



NEWS

a community partner protecting land, water and quality of life through conservation, stewardship and education

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Marsin Nature Retreat Center A tremendous gift to KLT and the Community

Mary Sinish had a mission to establish a nature retreat center with her property on Red Brick Road along the Portage Waterway in Stanton Township. She envisioned a space available for community groups to hold events while enjoying a natural setting.

After forming the Marsin Forest Grove Conservatory in 1999 to develop a non-profit, Mary and the Conservatory's board decided in 2000 to turn this project over to KLT, which has a compatible mission and the organizational structure already in place. The first big step towards fulfilling her vision came when Mary donated the 40-acre Marsin Preserve to KLT in 2001. Discussions continued to keep her dream moving along.



Thanks to Doug McKenzie, we have this aerial photo with the Marsin Preserve and Nature Retreat Center near the center of the image with the wooded Churning Rapids across the Portage Waterway. Marsin now comprises 56 acres and Churning rapids will have 770 acres protected and open for public non-motorized recreation. Photo by Dave Toczydlowski

Mary died unexpectedly in early 2005. Robert Terrian, Mary's trust manager, began the legal process to transfer to KLT the property and assets dedicated for the Marsin Center. KLT staff and Board of Directors prepared a proposal detailing KLT's plans for the Marsin Center and programs. Mr. Terrian hired Allison Slavick to evaluate the proposal, KLT's organizational capacity, and the resources available for the Center. Following lengthy review, all parties involved supported KLT's role and the Probate Court approved the transfer in May, which was finalized in September.

The Marsin Center campus has 16 acres and 900 feet of shoreline along the Portage Waterway. With two residences, numerous outbuildings, a utility vehicle with a snow plow, pontoon boats and canoes, and tools included in the donation, Mary had the bulk of the resources in place for the Marsin Center's initial establishment. As important as the gift of property, Mary

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Churning Rapids Protection Expands to New Heights

We hope many of you go hiking, bicycling and cross-country skiing on trails at Churning Rapids. Did you know that you are enjoying private property?

KLT is working with landowners Terry Kinzel and Sue Ellen Kingsley to finalize a conservation easement to permanently protect another 280 acres at Churning Rapids. An easement donated in 2002 protects 490 acres of their property including Ruby Marsh, Lookout Loop and the observation tower. A previous owner's

over-harvesting of timber took its toll and reforestation became a central goal of that easement. The new easement protects steep ravines, streams and mature forests interspersed with patches of old growth hemlock, white pine and oak.

The purpose of both easements is not only to protect the important natural features and habitats, but also to provide for responsible long-term management of the forest resources, and require continued access by the public for low-impact outdoor recreation. KLT's role is to ensure that timber harvests and trail use, for example, are conducted in a sound manner that protects water quality, soil productivity, wildlife habitat and landscape esthetics, such as those majestic monument trees along the Great Oaks Trail.

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**Curtis Perala
Property Manager**

The President's Corner:

Thank You for Sustaining Your Land Trust!

Greetings KLT members! As the new board President, I want to say hello, and thank you to all of the people who keep KLT active and growing: our staff, our members and our volunteers.

In the past few years we have made the shift from all volunteer to a mix of staff and volunteer. The tireless efforts of our staff, Executive Director Evan McDonald and Project Specialist Pat Toczydlowski, have made so much happen over the past years. Their vision, dedication, and passion provide an anchor for all our efforts--conservation easements, property donations, land purchases, fundraising, grant writing, educational outreach... the list goes on and on. I'd also like to welcome a new staff member, Curtis Perala, the resident Property Manager at the Marsin Nature Retreat Center, who will also be helping on other KLT projects where hands-on help is needed.

