



VOYAGEUR

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GROSSE ILE NATURE & LAND CONSERVANCY

"Dinosaurs still lurk in some dark, cold waters in the upper Midwest."
~ Jess del Fiacco



NATIVE SPECIES OF GROSSE ILE

Lake Sturgeon (*Acipenser fulvescens*)

BY KATIE KOBILJAK
HRABNICKY

→ As someone who knows next to nothing about fishing (besides how much proper fishing licenses benefit conservation!), I've always been amazed to see photos of the lake sturgeon caught in the Detroit River and surrounding waterways. The idea that these massive creatures could be swimming around us while we boat and swim outside Grosse Ile may be slightly haunting, but the reality is that they are true gentle giants who deserve the extensive protections they are afforded throughout our local waterways.

CHARACTERISTICS: These awesome prehistoric fish can reach seven feet in length and weigh 200-300 pounds. They are covered in bony, plated armor, and their tail resembles a shark's. They have four sensory whiskers, or "barbels," on the front of their mouths which help them locate food. Lake sturgeon don't have teeth (so they aren't as scary as you may think they are in the water!), and their mouth extends out so that they can suck up food from the bottom of the river.

DIET: Because they don't have teeth, lake sturgeon

must use their large protrusible mouth to vacuum up the bottom of the river. They are omnivores, eating a wide variety of food they find, including macroinvertebrates like crayfish, mussels, and snails, as well as small fish and eggs.

LIFESPAN: Lake sturgeon have been around for at least 150 million years, and we are still learning more and more about their lifespan. Until recently, it was thought that lake sturgeon lived to be between 50-100 years old, with male fish living to an average of

55 years and females living between 80-150 years. However, a new study from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources shows that they may be living up to 400 years in the Great Lakes. For context, that means there could be lake sturgeon swimming in our waterways that predate the United States of America, the French Revolution, and the discovery of gravity! Not that the sturgeon care about any of that.

HABITAT: Lake sturgeon are "benthic" fish, meaning they
— Continued on page 7

9/19

Bats

Sat, September 18, 7:30-9pm
Airport Natural Area

10/17

Seed Collection

Sat, October 17, 1-2:30pm
Airport Natural Area

11/7

GINLC Annual Membership Meeting

Special Guest:
Fox 2's Brother Nature

Reflections From the President

BY PAUL GLOOR

As we move further into 2026, I'm pleased to share that GINLC continues to build on a strong foundation. Our Education Team has prepared a full slate of programs designed to help residents of all ages appreciate, understand, and care for the natural areas that make Grosse Ile such a special place. The full list of events can be found at ginlc.org/upcoming-events.

Community Engagement

This year's Islandfest was a wonderful reminder of what makes Grosse Ile unique. The Membership Committee organized a strong and spirited presence at Islandfest — complete with a parade march, recognition of William Nachtrab as our Conservationist of the Year, and an engaging booth at the Airport. I especially enjoyed meeting new families who recently moved to Grosse Ile and helping both kids and adults create their own bird feeders.

Celebrating Grosse Ile's 250th Anniversary

GINLC has been honored to play an active role in this milestone year for our island with three activities:

- In May, we planted and dedicated a native Swamp White Oak at the Bruce Jones Preserve.
- In June, we partnered with Downriver Linked Greenways, Friends of the Detroit River, and the Grosse Ile Historical Society to host "Hike Through Time" at the Gibraltar Bay Unit and Airport Natural Area.
- In July, we led an insect and butterfly hike during the July 25th celebration at Centennial Farm.

Investing Wisely in Our Future

You may soon notice construction activity at the John C. Jackson Resource Center as we begin building an Accessory Building, as more described in the Summer Stewardship article in this newsletter. This is an important next step in creating a functional, long-term home for GINLC. The new structure will allow us to safely store stewardship tools



Eric Antolak, Trail Manager of Downriver Linked Greenways; Doug Thiel of GINLC; and Gary Kadam of the GI Historical Society at our partnered June Education Event.

and equipment and will include a small outdoor gathering space for future education programs.

Strengthening Our Operations

As a 100% volunteer-driven organization, we take seriously our responsibility to operate efficiently, protect donor investments, and reduce risk. To ensure GINLC remains vibrant and resilient, we are modernizing the systems that support our mission. We must be mindful of our volunteers' time and the risks that come with relying on single individuals for critical tasks. Our current mix of outdated software and manual processes no longer

meets the needs of a growing organization.

Therefore, we are implementing a cloud-based Constituent Relationship Management (CRM) system that will unify contact management, volunteer coordination, membership tracking, event management, and donation processing. This transition will strengthen our operations and set us up for sustainable success. You may notice changes in the look of our emails and event notices as we adopt this new system.

