



the VOYAGEUR

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GROSSE ILE NATURE & LAND CONSERVANCY

VOLUME 24 ■ NUMBER 3

"Coyote is always out there waiting, and Coyote is always hungry." Navaho proverb

CALENDAR

GIBRALTAR BAY UNIT (GBU)

28820 E. River Rd.
Remains open dawn to dusk year round

GINLC EVENTS:

OWL PROWL

Friday, Nov. 4 @ 7pm
Centennial Farm

NATIVE AMERICAN COUNCIL RING RE-DEDICATION CEREMONY

Saturday, Nov. 5 @ 10am
GBU

GINLC ANNUAL MEETING

Saturday, Nov. 12 @ 10am
GI Country Club

OTHER EVENTS:

REFUGE NATURE STORE HOLIDAY SHOP

Thursday, Nov. 17
4:00 – 8:00 pm
TV's Grand Event
Trenton

USFWS OWL PROWL

Friday, Nov. 18
7:00 – 9:00 pm
GBU



Coyotes, wolves and domestic dogs are all members of the Canine family. Coyotes adapt well to human environments and can be mistaken for a German Shepherd from a distance.



NATIVE SPECIES OF GROSSE ILE Coyote (*Canis latrans*)

BY CAROL MACHUGA and BERT URBANI

Many residents are drawn to Grosse Ile for its natural setting. We enjoy the green, wooded spaces and the wildlife that live there. We enjoy feeding the birds but at the same time, we are unwittingly attracting other animals closer to our homes. Mice, moles, squirrels, racoons and deer all benefit from these human actions. In recent years, coyote sightings and encounters have increased on the island. Learning about these fascinating wild “neighbors” can help us manage these encounters.

CHARACTERISTICS: The coyote is a member of the Canine family. Domestic dogs are also canines; their scientific name is *canis lupus familiaris*. As noted on the Michigan Dept. of Natural Resources website, “coyotes can be difficult to distinguish from a medium sized German shepherd dog from a

distance.” Coyotes are also related to wolves. Wolves are larger than coyotes. Coyotes’ long fur makes them seem bigger than they really are. They average 25 – 45 pounds, with a bone structure that is slighter than that of most domestic dogs. Their fur varies widely in color, with a yellowish gray upper body and throat and belly of white to cream color.

RANGE AND HABITAT: Coyotes are native to all parts of North America. As humans have continued to expand into rural areas and change the landscape, coyotes have adapted. They now inhabit urban areas, where their range averages 2 to 5 square miles. They are common but very good at remaining unnoticed, even while living in close proximity to humans. Their range in rural areas can extend to 12 miles.

– Continued on page 6



DONATIONS

THANK YOU TO OUR
GENEROUS
IN-KIND DONORS:

*Grosse Ile Golf & Country Club
(annual meeting location)*

Gary Jones (tree removal)

Kurt Kobijlak (legal advice)

*Richard Smith & Adam Drobot
(title work)*

*Joseph & Frank Susin
(use of backhoe)*

*In memory of
Josephine B. Altsletter
John Altsletter*

*In memory of
Frank Le Feuvre
Barbara Leeper*

*In memory of
Annabelle Zucchet
Tom Zucchet*

THANK YOU
for your
contributions!

Reflections From the President

BY PETER KANTZ

Fall is upon us and winter is not far behind; it's time to clean out the gardens and prepare the yard and house for winter. Fall is also the perfect time of year to enjoy nature. The leaves are changing color. The air is crisp. The animals are moving around and preparing for winter. Now is the time for a walk in the woods or a visit to the wildlife refuge. Hike the Open Space trails, start at the trail head located on Meridian, north of Rucker or at Centennial Farm. Visit Hennepin Marsh Gateway on Meridian about 1/2 mile north of Bridge, take the boardwalk across the wetlands and view the marsh and river from the observation platform. Enjoy the many trails, observation platforms and photography blind at the Gibraltar Bay Unit of the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge, located on East River 1/2 mile south of Groh. Walk the trail around Intrepid Pond located at the intersection of Meridian and Intrepid or view the river from Sunrise Park located at the east end of Grosse Ile Parkway. Grosse Ile has so much to offer those who appreciate nature and it is GINLC's mission to preserve and steward these natural resources.



The Conservancy does not slow down when the weather turns cold. Outdoor educational programs are offered, plans for next year's projects are formulated and budgets established. The all-volunteer Board of Directors does much of this work, but all GINLC members are encouraged to participate. People with a variety of skills are needed to staff the various committees and help at the many events the Conservancy puts on throughout the year.