Your contributions help make the staff activities possible. However, our paid staff cannot complete all the work needed to make KLT's vision a reality. Volunteers play an essential role, helping with fundraising and community outreach events, managing our easements, trail maintenance,



KLT Board President Erik Lilleskov with his sons Ben and Eli at the Marsin Open House and KLT Annual Meeting in October. They enjoyed roasting marshmallows under the BBQ shelter by the Portage—one of the original structures on the Marsin property. Photo by Evan McDonald

and serving on the board, acting as treasurer, giving legal advice, helping in the office... that list goes on and on too! You, our members, are an essential part of the KLT recipe for success. By giving as much as you can, volunteering whenever you can, and spreading the KLT message, you keep KLT growing. Thank you for all you have done and will continue to do for our organization. Remember, we are all KLT. --Erik



A bridge at Finney Creek is a part of the trail system on the newly protected land at Churning Rapids. Photo by Pat Toczydlowski

Churning Rapids *continued from page 1* This new easement allows for a home to be built near the end of High Point Road. This provides options for future income and marketability of the property while protecting habitat conducive to large roaming mammals and interior species.

Churning Rapids is right across the Portage from the Lakeshore campus of our new Marsin Center. A KLT goal is to link programs and use of these two outstanding community resources by securing waterfront access on the Portage along M203 near Christensen Road.

By donating conservation easements, Terry and Sue Ellen have ensured that future generations will

also be able to enjoy this large expanse of forests, meadows, ponds and streams. In addition, proceeds from the annual HorseTail Scramble held at Churning Rapids build the Land Stewardship Fund that will eventually support land protection and stewardship staff. It is a complete package. Our community should be thankful for these generous and visionary landowners, and also for the KLT supporters that are building a local organization with a track record as a qualified holder of conservation easements that makes projects like this possible.



Alan Toczydlowski helps his mom, KLT Project Specialist, document the current condition of Churning Rapids property for the easement baseline document. Photo by Pat Toczydlowski

Marsin Center *continued from page 1* planned for establishment of an endowment to support the Center's cores operations. This financial gift supports a resident Property Manager to handle maintenance and improvements. A Marsin Advisory Committee is being formed, with the responsibility of guiding and overseeing management and development of the Center and its programs.

The Center is now available for use by groups up to about 25 people. Space is available for overnight lodging of visiting professionals or volunteers. However, the project is a work in progress and the complete transformation of the campus and facilities into a nature retreat center will take work and additional resources. Goals include improving esthetics, access for the disabled, and building modifications to improve energy efficiency and durability. We want to create a conference room space, as well as alter common areas and rest rooms for group use. An area for wood-working or craft projects could be setup in the garage or basement. Eventually we could increase the capacity for overnight guests by improving the rustic cabin on the property and the Center's basement area. All improvements will be based on professional recommendations.

KLT submitted a proposal to the Master Planning program of the University of Michigan's School of Natural Resources and Environment (SNRE) for assessment and planning needs of the Marsin site and facilities. This SNRE program provides real-world challenges to a team of masters students as the culmination of their studies. Hopefully the Marsin Project will be one of the SNRE selected projects for 2007-08.

The Portage Waterway is an under-appreciated resource in our community and KLT can promote awareness and appreciation through the Marsin program and our outreach efforts. For



Gathering at the Marsin Lakeshore campus for the June dedication. Photo by Evan McDonald

ecological and other benefits, we plan to naturalize shoreline vegetation and create a demonstration project for the Portage Waterway. Replacing portions of maintained lawns with native species and natural plant communities will help protect water quality,

provide wildlife habitat, minimize maintenance needs, and allow the Center to blend in more naturally with the landscape.

We have the opportunity to make the Marsin Nature Retreat Center a centerpiece of KLT's three-part mission of conservation, stewardship, and education. The facility can strengthen our role as a community partner by being available to diverse user groups, with a special emphasis on fostering appreciation of the natural world. With opportunities for arts, crafts, recreation, gardening, and ecological study such as water testing and biological surveys, we have the potential to develop multigenerational programs that strengthen people's connection to nature and build community. Intern and artist-in-residence programs at the Center could promote these goals.

With intention and vision, Mary Sinish gave us all a gift, turning her home into a place where we can all feel at home. Call KLT at 482-0820 to reserve this facility for a group function or to find out about volunteer opportunities at the Marsin Center.

Meet KLT Board Member Dave Bach

When Dave was asked why he chose to be on the KLT board of directors there was no hesitation in his unbiased reply. "I want to help preserve and protect one of the finest places on earth to live".

