



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

# NEWS

Volume 23 No. 1—Spring 2021

## A Wave of Coastal Conservation in our 25<sup>th</sup> Year!



**Introducing Keweenaw Sandhills**, a mosaic of interesting and important habitats on 40 acres stretched along 1,700 feet of Lake Superior (see page 4).

As the pandemic pushed people outdoors, KLT made a push on shoreline conservation with several projects coming to fruition during 2020. Protection of natural shoreline areas and access to water have always ranked among our highest conservation priorities based on surveys of our community and supporters over the years. While each project has its own story and timeline, the end result is the same — special places set aside for nature and for us to responsibly explore and enjoy. We appreciate the myriad of supporters that make our conservation successes possible, and especially the landowners that willingly work with us, often over a period of years or even decades, to achieve a shared vision for conservation. While there was much we could not do during the pandemic of 2020, we could always go outside. Many people newly recognized that nature is open for us in the most unusual of times and land trusts across the country collectively felt the increased urgency and relevance of our work. KLT is honored to receive and be entrusted with land donations and federal funding on behalf of our community and the natural world that make these projects possible. Together we have now protected 24 nature areas and we are likely to add at least one more to make one per year as we enter our 25th year. We invite you to explore them all as we increasingly seek solace, deep connections and adventure in the natural world.

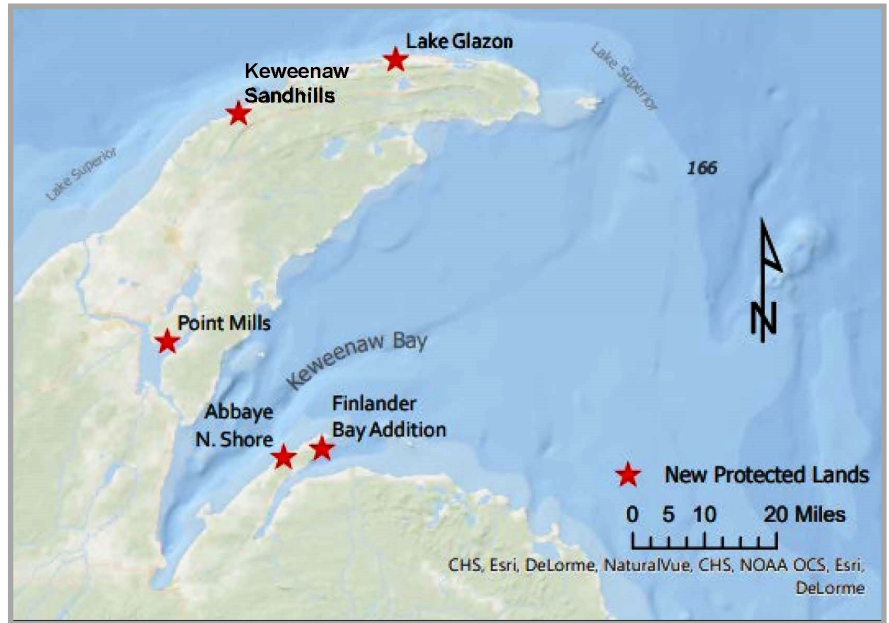
### A QUARTER CENTURY!

This year marks the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Keweenaw Land Trust. We strive to create a landscape that is forever beautiful, healthy, and diverse. We have worked hard to provide protection and stewardship for many special places that make our landscape so unique and beloved. We have secured 24 nature areas totaling 3,728 acres and combined with conservation easements and assists, are only 8 acres short of 8,000 protected acres in the western U.P.! Look for celebrations and summaries of our work throughout the year. You, our members and volunteers have played a crucial role in our work.

