



Exploring Isle Royale

Tracking the trails of wolves and moose

By Jeff Plakke

When we arrived on the Ranger III, the air and water temperature were both 40 degrees, and Isle Royale was shrouded in mist. Lake Superior had dropped a shocking 18 inches, so small islands were now merging with the larger ones, and large rocks along the shore were fully exposed. After being dropped off at Mott Island, the park's headquarters, Rolf and Candy Peterson met me, the two other EarthWatch leaders, and our crew of 15 volunteers to bring us by small boats back to their humble base station "Bangsund," made up of several old fishing buildings and a yurt. A small solar collector powers the computer, gas lamps light the cabins at night, and drinking water is filtered from the dock.

I have worked with Dr. Rolf Peterson on the Ecological Study of Wolves and Moose on Isle Royale as an EarthWatch leader since 1996. After arriving for this trip in June 2007, Rolf and Candy give us an introduction to the research and how the "EarthWatchers" will be helping with the study.

We'll be hiking off-trail through the wilderness of Isle Royale in search of moose, moose bones, wolf sign, snowshoe hare, active beaver lodges, and any other interesting wildlife findings such as otters or eagle nest sites. My job as leader is to keep us together, determine our course and pace, and assist with the challenges of the true back-country hiking and camping experience. Our main goal is to find as many moose bones as we can and be back at the dock for pick-up in 6 days. We spent those days hiking through some of the most beautiful and remote areas of this amazing state. It was a fantastic



Jeff and the EarthWatch team listen to a project briefing on their Isle Royale ecological study.



The EarthWatch group! The author, Jeff Plakke, is in the front row on the far right.

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Isle Royale continued

time to be there. The spring wildflowers were in bloom, the warblers were migrating through, the temperatures were a comfortable 50's and 60's, and the biting bugs were "not that bad" yet.

We crossed over the Greenstone Ridge and hiked off-trail in to Sargent Lake, where only the most determined of fishermen would ever make it to wet their line. Along the way I spotted the rare white form of the fringed polygala *Polygala paucifolia*. We continued on to the Stanley Ridge where we enjoyed mesmerizing views of Thunder Bay, Canada, and McCargoe Cove of Isle Royale. Through binoculars we could see several otters moving and playing in the cold blue waters. While hiking along the wetlands between the island's ridges, we saw a cow moose with twin calves and a bull moose. We found two areas where beaver had recently cut trees. We watched a bald eagle soaring, heard the sounds of wolves howling and examined their tracks, and listened to the mournful evening calls of the common loon.

With all its beauty and tranquility, camping in the backcountry is a challenge. There are no campsites waiting, so each time we moved we had to scout to find a flat area that was relatively clear and close enough to water. There are no tables and chairs, which provides

a healthy challenge to the daily routine. And living for six days without cell phones, TVs, or computers – much less without power, running water, and a climate-controlled environment – exerts an exhausting yet deeply relaxing and ultimately invigorating force on many unconscious layers of the human body and mind. Once settled after dinner, most folks were asleep before the dark of night set in. The physical challenge of back-country living is always a surprise, and the depth of sleep and dreams at the end of a long day is a common topic of conversation around our breakfast of instant oatmeal.

At the end of six days, tired but renewed, we had found three dead moose from which we could collect several bones to bring back to base camp. We shared our stories and a hearty meal with the rest of the leaders and volunteers who had set off to other parts of the island. One group had found over 20 dead moose – a treasure of data to help us better understand these animals and their environment.

After stuffing ourselves with spaghetti and drinking in a few last lungfuls of the freshest air you'll ever breathe, we hopped aboard the Ranger III for the five-hour return trip, parted ways and headed back to our homes. But I can tell from past experience, this memory will live on in the minds and bodies of all who have roamed those remote woods.

Jeff Plakke is a Natural Areas and Collections Specialist at the University of Michigan Nichols Arboretum and Matthaei Botanical Gardens. He is also a Masters Student at the School of Natural Resources and Environment.



The Huron Valley Group Newsletter is published 4 times a year by Huron Valley Group, Michigan Chapter, Sierra Club, 621 Fifth Street, Ann Arbor, MI 48103

We spent those days hiking through some of the most beautiful and remote areas of this amazing state.

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Simply Living: Exploring the Close-At-Hand

The word “explore” means to “look into closely, scrutinize, examine.” One can explore the world...or one’s own backyard! In the spirit of exploration of our local environs, let’s take it one letter at a time and check out some cool places you can explore without leaving our area.

Eating: Yes, eating! Explore our local restaurants. Try eating only local produce for a week—or better yet, try to buy only local foods for a month, or more. Explore all of the farmers’ markets in our community. If you usually go to the market nearest to your house, try a different one. You can find a farmers’ market in Washtenaw County almost any day of the week.

Xhibits in Museums: (Bear with me...it’s hard to find words that begin with “X”!) Exploration doesn’t have to be in the great outdoors...much can be experienced inside (especially on those days when the “real feel” is 103). You may have been to the natural history museum years ago...why not go again? Visit museums in neighboring communities and learn about the history of our wonderful community.

Plants: Have you ever wondered the names of those bushes and plants in your backyard? How about the ones in your local park? Now’s the time to find out! With the help of the library or the internet, you can find out if your local park has black-eyed Susans or tall coreopsis. (I’m pretty sure that those are black-eyed Susans in my park!)

Long rides: Bike rides! After a 19-year absence, I recently got back on a bicycle. It’s true—you really *don’t* forget how. Just riding to the store is an exploration. Unlike riding in a car, you get to feel the breeze, smell the air and see the beautiful sites that nature has to offer. And, you are burning calories and not polluting the air. Everybody wins.

Orienteering: Even with a compass in my car, I still sometimes find myself accidentally going west to get to Ypsilanti (I live in Ann Arbor). Orienteering is a sport that involves navigating with a compass and map. There are clubs in the area, and in southeast Michigan. Events take place at local parks and lakes. What better way to really get to know a native area? And, if you ever find yourself crash landed on a deserted island, you’ll be able to help your fellow survivors escape from the Others. (Oops, this will only work if you are stranded on the TV show “Lost”. But still.)

