time cycling, running with their two dogs, or snowshoeing in the winter.

More Ways You Can Support Your HeadWaters Land Conservancy!

- Give a Gift Membership!
- Tell us if your employer matches your charitable gifts!
- Volunteer!
- Remember HWLC in your estate planning!
- Tell your Friends & Family about our work and invite them to join us!
- Explain the importance of private land conservation to your Friends and Neighbors!
- Tell the Staff about land owners you think we should contact!
- Help us identify prospective donors!
- Distribute extra newsletters! (We'll send them to you - just ask!)
- Become a member of the Sustainer's Circle! (Less than \$10 a week!!)
- Donate appreciated assets like securities or land - and avoid taxes on the gains!
- Write an article for "Currents."
- Send a supportive letter to the editor of your local paper about us!
- Put a new roof on our building!

New Federal Law Gives More Appropriate Tax Benefit for Voluntary Conservation Agreements

Generous landowners who donate voluntary conservation agreements, also known as conservation easements, to the HeadWaters Land Conservancy are inspired by many things: their love of Michigan's north woods, a feeling of connection with their lands, and their wish to leave a legacy for future generations to enjoy. This inspiration is at the heart of our work to permanently protect valuable natural resources.

Donating a conservation easement is a major financial decision, and the federal income tax deduction that comes from a donation helps make easements attractive to more landowners in our region. Now that deduction is an even bigger incentive.

Congress recently passed a new Farm Bill which, in part, extends the tax benefits for protecting private land until the end of 2009. The legislation improves the tax incentive for conservation by allowing conservation easement donors to:

Deduct up to 50% of their adjusted gross income in any year (up from 30%);

Deduct up to 100% of their adjusted gross income if the majority of that income came from farming, ranching or forestry; and carry this deduction forward for as many as 16 years (up from 6 years).

Congress also passed tighter appraisal standards for such gifts and stronger penalties for appraisers who violate the standards.

The Land Trust Alliance led a coalition of more than 50 groups in urging Congress to approve this new law. The Alliance is a national organization that sets national standards for conservation organizations like ours, provides training and networking opportunities, and represents the land trust community in Washington, DC. HeadWaters Land Conservancy has been a member of the Alliance almost since our beginning.

Each day we are touched by the generous and inspired landowners who work with us. The new law will make it easier for others in our community to build on their love of the land and permanently protect the beauty of northern Michigan.

To learn more about these new developments, visit us on the web at www.headwatersconservancy.org or the Land Trust Alliance at www.LandTrustAlliance.org.



GAHAGAN PRESERVE AND HEADWATERS MAKE AN IMPACT

Marguerite Gahagan Nature Preserve (GNP) established a conservation easement with Headwaters Land Conservancy in 2004. Unlike other projects of Headwaters, the preserve's land is public, making this a unique relationship. Operations at Gahagan are managed by a non-profit organization. Having the conservation easement on the publicly held land protects the preserve from future political land-use decisions. With the land protected, GNP can focus on its other major mission, outdoor education.

Marguerite Gahagan was an early Michigan conservation journalist who founded *The North Woods Call* in 1953. In 1959, Marguerite purchased ten wooded acres in Roscommon and moved herself and *The Call* to the site of today's Gahagan Preserve. She was known as a hard-driving reporter who made weekly visits gathering the latest news from field stations of what was then the Michigan Conservation Department. The view from her cabin inspired her regular column "Pine Whispers" which chronicled the daily events of her woodland sanctuary.

When Marguerite passed in 1997, she gifted her ten-acre property and the cabin home as a nature preserve. The property consists of mature pine forests, cedar swamps and the beginnings of Tank Creek, which feeds into the South Branch of the Au Sable River. The preserve is affiliated with

the Roscommon Metropolitan Recreation Authority and includes fifty additional acres, which were acquired later.

The principal mission of the GNP is to encourage awareness of the need and value of protecting natural habitats and wildlife. Towards that goal the preserve provides environmental education to surrounding school districts. Each year, around 70 classes of K-7 students visit the preserve on field trips. The preserve also conducts a visiting naturalist program reaching more than 4,800 area students. By working with parents in the Environmental Learning for the Future program (ELF), an additional 1,200 student contact hours in environmental education are provided. The GNP Board spearheaded the recent development of the Upper Au Sable River Water Quality Monitoring Project. It works with Boy Scouts by providing a place where Eagle Scout candidates can demonstrate leadership skills while also accomplishing improvements to enhance the facility. The preserve is currently engaged in a long-term study of deer browsing impacts and provides opportunity for visits to view the study first hand.

