

CALENDAR

**GIBRALTAR BAY UNIT
(GBU) DETROIT RIVER
INT'L WILDLIFE REFUGE**
28820 E. River Rd.
Open to the Public Daily,
Dawn to Dusk

**AIRPORT NATURAL
AREA (ANA)**
Beyond the Gate
at the GBU, Open
Sundays from 1-4pm,
May 1 to Oct 30, and
for Special Events

LOVELY LOTUS WALK
Sat, Aug 20 @ 1:00pm
ANA

TWILIGHT HIKE
Sat, Sept 17 @ 7:00pm
ANA/GBU

NATURE OF HALLOWEEN
Sun, Oct 30 @ 1:00pm
ANA

**GINLC ANNUAL GENERAL
MEMBERSHIP MEETING**
Sat, Nov 12 @ 10:30 am
GI Golf & Country Club

Continued on page 2

NATIVE SPECIES OF GROSSE ILE

North American River Otter
(Lontra canadensis)

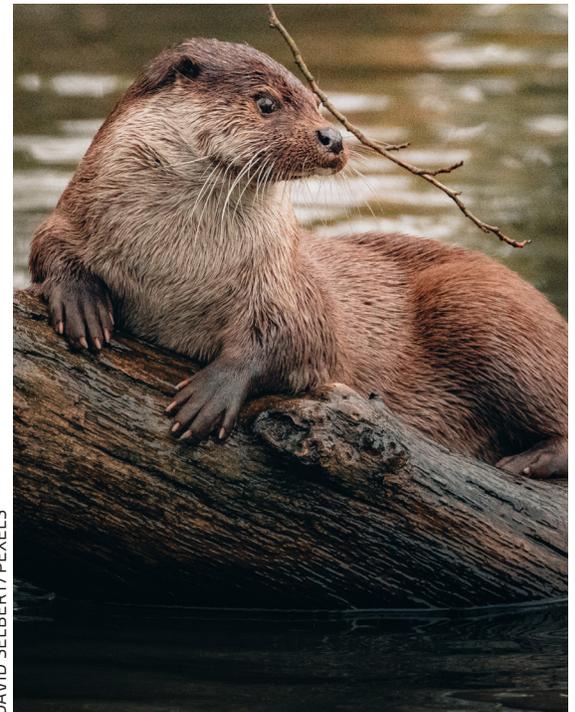
BY KATIE KOBILJAK

Good news – river otters are back in the Detroit River! A century after these semi-aquatic mammals disappeared from the area due to over-trapping, urbanization, and high pollution levels, they've been spotted making their return throughout the Detroit River, including some sightings right off of Grosse Ile. Their return indicates that the Detroit River's pollution levels have dropped, meaning that the water is now clean enough for the otters and other species to comfortably live near our island. Here's some fast facts on these awesome creatures so that you can keep an eye out for them next time you're by (or in) the water!

CHARACTERISTICS: River otters have thick, protective brown fur that helps regulate their body temperature. They have webbed feet, a narrow body, and a long tail (which takes up 1/3 of their body length), all of which are used to help them swim effectively while they hunt. Most river otters are between 3-4 feet long, and weigh between 11-30 pounds.

HABITAT: They can be seen throughout the majority of the U.S. and Canada, excluding desert and treeless areas. River otters enjoy both marine and freshwater, and can be found in ponds, lakes, rivers, marshes, and estuaries. Their dens are usually found along the water, and resemble burrows or hollows.

DIET: River otters are carnivorous, eating fish, crabs, frogs, turtles, and some small mammals.



DAVID SELBERT/PEXELS

They hunt both on land and underwater, and can be seen hunting individually or in pairs. They have the ability to close their nostrils, which allows them to stay underwater longer while hunting.

REPRODUCTION: These animals breed in late winter and early spring, and females will bear a litter of 1-3 pups annually. Evidence indicates that river otters find a new mate every year, and will mate either on land or (most likely) in the water.