River: Wherever you live, you live in a watershed. I am blessed to live in the Huron River watershed. Take a walk along the river one day when you have time to really explore the water. And if you see something that doesn’t belong there (like the time I found a neatly capped needle snuggled up against the bank), remove it (carefully!!). It’s up to us to be stewards of our beautiful river.

Environmental Groups: Oh, come on! You know you’re an environmentalist—get involved with a local group or club and make it official! Not only will you meet new people and save the planet, you might also find yourself writing articles for the club’s newsletter. It’s win-win.

Happy exploring!



By Patti Smith

The logo features a stylized crescent moon with the letters 'PFC' inside it, positioned to the left of the text 'People's Food Co-op' and 'Café Verde' which are stacked vertically.

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Exploring the Botanical Gardens, ICO-style



By Barbara Powell

On Wednesday June 27, eleven children and four staff from Green Baxter Community Center in Ann Arbor joined Barbara Powell, Ralph Powell and Carla Danley, volunteers with the Sierra Club Inner City Outings, for an afternoon of exploring the University of Michigan Matthaei Botanical Gardens. After a long period of hot weather, a quick thunderstorm had quickly moved through the area around noon that day. With cooler weather in mind, the children and staff filled their van and took off for the short drive to the botanical gardens.

There was time for a game before the lunch provided by ICO was unpacked in the picnic area. Suddenly, another set of dark clouds moved in from the west. Everyone ran for the covered back

entrance of the conservatory building to finish lunch out of the wind and rain. After lunch, the group went inside and explored the three rooms of the conservatory, with special attention paid to the banana plants, chocolate tree, venus fly traps, and cacti.

When the inside tour was finished, the rain had decreased to a light shower. Rain ponchos were unfolded and we moved outside for more exploring along the Red Trail. Several times we stopped along the trail at plaques, to make leaf rubbings and learn about some of our native trees. The vegetation along the trail was very wet from the rain, and it wasn't long before the children discovered numerous snails and slugs benefiting from the moist conditions. The highlight of the trip was a surprise encounter with a large crayfish which was found sitting in the middle of the trail. Although there was pleading to continue the exploring, all too soon it was time to fill up the van again for the return trip to Green Baxter Community Center.



Local kids don raincoats to explore the trails at the Matthaei Botanical Gardens with the Inner City Outings program.

Can you help?

Can you help ICO continue exploring with the children of Green Baxter and Hikone Community Centers? The ICO volunteers usually meet the second Sunday of the month to plan outings. Contact ICO Chair Vera Hernandez for information at washtenawico@yahoo.com or 737-665-8118. Also check the ICO website at ico.sierraclub.org/washtenaw.

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A Sucker Born Every Minute

Exploring Bird Hills and remembering George Sexton

By David Borneman

If you enter Bird Hills Nature Area from Bird Road to the north and take the first trail branching off to the left, you'll be hiking on a very special trail. It was built in the 1980s by the local chapter of the Sierra Club, thus it's been known by some as the "Sierra Club Trail." I learned this bit of history, and many other fascinating things about Bird Hills and the local environmental scene on November 16, 1993, my second day on the job. That was the day I took my first walk with George Sexton.

For those of you who didn't know George, he was an avid defender of natural areas and a long-time leader within the local environmental community. He also served several terms on our Department's Parks Advisory Commission and played a key role in creating my position and hiring me to fill it.

Sadly, George died this past fall (*ed. note: this refers to 2001*), almost eight years to the day after I took that first walk with him down the Sierra Club Trail. In honor of all that George did for the local natural areas, the Parks Department has decided to re-name this trail after him: *the George Sexton Trail*. Let me take you on a quick trip down the George Sexton Trail to point out some of the features that make it a good memorial to George and illustrate what a good model he was for the rest of us.

The trail runs along the eastern side of a high ridge with frequent vistas (at least in winter) of the Huron River and Barton Nature Area. It's a good place to gaze out over the landscape and enjoy the largest block of contiguous natural area in Ann Arbor. It's also a good place to ponder our role as stewards for the environment and to develop a vision for protecting these ecological jewels. George had that kind of vision, and the rest of us should work to develop it.

As you round the bend in the trail, you pass by a large rock, a glacial erratic, about the size of a doghouse. Don't try to move it; it won't budge. Once it had been set in place by the retreating glacier, it was there to stay. And if there's one thing I'll always remember about George, it was his ability to not budge on an issue that he felt strongly about. He held his ground, persisted, and usually prevailed. We can learn a lot from George, and this rock, about holding our positions on important issues.

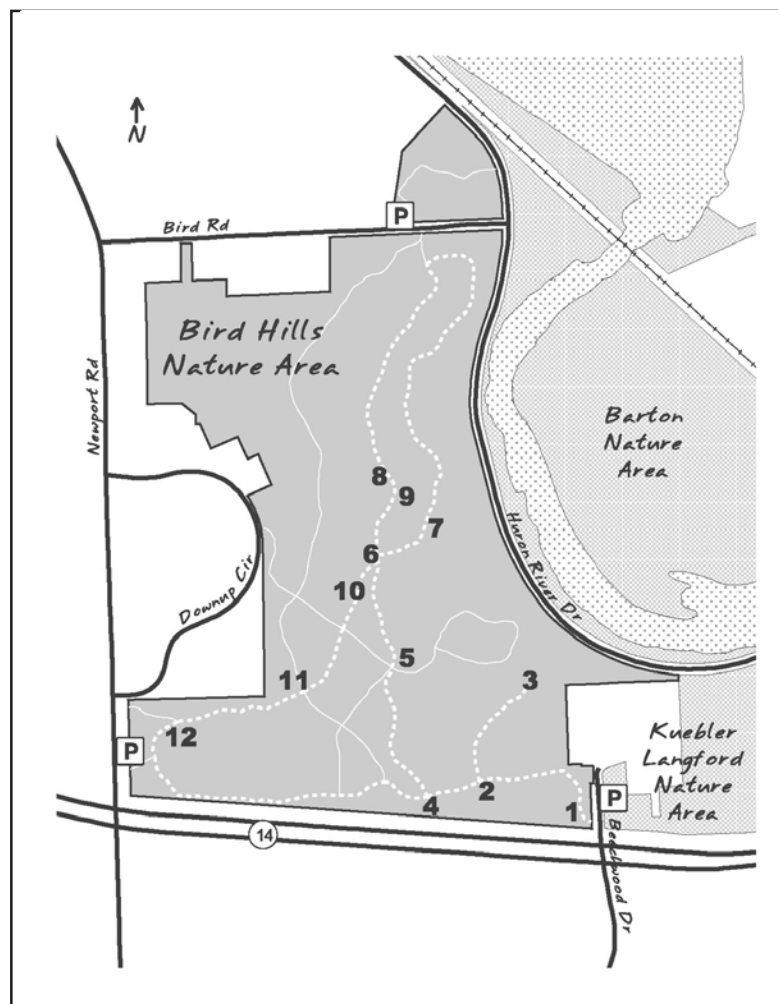
The trail also takes you past some of the tallest trees in the park. They are tulip trees, which have a characteristic straightness as they shoot high into the sky. Stand tall, stand straight, stand proud, all you who work to protect and care for Mother Earth. George always did.

