

Abbaye Peninsula Wetland Wonders: More Keweenaw Bay Shoreland Protected!



Half a mile of Keweenaw Bay shoreline has been protected forever, the second successful KLT land acquisition on the Abbaye Peninsula. Along with stunning lakeshore views and rocky shoreline, the 49-acre property is comprised almost entirely of untouched Great Lakes coastal wetlands. KLT purchased the property in December 2015, coming on the heels of the successful protection of the 1,245-acre tract that makes up the heart of the Abbaye Peninsula & Huron Bay Conservation Initiative. Calvin & Gail Koski offered the land at bargain sale, helping with the match needed for the National Coastal Wetland Conservation grant supporting this project.

This new nature area adjoins Copper Country State Forest land on two sides, and can be accessed from Point Abbaye Road. Watch for signs on the left (to be posted soon) about 7.3 miles from Townline Road. You will be greeted by mature maples and northern hardwoods, dense cedar stands, and an abundance of wetland species. Pick and choose your way through the alder thickets as you make your way north, taking caution not to step in a vernal pool or wetland seep! The biodiversity is remarkable on this relatively small parcel of land. Gnarled old hemlocks and twisted cedars form a protective roof and provide food for white-tailed deer during tough U.P. winters.

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Great News for the Pilgrim River Watershed Project

In late 2015 the prospects for a grant for the Pilgrim River Watershed Project (PRWP) were bleak. But when Congress approved a 3-year extension to the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) received a \$550,000 Forest Legacy Program grant to conserve almost 1,300 acres in the Pilgrim River Watershed. After nearly a decade of planning and preparation by the PRWP partnership, this grant enables completion of a longstanding goal.

The Forest Legacy grant will fund the purchase of conservation easements on prime, undeveloped forest land with about 3.5 miles of Pilgrim River frontage. This property serves as an important wildlife corridor and offers substantial opportunities for public recreation, education and research. This upstream effort follows the partnership's recent success

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Pilgrim River Watershed *continued from page 1.....*



“This is the largest block of unbroken forest next to Houghton. Numerous song birds are dependent on these woods for nesting and habitat. In spring one can hear the melodies of thrushes, warblers and vireos announcing their territories high in the trees. Also this is one of the most wonderful places to find baskets full of edible mushrooms every summer and fall!” Dana Richter, CC Audubon

with the Pilgrim Community Forest, acquired by KLT in 2014 with a U.S. Forest Service Community Forest Program grant and matching funds from the J.A. Woollam Foundation and private donors.

This project balances economic, conservation, and recreational goals to benefit the community in a multitude of ways. Along with protecting much of the Pilgrim River, the Forest Legacy project ensures sustainable forest management to support our local forest products economy. Preventing development on over 10% of the Pilgrim River Watershed benefits clean air and water and helps provide habitat for a diversity of wildlife. The project will secure permanent public access for hiking, exploring, hunting and fishing, continuing these time-honored Keweenaw traditions!

The Keweenaw Trails Alliance, a project partner, developed non-motorized trails winding through the Pilgrim River valley that will be open to hikers, snowshoers, cross country skiers, and mountain bikers free of charge. Opportunities for backcountry exploration are abundant, with tributaries and twists in the river to explore. A trailhead on Boundary Road allows access to the soon-to-be-protected property. Canoe and river kayak travel is possible on the Pilgrim during high water, making for an unforgettable adventure!

With the grant awarded, the MDNR and KLT will advance the project through the next steps. The Forest Legacy Program funds up to 75% of

project costs, with the remaining 25% as match from successful local fundraising. Project partners also include the Copper Country Chapter of Trout Unlimited, Copper Country Audubon, Houghton Keweenaw Conservation District, Northwood Alliance, and Partners in Forestry. The Hovel family owns the property to be protected by Forest Legacy conservation easements – their willingness and patience through the project development process is truly commendable.

Abbaye Peninsula *continued from page 1.....*

With over half a mile of Lake Superior shoreline saved from development and logging pressures, the property has a lot to offer the adventurous sightseer. When lake levels are low, a wide shelf of rock and cobble beaches are revealed, allowing easy access along its length. Wetland habitats nudge right up against Keweenaw Bay, including a stunning shrub fen at the northern corner of the property. These wetlands drain directly into Lake Superior, helping to sustain a rich near-shore fishery. No trails are planned for the property to keep its wild character intact. However, GPS boundaries are available to those up for exploring this fantastic coastal wetland. The property can be visited year-round – in winter the plow line ends on Point Abbaye Road just before nearing this property.

Marsin Management Plan Draft Coming Soon!

