Poetry on Preserves
by Sarah Mayhew, LTC Director of Environmental Education

This fall, LTC partnered for the second year with the Good Hart Artist Residency program to offer high school students a unique opportunity to learn from working professionals in the field of writing. One consideration for an artist’s acceptance to the residency is their proposed collaboration with a partnering organization. Little Traverse Conservancy is one of several local organizations committed to supporting this program.

This year we teamed up with author Timothy Bradley and Mackinaw City Public Schools to offer a Trail Writing Workshop. The workshop started in the classroom setting with several prompts to enhance the students’ observation skills and use of descriptive vocabulary, pulling from their prior experiences to facilitate discussion.

Students were then led outside where they gathered for a reading designed to focus their minds on the outdoors. This exercise was followed by a silent walk to the Hathaway Family’s Regina Caeli Nature Preserve. Once they reached the preserve, students spread out to record their observations in journals provided by LTC, using rocks and fallen trees for seats.
A little Seed  
Deep under the dirt  
on my way into the sunlight,  
I begin to sprout.

With help from the rain and sun,  
I am able to become a sapling.

When I get big enough,  
I will be used to collect maple syrup from.

I watch the days turn into nights,  
over and over,  
while the seasons change.

In spring I get to watch the flowers bloom  
and the bees fight over them.

In summer I see the small critters play  
among my branches  
that get stronger by the year.

By fall I've laughed all of my leaves off.  
Winter is my least favorite.

It's sad, lonely, and cold.

I watch years go by,  
over and over,  
one after the next  
until the day comes  
that my trunk buckles in  
and I fall among the leaves.

The Good Hart Artist Residency program offers dedicated artists a two- to three-week stay in a creative and quiet environment. The residency provides living/studio space, meals and close proximity to nature preserves and beaches. For more information, visit www.goodhartartistresidency.org.

LTC has long valued the close connection between art and nature and providing young people unique opportunities. We look forward to continuing this relationship!

Fresh off the press! Pick up your NEW and UPDATED version of our Featured Lands Preserve Guide Map at our office.

We made some updates to our website! Visit www.landtrust.org to explore the changes.