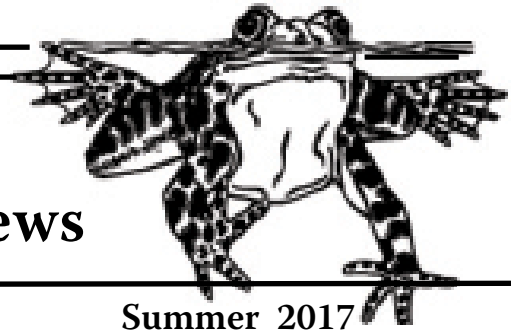


Water's Edge

Gratiot Lake Conservancy News



Volume 19

Summer 2017

GLC's Annual Members Meeting

Monday, July 31 at the **Eagle Harbor Community Building**
(M-26 in Eagle Harbor across from Shoreline Restaurant)

6:45 PM: Reception

7 PM: Business meeting

7:30 PM: Light refreshments

8:00 PM: presentation by naturalist Karena Schmidt:
"Keweenaw Orchids: A Tale of Beauty in the Balance"



Photo by Karena Schmidt

More than any other family of plants, the Orchids are among the most successful at beguiling our senses, arousing our fascination, impressing upon us the delicacy of ecological interactions. Here on the southern fringes of the Boreal Forest, right

here in the Keweenaw Peninsula, live nearly forty species of terrestrial orchids--plants that are neither swayed by deep snows, cold bottoms, nor austere availability of nutrients. Yet their adaptability is ever threatened by a rapidly changing landscape. Karena will share insights and photographs of these amazing plants and their pollinators.

Karena Schmidt worked as a naturalist on Isle Royale and specializes in knowledge of lichens, orchids, and ethnobotany. She has led workshops on both lichens and ethnobotany at the Gratiot Lake Preserve. Karena is currently employed by the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community as a plant ecologist working primarily with wild rice.

You are invited!

Saturday, August 19, 10 am to 2 pm: **Tour Gratiot Lake and the GLC Preserve.** Come on a guided pontoon tour of Gratiot Lake and visit the Gratiot Lake Conservancy sanctuary and Noblet Field Station. This is a free event but RSVP is required. Space is limited so reserve early. Details of what to bring along will be provided.

Saturday, September 9, 10 am to 1 pm: **Visit Bammert Farm.** Enjoy the last blooms of summer, look for mushrooms, and hear about local history. This is a free event but RSVP is required. Meeting location and details will be provided.

RSVP to Bonnie at Director@GratiotLakeConservancy.org or 906-337-5476 and provide your name and contact information.



**STOP AQUATIC
HITCHHIKERS!™**

Be A Good Steward.
Clean. Drain. Dry.

StopAquaticHitchhikers.org

*Nature awaits!
Explore outside.
Information inside...*

GLC is grateful for all donations received. You further our work!

In the last seven months GLC has received Major Gifts or Grants from

Charles and Janice Anderson
Mary and Michael Bingham (GLCFund at Keweenaw Community Foundation)
William Bingham and Laura Cison
Bonnie and Jim Hay
Leuthold Family Foundation
Carol and Joseph Lizzadro
Carmen Sandretto (in memory of Louis Sandretto)

To download a membership/donation form please click [here!](#)

Rita and Jack Sandretto Scholarship Awarded

GLC is happy to announce the award of the *Rita and Jack Sandretto Scholarship* to Minali Bhatt, a junior at the Farmington Hills Michigan International Academy. Minali, the thirteenth student to receive this scholarship, will attend the *Michigan Tech Summer Youth Program Exploration: Aquatic Ecology at Gratiot Lake*. The group of high school students will camp at GLC's Noblet Field Station from July 24 to 28. The tuition scholarship and the salary of instructor Bradley Wells are funded from an education endowment originally established in 2002 by Rita Sandretto in memory of her husband Jack. Rita, who was an avid supporter of environmental education, passed away in 2007.

