

## CALENDAR

### GIBRALTAR BAY UNIT (GBU) DETROIT RIVER INT'L WILDLIFE REFUGE

28820 E. River Rd.  
Open to the Public Daily,  
Dawn to Dusk

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**HIKE IN AIRPORT  
NATURAL AREA (ANA)**  
Sundays: May through Oct  
from 1:00-3:00pm  
GINLC hosts are  
available to open the  
trails of the Airport  
Natural Area for hikers

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**GINLC ANNUAL GENERAL  
MEMBERSHIP MEETING**  
Sun, Nov 12 @ 10:30am  
Grosse Ile Golf Country Club  
9339 Bellevue, Grosse Ile

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**OWL PROWL**  
Sat, Nov 12 @ 6:30pm  
Centennial Farm  
25797 Third St., Grosse Ile

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**SOLSTICE WALK**  
Sun, Dec 18 @ 1:00pm  
Meridian Woods  
East side of Meridian Road  
across from Meridian  
Elementary School

BROCK FENTON / CC BY-SA 4.0



## NATIVE SPECIES OF GROSSE ILE Big Brown Bat (*Eptesicus fuscus*)

BY KATIE KOBILJAK

Bats can have a bad reputation — but shouldn't. Some of the misconceptions spread about bats focus on their vampiric habits (don't worry, no bats in North America have Dracula tendencies) and their risk of spreading rabies (the CDC reports that it's extremely rare to catch rabies from a bat). In fact, these mammals are vital to our ecosystem, keeping our backyards from being overrun by pests — and doing so while trying their best to keep to themselves. So read on to learn more about nature's one and only flying mammal, who's quietly and efficiently keeping your backyard bug levels low!

**CHARACTERISTICS:** Big brown bats weigh less than an ounce. Their fur can range between light and dark brown fur with black muzzles, ears, and wings. These bats have a wingspan between 13-16 inches, with forearms around 1½ inches long.

**WHERE TO FIND THEM:** If you're anywhere in North America, whether that's northern Canada or southern Mexico, you have an opportunity

to see the big brown bat. They can be found in most habitats within the continent, including meadows, forests, and deserts. Pine, oak, beech, and bald cypress trees tend to provide these bats a natural home, while others seek refuge in barns, bridges and bat houses. If you want to provide these animals a safe home, you can buy and set up a bat house in your backyard. Bat houses should be placed about 15 feet high on a pole, usually facing the east or south sides of your house so that they can get 6-8 hours of direct sunlight in the morning. Check out [batcon.org](http://batcon.org) for more information about building your own bat house. Fun fact: when "Batman v Superman" filmed in Michigan in 2016, the cast and crew decorated and raffled off bat houses to help raise funds to protect Michigan's native bats!

**DIET:** Most night-flying insects wherever big brown bats are residing are fair game, but they prefer small beetles and various moth species. They use echolocation to hunt, which might sound like clicking or chirping sounds to the

— continued on Page 6



## Thank You TO OUR SPECIAL DONORS

JASON CARTWRIGHT  
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MELVIN CZECHOWSKI &  
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IN HONOR OF  
MARY ANN CZECHOWSKI

AMY LONGTON  
for the donation of tools  
and supplies

IN MEMORY OF  
DAVID LONGTON



# Reflections From the President

BY PETER KANTZ

The Conservancy is making steady progress on converting the building at 8801 Macomb into our Resource Center. The northern portion of the building's interior has been demolished in preparation for its redevelopment into office, conference room and multipurpose areas. The southern portion of the building will be utilized as office and multipurpose space. The center of the building is currently leased to a business for office space.

Most noticeable to the public is the area outside of the building. The area in front of the building is under redevelopment. The Salon Sigrid sign and 9 parking spots have been removed. The area will be planted with native trees, bushes, flowers, and grass, giving it a more natural look. The dumpster pad and fencing at the rear of the building were removed. This area will be turned into a rain garden, filtering the runoff from the parking lot.

