

Preserve play

Kids net money for land conservancy

By TAMARA BURLEY
News-Review staff writer

CHARLEVOIX — When two fifth-grade classes decided to present the Shakespearian play, "A Midsummer Night's Dream," to benefit the Upper Chain of Lakes preserve, the St. Clair Lake-Six Mile Lake Natural Area, the students thought they would help raise some money to maintain the property.

The students succeeded beyond their wildest dreams.

Proceeds from the play equaled more than \$550 for the preserve. At intermission Glen Chown, executive director of the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy, announced that the hard work and dedication of the students had inspired an anonymous donation of \$30,000.

"The students wanted to do a benefit for the environment," said Carol Elliott, who teaches one of the fifth-grade classes. "They did a wonderful job with a very difficult play."

The students designed the sets and made their own costumes.

"It took us a year to raise \$7,000 for the first acquisition of land," said co-chair of the St. Clair Lake-Six Mile Natural Area committee JoAnne Beemon. "This is a really significant amount of money."

The Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy will use the money to purchase a 59-acre property in memory of the Skow family from Ellsworth. The land adjoins the Lawmaster Preserve in the St. Clair Lake-Six Mile Lake Natural Area. This preserve addition boasts a mosaic of habitat types including lowlands, marshlands, transitional fields, uplands, hardwoods, and a scenic overlook with a sweeping vista of the waterway.

The St. Clair Lake-Six Mile Lake Natural Area is a 17-acre parcel of land east of Ellsworth located on the west side of the channel connecting the two lakes. The natural area is one of the longest stretches of underdeveloped shoreline in the Elk River



Ellsworth: Helping to dedicate the St. Clair Lake-Six Mile Lake Natural Area are (from left) Heidi Dexter of the Little Traverse Conservancy, co-chair of the St. Clair Lake-Six Mile Lake Natural Area steering committee JoAnne Beemon, and committee members Harold Shirey, Rick Beemon, Ron Tshudy and Cherie Hogan. The conservancy received a \$30,000 anonymous donation for the area. (NEWS-REVIEW photo by Tamara Burley)

Watershed. It links Six Mile Lake and St. Clair Lake. Made up of mostly wetlands, the area basically is between the south arm of Lake Charlevoix and Grand Traverse Bay.