View *Water's Edge* Newsletters (in full color), articles, calendar, photos, and links:

www.GratiotLakeConservancy.org



During the June 3rd session of GLC's Keweenaw Birdlife workshop, Dr. David Flaspohler demonstrated the use of mist nets used by biologists who study and survey birds. At a visit to the Flaspohler camp, a song sparrow and a black-capped chickadee were detained and released unharmed. Pictured (l. to r.) at the brief bird-in-hand encounter are Joan Chadde, David Flaspohler with song sparrow, Linda Reynolds, and Nancy Leonard.

About *Water's Edge*

Water's Edge is the newsletter of the Gratiot Lake Conservancy. Its purpose is to report Conservancy news, share information about the ecology and history of Gratiot Lake and its environs, and suggest ways to improve stewardship of the lake and its watershed. View *Water's Edge* in color on the GLC website.

Please send questions, comments, or articles to

Bonnie Hay
Gratiot Lake Conservancy
P.O. Box 310
Mohawk, MI 49950

Director@GratiotLakeConservancy.org **phone: 906-337-5476**
www.gratiotlakeconservancy.org

It's that time of year.

**Everything
is growing...
including invasive
plants!**



HELP with the WEEDING
at Gratiot Lake Preserve.

Monday, July 17, 9:30 AM- 2:00 PM

contact GLC at 906-337-5476
director@GratiotLakeConservancy.org

Finding the GLC Preserve and Noblet Field Station

There are two ways to get to the Gratiot Lake Conservancy nature sanctuary. That said, depending on weather and season, there might be **no way** to get there. Humor aside, here are the ways:

By watercraft: There is a seasonal dock in roughly from mid-June through September. Lake bottom near the dock is mostly sand and cobble with occasional rocks. The shallows extend quite a way out, so if you have a powerboat you may need to lift your motor. Kayaks or canoes are welcome to pull ashore anywhere along GLC shoreline. Gratiot Lake has quite a fetch and mountains on the north shore impact winds and waves as well, so watch the forecast.

By logging road: It's a 7 mile drive in from the Gay-Lac La Belle Road via logging roads. These dirt roads run through private land (mostly logging company land) and are not maintained by any public entity. In the spring, Iron Gate Road is usually open and passable on its south stretch to Conservancy Road by the 3rd week of June. Only high carriage and 4 wheel drive vehicles are recommended. Taking Iron Gate Road from its other end, at Gratiot Lake Road, is not recommended.

If you are attending GLC events at Gratiot Lake, carpooling is encouraged. [To download a map and directions to the GLC Preserve click here.](#) [To download the trail map click here.](#)

**Email GLC to receive a pdf copy of
the *Water's Edge* instead of a paper copy.**

Hold on to your hat!

We try to keep trash out of the lakes we love, but once in awhile something just gets away from us... like a hat blowing away in a stiff wind. Help keep Michigan shoreline clear of trash this summer.

Each year volunteers at Gratiot Lake and throughout the Keweenaw join with thousands of people statewide to clear trash from lake shoreline during the *Alliance for the Great Lakes September Adopt-A-Beach Clean-up*. Last year, volunteers throughout Michigan collected nearly 10,000 pounds of trash at 142 sites.

Last September Mary, Mike, and Pete Bingham; Bonnie and Jim Hay; Dorothy Jamison; Chris Marks; Neil Noack; and Elaine Rysiewicz covered approximately 3.5 miles of shoreline and removed about 180 pounds of trash from Gratiot Lake shoreline.

You are invited to the *Adopt-A-Beach Clean-up* on Keweenaw lakeshore. At Gratiot Lake we will meet at the public boat launch on Saturday, September 16 at 9:30 AM. If you can't make it that day but would still like to help, email GLC to receive a trash reporting sheet and bags to use and to let us know the stretch of shoreline where you will collect trash.

Communications Streamlining

Soon email announcements which you receive from GLC will take on a new look. We will use an email service (likely Mail Chimp or Constant Contact) as most organizations do. This will ensure more universal readability across devices and platforms. The content will be familiar but the look will change.



