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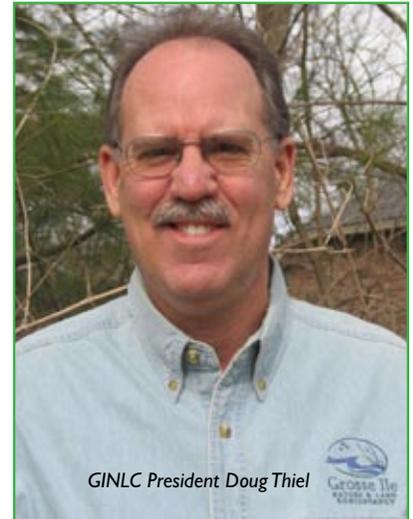
SPRING, 2012

*the newsletter of the Grosse Ile Nature and Land Conservancy*

*"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."  
—Margaret Mead*

**REFLECTIONS FROM THE PRESIDENT** *by Doug Thiel*

As I start my second tour of duty as the President of the Grosse Ile Nature and Land Conservancy (GINLC) I would like to recognize the tremendous contributions of Liz Hugel who served as President of the organization for the past five years. She guided GINLC with tremendous vision, boundless energy, and enthusiasm. Whenever a project lacked a leader she stepped up to coordinate the project and whenever one of our committees needed assistance on something she was always there to help. Our by-laws dictate that all of the officers of the GINLC and Board members take a one-year sabbatical after nine years of service. Therefore, she is taking a much deserved break. I am sure she will be active again with the Conservancy come next January. Many wonderful programs were conducted and projects completed during her tenure. Liz, thank you for all you have done!



GINLC President Doug Thiel

In January and February the Board met to develop our priorities for 2012. Here is a brief summary of our major projects for this year:

*Landscape For Learning*— This is a continuing multi-year project that is a partnership between the Grosse Ile School District and the Grosse Ile Nature and Land Conservancy. It involves the creation of outdoor learning areas for students on the school grounds of a number of Grosse Ile Schools. This year we look to complete the Geology Rocks Project at both Meridian Elementary School and the Middle School.

*Gibraltar Bay Unit/Nature Area*— GINLC volunteers will once again act as hosts for the public and for various groups that want to visit this part of the International Wildlife Refuge. We will be continuing our very successful guided nature walks with Natalie Ray at the Nature Area throughout the spring, summer and fall. Karen Skrocki, our Education Chairperson, is also lining up some additional nature-related speakers during the year. Look for announcements on our website [www.ginlc.org](http://www.ginlc.org) and in the *Ile Camera*.

*Invasive Species*— Working in partnership with Federal, State, County, Township officials, and experts from private companies, GINLC will be working on controlling Phragmites and Common Buckthorn on various properties we own across Grosse Ile.

*New Macomb Overlook Signs*— We are planning to install updated signs and new holders to protect them from the elements at the Detroit River overlook at the east end of Macomb Street.



*continued on page 8*

**Gibraltar Bay Unit  
Detroit River  
International Wildlife  
Refuge/Nature Area**  
Open Sundays 1-4PM  
May 6- October 28  
Interpretive Walks tba

**Refuge/ Nature Area  
Volunteers**  
Sign up and training  
**BREAKFAST**  
Centennial Farm  
9AM -11AM  
May 5

**Kayak Tour**  
depart from Gibraltar Bay  
June 10  
(details tba)

**Watch email alerts  
Stewardship work  
parties**  
Intrepid Pond  
Kobiljak-donated property  
April and May

**Looking ahead  
Annual Meeting**  
November 10  
10AM -Noon

## ANNUAL MEETING

Over 40 people attended the Conservancy's Annual Meeting at Centennial Farm on Saturday, November 5th. Everyone enjoyed a continental breakfast while President Liz Hugel presented an overview of the State of the Conservancy. Members Paul Gloor, Jo-Anne Gronlund and Eric Michael were elected and welcomed to the GINLC Board of Directors.

