

2011 Annual Report



**"All know
the way.
Few
actually
walk it."**

—Buddha

**The Land
Conservancy
of McHenry
County**



"Preserving Land Forever"

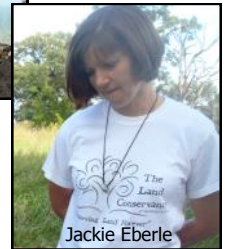
Our Mission:

To preserve natural, agricultural and scenic land in perpetuity in and around McHenry County by working with individuals, communities and other partners.

Our Vision:

TLC will be a respected voice for local land and water resources and for the contributions of private landowners to ensure that future generations will benefit from the natural, agricultural and scenic landscapes of all scales that residents enjoy today. The County will be known for its permanently preserved biologically diverse and irreplaceable natural landscapes, scenic vistas that reveal the glacial and agricultural heritage of the area, and its strong community support for conservation. A diverse and growing membership and volunteer base will work effectively alongside staff to nurture and expand the conservation community.

TLC Staff 2011



TLC Board of Directors

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Randy Schietzelt

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**Today we
determine the
legacy we will
leave.**

Just when it seems TLC might be hitting a lull, the Universe decides there is more work to be done!

2011 was no exception. Natural Heritage Corridor easements kept us busy in the first part of the

year, a series of land donations, conservation easements, and even a land acquisition kept things hopping.

Throughout the year, dramatic restoration at Yonder Prairie, Crowley Sedge Meadow, the Land of Oz and several easements kept a variety of contractors, as well as TLC's able-bodied volunteers, very busy.

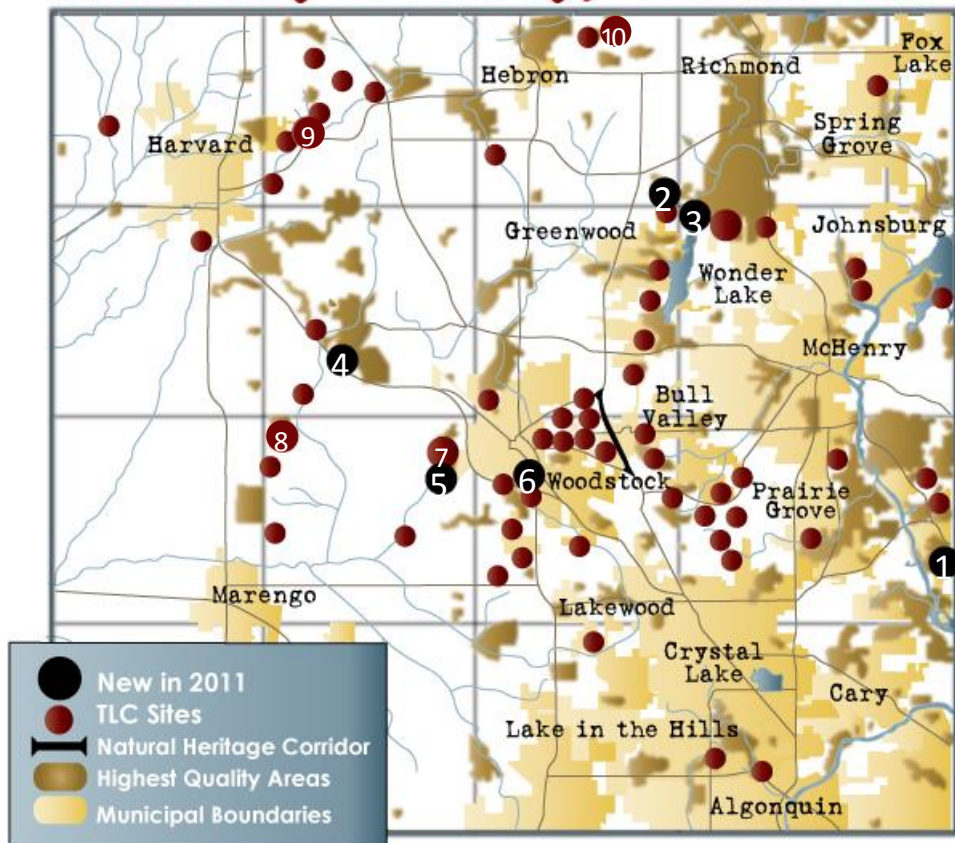
All that restoration transformed nearly 200 acres of land, opening up habitat for Leopard frogs, Baltimore checkerspot butterflies, and even Whooping cranes.

