



**For Immediate Release**

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## Michigan Land Conservancies Collectively Protect 548,318 Acres of Land

GRAND LEDGE, MI. Heart of the Lakes Center for Land Conservation Policy (Heart of the Lakes) announced today the results of the 2010 Annual Acres Protected Survey. The survey found that Heart of the Lakes member land conservancies collectively protected 548,318 acres of Michigan land as of December 31, 2010, an increase of nearly 40,000 acres from their collective total of 509,125 as of December 31, 2009.

Heart of the Lakes is a statewide coalition of individuals and organizations dedicated to private land conservation, including 28 member land conservancies.

Land conservancies are community-based nonprofit organizations that partner with willing private landowners, local communities, and partner organizations to permanently protect and serve as stewards of important conservation lands in Michigan. Every county in the state benefits from the presence of at least one land conservancy dedicated to protecting lands that provide public benefits such as protecting water quality and wildlife, keeping working farms and forests in production, or supporting community goals for scenic lands and outdoor recreational opportunities. Land conservancies use non-regulatory tools such as voluntary legal agreements with landowners called conservation easements and purchase of nature preserves or sanctuaries for use and enjoyment by the public. [Click here](#) for details on the amount of land protected by the different tools conservancies use.

Heart of the Lakes Executive Director, Rachel Kuntzsch said, “The protection of Michigan land and natural resources is not only beneficial for Michigan’s environment, it is absolutely critical for our economy. Combined, Michigan’s land-based industries (agriculture, tourism and forestry) contribute more revenue to Michigan’s economy than any other industry. The protection of the land on which these industries depend is crucial for the future success of Michigan’s economy. Protecting well over one half million acres of Michigan land is a tremendous success for Michigan residents and businesses alike.”

Conserving Michigan’s diverse land base benefits Michigan residents and businesses. Michigan’s working lands provide food, fiber, wood sources, and jobs for citizens. The state’s 38,000 miles of rivers and streams are the world-renown. Protected wetland systems that flow into these waterways help filter out sediment and pollutants, purifying our fresh water resources. Michigan parks, beaches, and open space that provide outstanding recreational opportunities, connect us to the natural world, and influence where people choose to live, work, and play.

Heart of the Lakes member land conservancies are proud to play an important role in supporting Michigan’s economy and quality of life. To see a complete list of Heart of the Lakes members and their service areas, visit [www.heartofthelakes.org/find\\_your\\_conservancy](http://www.heartofthelakes.org/find_your_conservancy)

### ABOUT HEART OF THE LAKES CENTER FOR LAND CONSERVATION POLICY

Heart of the Lakes Center for Land Conservation Policy strengthens the collective efforts of individuals and organizations dedicated to the conservation of our environmentally and economically significant lands. Heart of the Lakes provides leadership, innovative ideas, and advocates for sound public policy for the benefit of communities and for generations to come.

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