Plans for making the building an example of energy efficiency and green building practices are underway. We are looking at ways to make the heating and cooling system more efficient, possibly converting to a geothermal system. Interior and exterior lights will be updated to LEDs. Solar panels are being investigated to supplement our electric utility and it's possible our dependence on natural gas will be eliminated altogether. Although some of these projects may be a few years off, it's anticipated that the building will be open for education programs and special events, such as Earth Day, in the Spring of 2023.

The Conservancy has come a long way in the past few years, with substantial land acquisitions and the purchase of an ideally located building for our Resource Center, thanks to generous donations and the hard work of our many members and volunteers. The future is bright but there is still much work to be done. If you'd like to help by volunteering your time and expertise or making a donation, please contact us at [info@ginlc.org](mailto:info@ginlc.org) or contacting any Board member. You can also check out [ginlc.org/ways-you-can-help](http://ginlc.org/ways-you-can-help).



## 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 GIHS Counseling Office will provide info to 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: Dusk to Dawn, Fur & Feathers, or Bark & Blooms.

Visit [ginlc.org/bruce-jones-scholarship](http://ginlc.org/bruce-jones-scholarship) and [ginlc.org/photo-contest](http://ginlc.org/photo-contest) for info

2022-2023

**TAKE IT  
OUTSIDE**  
NATURE & WILDLIFE  
PHOTO CONTEST



Photo Credit:  
Olivia Rogers  
On a Giant's Shoulder  
Trenton High School

All Digital  
\$445 in Cash Prizes  
3 photo entries per student  
one per category  
Open to all High School Students  
Enter during school year 2022-2023

3 CATEGORIES  
Dusk to Dawn  
Fur and Feathers  
Bark and Blooms



SPONSORED BY THE GROSSE ILE NATURE AND LAND CONSERVANCY  
Visit us at [www.ginlc.org/photo-contest](http://www.ginlc.org/photo-contest) for complete details and entry form  
Deadline Thurs. May 11th, 2023





GINLC volunteers at a summer stewardship event.

# Fall 2022 Stewardship

BY PETER KANTZ

Stewardship activities occur throughout the year, but fall is a particularly good time to get things done. The weather is not too hot and not too cold for working outside. During the Summer much of our stewardship activity revolves around standard maintenance tasks, cutting the grass, maintaining the trails, and removing invasive plants. In Fall, grass and other plants stop growing and we are able to concentrate on preserves that require special attention.

High water over the past few years has prevented us from accessing some areas, and as a result, invasive plants have taken over at least one of our most popular preserves: Hennepin Marsh Gateway Preserve, located on Meridian a half mile north of Bridge. The Conservancy has started an aggressive project to rid the preserve of invasive plants, mostly phragmites and honeysuckle, and cut down a number of the trees killed by high water. You can visit the preserve and view the progress we are making. The project is ongoing and may take years to complete. Without our help, invasive plants will take over the preserve, spoiling the natural habitat and forcing out the animals that live there. We've had 2 well attended weekend events for volunteers to help with this project and more Saturday morning events will be held in the future. Many thanks to the volunteers who have helped with the project so far.

We are in the process of replacing our gas-powered stewardship tools with battery powered tools. Gas powered lawn tools are a major source of pollution. To date, we have purchased a self-propelled walk-behind lawn mower and a chainsaw. The battery powered tools have exceeded our expectations in regard to performance and durability. More battery-powered equipment will be purchased as our gas-powered equipment wears out.

## Thank YOU GINLC Volunteers !

YOU matter. YOU make a difference. Your willingness to share your time, energy, and talent by volunteering with GINLC has a profound and lasting impact on our efforts to preserve the natural water and land areas of Grosse Ile. Whether it's helping host the Meet & Greet sessions at the Airport Nature Area, contributing to the Newsletter, participating in our stewardship work, or supporting our education events, it's your willingness to give selflessly that allows the Conservancy to thrive and fulfill its Mission.

