



# The Chikaming Legacy

Fall 2007

CHIKAMING OPEN LANDS

## COUPLE PRESERVES 71 ACRES FROM DEVELOPMENT

Condensed from article By John Gunner Gooch, South County Gazette - August 4, 2007

Mel and Nancy Johnson will mark 20 years of matrimony in November and they celebrated the occasion a little bit early by giving each other, and the community, a gift that will truly keep on giving. They recently completed a conservation easement with Chikaming Open Lands (COL) that will keep wooded acres surrounding their home on Indian Trail Road, as well as a parcel on the west side of Flynn Road, in a natural state in perpetuity.

Both properties contain significant lengths of the Galien River, are heavily forested, and provide prime habitat for the state-threatened prairie trillium, numerous bird species and other wildlife.

“Because our home here on Indian Trail Road is surrounded by woods we get to see and hear a lot of beautiful birds, such as indigo buntings and wood thrush,” Nancy said. “Right now you’ll see lots of little toads hopping around the yard, and this spring we saw a snapping turtle laying her eggs by the barn. Just over the hill is Johnson’s Creek where we’ve seen salmon and brown trout, but the decline in the water quality of the Galien River from what it was 30 years ago has really concerned us.”

“Mel and I have always been nature lovers, and our children were definitely nature kids who spent a lot of time outdoors and even camped out here with their friends,” Nancy says with a smile. “When we talked to them about this, their support made us even more sure that we were doing the right thing. We’re hopeful that if more people who own property along the river do something similar, it will really help to improve things in the future.”



**Mel and Nancy Johnson protected 71 acres of forested land along the Galien River by establishing a conservation easement with Chikaming Open Lands.**

PROTECTING THE LAND ~ PRESERVING OUR HERITAGE



## DEAR MEMBERS AND FRIENDS OF CHIKAMING OPEN LANDS,

Protecting the Land – Preserving our Heritage. These words are the heart and soul of what we are doing at Chikaming Open Lands. Our Board of Directors and Staff have committed ourselves to these goals. After eight years of building our membership, strengthening our organization, improving our outreach, we have reason to celebrate! In a little over two years, thanks to a grant from the DEQ and the hard work of our Staff, Board, and other working committees, Chikaming Open Lands is proud to announce we have closed on eleven easements protecting 726 acres! Our community is realizing the importance and value of being good stewards of the land.

Another reason to celebrate is the successful conclusion of the second season of our Second Saturday Series. These events were well received with record numbers attending. We are already planning next year's series revolving around the Sima Marsh which many of you have visited by way of our Voyageur Canoe rides.

Organizationally, I am pleased to announce the addition of Paul Miller to our Board of Directors. Paul is an attorney and has been a resident of Lakeside for many years. Also, I am pleased to announce that we have changed Jean Brokish's title to Program Director to better reflect all that she does for COL.

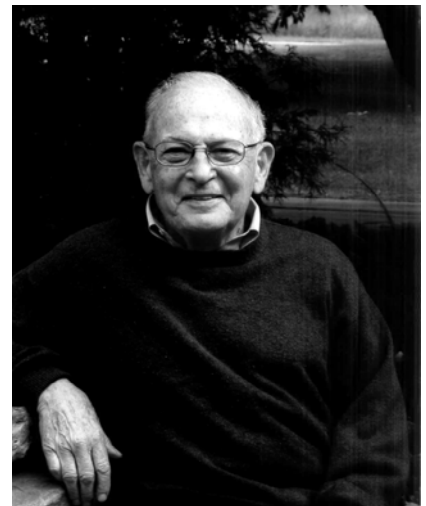
We at Chikaming Open Lands are grateful for our members and your continued support. Your consistent, sustained annual membership insures that we can continue to deliver on our promise of Protecting the Land – Preserving our Heritage.

Sincerely yours,

Jean I. Smith, President

## WELCOME NEW DIRECTOR

Paul Miller is a relative newcomer to Lakeside, but in the eleven years that he and his wife have lived here he has found and developed a passion for the land and what it grows. Born in Boston, Massachusetts, he is a graduate of Boston Public Latin School, Yale, and Harvard Law School. After a few years in Army JAG, in 1957 he came to Chicago where he has practiced law in the firm of Sonnenschein Nath & Rosenthal since his arrival. Paul specialized in corporate and securities law and has had a wide range of experience in those fields, including extensive experience in advising corporate boards and management. He served as a Trustee of The Latin School of Chicago from 1985 to 1991 and is currently a member of the Board of Trustees of The Newberry Library (Chicago).





