

Friends of Neithercut Woodland

A society dedicated to preserving the values of the woodland

Friends of Neithercut Woodland is an organization dedicated to preserving the values of the woodland that were first articulated by Josiah L. Littlefield.

In 1871, Littlefield graduated from the University of Michigan with a degree in civil engineering. The 26-year-old then moved on to settle in the new, rural, lumbering community of Farwell, Michigan, where he was engaged by his uncle, Edmund Hall, to use his surveying skills to help plan the proposed "state road" from Ionia to Houghton Lake. Over the next 30 years, Littlefield expanded his horizons into multiple occupations including surveying, lumbering, operating a planing mill, developing a cement factory, and becoming a farmer.

Throughout his entire career, Josiah Littlefield had a vision of land preservation. In 1922, he started the first "school forest" in Michigan in cooperation with Farwell Public Schools. As part of his land preserves, Littlefield ultimately acquired a block of land approximately 3 miles long by 1 mile wide, located about four miles to the west of Farwell. At the core of his tract of land were 80 acres of hardwood forest.

Littlefield died in 1936, which was about the same time that the state of Michigan built state highway M-115 right through his important preserve. Fortunately, his descendants held on to much of his estate, and from 1959 to 1968 they transferred almost 252 acres of the original Littlefield land to Central Michigan University. A key portion of the transferred land was approximately one-half of the original 80-acre special hardwood woodland preserve that Josiah Littlefield had protected for so many years.

William Neithercut, a banker from Flint, was instrumental in helping CMU to obtain the property from Littlefield's descendants. It was his financial support that sustains to this day the vision that originally inspired Josiah Littlefield.

Named after William Neithercut, the 252-acre Neithercut Woodland is located approximately five miles west of Farwell, and is directly accessed from M-115. The university constructed a small lodge for non-overnight uses such as workshops, retreats and social gatherings. The woodland contains miles of marked nature trails including a half-mile "Freedom Trail" which is a hard surface, barrier-free, easily accessible area for those with disabilities. The woodland preserves a treasure trove of opportunities to see wildflowers, plants, and animals in a great variety of habitats.

We invite those of you who might be interested to become members of Friends of Neithercut Woodland. We will turn to this group for leadership in formulating recommendations for the protection and use of the woodland.

You can join this group by contacting [Gail Moore](#), and by donating an initial, nominal annual fee of \$50. We plan to have an annual picnic as well as other activities for all Friends of Neithercut Woodland to get together at the woodland.

Please become involved! We appreciate your support.



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