



NEWS

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

Coastal Wetland Conservation Success Crosses Keweenaw Bay

As KLT was wrapping up coastal conservation work on the Abbaye Peninsula, a new project slowly unfolded across the waters of Keweenaw Bay. Like every KLT land project, this one has a story. Longtime KLT supporters Larry Carroll and Mary Haller have owned a tract of land on Lake Superior for decades. Their plans for the property changed over time, with perpetual conservation becoming a goal. The dense conifer cover and thickets surrounding the wetlands of Le Chance Creek are home to countless species of plants and animals. Visions for a getaway camp faded as appreciation for the unspoiled natural wonders of the site grew.

Knowing they would not be able to hold onto this wild property forever, Larry and Mary approached KLT with an opportunity and an offer that was hard to refuse. Would the land trust be interested in purchasing their land? At 432 acres with over a quarter-mile of stunning Lake Superior shoreline, extensive wetland ecosystems, and indications of its potential for bird habitat, KLT gave the property a serious look. Logging pressures in this area meant if the property were sold to a private party, the lush habitats that had thrived over generations may be degraded. The Michigan DNR owns land adjacent to the property on two sides, adding conservation value to the tract. Coastal conservation is a KLT priority, with sites that serve the Keweenaw Water Trail one consideration.



To help evaluate the conservation value, KLT worked with members of Copper Country Audubon to identify bird species found on the property. Dozens of birds were cataloged, including early records of several rare species, such as the Boreal Chickadee. The property's near-shore habitat has fishery value and the Keweenaw Bay

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Partners Gather to Dedicate Abbaye Peninsula & Huron Bay Lands

The Keweenaw Land Trust was pleased to host our U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) and Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) coastal conservation partners as we welcomed over 50 community members to a dedication this October to celebrate the success of the Abbaye Peninsula & Huron Bay Conservation Initiative. Despite rainy skies, a cheerful crowd gathered at the Lightfoot Bay cabins to share a jubilant morning with one another. After all, wrapping up a \$2.1 million dollar conservation project is worth a celebration!

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Indian Community periodically monitors this stretch for lake sturgeon. Additionally, The Nature Conservancy highlighted this area in its 2000 Ecoregional Assessment for the property's Carex/Scirpus Sedge Meadow Marsh along Le Chance Creek, a particularly rare vegetation type in this region. KLT incorporated this information and more in an application to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's Joint Ventures grant program that focuses on conserving birds and their habitats throughout North America. The proposed project would permanently protect the property and its mature forest that is becoming rarer on our landscape. KLT's application was especially competitive because Larry and Mary offered a significant bargain sale and offered to pay some project costs.

The Joint Ventures program has a quick turnaround! After a spring submission, KLT learned that the entire \$282,000 request would be funded by summer! KLT officially closed on the property in October 2016, establishing the Le Chance Creek Nature Area as the organization's 15th public nature area. The property is open for low-impact, non-motorized recreation, including bird watching, hunting, and paddling, with water trail camping on the remote shoreline. KLT has no plans to develop the site beyond a small rustic camping area on the shore, leaving this place wild and the wetland habitats intact. The property can be accessed on foot through the DNR land to the south, or by water.

We thank Larry Carroll and Mary Haller for their patience and dedication to finding a conservation outcome. Now, not only can they still enjoy the serenity of the property's woodlands, the entire community can share in that enjoyment.



Larry Carroll enjoying the view near Le Chance Creek.



Dense conifers provide winter cover for area deer.

Conservation Comes Full Circle with Expansion of Lightfoot Bay

The story of Lightfoot Bay goes back generations, but for KLT things only began in 2007. That year the organization received its first large land acquisition grant, a \$397,000 award from the National Coastal Wetlands Conservation (NCWC)



program of the USFWS. KLT used this money to purchase 54 acres from Gail and Gerry Mattson that encompassed the heart of Lightfoot Bay. Gerry's father, a L'Anse pharmacist, owned land at Lightfoot that served as a family vacation retreat for decades, with the ownership later divided between Gerry and his sister Suzanne (Mattson) Brown.

Suzie soon became involved with the land trust, sharing a wealth of stories to enrich our knowledge of that area. After gaining the trust of Suzie and her husband, Jim, KLT purchased another 26 acres of the family land from the Browns in 2010, adding a mature wooded dune and swale of exceptional diversity and quality to the existing nature area.

