VOL. 29 NO. 1

A SILVER LEGACY SHINES ON THE NORTH SHORE

Keweenaw LAND TRUST

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

March 2026 News



The Silver River Wetlands, generously donated by Linda Ott, is KLT's newest acquisition and the 30th nature area under its protection. Photo: KLT

By Pat Toczydlowski

Inspiration and legacy are threads that run through stories of land conservation.

The late Bill Rose spent decades observing and sharing the natural splendors and awe of Lake Superior before he and wife Nanno donated their beloved Silver Island to KLT in 2023 to ensure its perpetual stewardship. Bill's conservation vision expanded inland to serene wetlands and unique geological features on the mainland. Inspired by his vision, Linda Ott donated a nearby portion of her land on the Keweenaw Peninsula to KLT in December 2025 to establish Silver River Wetlands, the 30th nature area under KLT's protection.

Bailey Creek flows through this 40-acre property in the shadows of rock before joining the Silver River, flowing through forested wetlands to open, sunny marsh, and finally emptying into Lake Superior. This land contributes to a conservation corridor along the Keweenaw's north shore, expanding the impact and benefits of this and other nearby conservation lands (see map, next page). The north shore is recognized as an important habitat area for its high biodiversity, rare plant and animal habitat, unique geological features and benefits to the Lake Superior fishery.

A key feature of this new nature area is a rock ridge parallel to Highway M-26, across from the Michigan Audubon's Lake Bailey Sanctuary. Jamie Roberts, a retired geologist serving on the KLT board describes it as a modest continuation of the more massive resistant conglomerate layer known as the West Bluff which holds up Brockway Mountain Drive. At Silver River

Continued on following page



The Silver River Wetlands (star) contributes to a conservation corridor on the Keweenaw's North Shore, along with The Nature Conservancy (pink), MI Audubon (yellow), Michigan Nature Association (green), Esrey Park and the MI DNR boat launch (aqua) lands (KLT Nature Areas in red).

Wetlands, the ridge includes thin layers of resistant conglomerate and basaltic lava flow. The ridge has the potential to offer spectacular vistas across the Keweenaw to Lake Superior if we can find a safe route for a footpath on this steep topography, one possibility KLT will explore as we get to know the land better and develop a management plan to guide its stewardship. Linda has always been curious about the ridge, noting, "One of the things I've always cherished about that spot up north is how you can sense the creation of the land from the signs of the lava flow. It's always felt so primitive, in a good way, to me."

Michigan Tech celebrated Linda's legacy in 2025, recognizing her 47 years of service as a dedicated and beloved faculty member and trailblazer in her field of computer science as she announced her retirement. Reflecting on her career, Linda recalled a high school teacher who inspired her, "I think about how impactful his efforts were on my life, and I'd like to think that I've extended his impact forward to future generations through my students and colleagues." Linda parallels her career legacy with one of land conservation with an impact-forward gift of intact land to benefit us and future generations. KLT envisions this tremendous gift as one that can inspire new conservation opportunities and successes.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR UPDATE

KLT has officially entered our 30th year! On March 22nd, we mark the anniversary of our incorporation by a group of people determined to protect the land, water, and quality of life that make the Keweenaw a special place to live and visit.



B & volunteer Matt Laird at the KLT table during NatGeo's Earth After Dark this January. Photo: KLT

This milestone year has already begun with energy! In January, we partnered with the Rosza Center to present **Nature by Night**, an event series exploring our night skies, anchored by a NatGeo Live event. Our community turned out in force to explore quiet winter forests, and National Geographic was so impressed by the way we grounded their global perspective in our local landscape that they hope to bring this model to other communities across the country.

If you missed this series, there will be plenty more opportunities to celebrate and explore together in this year of reflection, celebration, and forward momentum. In these pages, you will find a glimpse of what is ahead.

I hope to see you at an upcoming event! Every member, supporter, and friend of KLT is a core part of the foundation we have built together and part of conservation we will carry forward into the next 30 years.

Yours in conservation and connection,

B Lauer

B Lauer, Executive Director

BUCKTHORN: A 'GROWING' PROBLEM

By Tiff DeGroot, Ph.D.