### We celebrate those of you who choose to:

- Spend a Sunday afternoon hosting at Airport Natural Area so others can enjoy this hidden gem
- Take photos of our events and scenery that we can use on our webpage and social media
- Work as part of a stewardship team cutting the grass, trimming trees, attacking invasive plant species on our natural areas
- Assist with the renovation of our Resource Center
- Lead our high school photo contest - involving our youth in exploring our environment: air, water, land, wildlife, resources, and ecosystems
- Assist our membership team as we continually strive to attract and retain members to enable GINLC to make a greater impact
- Help conduct a successful Earth Day event
- Assist with our many Educational Programs to help the public learn about the natural area and to celebrate the importance of conservation and preservation
- Publish our excellent *Voyageur* Newsletter
- Staff our Booth at Islandfest and other Island events
- Complete an Eagle Scout Service project

The fruits of your labors make a tangible impact, of course, but perhaps it is the fact that you are willing to share your time and talent with GINLC that tells us that our vision and mission is important. We don't say it often enough, but we very much appreciate all that you do for GINLC and so, on behalf of the Board of Directors, we thank each and every one of you.

There are many rewarding opportunities with GINLC. Reach out to us [ginlc.org/volunteer](https://ginlc.org/volunteer) if you are interested in learning how to be involved.





**Guests at the Lovely Lotus Walk examine lotus flowers and other natural plants in the Airport Natural Area.**



# GINLC Education Programs Recap

BY ERIN PARKER / PHOTOS BY BERT URBANI

**Lovely Lotus** — *Saturday, August 20*: Despite a sudden mid-day downpour, 10 visitors arrived at the Airport Natural Area ready to battle the humidity and get up close to Gibraltar Bay's hundreds of blooming American Water Lotus (*Nelumbo lutea*). These giant aquatic plants, with their huge leaves lifted several inches above the water's surface, bloom in August, much later than their smaller, June-flowering cousins, the water lilies (*Nymphaea spp.*). Along with the lotus flowers in the Bay, participants observed a variety of butterflies including Common Buckeye, Viceroy, and Monarch taking advantage of flowering plants along the trail including common and swamp milkweeds, common boneset, and more. Another highlight was an American goldfinch nest, comprised of thistle-down woven into the reeds, complete with 4 tiny jellybean-sized eggs!

**Twilight Hike** — *Saturday, September 17*: Eighteen visitors participated in this evening hike focused on the emergence, observation, and identification of bats as the sun sunk below the horizon. Thanks to both the Airport Manager and the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge for allowing later-than-usual access, the evening started with a spectacular view of the sunset and a close-up exploration of the hydrophobic properties of the giant water lotus leaves. Participants got to taste the young green seeds in a developing lotus seedhead, commonly eaten in China. They also explored the world of spotted jewelweed's 'exploding' seedpods before it got dark enough to start looking and listening for bats. Using a 'bat detector' or ultrasonic microphone to detect, record, and identify bats, visitors were able to see and hear 3 different species! With bat populations in steep decline in Michigan, habitat such as the natural areas on Grosse Ile are more important than ever.

**Nature of Halloween** — *Sunday, October 30*: Skulls and skins and creepy eyeballs—it must be The Nature of Halloween! Visitors to the Airport Natural Area explored a variety of natural objects from shed snakeskin to racoon skulls and the weird white 'dolls eye' berries of our native dogwood shrubs. A few even got to meet an ambassador snake up close. It turns out that the nature of late fall isn't so creepy after all!

Grosse Ile Nature and Land Conservancy's monthly programs are free and open to the public. Designed to showcase seasonal phenomena and the various natural areas of Grosse Ile, join the naturalists and get outside with GINLC! Two programs remain in 2022: The Owl Prowl takes place at Centennial Farm on Saturday, November 12th from 6:30-8 p.m. and a Solstice hike celebrates the changing of the seasons with a stroll through Meridian Woods on Sunday, December 18th from 1-3 p.m. Find all of our educational events at [ginlc.org/upcoming-events](https://ginlc.org/upcoming-events).