The trail continues on over hills and down

valleys (the same kind of ups and downs we all face in life) and picks its way carefully, but persistently, when the way is crowded with thick brush. And finally, near the southern end of the trail loop where it rejoins the main trail, it passes through one final feature that I think is an especially fitting tribute to George: a sassafras grove. George used this clump of sassafras trees to teach me how to identify the species by its bark, which has a distinctive soft orange glow to its grayness.

Sassafras trees, like many plant species, have the ability to spread by underground shoots, or *suckers*, creating new stems—and eventually new individual trees—genetically identical to the parent tree. These new stems are all considered *clones*, from the Greek word *klon*, meaning *twig*. This particular clump of sassafras trees is the largest I have ever seen, with forty to fifty trunks each about ten inches in diameter. And right in the

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Did you know? A portion of the Bird Hills trail system was built in the 1980s by the local Sierra Club members! (map: Natural Area Preservation)

Bird Hills and George Sexton continued from page 5.



George Sexton

middle of it is an old sassafras log, from a tree larger than any of the others standing there, and one known now only by a dead cylinder of outer bark standing about eight feet tall. This was probably the parent tree that gave rise to all the others in the grove, all clones of this once-magnificent tree.

I like to think that George was just such a “parent tree” within the Ann Arbor community. He stood guard over our natural areas but always sent out new shoots in hopes that some of them would grow into mature individuals who would perpetuate his work to save our forests. He sent out shoots as a teacher with the Ann Arbor Public Schools Environmental Education Program. He sent out shoots as an active member of the Sierra Club, which honored his considerable efforts toward their cause in 1994 when they created the *George Sexton Public Servant of the Year Award*. It is presented annually to a public servant who supports the kind of local environmental protection for which George always fought. I was honored to receive one of those awards in 1994 and I guess that marked my official christening as one of George’s “suckers.”

As NAP’s roots have taken hold, we’ve begun to send out some of our own suckers, and thus our circle of influence and our level of impact continue to expand. Our restoration efforts are multiplied hundred-fold by the volunteers who attend our workdays, and by the growing corps of dedicated park stewards beginning to put down their own roots in parks where they take on additional responsibilities. And so our grove of environmental protectors and ecological stewards continues to grow outward with each generation of new recruits, even after the passing of our parent tree.

This year, go walk the George Sexton Trail. Sit on a rock and ponder being immovable. Stand proud and tall among the tulip trees reaching for the sky. Stroll through the sassafras grove. Find the parent tree and marvel at the many suckers that have themselves turned into mature trees. Consider becoming a new shoot yourself to carry on the work of the parent tree. Then go out and save the planet.

David Borneman is manager of city of Ann Arbor Natural Area Preservation. This story was originally published in the Natural Area Preservation newsletter, volume 7, number 1, spring 2002; reprinted with permission.



Like Nature? Like People? You Could be an Outings Leader!

The Sierra Club Huron Valley Group is accepting new volunteer outings leaders to lead short day-hikes in and around Ann Arbor/Ypsilanti. We will reimburse you for American Red Cross basic first aid training. You will first go on the outing that you choose, and then lead that outing on a later date - or propose your own ideas! Great for your resume, good company, exercise, and fun. Call Kathy Guerreso at 734-677-0823 for information on how to get started.



Sierra Club—Huron Valley Group Calendar

Participants in Sierra Club outings will be asked to sign a liability waiver. If you wish to read the waiver before coming to an outing please see <http://www.sierraclub.org/outings/chapter/forms/> or call 415-977-5630. When carpooling is used to facilitate logistics for an outing, participants assume the risks associated with this travel, as well. Carpooling, ridesharing and the like are strictly a private arrangement among participants. Park fees may apply.

For up to date information, visit our website at <http://www.michigan.sierraclub.org/huron/>

Tuesday August 14. Sierra Club Book Club. 7:30 pm, 2nd Tuesday of every month at Nicola's Books in Westgate Shopping Center, corner of Maple and Jackson, Ann Arbor. Book: **TBD**. Join us for discussion - all are welcome. Check the Ann Arbor Observer or call Nancy Shiffler at 734-971-1157 for details.

Tuesday August 21. HVG Monthly Public Program. 7:30 pm, 3rd Tuesday of every month at Matthaei Botanical Gardens, 1800 N. Dixboro Road, Ann Arbor. Topic: **Up Close and Personal with a Live Eagle, Owl and Falcon: How Raptors Survive in their Habitats — And in Ours**, with Francie Krawcke — Leslie Science Center. Non-members welcome; refreshments provided.

Monday August 27. Conservation Committee meeting. 7:00 pm, 4th Monday of every month. Contact Dorothy Nordness at DorothyK@isr.umich.edu or 734-668-6306 for location.

Thursday September 6. Executive Committee Meeting, typically first Thursday of each month, 7:15 pm. Call Doug Cowherd at 734-662-5205 for location.