Stewardship Chair Doug Thiel provided a summary of the major efforts undertaken in 2011, including development of a property enhancement plan for the Kobiljak-donated property, prescribed burn of Phragmites at the BASF-donated Property, tree plantings at the Gray's Drive pothole and Milfoil Treatment at Intrepid Pond. Eagle Scout candidate Josh Shah spoke about his project, done with training by GINLC, to identify and document champion trees on Grosse Ile.

Lisa Appel (l) presents Joan Jones with the MAEOE Recognition Award for Dr. Bruce Jones.



Several awards were presented including the Michigan Alliance for Environmental and Outdoor Education Recognition Award to the late Dr. Bruce Jones, founding member, for his excellence in organizing and promoting environmental education and conservation in the lower Detroit River and southeast Michigan. Joan Jones received the keepsake bronze moose from MAEOE.

The attendees enjoyed two very interesting presentations. Lisa Appel, Coordinator of Watershed Education at the Cranbrook Institute of Science presented "Elements of Native Landscaping, GINLC Thorofare Canal Property Vegetation Enhancement," which she put together as her capstone project in fulfillment of requirements to become an MSU Extension Conservation Steward.

Bert Urbani and John Leon, who jointly received the GINLC 2010 Conservationist Award, presented "If You Plant It, They Will Come" about their personal experiences with native plantings at their Grosse Ile home. The presentation included photos of their transformation of suburban lawn to mini-prairie.



Margarete and Ingo Hasserodt  
Lifetime Achievement Honorees

The GINLC Lifetime Achievement Award was presented to founding member Ingo Hasserodt and long-time board member Margarete Hasserodt. Together they have been involved in every facet of the Conservancy since its inception. Over the years their combined contributions to land acquisition, property stewardship, education, the newsletter and the transformation of the Nike Base to a community nature area have built an incredible foundation for our organization. The Conservancy membership thanks Margarete and Ingo for their tremendous dedication!



The GINLC 2011 Conservationist Award was presented to Ken Tilp, who has gone far beyond expectations for contributing to the preservation, conservation and natural beauty of Grosse Ile. In the last few years Ken has shown great initiative in making progress with our stewardship projects. He organized work crews at several Conservancy-owned properties including the donated BASF (Meridian) and Kobiljak properties (Thorofare), and the township's Intrepid Pond property which we assist in stewarding. In 2011 he participated in every stewardship work "party," while saving money in his rainy-day job as GINLC Treasurer. We appreciate Ken's efforts in so many ways!



### *Did You Know?*

Sierra Club magazine, Nov./Dec. 2011  
Compiled from Margarete Hasserodt



Increased use of soybeans that have been genetically modified to tolerate herbicides has WIPED OUT MILKWEED from 100 million acres of U.S. farmland—a disaster for milkweed-dependent monarch butterflies.

## KAYAK THE BAY

GINLC is partnering with Riverside Kayak Connection, Friends of the Detroit River and Grosse Ile Township to host a kayaking event on Sunday June 10. As we go to press the event is still in the planning stages. Look for an announcement in May in the Ile Camera, or contact Paul Gloor at [jpgloor@comcast.net](mailto:jpgloor@comcast.net).

## REFUGE VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

The Gibraltar Bay Unit of the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge will reopen on Sunday afternoons from 1-4PM, starting Sunday May 6th. Volunteers will be needed to host each "Open House." Volunteers are also needed for stewardship activities. Bring your date book and join us for breakfast on Saturday May 5 at 9AM at Centennial Farm for sign-up and training. Contact Liz Hugel at [hugel@umich.edu](mailto:hugel@umich.edu) with questions.

