PROTECTING ACCESS TO ANCIENT SHORES

Keweenaw LAND TRUST

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

July 2026 News



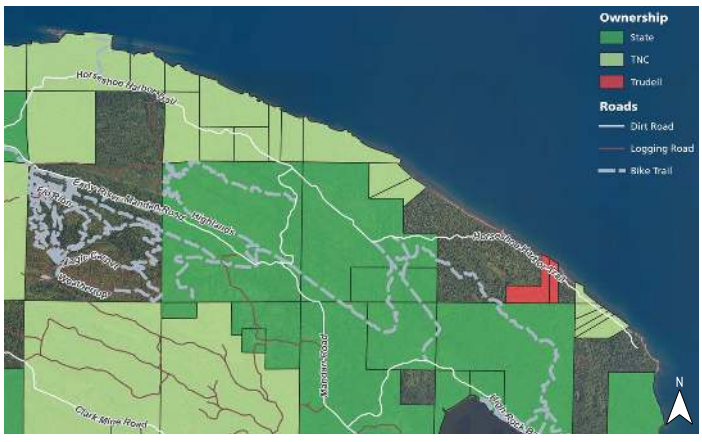
The ancient shoreline property on the Keweenaw's North shore. Photo: KLT

By Pat Toczydlowski

The choices landowners make now can protect access to special places for generations to come.

The Keweenaw Land Trust is excited to announce an opportunity to purchase land for a new coastal nature area on the north shore of the Keweenaw Peninsula. After enjoying this property for generations, the Trudell family has offered 40 acres with 800' of Lake Superior shoreline on a bargain sale, or below fair market value, entrusting KLT to steward it for conservation and public access in perpetuity. Located between Horseshoe Harbor and High Rock Bay, part of the adventure of visiting will be getting there, walking or bicycling on old two tracks or the Keweenaw Point Trail to be rewarded with solitude and layers of time awash on the ancient rocky shoreline. Protection of this coastal property builds on the conservation values of adjoining State 'tip' lands.

Coastal conservation has been among the highest priorities for KLT's land conservation program based in part on community input and regional conservation plans. In its first 30 years, KLT has established eight nature areas on the shores of Keweenaw and Huron Bays, three along the north shore of the Keweenaw, and three island projects that altogether protect about 10 miles of Lake Superior shoreline, most of which offer public access. In this 250th year of our nation, we are reminded of the legacy and foresight of setting



The new coastal property (in red) abuts State-owned public lands.



One-billion year old Copper Harbor Conglomerate at the new coastal property. Photo: KLT

aside the richly varied and intact landscapes of this country for the public good, and of the need to build on these efforts in our time as our landscapes face new and tremendous pressures. Your support over the years has enabled KLT to protect land that strengthens our community and our connections to the natural world. Together, let's make the choice to continue to build on this land legacy in the Keweenaw.

By offering the property on a bargain sale, shared conservation goals for the property are made more readily achievable by KLT. The fundraising goal for this project is $100,000 which includes consideration of initial and ongoing management of and care for this future nature area. Please join the Trudell family, the Upper Peninsula Environmental Coalition, which offered a $10,000 grant to this project, and others who have and will make the choice to support the conservation of these ancient shores for generations to come.



KLT's Land Jam returned in 2026 & thanks to you, we raised $15,600 *(exceeding our goal)*! Land Jam 2026 proceeds support KLT's purchase of this coastal nature area & the long-term care of that and other protected lands.

THIRTY, THRIVING, & BLAZING FORWARD

Although each season in the Keweenaw brings with it a suite of possibilities for engaging with our trails, waterfalls, inland lakes and rivers, berry patches, and beloved Gitche Gumee, summer perhaps brings the *most* opportunities. As the air warms and sun beams down, nature connections can look like everything from noticing a tiny tomato growing in your backyard garden to a full day sending it down difficult trails in Copper Harbor. This is one of the beauties of this place: not only are there outdoor activities to match every pace and interest, but there are publicly accessible spaces to do them. It is the honor of a lifetime to lead a team and organization that plays a small role in protecting this place and these experiences, forever.

In our 30th year as an organization, we are spending long days clearing trails, planning events, and meeting with landowners, but we're also doing a lot of imagining. We're imagining the next 30 years of KLT and what we need to sustain this organization as a resource for our community well into the future. We're imagining new nature areas, like that made possible by the Trudell Family on the Keweenaw's North shore, where our community can connect, play, and appreciate the ancient stories for generations to come. And we're imagining what is possible when we all work together to protect the places, habitats, and experiences we hold most dear. I would like to personally invite you to imagine with us this year. Imagine what is possible. Imagine the future we want to share together. Imagine this level of protection, care, and connection forever.

