



ENVIRONMENT. ECONOMY. COMMUNITY.

FALL 2014

From Executive Director Hans Voss

# CELEBRATING OUR MISSION



Gov. William Milliken, Hans Voss, and Ray Minervini at Harvest@theCommons.

We've had a good number of events over the years at the Michigan Land Use Institute. Great leaders like Bill McKibben and Wes Jackson speaking to big crowds; and community forums packed with people interested in topics like how to expand rail service in Michigan or what to do about oil pipelines under the Mackinac Straits. I love the energy created when a group of people come together around a common interest.

So, it's no surprise that my favorite moment of 2014 was our amazing Harvest@theCommons event. Even though we knew we were going to have a great turnout, I was blown away when I walked up to the tent on the beautiful lawn of the Grand Traverse Commons and saw just what 550 MLUI supporters looked like.

They were people from all walks of life. We had a table of beer enthusiasts from Short's, the leaders of Tom's Food Markets, a lively bunch from Keen Technical Solutions, and fair trade revolutionaries from Higher Grounds. Long time supporters. Young people. Community leaders like Ross and Brenda Biederman and Mike and Denise Busley. New supporters. Foodies. Realtors. Transit advocates. Bluegrass musicians (Lindsay Lou and the Flatbellies were amazing!). City commissioners. Celebrities (Amy Smart and Carter Oosterhouse's pie sold for \$3,000 in the auction!). Solar installers. Journalists. Yoga instructors. Farmers. Doctors. You name it.

There must have been two tables full of Minervinis to witness the dedication of the 2015 Milliken Award for Distinguished Leadership to Ray Minervini. It was great to see so many of the early organizers who worked with Ray to prevent the Commons from being bulldozed. Governor Milliken was under the tent, too, along with his son and our Board Member Bill. Helen Milliken's sister and her family also came out from Colorado, which was a special treat. My parents were in the mix, so were my wife and kids, and the families of our staff.

One of our founding Board members (and a good friend) sent me an email the next day to say how much he enjoyed the energy of the event and exclaimed, "There were even a couple of millenials making out at the end of the table!"

We didn't really expect that one (!), but that's what community is all about. Diverse. A bit unpredictable. Tied together by a common interest. The common interest for the Harvest event was celebrating local food of course (way to go Harvest restaurant), but also the broader MLUI mission of connecting environment and economy and pushing programs that lay the groundwork for long-term community resilience.

I hope you enjoy the rest of this late fall newsletter – and the highlights my colleagues on the staff have chosen for you. The good work of MLUI really is a community effort and I thank you for being a part of it.

*Hans Voss*

## SAVOR THE DATE

Mark your calendars for Oct. 10, 2015, for the second annual Harvest@theCommons!



## FARMLAND 5K

Celebrate year-round running and fitness on Dec. 6, 2014. Organizers will donate \$2 of each entry to MLUI's Taste the Local Difference™ program. Visit [www.xcchallengetcruns.com](http://www.xcchallengetcruns.com).



## RESILIENCE READS

Community book discussions  
Nov. 18, 2014: *The World in 2050*  
Feb. 17, 2015: *The Wealth of Nature*  
May 19, 2015: *Engaging Voices*

All discussions at Horizon Books in Traverse City at 7 p.m.



Details at [www.resilience-reads.org](http://www.resilience-reads.org)

# BECOME AN MLUI MEMBER!

[mlui.org/member](http://mlui.org/member)

Michigan Land Use Institute  
148 East Front Street, Suite 301  
Traverse City, MI 49684



# A LOOK BACKWARD

The MLUI staff reflects on the favorite aspects of their work in 2014...

...and what they're most looking forward to in 2015

# AND FORWARD

## James Bruckbauer Transportation Policy Specialist

**2014:** I loved writing and releasing the *Getting Back on Track* report, which highlighted the opportunity for reviving passenger rail in northwest Michigan. Since we released the report, I've received lots of positive comments and lots of people are volunteering to advance the project.

**2015:** In 2015, we're going to bring that project to the next level. In February, we'll invite the community to hear about opportunities for rail travel in Traverse City, and about other innovative passenger rail projects, including the exciting M-1 streetcar in Detroit.



## Amy MacKay Development Director

**2014:** I am especially excited that we included so many young people in our work this year, including the Food-Corps service members, summer interns, and high school volunteers. MLUI is giving the next generation powerful, hands-on experiences in moving our neighborhoods and communities toward more resilient and sustainable living.

**2015:** I am looking forward to spreading MLUI's twin messages of hope and resilience to an ever-broadening audience. With common sense ideas, civic conversation, and community collaboration, northwest Michigan will be a model for an environmentally responsible way of life.