Continuing Our Commitment to Land Stewardship

With the recent acquisition of the Leo G. Stevenson Family Preserve and several parcels within Grosse Ile Woods, our Land Acquisition Team remains actively engaged in identifying additional properties worthy of long-term protection. Our commitment to safeguarding the natural environment in and around Grosse Ile remains as strong as ever.

Your support—whether through volunteering, donating, or participating in our programs—makes this work possible. Together, we are ensuring that Grosse Ile's natural heritage remains protected.

Thank you for supporting GINLC. There is much to look forward to in 2026, and I hope you'll join us in making this a memorable year for our island community.

Summer Stewardship

BY PETER KANTZ

Summer is a busy time of year for the volunteers that take care of the many GINLC-owned nature preserves, the outdoor areas of our Resource Center on Macomb, the Township owned Airport Nature Area at the Grosse Ile Airport, and the occasional clean-up event at Sunrise Park. Stewardship requires many volunteers dedicated to preserving our natural environment throughout the year; however, summer is the most intense season for stewardship, with trails maintained, fallen trees removed, signs installed, and structures, such as observation platforms, nature displays and information kiosks, constructed and maintained. These activities require knowledgeable, diligent, and collaborative volunteers. GINLC is extremely fortunate to have so many volunteers with these characteristics to meet our stewardship needs. As the number of our nature preserves increases along with our desire to make these preserves readily accessible to the public, the need for additional volunteers exists. Specialized knowledge is not required, and on-the-job training is available. If interested, please contact GINLC.

Stewardship requires an assortment of tools and



Our dedicated stewardship crew at this year's Sunrise Park clean-up.



Construction crew beginning on our new accessory building.

equipment, ranging from hand tools and power tools to lawn mowers, brush cutters, and chainsaws. Currently this equipment is stored in various locations. A dedicated storage and workshop building is under construction at our Resource Center on Macomb. This facility will allow us to consolidate our

equipment and provide space to properly maintain the equipment. Additionally, to accommodate outdoor events at the Resource Center, the building will have an attached covered patio. We are looking forward to having this resource at our headquarters moving forward.

THANK YOU to our special donors!

Patrick and Molly
Mech

Nussbaum Family

Kathleen Levellier

Katherine and Joseph
Kobiljak Hrabnicky

Michael Sullivan
In honor of
Mary Joan Sullivan

Marcia and James
Kenyon

Greg and Marcia
Pflum



Giving Made Easy

Enroll your Kroger Plus card to benefit the Grosse Ile Nature & Land Conservancy! Go to [kroger.com/communityrewards](https://www.kroger.com/communityrewards) to enroll (our organization number is AW710).

The AI Craze: How Do Data Centers Actually Use Fresh Water?

BY KATHRYN CHRISTIANSEN

As technology has become an integral part of our lives, the data gathered about our activities is both more broad and more detailed than ever. Most of us know that the data gathered by our phones, TVs, cars, etc. is sent to “the cloud,” but where is that and what is all that data being used for?

“The cloud” really means a data center—a facility filled with thousands, sometimes tens of thousands, of powerful computers that can store and process information collected from the technology we use every day. Individuals and companies can essentially rent this computing power, eliminating the need for local hardware and letting users access data and programs over the internet. This tends to be more economical, since computing power can shift to wherever it’s needed most, and more secure, since data can be duplicated across locations in case any one computer or data center goes offline.

Anyone who’s actually held a laptop on their lap knows how much heat a computer can generate. Now imagine a building full of them. The longer computers run, and the more calculations they perform,

