

# Summer 2020

In the two and a half years since our last update, four more conservation easement purchases have been completed totaling over 334 acres! Funds utilized in our program come from the "Protect Webster" ballot campaigns that led to our citizens voting to fund our land preservation program three times by substantial margins. Township residents have consistently said they want our community to remain rural, encourage farming, and protect natural features.

Our program accomplishes these goals and would not be possible without the dedicated funds you have approved. Thank you for that support. You will be pleased to see what has been accomplished. Webster Township is unique, as one of a few in Michigan that has achieved this level of success in land preservation.

Webster Township Farmland and Open Space Preservation Board  
John Westman, Farmland Board Chair and Township Trustee  
Tom Bloomer  
Julie Frost  
Linda Hosford  
Jerry Nordblom



## WEBSTER TOWNSHIP Farmland & Open Space Preservation Board

### How It Works

*Conservation easements* restrict the uses landowners can pursue on their property. Easements primarily limit or prohibit the ability to develop the land for residential use by permanently preserving it for agriculture and protecting natural features: woods, wetlands, ponds, streams. Other rights—such as hunting, managing a woodlot, and prohibiting public access—are retained.

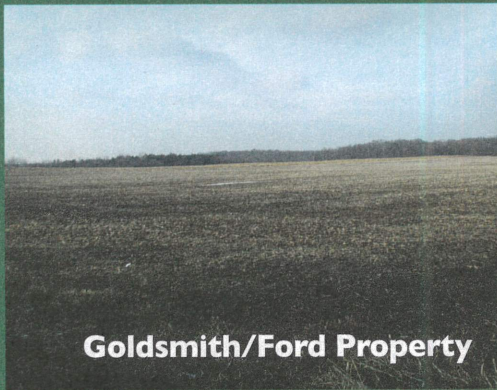
Landowners voluntarily apply to the township program. The application is available on the township website and can be mailed or dropped off at the township hall. Applications are scored and ranked, and funding partnerships are sought for the most desirable properties. An independent real estate appraisal determines the value of the rights to be conveyed. A boundary survey and an environmental assessment for hazardous materials are commissioned, all at township expense. The township farmland board, working in cooperation with our land preservation consultant, makes recommendations to the board of trustees on expending dedicated public funds to purchase the development rights from the landowner.

After the easement is signed and recorded, the property remains in private ownership so property taxes are still paid. With taxpayer support, we have been able to protect the agricultural and natural features of Webster Township forever.

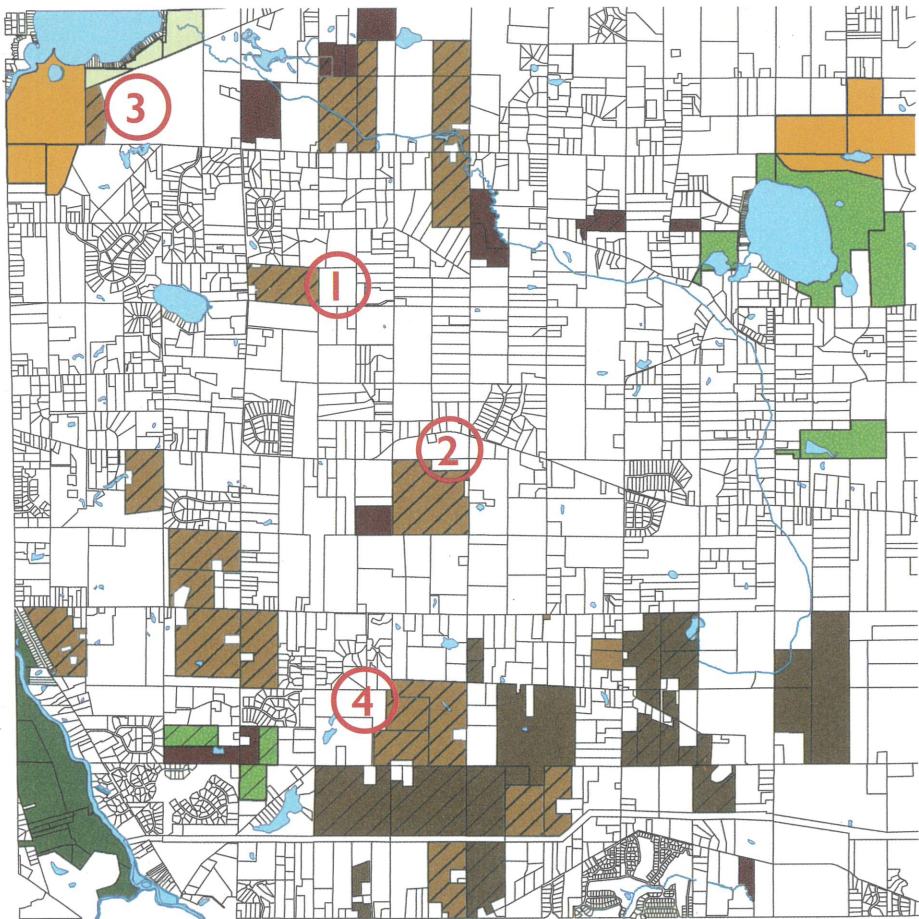
- Ann Arbor Greenbelt
- Huron Clinton Metro Authority
- Legacy Land Conservancy
- Private Open Lands- Base Lake
- Private Open Lands-UM
- Washtenaw County Parks
- Funded Webster Millage Proceeds