The Keweenaw Land Trust has been busy this winter tidying up some loose ends before the snow melts and the field season begins. One of these projects has been to draft a management plan for the Marsin Nature Area & Retreat. KLT began this process in early 2015 after being awarded funding through the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality's Coastal Zone Management program. During late-spring and early-summer 2015, KLT involved over 100 students from the local schools to aid in gathering input to be used in the planning process. Additionally, resource professionals from around the region visited Marsin to study the nature area's fish, birds, mosses, wetlands, invasive species, and more.

All of this data and participant input is being compiled into a draft management planning document that will be shared with the public soon. Be on the lookout by email or the KLT website for how you can comment on the draft report. Your opinions are important as we finalize this process! KLT would like to hear your thoughts as we aim to make Marsin an ideal nature retreat for our community. If you have questions on this process or would like to be alerted when the draft plan is being released, call the KLT office at (906) 482-0820 or email pat@keweenawlandtrust.org.

Carls Foundation Supports Abbaye Peninsula Protection with \$100,000

The Carls Foundation has awarded KLT \$100,000 to aid in the protection of intact coastal wetland resources on the Abbaye Peninsula and Huron Bay, taking the organization one step closer to completing our largest conservation effort to date. Of the total award, \$70,000 will go immediately towards paying off the purchase of the 49-acre Keweenaw Bay parcel; the remaining \$30,000 serves as a challenge grant to obtain the funds needed to purchase a 30-acre piece on Finlander Bay and a 50-acre expansion to KLT's Lightfoot Bay Coastal Wetlands. Already KLT is finding success with this challenge in the form of \$10,000 from the Upper Peninsula Environmental Coalition! (see next article)



The parcel on Finlander Bay has spectacular views of the Huron Mountains and Huron Islands and is the perfect place for a rustic campout. A cobble and sand beach stretches for a quarter of a mile, while towering white pine, cedars, and a blend of northern hardwoods make up the interior. A small campsite with pit toilet is accessible by water or off McBeth Road. With this expansion, KLT's protected area at Lightfoot Bay will be enhanced by an inland wetland complex, headwaters of a feeder stream, and dry pine dunes. Another ¼ mile of frontage along Pinery Cemetery Road will be protected, presenting good options for a new trailhead parking area.



UPEC Supports Point Abbaye with \$10,000 Community Conservation Grant

The Upper Peninsula Environmental Coalition (UPEC) awarded KLT a \$10,000 grant at their 2016 Celebrate the U.P. event, held in Baraga this March. The funds will help support KLT's ongoing fundraising efforts to secure over 1,500 acres of land on the Abbaye Peninsula and Huron Bay. **UPEC's Community Conservation Projects Grant program started in 2016 and was made possible by a generous bequest from conservationist Tom Church, a vigorous UPEC supporter who loved the natural richness and beauty of the Upper Peninsula.** This grant program will enable communities in the U.P. to step up conservation work in their watersheds or locality. In this spirit, KLT hopes to partner with the MDNR, Baraga County, Arvon Township, Baraga Trails in Motion and others to construct trails across the Abbaye Peninsula and create an exciting recreational area for the community and visitors to enjoy. The UPEC grant could not have come at a better time, as KLT hopes to wrap up this phase of the Abbaye Peninsula & Huron Bay Conservation Initiative by this summer.

Help Name the Nature Areas!

With two new nature areas on the Abbaye Peninsula and a third on the way, KLT welcomes your help to come up with names for the newest crop of protected lands in our portfolio. KLT would like to hear your suggestions for these new parcels before we settle on a name, so put on your thinking caps (or maybe your waterproof boots) and brainstorm some inspiring, descriptive, or just plain fun sounding names. Those yet to be formally named include the 49-acre piece on Keweenaw Bay, the 1,245-acre tract, and the 31-acre parcel on Finlander Bay near Point Abbaye that will be acquired soon. Take a visit to these protected places this spring or summer to see if inspiration strikes you. Keep in mind that KLT already has a conservation easement named Keweenaw Bay Shorelands, and Baraga County owns the Point Abbaye Natural Area at the tip of the peninsula. Email your suggestions to nathan@keweenawlandtrust.org. The winners will be given a pair of KLT pint glasses!

Voices of the Keweenaw: Connecting Students with Nature

by Meryl Lucchesi-Freyberg, Houghton Middle School teacher

This year Houghton Middle School students have a new elective meant to broaden their horizons. It's called Creative Outdoor Explorations, a hybrid class combining creative writing, photography, and outdoor fitness activities like cross country skiing, mountain biking, and hiking. As a lifelong lover of the outdoors, I cannot imagine a better way to spend an hour each day than helping young people, the future of our region and our country, value the outdoors.