And the Keweenaw is a place he attempts to get to know on a very personal basis. Using feet, peddle, and paddle for transport; Dave's idea of a great time is to get lost trying to find and follow the



path least traveled. He humbly states that, besides wanting to thoroughly sample every India pale ale, "one of my loftier goals is to explore every inch of the wilder places of the Copper Country or get lost trying".

Dave came to the Keweenaw over forty years ago as a freshman at Michigan Tech. "I knew I had found my real home" he says, "when, in the family station wagon, we sled into Houghton through a blinding blizzard, and it was early September!"

Since then he has become, as his father would proudly state, "an overeducated carpenter", receiving an undergraduate degree in engineering and a masters in biological sciences. And both have been handy in a 25-year stint as local building contractor specializing in creative, energy-efficient design and construction. "This was a wonderful job", Dave exclaims I worked with a crew of wonderful, creative people, my clients have become friends, and I spent most my time outside. How many people can have a picnic lunch almost every day?"

Currently, Dave uses his building knowledge teaching courses in construction management in Michigan Tech's School of Technology. "It all fits together perfectly," Dave says. "My life experiences as a builder, engineer, biologist, teacher, and explorer are rooted in grappling with what I term the human dichotomy- the personal everyday balancing act of want vs. need and its effect on the wonderful natural systems on which our existence depends. In the KLT I find like-minded souls willing to address this issue at the community level. I have no choice but to jump in with both feet."

Stewardship

Protection in Action

Stewardship is rooted in gratitude, generosity and service to others – using our skills and resources to nurture something for the public good. Land stewardship embodies the belief that we do not really own the land but are caretakers during our lifetime. KLT works to recognize, demonstrate and inspire land stewardship that leaves the land better for future generations. This fosters good public relations and demonstrates our commitment to protect a property. Regular inspections of our protected lands and maintaining working relationships with landowners of easement properties build our credibility in the community. More than caring for preserves and monitoring easements, stewardship is an ethical and legal responsibility upholding KLT's mission as a qualified easement holder under I.R.S. regulations.

KLT welcomes Curtis Perala as our Property Manager, coming on in June with the Marsin Nature Retreat Center. Curtis will primarily care for the Marsin project, but is available to assist with other KLT projects. We are fortunate to have a reliable jack-of-many-trades to bolster our stewardship program. The trails at Marsin are greatly improved with assistance from the MTU Land Trust and Conservancy Student Group. Curtis will help improve trails and signage at the expanded Paavola Wetlands preserve next year. That addition gives more options for access and viewing the pond and more trail friendly high ground.

“Hard work spotlights the character of people: some turn up their sleeves, some turn up their noses, and some don't turn up at all.” (Sam Ewing)

KLT benefited from the cost-share available to private landowners through the MI-DNR's Forest Stewardship Program to prepare a management plan for our 200-acre Six Mile Creek Preserve near Keweenaw Bay. KLT goals are to protect the natural features and soil and water quality of this rugged land of steep ridges, ravines, sedge meadows and streams. Adding signs and monitoring beaver and ATV activity are the main needs identified. With a DNR approved plan we can take advantage of future cost-share incentives for implementation activities like habitat improvements, and control of erosion and invasive species. Any Michigan landowner with 12 or more acres can participate in this program aimed at increasing benefits derived from their land while conserving it for the future.

KLT is working with project partners, volunteers and

Manitou Island Light Station Project:

Joe Kaplan, Phil Quenzi and Bob Haataja made great progress in 2006. The team sealed and painted exteriors, and improved ventilation to let those historic buildings breathe easier. Ken Czapski of UP Engineers & Architects completed the Condition Assessment Report to guide future rehabilitation. The Copper Country Audubon Club funded another successful migratory bird survey.



