

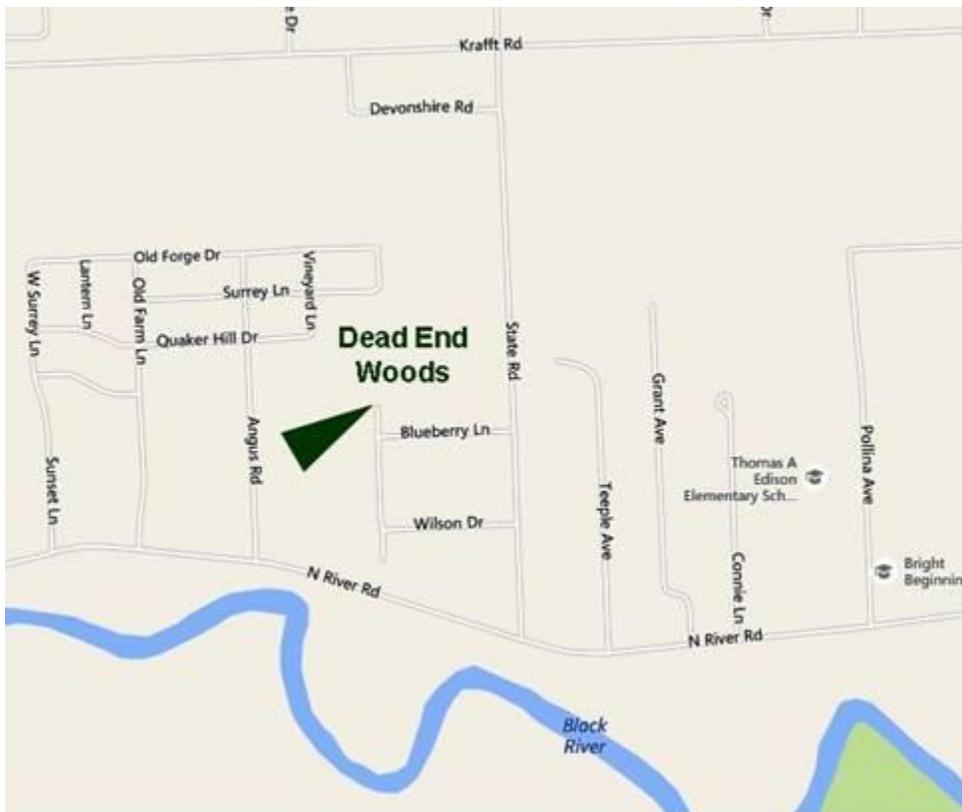
Thumb Land Conservancy NEWS

November 27, 2017

TLC Christmas Gathering and Executive Board Meeting Sunday, December 17, 1:00 – 6:00 PM

Our annual Christmas gathering and 4th quarter board meeting will be on Sunday December 17 from 1:00 to 6:00 PM at the home of TLC executive board member Dorothy Craig, at 3685 Wilson Drive in Fort Gratiot. She is at the dead end of Wilson Drive next to our Dead End Woods Sanctuary.

Except for our meeting, the gathering is very informal. All are welcome. A dish to pass, snacks, or beverages are appreciated. Most of all, just show up and bring your thoughts about nature preservation in the Thumb. Please RSVP if possible.



3685 Wilson Drive, Fort Gratiot, at the dead end of Wilson Drive

Deerfield Wind Energy Preserve, Huron Township, Huron County, Michigan

This past Saturday November 25, we cut more invasive Japanese Barberry at the Deerfield Preserve. Thanks to TLC board member Kay Cumbow and volunteer Joe Mindelli. Joe and his family have hunted deer on the preserve and adjoining land for years. In trade for more hunting time this fall, I made a deal with Joe to come out and help. Hopefully next year we get more of his family out there.



Joe Mindelli cutting Japanese Barberry with a small chainsaw.



TLC board member Kay Cumbow cutting Japanese Barberry.

We've made very good progress this fall. Most of the barberry in a roughly 400-foot long by 100-foot wide area is now cut to ground level. That's nearly one acre of hard sweaty work, all the while being poked by sharp barberry spines and clawed by Multiflora Rose thorns. In March and April we start hitting it with fire. There's not enough natural fuel load to get a good ground fire, but we will burn the new stems with a large propane torch. No doubt I'm going to take out some Multiflora Rose also.

If all of this sounds fun, we are working up there again this coming Saturday, December 2, and again on Saturday December 16 from 11:00 am to 4:00 pm. We were going to also work on December 9, but gave that day back to Joe Mindelli for deer hunting in return for his hard work. You will want to wear boots and bring leather gloves, drinking water, and dress for the weather. The TLC will provide lunch and some gas money, and can coordinate rides.

North Street Station, Clyde Township, Saint Clair County

Our neighbor, Carl Hallead, and I nearly finished putting sheet metal on the south roof of the main building. Carl has been great and really takes charge of the work. The north roof was in much better shape than the south, but we will soon be covering that also.



Carl Hallead installing the last sheet of steel near dark, anticipating rain the next day.

A rather amazing coincidence occurred two weeks ago. On our last day working at North Street, Sharon Palmateer stopped to talk with us. She and her husband, Sherwood Palmateer, own the land across the road where the new post office is located. She told me that I should talk with the Schomaker family sometime because they know a lot of North Street history and she pointed out their old house and farm less than a quarter mile down the road. The next day John Schomaker, who grew up in North Street but now lives in Minnesota, called because he was looking for historical information about North Street and he just happened to find our web site. No one contacted him to call me. What are the chances of that happening? John and I had a

nice talk and not only did he e-mail me some old photos and video of North Street, but he donated \$1,000 to our project. The day before, I told my neighbor Carl that I didn't know where the money would come from, but I'd try to pay him for his work soon. The one bad part is that we took out a dormer on the south roof that I thought dated to the 70's or 80's. Turns out, based on John Schomaker's photos and video, it dates back to at least 1947, so looks like we'll be rebuilding that. Anyway, what John sent is very helpful in guiding the restoration. I can even see that the Arborvitae trees along the south property line are about 80 years old. Thank you very much John.



