



## **We Want the Land Coalition FAQ**

*The following is a list of frequently asked questions that we hope is helpful. This is a “living document,” to be updated as the organization grows and progresses, and as more questions are asked and answers are developed!*

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## **We Want the Land Coalition FAQ**

### **WHAT IS WE WANT THE LAND COALITION? (back to top)**

The We Want the Land Coalition was created to save the acres of land that were home for over 30 years to the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival (MichFest), a place that many called "home." MichFest was a place where we laughed, loved, learned, and struggled together; where we welcomed newborns and scattered the ashes of our beloved departed. It served as an incubator for both personal transformation and profound social justice work. While we do not intend to recreate the Festival, WWTLC does seek to honor the tradition of MichFest by creating a society and community we want to live in and pass on to the next generation.

- WWTLC is a registered nonprofit organization in the state of Michigan and an IRS-designated 501(c)(3) non-profit charity. WWTLC received federal 501(c)(3) non-profit status in September 2017.
- Annual reports have been filed, in accordance with Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs requirements. In addition, WWTLC produces an annual report to our community which is also found [on our website](#).
- WWTLC's mission is to provide women and girls with unique programs, events, and experiences that celebrate women's history, promote healing and empowerment, build women's community, and encourage education and growth. This is made possible through the maintenance, preservation, conservation, and stewardship of approximately 651 acres of land in Walkerville, Michigan, near the Manistee National Forest, the former home of the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival – an area we call The Land.
- A nonprofit structure ensures that the women's community retains possession of The Land for generations to come.

### **WHAT ARE THE GOALS OF WWTLC? (back to top)**

- Maintain, through education, community awareness, interaction with public officials, and restorative efforts, the condition of The Land in its current pristine condition in perpetuity, for our own use now, and for future generations of women and girls.
- Practice sound environmental stewardship to maintain The Land in its current pristine condition. Preservation of The Land is essential to the local ecosystems.
- Establish protected space for women-only and women-centered events, so that the ethos of the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival may not only endure inside of us, but also be alive and well upon The Land itself.
- WWTLC will offer and host programs in the expansive, wild and protected space offered by The Land as a means of providing women and girls with opportunities to thrive in a natural environment unmediated by some of the more unfortunate realities of modern life.
- By partnering with organizations that serve women and girls, WWTLC seeks to provide women and girls with unique programs, events, and experiences that celebrate women's history, promote healing and empowerment, build women's community, and encourage education and growth.



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### **WHAT ABOUT THE MICHIGAN WOMYN'S MUSIC FESTIVAL? [\(back to top\)](#)**

- The Michigan Womyn's Music Festival (MWMF) was a week-long annual event created by and for women that held space for lesbian and women's culture in the United States and beyond for four decades. The last MWMF was held in 2015. Through its longevity, the MWMF provided respite and sanctuary for generations of women, while showing girls the power that they possess to change the world. WWTLC seeks to honor this 40-year legacy.
- The MWMF was completely built, staffed, run, and attended by women. Throughout its 40-year history, the Festival occupied a central and powerful place in lesbian history, embracing and creating space for the vast diversity of the female experience. It provided space for women to share and learn skills including carpentry, plumbing, sound engineering, stage production, and community organizing. For many women, it expanded and transformed their understanding of what it means to be a woman.
- As the former location of the MWMF, The Land is considered by many to be a site of historical significance, one that remains a meaningful, deeply connected space for women and girls who gather there.
- While WWTLC is grateful for the foundation provided by the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival, and we thankfully acknowledge that many of the skills needed to form WWTLC as an organization were taught to us via our MichFest experiences, the organization does not seek to recreate or resurrect the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival event.

### **WHAT IS THE DISPOSITION OF MICHIGAN WOMEN'S FESTIVAL INVENTORY? [\(back to top\)](#)**

- In late 2016, the Festival's inventory was sold at auction.
- At the time of the auction, WWTLC was focused on purchasing The Land. Therefore, we did not attend nor purchase items on behalf of WWTLC. Many members of the Festival community did attend the auctions and purchased some of the inventory, but WWTLC was not involved.

### **WHAT ABOUT COMMERCIAL INVESTORS AND/OR DEVELOPMENT? WILL WWTLC SELL SHARES, OR PARCELS OF THE LAND? [\(back to top\)](#)**

- WWTLC will not explore private ownership or ownership by shares.
- WWTLC does not plan to sell parcels of the approximately 651 acres of The Land.
- Lisa Vogel, co-founder and long-time producer of Michigan Womyn's Music Festival, and owner of The Land, worked extensively with the Land Conservancy of West Michigan prior to the sale of The Land to WWTLC to establish a conservation easement that protects The Land from commercial development, while supporting any minimal development that may be required in the future to realize WWTLC's mission.



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### WHAT ABOUT MONEY? ([back to top](#))

- **What was the price of The Land?**

- WWTLC signed a land contract agreement with Lisa Vogel in April 2017 to purchase The Land for \$1,500,000 over eight years, with the final payment due in April 2025.
- Our goal is to avoid interest expense by paying the land contract off as quickly as possible.
- WWTLC's Fundraising Team is dedicated to continuing to raise funds to support this plan.
- Ongoing fundraising and Land-use rental fees will provide the primary financial means required to sustain and maintain The Land as well as to fund payments on the land contract.