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A Gathering to Celebrate Abbaye Peninsula & Huron Bay Conservation Initiative

"The diversity and abundance of fish and wildlife that use the Abbaye Peninsula are a testament to the quality and significance of the land and water around us," said Tom Melius, USFWS Regional Director. "Bald eagles, coaster brook trout, waterfowl and lake trout – and the people who enjoy these resources – will benefit now and in the future."



From left: Evan McDonald (KLT), Tom Melius (USFWS), and Stacy Welling-Haughey (MDNR).

Members of supporting organizations attended, representing Copper Country Audubon, the Upper Peninsula Environmental Coalition, and others. Assistance from our partner organizations enabled the conservation initiative to permanently protect 1,374 acres and nearly a mile of Lake Superior shoreline. A \$1 million grant was awarded in 2015 through the USFWS's National Coastal Wetlands Conservation program, and over \$1.1 million was raised in matching funds from private foundations, individual donors, and bargain sales. The MDNR served as the grant administrator for this important project.

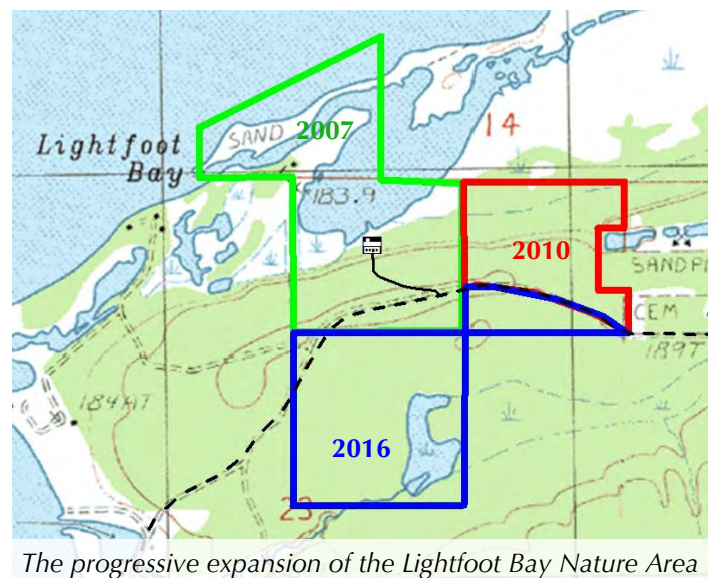
"All of the project lands will be open to the public, with fishing, hunting, skiing and other valuable recreational opportunities available here," said Stacy Welling-Haughey, MDNR Upper Peninsula regional coordinator. "This project aligns with MDNR

goals and complements several other initiatives in the area, including the Pilgrim River Watershed Project."

Evan McDonald, KLT Executive Director, concluded the prepared remarks by inviting a moment of silence to listen to the beautiful surroundings and appreciate what has been protected. Having heard a taste of what was out there, attendees had a chance to go for a hike once the rain ceased. Some chose to explore the diverse dune & swales east of the cabins, while others headed south to discover marshy headwater habitats. Those new to Lightfoot took the popular hike (down Two Tick Lane) to check out the ever-changing white sand beaches and views of the Abbaye Peninsula. No one left disappointed! All in all, it was a wonderful day and we're glad so many of you could share in the celebration. KLT plans to offer additional opportunities for guided explorations to the Finlander Bay Nature Area, Koski Shores on Keweenaw Bay, and Huron Bay Field Station in the coming years.

Positive recognition of our work at Lightfoot Bay and its alignment with KLT and broader conservation priorities led to a second NCWC grant in 2015, this time to the tune of \$1 million for the Abbaye Peninsula & Huron Bay Conservation Initiative. These nationally competitive grant awards speak to the quality of our natural resources and KLT's approach to building strong partnerships. The Land Trust recently closed out this second NCWC grant with the purchase of the remaining 51 acres of the Mattson/Brown family holding at Lightfoot Bay. The newest addition permanently conserves more of the wooded dunes at Lightfoot and a large wetland complex that forms the headwaters of a local creek. The wetlands are teeming with birds and wildlife and add significant diversity to this already valuable protected area.

