

# ANNUAL REPORT 2020

**WWTLC**

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# PRESIDENT'S LETTER TO THE COMMUNITY

Dear Lovers of the Land,

2020 sure was a strange year, on so many levels. We have ridden the ever-changing waves of the COVID-19 pandemic, with many of us facing challenges in all facets of our lives: economic, job changes and job loss, social distancing, virtual education and new childcare or eldercare arrangements, physical and emotional health, and having to cope with loved ones contracting the virus and enduring treatment in isolation.



We ushered out the 45th President and welcomed the 46th. On one hand, many have exhaled a sigh of relief with this transition. On the other hand, the division and systemic racism in our country has also been exposed like never before. It's complicated, because in a time where we need to be having deep and tough conversations in order to heal, we are mostly relegated to social media, which has its limitations in terms of being able to really hear and see each other on a deep level.

In fact, one of the most noticeable impacts of the pandemic on our close-knit community has been on our ability to stay connected. In the early stages of the pandemic, WWTLC made the heartbreaking decision to postpone 2020 events to 2021. While intellectually we know it was the right decision, our hearts were still unbelievably sad that we were not able to gather in person in 2020. For almost an entire year, our ability to travel, gather, and socialize face to face has been severely hampered. With the situation with the virus still shapeshifting, as vaccine availability ramps up and we adjust to new emerging strains of the virus, we are still experiencing these ongoing restrictions in our communities.

Yet, just like those beautiful ferns poking their way up through the earth on The Land, we have persevered, and we are still here. Thank you for being a part of this community and for weathering the storms with us. And a very special thank you to all of the volunteers who gave so generously of their time and talent to keep things moving right along. Together we can accomplish anything!

As we plan, and adjust, and plan some more for welcoming us all back home to The Land in the summer of 2021, I am feeling hope and a sense of renewal more strongly than I've felt for just under a year (really, since 2016). And I feel an overwhelming sense of gratitude for all we've done together, as an all-volunteer board of committed and passionate and dedicated women, and as a community. And I look forward to continuing this work in 2021 and beyond. I hope that this annual report gives you a sense for what we've been able to accomplish together as a community - and fills you with hope for the future of The Land.

We are doing it! We are stewarding The Land we call home so that it is available for women and girls - FOREVER. I hope to see you all walking amongst the ferns together SOON.

