



the

VOYAGEUR

FALL, 2011

the newsletter of the Grosse Ile Nature and Land Conservancy

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*"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 Liz Hugel

It's been another productive year and we've been so busy with our stewardship projects, events and educational initiatives it seems like there's never enough time to write to tell you about them. Maybe we just need to find a volunteer or two who enjoys writing and can take on this job? How about you? Drop me a note if you can help with our future newsletters. Fortunately, we have had more articles on our events and activities published in our local paper this year, so hopefully you've seen them there. Unfortunately not everything gets published, so this newsletter will attempt to bring you up-to-date on some of our activities. You can also attend our annual membership meeting on November 5th to learn more about accomplishments this year.

It was with much sadness that we said good-bye to Dr. Bruce Jones in early September. He was an incredible contributor to our organization as well as the downriver region and the statewide conservation community. He always had a vision for how things needed to be and he worked tirelessly for decades to promote the protection of our region's natural resources. From reclamation and restoration of the former Nike missile site leading to the creation of the Grosse Ile Nature Area, to protecting Hennepin Marsh and Stony Island, to saving Humbug Marsh from development, his accomplishments leave a lasting legacy for generations. Although a successful dentist by training, he was an educator in every fiber of his body. He so loved the opportunities he had to talk to younger generations about the wonders of the world around them. As his granddaughter Charlotte wrote upon her loss of him, "he taught that the world is full of miracles—whether it be a sunset, a rainy day, a butterfly or any of the other little things we might miss if we didn't look closely." We are all very lucky to have shared time with him. As deeply as he loved his own children and grandchildren, so too did he care about and work for all the children and future generations in the community and the region. He wanted all of them to see the miracles around them, to find joy and peace, curiosity and understanding in the natural world, to be raised in spirit by the sunset and to work together to preserve those miracles for those who come after us.

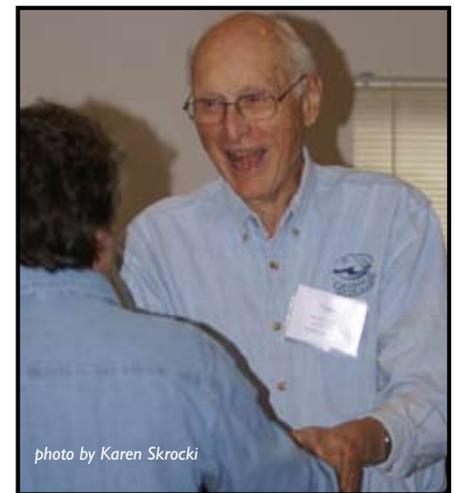


photo by Karen Skrocki

GINLC President Hugel presented the Lifetime Achievement Award to Dr. Bruce Jones at the 2010 Annual Meeting

Last fall Dr. Bruce Jones obtained funding from the Colina Foundation with the plan to use it for projects "to get kids outdoors." We decided that the funds would be used to make progress on three fronts. One was to sponsor seasonal outdoor learning events at the Grosse Ile Nature Area. Our nature interpreter led walks with Natalie Ray were very successful, from winter through fall, and we hope to have funds to continue these next year.

continued on page 2



**Nature Area Open
Every Sunday
1-4PM
through OCTOBER**

**Kids Discovery:
Owl Prowl
Centennial Farm
Friday, November 4
7-8:30PM**

**Annual Meeting
Saturday, November 5
10AM-11:30AM
Centennial Farm**

**PRESENTATIONS:
Elements of Native
Landscaping
by Lisa Appel**

**Practical Experiences
by Roberta Urbani**

President's Message continued from page 1

Our second initiative was to develop an outdoor learning center at Parke Lane Elementary. Courtney Solenberger-McNeill coordinated this project and it was a huge success (see Annette Ader's description—page 4). Our third project was the development of an outdoor learning center at Centennial Farm, which was accomplished by many volunteers from the Grosse Ile Garden Club under President Barb Carroll. The Conservancy matched the Colina grant with its own funds, i.e. your membership donations, as well as additional funds from the Richard & Rosalind Meyer Family Foundation and the Grosse Ile Educational Foundation. With funding in hand, the creation of the gardens were a success because of the many hours of volunteer services, most notably from Ford Motor Company, Russ Boismier, and Grosse Ile Lawn Sprinkler. We are so grateful for their efforts and hope that you can also show your appreciation to them if the opportunity presents itself.