The investment of staff time, match and grant funding, and the buy-in of conservation minded landowners has achieved remarkable conservation success for the globally significant natural resources of Huron Bay. We are fortunate to have had the chance to work with the Mattson/Brown family over the past decade to ensure their property remains wild forever.



The progressive expansion of the Lightfoot Bay Nature Area

Frightful Weather Can't Stop Inaugural Breakers to Bridge!

The stage was set: 80 paddle craft lined up at the North Entry Breakers. There were kayaks both big and small, canoes, and even a few paddleboards. For those who saw this fleet, it was an impressive sight to behold. Few photos exist from the first Breakers to Bridge Paddle Festival due to an exciting twist to this fun-filled event: one helluva early fall storm!

The Breakers to Bridge Paddle Festival was hosted by the Michigan Tech Outdoor Adventure Program (OAP) to celebrate its 10th anniversary. Along with KLT's 20th anniversary, a combined event was planned to highlight the work both groups are doing to promote water-based outdoor recreation in the Copper Country. The Festival's feature event was a 10-mile paddle from the North Entry to the Lift Bridge, an event that would draw over 100 paddlers of all abilities from 5 states.

With brutal winds whipping up dangerous waves at the planned start line, OAP made the call to shuttle paddlers a mile inland to avoid the worst of what Lake Superior had to offer. A few brave souls from the competitive paddling division made the frenzied paddle anyway through "the irons" to the updated start line. 3...2...1... off they went on the ride of their lives! Soaked to the bone by the driving rain, successive waves of paddlers in the non-competitive division quickly followed into the whirling storm.

As this was the first year the course was run, it was anybody's guess how quickly competitive paddlers would complete the race. The answer: *fast!* Fierce north winds set a blistering pace, and before they knew it paddlers were passing by the first aid station at the Marsin Nature Retreat. KLT Board members Clay Hixson, Bill Deephouse, and Don Keith endured the weather to hand out snacks and drinks to paddlers in need. After rounding the bend at Oskar, paddlers practically flew into town on a stiff tailwind, with the first competitive racers arriving in well-under two hours! All told, 79 out of 80 boats finished the event despite the crazy weather. KLT and OAP look forward to building on the successful launch to offer many more years of this fun event – no matter what Mother Nature throws at us!

Following the 10-mile paddle, KLT hosted its **Annual General Membership Meeting**. The Board of Directors saw three members step down this year: Bill Deephouse and Terry Kinzel both completed two successive 3-year terms, and Aaron Bickel left the Board to focus on his studies at Michigan Tech. We thank each of them for their dedicated service! KLT members elected three new Directors, welcoming Maria Janowiak, Babette Jokela, and Ellen Aiken to the Board. They will bring great new perspectives and help drive the organization forward in the coming years.

Meet the Board: Maria Janowiak

I grew up catching turtles and frogs, and being outside in nature has always been an important part of my life. I moved to the Keweenaw to go to college and have stayed because I can't imagine a place that I'd rather be.

I studied forestry at Michigan Tech, receiving B.S. and M.S. degrees and learning a lot about the woods. I also met my husband, Rexx, at Tech when we were students and we have been lucky to both find jobs that allow us to stay. I work at the Northern Institute of Applied Climate Science and Forest Service, where I summarize the science describing the effects of climate change on forests and communicate this to natural resource professionals so they are better able to keep forests healthy and productive. Rexx works at Green Timber Consulting Foresters and helps people manage their land. We are outdoors a lot in our spare time, with gardening, biking, and spending time at our property currently being my favorite things to do.

I travel a lot for work, which helps me to see what a unique place we have here in the Keweenaw, in terms of the natural landscape as well as the community of people that live in it. My hope is that I will help others better understand and appreciate this place and inspire them to go out and be good stewards of the land.



A Field Trip to Lightfoot Bay – Marcy Erickson, L'Anse 6th Grade Teacher

The L'Anse sixth grade class recently spent a beautiful day at KLT's Lightfoot Bay Nature Area to participate in place-based education on native plant communities and uses. As you can imagine, the time required to orchestrate a successful outdoor experience for 65 highly energetic and enthusiastic students is, well...significant. Busing needs to be arranged, permission slips need to be signed and turned in before the field trip, lunch needs to be planned, safety of the students considered, and the location needs to have bathrooms. If inclement weather should arise, a contingency plan needs to be in place. All of this and more goes into planning a meaningful, organized and effective field trip before we even leave the school.



