

# Thumb Land Conservancy NEWS

July 29, 2020

## Southern Lake Huron Coastal Park 42-Acre Bidwell Sanctuary Burtchville Township, Saint Clair County



The TLC closed on the Bidwell property on July 17 and now owns the long-pursued 42 acres of beach ridge and swale forest north of Metcalf Road. This is a major preservation accomplishment for the TLC on behalf of the Blue Water Area. The new Bidwell Sanctuary is a very significant natural area and it was a big step for the TLC to successfully complete a project of this scale.

A big thank you to all of our funders, especially to The Carls Foundation of Bloomfield Hills who provided a \$150,000 match grant that jump-started our fundraising effort. Without The Carls Foundation grant, we would not likely have been successful within our 14-month deadline.

Thank you to our other project funders, including the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan with a grant of \$50,000 through the Wilson Legacy Design and Access Fund, the Consumers Energy Foundation with a grant of \$30,000, Cargill, Inc. and Cargill Salt of Saint Clair with a combined grant of \$20,000, the Community Foundation of St. Clair County with a grant of \$20,000, the Franklin H. and Nancy S. Moore Donor Advised Fund of the Community Foundation of St. Clair County with a grant of \$20,000, SEMCO Energy Gas Company of Port Huron with a grant of \$2,000, and several individual donors.

Thanks to our realtor Dave Ladensack for diligently pursuing the purchase agreement and all of his follow-up.

After the property closing, the TLC Board and Director met long-time TLC members and expert birders Tom and Laurie Dennis on the Bidwell Sanctuary for a dedication ceremony. Tom Dennis led us in a prayer to bless the new sanctuary and our continued efforts.

A press release was submitted to all major media in the area. Blue Water Healthy Living, a very popular and rapidly growing local web site, posted the full press release. Ben Shinavier and the Blue Water Healthy Living team is an impressive bunch and it's always a pleasure to work with them. See this link:

<https://bluewaterhealthyliving.com/thumb-land-conservancy-acquires-42-acre-bidwell-preserve-in-burtchville-township-as-part-of-the-proposed-southern-lake-huron-coastal-park/>

Local radio station, WGRT 102.3 FM, just posted a very nice article about the project last night. It was written by Jessie Wiegand who grew up right across the road from the Bidwell Sanctuary. Like many of us, she loved to explore the woods, swamps, and streams as a kid. I was delighted to hear her say she used to ice skate through the woods with her friends, just like I did with TLC Board Member Scott Ferguson and our friends in the Dead End Woods. See this link:

<https://wgrt.com/thumb-land-conservancy-acquires-property-in-burtchville-for-future-southern-lake-huron-coastal-park/>

The TLC will hold a public dedication ceremony on the Bidwell Sanctuary on October 3 along with the Blue Water Indigenous Alliance of Port Huron (BWIAPH.org). The preserve will be given an Anishinaabe name to honor the original Native American inhabitants of our region.

We need labor and materials to develop the park entrance and trail on the Bidwell Sanctuary. If you would like to help, please contact us.

**Historic North Street Station  
5200 North Road, North Street  
Clyde Township, Saint Clair County**



North Street Station

We will be working at the North Street Station property this coming Saturday, August 1, from noon through 4:00 or 5:00 PM. The North Street Station is located on the east side of North Road, directly across from the US Post Office. The work will include mowing, brush removal, and clean-up both outside and inside the building. Bring gloves and drinking water. We will provide trash bags and tools. Jimmy Rankin's Meat Market on Lapeer Road in Port Huron Township ([jimrankinmeats.com](http://jimrankinmeats.com)) has provided hotdogs. If you are interested in helping, let us know or just stop in.

Thank you to TLC Board Member Kay Cumbow for cutting weeds and monitoring the North Street Station in July.

## Help Us Transplant Purple-Flowering Raspberry



Purple-flowering Raspberry

There is still time to help us save some special native plants. Region 7 Area Agency on Aging is developing a new facility on 3 acres of beach ridge and swale forest adjacent to the Presbyterian Villages of Michigan, Lake Huron Woods senior living facility on the west side of M-25 in Fort Gratiot. The facility will assist local senior citizens with health care and independent living. The Area Agency on Aging gave the TLC permission to transplant Purple-flowering Raspberry and other native plant species from the site, and they will make a donation to the TLC for our work.