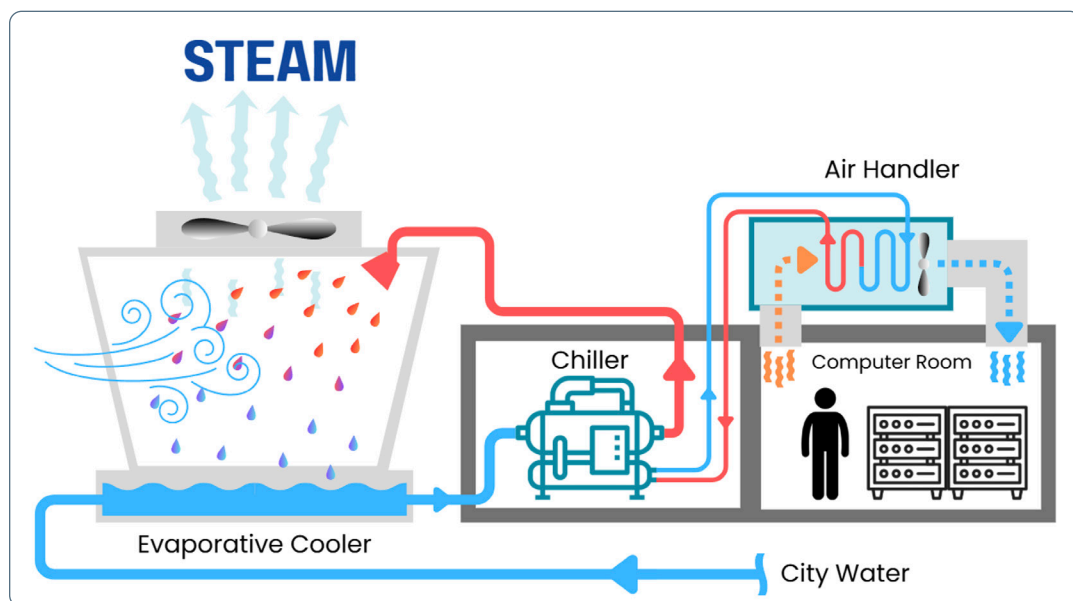
the more heat they generate. A conventional data center will mostly be used for storing emails, static web pages, documents, or videos, meaning the computers run relatively modest workloads because they spend most of their time idle, waiting to be accessed. In contrast, data centers that process “AI” workloads, or cryptocurrency, can run nearly constantly and therefore generate much more heat.

The reason computers in “AI” data centers run more continuously is because what we call “Artificial Intelligence” relies on neural networks (mathematical structures containing billions of adjustable values called parameters) running across

many computers at the same time. Training one of these networks means feeding it enormous amounts of text: whole books, scientific papers, news articles, social media posts. The network is repeatedly asked to predict the next word in a passage, and its guess is compared against the actual word that comes next. When the guess is wrong, a process called backpropagation makes small adjustments to the network’s parameters, dialing it in to be closer to the correct answer. This happens billions of times, gradually shaping the network until its predictions become reliable. “Generative” is the “G” in “GPT”; the “P” stands for “pre-trained,” and the “T”

for “transformer,” which is the type of neural network architecture the model is built on. Once trained, the model uses that same next-word prediction process to generate new text in response to whatever it’s asked, which is why it’s often called a predictive text program.

All of this means there are more chips running hotter and longer, at the same time, producing far more heat than data centers used mainly for storage. Cooling systems that might handle a conventional facility comfortably are then pushed to their limits in an AI environment, and this is why AI data centers require more water for heat management.



So why is water used for cooling? Most of us are familiar with our household air conditioners that don't use any water, but there are many large buildings that use what are called evaporative cooling open-loop systems.

Just like inside our homes, as the air inside a data center heats up, cool air is blown into the room which absorbs the heat and is ducted back to the air handler unit. In your home the air inside the air handler is cooled via pipes full of refrigerant that run outside your house to a cooling coil, where they dissipate heat to the atmosphere. In an evaporative cooling system that refrigerant instead carries its heat to a piece of equipment called a chiller, which is connected to a second loop that is filled with water. That water is pumped outside to a cooling tower, where it is sprayed into fine droplets as fans blow air through the tower, exposing the water to the outside air where some of it evaporates and carries heat away with it; the way sweat cools you down on a hot day. The cooled water then heads back inside, supplemented with more clean water, and the cycle repeats for as long as the computers keep running.

This method is generally preferred because it uses far less electricity than regular air conditioning; closed-

loop systems that skip evaporation are possible, but they cost more to install and run. Evaporative cooling also needs treated municipal water rather than raw river or lake water, since minerals and biological growth in untreated water can clog or corrode equipment. This demand can put pressure on municipal water systems, a cost sometimes shared by surrounding communities.

The other cost to communities can be wastewater. While roughly 70 to 85 percent of the water used for cooling evaporates in the cooling towers, the leftover water, called "blowdown," returns to the system with a concentration of minerals 3 to 10 times higher than municipal supply. Chemical additives to inhibit corrosion and bio-growth also accumulate in this water, so periodically it must be drained. Discharge of blowdown water is regulated under the Clean Water Act, and facilities must send it to a sewer system, get a permit for direct discharge, or treat and reuse it on site.

While the issues surrounding AI are complicated, hopefully this article helped you understand the connection between freshwater resources and the powering of ChatGPT, Claude, and any other AI platform you have encountered.