# Leave Your Leaves & Stems

BY ERIN PARKER

Fall arrived right on schedule with lower temperatures and a blast of wind that helped to push major migrations of birds, butterflies, and even bats. The first leaves have started to drop and gardeners everywhere are starting their autumn chores. Two tasks to leave until spring are removing all your leaf litter and trimming all your summer flowers back to the ground!

**Leaving your leaves** – or at least a large percentage of them – has many benefits to wildlife. First, the cocoons, caterpillars, and larvae of many of our native moths, butterflies, and fireflies rely on leaf litter for overwintering. Remove all the leaves and you've effectively removed a generation of beneficial insects. Loss of insects means less for the robins, bluebirds, and other songbirds to eat during the spring and summer when they depend on insects to raise their hungry young. Amphibians, such as toads and salamanders, both use the damp leaf litter for shelter and consume the insects living within it. These are important parts of our backyard ecosystems that we should welcome as tiny predators of our garden pests.

Leaf debris also feeds your soil as it breaks down, improving water retention, nutrients, and even soil structure. While leafy piles on your lawn will kill the grass, these same piles moved into your vegetable and flower beds make excellent weed-preventing mulch. If you can't leave the leaves in piles in your garden, make a compost area where the leaves can slowly break down over the winter. Finally, leaves can be left on the lawn and run over with a mulching mower. The tiny shreds left behind will feed the soil without smothering the grass.

**Flower stems and seedheads** are another important fall garden task to cross off your to-do list. The seeds of plants like bee balm (*Monarda sp.*) and coneflowers (*Echinacea sp.*) attract finches, sparrows, and others to feed on cold fall and winter days. When snow falls, the stems and leaves bend and create pockets of protection for these same birds to escape the wind and precipitation. Even the stems of many of our summer flowering plants are important as the eggs, larvae, and cocoons of many pollinating insects are housed inside or attached to hollow stems.

Leaving your leaves and stems for the winter provides food and shelter for the wildlife we enjoy all summer long. And it's a win, too, for gardeners as we take a few tasks off the list! In the spring, don't be too quick to finish these chores, either. Like Michiganders everywhere, pollinators know not to get used to warm spring weather too early! Overwintering insects don't typically emerge until there has been a week or more of temperatures in the 50s, so gardeners that get the itch to garden before the true last wintry weather leaves in late April or early May can end up removing these beneficial garden helpers.

## In Memory of a GINLC Founder

On July 29, the Grosse Ile Nature & Land Conservancy lost one of its original founders and Board members. Mary Ann Czechowski, GINLC's first secretary, passed away due to complications from Parkinson's disease. Mary Ann was a true environmentalist, dedicating time to GINLC, the Grosse Ile Natural Resources Committee, and the Michigan Nature Association. Below, two of the original Board members who served with Mary Ann share their fond memories of her.

Co-founder Ingo Hasseroth

said: "I remember Mary Ann and her husband to be exceptionally dedicated environmentalists who avoided material possession. They used to drive a Saab automobile, which at the time was like a symbol of protest against the rest of the gas guzzlers. They lived in a small, sparsely decorated apartment, and her husband often

spent hours on my old Apple computer studying environmental issues, without saying a word. She was the first secretary of the Conservancy, recording the agenda of our first meeting."

Co-founder and past President Kurt Kobiljak fondly remembers Mary Ann being at some of the very first founders' meetings and indicated: "When we were first trying to devise the Conservancy's path, we had many opinions and were driven by Grosse Ile activism. During these meetings, Mary Ann always kept us focused by very calmly and quietly reminding us as to the Conservancy's mission and our purpose as board members." He laughed and continued by stating: "there is no doubt that Mary Ann kept both Bruce Jones and myself grounded when we were both attempting to tackle every aspect of protecting our island's land and water resources during a two hour meeting. Mary Ann made all of us better Board Members and conservationists, there is no doubt."