Walk the trails, listen to the birds and watch the water gather in the cedars as it begins its journey to Lake Huron. Reach GNP from the I-75 Business Loop just south of Roscommon. Look for the sign at the industrial park by Roscommon Manufacturing (South Street). Travel west about one-half mile and look for the **Headwaters Land Conservancy** sign on your right.

Google: Gahagan Nature Preserve. Phone 989 275-3217

HeadWaters Land Conservancy to benefit from the sale of GLFT AuSable River Property!

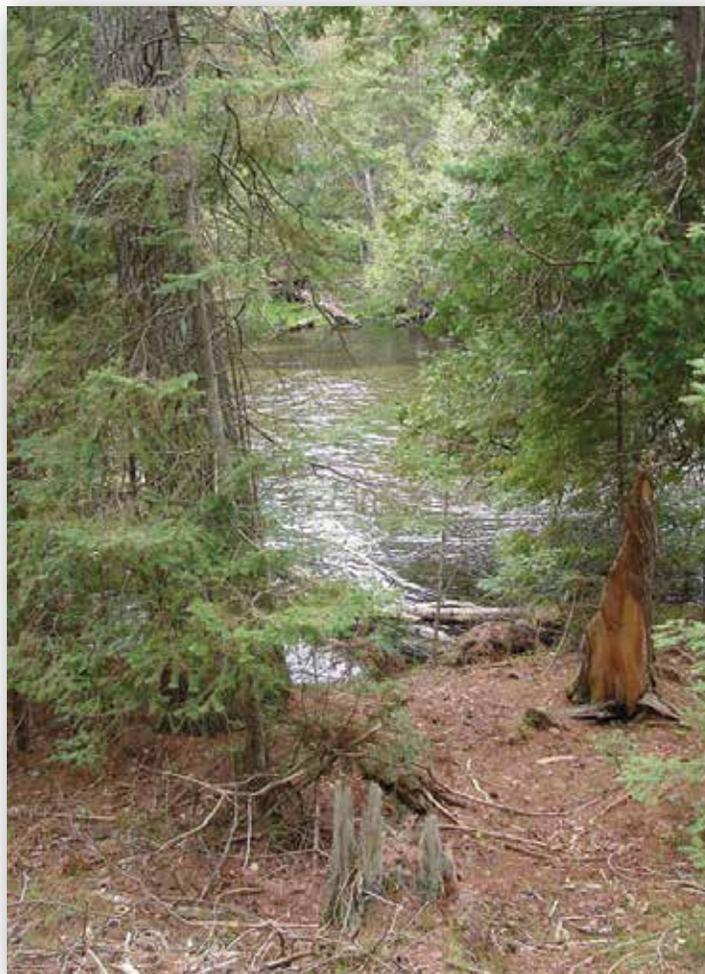
In an effort to support HeadWaters' land protection work on the AuSable River, the Great Lakes Fishery Trust will donate the net proceeds from the sale of nearly 30 acres of forested land with over 200' of frontage on the 'Holy Water' section of this legendary river.

This spectacular property has already been protected in perpetuity with a conservation easement.

The GLFT notes that they are eager to maximize the return on the sale of this property in order to have the largest impact possible on protecting the famous AuSable River system.

The GLFT is an innovative funding source created in 1996 as part of the settlement with Consumers Energy and the Detroit Edison Company for fish losses caused by the operation of the Ludington Pumped Storage Plant. The GLFT provides funding to educational institutions, nonprofit organizations, and government agencies for projects related to Great Lakes fisheries to provide mitigation for the losses.

Property details, including the conservation easement, survey, preliminary title-work and appraisal are available by contacting Lance Weyeneth of Headwater Realty, LLC. 989.705.2600. His company e-mail address is Lance@TheRiverSpecialist.com



The Beginning – A Need Fulfilled

Joe Kutkuhn, Upper Manistee River Association

As the ranks of newcomers to northern Lower Michigan's land-preservation scene continue to multiply, more and more are asking me as a surviving founder and its first chair about the origin and birth of the **HeadWaters Land Conservancy**. Indeed, scant detail and some misinformation point to an undeniable gap in the public record of Conservancy genesis. Accordingly, our executive director has invited me to recap the organization's early history. I'm pleased to do so even though handicapped somewhat by sketchy notes, misplaced documents and increasingly hazy recall.

