



# the VOYAGEUR

FALL, 2012

the newsletter of the Grosse Ile Nature and Land Conservancy

VOLUME 20  
NUMBER 3

*"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*

## Kids Discovery:

**OWL PROWL**  
Centennial Farm  
Friday, November 2  
7PM

Registration Required  
(734) 624-7993

**WINTER BIRDS**  
10 AM  
Saturday, December 1  
Westcroft Gardens

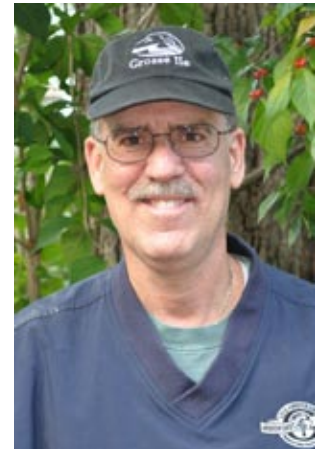
**ANNUAL MEETING**  
Saturday, November 10  
10AM-12 NOON  
Centennial Farm

**PRESENTATION:**  
Julie Stoneman  
Executive Director  
Heart of the Lakes

## REFLECTIONS FROM THE PRESIDENT

by Doug Thiel

The Grosse Ile Nature and Land Conservancy has had another extremely busy year. We will once again review our various activities and the status of our various projects at our annual meeting on November 10, 2012. All of you are cordially invited. Please see additional information on the annual meeting elsewhere in this newsletter. I have a few miscellaneous items I wanted to cover in this communication where individuals can take action and have a positive impact on our community:



- As I travel around the island, it is very disturbing to see the amount of litter present. There are numerous homeowners who border open space parcels and township-owned land who, with little effort, could help keep these areas litter free. If more residents would pick up litter in front of, and in the areas around their homes, this would make a major improvement in the appearance of our community.
- Over the past five years we have lost thousands of trees to the Emerald Ash Borer on the island. As a homeowner, please consider replacing some of these trees with native tree species that will thrive on Grosse Ile. Consult the GINLC website, on the Stewardship page, for suitable native tree species choices. Gorham and Sons, Schoedels and Westcroft Gardens are local nurseries that maintain native tree species stock and fall is an ideal time to plant, with good deals on trees as nurseries move out their remaining stock. This effort will help to keep Grosse Ile green, provide habitat for wildlife and will help to moderate temperature extremes.
- While many homeowners have good intentions, they are slowly killing their trees by improperly mulching them. The following is an excellent reference on proper tree mulching techniques:  
[http://www.bissettnursery.com/Education/Downloads/mulching\\_techniques.pdf](http://www.bissettnursery.com/Education/Downloads/mulching_techniques.pdf)
- To help eliminate the invasive Phragmites growing in drainage ditches on your property and to assist in the overall effort in southeastern Michigan to reduce the damage these plants cause, please visit:  
[http://www.nohlc.org/uploads/6/6/4/1/6641558/phragmites\\_doc\\_final.pdf](http://www.nohlc.org/uploads/6/6/4/1/6641558/phragmites_doc_final.pdf)

Our website also has a great deal of information on this subject. Look on the Stewardship webpage.

Volunteer your time and energy on one or more of our many projects and activities outlined in this, and previous newsletters. If you have an interest in a particular area, please contact a member of the GINLC Board and they can help direct you to the right person.

Get outside and enjoy the beautiful fall season! I hope to see all of you at our November annual meeting



# NEXT PHASE OF THOROFARE CANAL PROPERTY IMPROVEMENT PROJECT COMPLETED

by Doug Thiel

In June, the Conservancy was approached by Jack Adams, who lives on Grosse and is a member of Boy Scout Troop 1659 in Riverview. He was interested in pursuing an Eagle Scout project and wondered if there were any possible projects that the Conservancy had available.

The timing was perfect, as we were ready to work on the next phase of the Thorofare Canal Property Improvement Project which involved the rehabilitation of the shoreline bordering the Thorofare Canal.

Our summer newsletter reviewed Phase I of the project. The shoreline was strewn with concrete pieces, cinder blocks, broken bricks and other man-made debris. The vegetation along the shoreline was a mass of poison ivy and other unattractive plants. After visiting the site with Jack and reviewing the scope of the project, he was very excited about working on it. He reviewed the project with his troop leaders and was given the necessary approval



The improved shoreline along Thorofare Canal was the Eagle Scout project of Jack Adams.

to proceed.

Jack drew up a detailed plan after consulting with Lisa Appel (a Naturalist who consults with GINLC), who developed the overall site improvement plan. The plan was approved by GINLC and the work was completed during August, September and October. The man-made debris was replaced with natural rock, and a variety of native species were planted along the shoreline in a

mulched bed. A key feature of the improved shoreline is a wildlife ramp to allow movement by various animal species from the water onto the land. Most of the shoreline along the canal in this area is lined with break walls which inhibits the movement of wildlife. The completed project has resulted in a much more aesthetically pleasing and wildlife friendly shoreline.

The Conservancy salutes Jack on a project well done!

## JOSH SHAH'S EAGLE SCOUT PROJECT

Eagle Scout candidate Josh Shah approached the Conservancy this spring asking for assistance in completing his project of identifying the locations of the largest specimens of trees native to Grosse Ile. His project was the idea of Yi-Chia Schmaeman. Josh located the largest specimens of various trees and developed a brochure that lists the trees, with a brief description and GPS location of each. These brochures are available at the Township Hall and through the Conservancy. In the field, the trees are identified with a metal pole to which a laminated summary sheet is attached which describes the features of the trees and their various uses by wildlife and man.

This project was completed under the guidance of Pamela Frucci, with technical and financial support from the Conservancy and the help of other scouts from Josh's troop. This is an excellent educational tool for residents who would like to learn about the various tree species on Grosse Ile.