Some human impacts on the land eventually fade into memory. Ruins crumble, reclaimed by the soil. Old logging roads are filled in as forests regenerate. Others, however, do not fade, but *grow* over time, setting off a cascade of rapid change.



Glossy buckthorn at Paavola Wetlands Nature Area in 2025. Photo: KLT

Buckthorn is one such example of a growing problem in the Keweenaw and throughout the region. There are two types of buckthorn in our area: common (serrated leaves, large thorns) and glossy (smooth leaves, no thorns). First brought to North America in the 1800s, it was praised as a fast-growing and adaptable ornamental shrub to be used for fencerows and windbreaks. These very qualities are the same that make it a looming threat today. Buckthorn grows quickly. It thrives in woodlands and fields, in sun and shade, in soggy and dry ground, and in loamy and sandy soil. It is an aggressive colonizer, outcompeting native species and producing copious clusters of fruit, which birds readily eat and spread. However, adult birds rely on native insects to feed their young. Because native insects do not readily feed on buckthorn, birds must travel farther to find suitable food for their nestlings when buckthorn dominates an area.

COLLABORATIVE MANAGEMENT WITH THE HELP OF A GENEROUS DONOR

Learn to identify buckthorn, and you will start to see it everywhere. And if you start to see it everywhere, you may be inspired to act—like one generous, anonymous donor who is helping KLT, Keweenaw Invasive Species Management Area (KISMA), and Swedetown Trails Club manage buckthorn this summer. They experienced a stunning realization while on a local trail late last fall. They were surrounded by green-leaved trees—every one of them buckthorn. "I wasn't looking for it because I didn't realize it was even here… It shattered my illusion of this place," they marveled. Having witnessed the massive changes buckthorn has caused in other parts of the Midwest, they felt that *now* was the time to act.

> ***"I wasn't looking for it because I didn't realize it was even here… It shattered my illusion of this place"***

Time is indeed of the essence when managing invasive species: it is going to take more than one field season to tackle this growing problem. But the work that KLT, KISMA, and Swedetown do now will be an important step in slowing the spread.

We aim for two major management pulses this spring and fall. Spring will focus on reducing seedbanks and cutting dense patches, with follow-up cutting and cut stump treatments in the fall, when identification is easier due to buckthorn leaves staying green later than most native shrubs. We hope you will consider helping by attending an upcoming workday—your work this season will help us manage this invasive for years to come!



Cal Koski walks in the woods, continuing a life of exploration on Point Abbaye. Photo: KLT



Mark and Kathy Roberts at Lily Creek in 2019. Photo: KLT

STEWARDING LAND, HONORING CONNECTIONS

By Tiff DeGroot, Ph.D.

What does it mean to be a Site Steward? When I asked four of KLT's volunteer Site Stewards about their experience, I heard stories of connection.

Connection to the land, to its history, and to the people who have cared for it before them. Cal Koski, who stewards Point of View, spoke of his family history and a lifetime of exploration, often with his father, on the Abbaye. "Before there was even a road, we would walk and hunt and fish out there," Cal told me over the phone, before heading back outdoors to chop wood. Cal isn't the only neighbor stepping up to care for the land he loves. As a neighbor of Lily Creek, Mark Roberts' connection to the land is literal. "I can look down at the creek clearing where we do the Winter Solstice," he explained. Mark lights the luminaries for our Winter Solstice celebration. He and KLT Stewardship Manager, Jill, laid out the trail so many enjoy.

Some Site Stewards connect with the land through its rich history. Jim Kalen reminisced about his childhood swimming hole at Point Mills. Now a nature area, Point Mills is a unique site that juxtaposes the human impacts of mining with nature's ability to heal over time. To Jim, showing that history is key, including the dichotomy of mining—an important part of the region's industrial past that nevertheless left scars upon the land.

"All the beauty here, the history… I hate the thought of that slipping away," he said. Jim and his wife Anne steward Din Egen Woods, just down the road from Point Mills. They often bring friends and family to visit, and one of Jim's biggest thrills is seeing them develop an appreciation for the beauty and history of the places he holds so dear.



