



CRITERIA FOR LAND PROTECTION PROJECTS

of the Land Conservancy of West Michigan

To qualify for consideration for protection, the property must be of sufficient size that its conservation resources are likely to remain intact. In general, the Land Conservancy prefers projects over ten acres in urban areas and over thirty acres in rural West Michigan. Shoreline is evaluated on an individual basis.

The property must also meet one or more of the following standards:

The land...

- ☞ is in a relatively natural state or contains rare species.
- ☞ contains important wildlife habitat or known migration routes.
- ☞ contains, or has the potential to contain, ecosystems of educational or scientific value.
- ☞ contributes to the protection of shoreline, riverbanks, water supplies or water quality.
- ☞ has recreational or cultural value, is actively being used for such purposes, or is adjacent to such lands.
- ☞ is in active agricultural or forestry use.
- ☞ buffers or is adjacent to other protected lands.
- ☞ contributes to open space, promotes land conservation, or encourages careful stewardship of land and water resources in furthering local conservation plans or policies.
- ☞ is or has the potential to be part of a community, regional or state park or greenway system.
- ☞ sets an important precedent for resource or open space protection in a targeted area.
- ☞ is valuable as community open space, provides scenic benefits, or open space buffers from development.

FEASIBILITY

Although land may satisfy one or more of the standards listed above, one or more of the following circumstances may lead to the Land Conservancy deciding not to pursue a proposed project. Such a decision is not a criticism of the proposal, rather it reflects the Conservancy's judgment that the proposal does not fall within the specific purposes of the Land Conservancy of West Michigan.

- ☞ A landowner insists on provisions in a conservation easement that seriously diminish the land's primary conservation values.
- ☞ Enforcement and monitoring of the conservation easement is difficult. (Examples: fractured ownership; difficult or costly to reach.)
- ☞ The land has a history of contamination that impacts the conservation qualities that are proposed for protection.
- ☞ Ethical or public image problems exist in association with the acceptance of this project.

All of the preceding notwithstanding, the Land Conservancy of West Michigan Board of Directors retains discretion over accepting or rejecting projects and will review each proposal on a case-by-case basis.