A YEAR OF GROWTH AND RENEWAL

Keweenaw LAND TRUST

A community partner protecting land, water, and quality of life through conservation, stewardship, and nature connections

November 2025 News

My morning began today with a deep dive into KLT board business: meetings in Hancock, then hours of emails about fundraising, strategic planning, and orientations. This is the necessary work that keeps a nonprofit board humming along. By lunchtime, I needed to escape the computer, so my dog, Blueberry, and I left for our daily walk along Lake Superior.

Blueberry quickly launched himself to the end of his leash, sniffing deer poop, barking at squirrels, and joyfully tangling himself in cedar roots. It took me a few minutes longer to shake off the digital haze. But then a young eagle screamed from a snag leaning over the shore. Nuthatches scolded from the hemlocks, and juncos flicked their tails through the brush. The smell of mud and cedar rose around us. This is why we do this, I remembered—to sustain the entangled human and natural communities that make the Keweenaw special.

And this is what inspires the KLT mission to serve as a community partner protecting land, water, and quality of life through conservation, stewardship, and nature connections. This year brought remarkable progress toward that mission. KLT permanently protected some of the Keweenaw's treasured landscapes, including Jacob's Falls near Eagle Harbor and the 1,320-acre Little Spruce Lake Nature Reserve near Craig Lake State Park—encompassing two inland lakes within one vast conservation area. Staff, volunteers, community partners, and board directors rolled up their sleeves to build trails, bridges, and



boardwalks at the new Boston Creek Nature Area, a space made possible through the generous vision of Sue Stephens.

As we turn toward 2026, the board's focus returns to strategic planning, balancing new acquisitions with long-term stewardship. With your help, KLT will continue to nurture a resilient future for the Keweenaw for generations to come.

Nancy Langston,
Board President

TWO LAKES, COUNTLESS ADVENTURES



INTRODUCING KLT'S LARGEST SINGLE ACQUISITION TO DATE

Little Spruce Lake Nature Reserve

Keweenaw Land Trust is overjoyed to announce one of our greatest gifts to date: Little Spruce Lake Nature Reserve. This land, water, and an accompanying stewardship fund were graciously gifted to KLT by Bill Lynch and Barbara Manger who have entrusted KLT with the land's perpetual conservation, stewardship, and connection to the surrounding communities.

These lands and waters fall within eastern Baraga County's Michigamme Highlands, an area of high conservation value in proximity to large tracts of land managed as wilderness.

The Reserve features over 1,320 acres of forest land, including pockets with old growth character. A well-maintained section of the North Country Trail meanders through the property, and features an Adirondack-style shelter. Its waters include the upper reaches of the Sturgeon River and the entirety of Lake Bud and Little Spruce Lake, with the latter featuring a lovely cabin.

Reading about the Reserve alone is astounding, but to experience it is something else. Approaching along the North Country Trail, one encounters rock outcroppings, patches of berries visited by fortunate bears, and a mix of topography that leaves one breathless—both from the hills and the sheer beauty. Every inch holds the potential for millions of experiences and future stories. In the summer of 2026, KLT will be working diligently to inventory this property to ensure that we can protect its most delicate corners while ensuring the public can safely enjoy its magic.

Bill and Barbara entrusted this land to KLT because they believe in our mission, our people, and our ability to care for it forever. That kind of trust is built by decades of good stewardship, transparent decisions, and members like you who keep KLT strong, ready, and responsive. With your support, we can say "yes" when opportunities like Little Spruce Lake come along.

A DELICIOUS PARTNERSHIP

CONSERVATION, CULINARY ARTS, AND COMMUNITY

"What if we hosted a farm-to-table dinner in the forest?" This question led to Farm Field Forest. At the peak of harvest season, a time of unmatched beauty in the Keweenaw, KLT partnered with From the Ground Farmers Market Collective to bring this ambitious idea to fruition in the heart of the historic Paavola Wetlands farmstead. It marks the beginning of a natural partnership between two organizations doing great local work toward shared values of land conservation, local food, and community. We look forward to growing this partnership—and bringing you an equally tasty experience in 2026.



