

“The founding fathers made an appropriate choice when they selected the bald eagle as the emblem of the nation. The fierce beauty and proud independence of this great bird aptly symbolizes the strength and freedom of America.” — President John F Kennedy

CALENDAR

**GIBRALTAR BAY UNIT
(GBU) DETROIT RIVER
INT’L WILDLIFE REFUGE**
28820 E. River Rd.
Remains open dawn
to dusk, year round

GINLC EVENTS

OWL PROWL
Saturday, Nov 2
Centennial Farm
6:30 pm
Register: GINLC.education
@gmail.com

GINLC ANNUAL MEETING

Saturday, Nov 9
GI Country Club
9:30 am Breakfast
10 am Meeting

REFUGE EVENTS

HAWK WATCH
Sept 1 – Nov 30
Lake Erie Metropark
boat launch

REFUGE NATURE STORE

HOLIDAY SHOP
Thursday, Nov 14
TV’s Grand Event
Trenton
4:30 – 7:30 pm



LYN EL-ZEIN

NATIVE SPECIES
OF GROSSE ILE

Bald Eagle

*(Haliaeetus
leucocephalus)*

BY BERT URBANI

What is a sight that used to be rare but is now becoming common, and is still exciting and welcome? Bald Eagles! Unlike many species of birds, such as Warblers, which are small and similar, Bald Eagles are large and distinctive. Even non-birdwatchers can easily identify them in their daily travels. Look up!

CHARACTERISTICS: First thing – Bald Eagles are not bald! Adult Bald Eagles have white feathers on their heads and tails. They get their name from the Old English word, balde, which meant white. Even their Latin name Leucocephalus derives from Greek words meaning “white head.” Young Bald Eagles are mostly brown and do not obtain their adult white heads and tails until they are 4 or 5 years old when they reach sexual maturity. They also have dark eyes and beaks compared to adults’ yellow eyes and beaks. Both adults and juveniles have strong

yellow feet and sharp talons. Their wingspan ranges from 6 to 8 feet!

RANGE, HABITAT & DIET: Bald Eagles are found only in North America, whereas their cousins, Golden Eagles, are found throughout the world. The northern-most Bald Eagles migrate south in the winter, but many stay year-round in their locations, including many Michigan Bald Eagles. They are found mostly near water, along coastlines, rivers, and even swamps. Bald Eagles are strong predators but they are also opportunists, eating carrion and even stealing prey from ospreys and other birds. Ben Franklin was famously not a fan, stating “For my own part I wish the Bald Eagle had not been chosen the Representative of our Country. He is a Bird of bad moral Character. He does not get his Living honestly.” When getting

– continued on Page 6



Thank You
**TO OUR
SPECIAL DONORS**

**GROSSE ILE GOLF
& COUNTRY CLUB**

(annual meeting location)

J & D TREE SERVICE

*(stump removal at GIHS
Nature Area)*

KROGER

*(Community Rewards
Program)*

**RAINTREE
LAWN CUTTING**

*(donation and planting
of memorial trees at the
Police/Fire Station)*

**WE APPRECIATE
YOUR SUPPORT!**

Reflections From the President

BY PETER KANTZ

Fall is that magical time of year when the trees shed their leaves and the animals get ready for winter, some flying south, some storing food, and others preparing to hibernate. It's a time to get outside and enjoy a walk in the woods and take in the fall colors, sights, and sounds. Winter will be here soon enough, and although a winter nature walk can be refreshing, it lacks the sights and sounds of fall.

This past year has been a busy one for GINLC, starting with construction of the south retaining wall at Sunrise Park, followed by landscaping above the wall. High water levels negatively impacted several of our properties. The lower portion of our preserve on Thorofare was underwater for much of the year so we planted a meadow on the slope leading down to the canal, well above the rising water. The observation platform overlooking the Trenton Channel at the Hennepin Marsh Gateway Preserve was inaccessible due to the trail and at times, even the boardwalk, being submerged.