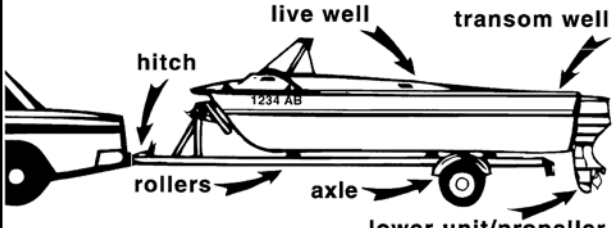
Hoping for hawks, David Flaspohler's Keweenaw Birdlife class braved 20 to 30 mph gusts on Brockway Mountain on June 10th. They were not disappointed. Carried on winds from the south, broad winged hawks, red-tailed hawks, and bald eagles cruised by at close range. Deb Mues who was counting raptors for the *Brockway Mountain Hawk Watch* gave the birds and our birding group a warm welcome. From (l. to r.) are Deb Mues, Lynnette Borree (background), David Flaspohler, Peg Hertel, and Lydia Lytle.

Clean, Drain, and Dry

**CLEAN BOATS
CLEAN WATERS**

Clean off these areas to avoid transporting invasive species from lake to lake!

WATERCRAFT CHECK POINTS



<input type="checkbox"/> Anchor	<input type="checkbox"/> Ladder	<input type="checkbox"/> Spare tire
<input type="checkbox"/> Axle	<input type="checkbox"/> Landing net	<input type="checkbox"/> Tackle
<input type="checkbox"/> Bait bucket	<input type="checkbox"/> License plate	<input type="checkbox"/> Tow rope
<input type="checkbox"/> Bunks	<input type="checkbox"/> Motor	<input type="checkbox"/> Trailer
<input type="checkbox"/> Bow line	<input type="checkbox"/> Wheels	<input type="checkbox"/> Transducer
<input type="checkbox"/> Fishing line	<input type="checkbox"/> Live well	<input type="checkbox"/> Transom well
<input type="checkbox"/> Floor	<input type="checkbox"/> Lights/wiring	<input type="checkbox"/> Trolling motor
<input type="checkbox"/> Hull	<input type="checkbox"/> Rollers	
<input type="checkbox"/> Intake pipe	<input type="checkbox"/> Prop	

A Mobile Boat Wash is coming to four boat launch sites in Keweenaw County and to one in Chassel. These free boat wash events are sponsored by Michigan State University, the U.S. Forest Service, and the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality. They will use trailer-mounted units with high-pressure, heated water that is proven effective in cleaning most invasive species from boats and trailers. A containment mat prevents runoff back into the lakes.

The public is invited to drop by any of the boat wash events to see first-hand how the boat wash works and to pick up free information on aquatic invasive species- including how to prevent their spread and how to identify harmful invasives. Boaters will come away not only with clean boats but with information that will help protect the waters we all enjoy.

• **Aquatic Invasive Species**, such as zebra mussels, aggressive weeds, and fish diseases, threaten the health of our lakes and rivers, decrease water quality, and can limit recreational enjoyment.

• Movement of boats and trailers between water bodies is the most common way aquatic invasive species spread in Michigan. **Washing is an easy way to stop them.**

www.facebook.com/MobileBoatWash

KISMA Update

Eurasian water milfoil, garlic mustard, spotted knapweed, European marsh thistle, emerald ash borer, glossy buckthorn, and spiny waterflea are all members of an increasingly long list of invasives creeping into the Keweenaw. Gratiot Lake Conservancy is one of the many local partner organizations in the Keweenaw Invasive Species Management Area (KISMA) which was established to help address the insidious spread of these problem species that can upset the balance of local ecosystems.

KISMA is one of the many cooperative management areas established across Michigan to stem the spread of invasives. Recently KISMA received a three-year grant from the *Michigan Invasive Species Grant Program* to bolster its impact in fighting invasive species. GLC and many other partner organizations are providing a match in labor and supplies for a portion of this grant, as we all work together to map and remediate invasive plant infestations and provide education and assistance to land owners and land managers.

On July 17th, a KISMA weed crew will assist volunteers in removing European marsh thistle, knapweed, and some other invasive species identified at the GLC preserve at Gratiot Lake and along Noblet Lane. If you would like to help, please contact Bonnie at director@gratiotlakeconservancy.org or call 906-337-5476. Snacks, water, and tools will be provided!

