KLT is well underway on the first comprehensive planning effort to create a site management and interpretive plan for the Marsin Nature Area & Retreat! We received funding for the project in late 2014, which began in earnest this spring. Throughout the spring and summer, natural resource professionals from a variety of fields will be visiting Marsin to document the current on-site conditions and recommend strategies for maintaining and improving upon the nature area’s rich biodiversity and coastal wetland habitats. The community has the opportunity to take part in this work and we encourage you to share your input in this important undertaking!

Coastal wetlands are important primary production hotspots supporting populations of insects, fish, amphibians, birds, and mammals, including people. Many of Michigan’s coastal wetlands were degraded or destroyed through human activity and their valuable ecological services lost. The 56-acre Marsin Nature Area lies entirely within the Michigan Coastal Zone, with about 1000’ of shoreline on the Keweenaw Waterway. Creating a site management plan that will help guide site use and landscape planning decisions for this important coastal resource will benefit not only those who visit Marsin, but also the plants and animals that live there.

Students learn about small mammals with Dan Haskel

Participants brainstorm landscape improvements for the Marsin Retreat

Pat, Nathan, and volunteer Russ Mattson busy tearing off a section of the cabin’s old roof

Cleanup work is moving along steadily at the Princess Point Nature Area, with significant headway being made towards opening up this water trail landing for visitors. Thanks to a generous grant from the Portage Health Foundation, KLT is working towards establishing an inviting overnight camp at the site, situated near the Sturgeon River Sloughs on the Keweenaw Waterway. The 4-acre property was donated to KLT in late-2014 and has over 300’ of shoreline, a historic log cabin, and open woods perfect for setting up a few tents to take a rest after a long day’s paddle. However, the site needs some improvements and sprucing up before it is ready for public use!
Citizen Science at the Marsin Nature Area

Jim Bess, lead ecologist for this project, has been spearheading much of the work that has taken place so far, including insect studies, habitat mapping, and youth engagement. His dedication is inspiring! KLT was pleased to have Nancy Aten and Dan Collins, internationally renowned ecological restoration experts from their Wisconsin firm Landscapes of Place, share their wisdom and make informed recommendations for the site during a multi-day visit. Dan and Nancy also led an afternoon planning workshop with several local teachers and other stakeholders to gather diverse perspectives to prepare a detailed report to inform the plan.

A highlight of the planning work is including local youth in these efforts, coordinated in partnership with the Lake Superior Stewardship Initiative (LSSI). Students in grades 4 through 12 from Dollar Bay, Lake Linden, L’Anse, Houghton, and the CLK Lighthouse Learners program all have played a part in learning about site resources and contributing ideas towards the planning process. A number of partners volunteered their time to teach these students about their respective fields, from bird watching to fish seining to small mammal trapping and more. In particular, those who took part in the landscape planning exercises were able to share their vision for Marsin – including determining the best places for native gardens, expanded wetlands, new trails, and how the Retreat may look without invasive species running amok.

To add to the insights gained from the students, KLT members and the public are asked to contribute ideas towards the Marsin management plan. An online survey is set up to gather opinions on how to improve and manage the site in the coming years. We value your creativity, so let us know what you think! The survey is available on the web at www.KeweenawLandTrust.org. Be on the lookout for updates on other activities you can get involved with over the summer. Financial assistance for this project was provided, in part, by the Michigan Coastal Zone Management Program, Office of the Great Lakes, Department of Environmental Quality and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Youth Advisory Council Gets Students Out to Marsin

KLT thanks the Keweenaw Community Foundation’s Youth Advisory Council (YAC) for helping 4 local schools attend our Coastal Zone Management data collection work at the Marsin Nature Retreat! YAC provided funding for bus transportation, a key element that is typically required by area schools to allow students to go on field trips. Students from Dollar Bay, Lake Linden, L’Anse, and Houghton were all able to take part of the day off their traditional class schedule to visit Marsin, some for an hour or two and others for an entire afternoon. The students all had a great time and learned firsthand about insects, mammals, amphibians, and native plants. Who doesn’t like learning in an outdoor classroom?

The Youth Advisory Council’s mission is to strengthen the leadership and charitable commitment of youth in our community by providing opportunities to develop solutions to serious problems. KLT is proud to give students the chance to interact with our natural world as we work to foster the next generation of land stewards.
Aquatic Plant Identification Workshop Offered This August!