When choosing a field trip destination, it was easy to settle on Lightfoot Bay, not just for its unique landscape and beauty, but also because it has outdoor privies, cabins for warmth, and plenty of space to contain a boisterous crowd of students. The day was spent hiking trails to compare and contrast native plant communities, discovering uses for wild rice, creating art using native plants, and making tea with native plants by boiling water with stones heated in a fire. Field trip events are the substance of school memories, and are a fantastic way to foster wonder and awe in students. Guided outdoor field trips connect children with their environment on a deeper level than they typically experience, and hopefully help children to be more aware of the amazing world they live in.



The sixth grade students at L'Anse claimed their field trip to Lightfoot Bay was “the best field trip EVER!” and it's easy to see why. Who wouldn't love a crisp, sunny, fall day spent outside exploring with friends in arguably one of the most unique places in the region? Our thanks go out to the Keweenaw Land Trust for making this special place available to us, and to Pat & Nathan for sharing their knowledge of the site with our students!

Photos clockwise from upper left: Marcy Erickson brews some tea using freshly picked ingredients; a student shows off his artistic creation; students hike the woods to learn about native plants with DeAnna Hadden from the KBIC Natural Resources Department; the class holds still long enough for a photo alongside the main Lightfoot cabin.



An Autumn Trip to Paavola Wetlands

Late this autumn, long after the leaves had fallen and most animals hunkered down, 28 students from Houghton Middle School's Creative Outdoor Explorations class went for a hike at Paavola Wetlands that they won't soon forget! Guided by KLT's Nathan and their teacher Meryl Lucchesi-Freyberg, the students explored the foggy woodlands and saw many rare, beautiful, and interesting sights. We'll let their photos and journal entries do the talking!



"When my class entered the wetlands we saw a white weasel, we learned that it's white because of camouflaging with the snow. The snow is very late and that's a problem because then the predators can spot the weasel easily and kill it." – Layan A.

"My favorite part was when we went onto the rock wall and it was covered with moss. We saw the large pond, with an outline of trees, part of it blocked off with all of the fog. It was glorious. I thought the tour guide did a really nice job of explaining and showing us new things. This was probably one of my favorite field trips ever." – Seth H.

"The air was very fresh and cool, and it was very quiet while we were walking and I could hear the crunch of the leaves and the squish of the mud when we walked by a water source." – Lily W.



"I think that my favorite part of the trip was just getting to be outside, and not having to sit in a classroom. It was really foggy outside, and it was good to get fresh air." – Cassidy S.



"We all saw this old abandoned house that people actually used to live in! It was fascinating. We smelled the forest breeze, we felt the rough tree bark, we tasted the crisp air, and we saw the cattails. I really enjoyed this field trip and I hope we can do it again sometime." – Brina K.

"It was a nice day, and we saw some pretty views on and at the top of the trail. I could see trees all around me, fallen logs on the ground, and the sun shining through the clouds. It smelled like a fresh spring day. One exciting part of the day was when we saw a white weasel running through the woods." – Helena H.

"We went and looked at some trees and there was this tree that had sap bubbles and if you poked them with a stick then the bubble would pop and sap would come out. Nathan told us that we could taste it if we wanted but he said to not try because it would probably taste bad. I ended up tasting the sap and it tasted like mint for a while and it was pretty good until the aftertaste kicked in when it started tasting nasty." – Jacob R.



"We learned about the history of the wetlands, tree identification, and beaver dams. My favorite part was learning about the history. It was cool seeing the old farmhouse and learning how many people actually fit in that small of a house. The garbage piles were so weird because you could see all of the things they used and how it won't decompose for hundreds of years." – Emily S.

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Address _____ Please Circle: Summer - Winter - Permanent

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

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I would like to receive email notices about: Upcoming events; General KLT News; Volunteer workdays

Choose your membership giving level:

\$20 STUDENT Membership

\$50 Supporter \$100 Guardian \$250 Steward Other \$ _____

_____ I am interested in receiving information about planned giving to support KLT

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

***** New this year: Give a FREE gift membership to a friend or family member! *****

Name _____

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Thank you for your gift! Dues and contributions are tax deductible. Please mail this form and payment to:

Keweenaw Land Trust, 801 N. Lincoln Drive Suite 306, Hancock MI 49930

Give a Gift Membership to KLT & Match Your Donation!