Local Boat Wash Events

Thursday, July 27

Copper Harbor: 8:00 am to 12:30 pm

Eagle Harbor: 1:30 pm to 6:00 pm

Friday, July 28

Gratiot Lake: 8:00 am to 12:30 pm

Lac La Belle: 1:30 pm to 6:00 pm

Saturday, July 29

Portage Lake in Chassel: 9:00 am to 2:00 pm

Wetland Plants Workshop

Botanist Janet Marr will teach a *Wetland Plants of the Upper Peninsula* workshop. This training on the identification of plants in diverse habitats is sponsored by the Michigan Wetlands Association (MWA) and will be held in the Keweenaw on August 1st and 2nd. A description of the workshop, fees, and registration information can be found under "training classes" on the MWA website at shop.miwetlands.org.

Shoreline Management Toolkit Available

An attractive guidebook on strategies for land managers of shoreline properties is available without cost from the Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council. *Climate Change Adaptation for Coastal Wetlands: A Toolkit for Best Management Practices for Coastal Wetlands in Michigan*, lays out the impact of current climate related trends on wetlands and provides strategies to lessen adverse impacts.

According to this guide, many areas in the state have lost over 80% of their ecologically valuable coastal wetlands since the early 1800's. The Keweenaw Peninsula has lost only 20% or less of these ecologically vital areas. These wetlands host diverse communities of plants and animals and provide broader ecosystem services such as water filtration, flood abatement, and storm buffering. Impacts of climate change such as extreme storms, increasing precipitation, rising temperatures, and changes in Great Lakes ice cover on wetlands and shoreline are illustrated.

Ideas offered to be good stewards of coastal wetlands are wide-ranging and include: conservation easements on coastal wetlands, shoreline and wetland ordinances, rain gardens, natural shoreline landscaping, and invasive species management.

Paper copies of the toolkit will be available at the GLC meeting on July 31. Tip of the Mitt Watershed Association offers free downloadable copies of this guidebook and many other resources for shoreline stewardship and on watershed topics at its website at <https://www.watershedcouncil.org/download-library.html>

Invasive Plant Workshop in Eagle Harbor

Under the auspices of KISMA partner, Keweenaw County Historical Society, KISMA will hold an informative workshop on local invasive species. The event will take place on Thursday, June 22 at 1:00 pm at the Eagle Harbor Township Hall Meeting Room, 321 Center Street. A 30-40 minute presentation indoors covering the identification of and control strategies for local invasive species will be followed by a removal demonstration by the KISMA weed crew out-of-doors. This training is free and no reservation is needed to attend. For more information about this event, contact KISMA coordinator, Sigrid Resh at kisma.up@gmail.com

The Bear Pit

Only a few decades ago trash disposal in the more rural areas of the Keweenaw still consisted of open dumping at the local "bear pit." It was a fun family outing to drop by the bear pit on summer evenings and to watch from our cars the antics of the animals rooting through our discards. Postcard kiosks offered cute scenes of such wildlife garbage feasts.

Since then, we have come a long way in our handling of throwaways in a more environmentally responsible manner (although the bears might not agree). Our trash is landfilled, and recycling has become an economically viable opportunity. This year, single stream recycling has become more conveniently available in parts of Keweenaw County. Kudos to Eagle Harbor Township for offering single stream recycling to its residents.

Michigan's Aquatic Invasive Plant Watch List

Aquatic invasive species on the watch list have been identified as being an immediate and significant threat to Michigan's natural resources. These species either have never been confirmed in the wild in Michigan or have a limited known distribution. Early detection and timely reporting are crucial for preventing establishment and limiting impacts. For more information on these plants, visit: www.misin.msu.edu

Be on the lookout for these invasive plants!



www.mi.gov/invasivespecies



Questions about other aquatic invasive plants? Contact the DEQ Aquatic Nuisance Control Program at 517-284-5593, www.mi.gov/anc

Revised March 2017

Bird Friendly Coffee

Songbirds are a joy to see and hear. We want to do what we can to sustain them. We put out bird feeders, install bird houses, nurture native trees and plants in our yard, and keep our cats indoors (especially during nesting), and so on. Larger factors (such as wholesale habitat loss) that affect our feathered friends feel out of our control, or so it would seem.

