

The 2012 – 2013 Weiss Salmon Project was very successful to say the least. Weiss fourth graders released 149 Chinook salmon into the Huron River on May 3, 2013. This was the highest annual survival rate (64%) for the project yet. Mr. Bouwman appreciated receipt of the award because although “The DNR provides the salmon eggs and food to cover the duration of the project. We need to cover the costs for the filter media, tank treatments, water testing kits, etc. I’d like to thank GINLC for their generous contribution to our project. Weiss Elementary has a high economically disadvantaged population, and our students and parents/guardians have never been charged to participate in this project. I plan to keep it that way.” The Weiss Salmon Project is scheduled to begin again in early November 2013. There are lots of pictures and videos of the project on-line, just search “Weiss Salmon Project” to learn more.



Our Stewardship Committee participated in Island CleanUp and performed annual inspections of our preserved lands.

To receive event notices and newsletters by email, contact us at info@ginlc.org



To make a donation, call
John Leon: 734.671.0125

To sign up for a work party, call
Eric Michael: 313.995.6580
or Art Payette: 734.671.0540

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VOLUME 21
NUMBER 2

Gibraltar Bay Open House
Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge & Airport Nature Areas
Open every Sunday 1-4 pm
From May 5th to Oct. 27th
Also open: 4 to 8pm on
August 8th & 22nd

Summer Nature Programs
Goodnight Marsh
Refuge/Airport Nature Areas
Saturday, Aug. 3 @ 7:30 pm

Walk to the Lovely Lotus
Refuge/Airport Nature Areas
Sunday, August 11 @ 2 pm

Kids Discovery: Incredible Insects
Refuge/Airport Nature Areas
Sunday, Sept. 8 @ 2 pm

Looking ahead
ANNUAL MEETING
November 2 @ 10 am
Centennial Farm

Autumn Nature Programs
Owl Prowl
Saturday, Nov. 2 @ 6:30 pm
Winter Birds
Saturday, Dec. 7 @ 10 am

the

VOYAGEUR

the newsletter of the Grosse Ile Nature and Land Conservancy

Summer, 2013

“Joy in looking and comprehending is nature's most beautiful gift.” - Albert Einstein

REFLECTIONS FROM THE PRESIDENT

by Liz Hugel

As summer finds its midpoint we’re stopping for a breather to recount for you some of what’s been happening in this whirlwind. This was likely the busiest spring season in our 20 years. Oops, like a spouse who’s too busy working and taking care of the kids, we didn’t take time to properly celebrate our anniversary! Our many projects and events, like kids, are keeping us fully engaged and focused on our mission and goals.

Education activities have hit records highs! In addition to programming, Courtney Solenberger-McNeill and the Education Committee handled the awards program, Earth Day, our Photo Contest and a Landscape for Learning project at GI Middle School. Last year our members asked for more programs geared to adult members. We heard the call and we’re delivering with great ideas, because we understand that it’s not just the kids who need to “get outdoors” and connect with nature. So this spring, even when we didn’t hear as many frogs calling on our nightly field trips as we had expected, or couldn’t identify with certainty some of the ones we did hear, the experiences were memorable, and for a few minutes, took a few decades away. Look inside for more info on some of these fun activities your membership dollars are supporting.

Speaking of **Membership** - Help! I ran out of time and didn’t send out reminder letters to those who didn’t renew. Please check your newsletter address sticker to see if your membership is in arrears. We really appreciate you being pro-active (see envelope inside) in sending in your membership dollars to support our mission and programs, so that we can focus on programs and stewardship. If you prefer to donate electronically, we accept credit card donations through PayPal (see our website) and bank-to-bank donations using Popmoney. Contact us at info@ginlc.org for assistance.