– continued on Page 8



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IN MEMORY OF
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*Blair & Gordon Jones
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GARDEN CLUB**

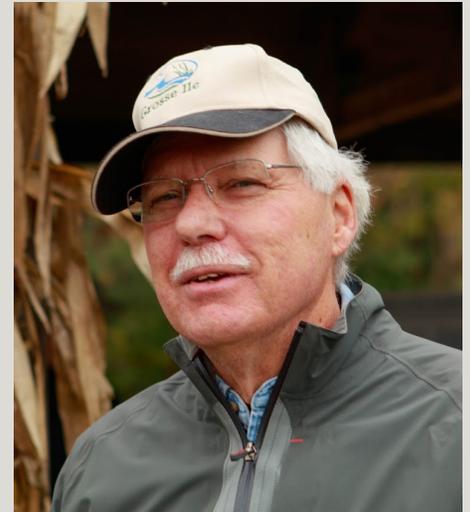
THANK YOU TO
**CHERI NELSON &
STEVE KENYON**
*for donating tools and
garden supplies*

THANK YOU TO
TIM LARSON
*for donating the Purple
Martin birdhouse*

Reflections From the President

BY PETER KANTZ

Much has happened since our last newsletter. As you are aware, John C. Jackson bequeathed a generous portion of his estate to the Conservancy upon his death. For the past six months, our Board of Directors has been working diligently to develop the processes and organizational changes necessary to handle the donated funds and prepare for the future. The Finance Committee was expanded, and its responsibilities increased. A financial services company was employed, and several endowment funds were created, each with a specific goal. The largest endowment fund was set up to ensure that the Conservancy will be a viable organization for generations to come. A scholarship fund was created so we can continue to grant an annual scholarship to the Grosse Ile High School student who best represents the mission of the Conservancy. An endowment fund for improvements to Sunrise Park was set up with donations that were made by Mr. Jackson prior to his death.



Preservation of our natural resources is a major tenet of our mission. The Conservancy recently purchased 16 acres at the corner of Meridian and Bridge roads. A sizable portion of the property is marshland and is being remediated by the Friends of the Detroit River to create fish habitat and prevent further erosion of the few remaining islands and shoreline. The property is a gateway to Grosse Ile for those using the toll bridge and will serve as a visual reminder that island residents value the natural beauty of their community.

The Conservancy is evolving and will become a more integral part of the community. On June 22, 2022, the Conservancy purchased the building at 8801 Macomb. The purchase was made after evaluating the current and future needs of the organization. Several options were studied to satisfy our need for office space, meeting space, educational space, and storage space. Main considerations were that it be centrally located, preferably on Macomb, be accessible to a nature preserve or open space, large enough to accommodate all our needs, and able to demonstrate sustainable technology. The building meets all of these requirements and will fit well with the DDA's plans for developing Macomb.

The Conservancy has a strong and promising future. We invite all our members to become actively involved. There are many areas where we need your talent and support as we move forward. Contact me or any member of the Board of Directors or email info@ginlc.org if you would like to help.

**CALENDAR
CONTINUED**

OWL PROWL
Sat, Nov 12 @ 6:30pm
Centennial Farm

SOLSTICE WALK
Sun, Dec 18 @ 1:00pm
Meridian Woods

**A complete listing of
our events can be found at
ginlc.org/upcoming-events**

Conservancy Purchases Valuable Parcel at the Corner of Bridge & Meridian Roads

BY DOUG THIEL

After 20 years of hoping, wishing, and trying, GINLC was finally able to purchase the ecologically valuable parcel at the corner of Bridge and Meridian Roads. The parcel has been named the Dr. Bruce D. Jones Preserve in honor of Dr. Jones who was a founding member and former President of the GINLC.

