

AGAINST ALL ODDS

North Oakland Headwaters Land Conservancy
2020 Annual Report



PEOPLE

Volunteers

NOHLC staff and volunteers found new ways to fulfill our mission in spite of 2020's challenges. We had 112 volunteers participate in outdoor activities or take-home projects.

Picture Perfect

Even when it's barely 20 degrees, you can find volunteer photographer Theresa Ray outside with camera in hand. Whether she is exploring a county park or an NOHLC preserve, she always finds something beautiful to photograph.

"If I get one good photo in a session, I'm happy," she says. Of course her definition of a good photo is different than the casual photographer. She creates images that are crisp, perfectly composed, with great attention to detail.

NOHLC volunteers donated 5,084 hours of valuable work in 2020

Theresa has been helping NOHLC build our photo database over the past two years. Although she is a nurse by profession, she has always enjoyed photographing nature during her travels with her family. Her photos help us tell our story on Instagram, Facebook, and in our print and newsletters. Thanks, Theresa, for all your beautiful photos.

American tree sparrow photo at right and cover photo of our Kimball Sanctuary by Theresa Ray



Volunteer service winner Shannon Steel with Ollie

Volunteer Award

This year's Tom Bullen Award for outstanding volunteer service goes to former Associate Director Shannon Steel. Shannon was known for her hard work and dedication on the job.

Her creativity, ethics, and attention to detail resulted in many NOHLC improvements. But what many people didn't know was the amount of hours she put in when she was off the clock.

Although Shannon retired from NOHLC last summer to pursue graduate studies, she still volunteers when she can.





Fox squirrel by NOHLC volunteer Theresa Ray

NOHLC OFFICE

STAFF

Executive Director: Susan Julian
Development Director: Alicia Arkwright
Communications & Outreach: Chris Hardman
Database: Mary Herzenstiel
Bookkeeper: Janet Porter

BOARD

President: Emily Duthinh
Vice President: Mike Metz
Secretary: Bette Moen
Treasurer: Mike Dougherty
Past President: Christopher Benedict

DIRECTORS

Pamela Beilke
Susan Julian
Jean Gramlich
Lora Perkins
Kelly Daly Flynn
Todd Roeser



Adopt a Preserve

In 2020 we were approached by a representative of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. They had a group of missionaries who had identified our organization as a worthy cause and wanted to volunteer to help nature.

They committed a group of 4-5 young women to a weekly volunteer spot. We assigned them to our Sashabaw Creek Preserve in Clarkston. Having this regular group at one property was invaluable. They removed invasive species, collected seeds, and planted native flowers.

On bad weather days, they produced mass mailings, sorted seeds, and made seed ball kits. In the photo at left 2 of the sisters are collecting native seeds.

LAND

Stewardship



Consumers Energy Clinches the Deal

Consumers Energy made the final contribution to Phase I of the “Big Help for a Little Butterfly” campaign with a donation of \$50,000. Despite winter conditions, Consumers Energy representatives Carolyn Bloodworth and Lauren Royston came out to see the 21.5 acres of the new Poweshiek Butterfly Preserve where the globally imperiled, tiny insect is fighting for survival.

The special wetland, called a fen, has just the right conditions for the Poweshieks to survive. This donation enabled NOHLC to purchase the land, while additional funds from local supporters will allow us to maintain the land in pristine condition.

Oakland County Supports Non-Profits

As NOHLC realized that the epidemic was going to change conservancy business in 2020, the organization took steps to scale back its operations to around 50% of expenditures. We cancelled fundraisers, reduced staff hours, and eliminated public walks in the woods.

Then Oakland County came to the rescue by including non-profit organizations in the criteria for eligibility for Covid relief grants. In a total of 3 grants, the county funneled money from the Federal Cares Act to us for a total of \$52,500 dollars.

This meant that we could continue land stewardship, add back staff, and plan to use this assistance to do good things in 2021. Thank you, Oakland County. You understood the public benefit of our goal “Nature Worth Preserving.”