- **What's a land contract?**

- A land contract is a form of seller financing. It is similar to a mortgage, but rather than borrowing money from a lender or bank to buy real estate, the buyer makes payments to the real estate owner, or seller, until the purchase price is paid in full.
- An initial down payment from the buyer to the seller is usually required by a land contract. WWTLC's down payment on The Land was \$300,000.
- Under a land contract, the seller retains the legal title to the property, while permitting the buyer to take possession of it for most purposes other than legal ownership.
- The seller conveys legal title to the property to the buyer when the full purchase price has been paid, including interest.
- There is a provision of the land contract for late payments: there is a 30-day grace period after the due date (which is April 17<sup>th</sup> through the year 2025) to make the payment without penalty. If payment is made more than 30 days past the due date, buyer will be required to pay a late payment fee equivalent to 5% of the installment.
- If the buyer defaults on the land contract purchase agreement, all monies paid are forfeited and the seller retains legal title to the property. This is similar to foreclosing on a regular mortgage.

- **Did WWTLC have an outside professional appraise the value of The Land?**

Lisa Vogel paid for a professional appraisal as part of the process to establish the conservation easement on The Land.

- **Is there a rough estimate of the annual upkeep costs to maintain The Land?**

This is dependent on property taxes, liability insurance, and operating expenses. The placement of the conservation easement helps to maintain property tax liability at pre-sale levels. An operating budget will be agreed upon annually by the Board in accordance with the organization's bylaws and within the funds available.

- **Would permanent structures raise real estate taxes?**

Michigan law defines real property as the land itself, plus all buildings and fixtures on the land. It is likely that any permanent structures would be considered improvements that increase the assessed value, and, therefore, the property taxes.



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### [HOW WILL THE MONEY BE RAISED?](#) [\(back to top\)](#)

- WWTLC conducts Fundraising Campaigns in order to satisfy the land contract debt obligation as well as meet ongoing operating expenses. Eventually, we hope to raise additional funds to build a small number of permanent structures on The Land that will make it possible for groups to rent The Land without having to recreate infrastructure from scratch. Our initial primary focus, however, is on land contract repayment and basic operations. We need our whole community to help with fundraising. Some will choose to make individual donations or pledge repeating donations, some will organize community fundraising events, while others may solicit donations and write grants.
- **Will our donations be tax deductible?**  
Yes! WWTLC obtained its 501(c)(3) nonprofit charity determination from the IRS in September 2017. Consult your tax preparer and/or accountant for more information.
- **How will you collect the money?**  
Donors may contribute funds in support of WWTLC's mission to purchase and sustain The Land for women and girls, forever, in one of the following ways:
  - o Personal checks (payable to We Want the Land Coalition, mailed to PO Box 11, Portage, MI 49008).
  - o [PayPal](#)
  - o [Donor Box](#)
  - o [Facebook Fundraisers](#)
- **Is this a donation or an investment with an expected return?** The funds accepted for the purchase of the Land and ongoing sustainability will be donations. In the future, we may ask the community for interest-free or low-interest loans. But for now, we are only seeking donations.
- **Will I be able to contribute specific amounts over time?** WWTLC encourages individuals to give in the way that best fits their financial capacity. This includes choosing to establish recurring donations and giving multiple individual amounts throughout the year(s). Recurring donation options are possible using all our donation methods: personal check, PayPal, Donor Box, and FaceBook.
- **What is the minimum donation amount?** Online donation platforms such as DonorBox and PayPal may specify a minimum donation amount. WWTLC accepts check donations of any amount. Our goal is to enable participation by every woman who has a desire to be part of the effort by making available a variety of options for donating.
- **What about all of the fees associated with fundraising?**
  - o Please keep in mind that ALL methods of donation include some fees.
  - o Whether donors give via DonorBox, PayPal, or by personal check, each of those entities provides a variety of services for WWTLC, from web hosting, to payment processing and accounting, to donor data collection and management.
  - o Even for nonprofits, these services have a price, and the small percentage of funds raised that goes to fees is providing necessary services as well as huge cost and time savings to WWTLC in our effort.



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- We encourage donors to give in the available ways that best suit their preferences and are grateful for every donation, regardless of the amount.
- **How will ongoing regular financial management be handled?**  
The treasurer of WWTLC, along with the Finance Team, will provide ongoing financial management. The organization has adopted an annual budget process. It is standard business practice for a treasurer's report and bank statements to be presented by the treasurer and reviewed by the board at each monthly board meeting. Access to the organization's bank accounts are limited to the president and treasurer, with additional access to a separate special projects account provided as needed to the summer project coordinator.
- **Can I organize local fundraising events to raise money for WWTLC's purchase of The Land?**  
WWTLC appreciates your generosity and willingness to support the long-term vitality of The Land. For legal reasons, WWTLC is unable to sponsor your event, but gratefully accepts any funds raised through local events.

