

Highland Conservancy E-Newsletter Nov. 4, 2008 Election Day!

Eco-Art

At a recent art teacher in-service, Huron Valley Art teacher Denise Forrest shared how she took the bold step of creating environmental art with her Oak Valley Elementary students. Following in the footsteps of artist Andy Goldsworthy, earlier this spring, she invited her students to explore the fields, woods, and land surrounding the school to gather their "materials". In teams of two, the children then created their own sculptures and amazing artwork using leaves, grass, dandelions, tall fronds of Phragmites, sticks and stones. The results were outstanding works of eco-art meant to naturally biodegrade. She also showed a DVD of the Goldsworthy that was awe inspiring in how it depicts the artist carefully and reverently working to create his natural sculptures. "With today's fast paced society, our students need to learn how to take time to slow down and appreciate natural beauty. This was an excellent opportunity for them and one that they truly enjoyed," reported Forrest. For the full article, click on the link below:

http://highlandconservancy.typepad.com/my_weblog/2008/11/environmental-art-a-hit-by-katheryn-krupa.html

Lego Teams learn about Climate Change

This year's Lego League challenge is the issue of climate change and global warming. Highland boasts several teams, top among them being the Muir Middle School, Oxbow Elementary and Charyl Stockwell Academy teams. All these teams went on to state last year and, hopefully, will place well again this year. The work these teams have done so far this year is nothing short of amazing to me. Teams have visited weather stations, interviewed key science advisors on issues related to climate change and have done some top notch research. If they win is not as important in my view as the knowledge they are gaining in how to work as a team to create and accomplish something, as well as what they are learning about climate change. Our earth is facing an impending crisis of monumental proportions if we (or more likely our children) don't do something to turn things around soon. These fifth through eighth graders are researching everything from rising oceans to habitat change to destructive changes in the earth's atmosphere. Of course, I think the most fun for them is creating, programming and running the Lego robots. Good luck to all Highland's teams at the November competitions that begin this weekend!

Updating of Parks and Rec Master Plan

On October 21st, there was a strategy session to update Highland Township's Parks and Recreation Master Plan. There was an excellent turn out and folks met to work on goals and give input to update the Parks and Rec Master Plan. The Parks Committee is seeking additional input from all Highland Township citizens. Those at the meeting voted overwhelmingly that Highland needs more trails. The township is seeking input from all Highland residents regarding future park facilities, bike paths, purchasing land for preservation of open spaces, and other parks and recreation interests. Please take a moment to fill out the survey (and/or make your comments and suggestions). A hard copy of the survey is available at the township offices or click here for the survey:

<http://www.highlandtwp.com/News/Recreation+Master+Plan+Update-271.html>

If this link doesn't work, you can go to www.highlandtwp.com then click on "What's happening" under the Recreation Master Plan Update section, click on more then click on survey. WE ALSO HOPE YOU WILL VOTE TO SUPPORT THE PRESERVATION OF HIGHLAND'S OPEN SPACES. As always, we welcome your comments on our blog: www.highlandconservancy.typepad.com

Conservation Easements – A Clarification

While in California recently, we stumbled upon a stunning 60-acre parcel overlooking a canyon in Northern California, in the Sierra Madre Mountains. What interested me most (aside from the awesome view and scenery) was the fact that the owner had placed a conservation easement on the parcel, protecting all but 2 ½ acres from future development. Instead of destroying the resale price and value of the property, surprisingly the parcel's value was increased. The 57 ½ acre natural area was still owned and useable by the owner of the property while providing a beautiful buffer of land giving the building site privacy and stunning beauty. It reminded me that even our smaller 10, 20 acre (or more) farms and open land in Highland can benefit from similar easements AND STILL BE BUILDABLE for future generations. There are many ways to write a conservation easement to fit your needs. For more information, please call Jim Lloyd at 248-887-3952.

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