However, something as simple as a person's choice of coffee, can have an impact on the survival of songbirds that migrate to the Keweenaw to nest after wintering in the tropics! These plucky snowbirds are less lucky now than they were 20 to 30 years ago. Much of their winter habitat a few decades ago was in traditional shade grown coffee plantations where coffee is inter-planted amid a diversity of native trees. Farm families were sustained not only by coffee income but from wood and other forest fruits, and the plant and animal biodiversity of these tropical areas was conserved. Now many plantations have been converted to more productive sun grown coffee which are monocultures of coffee plants managed with pesticides and fertilizers. The beauty of the sun grown coffee is that it is high yield and cheaper. The downside is it results in habitat loss for certain songbird species, some of which are already in decline. Another downside of sun grown coffee is that it reportedly is not as flavorful as the shade grown varieties.

Luckily there are still some traditional shade grown coffee plantations. With demand from bird-loving coffee drinkers, the market for this somewhat more expensive but tasty coffee can grow. And as that market grows, less land will go to coffee monoculture and more ecologically diverse traditional plantations will be saved. Shade grown coffee can be found at many food stores and online. The Keweenaw Co-op carries some shade grown brands.



The most reliable way to know that the coffee you purchase is from traditional shade grown plantations is to look for the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center Bird Friendly certification on the bag. Allegro, Birds and Beans, and Northwestern Coffee Mills are certified brands. A full list of brands is at <https://nationalzoo.si.edu/migratory-birds/bird-friendly-coffee-search>



Another very good but less stringent certifier is the Rainforest Alliance. Rainforest Alliance certified coffee and other products are available at many larger food chains. You can search for availability by location online at <http://www.rainforest-alliance.org/find-certified>

A few of the birds who nest in the Keweenaw and winter in Latin America



Photo by Jim Hay

Rose-breasted Grosbeaks are attentive fathers. Males and females take turns incubating eggs and caring for the young. Their song is described on the Cornell University's allabout-birds.org website as "...like a robin that has opera training, is drunk, refined, in a hurry or unusually happy." Their numbers are slowly declining.



Photo by Jim Hay

According to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Canada Warbler numbers have declined over 40% in the last fifty years. These shrub-nesting warblers are often the last to arrive in the northwoods in spring and the first to head to South America in the fall.



Photo by Jim Hay

The Baltimore Oriole female weaves a sack-like hanging nest of grasses, bark strips, and hair. Orioles eat insects and fruit. They can be enticed near homes with offerings of jam and sliced oranges. Baltimore Oriole numbers are declining throughout their range.

Nature Notes



Ron Sibbald has installed two nest boxes on Gratiot Lake shoreline. This spring the boxes were loaded with merganser eggs. Like wood ducks, some species of merganser seek tree cavities (excavated by woodpeckers) near water for suitable nesting real estate. These ducks will also use capacious nest boxes, provided the hole is large enough and the location is near a lake or river.

Ron, who has observed merganser families over the years, said the female lays her eggs over a number of days. After the last one is laid she incubates them for about 31 days. After hatching, the ducklings spend only a day or two in the nest before plucking up the courage to scramble out the hole. Their mother calls “cro, cro, cro” to encourage them to take the leap. Since newly-hatched ducklings can’t fly yet, they plummet down and scramble to the water (if they haven’t already fallen into it). Like other ducklings, merganser ducklings instinctively begin to forage and to group together for safety under the watchful eye and guidance of their mother. One hooded merganser brood of 8 hatched and jumped to freedom on June 11. The second bunch of ducklings’ anticipated debut is June 23 or thereabouts.

Neil Harri and biologist Brett Huntzinger flew over the Keweenaw in May on the annual aerial assessment of the status of eagle nests in the area. They spied one eaglet along with a parent in a nest located in a large white pine on the GLC preserve at Gratiot Lake. In mid-June it appears that the nest is still active. Although eagles have worked on this nest over the last few years, no eaglets were observed in it in previous years. This year an early spring storm disrupted some eagle nests in Keweenaw County but spared this Gratiot Lake nest.