Are you a biologist, gardener, student, or just curious about the Keweenaw’s rich ecological resources? If so, be sure to sign up for the Gratiot Lake Conservancy’s Aquatic Plant Identification workshop! This two-day class will build your understanding of aquatic plant types found throughout the Western U.P., allowing you to distinguish native species from their invasive counterparts. **Botanist Janet Marr will lead the class on August 22nd and 23rd from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM each day.**

The workshop will take place both inside the classroom and out in the field at several inland lakes, rivers, and Lake Superior coves in and around the Keweenaw Peninsula. A course fee of $100 will cover tuition, field handbook (*Guide to Aquatic Plants of Gratiot Lake and other Keweenaw County Lakes*), and canoe rental if you do not have your own watercraft. The class will meet at the Eagle Harbor Community Building and travel to various sites throughout the weekend. For more information, visit [www.GratiotLakeConservancy.org](http://www.GratiotLakeConservancy.org).

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**18th Annual Horsetail Scramble – July 4th, Marsin Nature Area!**

The 18th Annual Horsetail Scramble will once again be held at KLT’s Marsin Nature Area & Retreat on July 4th from 10:30 AM to 3:00 PM! This year’s event continues everyone’s favorite tradition – the Keweenaw-famous Horsetail Feast! We will offer guided hikes on the Marsin trails, with something new and intriguing. We’ll be taking you across the recently completed boardwalk that connects the lakeshore campus trails to the rest of the nature area through the lush and diverse Marsin wetlands. This important crossing was a long time in the making and supported by a grant from the Keweenaw Community Foundation’s Youth Advisory Council. We’re excited to show it off to you! Other activities will include lawn games, live music, and a **guided paddle exploration on the Keweenaw Waterway**! If you’d like to paddle over from Churning Rapids to meet us, please contact us for more details.

After querying KLT members and the public with an online survey, it was revealed that we shouldn’t tinker with the Scramble too much, especially the laidback social atmosphere that so many people come out to enjoy. Equal numbers of people said that changing it from July 4th would make it either easier or harder for them to attend, so we decided to stick with tradition for now to keep things simple. The survey showed that with a lack of decent trail options in the immediate area and falling participation, we should not host a running event. However, many people said we should try to incorporate a paddlecraft element to take advantage the Marsin location on the Keweenaw Waterway. Thank you everyone who took the survey to help guide the future of the Horsetail Scramble!

The Scramble is free to attend and open to the public (donations and an RSVP are appreciated though!). **If you plan to participate in the potluck, please bring a dish to share and your own tableware!** We will provide corn on the cob and strawberry shortcake for you to enjoy. Bring a friend or two along to enjoy this wonderful event! The Marsin Nature Area & Retreat is located on Red Brick Road – take Canal Road out of Houghton for 6.4 miles, then turn right. Follow the event signs to the Retreat. A complete schedule of events is as follows:

**July 4, 2015 - 18th Annual Horsetail Scramble!**

- 10:30 AM – Doors open at the Marsin Nature Retreat
- 11:00 AM – Guided paddle departs from Marsin shoreline
- 11:30 AM – Guided 5k walk begins
- 1:00 PM – Horsetail Potluck Feast

...or the most prodigious potluck in the Keweenaw!
Join the KLT as a new or renewing member!

Name_____________________________________ Phone # ____________________

Address______________________________________ Circle: Summer - Winter - Permanent

City_________________________________________ State________ Zip code____________________

Email Address________________________________

Current Members: Please Renew or Give a Gift Membership!

☐ $35 - New or Gift  ☐ $50 - Supporter  ☐ $100 - Guardian  ☐ $250 - Steward  ☐ Other: $____

YES! I Want to help the KLT achieve the Land Slam Conservation Campaign! $__________

THANK YOU! Donations to KLT are tax deductible. Please mail this donation form to:
Keweenaw Land Trust, 801 N. Lincoln Dr. Suite 306, Hancock MI 49930
KLT respects your privacy and confidentiality. We do not sell our lists and we honor requests for anonymity.

Lighthouse Cruises to Manitou Island & Gull Rock
July 11th, 18th, and 25th - Book Now Before They Sell Out!

This summer, the Isle Royale Queen IV will take passengers on a scenic and informative cruise past the tip of the peninsula to see the Keweenaw’s most secluded lighthouses: the KLT’s Manitou Island Light Station and the isolated Gull Rock Lighthouse. Captain Ben Kilpela from the Isle Royale Line will run three cruises, to be held on July 11th, 18th, and 25th at 7:30 PM. Representatives from KLT and the Gull Rock Lightkeepers will be on board to talk about the history of these lights and what is being done to preserve them for future lighthouse aficionados.