Sunday September 9. Inner City Outings. 7:00 pm, 2nd Sunday of every month. Inner City Outings introduces urban children in Washtenaw County to outdoor and environmental experiences that might not otherwise be available to them. Interested chaperones, sponsors, planners, and contributors are always welcome. For meeting location and more details, please visit ICO's events page or contact Vera at 734-665-8118.

Tuesday September 11. Sierra Club Book Club. 7:30 pm, 2nd Tuesday of every month at Nicola's Books in Westgate Shopping Center, corner of Maple and Jackson, Ann Arbor. Book: **TBD**. Join us for discussion - all are welcome. Check the Ann Arbor Observer or call Nancy Shiffler at 734-971-1157 for details.

Saturday September 15. Bird Hills Hike. Join us for a pleasant three-mile hike among oak and birch trees, with some hills and other points of interest. Meet at Ann Arbor City Hall to carpool at 11:00 am or at Bird Hills, Newport Road parking lot, at 11:20 am. Call Ken Morley at 734-678-0264 for more information.

Sunday September 16. Pinckney State Recreation Area "Secret" Hike. Get off the beaten path and discover new trails on this 3-4 mile hike through woodlands and hills with guest hike leader Barry Lonik. Meet at Ann Arbor City Hall at 1:00 pm to carpool. Call Kathy Guerreso at 734-677-0823 for more information.

Tuesday September 18. HVG Monthly Public Program. 7:30 pm, 3rd Tuesday of every month at Matthaei Botanical Gardens, 1800 N. Dixboro Road, Ann Arbor. Topic: **TBA**. Non-members welcome; refreshments provided.

Monday September 24. Conservation Committee meeting. 7:00 pm, 4th Monday of every month. Contact Dorothy Nordness at DorothyK@isr.umich.edu or 734-668-6306 for location.

Sunday September 30. Gallup Park/Arboretum Hike. Join us on this lovely hike between Gallup Park and the Arboretum. Meet at Ann Arbor City Hall to carpool at 1:00 pm or Mitchell Field parking lot at 1:30 pm. Call Kathy Guerreso for more information at 734-677-0823.

Sierra Club—Huron Valley Group Calendar continued

Thursday October 4. Executive Committee Meeting, typically first Thursday of each month, 7:15 pm. Call Doug Cowherd at 734-662-5205 for location.

Sunday October 7. Waterloo Recreation Area Hike. 3-4 miles with a possible “secret” hike excursion. Fall is a great time to explore Waterloo. Meet at Ann Arbor City Hall at 1:00 pm to carpool or at Waterloo Discovery Center parking lot at 1:30 pm. Call Jay Schlegel 734-477-5715 for details.

Tuesday October 9. Sierra Club Book Club. 7:30 pm, 2nd Tuesday of every month at Nicola’s Books in Westgate Shopping Center, corner of Maple and Jackson, Ann Arbor. Book: **TBD**. Join us for discussion - all are welcome. Check the Ann Arbor Observer or call Nancy Shiffler at 734-971-1157 for details.

Sunday October 14. Silver Lake Hike. Join us for good company and a leisurely paced walk in the autumn finery at Silver Lake. Meet at Ann Arbor City Hall at 1:00 pm to carpool or at the Silver Lake parking lot at 1:35 pm. Call Kathy Guerreso at 734-677-0823 for more information.

Sunday October 14. Inner City Outings. 7:00 pm, 2nd Sunday of every month. Inner City Outings introduces urban children in Washtenaw County to outdoor and environmental experiences that might not otherwise be available to them. Interested chaperones, sponsors, planners, and contributors are always welcome. For meeting location and more details, please visit ICO’s events page or contact Vera at 734-665-8118.

Tuesday October 16. HVG Monthly Public Program. 7:30 pm, 3rd Tuesday of every month at Matthaei Botanical Gardens, 1800 N. Dixboro Road, Ann Arbor. Topic: **Great Lakes for Sale: How We Are Losing Control of Our Most Valuable Natural Resource**, with Dave Dempsey, Great Lakes Policy Advisor, Clean Water Action. Non-members welcome; refreshments provided.

Sunday October 21. Waterloo Recreation Area Hike. 3-4 miles with a possible “secret” hike excursion, with guest hike leader Barry Lonik. Fall is a great time to explore Waterloo. Meet at Ann Arbor City Hall at 1:00 pm to carpool or at Waterloo Discovery Center parking lot at 1:30 pm. Call Jay Schlegel at 734-477-5715 for details.

Monday October 22. Conservation Committee meeting. 7:00 pm, 4th Monday of every month. Contact Dorothy Nordness at DorothyK@isr.umich.edu or 734-668-6306 for location.

Friday November 9. Learn how to become an outings leader! Information Session. Join us at 7:00 pm for camaraderie, information, and free snacks. We’ll watch “How to Lead a Hike” and talk about outings. Free. Attendees should be 21 or older. Location: 3039 Stone School Road, Ann Arbor. Call Kathy Guerreso at 734-677-0823 for details.



Other Local Autumn Events

Key:

NAP = City of Ann Arbor Natural Area Preservation. For more information call 734-996-3266. For workdays, please wear long pants and closed-toe shoes, and note that minors must either be accompanied by a guardian or contact NAP in advance to obtain a release form.

TNC = The Nature Conservancy. For more information call 615-500-8229 or email IvesRoadFen@gmail.com. Please bring a lunch.

SN = Stewardship Network. For fee information, to register, and for more information call 734-996-3190 or visit www.stewardshipnetwork.org.

WLT = Washtenaw Land Trust. For information visit www.washtenawlandtrust.org or call 734-302-LAND (5263).

Saturday August 11 - **Hollywood Nature Area Stewardship Workday (NAP)**, 9:00 am to 12:00 noon. These trails always need more chips! Help us spread them and also cut back the remaining invasive shrubs. Meet us on Sequoia Parkway near the intersection of Archwood Drive.

Monday August 13 - **Volunteer Day at Ives Road Fen (TNC)**, 9:00 am to 1:00 pm. Give the native bog birch and prairie rose a chance by cutting the buckthorn that is overwhelming it. Nature walk and refreshments to conclude the day.