## SILENT GIANTS CONSERVATION EASEMENT

Bob and Vicki Wagner have owned their property for 20 years and enjoy sharing it with wildlife; over the years they have encountered turkey, coyote, deer and numerous birds. This September, Bob and Vickie made a commitment to preserve their property for future generations with the donation of a conservation easement.

“The US has lost over half its wetlands since Colonial Times, and we are so grateful for the wetlands on our property,” said Vickie, who grew up on a dairy farm in Ohio, works at Notre Dame and serves on many local boards.

Two wetland areas are found on the property, and spring evenings are filled with a frog symphony. A nice array of native wildflowers is also present, including the State-threatened prairie trillium.

Bob spends his days working as a counselor at Bridgman schools, and his weekends in the woods. Bob has great reverence for the trees, and refers to these creatures as “Silent Giants.” When discussing his motivation, Bob quickly mentions that “young people need nature. There is no better place to learn about life than outside, in the woods.”

As if preserving native forest land, important wildlife habitat and pieces of nature for future generations wasn’t enough, this conservation easement also improves water quality in the Galien River. Though not directly connected, the Property lies between Spring Creek, ½ mile to the north, and an unnamed stream, ¼ mile to the southeast, both tributaries of the Galien River. This conservation easement enhances the ecological value of this corridor in the watershed.



Tucked away in the southern part of Three Oaks Township, this 18 acres of forest land has been preserved by Bob and Vickie Wagner.

### Six Years ago...

Chikaming Open Lands protected its first 5 acres. To date our protected properties equal 726 acres!

Chikaming Open Lands is achieving its mission “Protecting the Land and Preserving our Heritage.” With over 500 members supporting this mission, we look forward to meeting our goal of 1500 acres preserved by 2012.

Year	Acreage Protected
2001	5
2002	156
2003	263
2004	10
2006	36
2007	256.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>726.1</b>



## The Chikaming Legacy

### ENJOY OPEN SPACES!

It's never too late to go birding! Some of the least hospitable days of fall weather are the best to see migrating birds along the shoreline! The Louis J. Sima Marsh (owned by COL) and the New Buffalo Harbor and Beach are birding hot spots:

*"...an excellent area to watch offshore for migrating waterfowl and shorebirds. The beach area north of the harbor and the sandy areas on both sides of the inner harbor should be checked for resting shorebirds, gulls and terns...scan the rock jetties carefully as Spotted Sandpipers, Ruddy Turnstones and other species often rest or feed here." [www.sarett.com/birding.htm](http://www.sarett.com/birding.htm)*



**Purple Sandpipers are sometimes found here in the late fall and early winter.**

### COL 2007 SECOND SATURDAY SERIES A GREAT SUCCESS

#### **The Galien Meadow Conservation Easement June 9<sup>th</sup>**

Twenty-eight participants caravanned from COL's office to join owner Diane DeWitt and Naturalist Peg Kohring for a guided tour of this lovely property. Lunch bags were donated by Red Arrow Roadhouse. The weather was beautiful and the wild strawberries afforded the participants a great snack! The Galien Meadow Conservation Easement covers 33 acres of rolling terrain with a small pond. Deer, fox, turkeys and ducks can be found living on the property, as well as a pair of sandhill cranes that live nearby.

#### **Warren Woods July 14<sup>th</sup>**

Fifty-eight participants joined COL and Naturalist Mike Latus on a guided tour of Warren Woods. This is our largest turn out to date for this type of event! It was a perfect day to take a walk in the woods and enjoy the entertaining and knowledgeable presentation given by Mike on River Ecology, Plants, and Stream Health.

#### **Galien River Cleanup August 11<sup>th</sup> ( See Next Page)**

#### **COL Voyageur Canoe Outing September 8<sup>th</sup>**

It was a beautiful day to explore the natural beauty of the Galien River. Three Voyageur Canoe outings, guided by Naturalist Pat Underwood, got an up-close look at the Sima Marsh. "Voyagers" witnessed deer feeding, turtles basking, turkey vultures and a blue Heron, while learning about the delicate and valuable importance of ecological balance in this rare natural marsh.

