



Huron Pines

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The Herbert H. and Grace A. Dow Foundation Champions Long-term Conservation for the Kirtland's Warbler

Northeast MI – Huron Pines and the Kirtland's Warbler Alliance are excited to announce that The Herbert H. and Grace A. Dow Foundation is the newest champion of the people, partners and programs working to ensure long-term conservation of Michigan's signature songbird—the Kirtland's Warbler.

The Foundation has committed \$30,000 a year for the next three years to support two main efforts—to design K–12 education programs and to develop two partner groups working in alignment to increase public awareness, raise funds and coordinate habitat conservation programs.

Lesson plans and teacher support for K–12 students will connect classroom learning to the story of the Kirtland's Warbler and the different habitats it needs for survival. This education effort will build awareness of how conservation decisions are made in local communities and build appreciation for natural resources “just out the door.” Development and capacity building for both the Kirtland's Warbler Alliance and the Kirtland's Warbler Conservation Team will create a strong, collaborative network of land managers, researchers, nonprofit conservation managers, public relations specialists, birders, educators, economic and community development representatives and local decision makers to tackle the critical challenges to continuing the conservation success of the species. Strengthening this network will mean new partnerships and new opportunities to engage the public in threatened and endangered species conservation on public lands.

The Herbert H. and Grace A. Dow Foundation has charter goals to improve the educational, religious, economic, and cultural lives of Michigan's people as their needs can be defined in a world which constantly presents different challenges and opportunities.

Education, collaboration and coordination of a strong partnership to advance the scientific knowledge and understanding of endangered species conservation and development of a group focused on raising awareness and funding for important conservation programs is the recipe for Kirtland's Warbler success. “The Herbert H. and Grace A. Dow Foundation sees the strength in this combination of strategies and is pleased to help develop these programs to the point where the Kirtland's Warbler can be ushered away from protections under the Endangered Species Act—the ultimate goal for a species listed in the first place,” says Foundation President, Macauley Whiting, Jr. “We at the Herbert H. and Grace A. Dow Foundation are excited to be a new partner in this important work and support this extensive partnership leading innovation in endangered species management across the country.”

Huron Pines coordinates both the Alliance and Conservation Team. Since the start of the organization's involvement in Kirtland's Warbler conservation efforts in 2012 Huron Pines has been working with both groups to deepen connections to Michigan private sector funders. A key message for this work has been that the success of the Kirtland's Warbler and its ability to draw people from all over the world to Michigan, is a testament to our state's conservation leadership as well as an important opportunity for our communities to build economic investment and community pride.

“Huron Pines is very excited about this new partnership with The Herbert H. and Grace A. Dow Foundation and their understanding of how important it is to support the collaborative efforts and network around conservation of rare and threatened species,” said Abigail Ertel, Community Program Lead for Huron Pines, a nonprofit conservation



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organization based in Gaylord, MI and serving all of Northeast Michigan. “The Kirtland’s Warbler Alliance—an all-volunteer, Michigan-wide board of Directors—has been working diligently over the last 4 years to establish themselves as an important partner in conservation for the Kirtland’s Warbler. They are the group raising public awareness and support for the species across its breeding and wintering grounds to maintain necessary conservation programs for the recovered population through increased community engagement and innovative funding strategies in the public and private sectors.”

Twice since the Kirtland’s Warbler was listed under the Federal Endangered Species Act in 1973, the population has plummeted to near extinction. In 2016 the population is boasting its strongest numbers ever—over 2,000 pairs worldwide. The successful recovery of the species is a result of over 40 years of dedicated management by state and federal agencies and has set the stage for ushering the Kirtland’s Warbler off of the Endangered Species List.

When delisted the Kirtland’s Warbler will be the first species in the country to achieve this status as a result of collaborative habitat management strategies. Michigan has been ground zero for this effort and the Kirtland’s Warbler is one of our state’s leading conservation success stories.

For more information on the Kirtland’s Warbler, the collaborative partnerships of the Kirtland’s Warbler Alliance and Kirtland’s Warbler Conservation Team, Huron Pines and the support of The Herbert H. and Grace A. Dow Foundation please contact Huron Pines by calling (989) 448-2293.

For more information on The Herbert H. and Grace A. Dow Foundation, its vision and programs please visit hhdowfdn.org or call (989) 631-3699.

The Herbert H. and Grace A. Dow Foundation is the eight largest foundation in Michigan and, since its establishment, has granted almost \$593 million to worthy programs and projects in the Midland area and in Michigan.

Huron Pines is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and equal opportunity provider with a mission to protect the Great Lakes by conserving the forests, lakes and streams of Northeast Michigan. Huron Pines believes that through active leadership and coordination of conservation projects, we make the region a better place to live, work and enjoy.



Photo at left: A male Kirtland’s Warbler on Northeast Michigan breeding grounds. Nearly 98% of the world’s population returns to the region each spring to nest. Federal, state, nonprofit, academic and local partners are working together to ensure the population continues to thrive and the communities in both the nesting and wintering grounds have a strong connection to the species, its habitat and conservation programs developed to support continued success.

Photo credit: Daniel Kennedy, Michigan Department of Natural Resources.

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