

Webster Township Farmland & Open Space Preservation Board



Jason Wylie Property

The Webster Township Farmland and Open Space Preservation Board wishes to once again provide you with an update on our progress. We last sent you an update in 2015 and thought you'd like to see how we have progressed. The funds utilized in our program are a direct result of our "Protect Webster" ballot campaigns that led to the passage of three millages to fund our township's land preservation program. Township residents have consistently said they want our community to remain rural, encourage farming and preserve natural features. This program accomplishes these goals and would not be possible without the dedicated funds for our land preservation program. **We thank you for your support.**

John Westman, Board Chair



Agnes Sullivan Property



Walsh Rd. between the Charles and Loren Estleman properties

How it works

When a landowner places a conservation easement on their property, it restricts his or her ability to develop the land **by permanently preserving it for agriculture and protecting its natural features (woods, wetlands, ponds, streams and wildlife habitats).**

Landowners voluntarily apply to the township program. The applications are scored and ranked, and funding partnerships are sought. If a property is selected, an appraisal to determine the value of the "development rights," a boundary survey and an environmental assessment for hazardous materials are commissioned.

The property remains in private ownership so property **taxes are still paid.** All of this work is coordinated by our consultant and the Webster Township Farmland Board. With taxpayer's millage support, we have been able to protect the agricultural and natural features of our beautiful community *forever.*

Budget Highlights

- \$2M of township funds expended with \$10.5M leveraged (>5:1)
- 31% of protected areas in natural features
- 69% of protected acres in farmland
- 12% non-acquisition cost (only 5% for staff)
- 88% for easement purchases
- 4,132 total acres protected in Webster Township:
(includes county and regional parks and UM properties)



Our Partners

We leverage our township funds by working with the **Ann Arbor Greenbelt Program**, the **Washtenaw County Natural Area Preservation Program**, the federal **Agricultural Conservation Easement Program** and landowners who have discounted the sale price of easements by over \$1.6 million. By working collaboratively, we have been able to maintain an extraordinary leverage ratio of over 5:1.

Charles Estleman Conservation Easement

Charles' father purchased this property on Walsh Rd. in 1942. The family farmed it until the early 1960s when they began planting the upland areas with conifers. The property today is a mosaic of wildlife habitats. **77 acres**



Charles Estleman Property

Pat & Betty Farrell Conservation Easement

Pat Farrell's mother's family owned this property for over 100 years; the property fronts on the road named after them (Walsh). Pat milked cows on the adjacent property as a child; when the milking operation moved to his other Webster Township farm, heifers were pastured on this property. The property is now used to raise hay and for hunting. The Farrells are very pleased to see the property protected so that no residential development will ever occur. **60 acres**



Farrell Property

Robert Mast Conservation Easement

Robert Mast bought this property from the Clark family in 1959. Bob raised sheep on the property until 1971, then switched to a dairy operation until 1988, raised steers for ten years and cash crops until 2000 when he retired. The land is now rented to a local farmer for cash crops.

Bob remembers Mast Rd. (formerly Dexter North Rd.), as a one-horse trail, when cuts were made in the hills to widen the road and when it was first paved.

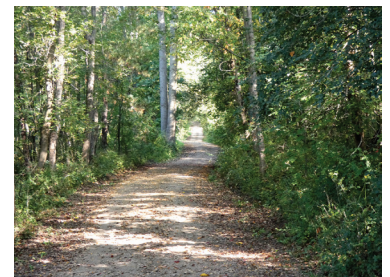
Today, Bob Mast has protected **187 acres**.



Mast Farm

Loren & Deborah Estleman Conservation Easement

The Estleman property was first acquired by J. B. Arms early in the nineteenth century under federal grant. Arms Creek was named for him and the land is said to include the longest section of that body of water on private land in our county. Loren



Loren Estleman Property

D. Estleman bought the property in 1985 from longtime owners Alfred, Marian and Audella Lemen. House construction was completed in 1988, and Loren and his wife Deborah have lived there since 1993. **103 acres**

Hall Trust Conservation Easement

Jim Hall purchased this property in 1988 and 1989. He enjoyed planting several thousand trees as well as hunting and experiencing nature. Jim came to love the land and liked that the conservation easement is in perpetuity and will have a positive impact. **100 acres**

Jim recently sold the property to a "conservation buyer."

If you are interested in pursuing a conservation easement on your property, please contact Barry Lonik, the Township's program consultant, who will be happy to sit down with you. (734.223.2321)

Farmland Board meetings are held the second Monday of the month at the township hall, 5665 Webster Church Road, at 6:30 p.m. The public is welcome but note that discussions about pending projects are done in closed session to protect the privacy of applicants.

Thanks for your continuing support!