Onward we go, with a heart full of gratitude, love, and respect,

**Annemarie Serra**  
**WWTLC President**  
**February 2021**



# 2020 BOARD OF DIRECTORS



**PRESIDENT**  
Annemarie Serra



**VICE PRESIDENT**  
Nedra Johnson



**TREASURER**  
Brenda Millhouse-Huebner



**SECRETARY &  
FUNDRAISING CHAIR**  
Cheryl VanDeKerkhove



**LAND STEWARDSHIP CHAIR**  
Anne Drake



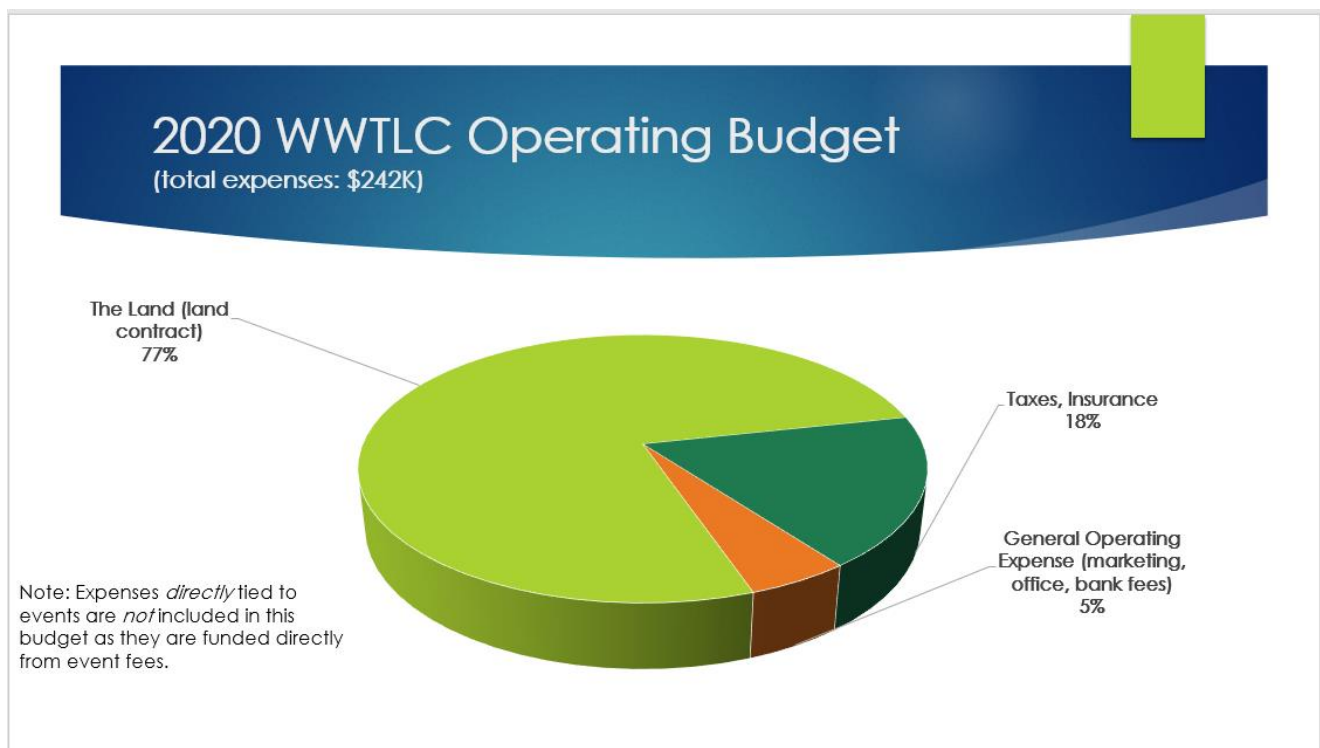
**LAND HOST CHAIR**  
Rosie Kae

# FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Brenda Millhouse-Huebner, Treasurer

## Income vs Expenses

- Total raised in 2020 was almost \$290,000!!!
- Annual expenses include: land payment (\$186,000), property taxes, insurance, legal fees, accounting fees, etc. (\$56,000).
- After paying those expenses, that left WWTLC with approximately \$50,000 that was put back to go toward the land payment in 2021.



## Status of Land Purchase

- The purchase price of The Land was \$1.5 million.
- Under the terms of the land contract, we agreed to a down payment of \$300,000 and eight annual payments of roughly \$186,000 each.
- We made our 3<sup>rd</sup> payment in 2020, and we have paid off almost \$700,000 in principal.
- That means we have paid 46.4% of the contracted payment.
- We still owe just over \$800,000, in principal.



# FUNDRAISING SUMMARY

Cheryl VanDeKerkhove, Fundraising Chair

THANK YOU to our community of supporters who made it possible, once again, and even in the midst of a global pandemic, for WWTLC to cover all expenses in 2020, including making our third payment on The Land!!

In our efforts to raise money for The Land, we adhere to the following core values:

- Creating, building and strengthening community
- Having shared significance, and
- Giving hope

## Community

We are all in this together. 2020 drove that home for Area 51 in new ways, but our experiences of The Land have given THIS community of women a deep understanding of not only our strengths and self-sufficiency, but of our interdependence, and of what it means to support one another. We also know that where we choose to spend our energy, time and resources matters.



## Shared Significance

The “shared significance” is maybe obvious, as all efforts to raise support for WWTLC help all of us secure the legacy of The Land, and all it has represented for us, for women, for girls, forever. We all know what our experience of The Land has meant to us, and to the womyn who have shared it. We have been strengthened immeasurably and our souls have grown from the impact it has had on our lives. We all want to be a part of the broad-based community effort to ensure that women and girls continue to have access to the self-affirming, loving, informed and educational, challenging, fun, moving, meaningful, celebratory, cultural and nourishing experiences that we have been blessed to have shared on The Land.