MEMBERSHIP

Membership renewals will be in the mail soon along with the invitations for the annual membership meeting. If you appreciate our efforts and activities, please show your support at whatever level is appropriate for you. If you want to donate by credit card, it must be done through PayPal. These electronic transactions can be done at any time through our website: www.ginlc.org by going to the "Donate" page. You don't need a PayPal account to use this feature; just enter your credit card information.

NEW BOARD MEMBERS NEEDED

Have you ever considered joining the Conservancy Board of Directors? We sure could use your help and leadership. The board has been meeting the second Wednesday of the month, during the months of February, April, June and September, and after the annual meeting in November. Executive committee members meet more frequently to handle projects, events and planning. Board members are elected for 3 year terms at our annual meeting, unless vacancies occur during the year. If you are interested in joining us, please call Liz Hugel (734) 552-8950 or send us an email: info@ginlc.org.

2011 CONSERVATIONIST OF THE YEAR

The conservancy is currently accepting nominations for this year's Conservationist of the Year. Would you like to nominate someone? Please send your letter of nomination to Liz Hugel at info@ginlc.com.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

One of our exciting special projects was the removal of phragmites from the BASF/Wackman-donated property on the north end of Meridan Road. With funding from Freshwater Future we were able to treat the phragmites with herbicide last year and remove most of them with a prescribed burn this spring.

It was an exciting evening when David Borneman's **Restoring Nature With Fire** team arrived and lit up the sky with flames. Although the efficacy of removal varied across the property it was a good first step in removing the phragmites and eventually restoring the property to native species. Some mechanical cutting and removal of phragmites remained necessary in the center of the property where a drainage swale keeps the ground wet. A second treatment of the surviving phragmites was performed early this fall. Clean up of trash and other debris washed up on the shoreline has also been necessary. Engineering plans for an observation deck and boardwalk were drafted by BASF in consultation with F&J Development. After permits are received, installation is expected in 2012.

The "Restoring Nature With Fire" team lit up the BASF/Wackman-donated property to destroy phragmites.



SUMMER CAMP VISITORS

Children from the Delray Community Center Camp returned for a morning at the Nature Area this summer. It was their first visit since 2008 and it was a beautiful day with a lot of learning experiences. Tracey Gaudette spoke with the children about honeybees and their declining populations. Natalie Ray took the children on nature scavenger hunts; Emily Becker talked to them about birds and had them build bird nests. Many thanks to Tracey, Natalie and Emily, as well as Karen Skrocki who orchestrated the arrangements. Our local Rotary sponsored the trip and brought volunteers to assist.



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Public Relations / Clothing Sales
Please come to our Annual Meeting at Centennial Farm on November 5th if you want to purchase our logo items. Alternatively, feel free to call Ken at 734-675-7633 to purchase a cap, t-shirt or golf shirt with the GINLC logo.

STEWARDSHIP CORNER

At the Kobiljak-donated property on Thorofare Road, the Conservancy, with the help of several volunteers, spread wood chips around the trees to help maintain moisture levels and block weeds. The trees planted last year and all the other trees planted over the last several years are in excellent shape thanks to the good spring rains, fairly decent amount of rain over the summer and our recent good September rains. Volunteers have also removed the many invasive honeysuckle bushes. The planting plan developed for the property by Lisa Appel will be presented and discussed at the annual meeting.