This year GINLC, along with the other owners of the adjacent, privately-owned Wright Woods, sold the 30-acre Wright Woods site to Open Space, opening up this area to the public. GINLC has been consulting with the Open Space Commission to improve the trail through Meridian Woods. Plans are also in the works for additional improvements to GINLC's Meridian trailhead. Fall is a good time to walk though Meridian Woods. The trailhead is located on the east side of Meridian just south of Meridian Elementary school. There are a number of public trails on Grosse Ile, Meridian Woods being the longest. A *Guide to the Natural Areas of Grosse Ile*, complete with nature area descriptions and trail maps, can be picked up at Grosse Ile Township Hall, Kroger, or at one of GINLC's many events.



Special Thanks...

... to those who are making, and have made, Grosse Ile such a special place to live. Anthony Ozog's Eagle Scout project involved building a wooden display for these stepping stones that were created many years ago to acknowledge some of the early contributors to the Conservancy. The project is located on GINLC property at the Meridian Woods Trailhead, which is the beginning and end point of a 1 mile loop trail through Open Space. Anthony's project adds a point of interest to the trailhead. GINLC member Carol Machuga worked with Girl Scouts who carefully cleaned and repainted the stones.

***Congratulations to Anthony and many thanks
to Carol and the Girl Scouts!***

Sunrise Park is looking better and better (what's not underwater!) due to the efforts of GINLC volunteers weeding, planting bushes, laying down mulch, etc.



Fall 2019 Stewardship

BY PETER KANTZ

Stewardship has been a challenge this year. Many of the properties we steward have been adversely affected by record high water levels. Some areas have been underwater, leaving trails and observation platforms unusable. The Gibraltar Bay Unit (GBU) of the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge, which GINLC stewards for the US Fish & Wildlife Service, was largely unaffected by the high water. However, portions of the wildlife areas on the Grosse Ile Airport property were often inaccessible, with water flowing over the road leading to the seaplane base, and the trail leading to the lagoon observation platform underwater. The lagoon observation platform was displaced from its foundation by high water and plans are being developed to relocate the platform.

With the exception of a narrow strip of land along Meridian, Hennepin Marsh Gateway Preserve, usually a robust vernal wetland, was underwater. The observation platform was inaccessible and the boardwalk, constructed well above normal water levels, was submerged when the wind blew out of the east. Stewardship efforts at the preserve were limited to the area along the road.

Construction of the retaining walls at Sunrise Park (funded by a generous GINLC donor) allowed the public to enjoy portions of the park this year; however the GINLC-built brick patio at the south end of the park was destroyed by the high water. The GINLC bench on the patio was removed to prevent it from being damaged and the GINLC spotting scope was not installed since its mounting pedestal is underwater. GINLC reinstalled the kayak slide at the park after the south retaining wall was constructed and kayakers were able to use the park throughout the summer.

Nature preserves not affected by high water were maintained as in years past. Plans for improving the upper level of Sunrise Park are being developed and we are looking into additional improvements to the Meridian trailhead. Eagle Scout projects have been a major component of past stewardship projects and we look forward to working with the Scouts on future projects. Scouts interested in working on projects should contact us.

REFUGE SAVE THE DATES!

May 2, 2020

28th ANNUAL BENEFIT DINNER

Bentley Banquet Center, Wyandotte

May 9, 2020

GRAND OPENING

Visitor Center of the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge



And, ta da! It's official! A date has finally been set for the Grand Opening of the John D. Dingell Jr. Visitor Center of the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge! MAY 9, 2020! We're all invited! A fun day is being planned. Volunteers are needed for various assignments, that day, and in the future as the Refuge starts functioning with programs, a gift shop, and the fishing pier. Contact Visitor Services manager Jody DeMeyere at 734-288-6458.



The late Congressman John Dingell, Mrs. (now Congresswoman) Debbie Dingell and members of the International Wildlife Refuge Alliance on Jan. 14, 2017, when the unfinished building was dedicated and named in Congressman Dingell's honor.

