

SAUGATUCK-DOUGLAS HISTORY CENTER

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LAND CONSERVANCY'S NEW WEST MICHIGAN PLAN
TO BE PRESENTED AT SDHC AUG. 11 "TUESDAY TALK"

JULY 31, 2020 -- Land Conservancy of West Michigan's first Strategic Conservation Plan, released July 14 to guide protection and stewardship of our region's natural lands for the next 10-15 years, will enlighten the next Saugatuck-Douglas History Center "Tuesday Talk" on August 11. Breaking with Tuesday Talk's Old School House venue traditions, this Talk will be conducted virtually via Zoom beginning at 11 a.m.

Public attendance is invited and audience participation is welcomed to enrich the discussion. Interested participants will need to register in advance online at tinyurl.com/SDHC-TT-8-11 in order to receive instructions for joining the Zoom program. Questions regarding online registration procedures may be e-mailed to info@sdhistoricalsociety.org.

LCWM Stewardship Director Justin Heslinga, presenting "Strategic Conservation in West Michigan: Planning For the Future", will discuss the new plan's development in response to the growing threats of habitat fragmentation and degradation, urban sprawl and climate change, looking at how they affect West Michigan's natural lands and waters, and how knowledge of historical landscape conditions serves to inform LCWM's approach to conservation in the future.

"As the first of its kind for the region," Heslinga says, "this plan marks a shift towards a more proactive concept of conservation. Seeking permanent protection and care of key natural areas will help to ensure that West Michigan's wildlife and plants stay resilient in the face of changing climate and other stressors, and that its people can enjoy improved water quality and access to nature."

He notes that the new Strategic Conservation Plan was shaped by rigorous data collection, advanced mapping and the most recent science. The process enabled the organization to identify three key regions in its eight-county service area -- which stretches from Fennville to Ludington -- that offer the most promising opportunities to support biodiversity, habitat quality and resilience to climate change.

These regions -- which the Land Conservancy calls the Eastern Glacial Corridor, Lake Michigan Shoreline and Big Forests & Wild Rivers -- are where the land trust will seek land protection opportunities in collaboration with landowners and community organizations to support the health and longevity of natural areas. The organization outlines its goals and rationale for each region's strategy in the plan, which is available for all to explore on its website www.naturenearby.org.

The development of the Strategic Conservation Plan was funded in part by the Land Trust Alliance, with technical support provided by the Northern Institute of Applied Climate Science. Many other partner organizations and individuals contributed greatly to the conceptual development of the plan, including The Nature Conservancy, Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Michigan Natural Features Inventory, Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy and the Land Conservancy's Board of Directors, Land Protection and Stewardship Committees and countless supporters.

The Land Conservancy of West Michigan is a nationally accredited, nonprofit land trust with professional staff and headquarters in Grand Rapids. For more than 40 years it has worked with individuals and communities to create nature preserves and permanently protect nearly 12,000 acres in Allegan, Kent, Ottawa, Newaygo, Muskegon, Oceana, Mason and Lake counties.

A summertime tradition since 1996, weekly Tuesday Talks present entertaining and informative insights into local community life throughout July and August. For more information about the Saugatuck-Douglas History Center, its Museum in Saugatuck and Old School House in Douglas, or its activities planned for upcoming months, visit www.MySDHistory.org.

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PHOTO ATTACHED SEPARATELY: see jpeg "SCP3reg"

Caption:

Map shows LCWM's three priority regions -- "Big Forests & Wild Rivers" to the north (green), the Lake Michigan Shoreline (beige) and the Eastern Glacial Corridor (yellow) -- prioritized in new plans aired at SDHC's August 11 Tuesday Talk.