NEW: renewing your KLT membership earns a free gift membership for a friend or family member! Know someone passionate about the outdoors? This is a great opportunity to give them a special gift: learning that they can help to protect special places across the Copper Country. Any General Membership renewal of \$50 and up receives a free gift membership – just provide the information in the donation form above. On top of that, any donation above \$50 will be generously matched in our ongoing \$10,000 match challenge!

Gift memberships are a great way to share the value of conservation with others who may not know about the Keweenaw Land Trust. With no cost to you, they're also a steal! Gift members will receive a year's subscription to KLT's newsletters, a letter welcoming them to be a part of the land trust and acknowledging YOU for their gift, and a sticker to display their support for land conservation. Households must be new to KLT to qualify for gift memberships.

Hiking buddies, fellow birders, photographer friends, angler allies, and anyone who loves the Copper Country will all find value in a KLT membership. Conserving greenspace is not just for "tree-huggers," it enriches everyone's quality of life. Whether you are an avid outdoors enthusiast or occasional fall color peeper, so many people love what makes the Keweenaw special: rugged shorelines, expansive forests, diverse wildlife, and winding rivers. Help spread a good word for KLT and give a gift membership today!

Don't forget that any amount you give above the \$50 general membership will be matched dollar-for-dollar, up to a total of \$10,000! This challenge is made possible by Terry Kinzel & Sue Ellen Kingsley, generous KLT supporters since its founding 20 years ago. To be eligible, your donation must be more than the base \$50 membership rate (or \$20 for the student rate). That means if you give \$250, Terry & Sue Ellen will match your donation with an additional \$200! This money will help support KLT general operations which are always in a perpetual state of need, despite the overwhelming success of KLT's project-specific fundraising. From insuring KLT's public nature areas to paying office rent, general operations funding drives the organization forward. KLT could not protect nearly as much land as it has without the support of individuals like you! Your support enables KLT to save more places like Hungarian Falls, Le Chance Creek, and the Mason Nature Area for future generations.

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801 N. Lincoln Drive, Suite 306
Hancock, MI 49930

(906) 482-0820

info@KeweenawLandTrust.org

www.facebook.com/KeweenawLandTrust

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33 Projects and Counting – Nathan Miller

Before I joined the Keweenaw Land Trust team in 2012, I had barely heard of KLT during my adventures around the Copper Country. I soon became familiar with not only how land trusts operate, but the joy of actually working for one. Sure, some days I'm in the office plugging away at the computer, writing newsletter pieces and project monitoring reports. While important, those aren't the days I write home about. Getting outside on the protected lands is what really drives me.

Whether I'm out cleaning up trails at Hungarian Falls with volunteers or leading hikes with students at Paavola Wetlands, being outside *and* on the job is nothing short of awesome! After 4 years of exploring, I have now visited every KLT project – all 33 of them, the first to do so. That's a lot of protected places! Every year I checked a few more off my list, even as KLT was adding more projects to its portfolio. It's hard to keep up when the list keeps getting longer.

Many land projects remain privately owned, protected by conservation easements that KLT must visit every year to ensure the landowners are managing their land according to the agreement. It's a treat to visit with these landowners and hear stories about their properties. Oftentimes they've been caring for the land for decades, watching the woods rebound and mature into spectacular forests. Being able to see these hidden gems and share my photos with you truly is a privilege.

Which projects are my favorites? The George Hite Dunes & Marshes Preserve in Keweenaw County is an amazing place to visit on a crisp fall day. Every visit to the Traverse (Rabbit) Island Conservation Easement is a fun adventure, as is accessing KLT's Manitou Island Light Station. The Pilgrim Community Forest is a fantastic place to go for a hike and harvest nature's edibles, and Lightfoot Bay is my go-to place for white sand beaches. Finally, I have a soft spot for the Pike River Road conservation easement... probably because I live there! I can't wait to see what else is out there that we can work to conserve so that others can discover and enjoy our shared natural treasures.