GRIFFIN'S FUN FACTS TO KNOW AND SHARE

Appearances can sometimes be deceiving. Despite looking nearly identical in many aspects, the American lotus is not a type of water lily; in fact, they aren't related at all! Pollen analysis and genetic sequencing has determined that the closest living relative of the lotuses is actually the sycamore tree. This is an example of what scientists call extreme divergence, which is when two close relatives look almost nothing like each other.



There is an old wives' tale that you can tell the temperature by counting a cricket's chirps. These old wives were very smart (as wives tend to be), because crickets do make excellent thermometers! Crickets are cold-blooded critters, so they tend to be more active when it is warmer outside. The result is faster and more frequent chirping when it is warmer. To tell the temperature, count the number of chirps in 13 seconds, then add 40. This will give a pretty good approximation of temperature.

GINLC Summer Events Recap

BY GRIFFIN BRAY

Sunday, August 18 – In August, naturalist Griffin Bray led a walk to the American lotus at the Gibraltar Bay Unit (GBU). Although widespread across the country, in Michigan lotuses are only found in the Lake Erie area, including Grosse Ile, and at Kensington Metropark. The beautiful yellow flowers, each roughly the size of a dinner plate, only last a few days before they lose their petals and release their seeds. Even though the program was cut short by an unexpected thunderstorm, we were able to see several of these impressive flowers, as well as hundreds of the lotus' equally impressive leaves.



Sunday, September 22 – During "Insects on the move," Griffin led a walk focusing on the insects and other creepy crawlies that abound at the GBU. Late summer is a perfect time to look for insects as they are very active looking for food for the winter or trying to find a mate before the first frosts end their lives. Our sharp-eyed, and sharp-eared, attendees found a variety of bugs on the hike, including singing cicadas, spider wasps, crickets, several species of bee, and a few orb-weaver spiders. The children and children-at-heart also went into the tall fields at the GBU to collect some specimens to get an even closer look at who lives on the island. Several species were observed.



Top Right: Meet Our New Naturalist! Griffin Bray is a senior at UM-Dearborn, studying environmental science. **Bottom right:** This little investigator brought her own loupe to Insect Investigations! She was intrigued by the Orb Web Spider.

GINLC Update: McLouth Steel Site Remediation & Redevelopment



BY DOUG THIEL

The following is a compilation of milestones and significant activities that have been achieved over the past three months.

- In July, numerous local elected officials toured the southern portion of the site to observe how things have progressed since April.
- Significant progress has been made on demolition of a number of the site

Thoughts on Development

BY INGO HASSERODT, *Vice President of Land Acquisitions*

For mainly residential communities, like Grosse Ile, creating the budget is a constant struggle and balancing act between what revenues are needed to provide reasonable services and what the voters are willing to pay. Frequently the suggestion is floated to just develop the remaining open spaces for single family homes and the resulting increased tax revenues will fix the problem. The truth is starkly different. A study by the University of Georgia about the fiscal impacts of land use on local governments found the following surprising relationships:

- Residential properties – *for every dollar of tax revenue received, the community will need to spent \$1.15 on average for services.*
- Commercial and industrial properties – *on the other hand, services would cost \$0.27 for every tax dollar received.*
- Farms and forests – *\$0.37 are spent for services for every tax dollar received.*

Obviously, since industry and farms are not options for Grosse Ile, it appears to be a valuable lesson for us, to leave the remaining open spaces undeveloped, particularly those located on unimproved roads without utilities. This will not only save us money but will help maintain our unique life style.

IRA Info BY JOHN LEON, *Treasurer*

Do you know what an RMD is? Are you over 70 1/2 years old and do you have a Traditional IRA? If so, then you must take a Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) that meets the requirements set forth by the IRS. This means that if the account holder fails to take their Required Minimum Distribution on time, and in the right amount, there can be a penalty. For every dollar not withdrawn, the IRS will charge a 50% penalty tax. Now that I know about this, this year I'm going to make my contribution to the GINLC directly from my IRA. It's called a Qualified Charitable Distribution. I'll pay no income taxes on that amount if taken directly from my IRA and donated to a qualified charity, like the GINLC. Please make your donation to the GINLC today. Consult with your accountant or financial advisor. Questions? Call me at 734-671-0125.

structures in the southern portion of the site.

