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Review copy requests should be sent to:

Kristina Stonehill
 Promotions Manager
 Wayne State University Press
 4809 Woodward Avenue
 Detroit, Michigan 48201-1309
 (313) 577-6127 Phone
 (313) 577-6131 Fax
 kristina.stonehill@wayne.edu

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Saving Arcadia

A Story of Conservation and Community in the Great Lakes

Heather Shumaker

"*Saving Arcadia* is an essential portrait of the most rewarding work there is: saving the land we love and telling its story even as the land changes us."

—DOUG STANTON, NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR AND CO-FOUNDER OF THE NATIONAL WRITERS SERIES IN TRAVERSE CITY

Saving Arcadia: A Story of Conservation and Community in the Great Lakes is a suspenseful and intimate land conservation adventure story set in the Great Lakes heartland. The story spans more than forty years, following the fate of a magnificent sand dune on Lake Michigan and the people who care about it. Author and narrator Heather Shumaker shares the remarkable untold stories behind protecting land and creating new nature preserves. Written in a compelling narrative style, the book is intended in part as a case study for landscape-level conservation and documents the challenges of integrating economic livelihoods into conservation and what it really means to "preserve" land over time.

This is the story of a small band of determined townspeople and how far they went to save beloved land and endangered species from the grip of a powerful corporation. *Saving Arcadia* is a narrative with roots as deep as the trees the community is trying to save; something set in motion before the author was even born. And yet, Shumaker gives a human face to the changing nature of land conservation in the twenty-first century. Throughout this chronicle we meet people like Elaine, a nineteen-year-old farm wife; Dori, a lakeside innkeeper; and Glen, the director of the local land trust. Together with hundreds of others they cross cultural barriers and learn to help one another in an effort to win back the six-thousand-acre landscape taken over by Consumers Power that is now facing grave devastation. The result is a triumph of community that includes working farms, local businesses, summer visitors, year-round residents, and a network of land stewards.

A work of creative nonfiction, *Saving Arcadia* explores ideas about nature and community, and anyone from scholars of ecology and conservation biology to readers of naturalist writing can gain from Arcadia's story.



Heather Shumaker has worked in land conservation for two decades, and was coastal program director for protecting Arcadia Dunes. She has a master of science degree in land resources from the University of Wisconsin–Madison and is a national speaker and author of *It's OK Not to Share* and *It's OK to Go Up the Slide*. She lives in northern Michigan with her family.