



Giving to
Michigan

2022

The Nature
Conservancy 

IN GRATITUDE

This fall, TNC trustees and staff from seven states and two countries came together at a Great Lakes Trustee Summit, to share and discuss TNC's work in this spectacular region. We were proud to host this summit in Michigan, and demonstrate in person just how special our state is—and what it has to offer to [TNC's 2030 Goals](#).



Jeremy Wittrock

Achieving our ambitious 2030 Goals will take all of us, working together toward a vision of a world where people and nature thrive. That's why I'm so grateful to you, our supporters. You make that future possible.

Because of you, we were able to update TNC leaders and volunteers on an incredible range of achievements and current work in Michigan within the Great Lakes Northwoods Initiative. In this year's edition of Giving to Michigan, we're excited to share some of those exciting conservation stories with you as well.

We couldn't do it without you.

So many of you give year after year, sustaining conservation work across Michigan, and so many of you went above and beyond to answer our call for support when exciting—and unexpected—opportunities emerged here in the Northwoods. And for those who gave for the first time this year, a very warm welcome. We live in a critical moment for conservation, and we're honored to have you with us.

On behalf of Michigan's nature, from northern forests to the Great Lakes: Thank you.

See you out there,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeremy J. Wittrock". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a small flourish at the end.

Jeremy J. Wittrock
Director of Development

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COVER PHOTO: Early morning over Bete Grise in the Keweenaw Peninsula. © Drew Chylek/TNC Photo Contest 2022;
ABOVE: Fall colors reflect in a small lake near Munising, Michigan. © John Keuvelaar/TNC Photo Contest 2022



This was a momentous year for The Nature Conservancy in Michigan, thanks to the generosity of supporters like you. With your help, we continue to pursue impactful conservation across Michigan and take on exciting new projects to help address the global biodiversity and climate crises.

The following visuals highlight how you have come together in the past fiscal year (July 2021 through June 2022) to support conservation in Michigan.

Thank you for your support of The Nature Conservancy!

\$19M

RAISED IN FY22

Your gifts impacted conservation across Michigan in many strategic areas. From land protection, to restoration projects and innovative research, here are just a few of TNC's accomplishments in FY22:



10,560 ACRES
PROTECTED



44,400 TREES
PLANTED

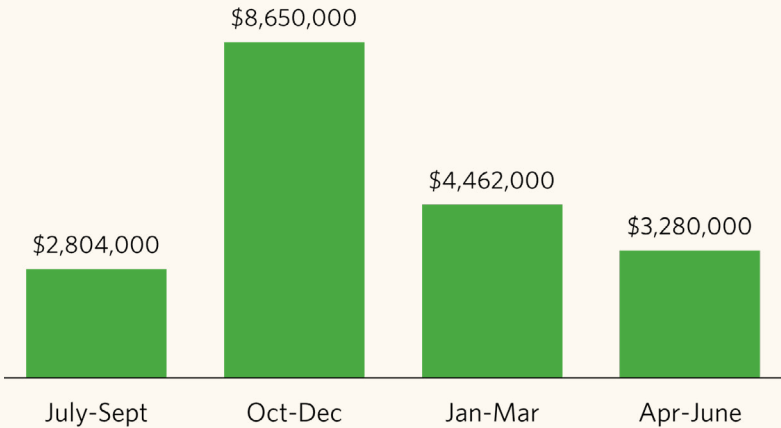


94 LBS AND 24
SPECIES OF NATIVE
SEEDS COLLECTED



4,932 AGRICULTURAL
ACRES TREATED WITH
CONSERVATION PRACTICES

FUNDRAISING PER QUARTER (FY22)



Many people choose to give near the end of the calendar year, setting TNC up for success in the year ahead.

The Northwoods

WHAT INSPIRES YOU?

A landscape of towering pines and colorful maples, lush wetlands and cold rivers. Home to far-ranging wildlife such as moose and gray wolves, as well as migratory songbirds and raptors. The headwaters of the Great Lakes. A stunning natural legacy that has provided for people for thousands of years. All of these—and more.

What are the Northwoods—to you?

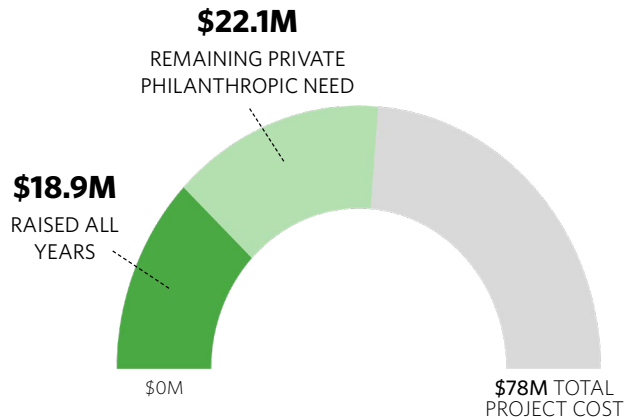
Even if you've never had the opportunity to visit the Great Lakes Northwoods, places like this touch all of our lives. Stretching across northern Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota, connected resilient landscapes like the Northwoods help the wildlife we love—including thousands of birds that migrate along Great Lakes flyways every year—find the food and shelter they need. The Great Lakes also have their headwaters in these northern forests, which help to keep the air and drinking water clean for millions of people living far beyond their borders. They provide economic prosperity and livelihoods for many, as well as outdoor adventures for many more. They even soak up carbon from the atmosphere—our natural allies in climate action.

