

Highland Conservancy E-Newsletter December 14, 2008

Our Mission Statement: "To encourage and facilitate the conservation of land and natural resources to preserve the rural character of Highland Township."

BLOG ARTICLE: Circle of Life

Recently I have been reading and reflecting on a book called *The Cherokee Full Circle* by J.T. Garret and Michael Tlanusta Garrett, both Cherokee from North Carolina. My initial reaction has been to wonder if the destruction of our planet is rooted in the white European culture's frenzied race for ownership and possessions. Is this the basis for our disregard and irresponsibility toward everything that is not specifically "ours"? Is the fact I do not "own" anything except a small plot of land have any connection mentally or spiritually to the reason it is so easy to disregard what is happening to our earth - to disavow any responsibility for it? As we have carved up our planet and established ownership of land, territories, countries and governments – have we simultaneously cut our connections to the land and everything living on it?

The first Americans had a complete and deeply spiritual sense of "oneness" with the earth. This rises from a "culture...born from beliefs and traditions that draw people together with a sense of oneness through the unity of family, clan and tribe." (Garrett pg 21). Mother Earth in traditional teachings is one's Universal Mother who gives us life. In this rich culture, a child learns to be sensitive to everything of which they are a part. Everything is connected and we are a part of a whole, "kin to every living being...The animals are thought of as our four-legged brothers and sisters; the Earth is our Mother; the sky, Father; the Moon, Grandmother; and the Sun, Grandfather to all living creatures. The connection we all have with others can be considered nothing short of sacred." (pgs 22-23).

Click on www.highlandconservancy.typepad.com to read and comment on the full blog article.

BOOK STUDY

I guess wintertime is an excellent time for reading! Starting January 7th, on Wednesday nights at 8pm at the parsonage (the house located on the right of the entranceway to Highland United Methodist Church), Pastor James Kummer will be leading an open discussion on the book *Hot, Flat and Crowded* by Thomas Friedman. This unique and interesting book looks at climate change, increased consumption and energy use, and suggests some unusual solutions. If you are interested in joining us for a casual and relaxed discussion, you can drop by the church any time to pick up a copy or simply join us on a Wednesday evening. You do not have to be a member of the church, so we hope you will join us!

MICHIGAN CONSERVATION STEWARDS PROGRAM

Are you interested in finding out more about Michigan's ecosystems? Have you ever wondered how Kensington manages its deer population and why? Do you hear about things like garlic mustard, phragmites or zebra mussels and wonder what they look like? Are you interested in walking through a real life Michigan prairie? Would you like to learn more about wildfires and find out how to protect your home or cabin from harm? MSU Extension will again be offering the Michigan Conservation Stewards Program starting in February 2009. This is an outstanding program that goes into depth in a variety of areas such as learning to identify trees, native grasses, and invasive species to hands-on experience in learning to assess water quality by collecting aquatic insects and examining them under microscopes. If you have not enrolled yet, I highly recommend this program. I remember thinking I already knew a great deal, yet each class left me feeling incredibly enriched and realizing how thankful I was to be learning in such an easy, fun, and interesting way.

For more information use the following links:

MSU Oakland CSP Brochure: <http://www.msue.msu.edu/go/go.cfm?0100>>

<http://www.msue.msu.edu/go/go.cfm?0100>

MSU Oakland CSP Application Packet:

<<http://www.msue.msu.edu/go/go.cfm?0101>>

<http://www.msue.msu.edu/go/go.cfm?0101>

or contact: Linda Smith, Michigan State University Extension

1200 N. Telegraph Rd

Pontiac, MI 48341

248-858-0887

FAX 248-858-1477

Email- smithlin@oakgov.com

DONATIONS TO HIGHLAND CONSERVANCY

It is time to renew your membership. Get those tax deductions before the year ends by going to our website: <http://www.highlandconservancy.org> and click on *Make a Donation*. If you prefer, you can print out the form below and mail in your tax deductible contribution today:

Yes, I want to _____join or _____renew my membership to the Highland Conservancy to encourage and facilitate the conservation of land and natural resources to preserve the rural character of Highland Township with my donation.

Please make checks payable to: Highland Conservancy

and mail them to: Highland Conservancy, 205 W. Livingston Road, Highland, MI 48357

_____ Call me regarding a gift of property.

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Email _____

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT! Note: For a donation of \$25, you will receive a lovely cloth tote bag. Better than paper OR plastic when shopping!