It all began 15 years ago in early August 1993 with phone calls to an unknown number of potentially interested parties—almost exclusively representatives of regional conservation groups—by **Diane Rekowski** of the *Northeast Michigan Council of Governments* (NEMCOG): Would we like to informally get together to explore the feasibility of organizing and instituting a land conservancy that would service northeast Lower Michigan? To Diane, matching in kind what the *Little Traverse* and *Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancies* already represented in northwest Lower Michigan made eminent sense. Now all of northern Lower Michigan—resource- and scenic-rich but development-threatened—would be covered by dedicated groups ready to facilitate land-protection options for private, stewardship-oriented landowners. For her subsequent tenacity and follow-up assistance in pursuit of this vision, Diane deserves enormous credit.

The relatively few respondents to her invitation met at the NEMCOG office in Gaylord on August 17, 1993. It was at this meeting that she first elaborated on the conservancy concept and rationale, obviously motivated by the widely recognized need for an expanded focus on land protection in the Lower Peninsula's northeast sector. And it was at this meeting, in response to Diane's post-argument question about our sentiments on this weighty issue, that what we support today as a major land-protection player was conceived. Let me also recount—contrary to what some may have been led to believe—that citizen volunteers alone, as opposed to any on-the-job agency or agency-affiliated individuals, made the decision and commitment to implement it. Support for this momentous move was unanimous among fellow attendees though not all were in a position at the time to participate in its development. The several who were included **Rob Morley** of the *Higgins Lake Property Owners Association*, **Jim Williams**, a semi-retired planning consultant and myself, a retired natural resources professional. I agreed to serve as acting chair and Rob as fund-raising facilitator; Diane offered to continue *ad interim* as secretary during the fledgling organization's start-up phase. We also concurred

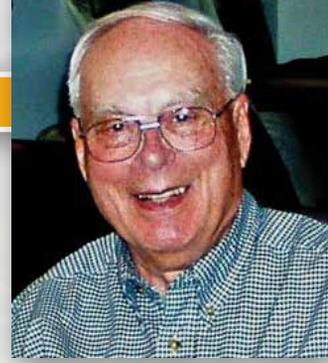
quickly on its name: **HeadWaters Land Conservancy**, for reasons dictated by the region's outstanding and renowned riparian features.

Then followed three months' germination during which our new creation's service area was circumscribed, its purpose and mission defined, its administration formatted, its likely funding prospects identified, its day-to-day operations planned, its operating capital solicited and its membership growth promoted—mainly by word of mouth, mailings and strategic PSAs. Three meetings in this period, each open to any and all conservation-minded citizens, accommodated information exchange, review of work in progress, approval of necessary documentation (mission statement, articles of incorporation, by-laws, etc.) and, in general, refinement of funding and recruitment strategy. Leaders of the *Little Traverse* and *Grand Traverse Conservancies* generously provided very helpful counsel and material at many points along the way. But we still lacked legal status.

That objective was soon fulfilled at a follow-up public meeting in Mio on December 2, 1993, truly a red-letter day for the Conservancy. Counseled and encouraged by attorney **Dave Werth** of Alpena, the 18-strong body in attendance declared itself as a whole the **HeadWaters Land Conservancy**, its individuals as provisional directors of the board. The board immediately reviewed and approved for filing our articles of incorporation (AIC) prepared in advance by Dave, suggested some changes in the proposed by-laws (also drafted beforehand by me) and accepted the offer of board member **Marc Richards** to draft for review (by Dave before filing) the paperwork required for acquisition of 501(c)(3) standing as a qualified conservation organization under the federal tax code. The board by consensus further directed that I, together with directors Rob Morley and Jim Williams, be the signatories of these instituting documents. The board went on to formally affirm me as its chair Rob Morley as co-chair, **Henry Waterkamp** as secretary and **Tom Edison** as treasurer. It further created Nominating, Fund-Raising and Membership Committees (others followed later), chaired respectively by Edison, Morley and (temporarily) Rekowski, and laid the groundwork for a Conservancy strategic plan.

At its next two meetings in Lewiston on January 20 and March 10, 1994, the newly constituted Conservancy board presided over signature of the AIC and by-laws, advanced attainment of the organization's tax-exempt certification (received a few months later) and welcomed an announcement by **Dan Sikarskie** that the *Huron Pines RC&D Area Council* in Grayling had agreed to provide *ad hoc* fiduciary services.