### HOW WILL WWTLC SUSTAIN THE LAND FINANCIALLY? (back to top)

- **Sustainability is key.** To sustain the literal and figurative upkeep of The Land, owned by a nonprofit organization that is managed by members of our community, will require income for taxes, insurance, staff, tech expenses, land expenses, etc. Income for the long-term sustenance of The Land will come from the following sources:
  - Individual donations. There will be ongoing donations and fundraisers.
  - Some funds will come from rental fees when groups or organizations within the community use The Land for events or gatherings (see below).
  - We hope that future fundraising plans will include a planned giving and endowment program for women who want to give through life insurance, estate planning, and so on, to support The Land long-term.
- **Can women add WWTLC to their wills?**  
Yes, please! The information needed to include WWLTC in one's estate planning documents, in addition to the amount of the bequest, is below. Please contact your attorney for additional assistance with the process.

WWTLC's EIN: 81-4997325

Our legal address:  
We Want the Land Coalition, Inc.  
c/o Anne Drake  
587 Kuehnle St.  
Ann Arbor Michigan 48103

- Here is a link to some information that might be helpful:  
<http://www.plannedgiving.com/what-is-planned-giving>.





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### WHAT ARE WWTLC'S PLANS TO SUSTAIN THE LAND ENVIRONMENTALLY? [\(back to top\)](#)

- WWTLC is grateful to Lisa Vogel for her dedication and hard work with the Land Conservancy of West Michigan to establish a conservation easement which both protects The Land from development and supports any minimal development that may be required in the future, in support of WWTLC's mission.
- **What is a conservation easement?** A conservation easement is a legal, binding agreement between a landowner and a regional Land Conservancy organization that provides protection for all or parts of a property forever, regardless of transfer or subsequent ownership. Conserving The Land in its beautiful, raw state, with minimal development, for future generations of women and girls to enjoy is aligned with the mission of WWTLC.
- There were no conservation easements on The Land when we began this process.
- This conservation easement was transferred to WWTLC at the time the purchase was complete. The impact on assessed value of The Land was taken into consideration when agreeing on purchase price.
- The easement requires the vast majority of the acreage to remain undeveloped, with a small number of exceptions for adding key infrastructure (e.g., utility buildings, bathrooms, picnic shelters, etc.) The conservation easement will protect The Land from development. Because The Land is almost entirely surrounded by the Huron-Manistee National Forest, it will also protect the habitats and resources on the surrounding public lands.
- We don't know yet what, or if any, permanent structures will be built.
- The conservation easement provides environmental protection of The Land's natural beauty and fragile topography. Going forward, WWTLC will work directly with the Land Conservancy of West Michigan to ensure that any development, changes, or maintenance are done with minimal impact to The Land and its ecosystem. Many of us say that The Land is magical, but it truly is ecologically astounding.
  - The Land contains the headwaters of Ruby Creek, a trout stream that is the highest quality tributary to the Big South Branch of the Pere Marquette River. The creek arises from extensive emergent marshes and cedar swamps on the property, and there are numerous high-quality wetlands with diverse vegetation that support important amphibian populations. The Conservation Easement will preserve a naturally vegetated buffer around the headwaters of Ruby Creek.
  - The majority of the property consists of level to rolling hills of mixed hardwood-pine forest dominated by white and red oak, red and sugar maple, beech, and scattered white pine. There is also big-tooth aspen, hemlock, witch-hazel, shagbark hickory, black cherry, and around the wetland areas are stands of cedars, hemlock and black spruce. There are both sedge-dominated, emergent (cattails), and shrub dominated wetlands with willow, alder, and dogwood. The oak-pine forest provides excellent potential habitat for interior nesting birds, migratory warblers, hawks, owls, reptiles such as box turtles and snakes, and mammals that likely include bobcat.



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### HOW WILL THE LAND BE USED? ([back to top](#))

- The bylaws of this nonprofit organization specify that The Land be preserved primarily for the use, education, and healing of women and girls, and for women-only and women-centered events.
- Programs, gatherings, and events on The Land will be community-generated and organized, *not sponsored by WWTLC*.
- The WWTLC board of directors will review and evaluate all proposals for gatherings and events against an established set of criteria that is documented in the organization's bylaws.
- Approved events will be held on The Land for a fee, which will generate some of the revenue needed to cover taxes, insurance, and upkeep.
- **What kind of infrastructure exists on The Land today; what kinds of improvements exist?**

There are intentionally no above-ground structures, but a lot of important and diverse infrastructure underground. Above ground, there are three-fourths of a mile of blacktop to make The Land more accessible. In the summer of 2018, a concrete shower pad was installed for new, accessible showers in the former DART area.

- **How will The Land be maintained between uses? What is the plan for sustaining The Land with multiple uses per year?**

Stewardship and preservation of The Land are central to the mission of WWTLC. The WWTLC Land Stewardship Team continues to build our knowledge base by tapping the deep knowledge of MichFest women, as well as consulting with conservancy organizations and other experts. This information is crucial for conserving The Land and planning for sustainable land use. These are priorities for us and will be part of the ongoing planning process for the Land Stewardship Team.