Over at Intrepid Pond on Meridan Road we continue to assist Grosse Ile Township with stewardship work. Several groups went out in the spring to trim bushes and spray with deer repellent. The deer did some heavy damage to three hemlocks and a couple bushes planted last year, but others are in excellent shape and should be reaching new heights next spring and summer. In late spring we released some weevils to help control the Eurasian

milfoil which had invaded the pond the previous summers. This year there was a lot less milfoil and it was good to see a patch of arrowhead growing in the southwest corner of the pond. Unfortunately invasive phragmites have been growing alongside the joe pye weed and cattails. Quite a few rhizome runners, 10'-30' in length with shoots every foot or so, were removed from the surface of the shallow water; the upland plants were individually treated with herbicide—a tedious and time consuming process. In early September, volunteers again weeded and cut the grass around the many bushes, trees and flowering plants. The flowering plants near the northeast corner of the pond were in bloom and providing a nice show. It was a good place to look for frogs, toads and butterflies.

The Conservancy really appreciates the invaluable help of the many volunteers who show up to help make Grosse Ile a beautiful place to live. Ken Tilp led several groups including high school students Michael Cantley and Aaron Bickel from Grosse Ile, and Nishwone Mohsin and Mohamed Yahia from Riverside Academy in Dearborn.

UPDATE ON THE PARKE LANE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL OUTDOOR HABITAT FOR LEARNING

by Annette Ader

Students at Parke Lane Elementary were busy last spring and late summer. The Courtyard Classroom Learning Habitat was the center of activity, excitement and wonder! The Grosse Ile Nature and Land Conservancy, The Colina Foundation, The Richard and Rosalind Meyer Family Foundation, and the Grosse Ile Educational Foundation provided funding for supplies and materials to construct the garden beds at the school. Volunteers from Ford Motor Company, the MODEL TEAM Project, and the Grosse Ile Garden Club, as well as other organizations installed the garden area on May 13. It was an intensive one day installation. GINLC members Courtney Solenberger-McNeill and Dr. Bruce Jones worked tirelessly to make sure the project was a success. Russel Boismier of Russel H. Boismier Construction Company, and Mike Kuderik and Brian Voss, from New View Landscapes worked with Parke Lane teacher, Annette Ader and former principal Patricia Nordstrom. The plan was to design and implement an area where children could learn about the life cycle of plants and animals. It is an innovative and ongoing project for the Kindergarten through Second Grade students at the school.



The children started the spring season planting herbs, wild-flowers, annuals, perennials, and various vegetables. The gardens exploded with growth. A patch of sunflower seedlings were just six inches when first planted and grew to be well over six feet tall! Children gazed up at the giant blooms and were amazed at the height.

Teachers created many hands-on lessons for the exciting outdoor classroom. For example, late one afternoon, while weeding in the garden, students spotted a bright blue swallowtail butterfly fluttering around a new dill plant. Later, it was discovered that the butterfly had laid eggs and several caterpillars were happily eating for their next stage of development. The garden has been alive with new things to discover.

Students also spent time learning and applying various academic skills. Not only did they care for the tender young plants, they used their keen observation skills to

record data about the habitat area. Some found signs of insects on leaves, flowering buds, and even new leaf growth in the garden beds. Another class collected data including measurement of growth, such as the width of leaves, and recorded the information on a detailed drawing for each of the beds. Weekly data collection times, weather, and dates were added to the drawings. The children noted the variations in growth and growth spurts among the different plants. To the amazement of many, the leaves and stems kept growing and growing.

The Parke Lane students also weeded the beds. It didn't take long for them to realize that weeds were often the fastest growing plants with very hardy root systems. In addition, some researched plants and wrote about their unique features. Math, writing and reading skills were utilized. These learning experiences make science and math come alive. Children and teachers enjoyed nice weather while eating lunch together or reading a favorite book. One class played the "rainbow" game of matching plants, flowers or fruit to the colors of the rainbow.