All the while, the Northwoods tap into our all-too-human love for beautiful natural places and for the planet that nourishes our hearts, minds and bodies.

Here, we're proud to share stories of Northwoods conservation—and of some of the supporters, like you, who have made them possible.

Giving to the Northwoods:

As you will read in the following pages, several important conservation opportunities recently emerged in the Upper Peninsula's Northwoods. Many of you stepped up to help TNC act—and protect Michigan forests for generations to come. Thank you for your support!



Wilderness Lakes Reserve is TNC's first big contribution to our envisioned "conservation corridor" of protected lands in the Michigan Highlands—a 1,182-square-mile region with some of the most rugged, beautiful and resilient forests in Michigan. © Jason Whalen/Big Foot Media; TOP: A cow moose with calf in the Michigan Northwoods. © Mark Godfrey



"The overall scale, diversity and beauty of Michigan's northern forests is absolutely breathtaking." —David Barfield

WILDERNESS LAKES RESERVE

Take a moment to imagine it—a misty evening on the lake. The water lapping at the sides of your canoe reflects the golden light of the setting sun, dipping beyond the horizon of pine and spruce trees. Then, you hear the haunting cry of a loon.

Loon Lake, which is named for this beloved Northwoods bird, is the largest of the many lakes at TNC's [Wilderness Lakes Reserve](#)—an emblem of its beauty, and its conservation potential. TNC protected the first half of this reserve in 2017. In 2021, with the help of many generous donors, we nearly doubled its size with the acquisition of another 4,840 acres. Together with the neighboring Craig Lake State Park, it creates a magnificent stretch of protected forest, lakes and wetlands—nearly 20,000 acres! The reserve also provides us with a living laboratory to demonstrate restoration and sustainable management practices that keep forests healthy, store more carbon and promote biodiversity.

The first steps of our stewardship plan include a significant period of rest to give the forest time to “recharge,” as well as much-needed infrastructure improvements. This includes repairing stream crossings to improve passage for fish and wildlife and improving roads to support access for reserve management, stewardship and potential outdoor education and recreation.

ABOVE: Canoe at Wilderness Lakes Reserve. © Dietrich Ludwig; RIGHT: David Barfield at Wilderness Lakes Reserve, courtesy of himself.

David Barfield

David Barfield, a lifelong Michigander and current chapter trustee, made a pledge this year to support infrastructure improvements at the newly expanded Wilderness Lakes Reserve, and challenged the rest of TNC's board of trustees to match that



pledge. Thanks to his support, TNC will be able to restore roads that are badly in need of improvement, thereby preventing ecological damage to the many wetlands, and providing for safe access to beautiful natural spaces.

Barfield is especially interested in supporting the reserve's potential for future educational opportunities for Michigan's youth, especially those who might not otherwise experience places like Wilderness Lakes.

Q: *Why are you a supporter of TNC?*

A: As human beings, we share the earth with all forms of life, yet are responsible for a disproportionate amount of harm to our planet. I feel we have an obligation to understand and learn from our harmful behaviors and do everything we can to protect the world's precious landscapes and waterways for our children and future generations. TNC is dedicated to solving climate change and biodiversity loss. My wife Kiana and I support TNC because we trust their commitment to their mission and vision.

Q: *Why is conservation in Michigan important to you?*

A: Both my wife and I were born and raised in Michigan and chose to raise our children here as well. Our family loves Michigan's four seasons and enjoys spending time outdoors year-round. Our kids say nature gives them an opportunity to be themselves, move freely and “unplug.” I agree; I believe nature is good for our mental health and overall wellness. Therefore, ensuring healthy lands and waters in Michigan (and beyond) is key to my family's quality of life.



Carol and Peter Walters

Carol and Peter Walters, as supporters of TNC for many years (Peter is a current Michigan trustee), understand the importance of long-term stewardship. This year, they made a generous endowment gift to TNC's ongoing work in the Michigamme Highlands. This will support the continuing stewardship activities that make TNC good caretakers of our protected lands, including Slate River Forest Reserve and Wilderness Lakes Reserve, and good neighbors to the communities who live, work and play in these Northwoods forests.

Q: *What is especially important to you about TNC's work to protect northern forests?*

A: The opportunity to contribute to the conservation of one of America's few boreal forests is truly gratifying. The diversity of these reserves needs to be carefully managed and The Nature Conservancy is the right organization to assure the proper steps are taken.

ABOVE: Photo courtesy of Carol and Peter Walters.

SLATE RIVER FOREST RESERVE

The protection of the 10,550-acre [Slate River Forest Reserve](#), in the Michigamme Highlands, is an extraordinary success story—a story reflected in its towering maple, pine and hemlock trees, diverse native plants and the cascading waters of the Slate and Ravine Rivers. But it very nearly didn't happen.