- **Will there be a physical presence on The Land year-round?** This is a long-term goal for WWTLC, but the answer to this question is unknown at this time. Attainment of this goal will be largely dependent upon financial ability to provide structures to support a full-time residence on The Land. If a caretaker is hired in the future, the position will be advertised via our email list, Facebook page, and website. In the interim, WWTLC has implemented two programs to help monitor The Land:
  - Land Host program during the summer months, where 2-4 women sign up to volunteer to serve as hosts for a period of time (e.g., a weekend or a week, or more). Camping is very rustic and primitive during these times.
  - Land Watch program (year-round) where women sign up for day trips to The Land to observe various conditions and attributes that are present, and report findings back to the Land Stewardship committee. Examples of some things that might be observed on a Land Watch tour of duty include fallen trees, damage to wells, excessive wear and tear due to off-road activities, etc.
  - If you're interested in volunteering in this capacity, please e-mail us at [info@wwtlc.org](mailto:info@wwtlc.org)





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### WHAT IS WWTLC's VISION AND DECISION-MAKING PROCESS FOR RENTAL AND USE OF THE LAND? ([back to top](#))

- WWTLC seeks to ensure that the environmental care and protection of The Land extend into perpetuity through loving stewardship and to guarantee continued use of The Land by the community for gatherings and events that benefit women and girls.
- WWTLC will rent to those who satisfy our rental agreement criteria, which include being able to demonstrate how a proposed event is aligned with the mission of WWTLC in its focus on benefitting women and girls.
- There are 365 days a year and approximately 651 acres of land. A key guiding principle of WWTLC is that there is room enough and time enough for all of us.
- WWTLC's vision is that opportunities exist for all kinds of events to occur on The Land, with all kinds of definitions and intentions, including explicitly biologically female-only events; explicitly transwoman-only events; and others.
- WWTLC will not define or determine who is female, woman, or girl with regard to who participates in or hosts events on The Land. Rather, our mission is to hold space for the possibility of gatherings and events for women and girls which exemplify all the differing philosophies and definitions held passionately by our community.
- Our vision is that many groups representing our diverse community will submit proposals for use of The Land. The decision of who will attend an event, whom an event is for, and who will use The Land, is left entirely to the groups and organizations seeking to rent The Land, not to WWTLC. It will be up to these programming groups and organizations to define the boundaries of their events and to demonstrate how their proposed event supports WWTLC's mission of benefitting women and girls or is connected to the historical legacy of The Land.
- WWTLC expects that all programming groups and organizations, as well as the participants of the events that they present on The Land, will respect the boundaries that *other* programming organizations have defined for their own events.
- Here is our overview of how this will work:
  - WWTLC's governing documents will establish detailed criteria and guidelines for land use.
    - Here are some examples of some considerations for usage of The Land: clear articulation of the programming focus of the event; the length of time the event will run; whether additional time is needed for setup and strike; whether temporary structures will be built (and if so, what the plan is for removal); whether electricity or running water will be needed; how the organization intends to care for waste (trash and bio waste); whether and/or how food will be provided for participants; confirmation of event insurance, etc. Please note that this is very much a work in progress and this list is by no means final.
  - Any organization seeking to rent The Land will be required to demonstrate that their program or event, in some tangible way, benefits women and girls or is connected to the historical legacy of The Land.



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- Any programming organization seeking to rent The Land will have to submit an application for Land use, and pay a security deposit and rental fee.
- The WWTLC Board of Directors will adhere to the guidelines and criteria set forth in WWTLC's governing documents in reviewing and approving applications submitted by programming groups and organizations for their events.
- Event proposals/applications that meet all the necessary criteria as defined in the rental application will be approved.
- WWTLC's governing documents will serve to protect the possibility of gatherings and events that set their own boundaries and define their own terms for participation in a range of different ways. Our hope is that there will be many kinds of events proposed by members of the entire community, which will provide revenue to sustain the continued preservation of The Land. Here are just a few examples of what this could look like to WWTLC:
  - A group seeking to use The Land to produce a female-only event;
  - A group of women who have stopped their female-to-male transitions and seek to gather on The Land to draw on its history and power in coming to a new understanding of what it means to be female;
  - A group of women with intersex conditions, such as CAH or AIS, seeking to gather privately on The Land to find reflection in each other;
  - A group seeking to hold a camping retreat for late transitioning trans women;
  - A group seeking to produce a yoga getaway for women born female, women of trans experience, and genderqueer women all seeking to strengthen a woman-centered practice.
  - A group seeking to use The Land for a special-interest retreat open to all who identify as women.
- We understand that some members of the community may feel strongly about autonomous biological female space and/or trans-welcoming spaces, and about definitions. Likewise, across members of the board, there exists a wide diversity of feelings and opinions regarding the need for autonomous female space and/or trans-welcoming space, and about definitions. WWTLC honors these differences and holds the intention that The Land will be available for programming organizations to create events that meet their needs for the benefit of women and girls – however the programming organization defines those words in relation to their intended participants.
- WWTLC recognizes that it is highly unlikely that a single plan will adequately please all people. Accordingly, we keep our focus trained on maintaining our homeland with the love, care and sacredness she deserves and hope that the community believes that these 651 acres can hold all of us in our great diversity and in our narrow specificity.
- **Can I visit The Land?**
  - Please feel welcome to visit during the day. We call these “day visits.” Day visits are permitted during the off-season, from September 1 through May 31.
  - Please abide by posted signs that direct you to where it is safe to drive, where to park, and any areas that are off-limits to foot traffic.



