



VOYAGEUR

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GROSSE ILE NATURE & LAND CONSERVANCY

"Wildflowers
don't care where
they grow"
~Dolly Parton

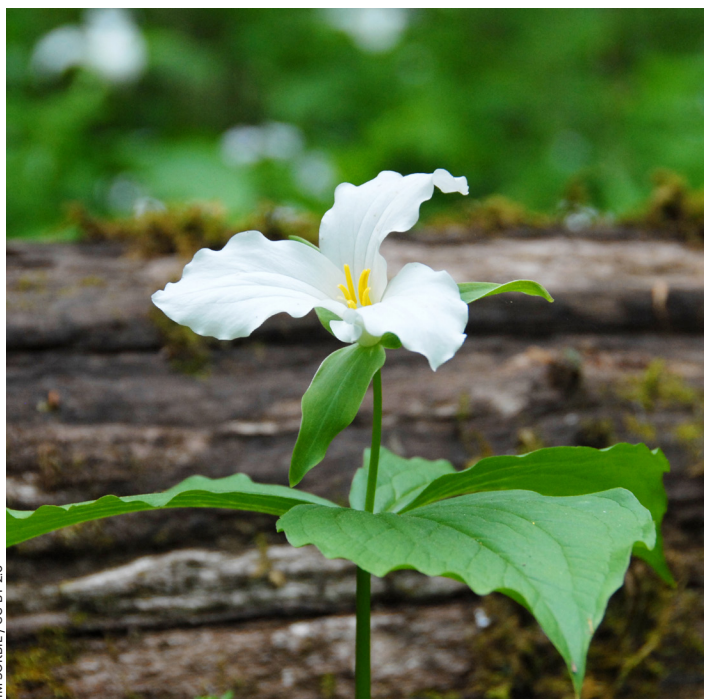
→ It's spring and the wildflowers are blooming throughout the woods in Grosse Ile! Most of these flowers are ephemeral and are gone by summer, so now's the chance to enjoy them. Following are just a few of the beauties you'll find close by - all of the photos were taken last year in mid April during a walk through the open space Wildlife Sanctuary off of Thorofare Road north of Horsemill. For more information about Michigan wildflowers, check out the resources from the Nature Conservancy www.nature.org/en-us/about-us/where-we-work/united-states/michigan/stories-in-michigan/wildflowers-where-when-to-view/ and the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy www.gtrlc.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Spring-Woodland-Wildflowers-at-AD.pdf

WHITE TRILLIUM OR COMMON TRILLIUM:

(*Trillium grandiflorum*) is one of the most beloved spring wildflowers found in woodlands throughout the

NATIVE SPECIES OF GROSSE ILE Wildflowers of Grosse Ile

BY VICTORIA MURPHY



JIM SORBIE / CC-BY-2.0

state. You'll see them starting to bloom in May and last until June, with the flowers turning to a pale pink as they age. The plants are fragile and should never be picked as they get all their energy from the bloom and leaves for next year's show.

WILD GINGER:

(*Asarum canadensis*) The jug-like flower is at the base of the leaf, which helps it attract small flies that come out of the ground in spring - looking for thawing carcasses. The color of the flower resembles decomposing flesh! Native

Americans and early settlers used the root of the plant for spice, but it is not related to true ginger, and can be toxic and cause skin irritation. Unlike other ephemerals which die back by early summer, the leaves of wild ginger remain green all year.

TROUT LILY:

(*Erythronium americanum*) is one of the earliest wildflowers you'll see on your walks in the woods on Grosse Ile. It gets its name from the brown speckled leaves which resemble a trout, but is also called Dogtooth Violet and Adder's Tongue. It grows in a large colony so when you see one bloom you'll soon see a crowd of them. Undisturbed colonies of trout lilies have been estimated to be hundreds of years old.

JACK-IN-THE-PULPIT:

(*Arisaema triphyllum*) is abundant throughout Grosse Ile, blooming in early May through July. In the fall, the pulpit is replaced with a stalk of bright red berries. The plant shown here is female (Jill-in-the-Pulpit?)

— Continued on page 6

4/7

Orioles

Tue, April 7, 6-7:30pm
JCJ Resource Center

4/10

Scholarship Deadline

Fri, April 10
Details on page 3

4/18 Earth Day

Island Cleanup Stewardship Event

Sat, April 18, 10am-12pm
Meet at JCJ Resource Center

4/26

Speakers, Raffle, Crafts

Sun, April 27, 11am-3pm
JCJ Resource Center

2025 Annual Meeting

BY PAUL GLOOR, PRESIDENT

The Grosse Ile Nature and Land Conservancy (GINLC) held its 2025 Annual Membership Meeting on November 8, 2025, at the Grosse Ile Golf and Country Club. We extend our gratitude to the venue for hosting this special event, which brought together approximately 75 attendees.