In the summer of 2021, TNC received confidential notification of the sale of the property. Bids were accepted by invitation only, and TNC was the only conservation organization represented among a group of commercial timber companies and investors. If we had not acquired it, it would have been purchased and managed primarily for its timber value.

Fortunately, the family selling the property accepted our bid, recognizing TNC as an organization that would honor their legacy and continue to care for the forest using sustainable practices, as they had for the past 60 years. We completed the acquisition of the property just three months later.

The need for swift action meant that TNC had to act on trust—trust that our supporters would also recognize the uniqueness of Slate River Forest and rally behind its protection. We are truly grateful for, and humbled by, the immediate and wholehearted support we received, and continue to receive, as we continue to raise the funds needed to complete this effort.

ABOVE, LEFT: As an outstanding example of a well-managed—and permanently protected—Michigan forest, the Slate River Forest Reserve will help TNC demonstrate what a sustainably managed, mature forest provides, so we can inspire change across the extensive timberlands within the Northwoods. © TNC; ABOVE, RIGHT: State Director Helen Taylor wades into a waterfall at Slate River Forest Reserve. © TNC



Local Treasures & Global Priorities

As allies of nature around the world, TNC makes places like the Northwoods a priority. This year, TNC brought our global leadership to the Northwoods, including CEO Jen Morris and North America Regional Director Jan Glandening. They toured the Keweenaw Peninsula and Michigamme Highlands, and met with local leaders, partners and experts—gaining a firsthand look at the importance and beauty of this region, its global significance and the work TNC’s Michigan staff have accomplished toward protecting the Northwoods for future generations.

ABOVE: TNC leadership at Slate River Forest Reserve. © TNC



© Drew Kelly

“We are ‘of nature.’ Any notion that we are not connected to it is a deep misunderstanding.”—John Leonard



John Leonard

John Leonard recently completed generous pledges to help TNC protect the North Point Peninsula, on the shores of Lake Huron, and our newest forest reserves in the Michigamme Highlands. An avid, life-long conservationist in his own right, Leonard is also working independently to acquire additional lands in the Michigamme Highlands for conservation. His efforts will help create a conservation corridor of resilient, protected lands that plants and wildlife need to thrive—natural spaces that nurture people, too.

Q: *Why is conservation in Michigan important to you?*

A: As the foremost Great Lakes state, Michigan has much at stake for one of the world’s most unique water systems.

Q: *Why do you support TNC’s work in Michigan’s northern forests?*

A: There are a few areas of first-growth forests still in existence in Michigan. Not to protect these forests is inconceivable to me.

ABOVE: Photo courtesy of John Leonard and wife, Rita Jain.



The Northwoods

WHAT MOVES YOU?

THE KEWEENAW PENINSULA

Rising from the clear waters of Lake Superior—the northernmost point in Michigan, save for Isle Royale—the [Keweenaw Peninsula](#) can feel like the edge of the world. This is a land of dramatic storms, verdant forests and outcrops of ancient volcanic rock, rich in cultural history and loved by many.

For thousands of years, the rich biodiversity and mineral resources of the Keweenaw Peninsula have provided for people. Now, as the heydays of its copper mining and timber industries fade into the past, the Keweenaw community seeks to build a future around the sustainable use and management of this landscape's expansive forests and incredible outdoor recreation. Since last summer, TNC has been engaging with local officials, community leaders and the State of Michigan to support local planning for this vision of prosperity.

Many of you who heard the story of what we were trying to achieve stepped forward to commit your support. This helped us ground this project in an equitable, community-centered process from the beginning—so we can clearly demonstrate how protecting nature also protects a way of life.

Recently, this partnership had an incredible breakthrough, when TNC secured agreements to [acquire more than 31,000 acres](#) at the heart of the peninsula. We believe these lands are best stewarded by the community and look forward to working with the State of Michigan, Keweenaw County, local townships, residents and people who love these lands to determine the best ways to achieve our shared goals for conservation and prosperity, including who the final owners of the land will be.

ABOVE, RIGHT: The unique property that TNC is in the process of acquiring connects to thousands of acres and more than 15 miles of Lake Superior shoreline that TNC previously helped our partners protect in the Keweenaw Peninsula. © Devin Leonarduzzi/Quincy Aerial, LLC





Steve Dobson

Like many supporters of TNC, Steve Dobson has both pragmatic and deeply personal reasons for conserving Michigan's lands and waters. Dobson, a chapter trustee, thinks of it as an investment in Michigan itself, including the Michigan forests that provide an important natural climate solution by sequestering and storing carbon. "Supporting TNC gives me the most bang for my bucks," he says. Rather than directing his recent Northwoods gift to a specific project, he provided TNC with the flexibility to use it where the Northwoods need it most.

Q: *What's a personal connection you have to nature in Michigan?*

A: I lost my younger brother in an auto accident when he was 21. He was the most passionate 'ecologist' (that's what they called themselves back in the '70s) I ever knew. When I retired 10 years ago, I finally had the time and money to honor what he would have done if he had a chance, and that has given me great satisfaction.

ABOVE: Photo courtesy of Steve Dobson.