A volunteer serves the third course, a pork belly bite, at Farm Field Forest. Photo: Goose Collective

YOUR "SIGN" TO GET OUTSIDE

Signs are often the first way KLT connects with someone. After all, as much as we'd like to be, our staff can't be at every trailhead, every day! So, this summer, our entire staff collaborated to design, order, and start hanging new signs with KLT branding, simplified rules, and our mission. We hope the signs encourage visitors to learn about KLT and get involved by attending an event, volunteering, or donating to support our work. Our stewardship team has also applied fresh paint-blazing to winter favorites like Lily Creek, Paavola Wetlands, and the Pilgrim Community Forest to improve your snowshoeing or backcountry skiing experience this winter.

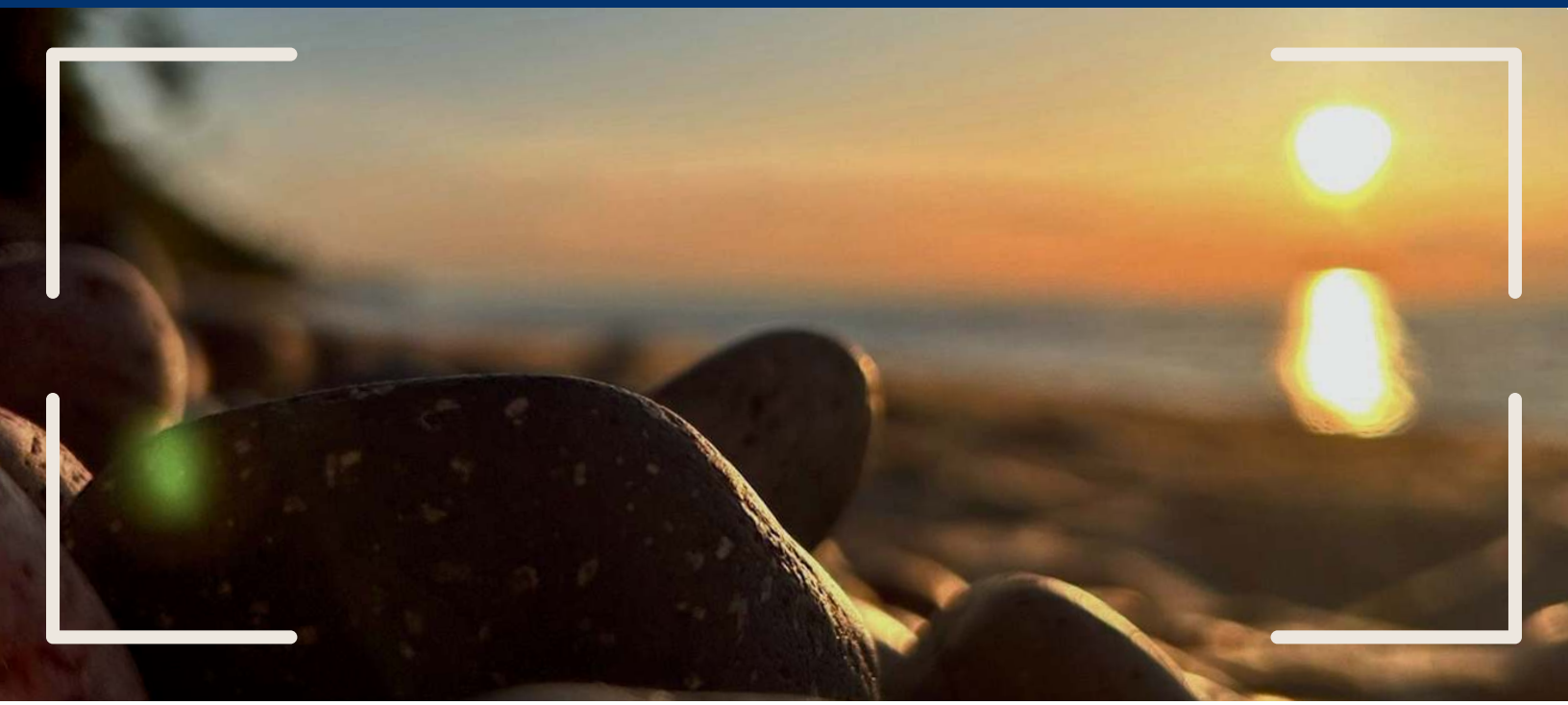
VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