**To see event pictures and learn more about Chikaming Open Lands visit:  
[www.Chikamingopenlands.org](http://www.Chikamingopenlands.org)**

CHIKAMING OPEN LANDS



# The Chikaming Legacy

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.

Margaret Mead *US anthropologist (1901 - 1978)*

## GALIEN RIVER CLEANUP AUGUST 11TH

Twenty-five determined volunteers joined Chikaming Open Lands and The Conservation Fund to brave the heat and the mosquitoes on the third annual Galien River Cleanup Day. Thanks to their hard work the Galien River and its tributaries are now a little cleaner.

An estimated ten cubic yards of metal, glass, and trash, along with 52 tires were pulled out of seven locations within the Galien Watershed. The areas cleaned, represent approximately 1 mile of stream. The tires were recycled through Berrien County. Disposal services and recycling were contributed by Forest Lawn Landfill, Reliable Disposal, Redbud Recycling, and Weesaw Township.



**Volunteers hard at work cleaning up one of the seven targeted cleanup sites along the Galien River.**



**2500 pounds of trash collected included appliances and other metals that were taken to the recycling center by Dave Carpenter.**

A large “Thank You” to the volunteers for their dedication to getting the job done. This project was made possible by the efforts and support of the Berrien County Resource Recovery, Berrien County Road Commission, The Conservation Fund, Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, Michigan Department of Natural Resources and the Great Lakes Commission.

Divide 10 cubic yards by 25 people and you get approximately 10.5 cubic feet of trash per person. Add in two weeks of heavy rain prior to the cleanup, hot weather and mosquitoes! That’s a lot of trash for one person to move!



## The Chikaming Legacy

### GIVING MADE EASIER

BY STEVE SMITH, TREASURER CHIKAMING OPEN LANDS

I often get asked if there are other ways of giving to Chikaming Open Lands than just writing a check. The answer is “yes” and here are a few ideas for donors to consider.

A very common way is to donate appreciated securities. The donor is entitled to an income tax deduction equal to the market value of the gift on the date of donation and avoids paying any capital gains on the appreciated value of the security. Any donor interested in donating appreciated securities can contact me at 269-469-4941 or Errett Van Nice at Wayne Hummer Investments at 866-713-7227. Donors who make a gift of securities will have the gift valued at the average of the high and low on the date of the gift.

A Michigan resident can donate cash to an endowment fund that Chikaming Open Lands maintains with the Berrien Community Foundation. The benefits are almost too good to believe. This **gift can be worth almost three times its actual out-of-pocket cost!** This astonishing benefit comes to the citizens of Michigan by virtue of Michigan's Tax Credit for Community Foundations coupled with the federal tax deduction. Michigan gives a 50% tax credit (not just a deduction) for donations to community foundations such as the Berrien Community Foundation. There is a maximum as shown below:

Individual Taxpayer	\$100 credit for \$200 gift
Taxpayers filing jointly	\$200 credit for \$400 gift

As an example let's assume a married couple filing jointly gives \$400 to The Chikaming Open Lands Fund at BCF. Assume they are in the 25% federal tax bracket. They first get a federal deduction for the \$400 gift that saves them \$50 in federal tax. They then get the \$200 credit on their Michigan taxes. Consequently, their \$400 gift cost them out-of-pocket only \$150. COL, however, benefits to the tune of the full \$400 invested in an income-yielding portfolio.

For members of COL who would like to give an additional gift beyond their annual membership dues each year this is a great way to help COL at a very favorable cost to the donors. The process is simple:

1. Make check payable to: **BCF/ CHIKAMING OPEN LANDS Endowment Fund**
2. Send check to:

**Berrien Community Foundation  
2900 South State Street, Suite 2 East  
St. Joseph, MI 49085**

3. Notify COL so we can express our gratitude.

Finally, and this only applies if you have an IRA and are 70 ½ or older. For just 2006 and 2007 you can transfer from the IRA a donation directly to a qualified charity such as COL. The transfer is not taxed as a withdrawal, it can be used to meet the donor's minimum required distribution and avoid the income tax on that amount, and it may possibly reduce estate taxes in the future. If anyone is eligible and interested please contact me at the number listed above. As a qualified public charity Chikaming Open Lands can accept such gifts. As a reminder, COL does not give tax advice. Donors should always rely upon their own professional advisors if they are not familiar with the gift procedures outlined here.