"If TNC doesn't permanently protect a huge share of the U.P.'s forests, they are very likely to vanish in a few short years and never give us the chance to use them in the climate change battle." —Steve Dobson



FAMILY FOREST CARBON PROGRAM

Conserving Michigan's lands and waters benefits us all—and there are many ways to get involved. Now, TNC is enabling small private forestland owners to contribute to natural climate solutions, by helping them manage their forests to sequester more carbon and provide habitat for wildlife, in exchange for compensation through the [Family Forest Carbon Program](#) (FFCP).

TNC launched our new FFCP pilot in the Great Lakes Northwoods this fall, in partnership with the American Forest Foundation. This pilot program offers 20-year contracts to landowners who commit to one of two practices: growing mature northern hardwood forests (with fewer harvests), or promoting diversity in aspen stands (including increasing the number of trees retained during harvests).

In exchange, participants receive assistance with putting together a plan for managing their forest for increased health, biodiversity and resilience, as well as with qualifying for carbon market incentives to help fund those practices. Carbon programs are largely inaccessible for many smaller family-owned forests, which tend to be fewer than 1,000 acres but collectively represent more U.S. forestland than any other ownership. FFCP is open to forest owners with as few as 30 acres.

Thank you for helping us offer this program, so that we can make conserving Michigan's forests a true community effort!

ABOVE: Autumn at Wilderness Lakes Reserve in Baraga County, Michigan. © Dietrich Ludwig



Bringing the Forests Home

This spring, TNC launched a Climate Resilient Neighborhoods Project in Detroit, in partnership with Grassroots Detroit. Through this project, some of the carbon credit revenue from TNC's forest reserves in the Upper Peninsula is being used to fund climate-smart upgrades and repairs to owner-occupied homes in the [Greater Eastern Market](#) neighborhood, where TNC is working to promote climate resiliency and green stormwater infrastructure solutions. This way, TNC can assist the community with home improvements that make them eligible for more low or clean energy programs that support climate resilience, and make sure that the benefits of investment in Michigan's forests and climate are equitably distributed and felt statewide.

ABOVE: Home in the Eastern Market neighborhood. © Michael D-L Jordan



Franklin Hull

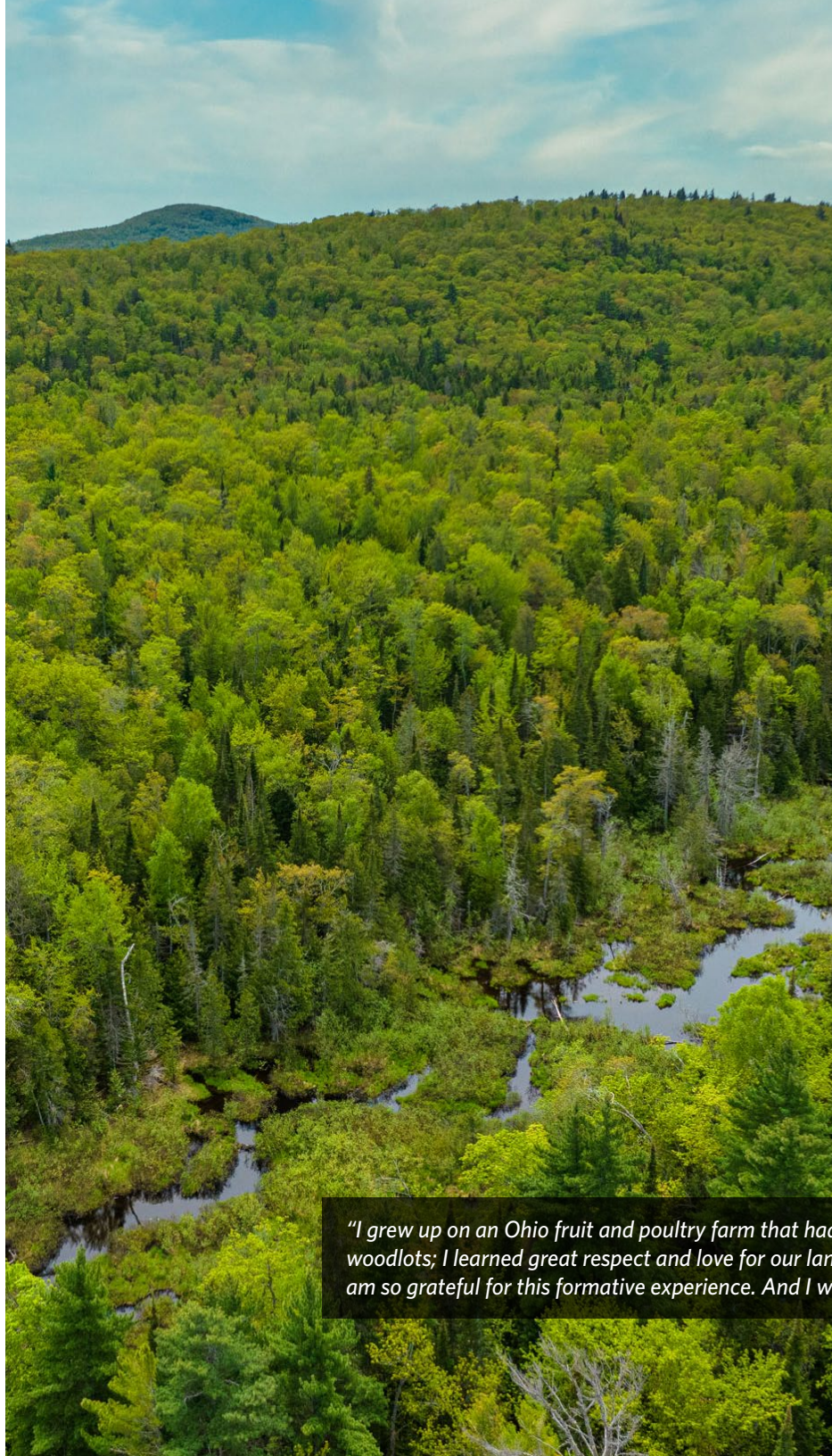
There are many paths to conservation, and many ways to give—as Franklin Hull knows. After pledging a generous multi-year gift, he is using charitable rollovers from his IRA to make his annual contributions. This creative giving option is also a way for those interested in making a legacy gift to impact conservation now, within their lifetime.