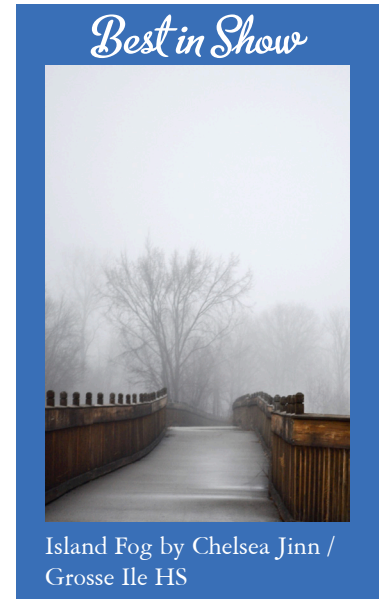
Stewardship activities also hit a record high this spring and included maintenance at our preserves led by Eric Michael, invasives control and trail work at the refuge coordinated by Art Payette with direction from US FWS, and several special projects.

While some of our activities are sweat-inducing or challenging, we had a fun time marching down Macomb last month in the **Islandfest** Parade. We brought a lot of smiles to island faces and we enjoyed our special guests (see pics!).

All-in all it’s been a rewarding year so far. I’m super grateful to board members who are being stretched and to the new board members who are already contributing a lot. So now let’s gear up to get going for the rest of our agenda for the year. Hope to see you at one of our events or around town enjoying the great outdoors and all it has to offer us.



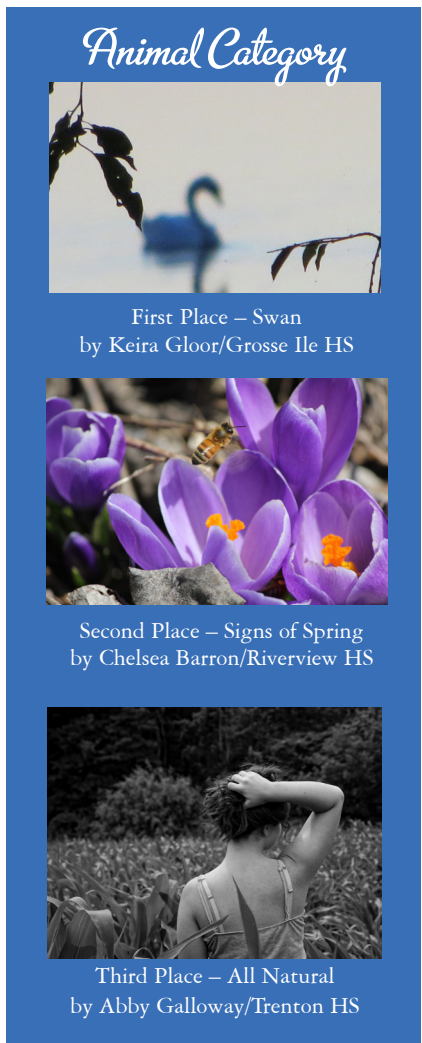
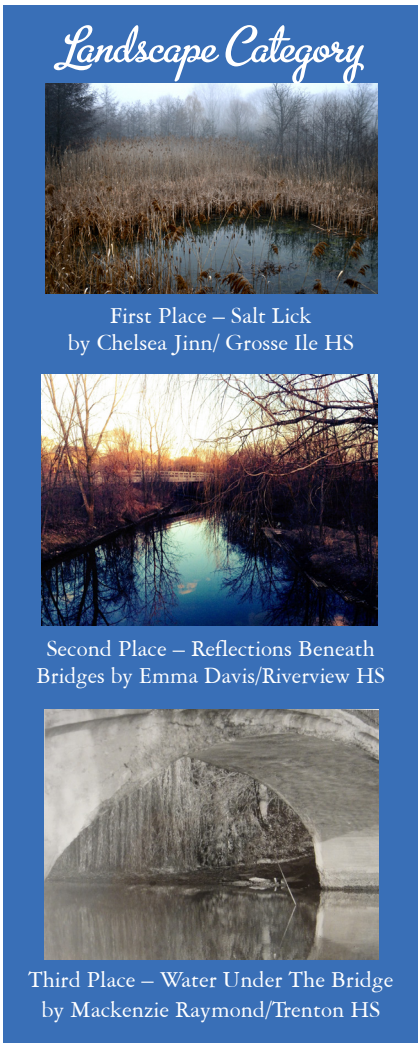
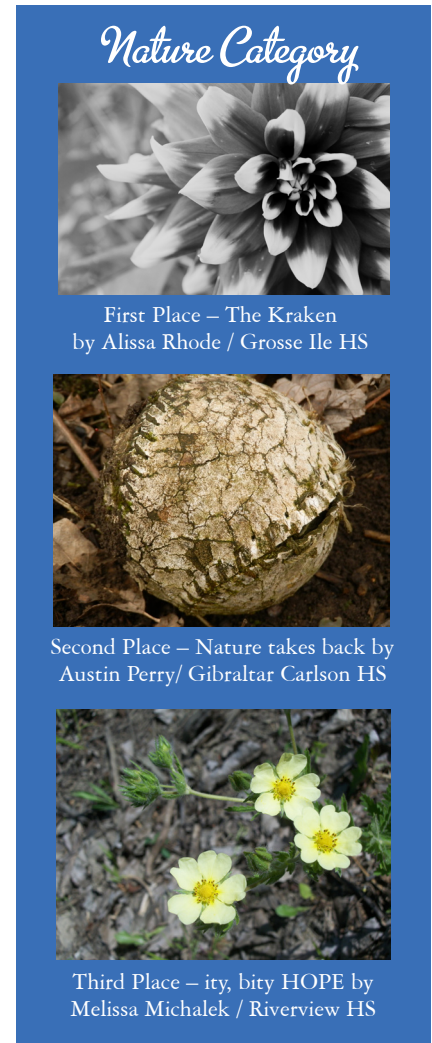
After an absence for a year our Earth Day Nature Photo Contest returned and blended right back into our lineup of educational activities. A total of 14 high school students from Grosse Ile, Trenton, Gibraltar and Riverview participated. Special thanks go to the teachers at each high school who helped us coordinate this activity: Eleni Ghawi at Grosse Ile, Rick Frye at Trenton, Ryan Donaldson at Gibraltar Carlson, and Amy Van Sickle at Riverview. These four made it happen!