B Lauer, Executive Director

CARING FOR THE FUTURE OF THE KEWEENAW, TOGETHER

By Tiff DeGroot, Ph.D.

For KLT, stewardship goes far beyond the boundaries of our nature areas.

Yes, it *is* making management plans, clearing trails, and managing invasive species. However, it is *also* an expression of care for our community, both human and non-human, now and into the future. It means thoughtfully planning, long days of hard labor, and working with our partners and volunteers. This special work connects community members to the work needed to care for a place in perpetuity—and feel a *part* of that place.

It is no surprise that our stewardship staff spend much of their time with, quite literally, boots on the ground. What *may* be a surprise is how much time they spend inside laboring over spreadsheets before each spring. That quiet computer time, while far from the wild places we all love, allows them to prioritize the work that must get done in our short field season. This spring, Jill and Elam drafted an ambitious list of projects, while I updated our volunteer system to make it easier than ever for you to join in.



Volunteers pose with the KLT stewardship team after fixing wet trails at the Pilgrim Community Forest. Photo: KLT

Upcoming volunteer days

Aug. 20th 9a–12p | *Boston Woods*
Aug. 20th 5:30–8:30p | *Boston Woods*
Sep. 12th 10a–1p | *Pilgrim Community Forest*

More info: bit.ly/volunteerKLT

JOIN US FOR AN UPCOMING WORKDAY

We are well into field season, and the "Stew Crew" team is back in their element—assessing nature areas after a hard winter, clearing trails, improving habitat, fixing structures, and more. Volunteers are key to this work: This season, volunteers have already helped us manage wet trails and invasive buckthorn at the Pilgrim Community Forest, care for native plant gardens at the Marsin Nature Retreat, and clean up Point Mills Nature Area. Upcoming volunteer days will focus on building a drier trail at Boston Woods and invasive buckthorn management at the Pilgrim Community Forest, Paavola Wetlands Nature Area, and Boston Pond Nature Area—thanks to a generous, anonymous donor.

By participating in the stewardship of a place, you leave not only with a sense of accomplishment, but a deeper connection to the land. You may learn about the land's history as you chat with our team. You may discover, or uncover, a trail that is new to you. You may make new friends who share your love of nature. By doing this work, you're cleaning up a trail for the next visitor, you are planting native species that will flourish and transform the landscape for the next generation, and you're adding your voice to our Stew Crew's motto "better than it was"!

We hope to see you out there!



KLT Trailblazers pose with current and alumni board directors. Photo: KLT

30 YEARS LATER: A GATHERING OF TRAILBLAZERS

By Tiff DeGroot, Ph.D.

In 1996, a group of friends gathered around a kitchen table to try to protect a piece of land they loved.

When they were outbid by a logging company, and the forest was chipped for pulp, they reached a turning point. They could have given up. Instead, they made the choice to *step* up and do something difficult: they learned as they went, reached out to other conservation organizations for guidance, and did the work that would ultimately grow into the Keweenaw Land Trust. Years later, KLT *did* protect that very land, which is now the Churning Rapids Conservation Easement.

As KLT entered its 30th year as an organization, Board President Nancy Langston interviewed several members of the "kitchen table crew" and KLT's earliest supporters to celebrate their contributions to our history—and our future. The interviews culminated in a gathering of trailblazers at the Marsin Nature Retreat, where we shared food, drink, and cheerful reunions. KLT Executive Director, B Lauer, said this the gathering, "Being surrounded by so many folks who were and continue to be pivotal in the formation, growth, and evolution of our organization was simultaneously humbling and inspiring. What a gift to be able to share not only a home, but a passion for conservation, stewardship, and access with such trailblazers."

The stories shared in the interviews and at the gathering shared themes of belonging, access, and being rooted in place. For current KLT staff and board directors, they are a reminder that as much as KLT has grown and changed, the organization has stayed true to those roots. The work of these and other trailblazers continues through KLT's work now and into the future. We are all a part of that story, and look forward to how you help us write the next chapter.

READ THE INTERVIEWS AT:
bit.ly/KLTConversations (case sensitive),
or request a print copy at the KLT Office

PARTNERSHIP IN PRACTICE: BRINGING NATURAL HISTORY TO LIFE

By Tiff DeGroot, Ph.D.

Bill Rose was a longtime friend and supporter of KLT, who was deeply committed to protecting and sharing a love of the Keweenaw's natural beauty.

He was also a founding board member of the Carnegie Museum of the Keweenaw. So, when he organized what became the Carnegie Museum's Keweenaw Natural History seminars—modeled after the Keweenaw National Historical Park's history talks—it was only natural that the Carnegie Museum and KLT would eventually become partners. As a lifelong educator, Bill's vision was to bring the academic talks of Michigan Tech to the broader community, making them more accessible and connecting community members to natural history. Over several years, the seminar series covered topics such as rocks, plants, and animals of the Keweenaw, geoheritage, and more. KLT joined the Carnegie in 2018 for a deep dive into the Father's Day Flood, which was one of the most popular series.