EDITOR'S BOOK CLUB

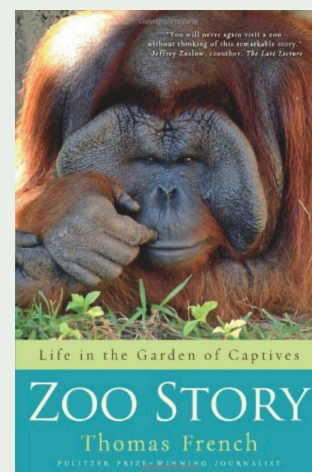
BY KATIE KOBILJAK HRABNICKY

Zoo Story: Life in the Garden of Captives

by Thomas French

I read this book close to a decade ago, but its content has stuck with me ever since. The story covers a lot, from the lives of zookeepers, the animals they care for, and the complex political game behind a zoo's C-suite. Zoos can certainly trigger contradictory thought—on one hand, it can be upsetting to see animals out of their natural habitats, but on the other, being able to experience these incredible creatures up close (and in an environment where they can be studied to benefit their wild counterparts) can spark a passion for conservation in any zoo guest. This book does a great job of displaying both sides of that coin in addition to focusing on the human aspects of a zoo.

As usual, if you're looking to pick up *Zoo Story*, make sure to visit The Literary Hideaway on Gl or Brooks Books in Wyandotte — giving back to your local indie bookstore instead of Amazon benefits our local economy and the environment!



Rocket Community Challenge

**Last chance
to give.**

The Rocket Community Challenge ends August 28th.

**Support
GINLC in
the Rocket
Community
Challenge
throughout
the month of
August!
Please see
our Facebook
for more
details.**



CONGRATULATIONS TO GINLC'S 2026 SCHOLARSHIP WINNER!

BY BERT URBANI

Thirty-three years ago, our 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 began further investing in the future by creating the Dr. Bruce Jones Memorial Scholarship. This scholarship is given to a graduating high school senior who has proven, by their words and deeds, that they are a worthy conservation steward of the new generation. This year, that student is Nya Dibert, whose scholarship-winning essay is included here.

Nya's essay focuses on her long-standing passion for nature and her goal to "become a veterinarian who not only provides care for animals but also contributes to broader environmental conservation efforts. I believe that we, as individuals, have both the power and the responsibility to protect the environment."

Congratulations to Nya Dibert, the recipient of the 2026 GINLC Dr. Bruce Jones Memorial Scholarship. Best wishes from the Grosse Ile Nature & Land Conservancy!

GINLC SCHOLARSHIP ESSAY

BY NYA DIBERT

From a young age, I have felt a deep connection to the natural world and a responsibility to protect it. Some of my earliest and most meaningful memories are of traveling from island to island along the Detroit River with my family, collecting glass, cans, and other debris to help preserve the ecosystems and wildlife around us. I also participated in community cleanups along the river, and what might have felt like a chore to others felt like a privilege to me. Even then, I understood that protecting our environment was not only important, but something I genuinely loved to do.

As I entered high school, I sought out more opportunities to turn that passion into action. Through my environmental science classes, I contributed to projects focused on both education and direct environmental impact. I helped create educational videos about recycling that were shared within my school, as well as posters explaining how and why to recycle effectively. In these projects, we also examined the realities of recycling systems, including how some programs can be misleading or ineffective,

which strengthened my understanding of environmental responsibility beyond surface-level solutions. Additionally, I participated in rain garden cleanup efforts designed to support natural water filtration systems. The amount of waste and invasive plant overgrowth we removed was overwhelming, but it reinforced my commitment to protecting and restoring natural habitats.

Beyond the classroom, I have engaged with environmental organizations such as the Grosse Ile Nature and Land Conservancy (GINLC). During a guided tree trail walk led by a GINLC member, I gained a deeper appreciation for the complexity of ecosystems, learning about tree identification, bark function, and the essential roles trees play in sustaining the environment. I also independently participated in cleanup efforts at Sunrise Park in honor of Bruce Jones, the founder of the GINLC. Spending my own time removing litter and debris from the land and surrounding water was a meaningful way to give back and contribute to the

preservation of local natural spaces.

Looking ahead, I plan to continue my commitment to conservation through my education and career. I intend to pursue a bachelor's degree in biology at Eastern Michigan University, followed by veterinary school at Michigan State University. My goal is to become a veterinarian who not only provides care for animals but also contributes to broader environmental conservation efforts. Whether through working with nonprofit organizations, supporting wildlife rehabilitation, or advocating for the protection of local ecosystems, I want my career to reflect my lifelong dedication to helping animals and preserving the natural world. I am especially drawn to this path because animals cannot advocate for themselves, and I feel a strong responsibility to be a voice for their well-being.

Ultimately, my passion for ecology and conservation comes from a place of genuine love and respect for the Earth. I believe that we, as individuals, have both the power and the responsibility to protect the environment. Through my past experiences and future goals, I am committed to making a positive and lasting impact because without a healthy environment, we have nothing.



