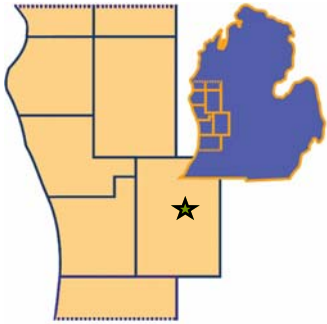


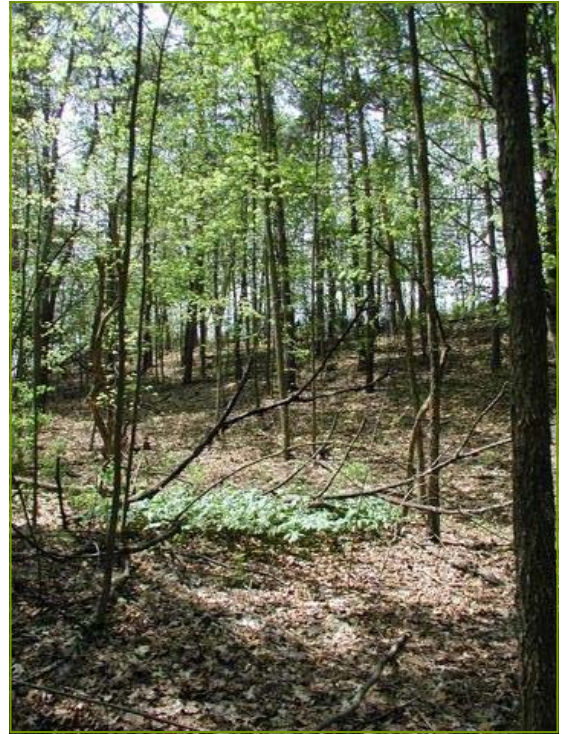


CONSERVATION EASEMENT SUCCESS STORY

Cecilia Vanderbout Protects Her Family Farm



One of the last and largest fragments of family farming in Plainfield Township, Kent County was preserved by the Land Conservancy in December 2006. Cecilia Vanderbout created a conservation easement that permanently protects her 33 acres of the once expansive and thriving Woodworth Family Farm.



Cecilia Vanderbout (n. Woodworth) grew up on the farm and remembers herding cows, riding her horse, watching her grandfather hand-shuck corn, and having picnics on the top of the high ridge that overlooks what is now Kent County's Lamoreaux Park.

The spot where she picnicked has long been her backyard, and now the family farm is only a remnant of what it used to be. Over the years, family members have sold off their portions of the farm, leaving Cecilia's 33 acres and a small parcel owned by her daughter Sharon, as the only parcels left in family ownership.

A large portion of the former farm has been mined for gravel and is slated to be developed in the next few years. Cecilia, however, does not ever want to see this happen to her part of the farm. Fortunately, she and future generations will never be faced with such a sight. Cecilia permanently protected her land from ever being mined for gravel, split up or developed by creating a conservation easement with the Land Conservancy of West Michigan.

Cecilia's land is protected forever, but it remains private property with no public access granted. Her 33 acres will stay the way it is, with its forested ravines enjoyed by the deer and foxes, a high

ridge visited by eagles, owls and hawks, and a large open field that can be planted, hayed or used as a pasture for horses.

The protection of Cecilia's property supports the natural habitats found on the adjacent county park. In addition, it helps to improve the water quality of the nearby Grand River by slowing run off and filtering pollutants before they reach the river.

Cecilia saw the protection of her scenic land as just something she had to do. However, the generosity and thoughtfulness of this gift should not be understated; she can no longer sell this highly-developable piece of land for development prices.



"It was on my birthday last March when I first met with the Land Conservancy to set in motion a conservation easement that would forever protect our land from ever being mined or developed. I was giving myself the piece of mind that could come only with the help of the Land Conservancy of West Michigan."

Cecilia Vanderbout