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2026

President Gloor outlined an ambitious vision for 2026, which includes:

- ▶ Further restoration of Hennepin Marsh Gateway Preserve and improvements at Bruce Jones Preserve.
- ▶ Potential land acquisitions.
- ▶ Deepening collaborations with Grosse Ile High School and like-minded organizations.
- ▶ Advancing collaborative projects identified in the Grosse Ile Master Plan.

WELCOMING NEW LEADERSHIP

We are pleased to announce the results of the recent board elections. Peter Kantz, Kathy Levillier, Eric Michael, and Isabella Rista were re-elected for additional three-year terms. We also warmly welcome the newest members to our Board: Madeleine Jones, Laura Plischke, and Kathryn Christiansen. You can find their biographies in this issue of the newsletter. Finally, we extend our sincere gratitude to Jenna Moxlow, Joshua Gratz, Mickey Bartlett, and Vicki DesJardins for their dedicated service to the Board.

CONSERVATIONIST OF THE YEAR

This year, the “Conservationist of the Year” award was presented to William Nachtrab. The president traditionally selects an individual who has made a significant contribution to conservation over the past year. This time, we recognized someone whose impact has been steady, thoughtful, and transformative over several years. Bill Nachtrab has served as GINLC Treasurer during a period of remarkable change and challenge. His leadership helped us



navigate and responsibly steward the inheritance from the John C. Jackson estate. He guided the establishment of our endowment, led the search for and selection of financial advisors, accountants, and put in place strong policies and procedures that will safeguard our finances for years to come. He also championed the modernization of our bookkeeping by adopting QuickBooks. GINLC is stronger because of his efforts!

KEYNOTE SPEAKER: MCKENZI WALICZEK

Our guest speaker, McKenzi Waliczek, the Stewardship Director of the Friends of Detroit River, spoke on the topic of Detroit River Revival: Restoring and Preserving a Living Legacy. The transformation of the Detroit River, once among North America’s most polluted waterways, is truly remarkable. The presentation showcased the significant collaborative restoration

efforts, detailing both the resulting ecological and economic benefits, and outlining the strategy for long-term stewardship. This success story, however, is tempered by the immense challenge posed by contaminated sediments.

THANK YOU, VOLUNTEERS!

The Conservancy’s success would not be possible without our incredible volunteers. Your time, energy, and passion make a lasting impact on preserving the natural beauty of Grosse Ile.

Here’s to another year of dedication and progress as we work together to protect and celebrate our community’s natural treasures!

Land Acquisition

BY DOUG THIEL

The Grosse Ile Nature and Land Conservancy has just completed the purchase of an ecologically valuable parcel of land on Meridian Road just south of Bridge Road. The property complements the previous acquisition of the Dr. Bruce D. Jones Preserve, which is located a short distance north of this newly acquired parcel.

The acquisition was made possible through a very generous donation for the full purchase price of the property by Mr. Leo Stevenson, who is a Grosse Ile resident, local business owner, and philanthropist. When Mr. Stevenson noticed this property had been put up for sale, he felt it was critical to preserve in perpetuity the woodlands and marsh for their beauty and critical wildlife habitat. These factors prompted him to contact the Conservancy regarding its possible purchase and future stewardship of the property. Negotiations to buy the property were initiated after a comprehensive assessment of the property by the GINLC Land Acquisition Committee. The negotiations culminated in its sale in January 2026. The property will be named the Leo G. Stevenson Family Preserve. A preserve sign will be



View of a frozen Trenton Channel from Leo G. Stevenson Family Preserve.

installed on the eastern edge of the property along Meridian Road sometime this spring.

This preserve consists of 7.9 upland acres and 10.9 acres of off-shore property on the Detroit River and represents the largest acreage parcel purchased by the Conservancy in its 33-year history. This property offers many varied habitats ranging from forested wetlands, mature upland forest, off-shore islands, marsh areas and limestone 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. 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 and spawning area for a variety of fish species. Mink, muskrat, and various species

of turtles and amphibians utilize the shoreline and protective shoal islands.

The upland portion of the property contains valuable habitat for a variety of birds, mammals, and many native plant species. There are many large native tree specimens (some over 200 years old) on the property including Red Oak, White Oak, Shagbark Hickory, Hackberry, and Ironwood. Spring ephemeral wildflowers are present at numerous locations on the property.