An effective team of volunteers pulled knapweed and improved trails at the Marsin Preserve in July. From the left, Don Horton, Afton Sather-Knutsen, John Dodge, Abbie Clarke, Zeke Fugate, John Hribljan, Julia Kalloz, and Christa Luokkala joined Marsin Property Manager Curtis Perala. Photo by Evan McDonald

professional consultants to develop a Resource Management Plan for the Bete Grise South Preserve, partly funded by a Michigan Coastal Management Grant administered by the landowner, Houghton Keweenaw Conservation District. Rod Chimner, a wetlands ecologist, offered much of KLT's required in-kind match for this grant by evaluating a previously conducted hydrological study. Rod used the site as an outdoor classroom for his MTU wetlands course and will provide recommendations for future use of the hydrological information and existing test wells. Coastal wetlands are vulnerable habitats and may be early indicators of potential impacts like global climate change. The South Shore Association of nearby landowners and KLT easement monitor, Jo Foley, help keep the preserve clean and identify problems that need attention.

We were pleased that Judy Foster and Barb Quenzi joined our returning conservation easement monitors. These dedicated volunteers provide a crucial service as stewards of our easements they have adopted. They work with our Project Specialist to maintain positive relationships with our easement donors and complete necessary annual site visits and reports that demonstrate KLT upholds the terms of our easements. Serious stuff – but enjoyable. The landowners are fun and inspiring to interact with – especially on their turf – land they hold very dear. We could not expand our land protection program without these committed volunteers.



Artwork by Ingrid DockerSmith

Partnership

“Partnering” is a focus of many granting programs and successful conservation teams that recognize that together we are often greater than the sum of the parts. Conservation organizations and agencies can build capacity and attract outside funding by leveraging combined resources, energy and expertise towards accomplishing shared goals. As a “community partner”, KLT not only relies on the individual skills and generosity of the

Strength in Numbers

purchase the land, and a separate grant to fund stewardship needs, including a Resource

Management Plan. The Houghton-Keweenaw Conservation District, The Nature Conservancy-MI Chapter and KLT all share the vision of protecting as much of this 5000-acre ecological system as possible. A proposal to more than double the size of this preserve along Lac La Belle recently made the state cut and we will hear in spring if it will be funded. KLT also fostered a new partnership this year, and we will soon learn if we will be funded to establish a new KLT preserve that would protect a diverse and beautiful coastal wetland that contributes to the viability of the Huron Bay fishery. This project would provide unique recreational and outreach opportunities in Baraga County. A third partnership proposal in the hopper would expand conservation efforts near Mount Baldy to develop a more extensive wildlife corridor along the north shore of Keweenaw County.

Thanks to support from Coastal Management Programs in three states (WI, MN and MI) you can now read about conservation successes across the lake basin as landowners, volunteers and staff of organizations in the Lake Superior Land Trust Partnership present several stories “In Their Own Voices”. These 14 vignettes (available in the KLT office) can be shared to inspire new partners in conservation. The benefits of partnership are clear when they result in a tangible success. However, KLT has learned that being on a team is rewarding regardless -- in conserving our natural resources...

...there is strength in numbers.

Some Heroes Behind the Scenes:

Special Thanks to the **Americana Foundation** and the **LUX Foundation** for major support of KLT programs in 2006. Their funding helped KLT make progress in our conservation easement program, as well as develop publications and improve our website. Look for those outreach materials and a new website in early 2007!



The KLT Annual Meeting at the Marsin Center gave supporters a chance to visit and hear about our partnerships. Photo by Evan

donors and volunteers that make our work possible, but also works to strengthen our network across the Upper Peninsula and throughout the national land trust community. Michigan now has the staff and strategic plans in place that enable us to compete for federal conservation funding. In this highly competitive process, only the best projects advance through state, regional, and national review, with those offering the greatest combination of conservation value, cost, likelihood of success and other criteria being funded.

The Bete Grise South Preserve, protecting over 1000 acres of prime coastal Great Lakes Marsh, is one example of such a success with project partners receiving funds to

Partnership to Conserve Land & Water Sails Ahead

The unique team formed by Discovery World at Pier Wisconsin (DWPW) and KLT continues to build for the future. For all of you who were unable to come aboard for daysails on the *Denis Sullivan* this past July, because we sold out quickly, plans are moving forward to provide that opportunity in 2007. If your schedule did not allow you to be a participant and crew member on our last Land to Sea Expedition on Lake Superior—the 2007 Expedition is under development. Look for our friends at DWPW to sail that 3-masted Great Lakes schooner to the Keweenaw in Mid-July. Contact KLT for details. Go to www.discoveryworld.org for information about the S/V *Denis Sullivan*.