# The Chikaming Legacy



## CHIKAMING OPEN LANDS GOES BUGGY FOR A CLEAN GALIEN

Chikaming Open Lands is one of three organizations in the state of Michigan that has been awarded a startup Volunteer Stream Monitoring Grant by MiCorps. This grant is “seed money” to form a volunteer stream monitoring group, conduct research on a monitoring project and design a strategy for implementation. A successful program will greatly benefit the Galien River Watershed. MiCorps will provide training to the volunteers, and the data will be used by the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) as a screening tool to identify sites requiring a more detailed assessment.



### Why monitor streams for macro-invertebrates?

Macro-invertebrates are animals that lack backbones and are visible to the unaided eye. Stream-dwelling populations of insects, worms, mollusks, crustaceans and other creatures are highly sensitive to changes in water quality and provide food for fish and other organisms. Volunteers will assess the quality of local stream habitat by recording macro-invertebrate populations at designated stream sites.

“Volunteer water quality groups represent a significant resource in our state’s efforts to monitor and protect water quality in our rivers, streams and the lakes they drain into, including the Great Lakes. These dedicated volunteers greatly expand our ability to monitor water quality in our state and help us achieve our goal of protecting Michigan's environment and public health.”

Lt. Gov. John Cherry, chair of the Great Lakes Commission.



### What type of volunteers are we looking for?

- 🔗 **Mudsloshers\***-Volunteers willing to get out in the streams and scoop the little critters!
- 🔗 **Catalogers-** Volunteers who are willing to assist the Mudsloshers in cataloguing activity.
- 🔗 **Eyeballers & Entomologists\***-Volunteers who will be trained in the fine art of macro-invertebrate identification and cataloguing.
- 🔗 **Dataheads** -Volunteers who are willing to enter collected data into an existing database.

*\* Mudsloshers & Eyeballers will receive special training by the MiCorps. For this reason we are looking for volunteers in these areas who are willing to commit two or three days to attend specialized training, and be involved for approximately 5 days per year for a minimum of 2 years.*

Over the next six months, COL will be presenting information on Stream Monitoring to townships and citizen organizations within the Galien Watershed. If you would like to get involved or learn more, contact Chikaming Open Lands: Phone: 269-469-2330. Email: [Info@chikamingopenlands.org](mailto:Info@chikamingopenlands.org)





Chikaming Open Lands  
P.O. Box 291  
14913 Lakeside Road  
Lakeside, MI 49116  
269-469-2330

## **DIRECTORS**

Linda Anderson  
Al Chapman  
Don Flinn  
Terry Hanover  
Greg Kaiser  
George Lucas  
Paul Miller  
George Platz  
Jean Smith  
Steve Smith

---

*“As the leaves finish their pageant of color and drop to the ground the trees stand in majestic beauty against a clear blue sky and disclose the secrets of the birds held so well all through summer.”*

*Gwen Frostic*

## ***Why Did the Turtle Cross the Road?***

We're not sure, but this very mature and confused Blanding's Turtle was rescued off Red Arrow Highway by John Gunner Gooch. The turtle accompanied John back to his office at the South County Gazette, living in Marianne's trash can while John did research on turtle relocation. Relocation strategy in hand, John took the turtle to Grand Mere Park where the turtle swam happily off!

John's photographs and stories are often featured in the South County Gazette and other local publications. John's support of COL has made a difference to our organization. Not only does he cover our events and write about our accomplishments, he also volunteers, willing to jump in at ground level with activities such as the Galien River Cleanup.

Volunteers are a vital part of building a strong organization. Our organization is growing and this coming year we plan to compile a "Talent Base" that we can draw from for future projects. Not only do we need volunteers with a backbone for stewardship activities, but we are on the look out for Attorneys, Marketing Specialists, Committee Members and volunteers to help with mailings.

Think you have a talent we could use? Call Bev at 269-469-2330 or email [Bev@chikamingopenlands.org](mailto:Bev@chikamingopenlands.org)



*The Blanding's Turtle is threatened by wetland degradation and road mortality and is protected by Michigan law as a special concern species.*