Our panel of 3 judges included professional photographer, Greg Shamus, the official photographer for the Pittsburgh Penguins, who also has a studio in Wyandotte where he takes many types of portraits, including high school and family portraits. His work is also displayed at The Framery in Trenton and on his website, shamusphoto.com. Greg judged the 31 submitted photos with two GINLC Directors: Art Payette, an avid photographer, and Karen Skrocki, an amateur nature photographer whose work has been seen in previous newsletters and calendars for GINLC and the International Wildlife Refuge Alliance.

The three judges thoughtfully evaluated each entry in the three categories and came to consensus to determine the winners. Helpful written comments were attached to each photo entry for return to the students. The winning photos were displayed at the Trenton Veterans Memorial Library for several weeks in May.

Look for changes to the contest for 2014 and let’s encourage the kids to keep taking pictures. Our area embraces birds on land and water, fish, turtles, insects, flowers, sunsets and sunrises, shade trees, our deer, and blossoms everywhere. We sure do have the subject matter!



Congratulations

Barbara and Ralph Thayer on their 50th anniversary!

&

Bert Urbani for being named a Michigan Green Leader
by the Detroit Free Press
and congrats on her retirement!

COMMENTS

from our mailbag



From Daniel T Ray (on Facebook)

There is no limit to the natural wonders and outdoor adventure available to residents of Grosse Ile: Thanks to efforts by folks like the Nature and Land Conservancy.....get out and enjoy the outdoor adventures awaiting you !

From Richard N. Snyder (email)

I just want to let you know that I think the newsletter you folks put out is really great. It’s informative as well as fun to read. The photography really helps me relate to the articles. Of course that photo of the muskrat and the fish was really neat and worth the extra effort.



Photo by Dave Milkens

From Milkens:

Dave Milkens enjoyed reading about the return of our native Trumpeter Swan, the world’s largest waterfowl. Imagine his excitement when he soon thereafter noticed one on the river. He fetched his camera and got a nice shot of it showing its all black bill.

From Chat at a bar to Redbuds at Waterfront, continued

A few days later I was talking to Doug Thiel and just guess what he needed: three redbud trees for landscaping the Waterfront Park. These trees didn’t have to be perfect and at this time of year he found that most places were out of redbuds.