**Thank you for your support!**



Our newest project on the **Abbaye Peninsula** began over 2 years ago as a few landowner inquiries linked to shape a new conservation opportunity. The concept, building on earlier successes, was well received by our federal aid coordinators culminating in a proposal, in partnership with the MI-DNR, to the National Coastal Wetlands Conservation (NCWC) program of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. Much of 2019 was spent developing the proposal to detail how our project would advance the 13 scoring criteria for the federal program and document landowner commitments to wait out a decision. Summer site visits, a fall national ranking meeting and finally spring of 2020, the good news! Our work on the Abbaye was awarded its 4<sup>th</sup> federal land acquisition grant.



### Entire Shoreline of Finlander Bay now protected!

The new Abbaye project adds 59 acres with 3,000 feet of frontage to protect the entire shoreline along Finlander Bay at the tip of the peninsula. Keeping this shoreline natural has been a goal since we protected the first ¼ mile in 2016 to help protect the quality of critical fishery habitat in the nearshore waters and spawning reefs of Finlander Bay. This property offers spectacular views of the Huron Islands from openings along its heavily wooded shoreline. Receiving competitive national funding speaks to the quality of the habitat values on these properties.



"As I near the end of a lifetime investing in beautiful properties, it is an honor and a privilege to have worked with KLT for the past 2 years to obtain funding that permanently preserves these amazing parcels. From our Huron Bay parcel to the tip of Point Abbaye is now conserved or in public lands, and contains some of the most spectacular stands of cedars and virgin maples we have seen. My wife Lynn and I give our sincerest thanks to Pat and the KLT for permitting us to be a part of this incredible project."

- Bruce and Lynn Hertel, landowners/sellers of two project parcels



## Abbaye North Shore Additions

This NCWC project also establishes the North Shore Abbaye Nature Area, a cluster of small shoreline sites near the large Huron Bay Field Station tract. KLT offered a 100-acre addition to the Field Station, and the Point of View property as land match to this project. Both match parcels were acquired with private funding and not yet used as match to a federal grant. This approach results in a far larger grant from the coastal program to purchase new land and will layer USFWS oversight through a deed interest to better ensure the permanent conservation of these protected lands.

Large rock ledges and a cleared campsite make the Lori Hall contribution to this project an ideal water trail location for use by paddlers. Envisioned as a family retreat, life unexpectedly forced a change of plans for this property that is now a perpetual memorial to deceased family members. A bittersweet success story.



A quarter mile west of the Hall water trail site is the second Hertel contribution to the NCWC conservation project on the Point Abbaye Peninsula. Rugged, cliffy and not nearly as friendly to paddlers is this haven for wild-life, cedars and mosses galore.



“ I want to thank the Keweenaw Land Trust for all your help and hard work. My sister-in-law Mary and I are thrilled to know that the property my husband Bill and brother Mike loved so much will be preserved forever. It was our dream to always share this property with family and friends, but now it will reach much farther than that.

Knowing that we can dedicate this in Bill & Mike’s memory brings us much peace. We feel that “no one’s lost who’s not forgotten” Thank-you again. I’m very satisfied today and also emotional this has come to light.”

—Lori Hall, owner/seller

## KLT Board of Directors 2020—2021

The 2020 Board elections were a bit sad as Steve Albee, friend and long time supporter of KLT, was missed in the duty of running the election. Lynette Potvin stepped in and the first virtual election brought on the talents of Don Lee as the newest member of KLT’s board.

Erik Lilleskov, Board President  
- Houghton

Maria Janowiak, Vice President  
- Chassell

Bill Leder, Treasurer - Houghton

Christine Handler, Secretary-  
Houghton

Ellen Aiken - Greenville, SC

Alex Hirzel - Ripley

Don Lee - Houghton

Lisa McKenzie - Hancock

Lynette Potvin- Hancock

Steph Tubman - Hancock

Leo Wheeler - Houghton



Ruins leave interesting patterns standing on what remains of the stamp mill floor. This site has the feel of an amphitheater with views over Portage Lake and will be a great place to host outdoor events and interpretive information.