## Conservancy Lands Growing

by Ingo Hasserodt, Land Acquisition Chair

The Conservancy received two wooded lots on the Island during the last 12 months. The family of Salem and Lilian Darany donated their empty wooded lot on Rucker Road and the family of Paul and Maureen Anderson their 3.43 acre portion of the open space south of Manchester Road, where the Conservancy already owns 3.43 acres originally donated by the family of William and Gail Jones. We thank them for their generosity.

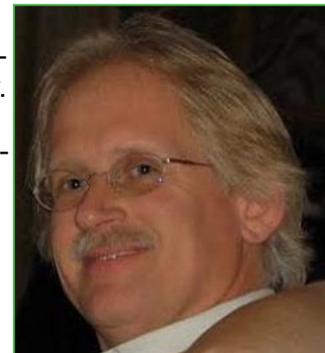
With the Township's purchase this year with Open Space funds of 47 acres, all the remaining wooded parcels between Rucker Road and Manchester are now protected.

Now that the Fish and Wildlife Service has purchased Sugar Island for the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge, Grosse Ile is really becoming a green wonderland.

Bruce Jones's vision of the Conservation Crescent is now a reality.

## MEET OUR NEW BOARD MEMBERS

**ERIC MICHAEL**'s passion for Grosse Ile started a couple of years ago when he and his wife, Jean, who lived in Allen Park, made a long bike ride on Grosse Ile. They became very excited by all of the natural areas, water vistas and abundant wildlife and decided that Grosse Ile would be a great place to live. That started the process of finding the right home. Early last spring their dream home on Church Road was discovered and Eric joined the Conservancy board to give back to the community.



Eric has a strong interest in stewardship activities and is, therefore, on that committee. He works at Jack Demmer Collision as a Master Technician and has vast knowledge of all makes and models of vehicles. He has modified vehicles with handicap equipment, driver educational controls, after-market products and police equipment. He also is a six category certified welder and his mechanical expertise is already being put to good use to keep GINLC's property maintenance equipment in good working order.

Eric is also the drummer for the "Full Speed Ahead Band."

**JO-ANNE GRONLUND** moved to Grosse Ile in 1968 with her husband, Bob. Their love of living on the water and the magical beauty of Swan Island after a snowstorm convinced them they had found "home." They raised three daughters with an appreciation for nature due to living their childhood on the island.

Jo-Anne worked as a secretary at Meridian Elementary School from 1976 until her retirement in 2005. She is an active member of the Grosse Ile Presbyterian Church as well as the Grosse Ile Inter-Faith Council of Churches. Her interest in the GINLC is a natural extension from living on the island. Summers spent sailing on Lake Erie and the Detroit River have shown her the beauty that Downriver Detroit has to offer. She recognizes the benefits that organizations and activists can have to improve water quality and habitat and looks forward to working with GINLC to protect the environment.



**PAUL GLOOR**, his wife Julie, daughter Keira and dog Calvin moved to Grosse Ile in June, 2007 leaving his oldest daughter, Megan, in school in Wisconsin. He is currently working for BASF Corporation. He grew up on a family dairy farm in southwest Ontario, where he grew to love the outdoors, and received his bachelor's degree and PhD in Chemical Engineering at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario. Paul and his family moved from Canada to Wisconsin in 1993 and enjoy four seasons of outdoor activities including canoeing, kayaking, cycling, skiing and golf. You can often see Paul and Calvin on the river in their kayak or walking through the open spaces. "I look forward to participating on the board and in activities of GINLC," says Paul.



This past November, while attending the annual meeting, my memory returned to a meeting held on the first Saturday in November after the founding of the Grosse Ile Nature and Land Conservancy. Carol Woodring and I were the designated organizers of this first annual meeting. It was held at what is now the Hoy Pan Restaurant on Macomb. Like many significant events in the past, sometimes they seem like yesterday.

The passing of Bruce Jones, our “founding father,” has brought moments of deep reflection and appreciation for what began years ago in Bruce’s home. Bruce’s wife Joan wondered at the time if anyone would be interested in a group organized to retain the Island’s unique environment. The founding of the Conservancy was an idea that many felt was almost too late for Grosse Ile, but we agreed it was “better late than never.”

