



# **CHIKAMING OPEN LANDS**

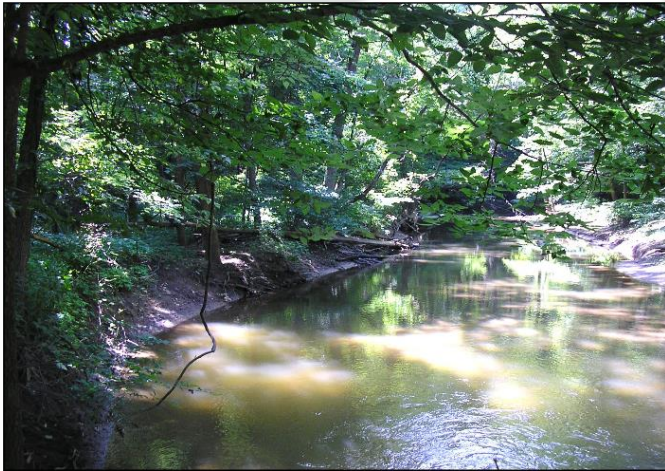
**“PROTECTING THE LAND, PRESERVING OUR HERITAGE”**

**Ryan J. Postema**  
**Executive Director**

# Our Purpose

**Chikaming Open Lands is the local land conservancy dedicated to preserving the open spaces and natural rural character of southwest Berrien County.**

We protect and restore native plant and animal habitat in the area, improve water quality in our rivers, streams and in Lake Michigan, and permanently preserve ecologically significant forests, prairies and wetlands, as well as prime farmland and other open spaces in our community.



# Who Are We?

- 501(c)(3) nonprofit land conservancy.
- Founded in 1999 by community members concerned about increasing development in the area.
- 4 professional staff, 11 volunteer Board members and more than 500 household members.
- Protect 1,681 acres: 12 nature preserves and 30 conservation easements.