Heldt Property



Goldsmith/Ford Property



Webster Township Protected Lands Map

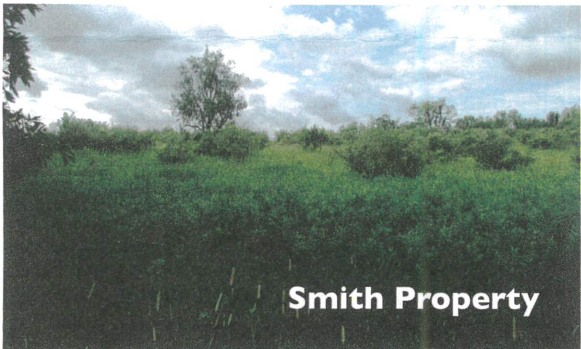


## Budget Highlights

- Total millage revenue:  
**\$2,666,478**  
**\$190,000/year for 14 years**
- Leveraged funds:  
**\$11,800,000 (5:1)**
- Percent of protected land in natural features: **33%**
- Acres protected through April 2020: **2,136**
- Non-acquisition costs: 12.6%  
7% for staff, remainder for due diligence
- Percent of millage used for conservation easement purchases: **87.4%**



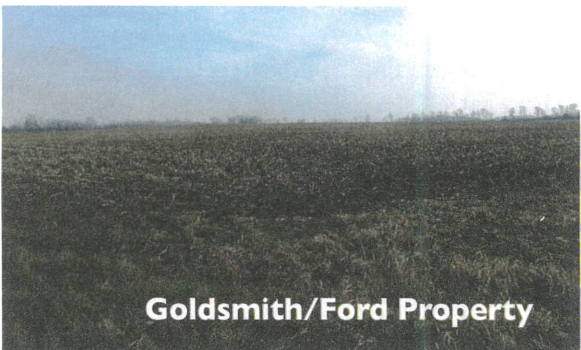
**Heldt Property**



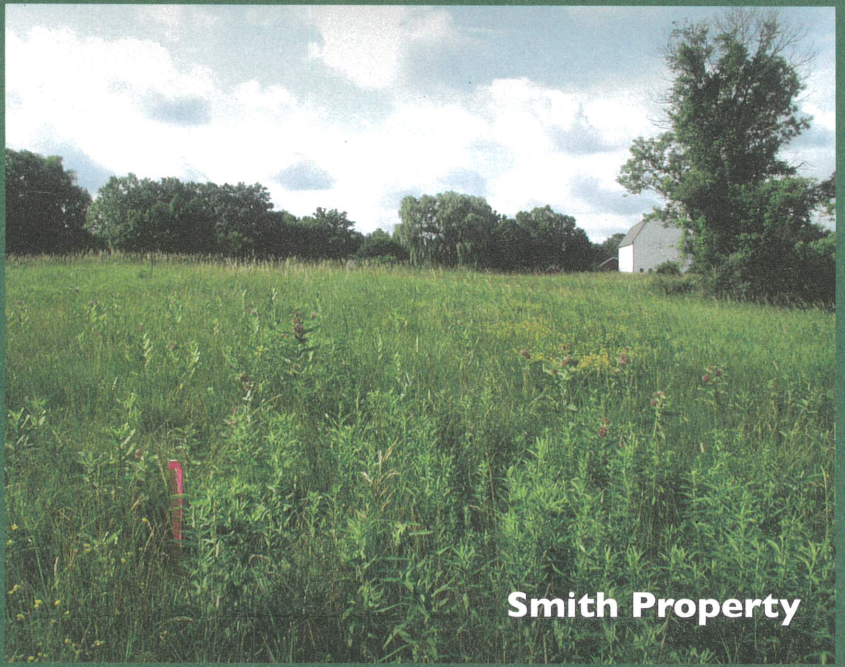
**Smith Property**



**Base Lake Farm LLC**



**Goldsmith/Ford Property**



**Smith Property**

## Recent Easement Purchases

The success of Webster Township's land preservation program would not be possible without the support of our funding partners. We have had outstanding contributions from the City of Ann Arbor Greenbelt Program, the Washtenaw County Natural Area Preservation Program, and the federal Agricultural Conservation Easement Program. In addition, landowners have discounted the easement sale price by over \$2 million. Combined, these sources have provided an extraordinary five dollars for every dollar from Webster's dedicated land preservation fund.

1. **Brian and Pamela Heldt—68 acres of mature woods, farm fields, and streams.** The Heldts bought their property on the east side of Mast Road in 2011. They have enjoyed helping bring the land back to being a productive farm with a goal of being largely self-sustaining and sharing the property with their extended family.
2. **Paul and Carol Smith—146 acres of mature woods, idle fields, wetlands, and streams.** The Smiths purchased their property on the west side of Zeeb Rd. in 1983. Now in retirement, they concentrate on maintaining the beauty of the farm buildings and grounds and have a large vegetable garden.
3. **Base Lake Farm LLC—30 acres of mature woods adjacent to the University of Michigan Sail Club.** Bill Brinkerhoff and Kathy Sample purchased their 258 acre farm, which once supplied beef for noted Detroit restaurant Carl's Chop House, on the south side of Strawberry Lake Road in 2015. They have been restoring houses and farm buildings and currently rent the property to an organic vegetable producer and a cattle farmer.
4. **Susan Goldsmith and Spencer Ford—90 acres of farm fields, a stream, and some woods bordered by protected land on three sides in a block of almost 1,000 contiguous acres.** Susan and Spence bought their property on the north side of Daly Road in 1989 and 1991. They farmed the land for a number of years and now lease it to local growers.

If you are interested in considering a conservation easement on your property, contact Barry Lonik, Webster's program consultant—(734) 223-2321, [BLonik13@aol.com](mailto:BLonik13@aol.com). Barry has nearly 30 years of experience and will be happy to speak with you.

Farmland Board meetings are held on the second Monday of the month at 6:30pm at the township hall 5665 Webster Church Road. The public is welcome to attend, except for closed sessions to discuss pending projects to protect the privacy of applicants.

Thanks for your continuing support!

*All land pictured is private property and not open to the public.*