The group that came together in the early 90’s had one common bond: to conserve the character and integrity of Grosse Ile. There had been talk about a mobile home park down at the old Navy base while more and more new homes were going up in the old forests. Bruce set the tone and helped us to define the goals and mission of the Conservancy around the big table at the Historical Society building on East River. Educating the community was going to be a big part of the foundation and sustenance of the Conservancy. We all participated in this first hand. It was necessary to explain to the residents of Grosse Ile that the conservation of land was a benefit that would increase the value of our property. Conserving open space with less development would be a positive, not a negative. Island residents were concerned that this process would take away a tax base and thus increase property taxes, so a booth was set up at the Azalea fes-

tival the following May to address these concerns. Bruce was at the forefront of educating us and our community. The first land donated to the Conservancy was the BASF property at the North end of the Island. It needed reclamation and stewardship. I remember planting flower bulbs by the roadside with Margarete Hasserodt one beautiful spring day. I was very pleased to see the film at the 2011 annual meeting about restoring that property with a controlled burn. Bruce had advocated for this form of restoration and revitalization.

Mary Ginnebaugh and I worked very hard on the Conservancy logo design which still represents GINLC. There were many trips to Gibraltar to the engravers and discussions at Water’s Edge, where the Board meetings were held. We all wanted to get the logo just right to clearly represent our mission. I think we did!

I was Stewardship Chair for a term, in those early years. Talk about education! Walking the donated properties, cleaning them and putting up our signs, was a big responsibility. The donation of property to the Conservancy took on great importance. Kurt Kobiljak, Ingo Hasserodt and Bruce worked tirelessly on the early acquisitions of island property through donations to the Conservancy. The stewardship of new properties made our commitment to the future of Grosse Ile a reality and put the Conservancy to work.

It remains a work in progress. I commend the present members of the Board and thank you all for continuing the mission of the Grosse Ile Nature and Land Conservancy. There is no better memorial for Dr. Bruce Jones than the education he provided us and the preservation of the island he loved.

## EXCITING TEACHING-LEARNING OPPORTUNITY

by Ken Tilp

With the Board’s recent approval of an “Environmental Project Award”, Grosse Ile students, teachers, Conservancy members and citizens can propose an environmental project that may be funded by the Dr. Bruce Jones Memorial Fund. Dr. Jones greatly encouraged young peoples’ outdoor activities related to the environment.

A project proposal should be clearly defined, including the environmental impact; the number of people reached in a teaching/learning situation; activities involved; materials and

their cost; volunteers required, if any; expected beginning and ending dates; and if additional funding is available.

The Conservancy has allotted a maximum of \$500 annually for awards which will be granted on a competitive basis.

For complete information and details about the Environmental Project Awards visit [www.GINLC.org](http://www.GINLC.org) or contact Ken Tilp 734-675-7633, or Doug Thiel 734-255-0957.

# CONSERVANCY PROPERTY AND OPEN SPACE – WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

by Pat Selby

Perhaps for many readers of this newsletter, the answer to that question is obvious and the distinctions between the two properties are well understood. But members of the board have noticed that there is some confusion in the community between the two types of properties, or perhaps a blending of the two in island residents' minds. Perhaps the following will help if you run across someone similarly confused.

The first significant difference is how land is acquired. The Open Space program was established by township voters to purchase lands with funds dedicated to that purpose, by way of the open space millage. The Conservancy was established in 1993 to acquire land by donation.

The existence of the two entities also results in different responsibilities in ownership and maintenance. The taxpayers of Grosse Ile have approved millages for maintenance. The Open Space/Greenways Committee provides oversight of the properties, and the Department of Public Services performs or contracts necessary maintenance.