## Hope

We are powerful. Together, we WILL achieve the goal of securing The Land for women, for girls, forever. We balance hope for the future with honoring and celebrating the legacy of our foremothers and learning from our past. We believe that this community of women can together make miracles happen. We have the vision and the dedication, and the faith that each of us will do our part to make this happen for all of us, and for girls of the future. We believe in the importance of passing on what we’ve learned and making it possible for others to have these experiences.





# FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGNS



## Be the We

We are in this together. In 2020, WWTLC launched “Be The We,” a new campaign that created community groups who collaborated together to raise funds in fun and creative ways. The brainchild of WWTLC founder Leslie Gallagher and her wife, Allison Porch, was designed to get us together. There were 11 teams this year, as well as 8 individuals who participated, with potlucks and raffles, auctions and superbowl squares. After we had to cancel the 2020 events, many donated the cost of their tickets back to a Be the We team. In all, Be the We teams and individuals raised almost \$70,000!!!



## Name a Tree

A prime example of grit, creativity and taking things into your own hands, Po Wood envisioned this campaign and birthed it. Name a Tree is about significance, sharing our stories, and honoring the sheroes of our community, all while helping to grow and sustain it. Donors are creating lasting monuments and sharing the legacy of The Land on [Google Earth](https://www.google.com/earth/) for all to see. As of February 2021, there are 91 trees that have been named, and over \$40,000 raised for WWTLC.



## Landmothers

Over a year in the making, Landmothers was the dream of Cheryl VanDeKerkhove, to create not only a sustainable stream of income to support WWTLC, but also to honor and further engage the pioneers and powerful women who are doing the heavy lifting to ensure we succeed. Landmothers is a community of the steady, reliable supporters who prove to the world the resilience, dedication, complexity and fearlessness of womyn, forged in a society that most often wants to tear us down, but uniting in strength and sisterhood on The Land, and fiercely determined to hold that legacy for the women to come. We hope to expand the Landmothers to include even more of our community in the engine that will steadily drive us through the first goal of securing The Land, and then on to growing opportunities for our community to gather and expand into and touch the generations to come. Landmothers will contribute an additional \$80,000 this year, and will stay with us to do the same in the years to come!



## Other Fundraisers

We also want to note some of the other efforts such as the grant writing and swag teams... and the “Michigan Night Sky” quilt for 2020, created by the Quilting for the Land volunteers, led by Katherine Block. She brought the quilt to The Land in 2019 for sisters to view and add a stitch. In early summer, the quilt was awarded to a donor via a live drawing.

# EVENTS ON THE LAND

(Unfilled Role), Event Organizer Support Chair

In the spring of 2020, after extensive discussion and soul-searching, the WWTLCL Board voted to make the difficult decision to postpone summer events until 2021 due to the then-emerging COVID-19 pandemic.

The previously scheduled six weeks of community-organized events that were set for Summer 2020 have all been rescheduled for Summer 2021.

Schedule for Summer 2020 (now rescheduled to Summer 2021):



## 2021 Summer Events On The Land

- July 6 - 11** Serenity and Sobriety On The Land:  
A Week of Recovery In The Woods
- July 13 - 18** Welcome Home Week 2021
- July 20 - 25** Big Mouth Girl - Gathering On The Land
- July 26 - 30** WPI Festival on The Land / BMG+
- August 3 - 8** Singing and Playing On The Land, 2021
- August 10 - 15** Mystical Womxn's Magic Fest





# LAND COMMITTEE

Anne Drake, Chair

Biweekly Land Committee meetings were and are Wednesdays at 8pm EST.



## Volunteer Work Weekends

- WWTLC held 3 volunteer work weekends where we removed downed trees, brush, hazardous trees and dangerous limbs.
- Most of our work during the volunteer work weekends centered around fallen trees that were blocking roads and paths through The Land. The hardworking crews cut the larger trunks and branches into smaller, more manageable chunks, and then moved them safely away from the road or path, leaving The Land looking more cared for and welcoming.
- Approximately 20 volunteers were able to come to The Land to help out, some even were able to camp on The Land during early Fall 2020 work weekends.
- Our spring work weekends will be scheduled in early 2021, determined mostly by mother nature and the spring thaw.
- If you are interested in joining in on any of the planning for actual work on The Land - consider joining our Zoom Land Meetings. For more information about the Land Committee or to be added to the list for spring work weekends, e-mail board member Anne Drake at [adrake.wwtlc@gmail.com](mailto:adrake.wwtlc@gmail.com).