MARK ROBERTS



Mark (left) and his volunteer crew. Photo: Keith Meyers

This year, KLT held 25 volunteer workdays—and *15 of them were led by Mark Roberts, with over 328 hours donated!* Not only did Mark and his crew help us open Boston Creek Nature Area, they also freed up our stewardship team to complete other important field work this season. Thank you to Mark and his crew: Stan Vitton, Keith Meyers, Jim Vaught, Sheri Hagwood, Wolfram Meingast, Jennifer Strand, and Dylan McMullin, among others.



STEADY GROWTH AND STRENGTHENING ROOTS

A SNAPSHOT OF KLT'S IMPACT REPORT

Each October, KLT reflects on its past year. This year was one of steady growth for KLT's three pillars: land conservation, stewardship, and nature connections. It also saw a strategic focus on strengthening KLT's roots: its people. We are excited to see what we can accomplish with increased capacity in 2026.

We are sad to see Carolyn Meingast retire, and John Frye step down. At the same time, KLT is energized with new leadership from Executive Director, B Lauer, and its stewardship and community engagement work has increased capacity through new staff members, Elam Maurer and Tiff DeGroot.

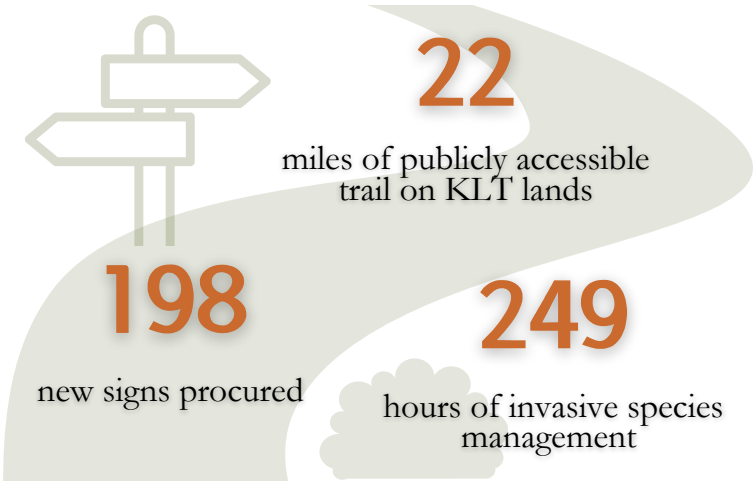
The following page highlights our 2024-25 key accomplishments. For the full report, visit **bit.ly/KLTimpact** or scan this code:





Top: KLT staff celebrate Carolyn's retirement with a luau-themed party; Bottom: John Frye works outside.

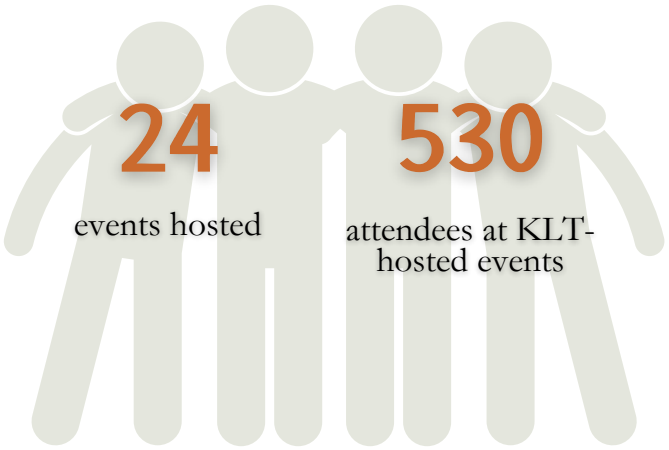
Steady growth and strengthening roots (cont.)