In the Works

We are now talking to various land owners who have

- A clear water stream that could potentially hold trout
- 80 acres of forest
- More fen for the endangered Poweshiek butterfly
- The headwaters of Swartz Creek

LAND

Stewardship



NOHLC Staff Debbie Hendrickson, Kevin Rossi, and Leah Harrison burn invasive brush in Clarkston

Stewardship is the term we use to describe how we maintain the land we protect and is an important part of our mission

- Boundary markers placed around nine preserves
- Invasive woody bushes removed from sixteen preserves
- Flooding problem resolved at Sashabaw Creek
- 1,000 seedballs made and distributed to add plant diversity
- Three demonstration gardens maintained
- All sixty properties inspected, documenting current conditions
- Six potential properties reviewed by Stewardship Committee
- Four trails maintained and boardwalks fortified
- Interpretive signage installed at one preserve open to the public

OUTREACH Education

When the world went online in 2020, we took advantage of that trend and stepped up our educational efforts on social media. With 2,098 Facebook and 1,501 Instagram followers, NOHLC is able to reach a significant audience comprised of varying age groups.

65% of our 168 Facebook posts contained educational content

26% covered an event that raised money and 9% thanked volunteers or sponsors.

A successful social media strategy results in audience participation through comments, shares, and likes. The most popular topics with our audience were invasive species, native plants, birds, and turtles. 2,323 people engaged with our most popular Facebook post about invasive garlic mustard.

Our top nine Instagram photos



NOHLC Intern Greg Przyborowski next to a muskrat lodge

Where is Greg Today?

In 2020, NOHLC introduced a series of educational videos hosted by Greg Przyborowski, MSU Junior in Fisheries and Wildlife. All videos are around one-minute long and are filmed on site.

Greg's editor and cameraperson is NOHLC staff member Chris Hardman. Chris is a photographer and former science journalist. Together they have produced videos on sandhill crane migration, Michigan's snowy owls, muskrats in winter, ducks on Belle Isle and how to spot a beaver lodge.

Short nature videos help us reach a younger audience than Facebook

We distribute the videos through Facebook, Instagram, and enewsbriefs. You may view all of the videos on our YouTube channel. Thanks, Greg, for all of your hard work.

OUTREACH

Community



Clarkston Impact weekend



Native plant sale



Planting native species

- Held two native plant sales in Neiman's Family Market parking lot in Clarkston
- Co-hosted a seedball-making workshop with the Clinton River Watershed Council and Oakland County Parks at the Lewis E Wint Nature Center
- Worked with Oakland Audubon Society to survey and restore important bird habitat on one of our preserves
- Partnered with the Shiawassee River Trail Coalition to successfully achieve recognition for the Shiawassee River as a National Paddling Trail

During a time of high stress and uncertainty, we provided the community with safe activities to de-stress and connect with nature

- Participated in the Clarkston Impact weekend along with area businesses, church groups and other non-profits
- Assisted the City of the Village of Clarkston in producing informational signs
- Helped publicize events and provided office support for our colleagues at the Oakland Conservation District
- Gave presentations to clubs and interest groups including the Clarkston Area Backyard Birders, Sierra Club, and Oakland Township
- Collaborated with the US Fish & Wildlife task force for the Poweshiek butterfly
- Tackled invasive plant control with our local Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area

FINANCES

Income

In spite of the economic downturn, our supporters remained steadfast in their commitment to NOHLC



Consumers Energy donated \$50,000 for Poweshiek land purchase

Additional grants for Phase 2 of “Big Help for a Little Butterfly” campaign totaled \$20,000 thanks to the Americana Foundation, the Elliott Memorial Foundation, and an anonymous family trust

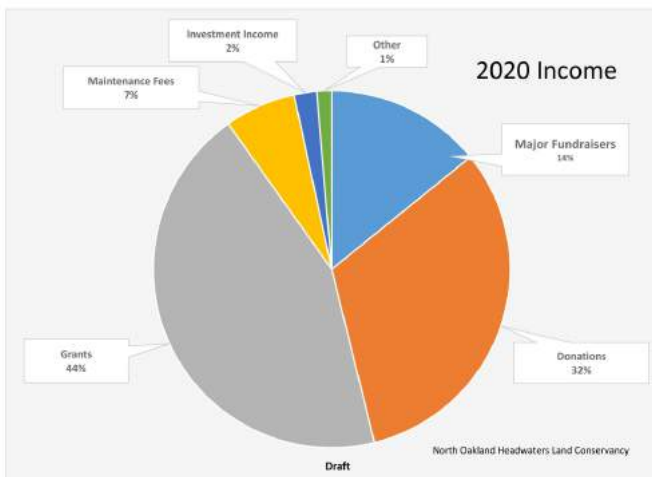
Oakland County grants to support operations totaled \$52,500