As you should know from reading about our Southern Lake Huron Coastal Park project, Purple-flowering Raspberry is essentially the Lower Peninsula's equivalent of the Upper Peninsula's Thimbleberry, being so closely related that they apparently hybridize. Purple-flowering Raspberry is very uncommon, with native populations recorded from only 7 coastal counties in Michigan, mostly along Lake Huron and largely restricted to forested dune and swale habitat near the shoreline.

Contractors are scheduled to begin site clearing in the next week or two. TLC Board Member Dan Rhein has already moved some plants, but there are a lot more to go. If you are interested in helping, please contact us.

## **Barberry Burning Deerfield Wind Energy Preserve Huron Township, Huron County**

We continue our periodic burning of invasive Japanese Barberry on the Deerfield Wind Energy Preserve in Huron County. TLC Board Member Fred Fuller and his son Will Fuller, who installed boundary signs on our Gerrits Sanctuary last year, joined TLC Director Bill Collins on July 13. Fred and Will served as junior fire bugs in-training. They may have gotten a little too ambitious with the weed torches at one point, but did a very good job.



Fred and Will Fuller ready to light things up.

Barberry coverage remains drastically lower than when we started stewardship on the preserve in 2017. However, many stems continue to grow back and it is necessary to cover old ground again. It is certainly a lot easier work now burning the new stems, as compared to cutting and burning our way through dense head-high thickets of barberry.

We plan to schedule several work days on the Deerfield Preserve in August and September. If you are interested in helping, please contact us.

## **2020 Event Schedule**

The TLC participated in the first Lavender Daze event at Indigo Lavender Farms in Imlay City on July 10 through July 12. Thank you to Trish Dennis, owner of Indigo Lavender Farms, for inviting us to exhibit at no charge. Thank you to TLC President Cheryl Collins for all of her work preparing exhibits and to TLC Board Member Kay Cumbow for helping us cover the event.

We planned to participate in several events through the summer but the next Lavender Daze, the Blue Water Sturgeon Festival, and the Port Huron Pow Wow have all been canceled due to the latest State orders on the COVID-19 virus. The Clyde Historical Society Summer Festival, scheduled for September 13, is currently on-hold. We will see what the next several weeks bring.

Date	Event	Status, Location, and Time
August 01-02	Lavender Daze	Canceled
August 02	Blue Water Sturgeon Festival	Canceled
August 15	Port Huron Pow Wow	Canceled
September 13	Clyde Historical Society, Summer Festival	On-hold. Bill Bearss Park, northwest corner of M-136 and Wildcat Road, Clyde Township, St. Clair County

## Summer and Fall Stewardship

Following is a rough schedule of our stewardship activities for the rest of 2020. We are planning to work at the North Street Station and our new Loznak Sanctuary through August. If you are interested in helping, please contact us.

Date	Activity	Location
August	mow, clean-up	North Street Station, North Street, Saint Clair County
August	post signs, clean-up	Loznak Sanctuary, Marysville, Saint Clair County
August-September	remove invasive Japanese Barberry	Algonquin Power Deerfield Preserve, Huron Township, Huron County
August-September	assist owner with invasive buckthorn removal	Koester Conservation Easement, Fort Gratiot Township, Saint Clair County
September-October	repair siding, paint	North Street Station, North Street, Saint Clair County
September-October	clean-up, install barriers	Loznak Sanctuary, Marysville, Saint Clair County
September-October	collect and sow milkweed and prairie seed	Gerrits Sanctuary, Ira Township, Saint Clair County

October- November	burn invasive Reed and Reed Canary Grass	Springborn Wetland Mitigation Bank, East China Township, Saint Clair County
November- December	post new signs	Dead End Woods Sanctuary, Fort Gratiot Township, Saint Clair County
November- December	post new signs	Peltier Beach Ridge Sanctuary, Fort Gratiot Township, Saint Clair County
November- December	post new signs	Bertha's Haven Sanctuary, Fort Gratiot Township, Saint Clair County

## 2020 TLC Membership

With your membership, the TLC is better enabled to protect important natural areas in our region. We offer three membership levels as shown below: Individual \$25, Family \$30, and Business \$100. Members will receive our e-mail news. Some of you are members based on your previous donations, volunteer efforts, or other help. You can also make donations in honor or memory of someone or something. For donations of \$100 or more, your name will be listed on our web site. For larger donations, please contact us for details. You may print and complete the form below. Make checks payable to "Thumb Land Conservancy". Mail checks and forms to: Thumb Land Conservancy, 4975 Maple Valley Road, Marlette, Michigan 48453

To download and print the membership form, click [HERE](#).

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