A few chats, a few phone calls, a few e-mails, some maneuvering to secure a trailer for hauling and these three separate “redbud” intersections all blossomed. Doug and his crew planted three 6-7’ redbuds at the site as “planned”, although not the three trees in rehab because those were damaged, again, when a large Maple branch fell on them just a few days beforehand. Digging holes on the slope leading to the Detroit River wasn’t easy and the large root balls of the redbuds, weighing 300 pounds each were difficult to haul into place. With cooperation the work was done. And won’t those redbuds be beautiful blossoming next spring! We sure have had enough rain to get them established.

Grosse Ile's Native Species

RED FOX - VULPES VULPES

by Doug Thiel

This is a continuation of our last edition on the Red Fox



Range: The red fox can be found in most of the United States and Canada, except for the extreme northern regions of Canada and Alaska

and much of the western U.S. and Hawaii. It can be found on Grosse Ile in multiple locations. They adapt well to urban environments such as parks, railroad right-of-ways and suburban areas. Sightings have been reported at Centennial Farm, at numerous locations at the north end of Grosse Ile as well as the Gibraltar Bay Unit of the International Wildlife Refuge (Nature Area) by the airport.

Diet: The red fox is an omnivore. It has an extremely varied diet. Its diet includes fruits, berries and grasses. It also eats birds and small mammals like squirrels, rabbits and mice. Surprisingly, a large part of the red fox's diet is made up of crickets, caterpillars, grasshoppers, beetles and crayfish. If living among humans, foxes will opportunistically dine on garbage and pet food. The red fox will continue to hunt even after it is full and will store extra food under leaves, snow or dirt for later use.

Life Cycle: The red fox mates from January through March. The female will make one or more dens right after mating. The extra dens are used if the original den is disturbed. A little less than two months after mating, the female gives birth to a litter of between one and ten kits. At birth, red foxes are actually brown or gray. A new red coat usually grows in by the end of the first month, but some red foxes are golden, reddish-brown, silver, or even black. The male brings the female food while she is caring for the kits. The kits start playing outside the den when they are about a month old. The mother begins feeding her kits regurgitated food, but eventually she will bring them live prey to play with and eat. Both parents care for their young throughout the summer months before they are able to strike out on their own when they are about seven months old.

Behavior: Red foxes are solitary hunters and are largely nocturnal although they will sometimes venture out during the daytime. The red fox, unlike other mammals, hears low frequency sounds very well. It can hear small mammals digging under-

ground and will frequently dig in the dirt or snow to catch prey. The fox stalks its prey, much like a cat. The fox's thick tail aids its balance, but it has other uses as well. A fox uses its tail as a warm cover in cold weather and as a signal flag to communicate with other foxes. Foxes also signal each other by making scent posts—urinating on trees or rocks to announce their presence. Except for breeding females, the fox doesn't usually use a den. Sometimes it will sleep in the open, wrapping its bushy tail around its nose to stay warm. When it does use a den, it will usually find an abandoned rabbit or woodchuck den instead of making its own den. Red foxes do not live compatibly with coyotes. If there is a good population of coyotes you will rarely find red fox in that area.

Viewing Opportunities on Grosse Ile: With its largely nocturnal lifestyle, the red fox is seldom seen by people. Look for it crossing grassy field areas on Grosse Ile, particularly in the early morning or at dusk.

Stay Away From This One!

by Ingo Hasserodt



Giant hogweed can grow to 14 feet or more

Although most invasive plants are more of a nuisance than a danger, contact with the asian giant hogweed can cause serious injuries. The plant's fluids contain photo toxins that cause inflammation on the the skin when exposed to sun light. Contact with the eyes may lead to blindness. On hot days even the vapors from the plant can cause breathing difficulties for some people.

Although the plant occurs in Michigan it fortunately is not wide spread.

For further information check this MSU web site: msue.msu.edu

GINLC EDUCATION EVENTS with Natalie Ray

What a fabulous year so far for nature education programs here on Grosse Ile! In addition to nature walks at Gibraltar Bay Unit of the Wildlife Refuge, we have expanded programs to include more specific topics so that participants can gain a deeper understanding of our local ecology.