LEFT: JASON FISCHER / USFWS, RIGHT: JUSTIN CHIOTTI / USFWS

Continued from cover
occupy the bottom region of a body of water (in their case, freshwater lakes and rivers).

REPRODUCTION: Despite their lifespan, these fish are slow to mature, taking males around 15 years and females around 20-25 years. While lake sturgeon spend a majority of their time in, well, lakes, they migrate to large rivers to reproduce. This usually occurs when they are about 10-30 years old, and only happens intermittently-- only 10-20% of mature adult fish do so every year. They choose to lay their eggs in early spring in rocky, fast-moving parts of the river that they choose, which keeps the eggs protected. Once the eggs hatch, they drift down river to live in a nursery habitat, which will be slightly different than the rocky area that they hatched in. Once they are able, they will leave the river until it is time for them to reproduce themselves-- and when it's time to do so, they will



Left: 240 pound, 6'10" female lake sturgeon caught (and released) in the Detroit River in 2024. Right: Lake sturgeon fingerling.

typically return to the rocky area that they hatched in.

CONSERVATION: Lake sturgeon were historically abundant in the Great Lakes, providing an important food source for indigenous tribes. However, European settlers saw them as a nuisance, as their population was so vast that they were known to capsize boats and ruin fishing nets. This led to an aggressive commercial harvest, which was bolstered by the construction of dams that ruined their reproductive migration and spawning/nursing habitats. Early fishermen would harvest their meat and eggs, use oil from the sturgeon carcasses to provide fuel for steam ships, and their swim bladders were used to produce isinglass, a type of gelatin used in making beer and wine. This cull was so impactful that in 1880 alone, more than 4 million pounds of sturgeon were processed in Michigan, taken from Lake Huron and Lake St. Clair.

Thankfully, conservation

efforts began shortly after. By 1928, the total sturgeon harvest from all the Great Lakes fell to less than 2,000 pounds. Stocking efforts have returned these fish to their native waterways, including the Great Lakes. Fish passages, regulated release of water from dams, and full removal of dams have helped bolster their populations further. Increased research into sturgeon migration and reproduction have helped these efforts, as well as the extreme protections they are offered from fishing. Harvesting lake sturgeon is heavily regulated, with an extremely limited number of licenses being offered a year. The season usually lasts less than an hour, as the quota is only six sturgeon.

The Michigan DNR still relies on volunteers to protect these lake sturgeon by reporting illegal harvesting or sturgeon sightings. If you see one of these legendary fish swimming around, try to snap a picture (and send it to us for a future newsletter)!

Grosse Ile at 250: Treaties, Transformation, and the Natural Landscape

BY SKYLER LESLIE

In 2026, both the United States and Grosse Ile commemorate 250 years since their colonial beginnings. For Grosse Ile, this anniversary offers an opportunity to look beyond 1776 and consider a much deeper history that stretches back thousands of years and continues to shape the island today.

Long before European settlement, the Detroit River region was home to Indigenous peoples, including the Wyandot and the Ojibwe, Odawa, and Potawatomi Nations (collectively known as the Anishinaabeg), among others. The Anishinaabe call this region Waawiyatanong, meaning “where the curved shores meet,” a name that reflects both the geography of the Detroit River and its importance as a place of connection.

For Indigenous communities, the rhythms of life followed the rhythms of nature. Seasonal fish spawning, changing water levels, wetland plant harvests, and wildlife migrations determined when communities gathered and when they dispersed into smaller family groups. Summers were spent fishing, hunting, harvesting, trading, and preparing food for winter. During the colder months, families relied on those stores while continuing to hunt and trap. Humans were woven into the ecosystem, helping sustain the Detroit River.

The river itself served, as it does today, as the region’s principal transportation corridor—a lifeway that connected communities throughout the Great Lakes. It carried people and trade goods but also stories, technologies, and cultural traditions. Rather than a boundary, the Detroit River was a living network linking wetlands, forests, islands, and the people who depended on them.

Early European visitors encountered an extraordinarily rich landscape. Extensive wetlands, including submerged and emergent marshes, wet meadows, shrub swamps, swamp forests, and lakeplain prairies, supported abundant

fish, waterfowl, reptiles, amphibians, and mammals. Dense forests of oak, hickory, maple, and other hardwoods covered much of Grosse Ile. Travelers often drank directly from the river, and early European accounts rarely mentioned concerns about water quality.