- The EPA Grosse Ile Office has closed. As a result, Brian Kelly, the on-scene coordinator, for the southern portion of the site has relocated his office to the EPA's Ann Arbor office. He continues to routinely monitor conditions at the site. His new telephone number is 734-214-4890.
- Kirsten Safakas of the EPA has reported that the formation of the

Community Advisory Group has been delayed until sometime in November or December of this year. The facilitator for the group should be in place before the end of October.

- Contaminant sampling will be initiated on the northern portion of the site by the third week of October. In addition, sampling will also be conducted by the third week of October to characterize the chemical constituents present in the water accumulating on West Jefferson

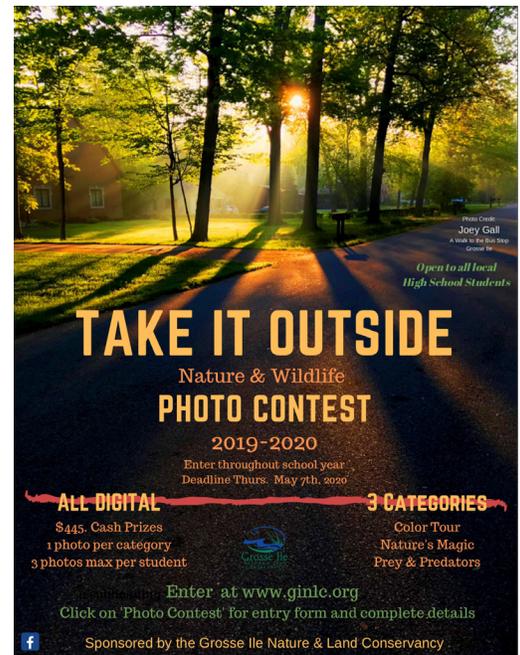


Photo Credit: Joey Gall
A Walk to Paradise 2019
Grosse Ile

Open to all local High School Students

TAKE IT OUTSIDE

Nature & Wildlife
PHOTO CONTEST
2019-2020

Enter throughout school year
Deadline Thurs. May 7th, 2020

ALL DIGITAL
\$45 Cash Prizes
1 photo per category
3 photos max per student

3 CATEGORIES
Color Tour
Nature's Magic
Prey & Predators

Enter at www.ginlc.org
Click on 'Photo Contest' for entry form and complete details

Sponsored by the Grosse Ile Nature & Land Conservancy

GINLC Photo Contest

All local high school students are eligible. Cash prizes.
DEADLINE: May 7, 2020

CATEGORIES: (all digital)

- Color Tour
- Nature's Magic
- Prey & Predators

Visit www.ginlc.org and click on **PHOTO CONTEST** for entry form and details.

2018-2019 Photo contest winners are on display at the Wyandotte Library in October and the Trenton Veterans Memorial Library in November.

off of the northwest corner of the site. An investigation has also been initiated by the Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy (EGLE) to determine if the storm sewer in that section of the road has been blocked off either accidentally or on purpose.

- There currently are no public meetings planned by the EPA or EGLE for either the northern or southern portions of the site.



This young Bald Eagle (left) will mature and achieve the regal appearance of the adult (right) by age 4 or 5 years.



LEFT: J.S. JOURDAN, RIGHT: LYN EL-ZEIN

– Bald Eagle, continued from cover

their meals “honestly,” Bald Eagles swoop down from a high perch and grab their prey with their talons. They also fly low over sea or land and take their prey, fish or small mammals, by surprise. A significant cause of eagle mortality is being struck by cars when eating road kill at the side of the road. Like all wildlife, eagles do not understand vehicles and, with their large size, they are slow to take off when they realize an oncoming car is a threat. They may even move towards crossing the road, getting more into the path of the vehicle. Drivers are urged to reduce their speed if they see an eagle on the ground near a road.