On March 23 we held a training seminar for our Frog and Toad Survey volunteers. Volunteers visited specific sites throughout the island 3 times during the frog breeding seasons to listen for their calls and determine



which species of frogs are breeding here on Grosse Ile. Unfortunately many amphibian species are currently in decline due to habitat loss and other factors that are not yet fully understood. Conducting surveys like this are extremely valuable for the preservation of these species - so thank you volunteers! Your efforts are certainly appreciated. We are currently working on compiling the results, so stay tuned to learn which species were observed!

We also hosted two programs that were specifically related to birds – “Birding 101” in April and “Birds of the Bay” in May. Birding 101 participants explored the reasons why birding is one of the fastest growing hobbies in the country, and learned the basic tools and techniques for getting started with this fascinating, addictive hobby! During our Birds of the Bay program, we observed at least 24 species of birds at the refuge and airport nature area. Many of these were neotropical migrants, either passing through on their way to nesting grounds to the north, or spending the summer here on Grosse Ile. All in all it was a wonderful day in May for birding, and I enjoyed sharing it with fellow bird enthusiasts!



Although it felt a little more like a wintertime stroll, our “Springtime Stroll” on May 12 was still a great day for families to come out to Gibraltar Bay to see what was springing! Although the bay

is mostly a marshy area, woodland wildflowers like Jack-in-the-Pulpit and Mayapple were seen on our small woodland trail, and we were lucky to see an Osprey flying over the bay with a fish in its talons. You never know what you will see at Gibraltar Bay – no matter the time of year, there is always something interesting going on!

Please consider joining us for one of our upcoming programs this summer:

Goodnight Marsh! Saturday, August 3 @ 7:30 pm As the day transitions to night, temperatures cool down, the sun starts to set, and animals either begin their nightly retreat or start their day, depending on who they are! Join us on a hike to observe the evening activities of the marsh.

Walk to the Lovely Lotus: Sunday, August 11 2:00 pm We will take a walk down to our beautiful bed of American Lotus and learn about the rich natural and cultural history behind the lotus, as well as other members of the coastal marsh ecosystem.

Kids Discovery: Incredible Insects : Sunday, September 8 2:00 pm Late summer is a perfect time to observe a variety of insects, especially up-close! Join us for a short hike to learn about and identify our resident insects and participate in a “catch and release” activity.



Jeff Bouwman Receives GINLC

Environmental Award in Memory of Dr. Bruce Jones



The Education Committee was very excited this year to receive its first application for an GINLC Environmental Project Award. In March we were delighted to present an award of \$200 to Mr. Jeffrey R. Bouwman, a Grosse Ile resident and Fourth Grade teacher at the Frank E. Weiss Elementary School in the Gibraltar School District. In late March, Courtney and Barbara visited Jeff's classroom to deliver the award and see the progress of the project up close.



The Weiss Salmon Project provides the fourth grade students with the opportunity to raise and observe Chinook salmon in conjunction with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Salmon in the Classroom program. This cross-curricular project was launched by Grosse Ile residents Mr. Jeffrey Bouwman (Fourth Grade Teacher) and Mr. Patrick Hancock Jr. (Volunteer) five years ago. Weiss fourth graders take on the role of marine biologists and run various hands-on science tests, log aquarium and fish data, and observe and reflect on fish behavior, tank conditions, and the salmon life cycle. Most important, every student is provided with the opportunity to release a salmon into the wild locally in the Huron River. Approximately 250 students have participated in the Weiss Salmon Project, and nearly 350 Chinook salmon have been released into the Huron River over the past five school years. Continued on page 12

Aaron Bickel awarded the GINLC Scholarship



A subgroup of the Education Committee was entrusted to evaluate 16 application essays for the GINLC Scholarship in memory of Dr. Bruce Jones. More than a few applicants were award-worthy and we were pleased to read about the passion for protecting the environment that has been developed in many of this year's

Grosse Ile graduates. They wrote about participating in Island Cleanup, setting up home composting systems and they professed their dreams and aspirations to help solve our world's ecological challenges through the study of science and engineering.

After careful consideration, it was the unanimous choice of the committee to name Aaron Bickel as the 2013 award recipient.