We are ALL The Land Conservancy and none of this land preservation and restoration work would happen without us! TLC would not exist without the support of our members and volunteers who enthusiastically choose to support this work.

Please enjoy this brief journey through 2011. Thank you for making it all possible.

Land Preservation 2011

McHenry County, Illinois

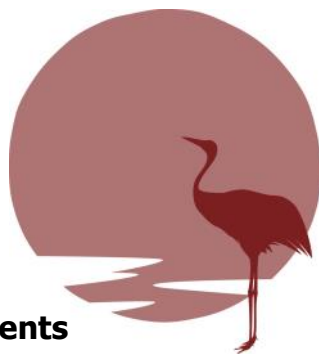


Summary

Total acres preserved: 1,858 acres
Includes 67 conservation easements

Total acres owned: 201 acres
At 12 locations in the county

Total Natural Heritage Corridor Easements
on Fleming Road: 12,300 linear feet





1

Weier Preserve
2.2 ac, Island Lake
Donation

Addition to the
**Dick York Memorial
Arboretum**
2.5 ac Greenwood
Donation



2

**Barnard Mill
Wetland**
1 ac Ringwood
Purchase



3

Frisbie Easement
56 ac Hartland Township
Donated Easement



4



5

The Bothie
38.5 ac Seneca Twp.
Donated Easement



6

Concannon Easement
2 ac Woodstock
Donation

Land Stewardship

Yonder Prairie Nature Preserve



By working with the US Army Corps of Engineers, the State Nature Preserves Commission and the Illinois Department of Transportation, TLC was able to secure the funds needed to hire Hey and Associates for a five year contract to remove much of the invasive brush and trees from 30 acres of TLC's Yonder Prairie and the north 30 acres of

Woodstock's adjacent Westwood Conservation Area. The area was visited by female Whooping cranes in April 2011 as the young travelers made their first journey from Florida back to Wisconsin.

Land of Oz

Nearly 20 acres of brush were cleared from the oak knolls and wetland at TLC's Land of Oz property in Seneca Township by Red Buffalo Nursery. Many people reported hearing the Sandhill cranes say thank you!



Crowley Sedge Meadow

This 6.7 acre wetland in Alden Township was TLC's first land acquisition back in 2004. The mortgage was paid off in November of 2008, and the volunteer-led restoration effort was complete in November 2011. Thanks to all the volunteers who logged in over 1,500 hours to complete the restoration!

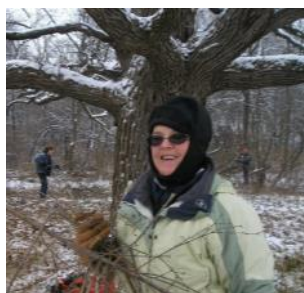
What do you get when 35 acres of buckthorn, honeysuckle and other invasive brush and small trees meet Earl Carr and his Geo-Boy?



Well, among other things, you just might uncover a kame, release some 250 year-old oaks

from the death grip of invasive brush, and open up acres of wetland habitat that were hidden beneath decades of buckthorn growth. And all this was made possible through a program offered by the US Fish & Wildlife Service “Partners for Fish & Wildlife” to help private landowner restore habitat on their land. 2011 was a great year for the Hidden Marsh, Arvidson and Hunter Conservation Easements.