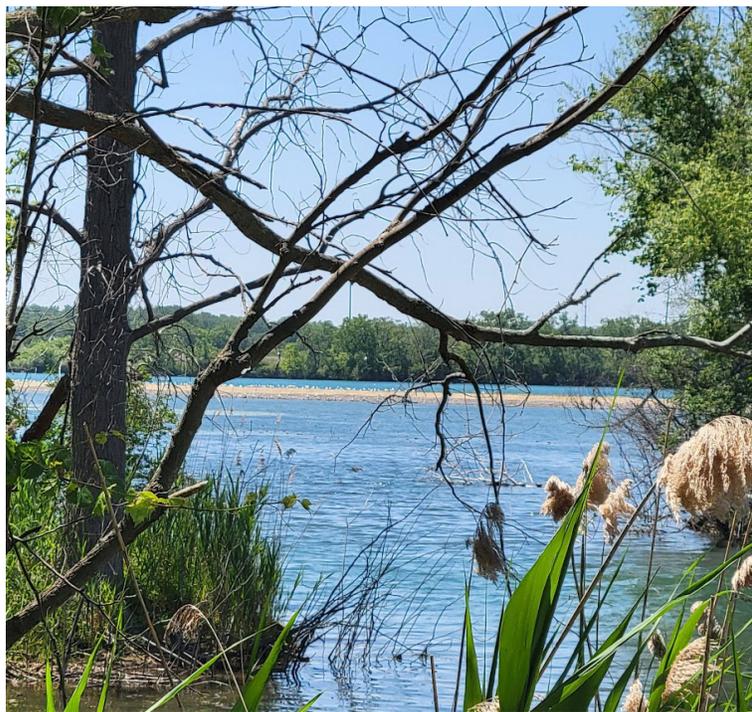
This preserve consists of 5.9 upland acres and 9.9 acres of off-shore property on the Detroit River (Hennepin Marsh). This property is highly valuable ecologically and offers many educational opportunities due to the many varied habitats ranging from off-shore islands, marsh areas, vernal ponds, to the upland forested area. The Friends of the Detroit River just completed a habitat restoration project by installing stone shoals at the eastern edge of the shipping channel to protect the small islands from further erosion and to enhance the Hennepin Marsh that exists within the preserve. (detroitriver.org/gfri-projects/project-two-tenx4-5mnr7). South Hennepin Marsh is one of the most important remaining habitats for fish and wildlife in Michigan waters of the Detroit River. The marsh is a popular site for transient waterfowl to gather and provides nesting and feeding areas for many species of local ducks and wading birds. Mink, muskrat, and various species of turtles are known to utilize the shoreline and protective shoal islands.

The Jones Preserve contains valuable habitat for a variety of amphibians, birds, fish, mammals, and reptiles. There are

also many large native tree specimens (some over 200 years old) on the property including Red Oak, White Oak, Swamp White Oak, Shagbark Hickory, Hackberry, Ironwood, and Eastern Cottonwood.

Dr. Jones's passion was environmental education. It is our intent to utilize this special preserve for such a purpose. After some clean up, the GINLC is tentatively planning to develop an interpretive nature trail on the property as well as a possible kayak launch that will be accessible to the public. Watch for volunteer opportunities! A dedication ceremony will be held for the preserve at a later date. Look for an upcoming announcement on this event.

A description of all our preserves can be found on our website at ginlc.org/protected-lands.



RE-TREE

Dennise Vidosh presented on her innovative business, "Re-Tree," whose mission is to "protect and preserve mature trees and ultimately our planet's ecosystem." While companies and organizations are busily planting seedlings and small trees, Vidosh focuses on mature trees.

From her website, *re-tree.org* "Mature trees provide irreplaceable ecological and sentimental value to people, communities, and the planet at large.

"To put one of many ecological benefits in perspective, a single mature tree can absorb carbon dioxide at a rate of 48 pounds per year and release enough oxygen back into the atmosphere to support two human beings.

"Until now, for a property owner, the most accessible solution to remove a tree that has outgrown its current location, or was in the way of new construction, was to have it cut down – destroying its life and environmental benefits in the process.

"Through significant investment into technology and transplanting techniques, we've ensured that tree removal is no longer the only accessible option."

RE-TREE uses an "air-spade" to blow away dirt from the entire root ball of a mature tree to enable the removal and replanting of that tree in a better location on the owner's property, or on a buyer's property. The website, *re-tree.org*, features a digital marketplace to post pictures and information on available mature trees to purchase or sell.



Earth Day, Back in Person!

BY BERT URBANI

On April 23, the GINLC celebrated Earth Day with a return to an in-person event, this time in partnership with the Green Team of St. James Episcopal Church, at the church! Family activities were concentrated outdoors in the spacious grounds of St. James, starting with a morning tree planting for badge-earning GI Girl Scouts, led by GINLC board member and St. James parishioner Madeleine Jones. Other outdoor hands-on activities featured live animals from Lake Erie Metropark, animal pelts and reproductions of skulls from the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge, birdhouse painting, and What's in the Sand? about plastics on our beaches and in lakes.