Saturday August 18 - **Volunteer Day at Ives Road Fen (TNC)**, 9:00 am to 1:00 pm. Meet some pretty caterpillars and help us fight back the buckthorn. Cool off in our lake when you are finished.

Saturday August 18 - **Redbud Nature Area Stewardship Workday (NAP)**, 9:00 am to 12:00 noon. More plants!!! Help us plant more natives in a new area. Dress for outdoor work and meet at the entrance near Parkwood Avenue and Jeanne Street. Afterwards we'll walk around to see some of the unique features of the park.

Saturday August 25 - **Volunteer Day at Ives Road Fen (TNC)**, 9:00 am to 1:00 pm. Cut buckthorn in the fen amid the summer dragonflies and butterflies. See an area restored two years ago and have warm cookies and cold Coke to finish.

Sunday August 26 - **Eberwhite Woods Stewardship Workday (NAP)**, 1:00 to 4:00 pm. Help spread the word; we need to keep our parks nice by cleaning up after our dogs and keeping them on leash! Meet us in the Eberwhite Elementary parking lot to help us post signs about forest ecology and dogs and also to pull up some invasives.

Saturday September 1 - **Volunteer Day at Ives Road Fen (TNC)**, 9:00 am to 1:00 pm. Get a workout while you restore the fen ecology. Walk through Joe Pye weed taller than you, before having refreshments. This is door-prize day!

Saturday September 8 - **Unlocking the Secrets of the Prairie (SN)**, 10:00 am to 12:00 noon. Many of the open prairies that once existed in Michigan have been plowed under for farming and development. At this workshop, you'll visit a small (but spectacular!) remnant prairie, learn to identify prairie wildflowers and grasses, and hear about seasonal changes on a typical prairie. You will also learn how to use 'indicator species' to tell at a glance if you're in a high quality prairie, and you'll receive resource materials to take home with you. Leader: Faye Stoner, naturalist with Washtenaw County Parks & Recreation. Location: Shanghai Nature Preserve. Registration: \$5 for stewardship network members; \$10 for non-members. Register at www.stewardshipnetworkonline.org or call 734-971-6337 x318.

Saturday September 8 - **Barn Dance & Bonfire! (WLT)** 7:00 pm. You're invited to a barn dance featuring the music of **Nutshell** at *Rancho Tranquillo* (home of Barry Lonik & Wesley Treemore). Enjoy celtic tunes — traditional and celtic-inspired — that are great fun for simply listening, as well as for square dances, contra dances, and more. Dancing isn't required, and no experience is necessary; just come ready to enjoy the music! Folks of all ages are encouraged to attend. Non-alcoholic refreshments will be available. A bonfire will follow (assuming the weather cooperates). Location: 11300 Island Lake Rd, Dexter. Suggested donation: \$10 per person, \$15 per couple, \$20 per family. Proceeds will pay the band a bit, and the rest benefits the Washtenaw Land Trust's conservation programs.

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Other Local Autumn Events continued

Saturday September 8 - **Volunteer Day at Ives Road Fen (TNC)**, 9:00 am to 1:00 pm. Fight back the invaders threatening our native wildflowers. See Michigan's prettiest poison sumac tree and have refreshments when we are finished.

Saturday September 8 - **Foxfire West Nature Area Stewardship Workday (NAP)**, 10:00 am to 1:00 pm. In the fall we collect seeds from native plants to spread to other sites. This is a fun, less strenuous activity suitable for children and adults. Learn about native plants in their important seed-producing stage. Meet at the park entrance on Birchwood Dr.

Sunday September 16 - **Scarlett Mitchell Woods Stewardship Workday (NAP)**, 1:00 to 4:00 pm. Come out and help in the ongoing eradication of invasive buckthorn and honeysuckle. Great exercise, and you can really see the difference at the end of the afternoon. Tools and gloves provided (or bring your own favorites). Meet in the Scarlett Middle School parking lot off Lorraine. Free snacks!

Sunday September 23 - **Furstenberg Native Plant Garden Stewardship Workday (NAP)**, 1:00 to 4:00 pm. Join park steward and master gardener Aunita Erskine as she expands the native plant garden. If there's time we'll take a botanical walk through Furstenberg Nature Area! Meet in the Furstenberg parking lot off Fuller Road, across from Huron High School. Workday orientation starts promptly 1:00 pm. A short nature walk will be held at the end of each workday, time permitting.

Saturday September 29 - **Dicken Woods Stewardship Workday (NAP)**, 9:00 am to 12:00 noon. Join the Dicken Woods Neighborhood Association in the annual cutting of woody invasive shrubs! Buckthorn and honeysuckle crowd out many of our native plants. By removing them, plant diversity is maintained. Tools and snacks provided. Meet at the park entrance at the end of Dicken Drive.

Saturday September 29 - **Redbud Nature Area Stewardship Workday (NAP)**, 1:00 to 4:00 pm. Join fellow nature enthusiasts in a fall planting! We will be setting out plugs of native plants and spreading some seed. We will provide tools, gloves, and snacks. Meet at the park entrance at the intersection of Parkwood Avenue and Jeanne Street.

Saturday October 6 - **Greenview Nature Area Stewardship Workday (NAP)**, 9:00 am to 12:00 noon. Invasive shrubs out-compete native spring and summer wildflowers by shad-

ing them out. We need many hands to help us get rid of these shrubs in the woodland. Meet at the Greenview Park sign, on Greenview Road, across from Barnard Road. We will provide tools, snacks, and water.

Sunday October 7 - Furstenberg Native Plant Garden (NAP), 1:00 to 4:00 pm. Join park steward and master gardener Aunita Erskine and plant fun flowers in the native plant garden. If there's time we'll take a botanical walk through Furstenberg Nature Area! Meet in the Furstenberg parking lot off Fuller Road, across from Huron High School. Workday orientation starts promptly at 1:00 pm. A short nature walk will be held at the end of each workday, time permitting.