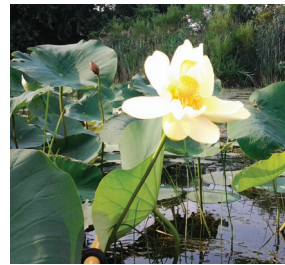
If you would like to become more involved in the Conservancy, please contact us at info@ginlc.org or attend our Annual Membership Meeting on November 12th and talk to me or any of the Board members. GINLC relies on the generosity of its members in sharing their time, talent and financial support to accomplish our mission. Fresh ideas and new faces keep the Conservancy moving forward. Hope to hear from you soon.



Keith Zook 1935 - 2016

Keith Zook, a former member of the GINLC board, passed away on September 26th. Keith enthusiastically participated in planting trees, cutting weeds and hosting at Gibraltar Bay Unit with his wife, Lois. He helped identify tires to be removed from the North Hennepin Marsh and remove invasive species. He believed wholeheartedly in the mission of GINLC and passed those values along. When they visited, he took his grandchildren, Ryley and Lynnette, walking to the Hennepin Marsh Gateway Preserve and boating on the Trenton Channel. His enthusiasm, good nature, and willingness to help were irresistible. He will be missed.

Thank you to the Zook family for designating GINLC as a recipient organization for donations to be used for a fitting memorial for Keith.



Environmental Ed For All Seasons

BY NATALIE CYPHER

Delray youth enjoy native mammal skulls and walking through the prairie. American Lotus bloom in the bay.

Summer education programs at the Gibraltar Bay Unit (GBU) were lots of fun this year! On July 11 a nice bunch of folks came out for a beautiful evening stroll through the area for our Habitat Hike. We looked at what animals need to survive, and why Gibraltar Bay is such a great home for so many species. A beautiful Osprey perched on a tree provided a nice treat for attendees, as did a muskrat swimming through Quarry pond.

On August 1, GINLC, USFWS, and GI Rotary hosted a group of young people from the Delray Community Center in Southwest Detroit. Refuge volunteer John Bordach impressed the group with the Refuge's stunning collection of pelts and skulls of native mammals, including skunk, mink, coyote and wolf.

The American Lotuses provided a spectacular showing this year on August 16 for our annual program that focuses on this fascinating plant. We learned how the marsh is like a "grocery store," and the practical value that the American Lotus provides to wildlife and our society. And of course we stopped along the way to check out the work of our local Beaver!

Our summer programming ended September 11 with some Incredible Insects! A seemingly endless supply of grasshoppers, crickets, and the occasional Garden Spider in our meadow provided our young guests with excitement and fascination.

Our next program for the fall is our annual Owl Prowl at Centennial Farm at 7pm on Nov 4. Please consider joining us, you never know "whooooo" we will find!

For more information about GINLC education programs please contact Natalie Cypher at GINLC.education@gmail.com or 734-624-7993.

Healthy Lawns & Gardens Fall Fertilizer Facts

BY BERT URBANI

Some things are seasonal, but ... you don't water your lawn if it just rained; you can't shovel snow if it hasn't snowed, and you shouldn't fertilize your lawn just because it is Fall. If you have had a soil test done that has shown that your soil is deficient in nutrients, now is the time to apply an environmentally friendly fertilizer. Do not apply fertilizer mindlessly, and do not allow your lawn care company to dump unnecessary nutrients and toxic pesticides on your lawn (and charge you money) unless the test results said they are truly needed.

Slow-release fertilizer:

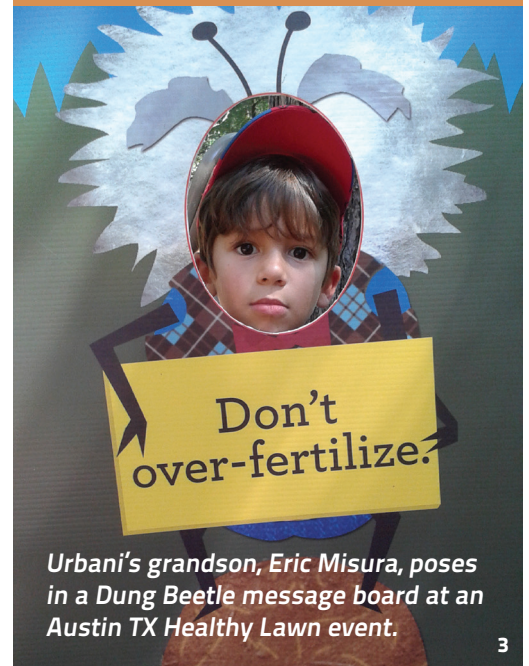
- Natural Organic fertilizer; or
- Synthetic fertilizer with 40% slow release nitrogen
- Free of all pesticides.