Indoor exhibits included the Grosse Ile High School Environmental Awareness Club, Wild Birds Unlimited, Grosse Ile Pet & Garden Center, Priority Waste, Junk Luggers, GI Garden Club and GINLC's information on Monarch Butterflies, Healthy Lawns & Gardens, and Bird Collisions. Presentations included The History of Earth Day by John Hartig, RE-TREE by Dennise Vidosh, Plastics in Our Environment with St. James Green Team members Sarah Triplehorn and Dave Hartwell, Coyotes by Griffin Bray, Native and Invasive Species by Erin Parker and Pete Blank, and a song by Barry VanEngelen and his granddaughter Evelyn. The GINLC thanks everyone who was involved in the 2022 Earth Day celebration.

Earth Day photographs taken by volunteer photographer Lyn El-Zein.





Grand Prize

← **GRAND PRIZE //**
Cherry Blossoms
Hannah Maudlin,
Roosevelt H.S.

2021/22
Take it Outside
HIGH SCHOOL
PHOTO CONTEST
WINNERS

The 2021/2022 photo contest wrapped up on May 5, and here are the winners! First, though, many thanks to GINLC Education Committee member Lori Riopelle, who runs the entire contest. It is a labor of love which lasts the entire year for Lori, as she develops the annual contest poster, communicates with the schools and teachers, recruits and assists the judge, receives and organizes the entrants, contacts the winners, posts the winning photos on social media, prints and delivers the certificates, prizes, and printed photos to the winning students, and arranges the photo displays at the libraries and other locations. Thank you, Lori!

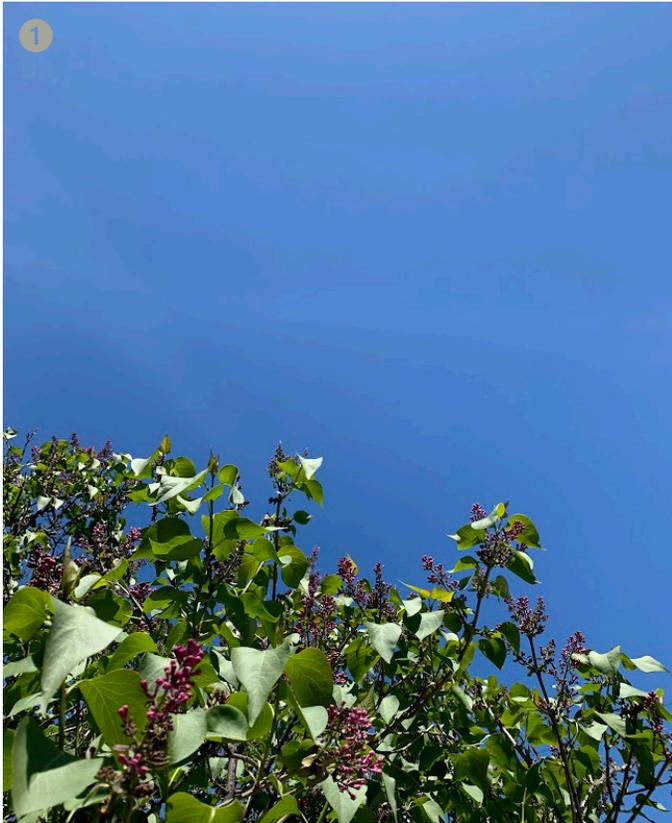
And thank you to our new judge, Scott Bolthouse. Scott is a photographer, journalist and martial arts master based in metro Detroit. As a photographer, Scott specializes in several different genres of photography, including fine art photography, architecture, nature, street photography and journalism. His work can be found at facebook.com/scottbolthousephotography/ and instagram.com/scottbolthousephotography/.

Besides photography, Scott is a martial arts instructor with over 22 years' experience teaching and training in the martial arts. His home school is the Allen Park Martial Arts Center in Allen Park. Scott is also the editor of The Huron Hub (huronhub.com) a News and events website based in Huron Township.

TURN THE PAGE TO SEE MORE — HIGH SCHOOL PHOTO CONTEST WINNERS →

GINLC 2021/22 — HIGH SCHOOL PHOTO CONTEST WINNERS!