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic brought the seminars to a halt, but Bill revitalized them in 2024 with a series about rocks and minerals and was working on creating the next series on fungi. Sadly, Bill passed away in 2025 before the fungi series launched, but Carnegie Museum Director, Elise Nelson, kept working to make his vision a reality. She connected with me this winter to plan a series exploring the mysterious world of fungi from a variety of angles. We're taking things beyond the slide presentation by including live demonstrations, guided hikes, and more. This spring, we explored the natural history of fungi, fungi in literature, and even cooking with mushrooms! We will continue this fall with a guided mushroom hike and an exploration of fungi in arts and crafts. Our hope with this series is to continue Bill's vision: "developing a deeper interaction with all residents…connecting people to the cultural and natural history of the Keweenaw Peninsula" and inspiring a sense of curiosity about nature. Elise and I hope you will join us for one of our upcoming seminars!



A packed Carnegie Museum Community Room during the Natural History Series Seminar: Mushrooms and Literature. Photo: KLT



Keren Tischler and Curt Webb of Metsä Hill Farm were assisted by Dr. Eric Lilleskov, Elise Nelson of the Carnegie Museum, and Tiff DeGroot during the Natural History Series Seminar: Cooking with Mushrooms, at KLT's Marsin Nature Retreat. Photo: KLT

UPCOMING EVENTS

Third Thursday Volunteer Workday (trail building)
Thursday, August 20th | 9 a.m.–noon & 5:30–8:30 p.m.
Boston Woods Nature Area

Walking Among Elders: Old Growth Guided Hikes
Wednesday, August 26th | 10–5 p.m.
Keweenaw Sandhills & Estivant Pines

Second Saturday Volunteer Workday (buckthorn management)
Saturday, September 12th | 10 a.m.–1 p.m.
Pilgrim Community Forest

Third Thursday Volunteer Workday (buckthorn management)
Thursday, September 17th | 9 a.m.–noon & 5:30–8:30 p.m.
Pilgrim Community Forest

Fungi of the North Woods: Guided Mushroom Walk
Location & date TBD (September)

Fungi of the North Woods: Fungi in Arts & Crafts
Location & date TBD (October)

KLT Annual Meeting
Thursday, November 5th



KLT's Bedrock & Blooms guided hike at Lake Glazon, led by Michigan Natural Features Inventory botanist, Abe Stone. 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

Administrative & Development Coordinator: Margaret Armstrong

Stewardship Associate: Elam Maurer



Tiff, Jill, Pat, B, Margaret, & Elam at the Trailblazers' event. Photo: KLT

KLT Board of Directors

President: Nancy Langston, *Chassell*

Vice President: Lou Vencato, *Hancock*

Treasurer: Stan Vitton, *Hancock*

Secretary: John Arnold, *Hubbell*

Mike Abbott, *Atlantic Mine*

Calvin Koski, *L'Anse*

Kaitlin Lapka, *Hancock*

Mike Miller, *Hancock*

Jamie Robertson, *Allouez*

Ray Weglarz, *Allouez*

Buddy Wylie, *Eagle Harbor*

ADDITIONS TO THE KLTEAM!

PERMANENT STAFF



Margaret Armstrong, Administrative & Development Coordinator

Margaret joined KLT in May, bringing 15 years of experience working with environmental nonprofits. She earned a B.A. in Political Science from Wayne State University and has a strong background in nonprofit administration, project coordination, and community-focused conservation. Margaret brings critical skills to KLT and hit the ground running—already making an impact on our administrative processes!

2026 STEWARDSHIP INTERNS



Connor Ford
Connor is a Masters student in Biological Sciences at MTU, advised by Dr. Casey Huckins.



Isabelle Holmstrom
Isabelle is a senior at MTU studying Applied Ecology and Environmental Science.



Noah Sanders
Noah Sanders is a Senior in Social Science at MTU, advised by Dr. Kari Henquinet.

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

Already a member?
Thank you!

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

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Please mail this form and payment to:

Keweenaw Land Trust
49902 Limerick Street
Hancock, MI 49930

Donations are tax deductible.

KLT respects your privacy and confidentiality. We do not sell your data and respect requests for anonymity. 29-2

Keweenaw LAND TRUST

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INSIDE: KLT HAS AN OPPORTUNITY TO CREATE A NEW COASTAL NATURE AREA HERE, ON THE NORTH SHORE OF THE KEWEENAW.