As someone with personal experience of the many benefits of forest stewardship, Hull also appreciates the benefits to biodiversity, climate and healthy forests that TNC’s work pursues in Michigan.

Q: *Why are you a supporter of The Nature Conservancy?*

A: My commitment is mainly motivated by TNC’s track record in aggressively seeking nature’s protection and preservation now and for the distant future—globally, for the benefit of all. And I respect TNC’s pragmatic approach in securing the cooperation of current landowners in this effort—else little would likely be accomplished.

ABOVE: Photo courtesy of Franklin Hull



“I grew up on an Ohio fruit and poultry farm that had two wonderful long-standing hardwood woodlots; I learned great respect and love for our land and woodlots—gifts for our caring. I am so grateful for this formative experience. And I would wish it for others!” —Franklin Hull

Giving that Inspires

Thank you to everyone who gave early gifts in support of TNC’s Northwoods conservation projects, including:

- Anonymous – 2*
- Cathy & Bob Anthony*
- Essel & Menakka Bailey*
- David & Kiana Barfield Family Foundation*
- Thomas B. Cook & Anna Owens*
- Stanley Day Family*
- Steve & Judy Dobson*
- The estate of Gerald Foy*
- Grainger Family Descendants Fund*
- Herrick Foundation*
- Richard Hoeger*
- Franklin Hull*
- John Leonard & Rita Jain*
- Charles Stewart Mott Foundation*
- Stephen & Roberta Polk*
- Don & Karen Stearns*
- Carol & Peter Walters*
- John A. & Cynthia Woollam*
- ...and many more.*

Your giving continues to inspire so many others to join in Northwoods conservation.

© Devin Leonarduzzi/Quincy Aerial, LLC

Multi-Year Supporters

WHAT ENGAGES YOU?

A RESTORATION WIN, DECADES IN THE MAKING

Supporters who have been with TNC for many years may remember when we set out in 2011 to restore the wetland habitats of our 946-acre [Erie Marsh Preserve](#) in southeast Michigan. You may also remember the completion of the first phase of the project, which included adding a fish passage structure and restoring the wetland's hydrology—allowing the natural exchange of water between Erie Marsh and Lake Erie to resume for the first time in 60 years.

Since then, we have seen the return of more waterfowl, fish and wildlife enjoying the preserve's newly restored abundance. We are now completing the final 198 acres of restoration, and look forward to celebrating this crowning achievement with you next year! A big thank you to everyone who has supported this project over the years, including the DTE Energy Foundation.

BOTTOM RIGHT: Sojourners in TNC's Erie Marsh Preserve include migratory birds like the marsh wren that depend on Great Lakes shorelines for food and rest while making their thousand-mile journeys. © Ian Adams; BOTTOM LEFT: Green-winged teal. © Ken Salzman; TOP LEFT: Restoration in progress at the preserve. © Jason Whalen; TOP RIGHT: Osprey in a wetland. © Trisha Seelman/TNC