Saturday October 13 – Seed Collection (SN). Come to the Ives Road Fen, Lenawee County, Raisin Township, and join Tom Tucker, assistant land steward of the Nature Conservancy in Michigan, and TNC volunteers at the Ives Prairie near Tecumseh for an informative presentation on the methods and ethics of seed collecting. The Nature Conservancy and conservation partners will offer an excellent opportunity to collect native seed for future restoration plantings. In addition to seed collecting, seed processing and storage methods will be demonstrated. For more information and directions contact Tom Tucker at ttucker@tnc.org.

Saturday October 20 – **Workshop on Propagating Native Shrubs (SN)**, 10:00 am – 12:00 noon. Enhance your environment with native shrubs you grow yourself. It's easy and fun! In this workshop you will collect, prepare, and grow seeds from red osier dogwood, witch hazel, spicebush, and other attractive shrubs for your restoration project. You'll also use stem cuttings to create new plants by the handfuls or hundreds. After the workshop, natural areas specialist Jeff Plakke will lead a tour of Nichols Arboretum to view some of these shrubs. Registration: \$5 for stewardship network members; \$10 for non-members. Location: Nichols Arboretum Reader Center, 1610 Washington Heights, Ann Arbor. Register at www.stewardshipnetworkonline.org or call 734-996-3190

Saturday October 20 - **Bluffs Nature Area Stewardship Workday (NAP)**, 1:00 to 4:00 pm. Fall is for seed collection! Help us gather various grass and flower seed for dispersal in other locations. This park has fun hills and trails through lovely woods. We'll meet you in front of the park steward's house at 236 Sunset. We provide snacks and

Continued page 13

Natural Area Preservation Annual Photo Contest



from left: NAP/Harold Eyster, NAP/Marion Powers, NAP/Pavel Borisov)

Ann Arbor's 152 parks (including 75 natural areas) offer citizens a wide array of wonderful places to go hiking, play ball, teach children, visit with friends, and enjoy the out-of-doors. Natural Area Preservation (NAP) offers many ways to get into the parks and help improve them – ecological restoration, trail maintenance, prescribed burning, counting birds and frogs, the list goes on. If you're looking for a more artistic way to enjoy the parks, NAP's photo contest might be right for you.

NAP has a series of historic photos at Cedar Bend Nature Area showing an area that has seen logging, erosion, and, more recently, invasive shrubs. New spring photos picture a healthy, restored woodland with a tall

over-story of oaks and hickories and a healthy smattering of native wildflowers. NAP is looking to collect more images of the parks and park users.

Last year's photo contest saw many lovely images of nature – large and small, serene and active. Join our second annual photo contest. There will be a few tantalizing prizes and perks for winners. Winning pictures from this year's contest will have the distinction of being included in our first-ever NAP calendar, available at the end of 2007.

See NAP's website for details about how, where, and when to enter (www.a2gov.org/nap). It's just another way to get out into nature and enjoy the gifts we have!

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Detroit Heritage River Water Trail

Creating a paddling trail along the Detroit, Huron, Rouge, and Raisin rivers

By Laura Rubin

The Detroit Heritage River Water Trail, the first regional water trail planned for Southeast Michigan, will allow canoeists and kayakers to paddle along the Detroit, Huron, Rouge, and Raisin rivers and experience first-hand the region's abundant natural resources and rich history.

The water trail will be, in effect, a river version of a greenway and is planned to encourage water recreation. It will connect people to the heritage and bountiful natural resources and wildlife along these waterways, with links to attractions, such as greenway trails, as well as cultural assets like museums, restaurants and shopping opportunities. The trail also will provide the opportunity to tell distinctive stories through signage about the rivers' ecology and heritage, which will educate residents and visitors alike.

Phase I of the Water Trail begins in the city of Flat Rock on the lower Huron River and leads downstream to Lake Erie. It then runs up the west shoreline of Lake Erie into the mouth of the Detroit River, and extends out to Celeron, Round, Hickory, and Sugar islands, as well as around Grosse Ile.



Kayaks and canoes on the shore of the Huron River at Labo Park. (photo: HCMA)

Significant progress has been made in implementing Phase I, particularly along the lower Huron. The Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority (HCMA) has designated two new canoe/kayak launches in Lake Erie Metropark and is planning to install signage at three existing launch sites. Additionally, HCMA will update its park master plans to reflect the desire to develop launches at Lower Huron, Willow, and Oakwoods Metroparks. The city of Flat Rock has approved a resolution that supports establishing its portion of the trail.

Next steps include incorporating the plan in local recreation and master plans, acquiring funding for launch site amenities, developing strategies and methods for interpreting and communicating historical, cultural, and natural features, and establishing management and maintenance arrangements.

The Metropolitan Affairs Council (MAC) in the Detroit metropolitan area initiated the project and funded Phase 1 with the understanding that quality-of-life amenities, like the Water Trail, are incredibly important to this region's economic development. Southeast Michigan businesses compete with other metropolitan areas in attracting workers - particularly the young, information-age professionals important for the growing knowledge-based economy. These young professionals evaluate the quality of life of regions when deciding where they want to live, work, and raise a family. To be competitive southeast Michigan must emphasize its assets - blue waterways, abundant wildlife, rich natural resources, and wonderful recreational opportunities. One way to do that is through the Water Trail, which can connect residents and visitors with those assets.

Go to the MAC website (<http://www.mac-web.org>) for details on the project. This site includes an "interactive guide" for the Phase I Development Plan and a downloadable PDF map of the Detroit Heritage River Water Trail.

Laura Rubin is executive director of the Huron River Watershed Council. This article was originally published in the Huron River Report, Huron River Watershed Council, winter 2006; reprinted with permission.



Map of trail in the lower Huron River and Rouge River watersheds (graphic courtesy of MAC)

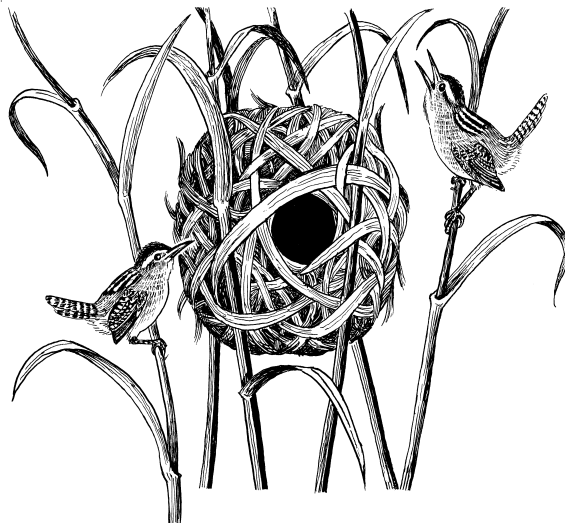
Local Events Continued from page 10

botanical information.