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- o Leave no trace. Please be prepared to take out everything brought in, including all trash (including food waste) and recycling, chairs, tarps, etc. Dumpsters will not be available.
- o Camping and other extended stays are allowed only when The Land is leased to event planners for events and/or gatherings.
  - The exception to this would be those volunteering as Land Hosts (see information [elsewhere in this FAQ document](#)).
- **Can I bring my dog, cat, pet lizard?**
  - o Only service dogs are allowed on The Land.
  - o If you do bring a service dog on The Land, please keep her/him harnessed, leashed or tethered, per ADA guidelines. Service dogs must be under control – either by harness, leash, or tether, or else by voice, signal or other form of command – at all times.
  - o Please utilize pet rest areas as marked on The Land, and please clean up after your service dog as well as you are able.
- **Can I bury my wife, partner, pet, etc. on The Land?**
  - o The spreading of your loved one's ashes continues to be welcomed.
  - o We have researched the issue and full green burials are not feasible at this time.

### **WHAT ARE THE PLANS FOR EVENTS ON THE LAND? (back to top)**

The Land was made available for the first time in 2019 for community-organized events, gatherings, and programs. Out of concern for the health and safety of our community, WWTLCL postponed 2020's events until 2021. Our successful third season of summer events (six unique weeks) was held in 2022. You can join our mailing list (e-mail or postal), or follow our Facebook page to stay connected.

- **Is there, or will there be, a WWTLCL coordinator to manage events?**

WWTLCL will not be producing or managing events on The Land. It is up to groups and members of the community to organize and produce the kinds of events they wish to create. WWTLCL has Event Organizer Support liaisons to support and coordinate event application availability, assist Event Organizers with application submissions, and ensure support of Event Organizers during the summer events season, as well as a Land Stewardship committee (also led by a board member) to oversee any prep work that has to be done on The Land. In addition, we foresee hiring short term, temporary staff positions to support the summer events season as needed.
- **Is WWTLCL permitted, from a licensing and permit perspective, to operate as a campground venue for events?**

WWTLCL is officially licensed to operate as a primitive campground, which is what is required to allow camping events on The Land. This license will be posted on The Land as required by the state of Michigan.
- **From a legal and/or marketability perspective, what improvements to The Land will be necessary to successfully operate as a venue for groups that produce events?**



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We are acutely aware of the ongoing costs of stewarding The Land and are balancing that with making The Land available and useful for events that uphold the mission of WWTLC. Improvements that were identified as necessary from both a legal and/or marketability perspective that have been completed include installation of a new septic system and installation of a permanent concrete shower pad (including grading for accessibility and planting foliage to add privacy). As needs are identified, and funding is available, additional improvements may be made in accordance with the conservation easement.

- **Is there a capacity limit to how many women and girls can camp on The Land at one time?** The campground license allows for 175 group camping sites, including tents for volunteer workers as well as event participants. As of August 2022, WWTLC has set event capacity at 400 adults. If demand is such that a higher capacity is needed, WWTLC will identify infrastructure improvements that would be required to support additional capacity and, if funding is available, will incorporate the request into the campground license renewal process.
- **When are event applications available?** Our ultimate goal is to time the applications process such that Event Organizers can announce their dates for the following year's events at the current year's event. Realistically in the short term, we strive to make the applications available as soon as possible in the fall following the summer events season.
- **Will there be a contract?** Yes. There will be a contract that outlines the fees to rent The Land, payment schedules and requirements, rules and guidelines for use of The Land, as well as communicating what WWTLC will provide and what event organizers will provide.
- **What is the fee to rent The Land for a week?** WWTLC's goal is to make camping on The Land reasonable and affordable, and comparable to what it costs to rent campsites at nearby campgrounds for a week, only instead of an assigned campsite in a public campground, a week on The Land offers acres of green camping space for relatively small and private events focused on women and girls. Events must be self-funding and cover costs. To that end, considerable time is spent on budget development, to enable fair and reasonable event fees and participant minimums.
- **Will there be a food option available?** Due to complexity of health department rules and regulations, WWTLC is unable to offer a food plan to participants. Great care has been taken to provide a community kitchen for event participants to cook their meals. In addition, Event Organizers have worked with local grocers and restaurants to put together a food plan for their individual events.
- **What will WWTLC provide to events on The Land?** WWTLC will provide the infrastructure and venue space. WWTLC cares for upkeep and maintenance of The Land, including roads and paths. We'll provide gate security, porta-potties, wrist band tickets, handwashing stations, hot showers, shade tent, fire pits, electric charging station(s), dish washing station(s), kitchen and dining space for participants to use, shuttles, and electric service for accessibility needs.
- **What will event organizers need to provide for events on The Land?** Event organizers will need to support their events by handling publicity, collecting ticket fees, communicating



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with event participants, arranging for entertainment, activities, and workshops. Participants will need to bring their own food, tents, and chairs. Full details are provided in the contract.