My goal in creating this outdoors class for middle schoolers is to inspire in young people a lifelong love of the outdoors. I also want to make sure they know that in order to conserve these places, we have to take care of them and sometimes fight for their protection. My hope is that they'll fall in love with a healthy outdoor activity and discover new ways to appreciate nature. Through their short writings and photography, which you can check out on the HMS Creative Outdoor Explorations facebook page, you can see what they value in nature, their observations from season to season, and the amazing eye they have for the beauty nature provides all around them.

When we started partnering with Nathan Miller of KLT, I could see that having them visit Paavola Wetlands was more than just a field trip. It was eye opening to realize that just outside of Hancock was a sliver of nature right in our backyards that they never knew about! Nathan helped them understand that these places exist because of people like them who love the outdoors and therefore want to protect it. We were treated to lessons in ecology, tree identification, a little biology by way of some beaver facts, and some history as well, all while we snowshoed around the wetlands.

For those of us hoping to conserve natural spaces, it can be easy to believe that this digital generation will prefer to spend their free time inside on electronics. That may prove a misconception. In their writing, my class has shown a yearning for the gifts of nature. I'm confident that with the combination of our future in the hands of people with these values, and organizations like KLT, we'll continue to appreciate and care for the nature we're lucky enough to find all around us.

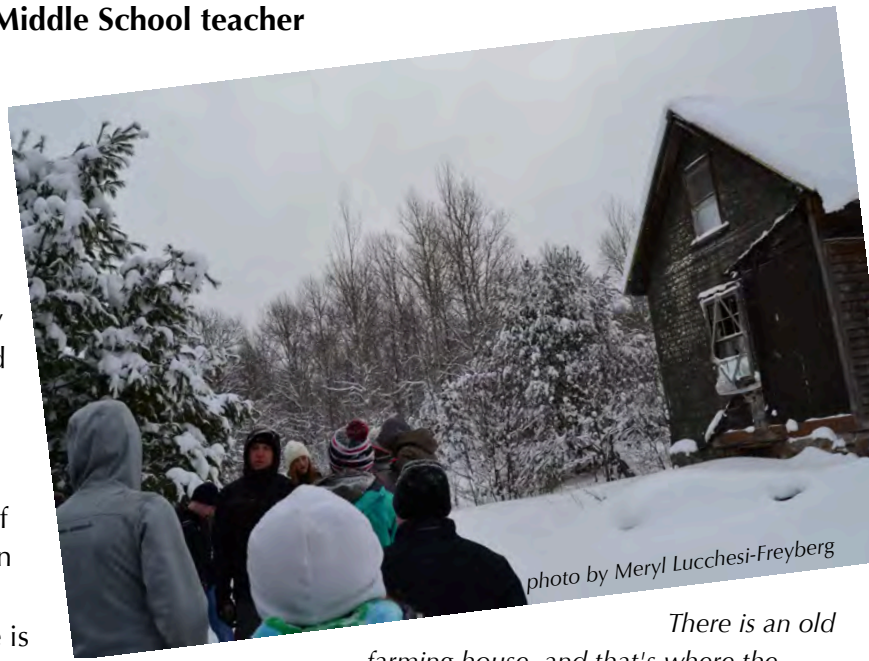


photo by Meryl Lucchesi-Freyberg

There is an old farming house, and that's where the farmers lived. It was really hard to farm in that area, as it is a wetland and there is a lot of water. My favorite part of the trip was when we got to the house. It was really cool seeing all of the trees with the snow on them too! -Bradley P., student



photo by Meryl Lucchesi-Freyberg

The reason we should appreciate nature is because of the beauty and how nature helps us. I love being in nature it provides oxygen and sights that are once in a life time. If people keep expanding cities there could be no nature or forest in 100 years or so. We have to be careful on how fast we expand. -Trent B., student

I had so much fun at the wetlands and I hope to go there when its summer to see all the cool wildlife. -Delaney R., student



We should appreciate nature because it is something breathtaking, needed, and something adventurous. Nature is something we will never fully understand. -Dylan, student

You could smell the trees, see the snow, hear the snowshoes, you could also taste the snow, and you could feel the cold wind. - J.J., student



I thought it was just going to be this open trail but turns out it was SOOOO pretty. It was cool to know that we were standing where a family had grown up. - N.R.C., student

Photo by J.J.