NEW BEGINNINGS ↓



NATURE IN DISTRESS ↓



7



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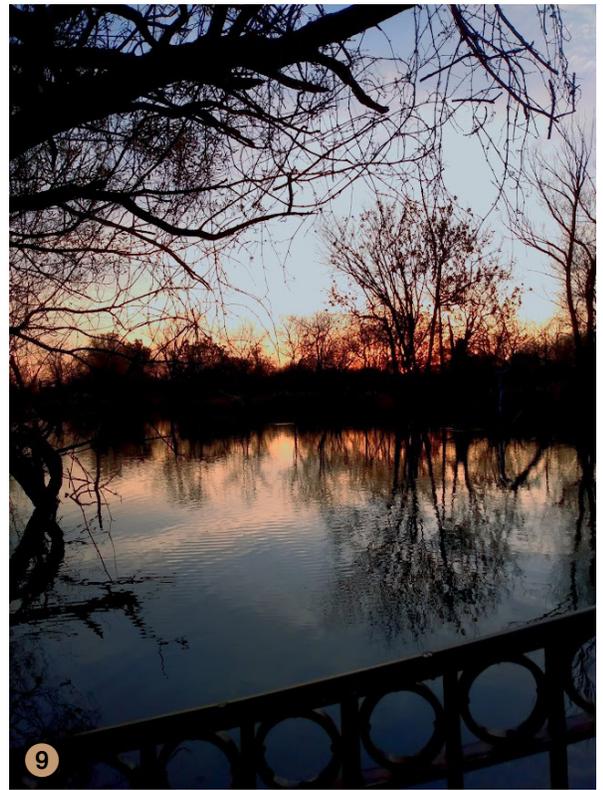
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NEW BEGINNINGS

1
1ST PLACE // *Spring Flowers Blossom*
Madalyn Bialoblocki, Trenton H.S.

2
2ND PLACE // *Buds of Spring*
Brooke Mickel, Roosevelt H.S.

3
3RD PLACE // *In Bloom*
William Gruits, Father Gabriel Richard (Ann Arbor) H.S.



9

NATURE IN DISTRESS

4
1ST PLACE // *Fog*
Aiden Hennessey, Grosse Ile H.S.

5
2ND PLACE // *Blades of Paper*
Brooke Mickel, Roosevelt H.S.

6
3RD PLACE // *The Art Of Dying*
Alexis Brand, Roosevelt H.S.

NATURE AT ITS BEST

7
1ST PLACE // *Through the Forest*
Owen Sobiechowski, Grosse Ile H.S.

8
2ND PLACE // *Ice Baby*
Meg Justusson, Grosse Ile H.S.

9
3RD PLACE // **Untitled**
Corbin Buryta, Riverview H.S.



RIVER OTTER, continued from cover

VIEWING: Now that river otters are back in the Detroit River, it's more likely than ever to see them running to build their dens along the shore, or swimming through the water to hunt. On the island, they have been spotted near the north end of Thorofare Canal. But make sure you keep a sharp eye out, as these animals are fast swimmers!

FUN FACT: Otters love to slide – it's common to spot them sliding through snow or mud!

UPPER LEFT: DAVE PAPE, UPPER RIGHT: MICHAEL WEIR/UNSPLOASH, LOWER RIGHT: HAMIKUS/PIXABAY



Board member and founder Amanda Phillips staffs the GINLC booth during the IslandFestivities.

ISLANDFESTING 2022



The GINLC had a smaller than usual presence in the IslandFest Parade but we played our part in the exhibition area with our display of the 2021-2022 high school "Take It Outside" nature photo contest winners, as well as a plethora of useful environmental information for residents.



Tim Larson and grandson Jay made and donated the Purple Martin birdhouse

Summer 2022 Stewardship

BY PETER KANTZ

Many of our preserves are left in their natural state and require little stewardship. Others are developed with trails, boardwalks, signage, and observation platforms. These preserves enhance public access and are often used for educational purposes. They require constant upkeep and this is where stewardship volunteers spend most of their time.

The larger and more visible preserves have signs identifying them as GINLC owned properties. We will be replacing the current signs, many of which are past their useful life, with more durable and identifiable signs. The new signs will allow you to easily differentiate GINLC nature preserves from Township-owned Open Space.