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



DR. BRUCE JONES MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

A \$1,000 scholarship for the Grosse Ile High School senior who has exhibited academic excellence, and dedication to protecting our environment.

APPLICANTS MUST:

- Be a GIHS senior, or a Grosse Ile resident, who is graduating from high school this year.
- Have a cumulative grade point average of 2.8 or above through the 2025-2026 fall semester

APPLICATIONS MUST BE SUBMITTED BY 6PM ON APRIL 10, 2026

TO APPLY:

- Contact the GIHS Counseling Office for information, application form, and submission, or
- Visit www.ginlc.org/bruce-jones-scholarship to print the application, which can be emailed to info@ginlc.org

THANK YOU to our special donors!

Leo Stevenson

The Jones Family

Meyer Family
Foundation

Melvin Czechowski

Jennifer Sinclair

Julie and Pat Sweeny

Hugel Egerer
Charitable Fund

Victoria and Dan
Murphy

Alisa Isom

Gianni Di Poce

*A special thank you
to the family of Anne
Marie Rock and the
Pellett family for the
new benches at Airport
Nature Area and Bruce
Jones Preserve*



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).

Winter into Spring Stewardship

BY PETER KANTZ

January and February were unusually cold, snowy, and windy, preventing us from doing many of the construction and maintenance tasks we like to conduct during the winter months. We were, however, able to complete a few projects before the cold weather hit. First, we built a brick patio and installed a memorial bench overlooking Gibraltar Bay at the Airport Nature Area. We also installed a memorial bench on the observation platform at the Bruce Jones Preserve.

One project was accomplished in February when the cold weather actually helped — the installation of gravel on the trails at the Bruce Jones Preserve. These trails are muddy in the spring and fall, and the new gravel will make it much easier to walk the trails at the preserve. This project required the use of heavy equipment and was contracted out to a local landscaping firm, Klammer Outdoor Solutions.

With the recent purchase of additional waterfront, marsh, and small island properties along the Trenton Channel, we find that our need to monitor and maintain these properties exceeds the



Above: Utilizing the new Anne-Marie Rock memorial bench at ANA. Below: Klammer Outdoor Solutions ready to work at the BJP.



ability of the equipment we have on hand. If you have a small, 16-foot, shallow draft boat you'd like to donate to

the Conservancy, let us know. It would go a long way in helping us preserve these natural areas.

PREVENTING WINDOW STRIKES BY SONGBIRDS

BY PHIL BARRACO AND DOUG THIEL

Collisions with residential glass windows is a serious, preventable threat to our nation's songbirds. National data from research completed in 2024 estimate that over one billion birds die annually from window collisions in the U.S. Michigan Audubon estimates that on average every Michigan residence likely kills an average of two birds annually meaning Michigan's toll alone is several million.

Birds will strike a window for various reasons. They hit the window mostly when they are panicked by loud noises or predators like hawks, or during territorial chases. Occasionally, a bird will not recognize a window and mistake the reflection of sky or yard for safe passage. The best preventable measure you can take is to make your windows bird-safe. With birds returning on their spring migrations soon, now is an important time to make your home safer for birds to navigate around.

Ways to make your windows safer:

- ▶ Place bird feeding stations within three feet (1 meter) of the window or beyond ten feet (3 meters). Within three feet, birds 'fleeing' the feeder area will not have built up enough speed to injure themselves if they strike the window. Beyond ten feet, birds will have enough time to spot and avoid the window.
- ▶ Try films or other window applications that create contrast. They can be lines or dots applied on the outside of the windows. Research indicates the key to effectiveness is having them spaced close enough; usually within 2 inches (5 cm) vertically and 2 inches (5 cm) horizontally. The spacing is key because birds will try to fly through small gaps just like they fly through the canopy of a tree or bushes.
- ▶ Set up a window feeder. It will help increase the birds' awareness of the window and provide you close views of them feeding.
- ▶ Window screens are a great solution. If your windows don't have screens, there are some netting options you can purchase to install over your windows to keep birds from injuring themselves.
- ▶ Hanging vertical exterior strips across the window at 4 inch (10 cm) intervals can be a good deterrent; especially, if they are a reflective mylar ribbon or even paracord.

- ▶ Interior vertical or horizontal blinds with the slats half open may make the window more visible and cut down on some bird casualties. Go outside and look to see if it is visible. If you can't see it, the birds can't see it.
- ▶ Soaping the window or using spray-snow is a good temporary solution to deter collisions until you can install a more permanent solution.