Tickets are on sale now, so contact the Isle Royale Line at (906) 289-4437 or visit www.isleroyale.com to book today. Cruise proceeds will help rehabilitate these remote lighthouses, from rebuilding the dock at Manitou to repairing the interior of the Gull Rock lighthouse. If you participate in the U.S. Lighthouse Society’s passport program, KLT now has a Manitou Island stamp to add to your collection. We can stamp your passport at our Hancock office if you cannot attend the lighthouse cruises. Don’t miss out on these exciting trips!

Picnic Potluck Fundraiser for the Bete Grise Preserve

The Stewards of Bete Grise Preserve are hosting a picnic fundraiser on Sunday, August 23rd, starting at 3:00 PM. The potluck will be held at 5:00 PM. KLT Board Member Erika Vye and fellow musician Gail English will play music into the evening beginning at 6:00 PM. Feel free to join the fun and check out all this amazing place has to offer! There is no charge for the event but donations are appreciated. The event will be held at Point Isabelle Park along Gay-Lac La Belle Road, south of the Bete Grise South parking area.

Point Isabelle Park, Photo Courtesy of Gina Nicholas
A Ferny Encounter at the Pilgrim Community Forest

By Nathan Miller

Like Pat and Evan before me, you’ll often find me working above and beyond my regular hours in the name of land conservation. There’s something about protecting cool natural places we all get to visit that just keeps me coming back for more, and with a seemingly never-ending list of lands worthy of protection and stewardship, our plates are always full. It’s often hard to totally separate work from my home life, especially when the two are so similar.

Last year while visiting KLT’s Rabbit Island conservation easement, I learned that you could eat certain fiddlehead ferns before they unfurl! I made a mental note to remember to collect as many as I could in 2015 during the short window they’re available. The best kind of fiddle fern to collect are ostrich ferns – they have totally bare stalks, a deep u-shaped groove down its length, no fuzz or hairs, and a light papery coating that flakes off easily from the coiled leaves. Break them off with a couple inches of stem and you’re all set! It’s too late to gather them this year, so be sure to save this article for next spring.

On a day off from KLT work this spring, I decided to head out to the Pilgrim Community Forest to scout around for fiddle ferns. Almost immediately after arriving, I hit pay dirt and busily began filling the bags I’d brought with me on my bike. You don’t want to take all the fern heads in a bunch, otherwise the plant won’t regenerate. Be sure to collect sustainably so there will be some year after year! While crouching around in the middle of the forest far from any trails, I noticed a couple of young women hunting similarly through the woods. “What are you guys looking for?” I asked. “Fiddle ferns!” they replied excitedly. “Hey, me too!” We met up to compare our respective hauls. It turns out they didn’t know exactly what type to gather and had taken a bunch of different species to identify at home, hoping one of them would be correct. I shared with them my knowledge right then and there to save them some effort and give them the best chance of reaping nature’s bounty. Talk about a funny encounter!

Being able to not only protect land for our community to visit, but also to take advantage of the resource and share my knowledge with others who have similar passions is one of my favorite parts about working for KLT. It’s hard to quantify exactly how many people are using KLT’s nature areas, especially when so often we’re out quietly enjoying nature off-trail away from others. Having the opportunity to bump into fellow explorers enjoying these protected places always makes me feel like we’re on the right track and making a difference in our community!

Work continues at the Princess Point Nature Area

To date, we have taken down several outbuildings and are currently working to remove a section of the old cabin. Using some of the salvaged materials from the cabin, we will construct a new outhouse atop a concrete vault to be installed later in the summer. A parking area will also be created for better access to the site. While the work has been dirty and strenuous at times, the results are already beginning to show. We look forward to completing the bulk of the work this field season to make the site more attractive, manageable, and ready for people to visit!

If you’d like to help with this project, we are especially in need of carpenters but there is work for others as well. We’ll keep your part manageable and productive. Contact Nathan with your volunteer availability at nathan@keweenawlandtrust.org for more info!
Community Foundation of the U.P. Supports the Land Slam Campaign

KLT is excited to announce that the Community Foundation of the Upper Peninsula’s Sustainable Forest & Wildlife Committee has awarded $1,000 to help with the Land Slam fundraising campaign! The funds will support purchasing land on the Abbaye Peninsula and Huron Bay, establishing the Princess Point Nature Area, and expanding the Paavola Wetlands Nature Area. Thanks, Foundation friends! The Community Foundation of the U.P. previously supported the Hungarian Falls Nature Area fundraiser back in 2013. It’s great to have them return with additional funding as we work to protect more Western U.P. lands for low-impact recreation. KLT is now working through the appraisal process for the parcels to be purchased on the Abbaye Peninsula and Huron Bay. If everything goes according to plan, KLT will acquire at least one significant piece this year! There is still a major fundraising need and we encourage donations towards this important project.