Saturday October 20 - **Swift Run Marsh Stewardship Workday (NAP)**, 1:00 to 4:00 pm. At this workday, have your choice of collecting seeds from native plants for dispersal in other parks, or cutting invasive woody plants. Buckthorn and honeysuckle are shading out many of our native wildflowers. When they are cut out, the native plants come back! We'll meet you on Eddy Street, off of Verle Avenue. Gloves, tools, and snacks provided.

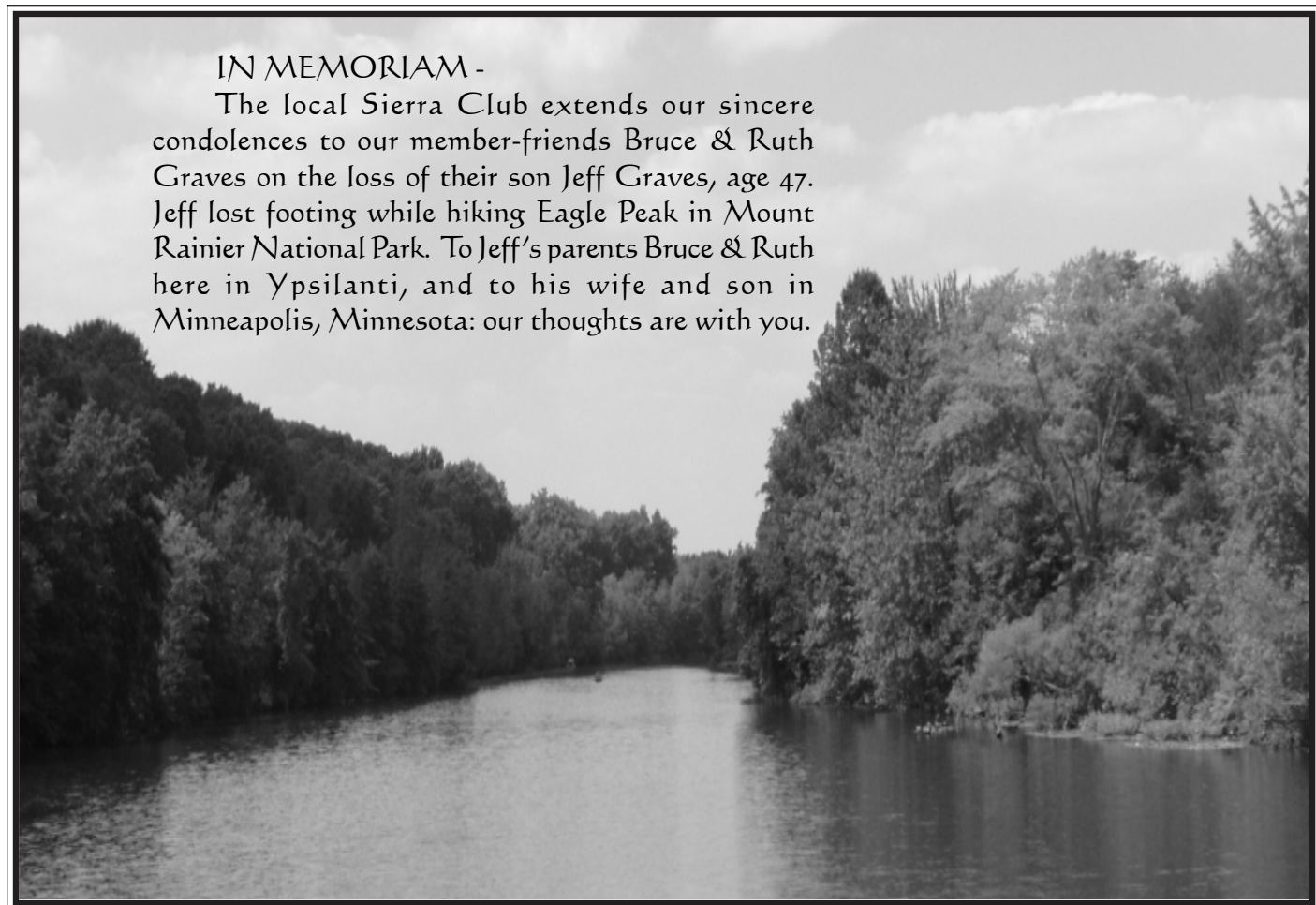
Sunday October 28 - **Barton Nature Area Stewardship Workday (NAP)**, 1:00 to 4:00 pm. Join us to learn to identify the seeds of certain native plants as we collect them for planting in other locations. This fun activity is suitable for the whole family. Snacks provided! Meet at the Barton Dam parking lot on Huron River Drive.

January 25 and 26, 2008 - **Stewardship Network Conference 2008: The Science, Practice and Art of Restoring Native Ecosystems (SN)**. Kellogg Center, East Lansing, MI. Join us for this information-packed, fun two-day conference linking wildlife enthusiasts, nature lovers, land managers, and researchers from throughout Michigan to improve the science, practice, and art of caring for natural lands and waters. Regis-

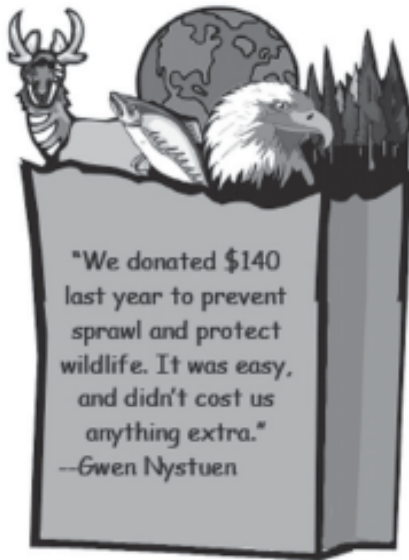


IN MEMORIAM -

The local Sierra Club extends our sincere condolences to our member-friends Bruce & Ruth Graves on the loss of their son Jeff Graves, age 47. Jeff lost footing while hiking Eagle Peak in Mount Rainier National Park. To Jeff's parents Bruce & Ruth here in Ypsilanti, and to his wife and son in Minneapolis, Minnesota: our thoughts are with you.



tration: stewardship network members: \$60/day, \$100 both days; non-members: \$75/day, \$125 both days. For more events information: www.stewardshipnetwork.org, 734-996-3190.



