

January 2009 Highland Conservancy E-Newsletter:

Greetings! In this newsletter, you will find a synopsis of our major accomplishments for 2008, an invitation to the upcoming Conservation Stewards Program, an organic farming workshop and important information about making a land donation or conservation easement on your land.

Wow - 2008 was a productive year for the Highland Conservancy!

Major accomplishments for 2008 are as follows:

- Land protected to date through our efforts (along with others) includes Oakland County's newest county owned park Highland Oaks, with 265 beautiful acres.
- Met with township officials and initiated community dialogue to establish permanent protection of the 27-acre township park north of the library. We are lobbying for a conservation easement to protect this beautiful park from future development. We continue to monitor Numatic's contamination cleanup of this public park. We also continue to lead volunteers in an annual cleanup there.
- Organized ongoing efforts to fight to protect the natural resources and rural character of Highland, specifically with regard to the attempt to modify current zoning to allow a high density, multiple family senior citizen complex.
- Participated in Milford's second Earth Day Celebration, Highland's Hazardous Waste Day and the annual Hi-White Parade where we gave away more than 400 white pine trees.
- Sponsored our new 5K Fun Run along scenic East Livingston Road to Dodge 10 Park as part of Highland's "Horsin' around Highland" festivities.
- Adopted a section of Harvey Lake Road from M59 northward all the way to Highland Oaks and kicked off the ongoing clean up of this stretch of road.
- Participated in the planting of new trees at Highland's Duck Lake Pines Park with the help of local citizens and community members.
- Worked together with members of a local church and local citizens in planning, planting and maintaining a community garden. A portion of the organic food harvested from the garden was donated to local food banks.
- Co-sponsored an initiative at Highland Oaks along with Oakland County Parks to remove more than 10 garbage bags full of garlic mustard, a highly invasive plant that quickly overtakes native plants, disrupting the normal food chain.
- Ongoing partnership with Six Rivers Land Conservancy (formerly Oakland Land Conservancy). Our president, Jim Lloyd, is seated on their board of directors to

establish a more effective liaison with our sister conservancy. Together we continue to work to protect critical parks, acquire conservation easements and delineate land for various levels of protection in Highland.

- Ongoing watchdog activities through attending most township Planning Commission meetings to provide input and feedback with regard to conservation issues and future development in Highland.
- Participated in and provided input on Highland Township Parks Committee's planning session to update and revise the Parks Committee's master plan.
- Presented and promoted the Green Infrastructure Plan that was established in Highland Township at various county and state level meetings and workshops. This model is key to our work in protecting Highland's natural resources and is an ecologically friendly blueprint for identifying natural hub areas and connected wildlife corridors as part of a broader effort to protect land throughout Michigan.
- Provided ongoing education through our blog - a venue for dialogue and debate on issues related to conservation and land use, environmental and local news. This is part of a larger educational effort including information disseminated through monthly E-newsletters, flyers, articles, our website: www.highlandconservancy.org and our blog: www.highlandconservancy.typepad.com

Conservation Stewardship Program:

Michigan State University is again offering this awesome program which starts Saturday, February 21 thru April 20, 2009. This is an outstanding program that goes into depth in a variety of areas from 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. I highly recommend this awesome program. For more information use the following links:

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

MSU Oakland CSP Application Packet:

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

or contact: Linda Smith, Michigan State University Extension

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Organic Farming Workshop

The Oakland Conservation District is sponsoring a new ORGANIC FARMING workshop on Thursday, January 22, 2009 at Springfield Oaks County Park, 12451

Andersonville Road, Davisburg, 8:30 am to 5 pm that will discuss what it takes to get started in small scale organic farming in Michigan. Experts from USDA, MSU Extension and Farm Service Bureau will cover all considerations for farming such as soils, crops, marketing and farmers markets. A discussion on creating a business plan, farm plan and budget as well as a round table discussion will also be included. Farm bill provisions for federal funding of organic producers will be discussed as well. A \$40.00 fee includes all materials and lunch. A limited number of scholarships are available. For more information on this event and to register call 248-328-0594.

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Tax Information for 2009:

If you are considering a land donation or conservation easement for your land, there can be various benefits and tax implications which may help you now or in the future. Please contact Jim Lloyd, president of the Highland Conservancy for more information at 248-887-3952.

Time to Renew your Membership

It's that time again – time to renew your yearly membership. You can make your donation 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!

Katheryn Krupa, Editor