This active nest is not the same eagle nest (on the opposite shore of the lake) photographed for over a decade by Jim Hay. That old nest which was productive for about 16 years began to collapse after a spring storm several years ago and has not produced an eaglet since 2013.

Look for Gratiot Lake Conservancy on Facebook!

**Add your favorite photos of pets and people enjoying nature at Gratiot Lake!
View announcements of upcoming events.**



In the spirit of looking on the bright side of life, I recently made a perspective-altering discovery. No-see-ems, those miniscule pests with the stealthy pinprick nips, have close relatives that are the main pollinators of my favorite food. These pesky, tiny flies (with 4 miniature cutting blades in their mouths) are members of the Family *Ceratopogonidae*. No-see-ems belong to a very large world-wide Family which includes 78 genera and 1000’s of species of midge. Turns out that chocolate midges are primary pollinators of cacao tree flowers. Chocolate midges are small enough to work their way into the blooming cacao flowers right after sunset and before sunrise. Without this no-see-em relative, production of chocolate would plummet. So, even though I flinch from the sharp bite of a midge, I am grateful for their existence!

National Pollinators Week is June 19-25

**“Thank you” to these pollinators:
butterflies, moths, bees, wasps, beetles, flies,
hummingbirds, and bats!**



The Snowberry Clearwing Moth, *Hemaris diffinis*

Unlike many moths, the snowberry clearwing is active during the day. It belongs to the same family as the hummingbird moth. In appearance the Snowberry Clearwing resembles an extra large bee, but it behaves more like a small hummingbird. The following flowers are its most important source of nectar: bush honeysuckle, snowberry, orange hawkweed, thistles, lilac, and Canada violet. It serves as a pollinator of many of the plants it visits; in turn, the snowberry plant and bush honeysuckle often serve as food plants for this moth’s caterpillars. The Snowberry Clearwing photo was taken near Lake Superior shoreline in early June by Jim Hay.

**Thanks to Ben Hay and Jim Hay
for newsletter proofreading.**

SAVE the DATE (see details inside):

July 17, 9:30 am- 2 pm: Join KISMA Weed Pull RSVP

July 24-28: SYP Aquatic Ecology at Gratiot Lake

July 28, morning: Boat Wash at Gratiot Lake Access

July 31, 6:45-9 pm: GLC Annual Meeting: Orchids

August 19, 10 am-2 pm: Tour of GLC Preserve RSVP

Sept 9, 10 am to 1 pm: Bammert Farm Walk RSVP

Sept 16, 9:30 am: Shoreline Clean-up

RSVP to Director@GratiotLakeConservancy.org or 906-337-5476. Include your contact information. You will be notified in the event of cancellation or rescheduling.

Click here for the updated online calendar!

Spur of the Moment Events

Field trips may be added to the GLC calendar.

Email: Director@GratiotLakeConservancy.org to be added to the notification list!

**We know you have talent!
We hope you have the time.**



Enjoy feeding a crowd? Bring refreshments to the Members Meeting on July 31st. RSVP

Enjoy carpentry? Make and install bee or bird houses.

Enjoy gardening? Pull invasive plants such as knapweed and marsh thistle at Gratiot Lake and Bammert Farm. First date is Monday, July 17. RSVP.

Enjoy writing? Contribute to *Water's Edge*.

Enjoy watching wildlife? Keep a diary of nature happenings you and others observe at Gratiot Lake. Share Gratiot Lake photos on the Gratiot Lake Conservancy *Facebook* page.

Enjoy boating? Assist Dorothy Jamison with water monitoring and testing. Be on the lookout for invasive aquatic species.

Enjoy walking on the shoreline? Help by picking up trash on the beach during the *Alliance for the Great Lakes Coastal Clean-up* September 16th or whenever you have time!

Become a GLC Member!

Conservancy members receive the newsletter, notice of special events, and an invitation to the Annual Members Meeting. Some GLC programs that have fees are discounted for members. Renewals are at year end.

Your support is always welcome!

Click here to download a GLC donation form.

Mail memberships or donations to:
Gratiot Lake Conservancy
P.O. Box 310
Mohawk, MI 49950

Donors of \$100 or more receive a gift of notecards with photos taken at Gratiot Lake.

Click here to see samples of the photos!