"It was great to have so many women show up to The Land to work together on various tasks that needed to be done to keep The Land safe and cared for and ready to welcome visitors. Women came with no expectations other than to pitch in wherever they were needed, and the teamwork and communications felt so positive and good. I also felt really good about our efforts to stay safe and healthy while we worked. I'm very much looking forward to coming back to help with any work weekends that happen in the spring."

-- Po Wood, Fall Work Weekend Volunteer

## Campground

- The annual campground inspection was not performed by the health department due to COVID-19. That fee will be carried over to 2021.

## Western Michigan Land Conservancy

- Our annual walk through with our Conservancy representative took place in September. We were able to schedule a follow up presentation for the Board of Directors and Land Managers to discuss the future and land management plans for The Land.
- See the presentation here: [LAND CONSERVANCY PRESENTATION](#)

# LAND HOSTS & DAY VISITS

Rosie Kae, Chair

## Day Visits

The Land is available for Day Visits year-round.

From April 1-October 31 there is an ADA accessible portable toilet that is serviced weekly available at Triangle, making The Land all the more inviting!



## Land Host Program

- When there are no events on The Land, there are opportunities to be a Land Host.
- The typical “season” for Land Hosting is between April 1<sup>st</sup> and October 31<sup>st</sup>.
- Land Hosts sign up for as little as a long weekend or as much as two weeks at a time.
- This is very primitive camping as there is no water or electricity available. Land Hosts pack-in what they need for their time on The Land and pack-out everything they brought in. This is truly a leave-no-trace-behind experience.
- The Land Host program is designed to allow applicants to camp in groups of no more than 8 and no less than 2 women (no more than 4 tents total) on The Land.
- Land Hosts serve as hosts, greet day visitors, and answer questions about WWTLIC and the Land Conservancy.
- Since there are no large crowds while they’re there, Land Hosts are able to see and hear the wildlife that The Land supports.
- Land Hosts report back to WWTLIC about their experiences while on The Land, and provide WWTLIC with excellent insight and feedback into the condition of the forest, wildlife, number of visitors, etc. They are also able to capture some of the most stunning images of our home in her most pristine and undisturbed state.
- If you are interested in being a Land Host in 2021 please go to [wwtlc.org/volunteer/#LandHosts](http://wwtlc.org/volunteer/#LandHosts), or if have more questions please email Rosie Kae directly at [rosiewwtlc@gmail.com](mailto:rosiewwtlc@gmail.com).

## 2020 Land Hosts

- In 2020, due to the COVID pandemic, there were only a few opportunities for women to be a Land Host. There was a total of three weeks of Land Hosts, consisting of different groups of women. They all reported a wonderful time filled with walks through the woods and sightings of deer, wild turkeys and birds.
- All of the women who were Land Hosts in 2020 followed CDC guidelines of social distancing, wearing masks and hand washing and sanitizing.
- Thank you to all of the adventurous women who served as Land Hosts last year, and for keeping yourselves and The Land safe.

“My time on The Land was breathtakingly magical. To see her in the autumn state of letting go was so amazing; to walk the paths and to feel the spirit of thousands of women was heart-filling.”

-- Sarah, 2020 Land Host

# HIRING COMMITTEE

Anne Drake, Hiring Committee Lead

In general, WWTLC relies on the generous contributions of our many unpaid volunteers who work on our many committees and crews. The work that they do includes, but is not limited to: Supporting summer events and land infrastructure improvements; Fundraising; Social-media management; Communications; Maintaining the e-mail list; Donor database management; Making custom quilts and other items for fundraisers; Serving as Land Hosts or Land Watch volunteers; Designing/updating the WWTLC website; etc. WWTLC's board members and advisory board members are not paid.



WWTLC does offer modest stipends to some summer work crew volunteers who have specific skills and availability to do the necessary work and/or supervision required to operationalize the infrastructure on The Land. These are not staff positions. To date, these stipends have not been on par with what anyone would consider equitable or fair pay for a comparable job elsewhere, including the jobs and work the volunteers left behind, nor did we offer benefits.