LIFESTYLE & NESTING: Bald Eagles may mate for life. They engage in a mating ritual where the male and female soar towards each other, lock talons, and spiral downwards in breath-taking free-fall until they miraculously wrench apart near the ground. Afterwards they mate on a tree branch or in their nest. They build their nests in tall trees with clear views. Both parents work on the nest which is made of large branches lined with softer materials such as moss. As the pair adds to the nest over several years, it becomes huge and heavy, weighing as much as 1,000 pounds, and averaging 4-5 feet across and 2-4 feet deep. The female lays two white eggs and both parents take turns incubating them for 35 days until they hatch. The parents bring food to the nest as the young learn to fly and hunt. Although they can fly at around three months of age, they hang around the nest for another couple months before setting off on their own.

VIEWING OPPORTUNITIES: Bald Eagles are becoming more common on Grosse Ile and throughout Michigan. There is a nest near Hole 5 on the Water’s Edge Golf Course and they also nest on Humbug Island. Bald Eagles are often spotted in trees on E. River Rd. and on Sugar Island. Fall Migration is happening right now, so check out the HawkWatch at

Lake Erie Metropark. For close up viewing, visit the resident Bald Eagle at Lake Erie Metropark.

CONSERVATION STATUS: In 1782 when the Bald Eagle was adopted as the emblem of the USA, it is estimated that there were 100,000 nesting eagles. Two centuries of killing (farmers shooting eagles), habitat loss, and pollution (reproduction failure due to egg shell thinning from the widespread use of the pesticide DDT after World War II) drastically reduced the population. By 1963 there were only 487 pairs of nesting eagles in the lower 48 states.

DDT was banned by the young Environmental Protection Agency in 1972. Bald Eagles were protected by federal legislation in 1966 and listed in the Endangered Species Act of 1973. These laws and the programs they produced – captive breeding programs, reintroduction efforts, law enforcement, and nest site protection during the breeding season – has resulted in the recovery of the species. On June 28, 2007, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service announced the recovery of the Bald Eagle and its removal from the list of threatened and endangered species.

However, in August of this year, the federal government announced changes to the Endangered Species Act. The changes will roll back protections at a time when the pace of species extinction is intensifying. According to a United Nations report, one million plant and animal species face extinction and may disappear within the next few decades. This is brought on by humans through habitat loss, climate change, and pollution, and threatens such iconic species as tigers, gorillas, and polar bears.

The Bald Eagle is a success story that we can all be proud of. We, the American people, brought this majestic bird, our national symbol, back from the brink of extinction. We must now ensure its continued existence and the survival of nature in its exquisite variety throughout our planet.

Donations Received October 2018 – September 2019

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*Lifetime Members

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

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.



GINLC ANNUAL MEETING is NOVEMBER 9th

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 9th

Doors open at 9:30 for complimentary breakfast

Meeting 10am to noon

Grosse Ile Golf & Country Club



PRESENTATION by Dr. Lauren Fry
Technical lead for Great Lakes hydrology at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Detroit District Office

The Grosse Ile Nature & Land Conservancy will hold its annual membership meeting on Saturday, November 9th at the Grosse Ile Golf and Country Club. Attendees will learn about about the GINLC’s latest projects, discuss 2020 plans, and celebrate the to-be-announced 2019 Conservationist of the Year.

Dr. Lauren Fry will be the guest speaker. She will present “Water, Water, Everywhere: Record-breaking Great Lakes water levels!” Dr. Fry will discuss the Corps’ monitoring and forecasting, and what to expect in terms of lake levels in the future using the science that goes into determining Great Lakes water levels.

THE PUBLIC IS CORDIALLY INVITED.
A complimentary continental breakfast will be available. This is your chance to learn about and volunteer for the various projects & activities that the Conservancy is working on to improve the quality of life on Grosse Ile.

TO RECEIVE EVENT NOTICES & NEWSLETTERS BY EMAIL, CONTACT US AT INFO@GINLC.ORG  

FALL 2019

To make a donation, call
JOHN LEON
734-671-0125

To sign up for a work party call
PETER KANTZ
734-558-2149

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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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www.ginlc.org

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