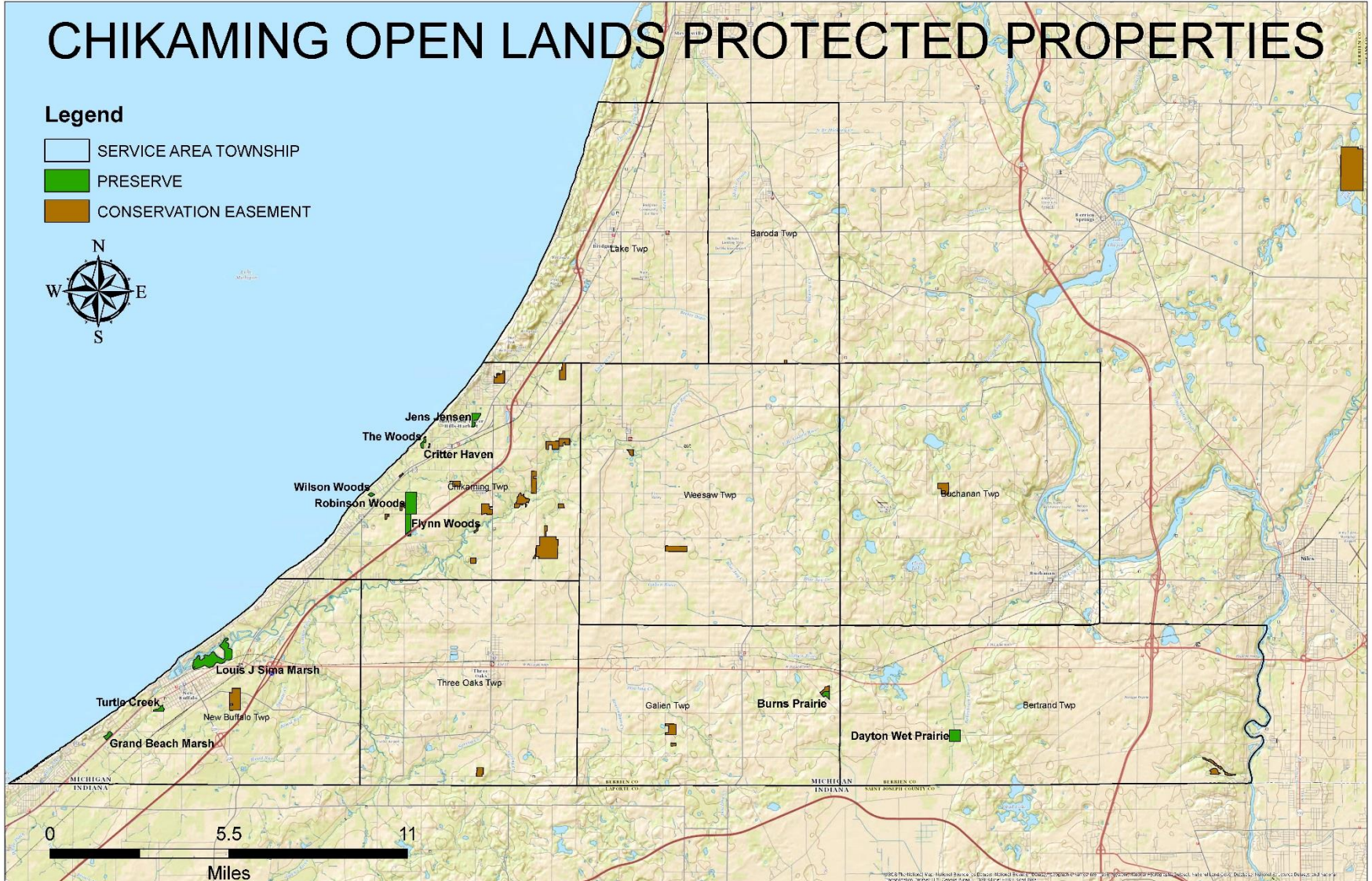
**Founders of Chikaming Open Lands**

# Where Do We Work?

## CHIKAMING OPEN LANDS PROTECTED PROPERTIES

### Legend

-  SERVICE AREA TOWNSHIP
-  PRESERVE
-  CONSERVATION EASEMENT



# What Do We Do?

Land Protection

Land Stewardship

Education & Outreach

Aerial view of Sima Marsh  
Preserve New Buffalo, MI  
~150 acres of Lake Michigan  
Coastal Marsh



# Nature Preserves

- Chikaming Open Lands owns and manages for conservation purposes (habitat, water quality, recreation, etc).
- Permit public access and use for passive recreation, educational activities, and scientific research.
- Land may be donated or purchased.



Wildlife “habitat”  
at Robinson  
Woods Preserve.

# Conservation Easements

- Recorded agreement with landowner, runs with the deed.
- Remains private property.
- Limits development rights, subdivision, other restrictions determined by land owner and Chikaming Open Lands.
- Conservation easements may be acquired through donation or purchase.



# Protection Options for Wetlands

- Nature Preserve.
- Transfer of ownership & management – public access.
- Owner donates or sells to land conservancy, local municipality, or other conservation organization.
- May need to meet specific criteria for protection.

Prairie fen at  
Dayton Wet  
Prairie Preserve





# Protection Options for Wetlands

- Conservation Easement - permanent.
- Owner retains property title & management – public access not required.
- Restrictions on development and use.
- Owner donates or sells to land conservancy, local municipality, or other conservation organization.
- May need to meet specific criteria for protection.

Mize  
Conservation  
Easement



# Protection Options for Wetlands

- Wetland Reserve Easement (ACEP).
- USDA-NRCS program for restoration & protection of “farmed” or converted wetlands.
- NRCS purchases easement and pays restoration costs.
- Must qualify to apply.
- Owner retains property title & management – public access not required.
- Restrictions on use.

# Thank You!

- For more details, contact:

Ryan Postema, Executive Director

[rpostema@chikamingopenlands.org](mailto:rpostema@chikamingopenlands.org)

(269) 405-1006

Chikaming Open Lands

12291 Red Arrow Hwy

Sawyer, MI 49125