The Conservancy board is responsible for accepting or declining offers of donated property. In addition, GINLC has a much lower budget, volunteer-only operation. With the exception of contracting services members are unable to perform, all maintenance activities are carried out by volunteers. No township money is used to maintain Conservancy-owned property, although many, many hours by GINLC volunteers have gone into improving and maintaining township-owned areas like Intrepid Pond.

The Conservancy is not prohibited from purchasing land, and it has done so through the Michigan land bank program. That permits purchase of tax-forfeited properties at minimal cost. However, our budget does not currently permit large scale purchases; it is more oriented toward projects to restore and maintain existing properties and educational programs.

It is also important to note the similarities and common interests between the two programs. The Conservancy's stated purposes include "preserving and stewarding the area's natural resources for the benefit of the general public." While the open-space purchase millages were silent on purpose, a Grosse Ile ordinance states that the land is to be "preserved for the enjoyment and benefit of all residents of the Township, [and] to be used as nature preserves and passive recreation areas."

Another similarity is that, to a degree, the public has the right of access to these lands. Residents of the island are in a sense all owners of the Open Space property. How that translates to access, trails, and other use is an ongoing discussion within the township.

The Conservancy's existence as a tax-exempt, non-profit, charitable organization does obligate it to make land it owns available to the general public. However, by law, such access is limited to "low impact, nondestructive activities." If an individual accessing Conservancy land exceeds that limitation, the organization has a right to take action to protect its property. And where land is fragile or there are other reasons to limit access (wildlife issues, wetlands), the Conservancy may limit access. Except in cases of conservation easements, the Conservancy owns its lands outright, and can and does assert all its rights as the landowner. Regardless of whether an open stand of woods or wetlands belongs to the township or the Conservancy, or has been left wild by its private owner, we are blessed to live in a community with so much green space and wildlife habitat.

*Pat Selby, VP of GINLC, also serves on the township Open Space/Greenways committee. Feel free to contact her at [plselby@gmail.com](mailto:plselby@gmail.com) with any questions or comments about the issues raised in this article.*



## GROSSE ILE NATURE AND LAND CONSERVANCY SCHOLARSHIP

The Conservancy has established a scholarship in honor of Dr. Bruce D. Jones, one of the founding members of the Conservancy. Graduating Grosse Ile High School seniors may compete for this annual scholarship funded by the Dr. Bruce D. Jones Memorial Fund. The annual scholarship will be funded at a \$500 level.

The scholarship will be awarded based on the student's participation in projects or activities associated with protecting or enhancing the natural environment and his/her plans to do so in the future. For complete information, applications may be obtained at the High School counseling office or at [www.GINLC.org](http://www.GINLC.org).



## BASF/WACKMAN TRAIL AND OBSERVATION DECK

by Ken Tilp

The Conservancy has embarked on a major project on the BASF/Wackman property—a double wide lot located on Meridian Road, north of Bridge Road. Plans call for a trail from the road to an observation deck located near the water's edge. It will be an excellent location for observing our winged friends at all times of the year.

Starting at the street, a wood chip trail has been laid half way. The next section will require a 70' long elevated boardwalk to traverse a wetland. The remaining distance will again be a wood chip covered trail. The observation deck will be 8' by 12', with benches and guard rails.

The BASF Corporation has generously donated \$5000 and provided architectural drawings for the boardwalk and observation deck. The remaining cost will be covered by GINLC.

You may recall that a controlled burn, funded by a grant from Freshwater Future, was done last summer to remove the invasive Phragmites. Two more years of spraying surviving Phragmites are recommended to complete their permanent removal.

While professional help will be engaged to build the footings and platforms for the boardwalk and observation deck, we will rely on volunteer help to assist them in order to minimize the costs. Volunteers will also finish laying the wood chip trails.