22
miles of publicly accessible trail on KLT lands

198
new signs procured

249
hours of invasive species management



24
events hosted

530
attendees at KLT-hosted events

29
nature areas owned and open to the public

5,278
acres owned by KLT

4,220
acres protected under conservation easement

LAND CONSERVATION

KLT expanded two of our existing nature areas, and added three new ones, including our largest single acquisition yet at Little Spruce Lake. After a flurry of concerned calls, and the help of donors, we were able to protect the iconic Jacob's Falls. And thanks to Suzanne Stephens, we have created a lovely nature area at Boston Creek. KLT now owns 29 nature areas—all open to the public—and protects 4,220 acres through conservation easements.

STEWARDSHIP

Stewardship work focused on trail and habitat maintenance, including installing new signage and improving ADA compliant trails at Paavola Wetlands and Boston Pond, thanks to a Copper Shores grant. Staff led a major effort to reclaim overgrown trails at Paavola with a generous memorial gift in honor of Jim Belote. New land conservation software and two interns, Elam Maurer and Henry Louniboss, made stewardship monitoring and project coordination more efficient.

NATURE CONNECTIONS

KLT hosted 24 events for 530 total attendees this year, despite having no dedicated outreach staff for a portion of the year. KLT's volunteer Outreach Committee stepped up to fill the gap until Tiff DeGroot was hired in July. Now onboarded, and having stepped into the position of Community Engagement Manager, Tiff has increased capacity to develop KLT's outreach programming and volunteer coordination. In 2026, she looks forward to strengthening these systems.

Upcoming Events

KLTea Time: Holiday Edition!
Friday, December 5th | 4–6 p.m.
KLT Office

Winter Solstice Gathering*
Saturday, December 20th | 4–8 p.m.
Lily Creek Nature Area

Celestial Week of Fun: Owl Prowl
Thursday, January 15th | 4–6 p.m.
Steve Farm Nature Area

Celestial Week of Fun: Twilight Snowshoe
Saturday, January 17th | 4–6 p.m.
Steve Farm Nature Area

Celestial Week of Fun: KBOCC Celestial Stories
Sunday, January 18th | 4–6 p.m.
KLT Office

Heikinpäivä Snowshoe with Hancock Trails Club
Sunday, January 24th | 2–4 p.m.
Churning Rapids

**registration required*



Foraging walk. Photo: Goose Collective

To learn more...
Visit our Upcoming Events webpage for detailed event descriptions & registration:

keweenawlandtrust.org/upcoming-events

KLT Staff

Executive Director: B Lauer

Project Specialist: Pat Toczydlowski

Botanist & Stewardship Manager: Jill Fisher

Community Engagement Manager: Tiff DeGroot

Stewardship Intern: Elam Maurer

Marsin Property Manager: Curtis Perala





Left: Elam and Jill install a sign; Right: Stan Vitton builds boardwalks.

KLT Board of Directors

President: Nancy Langston, *Chassell*

Vice President: Lou Vencato, *Hancock*

Treasurer: Stan Vitton, *Hancock*

Secretary: Alex Hirzel, *Hancock* ***Outgoing***

Kaitlin Lapka, ***New*** *Hancock*

Ray Weglarz, ***New*** *Allouez*

Mike Miller, ***New*** *Hancock*

John Arnold, ***New*** *Calumet*

Mike Abbott, *Atlantic Mine*

Haley Goodreau, ***Outgoing*** *Hancock*

Mare Grohowski, *Hancock*

Calvin Koski, *L'Anse*

Evan Lanese, ***Outgoing*** *Hancock*

Jim Northey, ***Outgoing*** *Atlantic Mine*

Jamie Robertson, *Allouez*

Buddy Wylie, *Eagle River*

#GiveCopperCountry

Amplify your Giving Tuesday gift to KLT!