Stewardship is an important consideration when deciding what properties to buy and how the preserves will be used. Since the beginning of this year, the Conservancy has acquired several properties totaling approximately 18 acres. The most noticeable being the land at the southwest corner of Bridge and Meridian. How we will use these properties is in the planning stage.

Since our Spring newsletter, the Conservancy has received donations of tools and other articles used by the stewardship crew. Steven and Cheri Kenyon donated several pieces of lawn care equipment and Tim Larson donated a Purple Martin birdhouse complete with mounting pole and hardware. If you have equipment you would like to donate, contact us at info@ginlc.org.

NEWS FROM THE REFUGE

BY BERT URBANI

The John D. Dingell Jr. Visitor Center at the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge Gateway is open! After a long wait during construction, a 2020 Grand Opening cancelled by covid, a 2021 soft opening then closing because of covid, the doors are now open to visitors Thurs, Fri, Sun 9am-4pm, Sat 12:30-4pm. Located at 5437 W. Jefferson in Trenton, the Visitor Center features interactive educational displays for all ages, a nature-themed gift shop, as well as a classroom and outdoor space for public programs, and offices for the staff members of the US Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the International Wildlife Refuge Alliance (IWRA).

Of course, the outdoor amenities – the world-class fishing pier, picnic area, Nature Playscape, handicap-accessible kayak launch, and hiking trails – are available every day from dawn to dusk. You can bike or walk to the Refuge Gateway via the Downriver Linked Greenway Trail, or kayak to and from the Refuge.

Volunteers are needed to keep the Visitor Center open more often. For information about the many volunteer positions, email to driwr_volunteer@fws.gov.

IWRA is sponsoring the 16th Annual Benefit Dinner in support of the Refuge on Thursday, Sept. 15 at the Silver Shores Banquet Center. Tickets are \$80 per person, or \$140 per couple, available at: iwralliance.org/2022-benefit-dinner.html.

The Gibraltar Bay Unit at 28820 E. River Rd., Grosse Ile, is one of more than 30 separate parcels, or units, of the DRIWR, and one of the few that is open to visitors year-round. The GINLC and the DRIWR partner frequently in educational and stewardship opportunities.

Student Opportunities

GINLC invites the next generation to get involved in caring for our island and the environment. Getting outdoors and doing what you can to help nature reaps a lifetime of benefits. Students, look out for these opportunities in the upcoming school year!



Dr. Bruce Jones Scholarship

Grosse Ile High School seniors can apply for this scholarship by writing about their experiences working to protect our natural environment. The GHS Counseling Office will provide information to graduating seniors!

TAKE IT OUTSIDE Photo Contest

Between October and May, high school students from Wayne, Washtenaw, and Monroe Counties can submit photos that fit into one of the three categories given. Check back in October 2022 to see what the upcoming school year's categories will be!

GINLC 2022 Scholarship Awarded

BY BERT URBANI

Twenty-nine years ago, GINLC founder Dr. Bruce Jones and other committed residents of Grosse Ile came together with two main goals – to protect and preserve Grosse Ile's precious natural areas, and to educate and inspire future generations of conservation stewards to carry on that work on our island home, and throughout the world. In 2012 the GINLC established the annual Dr. Bruce Jones Memorial Scholarship for the Grosse Ile High School senior who has exhibited academic excellence and dedication for protecting our natural environment. This year, that student is Liliana Finazzo.



Education Committee members Erin Parker and Bert Urbani congratulate scholarship winner Liliana Finazzo.



Congratulations to Liliana Finazzo, the recipient of the 2022 GINLC Dr. Bruce Jones Memorial Scholarship. Liliana, we wish you the best as you pursue your educational and career goals, as you say, "...so that I may continue to live a life dedicated to serving the earth, regardless of species." As members of the human species, we applaud and respect you.

Liliana was the president of the Grosse Ile High School Environmental Awareness Club as well as the high school liaison to the Grosse Ile Open Space Committee. Liliana stated that her goal "is to establish programs that educate students about the environment and reduce our environmental impact. By the time I graduate, I hope to lay the groundwork for many opportunities that the whole school can get involved with." Indeed, she has been working to integrate the Environmental Awareness Club and National Honor Society students with the work of both of Grosse Ile's environmental organizations, including bringing volunteers to the Earth Day Celebration at St. James Church and addressing Open Space trail maintenance.