Low or No phosphorus fertilizer:

- Ratio of nitrogen-to-phosphorus (N-P) which is equal to or greater than 5:1

Is not a weed and feed type product:

- Spot treatment of weeds is recommended



Urbani's grandson, Eric Misura, poses in a Dung Beetle message board at an Austin TX Healthy Lawn event.

TOP & BOTTOM RIGHT: BERT URBANI, BOTTOM LEFT: ART PAYETTE

Do You Want To Be A GINLC Board Member?

The GINLC is always looking for interested, active people with fresh ideas to join the board of directors. Elections will be held for the 2017 board at the Annual Meeting on November 12. If you are interested in taking that step for greater involvement and participation in your Conservancy, contact Doug Thiel, Nominations Committee chair, at theid@Comcast.net or 734-671-0771. Or if you're interested in getting more involved, but not quite at the board level, consider joining one of our committees – Stewardship, Membership, Education, Communications, Heritage Trees, Healthy Lawns & Gardens, or Land Acquisition – and email info@ginlc.org.

Stewardship – Protecting the Property Entrusted to Us

BY PETER KANTZ

One of the primary missions of GINLC is stewardship of the property entrusted to us. Our properties are open to the public year round from dawn to dusk and we encourage the public to use the properties to enjoy nature. Many of our nature preserves are identified with GINLC signs and have trails, boardwalks, observation platforms and educational signage to enhance the outdoor experience. Maintaining the properties in their natural state and when necessary removing invasive species or making alterations to improve access are a big part of what our volunteers do throughout the year. In some cases outside companies are used when dangerous conditions exist or expertise beyond our organization is required. On an annual basis we survey our nature preserves to determine if corrective measures need to be taken. We also solicit the help of our neighbors and the general public to alert us of any conditions that might require our attention, such as, encroachment, destruction of vegetation and dumping.

The woods, wetlands, marshes and meadows are there for everyone to enjoy. Protecting them for future generations is something we all need to be involved with. If you see something that doesn't seem right, contact us at info@ginlc.org or talk to one of our Board members.

The woods, wetlands, marshes and meadows are there for everyone to enjoy

Grosse Ile's Natural Areas Are Good For Your Health!

SUBMITTED BY PAMELA FRUCCI

Quotes from a health newsletter published by Dr. David Williams:

"One study revealed that a 15-minute walk in the woods resulted in a 16 percent decrease in the stress hormone cortisol, a 2 percent drop in blood pressure, and a 4 percent drop in heart rate."

"Researchers in Finland, a country with very high rates of depression, alcoholism, and suicide, now recommend a minimum nature dose of five hours a month to fight depression. Their data shows that a 40-50-minute walk in a natural environment is enough to produce significant physiological and mood changes."

Have you had your nature dose today?



Enhancements include native plants in the rock gardens, the new photography blind and picnic tables



Photography Blind at GBU

BY PETER KANTZ

Photography is an activity enjoyed by many outdoor enthusiasts. The Gibraltar Bay Unit (GBU) of the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge with its abundance of wildlife has long been a favorite of local photographers. To improve the capability of photographers capturing wildlife in their natural setting, GINLC constructed a photography blind overlooking Quarry Pond. The blind allows photographers to sit quietly in a protective structure unseen by the animals in and around the pond. Open to the public 7 days a week from dawn to dusk, the blind is handicap accessible.

Construction of the blind and ADA compliant path was made possible by a generous donation from John Jackson, a long-time GINLC member. Thank you, Mr. Jackson! Additional improvements are planned for the blind and the area in the vicinity of the blind which is located near the Native American Council Ring. A ribbon-cutting ceremony is also planned for the blind when everything is complete.

The photography blind is just one of many improvements made to the Gibraltar Bay Unit, located at 28820 East River, Grosse Ile, in the past year. Other improvements include: picnic tables, benches, bike rack, information kiosk, split rail fencing and restored rock gardens. Visit the wildlife refuge any day between dawn and dusk; you'll be glad you did.

Photo Contest for High School Students

GINLC invites area high school students to participate in our annual photo contest.



TAKE IT OUTSIDE
2016-2017
categories are:

- Wild Critters
- My Park Pic
- Waterway Magic

The contest deadline is May 10, 2017. Images can be uploaded at ginlc.org starting December 1, 2016. Cash prizes will be awarded in June.

Easy Ways to Give



KROGER CARDS

Enroll your Kroger Plus card to benefit the Grosse Ile Nature & Land Conservancy! Go to www.kroger.com/communityrewards to enroll or re-enroll (you have to renew every year). Thanks!

AMAZON SMILE

Don't forget to smile — Sign up for Amazon Smile! Select Grosse Ile Nature & Land Conservancy as your charitable organization, and then 0.5% of the purchase price of eligible products will be donated to GINLC.