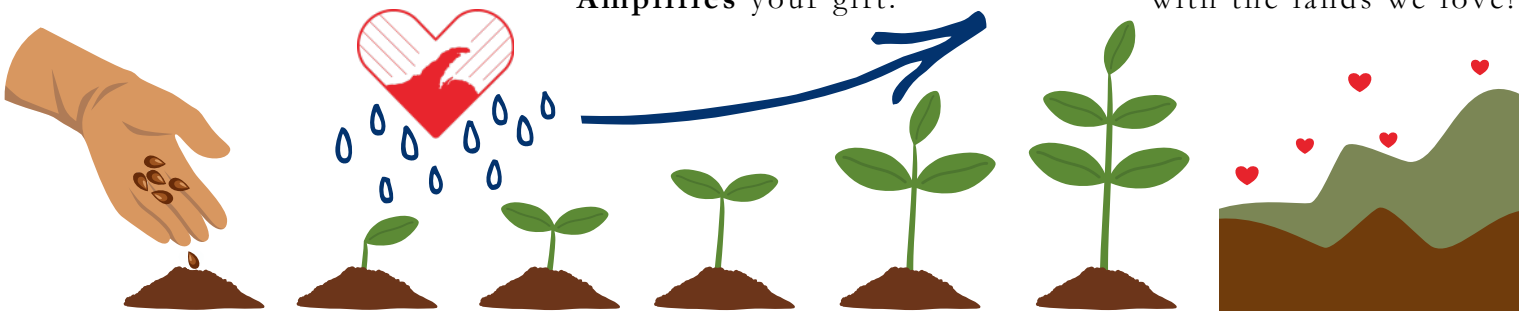
KLT is participating in **Copper Shores #GiveCopperCountry** for the third year in a row!

The #GiveCopperCountry Amplification Fund is a dedicated pool of money starting at $200,000 which will be used to amplify gifts to participating nonprofits. **Donating to KLT through the Copper Shores portal is a great way to increase the impact of your gift!**

Make a gift online at: **bit.ly/KLTGiveCC** (case sensitive) or see below for mailing instructions.

How it works

1. **Donate** to KLT via: #GiveCopperCountry
2. The Copper Shores #GiveCopperCountry Fund **Amplifies** your gift.
3. **Your gift goes farther** to protect, steward & connect with the lands we love!



MAKE AN AMPLIFIED #GIVECOPPERCOUNTRY GIFT TO KLT

Your donation will go to KLT, along with additional funds from the amplification fund.

Name _____ Phone _____

Street Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Email Address _____

CHOOSE YOUR DONATION LEVEL

- ☐ $20
- ☐ $50
- ☐ $100
- ☐ $250
- ☐ $500
- ☐ $1000
- ☐ Other $_____

#givecoppercountry

Please mail this form & payment to:
Copper Shores
400 Quincy Street, 5th Floor
Hancock, MI 49930

Please write "KLT" on your check.

Or donate online:
bit.ly/KLTGiveCC

KLT respects your privacy and confidentiality. We do not sell your data and respect requests for anonymity.