- **What will the map of The Land look like for events?** WWTLCL's Land Stewardship committee is responsible for layout of the space, tailoring it to smaller events. We anticipate more progress, including improvements in areas such as accessibility and land usage, as we continue to learn through experience. Currently, the event village is raised in the area formerly known as "downtown" on the MichFest map, spanning roughly from the area formerly known as Triangle to the area formerly known as Main Kitchen.
- **How do you assign events to weeks on The Land?** Event organizers are asked to rank their top 3 choices for their week-long event. In order to keep prices reasonable, events with fewer than the minimum camping pass commitment (as of August 2022, this was 125 adults) will be asked to combine with other events, dependent on mutually agreeable event intentions, etc. In the event that demand for event weeks exceeds availability of event weeks, the board will assign weeks using a random lottery.

### HOW IS WWTLCL STRUCTURED AS AN ORGANIZATION? [\(back to top\)](#)

- By definition, a coalition is "an alliance of combined action." We Want the Land Coalition, as an organization name, definitely fits.
- WWTLCL is structured to operate as a directorship, with a working board of directors who govern strategy and decision making for the organization.
- WWTLCL's board of directors forms working committees made up of interested, qualified and devoted volunteers to carry out the work of the organization, with ad hoc committees and sub-committees formed as needed. These groups are instrumental in helping WWTLCL achieve its goals. Examples of current committees include: Elections Committee; Fundraising Committee; Hiring Committee; Land Stewardship Committee; and Marketing/Communications Committee.
- WWTLCL's board of directors will consist of at least 4 and no more than 15 directors. Within these limits, the board may increase or decrease the number of directors serving on the board, including for the purpose of staggering the terms of directors. An executive committee consisting of a president, a vice president, a secretary, and a treasurer will be elected from sitting board members.
- Criteria for eligibility to hold a position on the board are outlined in WWTLCL's bylaws.
- In general, a 10-hour per month commitment is what is asked of board members, though that number varies widely based on the work that needs to be done.
- Board membership and positions of relative power will not be reserved for those who have more to contribute financially.
- An historical note: Initially, we started out by calling members of the community who were volunteering in various capacities on working committees "The Coalition." The types of work that committees (and the women volunteering on those committees) has shapeshifted as the organization has progressed, new bureaucratic (county, state, federal) requirements became apparent, and needs were identified. As an organization, WWTLCL continues to be an alliance of combined action, and that action is accomplished through the work of





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committees. In the late spring/early summer of 2017, WWTLC shifted to working committees with defined areas of expertise.

### **HOW ARE BOARD MEMBERS ELECTED? (back to top)**

- The first regular WWTLC board elections were held in 4<sup>th</sup> quarter 2019, for the term beginning January 2020. Board members will be elected, by a 50% +1 simple majority vote by the board, to three-year terms on a rotational basis in order to preserve continuity of the organization.
- Board positions may be added mid-term by appointment that is approved by a 50% +1 majority vote by the board, or during the regular annual elections cycle. Once the regular election cycle commences, the board of directors will accept nominations for open director positions from within committees.
- Our community is rich with brilliant, savvy women, and our strengths are compounded exponentially when we work together. We seek the input and involvement of women from our diverse community for volunteering first on a working committee and later seeking election to the board of directors.
- Members of the community who wish to volunteer their time and talent by serving on the WWTLC board of directors will be required to first serve as a volunteer on one of the working committees. This will allow interested candidates to explore the work of WWTLC, including time commitments and work content, before committing to serving a full term on the board. If you are interested in volunteering on a committee, please e-mail us at [info@wwtlc.org](mailto:info@wwtlc.org).
- Candidates seeking election to a board position will be vetted to assure they are aligned with the mission and values of WWTLC and have demonstrated a commitment to working for the rights and autonomy of women and girls.
- Board members and committee members are asked to sign Confidentiality and Participation Agreements.
- Board members are encouraged not to exceed two consecutive terms in the same position, though we recognize that this may not be possible if there is not sufficient interest or a qualified candidate to fill a given position(s). In this case, the board may elect the same person for additional terms beyond the preferred two consecutive term guideline. After serving two consecutive terms in the same position, a board member may seek election to a different position, if desired.
- **What about vacancies that occur before the end of a term?**
  - The bylaws provide for filling board vacancies that occur before the end of a term.
  - With the exception of the position of president (which would be filled through succession of the vice president in the event of vacancy), if a board position becomes vacant, it will be filled by appointment that is approved by a 50% +1 majority vote to complete the remainder of the term.
  - Complete details of WWTLC's legal structure and board are contained in our bylaws.





