



## HICKORY FOREST NATURAL AREA (Clarence Kroupa Property)

March, 2020

Love the land. *Pass it on.*



Clarence Kroupa was a well-known local conservationist with a deep and unshakable love of the land. He was happiest when he was in the woods, particularly his beautiful 76-acre parcel along M-72 that he stewarded with great care over the years.

Clarence always wanted permanent protection of this special property (one of the largest remaining forested parcels within the immediate vicinity of Traverse City) to be part of his legacy. After he died in 2019, his family approached GTRLC to see if we could find a way to honor his wishes.

Because of this, we now have a truly exciting opportunity to protect this magnificent property and add it to an already beloved group of public lands. It is contiguous to Hickory Hills and Hickory Meadows, which are owned by the city of Traverse City and the Traverse City-Garfield Township Joint Recreational Authority (Rec Authority), respectively. In an effort to protect Clarence's amazing resource as a public natural area for low-impact recreational use, GTRLC now has the property under contract for up to three years, with the goal of it being permanently protected and acquired by the Rec Authority.

The Rec Authority could have a millage for this purpose on the ballot as soon as November 2020.

The property, which is largely comprised of high quality mesic northern forest dominated by sugar maple and beech, boasts exceptional conservation values. Its Floristic Quality Index (FQI) score is 37.1, well above the statewide average of 20 and higher still than the score in which properties are considered significant from a statewide perspective (35). The FQI score, derived from detailed botanical inventories, is a way to quantify the rarity and quality of the plants found at a given site, and by extension the quality of the habitat.

GTRLC is in the process of creating a management plan that will include recommendations for sustainable trail design. The goal is to protect the property's natural features and conservation values while allowing users to fully appreciate its gorgeous, rolling topography.

GTRLC, Garfield Township and the City of Traverse City first proposed the idea for a Rec Authority nearly 20 years ago while working to protect Hickory Meadows and the former Smith Barney property as an addition to the Open Space. Voters in Garfield Township and the city approved the formation of the Rec Authority, which also saved the barns at the former State Hospital, in 2004.

### **This project will:**





- **Protect one of the largest forested parcels within the region's urban core**
- **Provide high-quality passive recreation to local residents and visitors**
- **Safeguard water quality in Kids Creek and Grand Traverse Bay by protecting the natural features that serve to filter surface runoff**
- **Preserve scenic views from Hickory Hills, M-72 and Barney Road**



**Proposed Hickory Forest  
Natural Area  
(formerly the  
Clarence Kroupa Property)**



**LEGEND**

-  Hickory Forest Natural Area (proposed ownership by Joint Recreation Authority)
-  Hickory Hills Recreation Area (owned by City of Traverse City)
-  Hickory Meadows (owned by Joint Recreation Authority)
-  TART Trail