Photo by Karen Skrocki

## DELRAY STUDENTS VISIT

by Karen Skrocki

On August 6, GINLC hosted 35 students and teachers at the Gibraltar Bay Unit of the International Wildlife Refuge. They ranged from 3rd graders to high school students and spent the time participating in nature studies. A tour was given by naturalist Natalie Ray and learning stations were set up by Grosse Ile Animal Control Officer Julie Cortis, Jamie Lanier of the Fish and Wildlife Service (water pollution game) and nature photos by Karen Skrocki.

Many thanks to GINLC members and the Grosse Ile Rotary who provided support and assistance. It was a great morning for all.

## CLEAN-UP AT THE GIBRALTAR BAY UNIT OF THE IWR AND AIRPORT NATURE AREA

July 21 was the clean-up date for the GBU. Board members were joined by volunteers for the project.

Everyone split up, with some spending their time putting the second coat of paint on the shed that had been provided by the US Fish and Wildlife group. It is anticipated, hopefully, that further painting will not be required for a minimum of 5 - 8 years. A great job was done, even though the tedious job of painting the grooves had to be done using a brush.



*Dennis O'Brien painting the shed.*

Others spent their time with heavy brush trimmers clearing the path down to the observation deck situated at the marsh pond located on the West side of the roadway about midway between the parking lot and the old seaplane base. Later joined by the painters, the clearing made it possible to again see the pond from the deck.

*Liz Hugel leading the way to clearing the observation deck.*

Somehow, as hot as it was that day, there was still energy to clear out the growth in front of two benches located on the East side of the road and overlooking Gibraltar Bay and a portion of the lotus beds (see before and after pictures below). The benches were used frequently during the following month when visitors came from all over Southeast Michigan to see and photograph the American Lotus.



A big THANKS goes out to Manfred Egerer, Liz Hugel, Fred Pepper, Dennis O'Brien and Art Payette. Also a big thanks to Jerry Hugel, Liz's father, who helped apply the first coat on the shed when he visited from New York earlier in July.

*Job well done (l to r): Art Payette, Manfred Egerer and Fred Pepper*





# Grosse Ile Nature and Land Conservancy Fall 2012 Schedule of Events

Sunday, October 14 @ 1:00 pm: *Why Fall is Cool* - Come see and learn what the plants and animals are doing in autumn to prepare for the winter, and what it is that brings about these changes. Share some cider and donuts with us to celebrate!

Location: *Gibraltar Bay Unit of the Detroit International Wildlife Refuge on East River Rd, 1/2 mile south of Groh Rd on Grosse Ile*

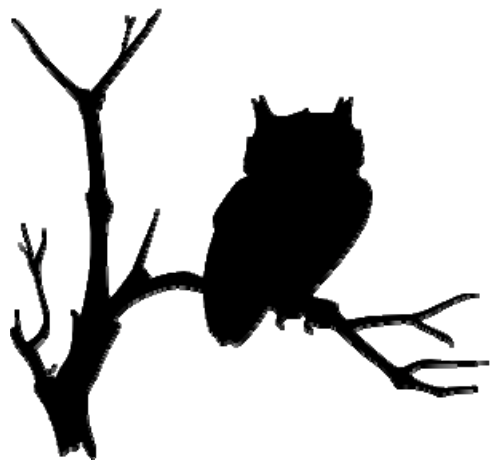
Friday, November 2 @ 7:00 pm: *Owl Prowl* - Join us for a short indoor presentation and owl pellet dissection, followed by a walk to call and listen for resident owls. Whooooo will we find??? **Registration Required**

Location: *Grosse Ile Centennial Farm, 25797 Third St, Grosse Ile*  
\*Dress for the weather, we will be outside much of the time

Saturday, December 1 @ 10:00 am: *Winter Birds of Westcroft* - The characteristics and landscaping of Michigan's oldest locally-owned family farm offer the perfect habitat for these "snowbirds." Come see who's spending the winter with us! Bring binoculars if you have them.

Location: *Westcroft Gardens, 21803 West River Rd, Grosse Ile*

**For more information  
or to register for a program  
contact Natalie Ray at 734-624-7993**



## MEMBERSHIP DONATIONS RECEIVED 10/1/2011- 9/30/2012

BASF Corporation	Kevin & Margaret Harris	James & Elaine Parker
Grosse Ile Garden Club	Rob & Susie Harrison	Arthur & Doreene Payette
Grosse Ile Bridge Co.	Dr. Brian & Katie Hartwell	Fred Pepper
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S.K. & Heidi Harb	Dominic & Liz Palazzolo	
	James & Diane Parker	

# Annual Meeting – November 10

The Grosse Ile Nature and Land Conservancy will be holding their annual meeting on Saturday, November 10, from 10 -12:00 noon at the Centennial Farm Community Building. “Conservancy” members will be reviewing progress on a wide variety of projects that were undertaken during the year and their plans for next year. Julie Stoneman, Executive Director of the Heart of the Lakes will be the guest speaker. The Heart of the Lakes is a statewide organization that works with local and regional conservancies like the Grosse Ile Nature and Land Conservancy to help protect ecologically valuable property across the State of Michigan. A complimentary continental breakfast will be available. All citizens of Grosse Ile are cordially invited. This is your chance to learn about the various projects and activities that the “Conservancy” is working on to improve the quality of life on Grosse Ile.

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



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734.552.8950  
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Greg Roginski  
Courtney Solenberger-McNeill  
Karen Skrocki  
Keith Zook



To join the Grosse Ile Nature & Land Conservancy call Greg Roginski 734.676.6554  
To make a donation or to sign up for a work party, call Ken Tilt: 734.675.7633

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