A frame of video dating to about 1947-48 showing the North Street building behind school boys playing baseball.

If you can help the North Street project financially, we really could use your donation. We still need to pay for the property acquisition, which was covered by a private loan of about \$11,000. Then, we always need money for materials. I am still hopeful we can get the bulk donated, such as paint and new boards, but I've had to buy a lot of roofing screws and nails and other things. We donated the sheet metal. Most of all, for now, I need to reimburse our neighbor Carl for his work, use of his truck, trailer, generator, and so on.

Clyde Historical Society, Clyde Township, Saint Clair County

Connie Bates of the Clyde Historical Society, our partner in the North Street project and Port Huron State Game Area stewardship, has just written the first edition of the "Young Historians Newsletter" which will be published soon. CHS is hoping to encourage more youth to take an interest in the history of their community and their family. The first edition features some history of Clyde Township, CHS member Doris Pabst Richards, and also the good old Thumb Land Conservancy. As soon as the newsletter is final and available on the web, I'll send a link.

TLC fundraising

We need help from anyone on writing grant applications and producing membership materials

Ecology News

This is a new section of our e-mail news that I decided to add tonight while thinking of a few issues. To make up for not including this in other news releases, I'm going to share three different topics, all in Europe by coincidence, but very pertinent to us here in North America and the Great Lakes region. I will try to keep this short and sweet.

Bialowieza Forest - Have you heard of Bialowieza (pronounced Bee-ahloh-veesha) Forest (Puszcza) on the border of eastern Poland and western Belarus? I almost visited there in 1994. It's an amazingly vast and diverse remnant of some of the last old-growth forest in Europe, a continent which has endured thousands of years of agriculture, wars, and other human destruction. The forest is home to many species that survive in few other places, including the European Bison. Unfortunately, early last year, the new conservative Polish government announced that it would basically triple the amount of logging allowed across large parts of the forest, using the excuse of trying to decrease bark beetles which have killed many trees. While some cutting might be reasonable, it was taken to extremes and many trees cut were not even species affected by bark beetles. There have been a lot of protests and court rulings, but finally, a week ago, the European Court of Justice demanded that Poland cease cutting in Bialowieza Forest. Hopefully, the Polish government will abide by the ruling and the forest can begin to recover, but I doubt this is the final chapter. For now at least, it's good to know this place is protected again and my respect to all those who defended Bialowieza Forest.

<http://www.dw.com/en/european-court-tells-warsaw-to-halt-bialowieza-forest-logging/a-41459320>

Hambacher Forest – The Hambacher Forest in western Germany is also an old-growth forest, home to over 140 endangered species. Sadly, it is quickly being destroyed for mining lignite, a very dirty form of coal. Of the original roughly 13,600 acres, only about 10% or 1,360 acres of the forest remain. It doesn't look good at all for this forest, unless the European Court of Justice gets involved quickly. A lower court ruling just a few days ago allows RWE, the mining company, to continue deforestation in preparation for mining. With the use of coal declining, it's a real shame that the remaining portion of Hambacher Forest can't be saved. It is a small haven for species that once flourished across Europe, and a genetic refuge that can serve to repopulate the region one day. Really, deforestation is bad enough here in the Thumb, but Europe is one of the last places that should be losing any more forest.

<http://www.dw.com/en/hambacher-forst-activists-and-police-clash-as-logging-begins-to-facilitate-coal-mining/a-41551783>

<http://www.dw.com/en/german-activists-lose-bid-to-halt-hambach-mine-expansion/a-41517134>

Insect Pollinators – Again in Germany, long-term research results released just about a month ago show that there has been a roughly 75% decline in flying insect biomass over 27 years in 63 nature reserves across the country. This means that basically, there has been a huge decline in the total number of insect pollinators. Of course, one could say this is just in

Germany, however, similar trends have been observed in North America and elsewhere. Also, you should note that the European Union has banned the use of some herbicides and pesticides used here in North America, and still their insect populations are dropping. The cause of this decline is unclear, but it appears to be due to global factors. In the absence of complete understanding, in my opinion, it's better to be cautious and err on the side of insect pollinators. We are now living in a time when the world is so developed and decimated, that I believe the subtraction of every little scrap of nature is now vital. We are seeing this in once common species of our childhood, such as the Monarch butterfly, a very visible species that people take notice of. But what about the many thousands of species you are not aware of; a particular bee or fly species that pollinates a woodland plant species you never heard of? Many, perhaps most, flowering plants depend on insect pollinators for reproduction and survival of the species. We now seem to be on the edge of a time when we risk the gradual loss of thousands of flowering plant species in addition to the insects that pollinate them. And this is not to mention the expected declines in agricultural production. One of the easiest and best things you can do as a landowner to help pollinating insects is to not mow so much. Leave some field where goldenrods, asters, clover, and other flowering plants provide a source of pollen, uncontaminated by herbicides. Just think of how much money and time you'll save. We mow very little of our grass, and while I'm probably considered strange or lazy for it, I derive much satisfaction from watching the bees, flies, butterflies, moths, and other insects busy collecting pollen and nectar on a summer day. If you really want a pollinator magnet, plant some Buttonbush in a moist area of your land.

<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2017/10/171019100927.htm>

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