## Cindy Rebman MLUI Accountant

**2014:** As an accountant, most of my job's duties aren't the most exciting—managing budgets, doing payroll, keeping tabs on cash flow etc. But this year, I was happy to take a more active role in working with our board and advisory council. It's been a lot of fun getting to know these very passionate and smart people helping lead this organization.

**2015:** We saw a big increase in the number of sponsors for our events and reports last year—just look at our Harvest event alone! I hope that continues into 2015. Partnerships with our business community are essential.



## Jim Lively Program Director

**2014:** Since we first learned about the dangerous oil pipelines in the Mackinac Straits, we've elevated the issue to one of the top environmental concerns in the state. The "Oil and Water Don't Mix" campaign featured a new website ([oilandwaterdontmix.org](http://oilandwaterdontmix.org)), a compelling TV commercial, and solid partnerships with many organizations.

**2015:** I look forward to connecting our programs to the exciting opportunities around solar energy. We intend to bring this clean, affordable, job-producing technology to our region and Michigan with new financing options for businesses, and crowdfunding opportunities for community solar projects.



## Diane Conners Food & Farming Senior Policy Specialist

**2014:** I was proud to see our farm to school work take off in so many ways. Districts participating in our *10 Cents a Meal for School Kids & Farms* spent \$84,621 on local food, with \$20,095 in *10 Cents* support. Our FoodCorps members continue to have a big impact on school kids. And in October we had a sold-out event that was a first-of-its-kind in our region, looking at Food, Farms & Health.

**2015:** I'm excited to turn the concept of Food, Farms & Health into a major conference and projects that connect the dots between health care, wellness and locally grown food.



## Jim Dulzo Clean Energy Senior Policy Specialist

**2014:** I've enjoyed reporting on the push to develop lots more rooftop solar power in Michigan, the pushback by the monopoly utilities that fear it, and the fact that energy efficiency and wind power now offer a better economic deal than new coal- and gas-fired generation.

**2015:** Unless there's a lame-duck legislative miracle in Lansing, I look forward to teaming up with allies around the state to push our lawmakers to act, finally, on expanding Michigan's very successful renewables and energy efficiency mandates.



## Shauna Treter Program Development Specialist

**2014:** In late 2013, Michigan passed the MILE (Michigan Invests Locally Exemption) Act, which lets entrepreneurs and small businesses access capital from the masses. This opened up the world of investment crowdfunding, and I helped organize two workshops in 2014 to begin sharing this exciting information with the community.

**2015:** I'm looking forward to using investment crowdfunding to further our goals and support local businesses. Envision a solar project where residents collectively invest in panels installed by local businesses—with the profits, energy, and investment landing right back here in our pockets, our grid, and our community.



## Bill Palladino Senior Policy Specialist, TLD

**2014:** This year, I'm proud to say we successfully trademarked Taste the Local Difference™, which allows us to capitalize on years of brand-building. This move also positioned TLD to seek advertiser support for our popular food and farming guides.

**2015:** Now Taste the Local Difference™ is about to cross over into its 12th year of serving farms and food businesses in northwest Lower Michigan. In 2015 we will partner with MyNorth, publishers of Traverse Magazine, to produce our guides in a full-color magazine. All of this is designed to support a strategy of financial self-reliance for TLD in the future.



## And Introducing Tricia Phelps and Amy Schneider!

One of the things *everyone* at MLUI is excited about for the coming year is the addition of two new staff members. **Tricia Phelps**, our new Taste the Local Difference™ Coordinator, previously worked as the market manager for the Sarah Hardy Farmers Market in downtown TC and the farmers market at the Grand Traverse Commons. She comes to us after working for three years with the Minervini Group—the nerve center of the Grand Traverse Commons.



**Amy Schneider** is our new Administrative Coordinator who will help all of our programs, communications, and membership systems run more smoothly. Amy has degrees from U of M and MSU, and worked for 10 years in the insurance industry.

## James Russell Communications Manager

**2014:** I'm really excited about our growing relationships with media outlets. Hans has a regular column in the Traverse City Business News, and both Diane and Bill contribute "Agriculture Forums" to the Record-Eagle. We've had op-eds published on topics including solar power policy and the Mackinac Straits pipelines, and reporters now regularly look to us as the go-to experts when it comes to clean energy, local food, and transportation.

**2015:** This year we surveyed hundreds of people as part of rebranding research. 2015 will be the year to take what we learned and act on it.



# THANK YOU, MLUI DONORS!

The following individuals and organizations made donations or pledges to MLUI between October 1, 2013, and September 30, 2014.

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**We strive to make our list as accurate and complete as possible; if you find an error or omission, please contact Amy MacKay at amy@mlui.org, or 231-941-6584, ext. 704. If your name should be here and it's not, lunch is on us!**