**Point Mills** has quite a mix of natural and human history. A generous land donation completed late in 2020 protects a unique landscape on Portage Lake with interesting stories to tell. This 90-acre property located near Point Mills was the site of a stamp mill used to crush native basalt in the copper boom era, creating stamp sand deposits that were covered with a vegetated soil cap over a century later. Remaining mining ruins, foundations and remnants of stonework, are disbursed through a mix of woods, wetlands, seeps and ponds that attract wildlife and create an intriguing example of nature reclaiming a former industrial site. Over 3,000 feet of shoreline will be protected from development, including two coves with dock

**The Keweenaw Sandhills** are an amazing place that you will want to leisurely explore. Down the coast and west of Eagle River, the Keweenaw Sandhills Nature Area was established early this year, thanks to the generosity of Dan and Joan Steck who donated approximately 40 acres of land to KLT to ensure that its 1,700 feet of Lake Superior shoreline and rich native plant life will remain unspoiled. Here, bare ancient conglomerate rocks rise from the shoreline below steep, forested dunes that make even standing up straight difficult! Heading inland, the dunes level out in a catchment basin forested wetland studded with vernal pools, stately white pines and stands of mature hemlock with a diverse understory of native plants.

This stretch of shoreline is best enjoyed either from the land or from a boat but transitioning between the two would be difficult. Thank you Dan for providing the beautiful photos. Wooded sand dunes are a magical place to explore.



I spent many great summer days in my life along this coast, fishing, swimming, and picking agates. The coast often is pounded by west and northwesterly winds as shown on cover. I often call it "the rock and roll" coast. Being on the conglomerate during a windstorm is a moving experience.

-- Dan Steck, Owner/Donor  
with spouse Joan Steck

*Please recycle this newsletter by sharing it with someone you think would be interested in our work.*





Great volumes of stamp sands were capped by the EPA and support sparse vegetation slowly transforming the site to some new state of nature that KLT hopes to improve with habitat enhancement work. This expansive shoreline will be open to enjoy on foot from land or water.

remains that shelter fish and attract bald eagles. Further inland, trails wander through oak forested dunes. Bonnie and Richard Faleschini made this tremendous gift of property to benefit the community in memory of Thomas Newill Smith and Helen Holman Smith, parents of Bonnie and her sister Cynthia Barth. This extent of shoreline property so close to where many live and play has much to offer paddlers, boaters, history buffs and all of the visiting public year-round. We appreciate the donors' patience as we worked through the complexities of a complicated transaction with the help of environmental consultants and an expert legal team.



It often takes a village to conserve land and that is one reason KLT works as a community partner. An inquiry from the owner of 26 acres on the north shore of the Keweenaw was among the first fielded by Evan McDonald when he came on staff in 2002. Timing and cost were not right for KLT at the time despite the conservation merit of this land with 1,100 feet of exposed bedrock glade on Lake Superior backed by emergent and wooded wetlands that shelter a diversity of native wildlife and migratory birds on the

west end of **Lake Glazon**, located about a mile west Dan's Point. As circumstances changed over time, the Keweenaw Community Forest Company (KCFC) took the lead to turn up the heat on a simmering opportunity by convening partners for site visits, conducting due diligence, negotiating a discounted price with landowners and securing pledges of critical financial support. When a conservation grant held by Eagle Harbor Township could not be re-directed to this project, partners looked to KLT as the holder to complete the deal. This challenge was met with funding from KCFC, John Woollam, UPEC, Copper Country Audubon, the Soyring Family Foundation, and many individuals including contributions in memory of Susan Hooker and Robert Filer – an effort that will outlast us all to benefit native wildlife and generations of nature and geo-heritage enthusiasts.