At the start of the new 2011-2012 school year, the courtyard habitat was changing. Some flowers were starting to dry and seeds were easily identified. These seeds were collected to grow seedlings in their classrooms for the next cycle. One class prepared a lovely bruschetta from the fresh tomatoes, peppers, and basil grown in their courtyard classroom. Many of the children tried fresh tomatoes and peppers for the very first time and everyone agreed that vegetables are delicious. Seeds from the tomatoes and peppers will be used to grow new plants next year.

Learning in our Parke Lane Courtyard Classroom brings science, math, reading, writing and health curriculum to life in so many ways. There is always something new in the courtyard waiting to be discovered.

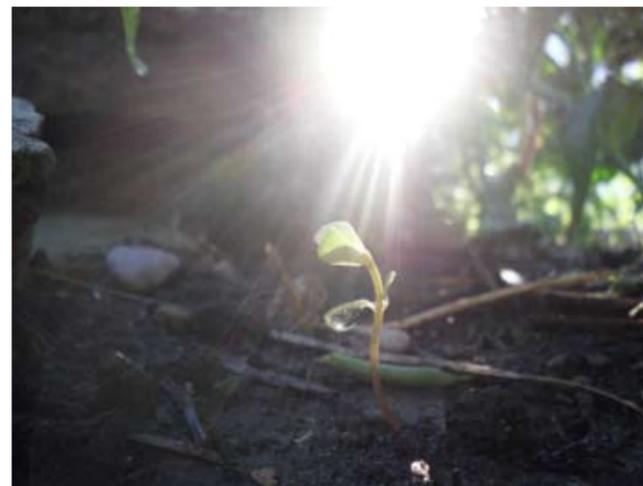


2011 NATURE PHOTO CONTEST

Entries for our third annual Nature & Wildlife Photo Contest for middle and high school students were on display during the Earth Day event and guests voted for their favorites. Photos were judged for artistic quality by Mr. Jerry Jourdan. He's a professional microscopic photographer and an amateur nature photographer whose amazing bird photographs have been published and won many awards.

For the month of May the winning entries were on display at the Kroger Starbucks, where an awards ceremony was held for the winners and their families. Thank you, Kroger, for hosting the display. We hope this contest encourages students to observe, appreciate and share nature's beauty.

HIGH SCHOOL 1ST PLACE "Replenished" by Marissa Ye



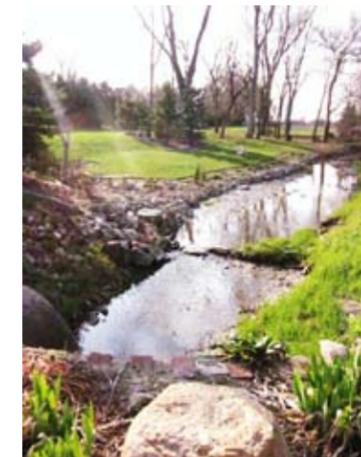
MIDDLE SCHOOL 1ST PLACE "Life is a Long Road" by Meah Monske



HIGH SCHOOL 2ND PLACE "Gold Leaf" by Marissa Nazareno



MIDDLE SCHOOL 2ND PLACE "Calm Creek" by Sana Nasir



Honorable Mentions
"Sunset Silhouette"
by Anna Burbo

"Changing Seasons"
by Bridget Swisz

"Timber"
by Dalton Johns

"Worldly Reflections"
by Rylee Barnsdale

HIGH SCHOOL 3RD PLACE "A New Life by Alissa Rhode



MIDDLE SCHOOL 3RD PLACE untitled by Myranda Ryder



People's Choice Awards (tie) "Replenished" by Marissa Ye, "Takeoff" by Dalton Johns

