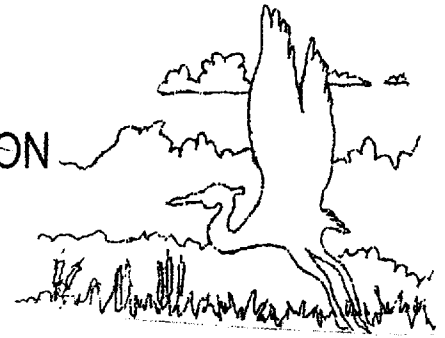


Spring 2003

HENRIETTA CONSERVATION & RECREATION  
CONSERVANCY NEWSLETTER



The countywide **Future of Rural Land** meeting is set for Saturday, April 12 at *Davies & Sons Banquet Center at 3575 Francis St. Jackson*. Registration begins at 8:00am, coffee & donuts provided. The program begins at 8:30 with welcome and introduction of speakers: Scott Everett, American Farmland Trust; Dr. John Warbach, Planning & Zoning Center, Inc.; Les Schick, MSU Extension-Jackson Co.; Holly Madill, Public Sector Consultants; Dr. Mike Thomas, MSU Land Resource Management and the Conservation Easement Team of Beth Monaghan Metty, Attorney, Rich Brooks, Leoni Twp. Assessor, and a tax accountant. A Question & Answer time at 11:30, Lunch is provided at 12:00pm, with the turning in of evaluations, door prizes presented and conclusion at 1:00pm.

**RSVP** is requested by April 7<sup>th</sup> Call Nancy at (517) 596-2802 or Pat at (517) 769-2283 or e-mail: [hcrlt @ yahoo.com](mailto:hcrlt@yahoo.com).

Henrietta Conservation & Recreation Conservancy **meeting schedule** will be at 8:00pm following the Henrietta Recreation Committee at 7:00 at the Henrietta Fire Barn on 11732 Bunkerhill Rd., April 15, & May 13. The Recreation Committee is presently working on the development of the DNR parkland containing the historic survey markers for Michigan at the corner of Meridian & Baseline road.



**THE JACKSON COUNTY FUTURE OF RURAL LAND SURVEY RESULTS.**

Thank you to all the citizens of this County who took the time and consideration to participate in this land use opinion survey. The opinions expressed were thought provoking and impressive. For example: **76%** supported the preservation of farmland and open space by adopting and implementing local zoning that limits residential development. **90%** supported the providing of tax incentives for landowners who voluntarily preserve farmland and open space. **88%** gave top priority to preserving character of rural areas. **73%** gave top priority to addressing urban sprawl. And **60%** supported increased regulation of land use. Many people took the time to write their views. This is just a sampling: "People who sell their property for development often feel

bad that they “had” to; we (society) should provide alternatives especially to older farmers etc., so land can be preserved in an open state, but people will have enough money to retire on.” “We need to develop (countywide or multi county) plan with a long view to protect farmland & open space while also looking to economic development. We should do this cooperatively in Jackson County.” “Preserving” farmland may, at sometime in the future, backfire for all concerned when there is no longer anyone willing to work it. A better incentive-to keep open space- may be to tax farmland in production at the same level as state owned land. As a deterrent to selling, the state could impose a 30% tax on its’ sale price when special treatment land is sold.” “It is cheaper to buy land & build a home in a rural area. City income taxes and rising fees along with the perception of crime, keeps people from wanting to live there.” This survey will help to guide the development of ideas to address our land use problems.



### **The Governor’s “MICHIGAN LAND USE LEADERSHIP COUNCIL” Meets.**

On March 24<sup>th</sup> Governor Granholm welcomed the diverse 26 member council and stated that, “Presently our state reflects consumption without thought.”” Our resources are why we are here and represent who we are.”” What kind of Michigan do we want our children to know.” ”Cookie cutter development adorned in strip malls and gray pavement?” Dr. Bruce Katz of the Brookings Institute presented points on smart growth. He stated that Michigan’s programs and policies may facilitate decentralization with taxes, fiscal policies and urban regulatory barriers. For more information the council’s or to make a comment , their website is [www.michiganlanduse.org](http://www.michiganlanduse.org) and the Brookings Institute is [www.brookings.edu/urban](http://www.brookings.edu/urban).



### **NEW YOUTH LAND USE CURRICULUM**

Please visit [www.msue.msu.edu/kent/yourland](http://www.msue.msu.edu/kent/yourland) for a free, activity-based youth curriculum on land use issues developed by MSU Extension’s *United Growth for Kent County* project.

**This Land Is Your Land** was developed to provide materials almost anyone can use to reach youth. It was designed so young people can contribute solutions to current land use issues as well as participate in making sound decisions now and in the future. The lesson plans meet the Michigan Curriculum Framework Content Standards and Benchmarks and prepare students for MEAP testing. **This Land Is Your Land** was created for upper elementary-3<sup>rd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> grades- and

the lessons are easily adaptable to any grade level. Teachers using this curriculum have given it rave reviews.