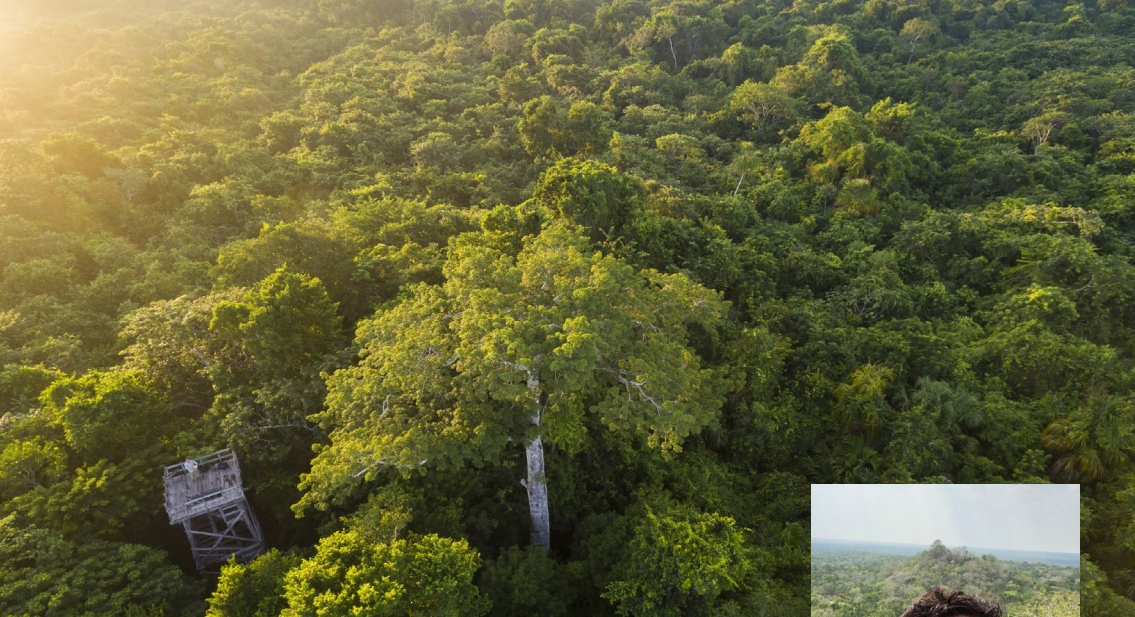


SCIENCE-DRIVEN SOLUTIONS FOR FISHERIES

There's much more to restoring fisheries than putting fish in the water—especially when the science behind it has more questions than answers. That's why, since 2018, TNC has been working with scientists from state and tribal agencies to survey Michigan rivers for spawning lake whitefish, one of several native [Coregonus](#) species that are important to a healthy [Great Lakes](#) food web—and Michigan dinner plates!

This research is helping us understand where whitefish are (or aren't). It is also giving us information we need to develop restoration solutions that have tangible, lasting results for healthy Great Lakes fisheries. Doing this right takes time, and we have you to thank for helping us fulfill our organizational commitment to rigorous science and evidence-based planning by supporting us over many years.

ABOVE: The Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians, a project partner, is now incubating whitefish eggs at their hatchery, in preparation for an experimental effort to help Lake Michigan whitefish begin spawning up Michigan tributaries again. Restoring these "river runs"—which were common until a century ago—could help address declining populations of this important species. © TNC



The W.K. Kellogg Foundation

TNC's work in Michigan informs our work around the globe. We are proud to have many supporters in Michigan who also support these global efforts. This includes the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, based in Battle Creek, Michigan, which is committed to supporting thriving communities across the country and around the world. Their giving supports TNC projects in the Yucatán Peninsula of Mexico, where we are partnering with Indigenous communities to make locally important industries such as agriculture, timber and ecotourism more sustainable. Many of these efforts bear similarities to TNC's work here in Michigan's Northwoods!

Sebastian Frias, Program Officer for the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, shared some of their reasons for supporting this work.

Q: *Why is the W.K. Kellogg Foundation a supporter of The Nature Conservancy?*

A: We have supported TNC's work in southeast Mexico since 2012. As we've become a closer partner to the communities in the Yucatán Peninsula, so has TNC, putting Indigenous leadership and knowledge at the center of their work. This is key for social change and impact. We hope to continue mobilizing resources and will around local communities' leadership.

Q: *Why is conservation important to you and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation?*

A: Conservation is directly linked to many Indigenous communities' ways of being, to a holistic view of the world where we are all connected. How we treat our environment directly affects the wellbeing of families and children, and the conditions we need to thrive.

ABOVE LEFT: Aerial views of the hardwood forest around the logging community of Noh Bec, Quintana Roo, in the Yucatán Peninsula, Mexico. The community has adopted reduced-impact logging techniques to selectively harvest specific trees, generating revenue while maintaining a healthy forest. © Erich Schlegel; ABOVE RIGHT: Photo courtesy of Sebastian Frias.

Multi-Year Supporters

We are proud to give special recognition to those supporters who have made generous commitments to our campaign through a multi-year pledge. We thank these donors for making gifts toward their pledge or making new pledges between July 2021 and June 2022.

\$5,000,000-\$10,000,000

Dow Chemical Company Foundation
Grainger Family Descendants Fund

\$1,000,000-\$4,999,999

Anonymous - 2
Arcus Foundation
The Carls Foundation
DTE Energy Foundation
Fred A. & Barbara M. Erb Family Foundation
W.K. Kellogg Foundation
Meijer Foundation
Charles Stewart Mott Foundation

\$500,000-\$999,999

Cathy & Bob Anthony
Richard C. Devereaux Foundation
Steve & Judy Dobson
Rollin M. Gerstacker Foundation
John Leonard & Rita Jain
Harry A. & Margaret D. Towsley Foundation
Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation

\$250,000-\$499,999

Gerard M. & Lizann W. Anderson
Bush Brothers & Company
Thomas B. Cook & Anna Owens
HSBC Bank USA, N.A.
Rivian
Rural India Supporting Trust

\$100,000-\$249,999

David & Kiana Barfield Family Foundation
Cook Family Foundation
Sarah & Tony Earley
Environmental Initiative
Franklin E. Hull, M.D.
Great Lakes Fishery Trust
TJ & Julia Kanczuzewski
Rosenberg/Starr Family Foundation
Robert & Rebecca Tisch