It can be daunting for a landowner to begin restoration of an oak woodland that is filling up with buckthorn and honeysuckle brush. So TLC volunteers brought their strong backs and chainsaws to these sites to help TLC do some **Oak Rescues!**



The Bottlemey woodland has been in the same family in Alden since 1877 (L), a winter workday helped open up the woodland on the Pensinger Easement (M), and volunteers came from all over to clear brush at Harvard’s new Gateway Park (R).

Conservation of oak woodlands is actually very simple. Plant more oaks. Cut more buckthorn & honeysuckle. There are still abundant oak woodlands in McHenry County. At its core,



Project Quercus®

The origins of PQ: In 2006, experts from state and local conservation agencies, tree care companies, tree nurseries and municipalities gathered at TLC to talk about the state of McHenry County's oak woodlands and share what they knew. The news was alarming.



Oak Keeper, Becky Walkington secures the cage at the Main Stay planting in Richmond.

Nearly 90% of the oak woods that were in the county in the 1830s have been cut down for farming, lumber, firewood, gravel mining and development. And while public agencies have preserved some important oak woodlands – such as those found at Moraine Hills State Park, MCCD's Coral Woods Conservation Area, Glacial Park and Rush Creek Conservation Area, 85% of the oak woods remaining are owned by individuals.

All agreed that if nothing was done, we might see the remaining oak woodlands die off within 20 years. Environmental stresses – gypsy moths, oak wilt, climate change – were taking a toll. Lack of management was leading to widespread invasion of local woods by non-native, fast-growing shrubs like buckthorn and honeysuckle. The invasive shrubs were killing off the lower limbs of oaks (known as shade pruning) and their dense growth was preventing sunlight from reaching the woodland floor, so young oaks were not germinating.



Scouts plant at St. Margaret Mary in Algonquin.

mple.

Then repeat until we have healthy,
e, that is the goal of TLC's...

PQ Today: Over 1,000 oaks have been planted by over 1,000 local residents of all ages through PQ. Tens of thousands of PQ oak seedlings that were raised from local acorns are waiting to be planted. The largest, oldest white oak in the county was discovered on private land near Harvard. Hundreds of volunteer hours have been donated to “rescue” ancient oaks throughout the county. Citizens from Algonquin to Alden are raising their voices to demand that elected officials do more to preserve our oaks.



Volunteers learn to use the post pounder at Lions Park in Harvard.

Five years have passed, and while the stresses to our oaks remain, there is a growing awareness in McHenry County that everyone has a role to play in ensuring the oak woods will remain a vital part of our community 100 – 200 – 300 years from now.



Kids from the Eastview Elementary Earth Club planted in their prairie.

The Future of PQ: By the end of 2012, Project Quercus is on track to:

- have planted nearly 2,000 oak trees, including reforestation of 20 acres of private land that was once an oak woods, but was cleared for farming a century ago,
- complete Oak Keeper surveys for all of the remaining privately-owned oak woodlands that are 50 acres or larger in size,
- create a “Community Forest” in McHenry County to help demonstrate the many benefits

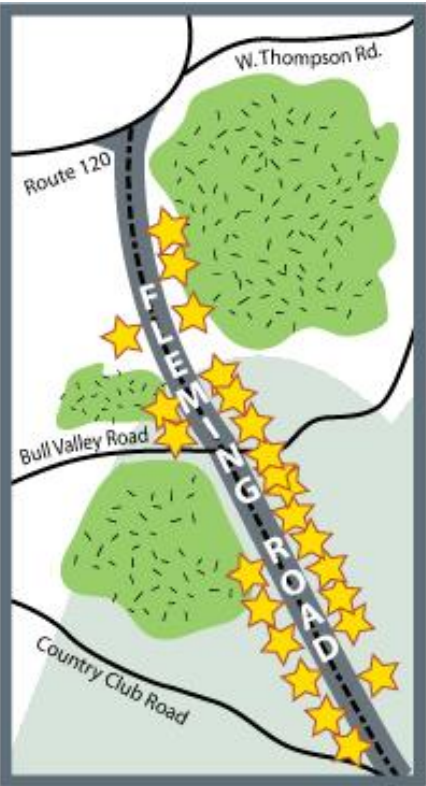
of responsible use and management of privately owned oak woodlands, and

- AND help communities throughout the Chicago region implement oak conservation efforts in their own counties and municipalities.

