

Conservancy's largest land investment to date: 56 acres of Lake Michigan shoreline

The Little Traverse Conservancy has made a purchase that protects the largest undeveloped, unprotected Lake Michigan shoreline from Charlevoix to the Mighty Mac. This is a landmark moment for our region and for Little Traverse Conservancy (LTC). This past Friday, December 8, the Conservancy purchased 56 acres with a quarter mile of shoreline on Little Traverse Bay in the small Charlevoix County community of Bay Shore. This is the land trust's biggest financial investment in land to date, and one that was only made possible because of the great vision and dedication of LTC members.

In the fall of 2022, the Conservancy was given the opportunity to visit this wooded sanctuary to see if it was worth protecting. The land had been listed in early summer of 2022 and was still on the market. After a visit, there was no doubt: the land and shoreline felt like an already-made nature preserve with many existing trails that had been loved and used by neighbors for many years. The challenge was how to fund it.

Jennifer Adderley, LTC member and a known lover of the Lake, was invited to admire the unparalleled beauty of the land before it would likely be sold to another buyer. Jennifer spent months thinking about the rocky shoreline and all the sunsets that could be enjoyed there. Jennifer believed in the project and called the Conservancy to pledge the first major gift from the Terence and Jennifer Adderley Foundation, hoping that the rest would come.

Thankfully, the Charles M. and Joan R. Taylor Foundation, Inc. shared Jennifer's belief that this land deserved to be protected. Joining together with the anonymous lead donor, a vision was made to create Enji-minozhiyaamigak, the Anishinaabemowin word for "The Place of Peacefulness." Recognizing that US-31 is a well-traveled route for many who visit northern Michigan, the anonymous lead donor wanted this to be a place for all. They also wanted to honor the history of the land and the Bay Shore Band of Odawa who had lived there. All signs will be in Anishinaabemowin first and English following.

A very important addition to protecting this land is creating LTC's first owned and cared-for universally accessible (UA) trail. This added another layer of challenge and inspiration to the Conservancy's plan. The Place of Peacefulness could not be open to all without a trail that can be used by all – including walkers, strollers, and wheelchairs. Brynne and Bob Coletti of Harbor Springs and Naples, FL believed in this vision and made the first-ever quadruple match challenge in LTC's history to ensure that the

accessibility component was included. Thanks to the added support of the Frey Foundation, Soter Kay Foundation, Teddy and Molly Schiff, Gordon and Sharon Hassing, and 142 donors, the land has now been purchased and LTC can begin work on the UA trail with the goal of a grand opening celebration later next year.