\$50,000-\$99,999

Anonymous - 1
Andrew & Linda Apsey
Richard P. Hoeger
James D. & Kathleen Lammers
Olivia P. Maynard
Michigan Sugar Company
Larry & Suzie Neiderheide
Rhonna & Mark Shatz
Carol & Peter Walters
Matilda R. Wilson Fund
William A. & Karen Zehnder

\$25,000-\$49,999

Anonymous - 1
Jury Foundation
Karen & Drew Peslar Foundation
Curt & Lisa Vander Meer

\$10,000-\$24,999

Briarwood Farm Foundation
General Motors Corporation
Barbara C. Van Dusen
Curt & Lisa Vander Meer
Joy A. Welty
Karen Wilson

\$1,000 - \$4,999

Barbara J. DeMoor
JSJ Corporation Foundation

Note: Every effort has been made to list donors and their contributions accurately. Please contact a member of the development team at (517) 316-0300 if you have any questions or concerns. The Nature Conservancy regrets any errors or omissions.

A REGENERATING FOREST

[Ross Coastal Plain Marsh Preserve](#) has it all: rolling, forested dunes; globally unique marshes; ponds and wetlands that support numerous wildlife species—and an unfolding story of restoration.

Last year, TNC removed 43 acres of a former red pine plantation on the preserve, to make way for the return of the natural diversity of plants, wildlife and trees that struggled to thrive in that monoculture environment. Some of the restoration process will happen naturally, as native plants emerge in the sunlight from the new gaps in the forest. To accelerate that process, we planted more than 2,300 tree saplings (six different climate-resilient species) at Ross Preserve this fall, with the help of TNC staff volunteers. Already, the new seedlings are thriving!

Decades from now, the next generation of TNC supporters and preserve visitors will be able to walk through a forest that is diverse, resilient and abundant with possibility.

RIGHT: TNC's forest restoration effort at the Ross Preserve contributes to a collaborative project, supported by a grant from the Wildlife Conservation Society, that will plant a combined total of more than 40,000 trees over two years. Check out the change in understory growth at Ross Preserve in just one year, including more oak and maple saplings. © John Lerdal/TNC



INVESTING IN PLACES AND PEOPLE

Restoration takes time, which is why TNC staff work hard year-round to plant seedlings, cut brush, remove invasive species, collect seeds—and more—on our preserves. The generosity of TNC members and supporters who give unrestricted or lightly restricted gifts, such as the Herbert H. and Grace A. Dow Foundation and the Harry A. and Margaret D. Towsley Foundation, enables us to invest in the staff capacity and expertise we need to effectively steward our protected lands. For example, this year we expanded our prescribed fire team to help us bring “good fire” to more preserves that need it to thrive.

Your support also helps us raise awareness of the importance of conservation—helping more people have meaningful experiences in nature, and inspiring the next generation of conservation leaders. For instance, we added a seasonal preserve specialist position this year to provide a stronger in-person presence at our most popular preserves, helping to orient and educate visitors.

RIGHT: Use [TNC's preserve audio tours](#) to visit some of the special places around the state that your generosity helps us protect—whether or not you can go in person! Currently, seven Michigan preserves (including our Nan Weston Preserve at Sharon Hollow) have an audio tour available that can be accessed from home or on site—and three now have a Spanish language option! Go to nature.org/miexplore to learn more. © Bekah Wuchner/TNC



Current-Year Supporters

WHAT MOTIVATES YOU?

NEW PROGRAMS FOR RESILIENT FARMS

It's been a big year for TNC's work with farmers and the agriculture industry in the [Saginaw Bay watershed](#), where—thanks to your generosity—we've launched several new programs focused on supporting healthy natural systems both on and downstream from Michigan's productive farmlands. These include:

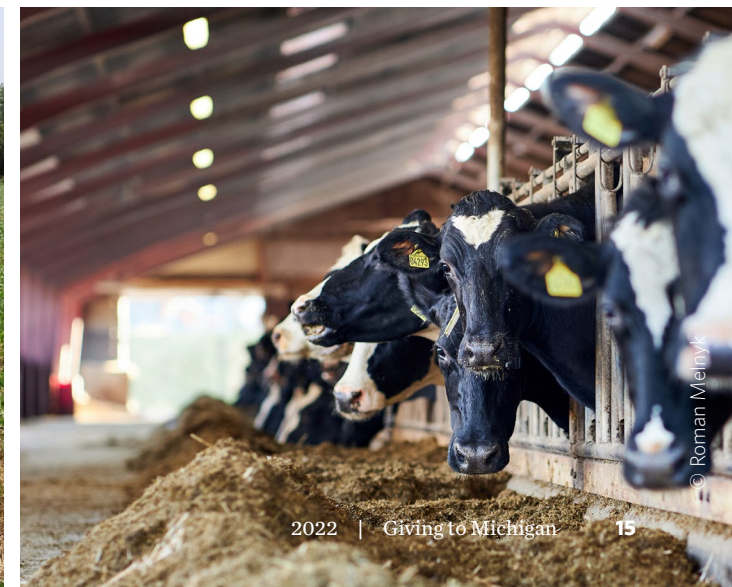
- An incentives program in partnership with Star of the West for wheat farmers who use regenerative practices.
- A pilot program with Michigan Sugar Company to help farmers transition sugar beet acres to strip tillage, with better outcomes for water quality and soil health.
- A Feed in Focus pilot program with the Michigan Milk Producers Association, with support from Rotary Club District 6310, to help dairy farmers implement climate-smart feed management and regenerative feed production practices that help reduce carbon from cows and crops.
- An expansion of our work with farmers to reduce sediment runoff into drains and reduce flood risk in Midland County, with support from the Rollin M. Gerstacker Foundation.