## EDUCATION CORNER

Our 2011 environmental education program was a huge success. Funds from the Colina Foundation were used to kickoff a series of three outdoor learning experiences. These popular "2nd Sunday" events were initiated for people to "get the kids outdoors." We hired professional nature interpreter Natalie Ray to lead activities and we were delighted with her preparation, presentation and excellent rapport with visitors. Although geared to kids, participants were pre-K to gray. With the initial success of the programming the board agreed to fund additional events led by Ms. Ray.

Most of these educational programs were held at the Gibraltar Bay Unit of the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge. The last scheduled event was an Owl Prowl at Centennial Farm. Interest was so high for this event that the GINLC board agreed to fund three

sessions so that group size was manageable and more kids could be accommodated.

Plans are underway for 2012 events:

Sunday, May 5  
1:00PM  
Spring at the Refuge

Saturday, May 19  
8:00AM  
Birds at the Bay

Check your Ile Camera for announcements. We will also post dates in Facebook and on our [ginlc.org](http://ginlc.org) calendar as they become available.

## KOBILJAK PROPERTY ENHANCEMENT

by Ken Tilp

Designs and plans are in place to enhance the Kobiljak property, just north of Highland on Thorofare, and fronting the Canal, to increase native vegetation and to maximize the site for wildlife habitat. Additionally, we want to make it aesthetically pleasing where residents can enjoy a respite from daily life while enjoying the beauty and tranquility of the place. The property—seventy feet wide by about three hundred feet deep—was donated to the Conservancy by Drs. Josef and Ursula Kobiljak in 2001.

With the help of a landscape specialist we have selected 41 trees and major bushes of 11 different varieties and designated their placement on the property. Plans call for a wood chip path leading from the street to the canal. We are working with the Township to assure compliance with all applicable township ordinances and hope to complete the first phase of the project this spring.

Phase 2 will take place in Spring 2013. We will plant groundcover, woodland undergrowth plants, grasses and sedges. Included will be wildflowers. A butterfly meadow will occupy an open area near the canal. To enhance the shoreline and make it more natural we will remove the bricks and pieces of concrete scattered there and replace it with natural rock.

The Conservancy will fully fund this project and accomplish it with volunteer help. You're more than welcome to answer the call for help!



*Kids were fascinated by the softness of the owl displayed at the GINLC Owl Prowl in November 2011. Three prowls were held in November to accommodate community interest.*

**Kobiljak-donated Property Lot Project** – We plan to start work on a two-year project to create a more aesthetically pleasing and ecologically diverse property owned by GINLC on Thorofare. The project is broken down into five distinct zones including a walking path, wooded area, woodland edge, butterfly meadow and a shoreline area along the Thorofare Canal. Several hundred trees, shrubs and perennial flowers will be planted by GINLC volunteers and others working in cooperation with our organization.

**BASF Lots Project** – An ambitious plan was developed last year to complete a walking path, boardwalk and wildlife observation deck overlooking the Hennepin Marsh on the Detroit River. This year we will be implementing the plan. BASF Corporation and GINLC will be jointly funding the project. Once completed, it will provide the public with an excellent wildlife viewing opportunity.

**Memorial Tree and Plaque**— A memorial tree will be planted and a plaque installed in honor of Dr. Bruce Jones, a founding member and tremendous contributor to our organization over the past 18 years, who passed away last September. He was a very close friend of mine and I miss his passion, energy and ideas for improving the environment and education of children on environmental issues.

As you can see, we have established a very ambitious set of goals. We can use your help to complete these goals during 2012 as volunteers on projects and through your financial support. If you would like to help, have questions, or suggestions for future projects you can contact us through our website at [www.ginlc.org](http://www.ginlc.org), or through any one of the board members listed on this page of the newsletter. On behalf of the GINLC Board, I would like to thank all of you for your continuing support of the our efforts!

To receive event notices and newsletters by email, contact us at [info@ginlc.org](mailto:info@ginlc.org)



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Keith Zook



To join the Grosse Ile Nature & Land Conservancy call Greg Roginski 734.676.6554  
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