Aaron is an avid fisherman and kayaker who wrote,

"keeping the island and its shores clean has been very important to me". He has participated in numerous projects to enhance the natural environment of Grosse Ile, including planting trees, plants, and acting as a host at the Gibraltar Bay Unit of the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge. Aaron also served as a member of the GINLC Board for the last few years, contributing articles for the newsletter and local paper and enlisting friends in assisting with planting projects.

Aaron will be attending Michigan Tech "to pursue a degree in the field of Material Science and Engineering. We must find ways to sustain our valuable resources. Providing food, water and energy for a growing population while limiting damage to the environment continues to challenge our increasingly complex society. Material science and engineering will play a key role in meeting these challenges."

We wish Aaron the best in his future endeavors as he carries the conservation spirit with him beyond the shores of Grosse Ile.

STEWARDSHIP AT THE REFUGE: GIBRALTAR BAY UNIT (GBU) by Art Payette

Every Monday morning since the beginning of June, weather permitting, we have had a volunteer work crew at the GBU. We have been concentrating on the removal of invasive species such as BUCKTHORN and HONEYSUCKLE. We are also thinning the WHITE DOGWOOD; the progress has been slow but steady and we are beginning to notice the additional sunlight breaking through the canopy.



On July 8, we had 4 additional volunteers, Devin, Grant, Alexis and Bristol from the YCC, a youth volunteer unit of the US Fish and Wildlife Service. See the attached pictures for before and after of their work - note the clearing in the background of the after picture. The 4 are going to be seniors at local high schools and are contemplating careers in the FWS. A big thanks to all the GINLC and IWRA volunteers who have helped so far, especially "the regulars". We will be continuing every Monday from 9AM - 12N. Come on out!



As many of you know we have been fighting phragmites at the site for many years and we must continue to control new growth. The FWS staff has been vigilantly treating the phragmites since they do continue to appear year after year. Greg Norwood, FWS Refuge Biologist recently provided us with a few comments and pictures for those who can't make it out to the refuge to see the progress.

From the Desk (and Field Survey) of Greg Norwood, FWS Refuge Biologist: What wonderful work out there. The tall coneflower looks better than ever, the spotted joe-pye weed is thriving where we treated phrag, and the jewelweed is getting reestablished and should flourish next year! Not to mention the revitalization of the bluejoint communities around the quarry! The phrag in the east corner is not regenerating and the phrag along the shoreline is reduced by over 95% at least. Nice clumps of ironweed, *Hibiscus*, and cordgrass are visible. Photos show the joe-pye and impatiens coming up through the treated phrag and the bluejoint community with phrag diminished.



EAGLE SCOUT PROJECT:
Butterfly Meadow by Jagr Moskall

I'm Jagr Moskall, a 14 year old with Boy Scout Troop 1261. I worked on my Eagle Scout project this summer by planting a butterfly meadow on GINLC's Kobiljak Preserve off of the Thorofare Canal. GINLC provided a \$1K grant for project materials and plants, while Scouts, friends, family and conservancy members volunteered their time and expertise.



Completing the project took several steps. First, I had to start off with research on which plants butterflies like, which plants are good host plants for butterflies, which ones are good nectar plants, and which ones are deer resistant plants. I took a ride over to Westcroft Gardens and talked to Erica the manager about which plants were good choices to put in my garden (for example, milkweed) and which ones were bad. Erica showed me different types of native plants that are sold by Westcroft.

Next, I went to the property and marked off the area with flags based on how I wanted the shape of it to look. Then, we were ready to take out the sod. With the help of some friends and kids from my troop, we got all the sod out and put a couple of inches of topsoil down. The next step was planting. After researching plants more and with Erica's help, I ended up with approximately 50 native plants including, for example, purple coneflower, brown-eyed Susan and sedum.

After we were done planting, we went to Carefree Lawn Center and talked to Rich the owner about the project. He helped with free rocks and discounted supplies. My dad (aka assistant Scoutmaster) and I picked out about 9 dark rocks so butterflies can use them to warm themselves. Did you know butterflies can't fly if their body temperature falls below 86 degrees? We also bought chicken wire fencing so rabbits won't eat the plants. Finally, we put in mulch, and the bulk of the project was done. Now we will water the plants to give them a good start this year.