A number of available window treatment products can be found locally at **Wild Birds Unlimited**, 19093 West Road, Woodhaven (734) 307-3456.

How you can help an injured bird:

Birds that collide with glass while in free-flight are rarely just "stunned," even if they are able to fly away after a period of recovery. Unfortunately, a bird hitting glass is quite different from a human accidentally walking into a glass door. Birds travel at a much faster speed, and also have hollow bones far more susceptible to breaking and to fatal injuries. Most suffer internal injuries and should be, if possible, examined by a licensed wildlife rehabber. Taking care of injured birds and wildlife should be left to people who have the correct expertise and medical equipment. The **Wild Bird Center** of Michigan in Saline specializes in assisting songbirds in southeast Michigan. They can be contacted at (734) 761-9640 or contact **Wild Birds Unlimited** (734) 307-3456 for help locating a rehabilitator near you.



Bird-Safe Windows at the GINLC Resource Center.

— *Continued from cover*

as it has 2 three part leaves - males have only 1 leaf. Most young plants are male as it takes less energy reserves to grow and produce a flower and fruit. And a fun fact - male plants, once they become strong enough, can change their sex to female, producing larger flowers and more fruit. This sex change can happen year to year depending on the stored energy reserves of the plant.

MAYAPPLE:

(*Podophyllum peltatum*) is also known as Wild Mandrake as all parts of the plant are poisonous. These plants

also grow in a colony and resemble small umbrellas on the forest floor. The plant has a white flower (not seen in this photo) that grows between the leaves and forms a green lemon shaped fruit that turns to yellow in the late summer.

SCILLA OR SQUILL :

(*Scilla Siberica*) It is non-native (native to southwestern Russia, the Caucasus and Turkey) and can become invasive as it's deer resistant and hardy. You'll find it blooming in early spring forming a sea of blue once it's taken hold. The leaves die back in summer.



Above clockwise: Trout lily, Jack in the pulpit, Mayapple, Scilla.

HONORING A LIFE OF CONSERVATION

2008 GROSSE ILE CONSERVATIONIST OF THE YEAR PAM FRUCCI

Pam Frucci received the **2008 Conservationist of the Year Award** for her tireless dedication and outstanding contributions to the preservation and stewardship of the natural resources on Grosse Ile and beyond. She is an amazing example of "stewardship" in this community—whether it's working diligently in a high profile position like Township Trustee, a member of the Open Space/ Greenways Committee or doing everyday good-citizen-of-the-earth activities like picking up roadside trash. Pam was a founding member of the Island Beautification and Natural Resources Committees and has extended her efforts beyond our island to include serving on SEMCOG committees, the Downriver Recycling Center and *Keep Michigan Beautiful*. At home, Pam has guided local scouts to build trails through our woods and periodically shares her conservationist principles with the community through the Ile

Camera. In 2008, Pam started the *Friends of Westcroft Gardens*, a band of volunteers organized to assist the deBeausset family in their efforts to preserve the natural beauty of their property—the oldest working island farm.



Pam exemplifies a conservationist who "walks the talk" with respect and appreciation for our natural environment through her decisions and actions. In November, when we bestowed this award, it was a rather chilly morning and a cold rain was forecasted. Nevertheless, Pam saw no need to travel the few miles to the annual meeting by car. She kept her carbon footprint low by hopping on her bike and using her own energy. In honoring Pam Frucci as our 2008 Conservationist of the Year, we encourage you to take to

heart one of her favorite sayings: "The earth is a garden and we are the caretakers".

GINLC is saddened to learn of the passing of Pam Frucci, a former GINLC Board Member and dedicated conservationist. We hope that this 2008 Conservationist of the Year article helps paint a picture of her legacy — a dedicated steward of the environment both in public and private, always encouraging others to protect the outdoors along the way. May we all channel her energy and enthusiasm for protecting our planet!

MEET YOUR NEW BOARD MEMBERS!



Kathryn Christiansen and her husband, Ryan, made Grosse Ile their home in 2019. After exploring neighborhoods around Metro Detroit, they were drawn by the island's unique blend of natural settings and feeling of community. They quickly settled into island life together with their 2 dogs, Kathryn working remotely for Johnson Controls, while Ryan commutes to the Ford offices. In 2021 they briefly relocated to Southwestern Florida to take advantage of work-from-home and be closer to family, but return-to-office (and a distaste for hurricanes) soon brought them back to Michigan, with no questions that their 7th house would be back on Grosse Ile. Professionally, Kathryn studied engineering at The College of New Jersey and has a background in MEP design. Currently she specializes in creating advanced 3D models for Building Information Modeling (BIM) and Digital Twin projects at Johnson Controls. At home, Kathryn and Ryan enjoy making their home and garden more sustainable, from adding extra insulation to their house and replacing old appliances with heat pumps, to cultivating native plants for the wildlife around their yard. They also do their best to make the most of island life, boating in the summer months and strolling the nature trails with their beagles year-round.