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You can help us do more by buying EarthCash vouchers for the stores where you already shop.



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Complete details are available at
<http://michigan.sierraclub.org/huron/sfte.htm>

Help preserve nature at no cost to you!

Shopping for the Earth Order Form

Indicate the number of EarthCash vouchers you want for each store and available dollar amount below. Enclose your check payable to "Sierra Club-Huron Valley Group." Total order (\$500 maximum): \$ _____.

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Arbor Brewing Company						
Arbor Farms						
Borders Books & Music ¹						
Busch's ²						
Farmer Jack ¹ (and affiliated stores)						
Hiller's Markets ²						
Holiday Market (Royal Oak)						
Kroger ² (and affiliated stores)						
Whole Foods ¹ (and affiliated stores)						
Meijer's	A rebate program, no vouchers (neither paper nor cards). Please see http://michigan.sierraclub.org/huron/SFTE_Meijer.pdf or contact us.					

¹ non-reloadable card • Consider buying several cards.

² reloadable card • The Sierra Club receives a contribution when you reload card, so only one needed per person.

all others are paper vouchers

- check here to receive local Sierra Club e-mail updates
 if not a Sierra Club member, check here to receive local Sierra Club newsletter

Your Name: _____
 Your Address: _____

 Your Phone number: _____
 Your email address: _____

Mail to:
 Kristine Denzin (Kodenzin@aol.com)
 5162 Doral Court
 Ann Arbor, MI 48108
 (Your data will not be shared)



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www.michigan.sierraclub.org/huron/

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Mike Anglin*	
Rita Mitchell*	665-0248

* = HVG Excom Member

How to Get HVG reminders via email!

At each HVG general meeting, there is an email sign up list. For those who missed it, or haven't joined us at a meeting, here's how you can get our general meeting reminders.

If you would like to receive email notices of each month's Huron Valley Group general meeting and occasional notices about other local Sierra Club activities send an email to Doug Cowherd at dmcowherd3@comcast.net with your name and "HVG email list" in the body of the message.

Are You A New Member?

Welcome to the Huron Valley Group of the Sierra Club. When you join the Sierra Club you are automatically a member of a local group, as well as a state chapter and the national organization. Membership entitles you to this newsletter as well as all editions of the state and national member publications. Check this page for our Directory with contacts on conservation, outings, political action, and the Inner City Outings program. Check the calendar in the middle of this issue for announcements of Monthly Public Program topics and our calendar of activities. We will be glad to see you at our next meeting or answer any questions if you care to call. Please take advantage of your membership as an opportunity to enjoy, preserve and protect our natural environment!

Membership

Yes, I want to help safeguard our nation's precious natural heritage. My check is enclosed.

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Check enclosed, made payable to Sierra Club

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Contributions, gifts and dues to the Sierra Club are not tax deductible; they support our effective, citizen-based advocacy and lobbying efforts. Your dues include \$7.50 for a subscription to Sierra magazine and \$1.00 for your Chapter newsletter.

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

	INDIVIDUAL	JOINT
INTRODUCTORY	<input type="checkbox"/> \$25	
REGULAR	<input type="checkbox"/> \$39	<input type="checkbox"/> \$47
SUPPORTING	<input type="checkbox"/> \$75	<input type="checkbox"/> \$100
CONTRIBUTING	<input type="checkbox"/> \$150	<input type="checkbox"/> \$175
LIFE	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1000	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1250
SENIOR	<input type="checkbox"/> \$24	<input type="checkbox"/> \$32
STUDENT	<input type="checkbox"/> \$24	<input type="checkbox"/> \$32
LIMITED INCOME	<input type="checkbox"/> \$24	<input type="checkbox"/> \$32

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Huron Valley Group Newsletter
The Sierra Club
621 Fifth Street
Ann Arbor, MI 48103

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- Exploring the Close-at-Hand - page 3
- Exploring the Boranical Gardens - page 4
- Exploring Bird Hills - page 9
- Calendar of Events - page 7-8



What's your story?

In celebration of the Sierra Club's mission, "To explore, enjoy and protect the earth", we'd like to invite you to share your stories, essays, photos, and/or drawings.

For this three-part newsletter series, we'll focus on each of the three aspects of this mission statement. The theme for the issue you're reading is *Explore*. For autumn, the theme will be *Enjoy*. Here are some questions that may spark an idea for you:

What is the most enjoyable place you've ever been?

Is it near your home, or far away?

Do you get "up close and personal" with nature? Or do you enjoy simply relaxing?

Do you enjoy trips with your family? With your friends? By yourself? With a pet?

What have you learned about yourself based on the places you enjoy?

What was just so darned fun that we'll all wish we'd been there?

We invite you to relive your memories - and then share them with others.

How, you ask? Here are the details: Essays, articles, and stories should be 600-900 words. If photos or drawings are your thing, images should be at least 300 dpi and 4" x 6". Submissions may be edited for style and clarity. Please send submissions via email (strongly preferred) to hvgnews@yahoo.com or by mail to Suzie Heiney, Attn: Sierra Club, 314 Washtenaw Rd., Ypsilanti, MI 48197. The deadline for the autumn issue is September 30, 2007; contact us before that to tell us about your idea, and so we can hold a space for you.

Got questions? Contact Suzie Heiney at 734-377-8248 or hvgnews@yahoo.com.

Enjoy your summer - and then tell us about the fun you had!