The **Jackson County Regional Trailways Study** was completed in December 2002. This was a coordinated effort of the county and city parks, townships, and Falling Waters and Lakeland trail committees. The committee acquired thirty thousand dollars through donations from Foote Hospital to hire Lansing based Landscape Architects and Planners, Inc. to help guide the community in the development of a county wide trailways vision plan. This greenway would provide urban/suburban residents easy access to open space though the use of trailways increasing recreational and educational experiences that might otherwise not be available. The State of Michigan supports trail development through the Michigan Trailways Act of 1993.



### **What is Smart Growth?**

The Smart Growth movement began several years ago and generally includes: Redevelopment of inner cities and older “first ring” suburbs. With strong community planning and regional cooperation between neighboring governments. Strict zoning and permit-granting, to limit further outward growth on suburban fringes. Restricted state spending on roads, schools and sewers beyond the current suburban fringes. And large tax credits and grants for farmers to discourage development of cropland. \*

### **OPPONENTS VIEW**

Pro-development groups such as the Michigan Association of Home Builders have these definitions: “A true smart growth plan emphasizes growth. Americans have a right to live where they want in the types of homes they want”. “Take the politics out of planning” to permit high-density, lower-cost developments to make suburbs more affordable.

“Balanced planning” to preserve open space, improve traffic flow and relieve overcrowded schools. “Timely” construction of new roads, water lines and schools “to keep pace with current and future demand for housing.” And “public benefits paid by public funds,” instead of charging developers and homeowners high fees for new home permits to help pay for infrastructure. \*



### **A Cost of Community Service study**

The study was conducted in 2001 to gain a better understanding of financial impact of existing land uses in Marshall and Newton Townships in Calhoun Co. The findings were, for every \$1 of revenue generated by residential property, a \$1.47 was spent providing

services to those lands. For every \$1 received from commercial and business land, only 20 cents was spent to provide services. For every \$1 received from farm/forest/open land uses, only 27 cents was spent providing services.

If this study was conducted for our areas, similar results may happen. Townships will be spending more money than they take in to provide services for increased home building. Local government would have to increase property taxes or increase fees for builders to cover the increased expenses. The populations coming to the rural areas are not an increase in the county but rather relocation from the cities.

### **Very short definitions for commonly used farmland preservation terms:**

#### **Transfer of Development Rights (TDR)**

Is a voluntary agreement between a farmer and a developer that accomplishes two objectives—permanently preserving a farmland and increasing development where there is existing infrastructure or other development. It creates a free market of buying and selling of development rights between farmer and a developer.

Michigan has not yet passed TDR legislation.

#### **Purchase of rights from Development Rights (PDR)**

The program is voluntary and incentive-driven. By purchasing the development rights from the farmer, the community and the state are buying a permanent easement on the property prohibiting non-agricultural development.

To date, Michigan's pilot PDR program, started in 1998, has preserved 55 farms and more than 13,000 acres with \$23 million dollars. The average cost of the development rights was \$1,883 per acre. Public Act 262, signed in June 2002, states in order to be eligible for cost share dollars of a PDR program, communities must adopt a master plan (less than 10 years old) and establish and partly fund a local farmland preservation program. PDR Ordinances approved by Barry, Kent, Clinton, Leelanau and Lapeer. Caaloun, Kalamazoo, Shiawassee, Grand Traverse and Antrim are all in the process of finalizing theirs.

#### **Agricultural Districts**

This is a temporary method of protecting blocks of agricultural land. An Ag district requires a minimum size, be initiated by the landowners and then approved by the local community. Landowners agree not to develop the land for a specified period of time, while the community agrees to minimize the impact of adjacent development pressure and possibly offer property tax relief, for those enrolled.



### **Agricultural Zoning**

Local zoning approaches may lower density in agricultural areas or cluster development. Clustering allows for development but on a much smaller piece of ground, leaving a block of farmland for agricultural use. The lot size is reduced in order to accommodate the cluster development. By lowering density, such as quarter-quarter zoning, one house or unit is allowed per 40 acres. Typically lot size is limited to ½ acre to 2 acres, allowing for the development to occur while preserving farmland.

### **Web sites for more land use issues information:**

[www.farmland.org](http://www.farmland.org)

[www.peopleandland.org](http://www.peopleandland.org)

[www.landlegacies.net](http://www.landlegacies.net)



The *Henrietta Conservation & Recreation Conservancy* is a non-profit organization governed by local residents. The purpose is to protect the rural character and natural diversity of our township, county by preserving significant land and scenic areas and fostering appreciation, understanding and recreational use of the environment.

### **The Conservancy's current activities include:**

- Promoting public awareness and appreciation of the importance of the rural environment.
- Seeking conservation easements (i.e. development rights) on important agricultural, wildlife habitat, and scenic properties.

### **Your donations and dues go towards:**

- Community land use education
- Land preservation
- Publicity, mailing and other operating costs.



\$20 HC&RC Membership

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Additional donation

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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