European settlement, beginning in the seventeenth century and expanding dramatically after 1776, gradually transformed both the human and natural landscape. Through a series of treaties, including the Treaty of Detroit (1807), the United States acquired millions of acres of land in southeast Michigan. While these treaties became the legal basis for American settlement, they also displaced Indigenous communities from much of their traditional homelands and restricted access to the lands and waters that had sustained them for generations.

Indigenous peoples have maintained enduring cultural, historical, and spiritual connections to the Detroit River that continue today.

Contemporary observers recognized the extraordinary productivity of the landscape. One early government report described “the lands on the strait of Detroit” as “of the finest quality,” producing abundant wheat, corn, and other grains. Grosse Ile’s “richness of the soil” and “quantity of valuable timber, consisting of oak and hickory,” made it one of the most desirable places in the region. So desirable that, when Antoine de la Mothe sur du Cadillac arrived in the region in 1701 with the goal of building a fur trading post, he considered Grosse Ile. Concerns of overharvesting the timber, and difficulties of transporting lumber, ultimately led him to establish Detroit roughly 15 miles north.

Over the following two centuries, forests were cleared for agriculture, wetlands were drained or filled, shorelines

*“Protecting wetlands,
restoring native habitats,
improving water quality,
and preserving open
space help sustain the
same natural systems
that have supported life
here for millennia.”*

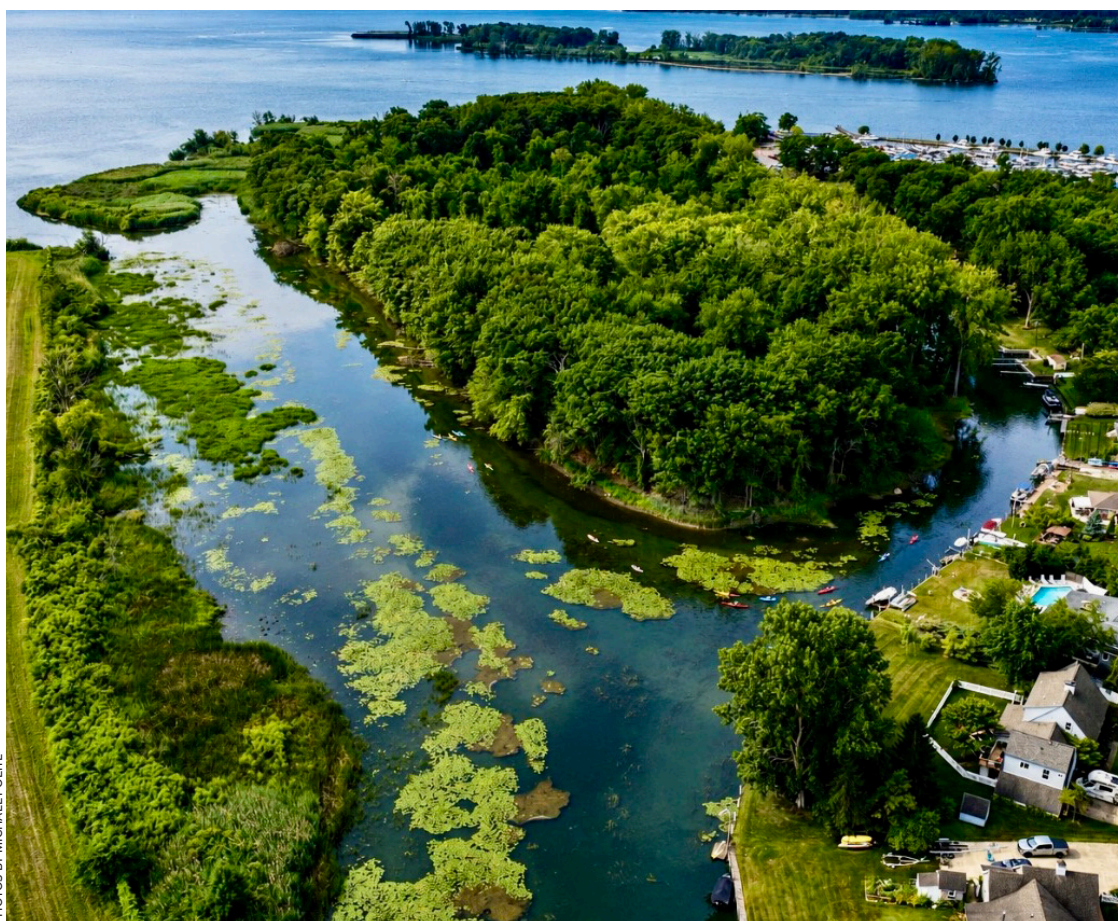


Paddlers during the GINLC x Friends of the Detroit River kayak event enjoying the natural beauty that our area is known for.

were reshaped, and development expanded across the island. These changes supported growing communities and local economies but also simplified ecosystems that had developed over thousands of years.