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### **ARE WWTLC POSITIONS PAID? (back to top)**

- WWTLC's board members are not paid.
- WWTLC's advisory board members are not paid.
- In general, WWTLC relies on the generous contributions of our many unpaid volunteers on working committees and crews. The work that they do includes, but is not limited to work associated with 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 Host volunteers; designing/updating the WWTLC website; etc.
- WWTLC offers stipends to some summer volunteers who have the specific skills and required availability to do the necessary work, and who are responsible for supervising significant aspects of the necessary work on The Land. These are not staff positions. The stipends WWTLC is able to offer are not on par with what anyone would consider equitable or fair pay for a comparable job elsewhere, including the jobs and work the volunteers leave behind, nor do we offer benefits.
- In addition, WWTLC hires short term temporary consultants in a handful of key positions critical to support summer programs. These positions are posted to the general community.

### **WHO IS ON THE BOARD? (back to top)**

- The current board of directors (as of August, 2022) is as follows: Anne Drake, Nedra Johnson, Brenda Millhouse-Huebner, Rosie Kae, Julie King, Annemarie Serra, and Kathleen Severt.

The term length for WWTLC Board of Director positions is 3 years. The board has adopted rotational terms to prevent full turnover of all board positions with every election.

### **HOW WAS THE INAUGURAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS FORMED? (back to top)**

- An inaugural board of directors took on the responsibility for forming the 501(c)(3) organization and preparing the proposal to purchase The Land, etc. The inaugural WWTLC Board of Directors included: Karen Colton, Rae Fehring, Leslie Gallagher, Nedra Johnson, Annemarie Serra, and Karen Thompson.
- Here's a brief history of how the board came to be:
  - In the fall of 2015, right after the 40th and final Michigan Womyn's Music Festival, Rae Fehring and Annemarie Serra took on the ambitious initiative to explore how to move forward with the next incarnation of the Festival. In the Facebook Group "Planting Something New," they seized on the idea of a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, with a focus on providing various enrichment programs for women and girls. Karen Colton researched and presented a plan in that group to purchase The Land separate from the programming entity, as a foundational step for the larger idea. For lots of reasons, momentum stalled and the group fell dormant.
  - In mid-July 2016, Leslie Gallagher, Nedra Johnson, and Allison Porch had a conversation, and the idea of purchasing The Land as a first step resurfaced. Then,



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seeing in writing Lisa Vogel's plans for selling The Land on the open real estate market and selling the Festival inventory at auction launched conversations into full-speed-ahead mode.

- Leslie reached out to Rae, Annemarie, and Karen, and, with the addition of Karen Thompson, the core of our organizing team was formed.
- Later, the following board members joined the effort: Tara Ayres, Anne Drake, Brooke Levandowski, Papusa Molina, Camellia Pisegna.
- At various points along the way, board and committee members have needed to take short term breaks; some board members have resigned. As a startup organization, some turnover is not unusual. WWTLC has experienced lots of growth and change, progressing through the organizational behavior dynamics commonly referred to as "storming, forming, and norming", while remaining true to our mission of preserving The Land for women and girls, forever. And the contributions of all who have pitched in to help, whether as a board member or volunteer, are very much appreciated.
- When Lisa Vogel sent her announcement to the worker community, Toni Armstrong Jr. began her own initiative to gauge community interest in raising the funds to purchase The Land. Very quickly, we began working together, because we realized that we share one single common goal: to preserve The Land for the use of our community.
- Toni Jr. offered to continue communicating with the community for this endeavor, and we gratefully accepted. Toni Jr. chose her own role in this effort and kept you entertained and enticed, managing the WWTLC page on Facebook (over 5K members as of August 2022) as well as recruiting Janis Kidder and Lynn Siniscalchi to create/manage an e-mail list of interested "Sisters of the Ferns."
- Together, we laid the groundwork of recruiting volunteers for WWTLC. Together, we've compiled Q&A for frequently asked questions, starting with the questions we ourselves asked when exploring this organization's effort.
- Our goal is to share as much information as is practical, as transparently as possible. The reality is that it sometimes takes us longer than we'd like to answer questions, simply because we are also investigating and learning as we go. We are taking into consideration all kinds of questions that are raised, including legal, financial, organizational, philosophical, and practical.

### **WHAT IS THE ADVISORY BOARD? WHO IS ON IT? [\(back to top\)](#)**

- The WWTLC Advisory Board is comprised of women who each have decades of experience within the women's music industry and within festival culture. They stepped up early on and agreed to support the We Want the Land Coalition (WWTLC) effort to secure The Land, and to offer their leadership, expertise, and advice as we move forward with this massive endeavor.
- The Advisory Board members are Toni Armstrong Jr., Ruth Barrett, C.C. Carter, Judith Casselberry, Juanita Colon, Laurie Fuchs, Terry Grant, Ubaka Hill, Lola Lai Jong, Bonnie Morris, Sasha Goldberg, and Rhiannon.