Finally, we were in business with status! Although it seemed at the time to have been painfully slow, this volunteer-driven process of going from seed to fruition, from concept to reality,



actually unfolded with surprising alacrity in little more than six months. A much greater challenge, however, now lay before us: How most effectively to enhance the Conservancy's severely limited manpower and fiscal resources while applying the land-protection tools it fostered.

The first five years of its formal existence witnessed lots of hard but rewarding work so directed by a loyal core of dedicated stewards. Though still falling short of securing long-sought funding to support a paid professional staff, the Conservancy board appealed for and did receive significant start-up contributions from several sources, most notably *Anglers of the AuSable*, *ABTCo*, the *Higgins Lake Property Owners Association* and the *Higgins Lake and Morley Brothers Foundations*; further, it followed through with developing and implementing its strategic plan; it prepared and circulated promotional material including a brochure, information pamphlets and quarterly bulletins; it saw membership grow modestly but steadily; it communicated regularly with the media on Conservancy activity and progress; focusing on its most powerful tool, the conservation easement, it made numerous presentations to interested parties, mostly like-minded and property-owner groups; it welcomed its first executive director in January 1996, retaining **Fred Gottschalk**, a near-retirement resource

professional; it solicited and entertained many inquiries from property owners about land-preservation options; it assessed numerous parcels nominated for easement potential (some 43 as of July 1998); and it facilitated the preparation and donation of several easements, the first on its own in 1996, the second in 1997 via transfer of a pre-Conservancy donation brokered by the Little Traverse Conservancy in the HeadWaters service area.

In summarizing here only a small part of their collective monumental effort, let me re-emphasize that *volunteers* performed *all* Conservancy-development work in these early years. They accordingly merit our profound and everlasting gratitude, as do their successors, for keeping the land conservancy movement in northeast Lower Michigan alive and well.

Note: I'm grateful to Henry Waterkamp for his help in ensuring the accuracy of this information. Fault me for inadvertent errors.

– JHK

Support HWLC's Work Today!

For individuals interested in making a long-term difference in conservation in northern Michigan we offer the following very special giving opportunities. Contact Brian Creek, Director of Development if you would like to discuss how you can provide support for our land protection efforts.

Land Patrons

Becoming a Land Patron gives you an easy way to make monthly or quarterly gifts to support land protection in northern Michigan as a convenient alternative to one large annual contribution. This reliable and continuing source of financial support allows HeadWaters to continue our vital conservation efforts, and reduces our fund raising expenses.

Becoming a Land Patron is easy and secure!

1. From our web site, click on the "Donate Now" button on the left side of the screen.
2. Determine the level of support that is right for you and select it on the donations page.
3. Select, "I want to make a recurring donation every ____." And select either "month," or "3 months."

4. Complete the rest of the information on the donations page including your name and credit card information. If you would like to remain anonymous you may do so by selecting that option.
5. Click on the "Continue" button and follow the instructions.

Sustainers Circle

Our Sustainers Circle is a very special group of people who are committed to the long-term goals of the Conservancy. Members of this group have pledged to contribute a minimum of \$500 annually to support the operations of HeadWaters. The Sustainers Circle provides us with the kind of financial support that ensures current success and future stability. Sustainers Circle members have the option of donating their annual pledged amount in smaller monthly contributions. This is especially easy if you use the "Donate Now" button on the web site. Just follow the instructions under "Land Patron" above.





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***Protecting the
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HeadWaters' Legacy Fellowship

The Conservancy's Legacy Fellows are those individuals who have made a planned gift to HeadWaters through their wills, living trusts, retirement plans, life insurance policies or other life income arrangement. If you wish to name HeadWaters Land Conservancy in your will or estate plan, we should be named as follows:

- HeadWaters Land Conservancy, a nonprofit corporation, organized and existing under the laws of the State of Michigan, with its principal business address at 110 South Elm Avenue, Gaylord, Michigan, 49735.
- HeadWaters Land Conservancy is a tax exempt organization under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.
- HeadWaters' tax identification number is: 38-3183846.

When you make a legacy gift to HeadWaters, you join the growing number of very special supporters who are committed to preserving the scenic beauty and natural features unique to Northeast Michigan. If you have included the Conservancy in your estate plans, please let us know so that we can welcome you to our Legacy Fellowship. For additional information please contact our office at (989) 731-0573.

**We'll Save Your Favorite Spot.
Forever**

Join us
in protecting
the watersheds
of the great trout
streams of NE Michigan,
including the Black, Pigeon,
Sturgeon, Manistee,
Muskegon, and
the Legendary
AuSable.



www.headwatersconservancy.org