I was mostly interested in the trees. That day we saw lots of white pines, birch, spruce trees and more. It was an awesome trip. - Branden P., student



Paavola Wetlands was so fun that I feel like going 10 more times. -Shianna, student



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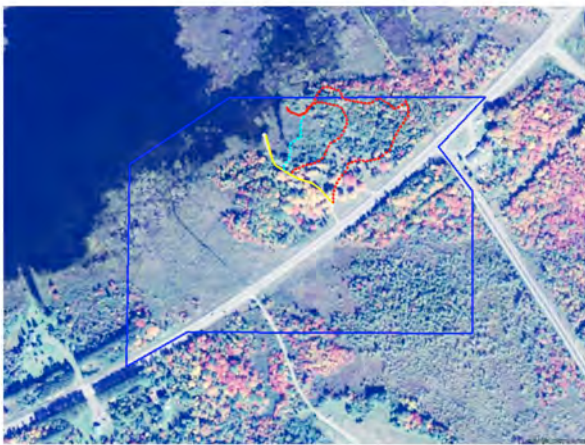
Saving the Paavola Farmhouse

You may have noticed work taking place at the farmhouse found at KLT's Paavola Wetlands Nature Area over the past year. After a century of hard winters, the condition of the homestead was deteriorating rapidly. In the fall of 2012, volunteers helped to remove a more modern addition to this turn-of-the-century home that had begun to collapse, threatening to take the entire structure with it. With the house back to its original footprint, KLT hoped that things were in the clear for a while.

Unfortunately, ongoing freeze-thaw damage to the foundation was crumbling the 100-year-old mortar, leaving large gaps that put the entire building at risk of collapsing. Not only that, holes in the roof and a tilting chimney added to the mounting danger. KLT was left with two options: tear down the house and cart away the remains for disposal, or save the historic structure for future generations to view and study. **Local historians, the National Byways program, and project partners recommended we save the house, both for its historic and scenic values.** With comparable costs, KLT opted to save this cultural resource.

Over the summer, crews from A-1 Drywall stabilized the foundation with concrete and timbers. Later in the fall Ron Hyrkas Contracting topped off the house with a metal roof to protect it from the elements. This coming stewardship season, KLT will finish cleaning up the immediate vicinity and devise a solution for the broken or missing windows to keep out the rain, animals, and curious humans. Despite its rough appearance, the rest of the structure remains solid and is a popular destination for children and adults. We are excited to have the opportunity to continue to share the story of the Karjala farmstead and are glad we were able to save the house in time! The Carls Foundation provided the needed funds in 2015.

A Surprise Expansion for the Boston Pond Nature Area



When KLT launched the Land Slam conservation campaign, the goals were to pay off acquisition costs for the Princess Point Nature Area, establish a nature area on Finlander Bay on the Abbaye Peninsula, and expand the Paavola Wetlands Nature Area. KLT successfully doubled the size of Paavola Wetlands in 2014 with the purchase of a large block of land once owned by the former Cahodas-Paoli company, a food retailer during the mining era. As part of the purchase, KLT also received a few stray parcels of land nearby with lower conservation value. To help cover the purchase, KLT planned to market these parcels, starting with the neighbors to reduce landscape fragmentation.

Neighbors Don Niemi and his mother Helen saw this as a chance to enlarge their farm. They also recognized this as a chance to add value to KLT's Boston Pond Nature Area, which lies directly across US-41 from their farm. They admired what KLT has been doing at Boston Pond, and during negotiations, Don and Helen offered KLT 12 acres of their property, with restrictions that it be kept natural, in partial trade for 20 acres of farmable land that KLT was offering for sale. **The 12-acres contains artesian springs, wetlands, and a feeder stream to Boston Pond. KLT went for the deal, and as a result the organization, our neighbors, and community all come out ahead. A true win-win-win!**

Protecting this land helps ensure water quality in Boston Pond remains high and adds to KLT's efforts to conserve scenic views and important headwaters along the Copper Country Trail National Byway. While KLT has no plans to construct trails or amenities on the newly acquired expansion, the public may still visit on foot. For both KLT and the Niemi family, knowing that another piece of our landscape will remain unspoiled forever is an unexpected outcome and added benefit to an already successful project.

Join the KLT as a new or renewing member.



Judi Bari would have been a KLT member; how about you?