The GINLC is able to continue supporting the original mission of protecting natural land on the island thanks to those like Mary Ann. We extend our deepest sympathies to her husband Melvin and her family.





human ear. Reproductive females are capable and known to eat their body weight in insects every night, and colonies of bats are known to consume enough cucumber beetles in farming towns to prevent the pests from ruining crops. The role that these bats play in balancing the ecosystem is vital!

**REPRODUCTION:** Mating season is during the fall and winter, but female bats usually do not get pregnant until the spring once their hibernation season ends. Bat pups are born in May and June, and usually stay with their mother in maternity colonies for a few months afterwards to feed and learn how to fly. Maternity colonies are made up of anywhere between 20–300 bats, and their roosts can be found naturally under loose tree bark, within tree cavities, or on cliff-side crevices.

**VIEWING OPPORTUNITIES:** Big brown bats hunt during dusk. They're one of the fastest bats, reaching up to 40mph while flying—but you can still spot them! If you've noticed shapes that may look like birds swooping around your yard once the sun goes down, those are our native bats helping de-bug your yard!

*Top: big brown bat perched upside down on a tree, a position that lets them launch faster, bottom left: two big brown bats roosting in a barn, bottom right: a typical bat box affixed to a post.*



## Domestic Cat (*Felis catus*) Part 2

BY BERT URBANI



CALEB WOODS/UNSPLASH

As discussed in the article in the Summer 2022 issue, Domestic Cats are a non-native species on Grosse Ile. They make wonderful pets, and they should be kept indoors, for their safety, and the safety of our native wildlife.

Many pet cats are allowed to roam the outdoors. In recent years, people have begun addressing the problem of unwanted stray cats with a practice called Trap, Neuter, Release (TNR). TNR programs trap, spay or neuter feral cats, and then release them to the environment, which perpetuates the problems of wildlife predation, disease transmission, and property destruction. While well-meaning in their intentions, people participating in TNR programs are actually inhumanely extending the short, sad, brutal lives of these lovely and loveable animals.

For more information about TNR, visit the American Bird Conservancy's website at [abcbirds.org](https://abcbirds.org).

# Donations Received – October 2021 to November 2022

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**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](http://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.





## Owl Prowl

Saturday November 12, 2022 @  
6:30pm-8:00pm  
Centennial Farm 25797 Third St  
Grosse Ile, MI 48138

These are awesome birds of prey!

We'll learn about the owls in our area and their characteristics. We'll end the night with a hike to attempt to find some owls.

GINLC.education@gmail.com for information and to register.



## Solstice Hike

Sunday December 18, 2022 @ 1-3 pm  
Meridian Trail head. East side of Meridian  
Road across from Meridian Elementary  
School. Grosse Ile, MI 48138

Join us for an educational walk on the (almost) shortest day of the year. Our focus will be on signs of winter; seasonal adaptations, and animal homes.



Photo Credit: Regan Rushmore.

You are invited to the

## GINLC Annual General Membership Meeting

Saturday, November 12 from 10:30 am - Noon

at Grosse Ile Golf & Country Club, 9339 Bellevue, Grosse Ile

Come and learn about the State of our Conservancy, our recent accomplishments, acquisitions, projects, and exciting plans for 2023 and beyond. We will also elect new members to our board of directors.

This year we are pleased to have Robert Burns, Friends of the Detroit River Riverkeeper, as our guest speaker. Bob will speak on "Detroit River Area of Concern Habitat Restoration Projects." The Detroit River was designated as a Great Lakes Area of Concern due to historical contamination and habitat loss. The Friends of the Detroit River organization has completed several projects to resort and protect wetland habitat in the Detroit River. You will recognize them as parts of Grosse Ile including Celeron Island, Sugar Island, Stony Island, and the Hennepin Marsh.

**This meeting is open to all GINLC members and the general public. We look forward to seeing you there.**



TO STAY INFORMED LOOK FOR US ON FACEBOOK, INSTAGRAM, & TWITTER

Sign up for our email list at [ginlc.org/contact-us](http://ginlc.org/contact-us)

FALL/WINTER  
2022

Grosse Ile, MI 48138  
P.O. Box 12  
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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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