Sharing innovative, scalable solutions across Michigan and beyond is a big emphasis for TNC. With support from the Fred A. and Barbara M. Erb Family Foundation, we are working with farmers in the Saginaw Bay watershed to test whether additional technical and social support can help more farmers maintain regenerative practices in the absence of financial support. As we learn from this work, we'll be sharing our insights with partners tackling similar issues in the Western Lake Erie watershed. © Jason Whalen/Fauna Creative



© Paul Bezukiewicz/TNC



© Roman Melnyk



CONNECTING AROUND FRESH WATER

TNC is proud to be part of the new Saginaw Bay Monitoring Consortium, which has been working this year to secure the federal funding and support necessary to launch a comprehensive water quality monitoring system for the Saginaw Bay watershed. Thanks to supporters like the Jury Family Foundation, TNC has been able to help our partners get the necessary pieces in place to begin installing new water sensors and gages in the coming year.

This will help fill a vital need for easily accessible data to help us understand water quality trends over time, and how changes in agricultural practices are impacting freshwater systems. With this information, scientists can conduct more robust research, resource managers can make more informed decisions and organizations like TNC can design conservation projects that improve water quality.

ABOVE: Timely, localized data on water quality in the Saginaw Bay watershed will provide TNC with important information we need to identify where to focus our efforts, and what approaches could have the greatest impact in those places. © Jason Whalen/Fauna Creative



Rotary Club District 6310

When Rotary Club member Mark Makulinski set up a donor advised fund for TNC in Michigan, he also pledged to match the gifts of local Rotary Clubs or members. His generosity sparked an exciting new partnership between TNC and Rotary Club District 6310 in the Saginaw Bay watershed. Anne Trahan, the environmental chair for the district, sees a natural connection between TNC's Dairy Feed in Focus project and Rotary International's new focus on supporting the environment.

Q: *How did you direct your giving and why?*

A: We partnered with TNC to support the new Dairy Feed in Focus program they started in our district, because of the trust that Mark Makulinski placed in TNC to establish the matching funds. I trust TNC to develop best practices that they can share with us, and more importantly with the dairy farmers. This is a way all Rotarians in Rotary District 6310 can help address problems such as water, soil and air quality, as well as animal health.

Q: *Why is conservation in Michigan important to you?*

A: The Great Lakes are so important to the world, and Michigan is the jewel of the Great Lakes. I have witnessed firsthand what happens when we don't take care of the Great Lakes and our fresh water—beaches where we can't swim, contaminated fish we can't eat. When we contribute to solutions, we help make a difference in the world we all call home.

ABOVE: Photo courtesy of Anne Trahan.

CLIMATE ACTION FOR ALL

In a world of change, it's heartachingly clear that addressing climate change and the loss of biodiversity is essential to those who will follow us on this planet.

Backed by our members, TNC staff continue to meet with key state policymakers and congressional members to introduce TNC and our work, as well as provide our expertise to inform equitable climate policy solutions. This has included providing input and feedback to the State of Michigan's "MI Healthy Climate Plan" released earlier this year, and driving interest among Michigan's leaders in supporting the natural climate solutions and community resilience that healthy lands and waters provide.

TNC is also working closely with the Michigan business sector, including an [ongoing collaboration](#) with the Michigan Manufacturers Association to share practical climate sustainability solutions with Michigan manufacturers that they can incorporate into their business models. BELOW: Michigan capitol building. © Michael D-L Jordan; Farmers in Saginaw Bay. © Jason Whalen/Fauna Creative; RIGHT: Manufacturing plant behind Ambassador Bridge in Detroit. © Michael D-L Jordan



Dr. Bosco and Lynda Chan

Dr. Bosco and Lynda Chan made a surprise gift to TNC at the end of 2021 using appreciated stocks, going above and beyond their donations in previous years. Dr. Chan, who is from Hong Kong and now lives in Michigan, shared with TNC how much he appreciates learning about the work we are doing to protect Michigan's abundant natural gifts and their accessibility. He is particularly thankful for our work to conserve Michigan's coasts, and our partnerships with farmers.

Q: *What motivates you to support TNC?*

A: We support TNC because of their work around the world. Especially in times like these, with the pressing issue of climate change, TNC is ensuring that we have natural places protected for all of us.

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We would also like to recognize the following individuals, companies, foundations and organizations who have supported our work in Michigan, as well as Michigan-based donors who supported other domestic and/or international conservation projects with cumulative gifts of \$1,000 or more between July 1, 2021 and June 30, 2022. *We extend our deep appreciation to the thousands of donors not listed here whose commitments make our conservation results possible.*

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