Landlubbers enjoying a daysail on Portage Lake. Photo by Evan

Notes from KLT Executive Director Evan McDonald

Our Connections and Choices for our Community

I don't think anyone wakes up and says "I'm going to do a conservation easement on my land today" or "I'm going to donate a thousand dollars to Keweenaw Land Trust this week." I would welcome both possibilities but I just don't think it works that way. Making those kinds of choices – to protect land or support a charity – comes out of a process and through appreciation of connections. Describing the connection to a place, an organization, a community...or to all of them simultaneously is something poets and nature writers try to capture. For many of us, our connection to the Copper Country grows out of all aspects of this place and our quality of life here: the history, the natural richness, the local arts and culture, and the community. By mission and tradition, KLT views the land itself as the common denominator for everything that comprises our quality of life. Protecting and enhancing our quality of life is why we pursue a diversity of projects and endeavor to promote efforts beyond just land protection.

When a community feels connections collectively, the shared awareness, desire and appreciation get people working together with a common vision. That connection is forming in our region. The appreciation that we live in

.....KLT views the land itself as the common denominator for everything that comprises our quality of life.....

a special place with a unique culture, rich history, blessed with natural resources is growing...and we are faced with choices that will impact the integrity of all of that. We have choices. That is too often and too easily forgotten. For a community, we need dialogue to weigh options and decide which choices are better. KLT will contribute to the dialogue and you can also be a voice.

"Leave the place the way you found it" and "leave the place better than you found it" are two often-repeated adages. I prefer the latter as a matter of principle. The first is good manners for guests in someone's home and the second one is essential for conservationists. I think when you have a deep connection your desire is to make something good even better. A beautiful landscape is good and a beautiful landscape protected for the future is even better. A productive, working forest is good and a working forest dedicated and managed for sustainability is even better. I think protecting natural resources is essential to our quality of life. But don't take my word for it, ask the birds, the trees and Lake Superior.



Mary Sinish (photo at left) felt a deep connection to a place and she wanted her connection to outlive her. Mary learned about her choices and in the last decade of her life she made decisions to create something that will endure and foster the kind of connections that she valued. She wanted to help build com-

munity for young and old alike by giving groups a relaxing and beautiful gathering place. Mary also wanted a visit to a retreat center to reinvigorate our connection to the natural world and remind us that we live in a special place here in the Keweenaw. Now KLT has the honor of making Mary's vision a reality and the community has the Marsin Nature Retreat Center. In her own way, Mary Sinish left the place better than she found it. Not everyone can do something like Mary did, but everyone can do *something*.

Helping people find their *something* is part of what our outreach program is about. For some, their *something* - their choice - might be a conservation easement, which is a land protection agreement through which a private landowner enters into a partnership with a land trust. It is a powerful choice that can protect land and promote appropriate development by setting limits that protect the natural integrity of the easement land. Development planned for easement property can be guided to help protect natural resources, such as leaving trees and space for them to grow and setting new construction far enough from fragile streams and shoreline. The state and federal governments recognize that conservation easements serve the public good by protecting valuable natural and cultural resources. The newest tax incentives for conservation easement donations are described on the facing page.

For others, a donation of time or money is the expression of their connection. Are you feeling connected to the Copper Country? Can KLT do something to help you feel more connected? Let's each find our own way to make a good thing even better.

I hope to see you at the TalviTohina!

Evan



Executive Director marries Executive Director. Evan with his bride, Libby Meyer, during their August wedding. Libby is Executive Director of the Copper Country Suzuki Association and her pupils performed at the ceremony...making beautiful music across the land. Evan's quality of life has improved greatly. Photo by Adam Johnson

Looking for last minute winter storage space?

We have indoor storage space available at the Marsin Center for reasonable rental rates that help fund our program. If you have a boat, vehicle or other items you'd like to store, give Curtis a call at 483-0480.