Info from our ACO

BY CAROL MACHUGA

In talking with Julie Cortis, Grosse Ile's Animal Control Officer (ACO), she stated that Grosse Ile is unique; with its borders, coyotes can travel across the ice in the winter, but are somewhat land locked once the ice melts. Grosse Ile and other Downriver communities are experiencing

increased sightings. Interactions are becoming more frequent as natural areas are diminished through



development. ACO Cortis said that she has met with other control officers and Michigan Department of Natural Resources biologists to discuss concerns over domestic animal/coyote interactions. They are tracking these events to learn how to co-exist, how to not invite them into our yards and how to deter them when we see them.

Cortis stated there have been 12 attacks on pets in the past two years, with half of those resulting in the deaths of the pets. The interactions have been mostly with small dogs, as the coyotes are acting with their prey instinct. Interactions with large dogs may occur because they are perceived as threats to the coyotes' territory. Cortis recommended that if a coyote is sighted, residents should keep their distance but become 'big and loud' to scare off the animal. Cortis emphasized to never leave your pet unattended outside, and if you are walking a small dog and there is a sighting, to pick up the dog but do not run, as that action will activate their prey drive. She reiterated that one of the most effective deterrents is to eliminate any potential food source that may attract the animals.

Coyote, continued from Cover

DIET: An article in the Fall Wildside newsletter of the International Wildlife Refuge Alliance (IWRA) provided the latest information on coyotes' diet. Bill Dodge received his PhD in biology from Wayne State University for his research on local coyotes. He reported that small rodents, racoons, woodchucks, rabbits and deer are their primary food, with the larger animals encountered as road-kill.

LIFECYCLE: The coyote life span is typically 6-8 years in the wild. Natural mortality occurs from disease, predation and starvation, but hunting, trapping and vehicle collisions are common causes of coyote mortality. Approximately 50-70 percent of juveniles do not reach adulthood. Mating pairs can have 4-7 pups in a litter in the spring.



TRAIL CAM PHOTO: JASON COUSINO

ENCOUNTERS ON GROSSE ILE: It is thrilling to lie in bed at night and hear a pack of coyotes howling, a true touch of wilderness in our sanitized, mechanized and increasingly digital environment. However, it is not so thrilling to wake up and find the remains of a fawn on your lawn, or, worse yet, to have a family pet snatched from your yard by a hungry coyote.

From the MDNR website: "Coyotes rarely attack humans. Bites from snakes, rodents, and domestic dogs are a far greater possibility than coyote bites, according to public health authorities. However, coyotes that are fed become accustomed to people and present a human safety risk. People should never intentionally feed or attempt to tame coyotes. It is in the best interest of both coyotes and humans if coyotes retain their instinctive fear of people."

The following important points can help minimize potential conflicts with coyotes:

- Never approach or touch a coyote
- Never intentionally feed a coyote
- Eliminate all outside food sources, especially pet foods
- Put garbage out the morning of pickup day
- Do not allow pets to roam free when coyotes are present - consider keeping pets indoors or accompany them outside, especially at night

Let's be smart and keep our pets safe and enjoy these wild creatures in our midst.

Donations Received October 2015 - September 2016

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THANK YOU! Please advise if your name was omitted or misspelled so that we may correct our records.



GINLC ANNUAL MEETING is NOVEMBER 12th

**SATURDAY,
NOVEMBER 12th**

10 am to noon
Grosse Ile Golf &
Country Club

PRESENTATION

By Jody DeMeyere,
Visitor Services Manager,
Detroit River International
Wildlife Refuge

The Grosse Ile Nature & Land Conservancy will hold its annual membership meeting on Saturday, November 12th from 10 – 12 noon at the Grosse Ile Golf and Country Club. Conservancy members will learn about the GINLC's latest projects and discuss 2017 plans.

Jody DeMeyere will be the guest speaker. Jody will update us on the growth of the Refuge to over 6,000 protected acres and give us the status of the amazing transformation happening at the Refuge Gateway on W. Jefferson. Find out when the new Visitor Center, Fishing Pier, and School Ship Dock will be complete, what's in store for the public when they're open, and how to get involved.

ALL GROSSE ILE RESIDENTS ARE CORDIALLY INVITED

Complimentary continental breakfast will be available.

Win a gift card or gift basket from one of our generous business supporters: E & J Kitchen, Extra Special Baskets, Hungry Howies, Hawthorne & Vine, The Round House BBQ, Sibley Gardens, The Waterfront Restaurant & Lounge, Whiskeys on the Water, and Wine Dotte Bistro. **Thank you, donors!**



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*To Promote for the public benefit the preservation,
stewardship and understanding of the natural resources in
the Township of Grosse Ile and surrounding area*

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