In addition, WWTLC has hired short term temporary consultants in a handful of key positions deemed critical to support summer programs on The Land.

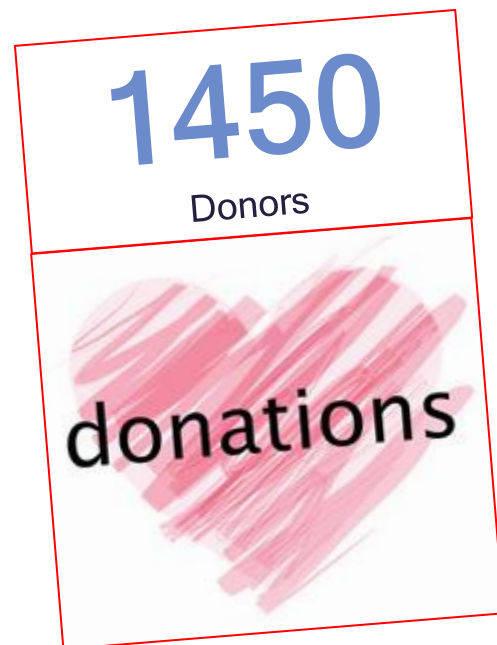
These positions are posted to the general community each year. The women hired for Summer 2020 were offered, and accepted, the same positions for Summer 2021. Our Land Manager, Grace Pifer, has been working with and for WWTLC since our inception, and is an integral part of our success. Her Assistants for the coming summer will be Virginia Irish, Deslie Ervin and Rania Gorab. Each woman has volunteered numerous hours throughout 2020 and into 2021, prior to Events ever beginning on The Land, in order to make sure things will be running smoothly. This is particularly hard work considering the changes necessary to ensure COVID Precautions are added to everything we would normally do. Enough cannot be said about the work these women have done to make Events on The Land in 2021 a possibility.





# COMMUNICATIONS & OUTREACH

(Unfilled Role), Chair



# HIGHLIGHTS & SUCCESSES

## 1) VOLUNTEER BOARD STILL ONBOARD

In 2020, WWTLIC was still an all-volunteer board. We all have day jobs that we have to do while also juggling the needs of the organization. We have an amazing Board of Directors that come together several times throughout the month to do the work of WWTLIC in our "off" time.

## 2) LAND PAYOFF GETTING CLOSER

We made our third of eight payments in April 2020. After April of 2021, we will be halfway to paying off The Land!

## 3) DOUBLED SUSTAINABLE MONTHLY INCOME

In 2020, the Landmother campaign nearly doubled the monthly donations WWTLIC can count upon (and since the Recurring Donor campaign before that, monthly income is SEVEN TIMES as high as two years ago!!). Even though we still don't have quite enough for the basic expenses, this is a vast improvement in taking stress and time demands off of the volunteers who were moving mountains each year to try to raise the \$230k just to pay for The Land, taxes and insurance.

## 4) NON-PROFIT REGISTRATION HELP

We hired a company to take over our state non-profit registrations. WWTLIC has to be registered in any state (that requires it) where we solicit donations. As an all-volunteer board, this was very difficult for one of us to do this consistently. The paperwork is different in almost all of the states. The needed documents were different for each state. Therefore, we hired a firm that works with non-profits to do this for us. They will make sure that we are in compliance at all times.

## 5) BOOKKEEPING HELP

We hired a company to get us up and running with QuickBooks. That will allow us to have easy access to exactly where we are financially. We will know where donations come from as well as what our expenses are at the push of a button (almost). They are currently working on creating the interfaces with all of our donation platforms and making sure it is up to date.

## 6) HONORS FOR NON-PROFIT TRANSPARENCY

WWTLIC earned the 2020 GuideStar Gold Seal of Transparency. GuideStar is an organization that "rates" non-profits with how transparent they are with their donors.



[wwtlc.org](http://wwtlc.org)

[Frequently Asked Questions - wwtlc.org/faqs/](http://wwtlc.org/faqs/)



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