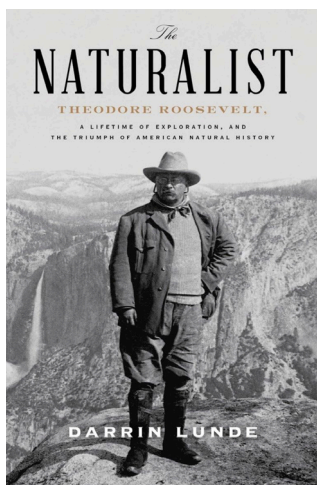
Laura Plischke moved to Grosse Ile in 1971 with her parents, Jack & Jo Wood. She is married to Kurt, has two adult children, Jakob and Catherine, and three grandchildren. Both Laura and Kurt, along with their children, are Grosse Ile High School Alumni. She enjoys birding, sailing, kayaking, skiing, walking outside and working in her yard. She grew up tent camping and canoeing all over Michigan. It is time spent outside that brings her peace and relaxation. Laura loves living on Grosse Ile for the small-town community, great schools and the amount of accessible green space and waterways connected to the Great Lakes. She is proud of her island neighbours and the Township leadership who prioritized protecting our rural atmosphere through Open Space and setting an example for other communities to follow. She often refers to her time on the island as living in a Hallmark Movie. Laura retired from Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan after 38 years. Laura has a Bachelor of General Studies from the University of Michigan. Growing up on the island Laura was a member of the KIC Corps (Keep our Island Clean). She is a member of the Detroit Bird Alliance and a life member of the Grosse Ile Nature and Land Conservancy (GINLC). Laura was previously on the Board of GINLC from 2000 thru 2003 serving as Secretary and Membership Chairperson.



Madeleine Jones traveled from the dry foothills of Denver to the green and damp of Michigan's Downriver in 1964. She earned her BS and M of Ed from Wayne State University and loved teaching science and environmental education in Southgate for 34 years. Madeleine attends St. James Episcopal Church, is a member of many local organizations, and tutors students in Southwest Detroit. Madeleine practices sustainable gardening with an emphasis on native plantings. She enjoys wildlife and like most islanders, has on-going experiments with "deer resistant" plantings. Madeleine is excited to be working with island people who advocate for the environment!

EDITOR'S BOOK CLUB

BY KATIE KOBILJAK HRABNICKY



The Naturalist: Theodore Roosevelt, A Lifetime of Exploration, and the Triumph of American Natural History by Darrin Lunde // Anyone acquainted with me will know that my favorite president is Teddy Roosevelt. His passion for conservation and teaching others about the wonders our world has to offer is fascinating, and without him spearheading the conservation movement in the U.S., it's likely that the landscape of our country would look completely different a century after his death. This novel details Teddy's desire to preserve American conservation through the American Museum of Natural History in New York City, and how, in what some may see as a weird connection, hunting can help promote conservation in the U.S. America would certainly not look the same without his efforts. I absolutely recommend ordering a copy from the Literary Hideaway or Brooks Books (or any indie bookstore, not Amazon)!

EARTH DAY:

SATURDAY, APRIL 18
10AM - NOON
MEET AT JCJ RESOURCE CENTER
8801 MACOMB STREET

Island Cleanup Stewardship Event

PLEASE VOLUNTEER WITH GINLC IN THIS
KIWANIS-SPONSORED EVENT

SUNDAY, APRIL 26
11AM - 3PM
AT JCJ RESOURCE CENTER
8801 MACOMB STREET

Guest Speakers, Raffle, Crafts!

COMING UP:

Orioles

TUESDAY, APRIL 7
6-7:30 PM

JCJ RESOURCE CENTER

Scholarship Deadline

FRIDAY, APRIL 10

Invasive Species & Control Burns

SUNDAY, APRIL 19
1-2:30 PM
AIRPORT NATURAL AREA

Birds

SUNDAY, MAY 17
1-2:30 PM

MERIDIAN WOODS

Wildflowers

SATURDAY, JUNE 20
1-2:30 PM
MERIDIAN WOODS



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

SPRING 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

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

OUR MISSION:

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