When I first joined the KLT Board in 2003, Evan McDonald had recently been hired to be the first KLT Executive Director and only staff for what had previously been an all-volunteer organization since its inception in 1996. Eighteen years later he is still at it, with a long string of huge successes and a vigorous organization that continues to fulfill the KLT mission, as you can see in this newsletter. That is a long time at the helm of a non-profit, where burn-out and turnover are the norm. Recognizing the toll this work can take, many non-profits encourage staff to take sabbaticals to recharge, improving both job satisfaction and long-term retention. Evan will be spending the next nine months on a well-deserved sabbatical. Evan is very glad for this opportunity and looking forward to working on long-deferred home projects and spending time enjoying life in the Keweenaw. In case you are wondering, unlike academic sabbaticals, his is unpaid, a common practice in small non-profits. Prior to the sabbatical we worked hard to tie up loose ends, ensuring a smooth transition. During this period the board and staff will be fulfilling his role, keeping KLT projects on track. If you have any questions that would normally go to Evan, please contact Pat Toczydlowski (pat@keweenawlandtrust.org) or me (elillesk@mtu.edu).

- Erik Lilleskov, KLT Board President

PAGE 4 NEWS NEWS VOLUME 23 NUMBER 1

### Executive Director Offers Dagwood Sandwich

I am happy to be part of the Keweenaw Land Trust and to find that this community is awakening to the critical need for conservation. I want to tell you how my own awakening came about. Part of it began in high school, when I saw maps showing temperate forest next to the Niagara River where I grew up. Once there must have been spectacular forests along that river as it made its way between Lakes Erie and Ontario, but I never saw those forests because they have been long gone. In college my courses in urban and regional planning and land use raised my awareness about changing land impacts in this country with shocking statistics.

While I was in Costa Rica studying rainforest trees for my graduate work, the rainforest at the

have also seen significant changes due to development and sprawl here in the Keweenaw. All the seeds of concern planted over the years had taken root in me and grown when the opportunity to work for KLT arose. Here was the chance for me to help save open space, to conserve land and public access to that land, and to protect one of the most beautiful areas in this country. I have been involved with ecological research for many years. We certainly need the facts that careful research provides and my education in science has been invaluable in identifying the problems and challenges. But we also need action, and now I have the opportunity to work towards tangible results. If we want to protect biodiversity, then we must protect the landscapes that are home to that diversity. If we want clean

situation reminds me of his famous, precariously stacked "Dagwood sandwich." The board and committee volunteers have pursued opportunities, taken on tasks and responsibilities, and kept it all on the plate.

But more opportunities are coming all the time, and we could use help. If you can, donate money to support KLT operations. KLT needs more members and community support. Tell your friends and

**If we want open spaces and public access to quality environments, then we must work to protect those places.**



How can we work in a world pandemic? KLT staff focused on: facility improvements (see below), getting ready for Evan's sabbatical and updating and improving critical computer hardware and software systems. This major task was made much easier and fun with the incredible help of volunteer Izaak Lauer, recovering from a stint managing software engineering for the Biden campaign, wanted to do something to help and "rest" in his computer way. Thank you Izaak, you are an amazingly patient and knowledgeable person and we appreciate the many hours you've given.



Din Egen Woods is such a sweet little spot and Pat & Dave T-11 helped make it sweeter with a great kitchen remake, new propane heater installed and leaks sealed. You will want to put a stay here on your bucket list. KLT owes many special thanks to Dave, if he only had a dollar for every KLT fix job he's ever done...



Marsin had facelifts inside and out. AmeriCorps member, Deanna Seil, put in 2 new native plant beds. Stain, paint, insulation, bathroom flooring and a coatroom will make Marsin more enjoyable in the post-Covid times to come, but that's not all! The roof was redone and the garage is now a 3 season lobby adding space for people to gather despite changes in weather.





## Join the KLT as a new or renewing member!

Please provide your current contact information if needed

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone# \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

### Choose your membership giving level:

☐ \$20 STUDENT Membership

☐ \$50 Supporter ☐ \$100 Guardian ☐ \$250 Steward ☐ \$500 Champion ☐ 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.*

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

Keweenaw Land Trust, 101 Quincy Street, Suite 303, Hancock MI 49930



### AmeriCorps is a way to...

serve your country and help a local organization in a meaningful way. AmeriCorps members receive a living stipend, medical coverage and an educational grant and their host site benefits by getting the member's valuable commitment, enthusiasm, and new skills and experience.