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### **HOW ARE MICHFEST WORKER AND FESTIE VOICES REPRESENTED IN WWTLC's EFFORTS? (back to top)**

- WWTLC continues to invite questions, concerns, and suggestions from women who represent all skill levels, various sides of every issue, and the full spectrum of MichFest experience.
- Many of the women who are contributing their expertise to the effort are former attendees (Festies) or workers at the Michigan Women's Music Festival. Before becoming workers, many were long-time Festies.
- Five of seven board members are former Michigan Women's Music Festival workers of varying tenure, work crew experiences and/or camper-come-early work shifters. All were festival participants at some point, as well – in some cases, for several years. Five of the twelve Advisory Board members were workers or craftswomen, and many are performers.

### **HOW CAN I BE INVOLVED? (back to top)**

- We appreciate your interest and are grateful that you're part of the WWTLC Community!
- There will be ongoing opportunities for community members to be involved; our long-term success will depend upon continued support and service from our vast community. If you are interested in volunteering on a working committee, please e-mail us at [info@wwtlc.org](mailto:info@wwtlc.org).
- Other ways to support WWTLC's efforts to preserve The Land for women and girls forever:
  - Help get the word out! We have created a pamphlet that we'd be happy to send to you by e-mail so that you can print/copy them. Send us an e-mail at [info@wwtlc.org](mailto:info@wwtlc.org) if you'd like us to send you this file.
  - Host a Facebook fundraiser to benefit WWTLC to celebrate your birthday or other special occasions in your life.
  - Organize a local fundraiser and donate the proceeds to WWTLC. Here are some examples: a house concert, silent auction, potluck house party or other gathering, or use your crafty skills to make items inspired by The Land to sell)
  - Volunteer to serve as a Land Host (overnight primitive camping during the summer months to greet day-visitors), or as a Land Watch volunteer (day trips to observe and report). If you're interested in serving as a Land Host or Land Watch volunteer, e-mail us at [info@wwtlc.org](mailto:info@wwtlc.org).

### **WHAT IS THE BEST WAY TO CONNECT WITH WWTLC? (back to top)**

- Visit our website: [www.WWTLC.org](http://www.WWTLC.org).
- Join our email list! Email [mailinglist@wwtlc.org](mailto:mailinglist@wwtlc.org) to be added.
- Send us an e-mail: [info@wwtlc.org](mailto:info@wwtlc.org). Or visit [wwtlc.org/join/](http://wwtlc.org/join/), where you'll find a convenient e-mail form.
- Find and join our Facebook Community group:  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/WWTLC.community/>



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- Our mailing address:  
We Want the Land Coalition  
PO Box 11  
Portage, MI 49081
- **If I'm not on Facebook, can I still be on the email or snail mail list?**  
Yes! Our email list is growing. In fact, our email distribution list will eventually be our primary means of communicating important information and updates. Please sign up by sending an email to [mailinglist@wwtlc.org](mailto:mailinglist@wwtlc.org) and our Communications and Outreach team will make sure you're added. You can also drop us a note to our mailing address (see above).
- **Does WWTLC have a website?** Yes! Visit us at [www.WWTLC.org](http://www.WWTLC.org).
- **Can WWTLC Facebook community group members add women to the group?**  
Yes! Members of the community may add other women to the Facebook WWTLC Community group. Permissions are set up so that an admin must approve the addition.  
**Why do you limit posts of community members? If I am unable to create a post on WWTLC's Facebook group, what is the best way to submit questions or concerns?**  
We have set the permissions in the WWTLC Community group so that one of the group admins must approve them before they are visible to the community. In this way, we can limit posts to those directly related to the work of the organization and building our community. Our intent is to keep the group easy to navigate and focused so you can easily find the information you seek. There are exceptions to this policy, like Facebook fundraisers and events that benefit WWTLC, or photos from The Land. We want to hear from you. We *do* read every post that comes in, even if not approved by an admin. We typically respond to submitted posts 1-1, and work to incorporate answers to common questions into our communications (like this FAQ). Group members are able to post comments and questions in response to WWTLC posts in the group. And as always, group members are welcome to message us using Facebook Messenger (or e-mail us at [info@wwtlc.org](mailto:info@wwtlc.org)). Look for FAQ and other documents under the Files tab at the left of the group page.
- **Can I help spread the word about WWTLC?** Yes! Please share our website address, invite women to our Facebook community, and share the links to our fundraising sites.
  - Let us know of any publications or event programs where we could submit materials to help increase awareness. Our advertising budget is limited, but we are definitely interested in placing ads in publications which will help us reach our intended audience – women and girls and the organizations that support them.
  - We have designed informational materials that we are happy to make available by e-mail by request, for those who wish to hand them out at various events they attend.

## **WILL MEMBERS OF WWTLC BE AT VARIOUS WOMEN'S EVENTS, SUCH AS THE OHIO LESBIAN FESTIVAL OR THE NATIONAL WOMEN'S MUSIC FESTIVAL? ([back to top](#))**

- Yes! Members of WWTLC attend many different events in the community. We look forward to connecting with you at events like the National Women's Music Festival in July; the Michigan Family Reunion in August; Ohio Lesbian Festival in September; and Women in the Arts (WIA) in November.



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- If you know of other events that we should attend, or where you would like to hand out literature for us, e-mail us at [info@wwtlc.org](mailto:info@wwtlc.org).