Eric Michael and Mickey Bartlett from the GINLC



were a big help on the project, answering any questions I had. They both helped to mentor me on my project as did Dave Adamczyk from Troop 1261. I also had some donations from friends and family (thanks Grandma!).

I am currently working to put a small sign next to the meadow to mark the completion of my project, and still need to visit the Leon-Urbani butterfly garden to pick up some additional plantings.

I hope you get the opportunity to visit the butterfly meadow at some point in the years ahead. It's just a start but hopefully it'll thrive and you'll see some Monarch butterflies and other butterfly species during your visit.

Middle School Learning Garden

Courtney Solenberger-McNeill, GINLC Project Coordinator

On May 31st, community members and volunteers from Ford Volunteer Corps, the Home Depot Foundation and the Grosse Ile Garden Club helped the Grosse Ile Nature & Land Conservancy begin construction of an outdoor learning garden at the Middle School.



Ford Motor MODEL Team Volunteers

The idea for the learning center was shaped by the teaching and administrative teams at the Middle School. Groups were eager to get started in the morning and by the afternoon, construction was completed and waiting for the next phase of planting at a later date.

During the lunch break, Principal David Tucker dedicated the Learning Garden and introduced the first annual "Concert in the Garden" with a performance by the 8th grade jazz group under the direction of music teacher, Joe Reimann.

Many thanks to the following for their help with the Landscape for Learning project at the Middle School. Without them, this project would not have happened.

- Joe Lemanski, Ford Team leader, and his fantastic, hard working members from the Ford MODEL Team Volunteer project
- Ford Motor Foundation for a project grant
- The Home Depot Foundation; David Ormsby, Woodhaven store for donating materials
- Russ Boismier, General Contractor & Project Manager for keeping us on track



- Richard Bohl Architects who put the ideas on paper
- Mike Kuderik & Brian Voss, New View Landscapes Design in New Boston
- Kroger's on Grosse Ile for breakfast and lunch
- Nate's Market for additional food
- Carefree Lawn Center in Trenton for garden products and assistance
- Tim Rooney and Brian Payette – Grosse Ile Township Recreation Department
- Brian Loftus and Ted Fournier – Grosse Ile Township Office
- Administration and staff from Grosse Ile Township Schools

- Grosse Ile Garden Club
- Nancy Crysler, Lorna Eis and Chris Dowhan-Bailey for coordinating the food
- Carol Machuga for making the signs
- Joe Porcarelli and his police staff
- Grosse Ile Lawn Sprinkler – Douglas J. Furtah III and his team
- Caron Tolstyka Photography for making sure we had photos of the project
- Jim Proctor, Grosse Ile Market Place for donating the plants



Stewardship Activities at the Waterfront Park

by Peter Kantz and Doug Theil

Grosse Ile now has a new waterfront park located at the eastern end of Grosse Ile Parkway due to a collaborative effort between the Township and a number of community organizations, businesses and individuals over the past two years. Ethan Ames constructed a wooden stairway providing safe access from the street level to the lower (river) level as an Eagle Scout Project. The GINLC has played a key role in enhancing the park. Working with the Township and with financial support of the Grosse Ile Herb Society, GINLC has planted several hundred native plants on the slope leading from East River Road to the Detroit River. The plantings included three large redbud trees, more than a dozen bushes and approximately two hundred smaller plants. Wood chips, supplied by the Township, were placed around the redbuds and number of the bushes. The wood chips were also used to create several pathways within the park.



GINLC members are constructing a berm at the top of the slope with dirt supplied by Compeau Brothers. The berm will act as a protective barrier for the plantings on the slope and will help in controlling surface water run-off at the site.

A split rail fence, purchased by the Township, was installed at the southern boundary of the park by GINLC Board Member, Peter Kantz. The fence will help delineate the park boundaries and preserve the privacy of the neighbors to the south.

GINLC continues to steward the waterfront park and has a number of additional projects under consideration for the property. Look for project updates in future issues of the Voyageur.

We have seen frequent visitors to the park during our evening work sessions. If you haven't been there, stop by! It is turning into a very beautiful mini park.