Planning Like an Oak

Fleming Road: Natural Heritage Corridor

I look at the large bur oak tree, and it seems so solid, so permanent. I think of the hundreds of winters, springs, summers and falls that tree has stood in that same place. How many birds have nested in its branches during those years? How many hundreds of thousands of acorns has it produced, and how many generations of wildlife have made it through the winter because of those acorns? How many of the nearby younger trees – some a mere 150 years of age – are its progeny?

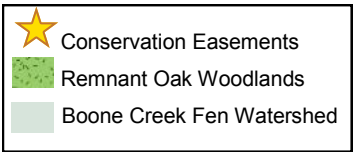


Then I look at the road passing just a few yards from the oak and think: “That tree was already old when early settlers left the tracks that became this road.”

We humans consider a long-range plan to be 20 or 30

years. To this tree, that means another inch of growth – a small fraction of a lifetime. If he (or she) could tell his life’s tale, we humans would hear a story of a world that was very different from the one we live in today. If we slowed down long enough to hear that story, would it change how

we plan for the future?



Volunteers



Joanne Wiedemann
Wolf

There are so many great things taking place at TLC! We'd like to give thanks for the collective and individual efforts of our



Scott Dikun



Dale Shriver

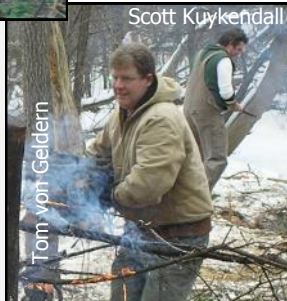


Dave Brandt

amazing volunteers. Whether planting oak trees, doing land restoration, Oak Keeping or putting together our spectacular Art of the Land event, approximately 400 TLC volunteers donated over 1,600 hours of their time in 2011, making a huge difference in the health of our environment. Thank You!



Christine McMorris



Tom von Geldern

Scott Kuykendall



Jack Kaskel

What if we made decisions today that helped to ensure all of McHenry County's human residents 300 years from now would be able to wonder what stories that ancient oak at

Fleming Road Easement Donors

Atwater-Ross	Klouda
Benkendorf-Schnering	Krenger
Erickson	Manny
Harding	Mattsson-Schermerhorn
J. Hervert	Moltmann-Bennett
L. Hervert	O'Brien
Jarosz-Ramsey	Rhoades
Johnson	Shoemaker
Karth	Thompson
Keinz	Trafelet

2011 Financial Summary

INCOME	2011	2010
Member Support	\$84,243	\$81,084
Grants	\$78,863	\$134,471
Program Service Fees	\$18,715	\$15,455
Special Events	\$14,298	\$29,149
Dividends/Interest/Investment Income	\$53,328	\$40,187
Endowment Contributions	\$3,500	\$9,500
In-Kind Gifts/Other	\$17,081	\$13,700
Released Funds for Land Stewardship	\$134,209	\$0
	\$404,237	\$323,546
EXPENSES		
*Programs	\$337,364	\$245,340
Management	\$35,020	\$37,047
** Fundraising	\$32,340	\$26,804
	\$404,724	\$309,191
Year-End Fund Balances		
Stewardship Endowment	\$442,737	\$402,169
Land Protection Fund	\$69,584	\$57,538
Land Management Reserve	\$99,750	\$69,750
Land Conservancy Fund	\$44,958	\$48,383
@ MC Community Foundation		