Join the Keweenaw Land Trust—Renew Your Membership

Name _____ Phone # _____

Address _____ (please circle: summer - winter - permanent)

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email address _____

I support the mission of the Keweenaw Land Trust. Enclosed are my membership dues:

\$15 - Student \$25 - Basic Member \$50 - Protector \$100 - Guardian \$250 - Steward

I would like to make an additional gift for:

Land Purchase/Memorial Fund \$_____ Purchase land in honor of _____

Manitou Island Light Station Preserve \$_____

Marsin Nature Retreat Center \$_____

KLT General Operations Endowment \$_____

I would like to set up direct deposit to support KLT through the year.

I would like someone to contact me with additional information.

If you were considering a contribution for the Paavola expansion, donations before Dec 15 will be **matched 50 cents on the dollar**

KLT respects your privacy and confidentiality. We do not sell our lists and we honor requests for anonymity.

**THANK YOU! Dues and contributions are tax deductible. Please mail to:
Keweenaw Land Trust, Inc., P.O. Box 750, Houghton MI 49931**

LIMITED TIME OFFERS! Act now for conservation

For a limited time, donors can take advantage of great new incentives to protect their land and support their favorite charities. Recent legislation passed at both the federal and state levels offers bold new incentives for land conservation easement donations and charitable donations from IRA's.

Federal Pension Act of 2006 offers the following incentives in effect through 2007:

- An IRA rollover provision now allows those over 70 1/2 years of age to make charitable donations up to \$100,000 from an IRA without having to count the donation as taxable income.
- Raises the deduction a landowner can take for donating a qualified conservation easement from 30% of gross adjusted income in any year to 50%.
- Extends the carry-forward period for a donor to take tax deductions for a conservation easement from 5 to 15 years.

State of Michigan incentives for conservation

- Senate Bill 1004 passed both houses of the state legislature and is scheduled to be signed by the governor. This bill could help those whose family lands have greatly appreciated in value so that the current "state equalized value" (50% of true cash value) is much greater than the capped "taxable value". Under the State Constitution, any time

ownership of a property is transferred - even to a family member - the taxable value is uncapped and property taxes are then paid on the current assessed value, with annual property taxes then increasing by no more than the rate of inflation.

- SB 1004 keeps property taxes capped for lands protected by an IRS qualified conservation easement when sold or transferred.
- SB 317 would grant state income tax credits for land or conservation easement donations if passed—similar to the federal income tax credits.

The Land Trust Alliance is working to make these federal incentives permanent. Learn more at www.lta.org and www.SteveSmall.com. Steve is a national leader on conservation and estate tax law and a strong advocate for the land trust community and estate planning for family lands.

The Heart of the Lakes Center for Land Conservation Policy provides a state-level policy voice for Michigan's local land conservancies through action and education (www.heartofthelakes.org).

If you know landowners considering the future of their land or potential donors of easements, land, appreciated stock, or other gifts, please let them know about these new conservation incentives and encourage them to consider a donation to KLT.



P.O. Box 750
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906-482-0820



**Please make a generous end
of year gift to help KLT start
2007 right!**

If you were thinking of contributing to
Paavola, donations before Dec 15 will
be matched 50 cents on the dollar

2nd Annual KLT TalviTohinat Cross Country Ski SCRAMBLE

January 20th, 2007 at the Michigan Tech Nordic Ski Trails

Part of the Heikinpäivä festival celebrating Mid-Winter and Finnish-American culture

New This Year

Pre-Registration: go to www.KeweenawLandTrust.org for downloadable forms

Skijoring Race: Bring your dog for fun in the snow



*Skiers at last year's TalviTohinat enjoyed
sunshine and nicely groomed trails.*

Race-Day Registration starts at 12:00

- 2.5 Km Youth Races***
- 5 and 10 Km Adult Races***
- 6 Km Skijor race for 1-2 Dogs***

***Volunteers are needed on race day—call 906-337-1524
or email Anne at mayokiely@msn.com for details***

***Family and furry friends will find
fun and fitness in the flurries***