Liliana has a passion for animals and that reached new heights this year when she worked with her cousin, a wildlife rehabilitator, to raise 15 orphaned baby raccoons. She is planning to pursue Pre-Veterinary Science and Biology degrees at the University of Findlay, with the intention of going on to vet school.

NON-NATIVE SPECIES OF GROSSE ILE

Domestic Cat (*Felis catus*)

BY BERT URBANI

There are lots of non-native, invasive species on Grosse Ile, including garlic mustard, common reed (*Phragmites australis*), zebra mussels, round gobies, buckthorn, honeysuckle, and emerald ash borers, but only one that I dearly love, but need to send a possibly unwelcome message about – our domestic cats.

KEEP CATS INDOORS!

There are two main reasons to keep cats indoors – to protect cats, and to protect wildlife, especially birds. Starting with birds, the American Bird Conservancy abcbirds.org has a Cats Indoors campaign. The shocking reality is that with more than 100 million cats in the United States, cats are “the largest source of direct, human-caused mortality to birds.” In fact, “cats kill approximately 2.4 billion birds every year in the U.S. alone.” Cat predation kills more birds than windows/buildings, habitat loss, climate change, and wind turbines.

There are many risks to cats when they are allowed to roam outdoors – getting hit by cars, being attacked and killed by dogs or coyotes, fighting with other cats, eating poisoned food or spoiled garbage, being abused by cruel people, collecting fleas and ticks, defecating in your child’s sandbox, contracting feline leukemia or other diseases, encountering rabid wildlife, getting worms and bringing them home, walking on wet, pesticide-treated lawns, crawling onto warm car engines, getting lost, being shot by BB guns or worse, getting trapped in someone’s garage, shivering in cold, rainy, or snowy weather, hunting and eating rats, bunnies, or birds, becoming someone else’s indoor cat and you never find out what happened to your cat...

People may feel it is unfair to cats to keep them indoors. It is unfair not to, but it takes some effort to keep a cat happy, especially if it is used to going outside. Cats have a prey instinct that can be satisfied with stimulating play instead of finding real victims in the outdoors. There are even phone apps that provide a cat with stimulating simulated hunting. There are a variety of enclosures, homemade or purchased, sometimes called “catios” (cat patios), that allow cats to enjoy outdoor views and smells without actually being outside on their own.

It is now believed that cats were domesticated in the Near East around 12,000 years ago, from the species *Felis sylvestris*, which means “cat of the woods.” This is much earlier than was commonly thought to have occurred around 8,000 years ago in Egypt. People should stick to having *Felis catus* as their pets, and not some of the wild exotic species that are currently fashionable.

Please protect your cats (and birds and voles and bunnies) by keeping them indoors!



These and other friendly cats at the GI Animal Shelter and TAILS are waiting for their “forever” inside homes!

2 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. 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.



Airport Natural Area is Open to the Public
 Airport Natural Area
 Enter at 28820 East River Rd, Grosse Ile, 1-4 pm

Hike in the Airport Natural Area. GINLC hosts will be available to open the trails every Sunday from May to October. Spend a few hours enjoying the trails, ponds, bays, lookouts, and woods of this hidden gem.



www.ginlc.org

← **REMINDER**, the Airport Natural Area is open on **Sundays from 1-4.** ↓ **Don't miss the Lovely Lotus Walk on August 20 at 1! The lotuses only bloom once a year!**



Lovely Lotus Walk
 Saturday, August 20, 2022. 1:00pm
 Airport Natural Area
 Enter at 28820 E River Rd, Grosse Ile

Enjoy a guided hike down to the American Lotus bed to observe this beautiful wetland flower. Discover what makes this plant so important for wildlife, technology, and humans. We will also observe the other plants and animals found alongside the Lotus during late summer in the marsh.



GINLC.education@gmail.com for information

All GINLC programs are free to the public, but your donations make them possible.



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 Sign up for our email list at ginlc.org/contact-us

**SUMMER
 2022**

Treasurer, Grosse Ile Nature and Land Conservancy
 P.O. Box 12
 Grosse Ile, MI 48138

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PETER KANTZ

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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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