From Chat at a bar to Redbuds at Waterfront

By Barbara Thayer



Due to the steep nature of the hillside and the hot and humid weather conditions the planting was quite a challenge! Special thanks to Peter Kantz, Paul Gloor, John Leon, Ray Kwiecien, Phil Pellett, Ralph Thayer and Doug Thiel for their efforts!

After picking up a large bag of sweet Vidalia onions in Toledo, Ralph and I stopped in Monroe to do yard work: weeding, cutting grass, picking up litter. We decided to stop for a beer, even if we were all sweaty with bits of pine needles, slivered blades of grass that the mower spit out, the tissue-thin cups that hold emerging leaves in place until they are ready to bust out, all this stuck to our clothes and faces, even in our hair. It's not really dirt. It is just the natural stuff that floats down and lands on every surface in the spring.

As grubby as we were, we felt comfortable stopping at the NorthSide Bar and Grill, thinking we wouldn't see anyone we knew.

We had ordered when friends from Monroe, Dan and Sue came in and seated themselves nearby. It turned out Sue had also been working in her yard. They didn't expect to see anyone either, but Dan had wanted to go see the "redbuds" at Lower Huron Metropark. He described how beautiful the blossoms were. A spring-flowering tree, the prime viewing was over, but, still, what a sight! We talked more and when all was done Ralph and I decided to stop at the Lower Huron Metropark too. And the redbuds were beautiful, even though some blossoms were past their prime.



When we arrived home our neighbor Jud was working in his yard and we chatted with him about our trip to see the redbuds. Jud told us about three redbuds in "recovery" at Landscape Supply, a third generation family landscape supply business. Every time I think of this business, I think of gorgeous, healthy, cared-for plants. In the spring at Landscape Supply, the color and scents and variety just embrace you. These three redbuds had been damaged in a storm that came through the area a year ago. They were coming along nicely, although not ready to be in anyone's yard yet.

Continued on page 11

Parade Features GINLC and Special Guests

By Bert Urbani

The Grosse Ile Nature and Land Conservancy participates in the Island Fest Parade every year to raise awareness among Grosse Ile residents of the work that we do to preserve and enhance the natural beauty of our shared island home. This year we were joined by two distinguished guests, Congressman and Mrs. John Dingell.



Congressman Dingell has been a regular participant in the parade when his congressional district includes Grosse Ile (as it does again after the recent redistricting). He graciously agreed to ride with the GINLC this year as a reflection of his support for our work in natural resource conservation, a subject near and dear to his heart. As we are all aware, Congressman Dingell is the longest serving member of the U.S. House of Representatives (since 1955!), and is the author or co-author of many of our nation's most important pieces of environmental protection legislation, including the National



Environmental Policy Act, the Endangered Species Act, Clean Water Act, Clean Air Act amendments of 1990 and the legislation that created the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge.

In a sense, we have Congressman Dingell to thank for the fact that we now have the privilege of observing, on an ever increasing basis, Bald Eagles flying over our homes on Grosse Ile. DDT was banned by the Environmental Protection Agency in 1972 after it was determined that its use was contributing to the decline (and potential extinction) of Bald Eagles and other top predators. The EPA was created to implement the National Environmental Policy Act and other environmental



laws and regulations, including the Endangered Species Act. The Bald Eagle was one of the first species to be listed as "endangered," but with the diminishing of DDT in the environment and other protections, the species has made a successful comeback and was removed from the list in 2007.



Since I made the arrangements with Congressman Dingell's staff, I had the honor of riding with him and Mickey Bartlett in the parade in her husband's beautiful 2013 black Ford Mustang convertible. Behind the convertible, Doug Thiel drove a pick-up truck that pulled a trailer with the GINLC sign and decorated with plants purchased from Westcroft Gardens. Debbie Dingell walked in the parade with other Conservancy members and Yogi the Bear and Boo Boo strolled along and gave candy to the children along the route.

It was a beautiful day. The Conservancy was well represented in the parade. Many thanks to Mickey and Brian Bartlett for providing and driving the convertible, to Congressman and Mrs. Dingell for joining us, to Eric Michael for readying the truck, trailer and sign, and to Eric's daughter Erica for bringing her friends Yogi and Boo Boo, who added some "wildlife" to our parade contingent.