MEMBERSHIP DONATIONS RECEIVED 10/ 1/2010- 9/30/2011

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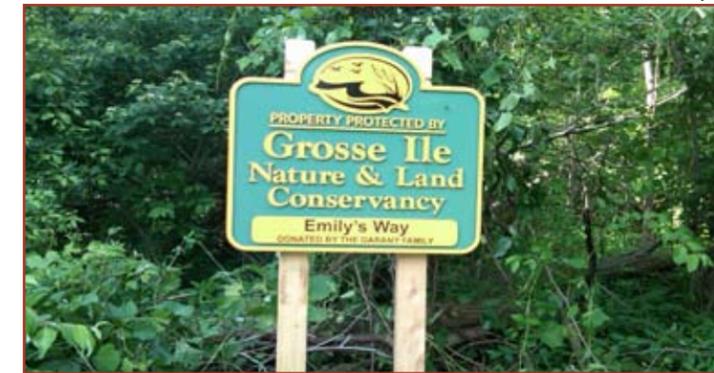
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Membership donations made in appreciation of efforts of
 Michael Cantley
 Eric & Jean Michael
 Tim O'Connor
 Arthur & Doreene Payette
 Josh Shah
 Henry Su

Program Grants
 Colina Foundation
 DTE Energy
 MacArthur Foundation
 Freshwater Future
 R&R Meyer Family Foundation

LAND ACQUISITION

This spring we received a donation of property on Rucker Road from the Darany family. The property is adjacent to the 80-Acre Woods, one of the township owned Open Space properties. Our property will eventually provide a southern entrance way to the woods and trail system there. The family contributed to the purchase of a sign and asked that the property be called Emily's Way, in honor of their daughter Emily Wilke, who works with the Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy.



above: Jed Bromfield with The Caterpillar Stop

left: Organization for Bat Conservation with one of their creatures

right: bird nest building in the main hall of the Recreation Building at the Centennial Farms.

bottom left: Children learn about butterflies with an interactive display at the Centennial Farms.

bottom right: A magnificent display of color from Hanne's Garden, a glorious butterfly garden, also located at the Centennial

2011 EARTH DAY

Our annual Earth Day Celebration was held at Centennial Farm on Sunday May 1. All ages had a fun and interesting afternoon. Jed Bromfield, our lepidopterist with **The Caterpillar Stop** was back with a variety of butterflies and moths in various stages of their life cycle. We also had an amazing presentation from the **Organization for Bat Conservation** with a variety of bats, as well as a flying squirrel and owl, all to see "close up and personal." Many thanks to the volunteers from DTE Energy coordinated by Bert Urbani who came to help and also provided us with a grant from the MacArthur Foundation. The children enjoyed bird nest building with UM Dearborn volunteer Emily Becker and got outdoors for a scavenger hunt with Natalie Ray.





In Memorium
BRUCE JONES

“He pointed out as many diamonds as he could to keep the beauty full, helped create the Nature and Land Conservancy on Grosse Ile to keep the world in order with nature, and changed the world forever with acts of kindness.”

from the eulogy written by granddaughter Charlotte Jones (age 12)

The following generously donated to the Dr. Bruce Jones Memorial Fund. These donations were received prior to October 10, 2011. The Conservancy plans to create a memorial in honor of Dr. Bruce Jones in the community and is exploring requirements for establishing an annual scholarship for a high school conservationist. Information will be shared as plans are developed.

Shirley Calhoun
Jeffery and Jill Craig
Charles and Beverly Dornbusch
Geneva and James Frazier
Ingo and Margarete Hasserodt
Sally Hawk and Bud McKay
David Howell
Liz Hugel
Karen and Stephen Jones
Barbara Leeper

David and Carol Morse
Willoughby Newton III
Dennis & Patricia O'Brien
John and Nancy Repp
Dr. Ian Murray Smith
Courtney Solenberger-McNeill
Charles and Susan Tournier
Roberta Urbani and John Leon
June Van Os
Beth Wilhelmus

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



“Light tomorrow with today.” — Elizabeth Browning

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