Today, conservation efforts undertaken by Grosse Ile Nature and Land Conservancy and its partners seek to restore some of the ecological functions that once defined Grosse Ile and the Detroit River. Protecting wetlands, restoring native habitats, improving water quality, and preserving open space help sustain the same natural systems that have supported life here for millennia.

As Grosse Ile marks 250 years of colonial settlement, it is also an opportunity to recognize the island's far longer Indigenous and ecological history—and how the two are intertwined. Understanding how treaties, settlement, and environmental change shaped the landscape reminds us that conservation is not simply about protecting nature, it is about caring for a place whose human and natural histories have always been inseparable.



PHOTOS BY MICHAEL POLITE

Our Teens: Paving The Way To A Brighter Environmental Future

BY LILA SOMERSET

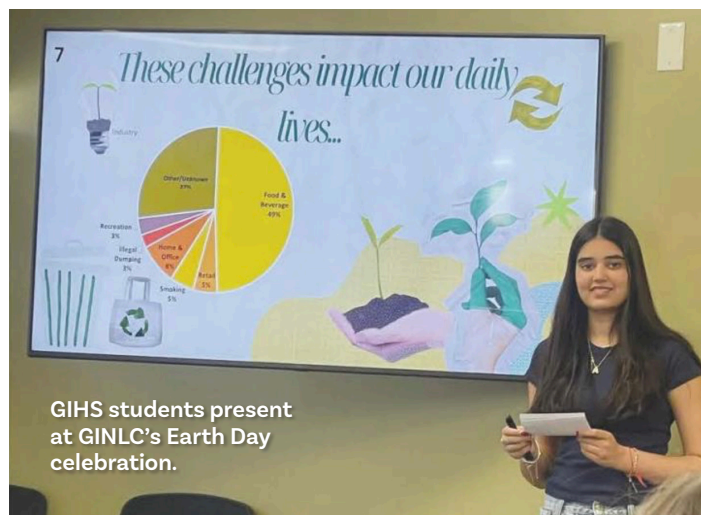
Editor's Note: Lila Somerset is a Junior at GIHS under the tutelage of professional journalist, Andrea Watson.

This article was originally published in the May issue of the Grosse Ile Grand.

Climate change, biodiversity loss, deforestation, air pollution, and water scarcity are the big environmental issues of today, tomorrow, and future generations. Without meaningful changes to current systems and ways of life, future generations, and even those in the near term, are likely to face significant environmental impacts.

The Earth is changing and will continue to change in extreme ways if no action is taken to prevent it. However, many individuals are actively working to raise awareness and develop solutions, including students making an impact in environmental science at Grosse Ile High School. With educators like Dr. Julia Roscoe providing guidance and mentorship, students are being encouraged to take initiative and responsibility for environmental issues. Through shepherd projects, students are working to tackle big issues, such as noise pollution and littering.

Recently, GIHS students Kate Glover, Evelyn Hicky, Lila Somerset, Morgan Dilsizian, and Anika Verma



presented their ideas and research at the Grosse Ile Land and Nature Conservancy during its Earth Day event, focusing on topics such as recycling practices and environmental awareness.

Morgan Dilsizian noted in her presentation, "Seeing how people were also passionate about our presentation really motivated

us to follow our dream."

Anika Verma was moved by the audience response, saying, "The feedback we got was very positive and it drives us to fight for change."

The program at GIHS is relatively new, though it has already made an incredible impact. In a recent write-up, Dr. Roscoe explained, "When I started teaching at Grosse Ile High

School four years ago, there was no Environmental Science course offered. One year ago, I launched this program with the goal of empowering students to become civically engaged and active participants in scientific research. Now in its second year, the program has grown significantly. It began with just 15 students, expanded to 60 students this year, and continues to gain momentum. Looking ahead, I will be offering an Advanced Placement Environmental Science course next year, with 90 students already enrolled."

Students taking environmental science are exposed to real-life problems and are taught to take action in order to create meaningful change they can see. Dr. Roscoe describes her classroom, "The work in this class allows students to take a deep dive into both local and global environmental issues while actively engaging in solutions through action, advocacy, and education."

Different classes in the program take on different environmental issues

and focus on making a change. “During the first semester, our class focused on improving the quality of drinking water in our school. Students organized a local ‘town hall’ meeting with our principal, where they presented evidence that the water filters were in poor condition and needed replacement. The efforts led to real change—we made it happen,” Dr. Roscoe continued.