Keweenaw Land Trust

49902 Limerick Street
Hancock, MI 49930

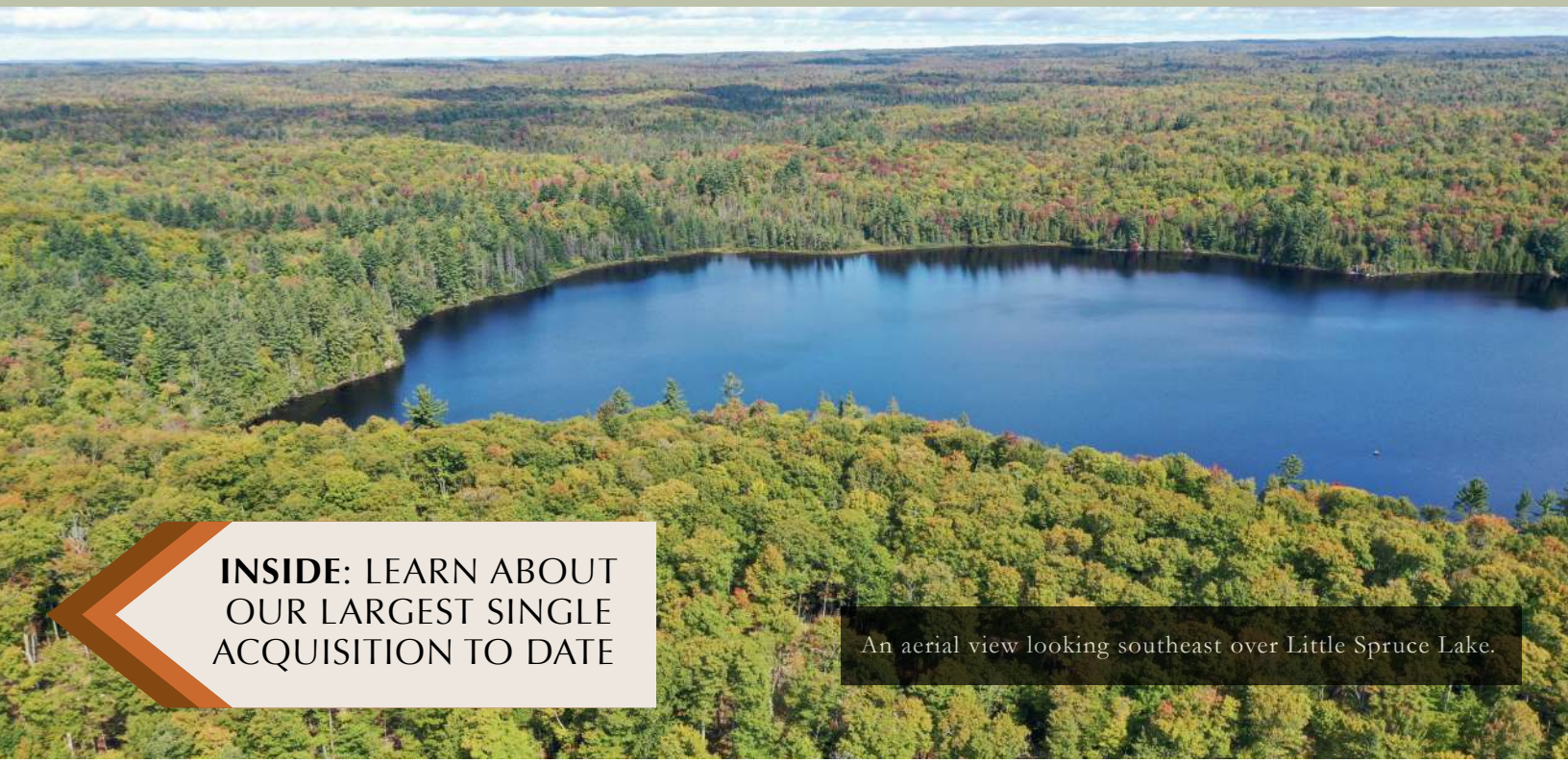
906-482-0820
info@KeweenawLandTrust.org

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@TheKeweenawLandTrust

@KeweenawLandTrust

Your one-year KLT membership started on:



INSIDE: LEARN ABOUT OUR LARGEST SINGLE ACQUISITION TO DATE

An aerial view looking southeast over Little Spruce Lake.