Bob Wheeler visits Silver Island in 2022. Photo: KLT

Our Site Stewards also shared stories of connection to the people who cared for the land before KLT. Take Bob Wheeler, who stewards Silver Island. Whenever Bob found an unusual rock, he knew who to reach out to: Bill Rose, an incredible educator and storyteller—and Bob's go-to guy for geology. He always wanted to hear Bill's story on interesting specimens. Bob had known Bill and his wife Nanno for years, visiting Silver Island before they donated it to KLT. When Bill passed away in July of 2025, Bob stepped up to care for this special place. "I'm privileged to do it," he told me, "I'm retired now, so I have time to feed the birds, and take a day trip out to the island to clean up the trails and check on the cabin."

The importance of our volunteer Site Stewards cannot be overstated. Cal checks in on Point of View a couple times per month. In the summer months, Bob kayaks to Silver Island, clears the trails, and checks in on the buildings. If you've stayed at the little cabin at Din Egen, Jim and Anne likely stopped by to freshen it up before you arrived. If you see a downed branch that has been cut and pulled off the trail at Lily Creek, it was most likely Mark who moved it. Good stewardship, like dusting, can be easy to overlook, but it is a key pillar of KLT's mission. As we celebrate protecting 30 Nature Areas, KLT Site Stewards like those featured here are more important than ever. We are deeply grateful!





L: Jim and Anne Kalen stand in front of the Din Egen cabin. R: The Kalen's granddaughters explore Din Egen on snowshoes. Photos: the Kalens

Is there a KLT Nature Area that is near and dear to your heart? Perhaps you are a neighbor, a friend of a land donor, or a frequent visitor? KLT is seeking Site Stewards across our service area. Please send an email to tiff@keweenawlandtrust.org, call, or stop by the KLT office! If you're ready to step up your commitment to a special place, site stewardship may be for you.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Land & Legacy: Intro to estate planning & gifting land
Saturday, March 28th | 9:30–11:30 a.m.
Marsin Nature Retreat

Meander the March: Guided snowshoe* *(weather dependent)*
Sunday, April 12th | 1–3 p.m.
Peqauming Marsh Nature Area

All About Frogs! A family-friendly adventure led by Joan Chadde
Saturday, May 2nd | 1–3 p.m.
Boston Pond Nature Area

Spring – On the Wing: A World Migratory Bird Day Celebration
Saturday, May 9th
Stay tuned for more details on this partnership event!

Bedrock & Blooms: Guided hike led by biologist Abe Stone*
Saturday, July 11th
Lake Glazon Nature Area

Land Jam! A benefit concert supporting KLT land protection*
Saturday, July 25th
Calumet Commons Green Space

**registration required*



Learning all about frogs with Joan Chadde! Photo: KLT

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 Associate: Elam Maurer



Incoming, incumbent, and outgoing KLT Board of Directors gathered in Nov. 2025. Photo: KLT

KLT Board of Directors

President: Nancy Langston, *Chassell*

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NEW WAYS TO SHOW YOUR SUPPORT

THRIVENT FINANCIAL CLIENTS CAN SUPPORT KLT AT NO COST

We're proud to be enrolled in the Thrivent Choice® program, which offers Thrivent members an opportunity to direct Choice Dollars to KLT—all at no cost to the member. Log in to Thrivent: **https://www.thrivent.com/login** to determine your eligibility and direct your Choice Dollars.

Thrivent Action Teams are also available to members to support nonprofit organizations holding public events with significant volunteer involvement. Action Teams allow members to receive a $250 debit card to be used towards KLT event expenses. Interested in supporting us through an Action Team? Reach out to b@keweenawlandtrust.org.

Your Thrivent Choice Dollars must be directed by March 31st each year, so don't wait!

Join or renew your KLT membership to keep the Keweenaw protected and accessible.

Already a member?
Thank you!

RENEW NOW!
Scan to renew online

DONATE TO BECOME A MEMBER OR RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP

Your membership is valid for one year from the date your contribution is made.

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CHOOSE YOUR MEMBERSHIP GIVING LEVEL (JOIN OR RENEW)

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Please mail this form and payment to:

Keweenaw Land Trust
49902 Limerick Street
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Donations are tax deductible.

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

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KLT members gathered on Dec 21st for our annual Winter Solstice luminary walk and gathering at Lily Creek Nature Area