“This year, students are working in small groups to design and implement sustainable action plans addressing a range of environmental challenges. We are partnering closely with the Grosse Ile Nature and Land Conservancy to improve recycling practices in our schools, address invasive species, create quiet zones for nature on the island, and educate middle and elementary school students about litter and environmental stewardship,” Dr. Roscoe said.

The student work in the GIHS environmental science class is vital to protecting the island community, where much of the instruction is rooted. As Dr. Roscoe states, “... Our island setting provides an ideal environment for this work. Students identify native trees at the Bruce Jones Preserve, engage in mindful observation during nature walks to better understand the ecosystems they share,

test water quality at Sunrise Park Beach, and sample macroinvertebrates in French Creek.”

Students in this program take on meaningful challenges, demonstrate ownership of their work, and become truly empowered through their efforts.

Kate Glover, a student in the program, said “Taking environmental science as a sophomore has really sparked my interest. I’m excited to continue with AP Environmental Science as a senior. For me, the program expansion is amazing; it’s helping me work toward my goal of becoming an environmental lawyer.”

Interest in Environmental Science classes among students at GIHS has tripled, leading to the program’s expansion into DCTC and AP for the 2026-2027 school year. This opens doors for students who plan on going into fields such as biology, ecology, mathematics, psychology, conservation, and community partnerships.

Big problems call for big ideas, solutions, and actions. Although students at GIHS are still young, their passion is huge. Through this program and with Dr. Roscoe’s leadership, these students are making waves in the environmental science world, proving that regardless of age, individuals with passion and strong values can make a significant change.

EARTH DAY 2026

BY ISABELLA RISTA

The Grosse Ile Nature and Land Conservancy held its annual Earth Day celebration on Sunday, April 26th at the John C. Jackson Resource Center. The day included a guest speaker series, raffles, take-home crafts, and our friends from the Save Sibley Prairie Coalition.

Guest speakers included; Kathryn Christiansen, GINLC Board Member, presenting on Home Heat Pumps and how to make your home more efficient year round. Jack Smiley, from Save Sibley Prairie Coalition, Save it Don’t Pave It presentation highlighted the importance in saving Sibley Prairie, the largest remaining lakeplain prairie in the State of Michigan - a landscape found almost nowhere else on earth. GIHS Environmental Science Advocates; Anika Verma, Morgan Dilsizian, Jack Johnson, Evelyn Hickey, Kate Glover, Gulmina Mahmood, and Lila Somerset, had interactive presentations on various environmental science topics that related to real life problems found on the island. Students worked with attendees to identify solutions to these problems and educated them in real time. The day was wrapped up with Skyler Leslie, Friends of the Detroit River Board Member, sharing the Socio-Ecological History of the Lower Detroit River. This presentation shared insight on how humans interact with the Detroit River ecosystem and how those ecosystems are affected by humans.

Thank you to our presenters, dedicated volunteers, and donors! Without individuals like you, we would not be able to make days like this happen. We hope to see you at a program soon!



Upcoming Events

SEPT
19

7:30 - 9:00 PM

Bats
@ Airport Natural Area

OCT
17

1:00 - 2:30 PM

Seed Collection
@ Airport Natural Area

NOV
7

GINLC Annual
Membership Meeting
Special Guest: Fox 2's
Brother Nature



GI resident Jennifer Phillips-Engle with her hand-painted GINLC oar displaying swans, mallards, and geese for the DDA's "Decorate Oar Be Left Out" contest— which took first prize!



TO RECEIVE EVENT NOTICES & NEWSLETTERS BY EMAIL, CONTACT US AT [INFO@GINLC.ORG](mailto:info@ginlc.org)

SUMMER 2026

SEND A CHECK TO:
Treasurer,
Grosse Ile Nature &
Land Conservancy
P.O. Box 12
Grosse Ile, MI 48138

info@ginlc.org

EMAIL:

ginlc.org/join-us

VISIT:

WAYS TO DONATE

Non-Profit
Organization
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 99
GROSSE ILE, MI

OUR MISSION:
To promote for the public benefit the preservation,
stewardship and understanding of the natural resources in
the Township of Grosse Ile and surrounding area

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
www.ginlc.org
P.O. Box 12
Grosse Ile, MI 48138
Paul Gloor, President
Katie Kobijak Hrabnicky,
VP/Newsletter Editor
Bill Nachtrab, Treasurer
Johanne Wilson, Secretary
Kathryn Christiansen
Vicki Desjardins
Jason El-Zein
Jonathan Hodge
Liz Hugel
Alisa Isom
Madeleine Jones
Peter Kantz
Nicole McMillan
Eric Michael
Victoria Murphy
Kathy Levillier
Amanda Phillips
Laura Plischke
Isabella Rista
Doug Thiel