This year KLT will benefit from our new Huron Pines AmeriCorps member, **Nick Potter**, who with his GIS and outdoor skills will be gathering data and updating the Keweenaw and Portage Water Trail maps!



There are many new KLT properties to add to the outdated water trail map before printing a new supply. Nick will update information from many water trail partners to make useful print and online tools to help paddlers have a safer and more enjoyable paddling experience. He will also be tackling projects to improve KLT shoreline sites for visitors, like Heideman Woods, Princess Point and several new ones in this issue! Look for volunteer workdays this summer to help Nick help us improve our local trails.



### Welcome Carolyn Meingast !

Carolyn recently "retired" from teaching middle school math and moved to the area to ski and be near adult children. Her love of the outdoors quickly lead to involvement with KLT. Now she has joined our team as a part-time office manager providing much needed support to our busy staff. Carolyn is passionate about nature and conservation, and we're so excited to benefit from her skills, experience and enthusiasm.





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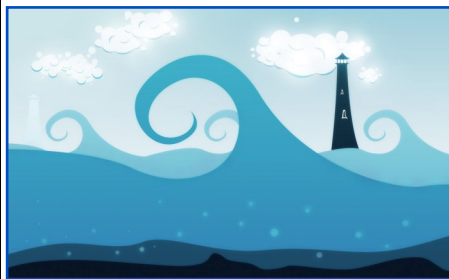
#### KLT Staff

Evan McDonald, Executive Director  
Pat Toczydlowski, Project Specialist  
Jill Fisher, Program Coordinator  
Curtis Perala, Marsin Property Manager  
Nick Potter, Huron Pines AmeriCorps  
Member serving with KLT

«Addressee»

«Pref# Street»

«Pref# City», «Pref# State/Province» «Pref# ZIP/Postal Code»



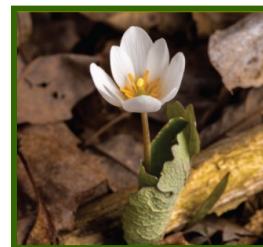
Our records show your last gift to KLT was on «Last gift date» Please let us know of errors. We migrated our database and want good data!

## Spring KLT Events

**April 1– 20th: Jan Brett's The Easter Egg story Trail at Lily Creek** — Brett's wonderful illustrations tell stories within the story and Lily Creek's enchanting atmosphere pair nicely with her books. This is yet another self-guided hike to do at your leisure along the 0.8 mile trail which can be muddy in places.

**April 15, 22 & 29: The 4th Annual Keweenaw Native Plant Symposium** — Learn something new and useful for the habitats and creatures in your yard! See Upcoming Events on our website for detailed information. Zoom registration is required for each session. Free of charge. In conjunction with: Keweenaw Chapter of Wild Ones, the Keweenaw Garden Club, MSUE Master's Gardeners.

**End of April into early May (TBA) – Look for Guided Spring Plant Hikes** — The spring ephemerals are a special treat and you never know exactly when they will be popping up in full bloom. Look for our email and social media posts on Instagram and Facebook. Registration required. Hikes to be led by KLT's botanist, Jill Fisher.



**Mid May (TBA): Shitake Inoculation Workshop at Marsin —1 -2:30 pm** Geek out on mycology with Resident Volunteer, Brendon Stutzman. Brendon will walk you through the ecology of these organisms & run through the process of inoculating a log. You will walk away with handouts & your own inoculated log! Registration, masks and social distancing required. **Fee \$15/participant. Limited to 10 participants**

**End of May (TBA): Trail and clearing clean up at Paavola Wetlands** — Join Pat and Jill to clear brambles and grasses encroaching the accessible trail, clear out areas for white pine regeneration and work on the deadwood from the old and craggy apples trees. Registration, masks and social distancing required.

**Detailed information and registration links can be found on our website under  
Get Involved— Upcoming Events**