Giving Tuesday campaign to “Keep Our Doors Open” resulted in \$6,250

Individual donors gave \$43,688

Our most successful plant sales to date brought in \$12,606

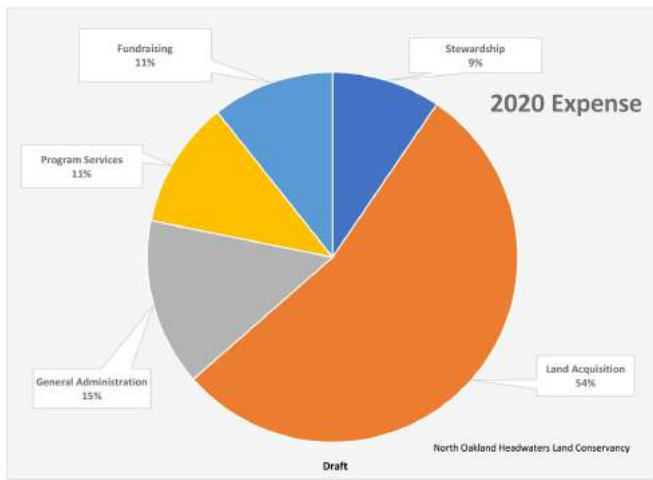
Corporate friends supported us with \$11,950 in sponsorships



FINANCES

Expenses

To help save an endangered butterfly, we established the Poweshiek Butterfly Preserve



In 2020 we purchased 21.5 acres of ecologically valuable land in Davisburg



**1,526 acres
protected in Northern
Oakland County**

**7 public preserves for
hiking and education**

**60 properties
inspected yearly**

**4 rivers' headwaters
protected**



1,099 Acres of Easements

Campbell .25
Thomson Preserve .5
Deer Wood Hollow .5
Oakland Crest II .5
Gill Landing 1
Oakland Hill I 1
Oakland Hill II 1
Round Lake Shores 1.2
Oakland Crest I 1.5
Cedar Park I 4
Hall's Connector 5
Waterworks Wetlands 5.2
Bailey Preserve 5.2
Oakhill Hollow 6.8
Robert E. Shell Fen 8.9
Poquosin II 9
Pine Knob Country II 10.3
Cedar Park II 10.5
Steeple Ridge 11
Waterford Hills 11
Poquosin I 12
Schwartz Preserve 12.7
Long Lake Village 12.9
Ingomar Farms 13
Village Park 14.9
Whipple Tree Lane II 17
Old Sturbridge 19
Hummingbird Ridge 25.2
Davis Lake Overlook 36.7
Bridge Valley Reserve 50.8
Suzanne G. Knorr 52
Clarkston Woods 59.49
Forest Point Acres 62
Hidden Ridge 69.97
Haddon Nursery 79.6
Thread Creek Farm 97.23
Liberty Golf Preserve 120
Camp Wathana 250

427 Acres Owned

Dixie Independence .11
Holly Lakeview Preserve .25
Bald Eagle Lake Lots .5
Princeton Independence .69
Whipple Lake Preserve 2.6
Heather Haven 3
Victoria Preserve 3.2
Keller Sanctuary 3.5
Cranberry Lake Shores 4.2
Eaton Wet Meadow 4.5
Voorheis-Beardsley Farm 8
Tully Lake Preserve 14.7
Rattalee Shoreline 15
Sashabaw Creek 20
Poweshiek Butterfly Preserve 21.5
Buckhorn Complex 23
Mud Lake 35
Nels Kimball Sanctuary 41
John R. Schmude 55.4
Nolta-Brennan 60
Springfield Nature Preserve 111

Follow us

Web: NOHLC.ORG
FACEBOOK: @NOHLC
Instagram: NOHLC

Contact us

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#natureworthpreserving