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Six Mile Creek, KLT's Hidden Gem – Nathan Miller

The Keweenaw Land Trust now has over a dozen nature areas stretching across our service area. KLT's conserved lands see hundreds of visitors each year, but one KLT nature area is off nearly everyone's radar: Six Mile Creek, in Baraga County. The Six Mile Creek Nature Area was gifted to KLT by The Nature Conservancy in 2000. The 200-acre parcel is located near the head of Keweenaw Bay, about 2 miles inland as the crow flies. **Few dare brave the journey into this remote place which has steep wooded ravines, wet riparian areas, and no direct road access.**

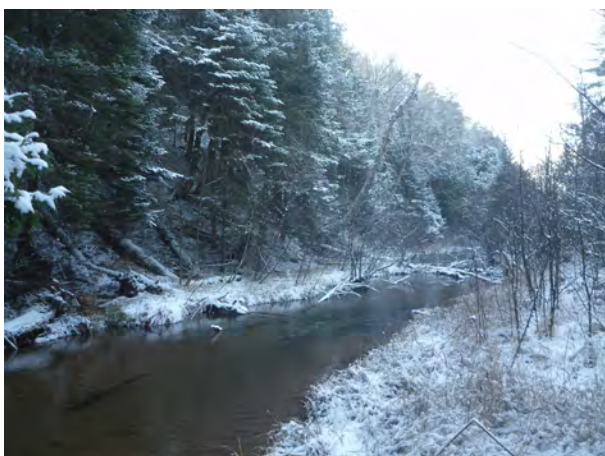


As part of our ongoing stewardship efforts, KLT checks in on each of our nature areas each year, looking out for landscape changes, invasive species, vandalism, or interesting new wildlife. Even those areas left "as-is" must be looked after, no matter how distant. With tales of past excursions becoming mired in alder thickets on my mind, I set out for a yearly monitoring visit in late November. To access Six Mile Creek, turn onto the Plains Cut-Off Road just past Baraga State Park, and then head southeast for one mile along a wide power cut. The power lines will lead you right into the nature area and skirt its southern border.

The nature area begins where the powerlines cross a wide river valley. Here's where the fun starts! With no established trails, you'll quickly find yourself surrounded by dense stands of spruce, balsam, and alder. Be sure to bring a GPS and compass with

you to prevent getting turned around. **Crossing Six Mile and Nester Creeks will lead you deeper into the nature area, where enormous white pine and northern hardwoods dominate the high ground. As there are no bridges, you'll have to find fallen logs to cross the creeks.** Steep slopes and brushy valleys will slow your progress, but if you can emerge from the dense forest cover the views are impressive.

I found no issues of concern during my monitoring visit, but did discover one of my new favorite places to visit in the region. Exploring at the height of bug or tick season probably wouldn't be the best idea. Otherwise, I hope more people venture into KLT's Six Mile Creek Nature Area in the coming years! More information and directions can be found on our website at www.keweenawlandtrust.org/special-sixmile.php.





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Isle Royale Botany Workshops

Space Still Available!

Renowned local botanist Janet Marr will be leading two botany workshops at Isle Royale National Park this summer. Experience the magic of the wilderness while learning about the unique plants that call this place home! Sponsored by the Isle Royale & Keweenaw Parks Association (IRKPA), the workshops are for anyone with a beginning/intermediate knowledge of plant identification. Participants will spend four days on Isle Royale either in the spring (June 6-11) or fall (September 6-11). Most activities will take place outdoors, so be prepared for the weather. You should be able to walk up to 8 miles in one day with a daypack on rugged trails. Having led these I.R. workshops since 2007, Janet is keen to share her knowledge with others in this unique environment.

Enrollment is limited to 12 participants for each trip so register early! Cost is \$725/person/ trip which covers instruction, camping, user fees, meals, reference guide, and transportation to & from the island. The June workshop will focus on areas near Rock Harbor, while the September workshop will be based around Windigo. For information about the workshop content and schedule, contact Janet at jkmarr@mtu.edu. For registration inquiries, contact Kristine Bradof at IRKPA at (906) 482-7860 or email kbradof@irkpa.org.

2016 Green Film Series Selections

Don't forget the 2016 Green Film Series selections yet to come! Following these documentaries, each related to the environment or sustainability, a speaker will lead a discussion. The films begin at 7:00 PM. All showings are free and open to the public. Light refreshments are provided and donations are appreciated! The Green Film Series is co-sponsored by the Lake Superior Stewardship Initiative, Michigan Tech Center for Water & Society, Keweenaw Land Trust, and Keweenaw Unitarian Universalist Fellowship.

April 21 - *Project Wild Thing*. Concerned that his children are spending too much time glued to their screens and not enough time outdoors, David Bond appoints himself Marketing Director for Nature and kicks off a movement to market the benefits of going outside. **Location: MTU Forestry Building, Hesterberg Hall**

May 19 – *Bikes vs. Cars*. From bike activists in Sao Paulo and Los Angeles, fighting for safe bike lanes, to the city of Copenhagen, where forty percent commute daily by bike, *Bikes vs. Cars* considers the revolutionary changes that could take place if more cities made room for bicyclists. **Location: MTU Fisher Hall, room 135**