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# Water's Edge

## Gratiot Lake Conservancy News

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Volume 17

Fall 2015

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### *200 Feet of Shoreline added to GLC Preserve at Gratiot Lake*

In August, GLC purchased 2 ½ acres of wetlands, cedar swamp, and a beautiful sand beach from the Lantto family in a bargain sale. This addition to the Gratiot Lake nature sanctuary was made possible with money from the GLC's Land Acquisition Fund. The parcel is adjacent to GLC land on the west end of Gratiot Lake. Approximately 2,200 feet of shoreline is now conserved on the west end of Gratiot. This area is accessible by canoe, kayak, and small watercraft—a nice spot to take a break from paddling and to enjoy a stroll along the beach.



### *Conservation Opportunities Too Good to Miss*

Expansion of conservation lands is made possible by the confluence of opportunity and generosity. In the purchase of the Lantto camp both factors converged beautifully. Donors to GLC's land Acquisition Fund made the purchase possible when the Lantto family was ready to make a bargain sale.

More opportunities are on the horizon for acquisition of waterfront land for conservation at Gratiot Lake. Preserving a mostly intact wild border to the lake will help protect habitat for wildlife, ensure the diversity of native plants, and enhance lake water quality and the fishery. It will also ensure that these lands are accessible for low impact recreational activities and that wild lands will be part of the landscape at Gratiot Lake in perpetuity.

**Make a special donation to GLC's Land Acquisition Fund.**

**Through your generosity, these wild places will be protected for future generations to enjoy.**



Moon floats over Gratiot.  
Barred owl calls hoo, hoo, hoo, hoo  
Courting the lunar eclipse.

*Look inside for owls, haiku, and more...*

**Make a year-end gift!**  
Download a donation form at  
[www.GratiotLakeConservancy.org](http://www.GratiotLakeConservancy.org)

# GLC gratefully acknowledges Donors from Nov. 2014 - Nov. 2015

## Major Donors

William Bingham and Laura Cison  
Bonnie and Jim Hay  
HFR Asset Management  
Carol and Joseph Lizzadro  
Carmen Sandretto

## Memorial Gifts

*in Memory of Lowell Bollinger*  
Mary and Neil Hodges

*in Memory of Allan Hochstein*  
Dennis Moore

*in Memory of Marilyn and Don Hon*  
Diane and David Gothard

*in Memory of Marilyn Kahl*  
Robert Kahl

*in Memory of Louise K. Marta*  
John Marta

*in Memory of Marcia Petermann Miller*  
Leonard Miller

*in Memory of Diana Nicholas*  
Dante and Joyce Iacovoni



Black-eyed Susan at Bammert Farm

## Grants

*Steven C. Leuthold Family Foundation*

## Gifts in Honor

*in Honor of Bonnie Hay*  
Maria and Robert Macfarlane

*in Honor of Teagan Stansell*  
Pam Shaughnessy

## Donors to General Operations

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**Donors to Education Fund**

Steve and Judy Albee  
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Doug and Nancy Sherk  
Doug and Norma Lee Stuart  
Cecilia and Paul Tomasi

**Memorial Gifts Education Fund**

*in Memory of Howard Hosking*  
Bunny and John Hosking

*in Memory of Marilyn and Don Hon*  
Diane and David Gothard

*in Memory of Louis Sandretto*  
Carmen Sandretto



*Lichen Workshop* instructor Karena Schmidt points out lichen species growing on the old picnic table near the Noblet Field Station.

**Donors to Land Acquisition Fund**

Orin Ahlstrom  
Kate Alvord  
Jo Foley  
David and Diane Gothard  
Mary and Neil Hodges  
Don B. and Pat Keith  
Suzy Lofquist  
Lizzadro Family Foundation  
Doug and Norma Lee Stuart  
Jim Tercha

**Memorial Gifts Land Acquisition Fund**

*in Memory of Allan Hochstein*  
Bonnie and Jim Hay

*in Memory of Marilyn and Don Hon*  
Diane and David Gothard

*We miss a Gratiot Lake neighbor and friend who recently passed away*

*A year-round resident at Gratiot Lake, Al Hochstein was a GLC member for over 15 years. Al enjoyed fishing on Gratiot and loved nature. Eager to help, Al and his wife Carol always pitched in on the shoreline clean-ups.*

**Donations to GLC Fund**

**Keweenaw Community Foundation**

Michael and Mary Bingham  
Chevron Foundation  
Gina Nicholas  
Douglas and Norma Lee Stuart

**New Life Member**

Laura Porter

**Gifts in Kind**

Ruth Baker  
Jim Hay  
James Tercha  
John Yunger



photo by Nathan Miller

Michigan Tech Summer Youth Program Aquatic Ecology group at GLC. Jacalyn Blau, a sophomore at Lake Linden-Hubbell H.S., received a *Rita and Jack Sandretto Scholarship* to attend this program held at GLC's Noblet Field Station in July.

## See (or Hear) Owls in the Keweenaw

### Barred Owl

Barred Owls (photo at right) like mature, mixed forests near water, so it is no wonder we hear their “Who, cooks for you? Who cooks for you all?” hoots at Gratiot Lake (two sets of four hoots with the last hoot sliding and descending in pitch). Barred owls eat small mammals, birds, and even fish! One Gratiot Lake fisherman related a story to me about an owl that went for a lure. It may have been a barred owl. Barred owls use old dead trees for nest sites.

### Great Gray Owl

Great Gray Owls prefer boreal forest. Tallest of the North American owls, they have 5 foot wingspans. They have small feet for their size and dine mostly on small mammals. They locate mice under snow with their acute hearing, then dive in for the kill.



Photo by Jim Hay

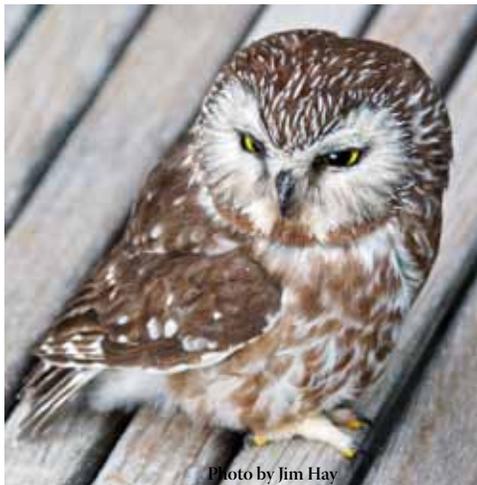


Photo by Jim Hay

### Northern Saw-whet Owl

Although seldom seen, the tiny Saw-whet Owl is one of the commonest owls in the northern part of North America. Saw-whet owls eat small birds, rodents, and insects.

The one pictured at left was momentarily stunned by a window collision. Perhaps he was aiming for a hummingbird, but it is unclear why he was out-and-about in daylight. The call of Saw-whet owls is a rapid series of tooting whistle sounds that has been compared to the sound of a saw being sharpened on a whetstone... hence the name.

### Snowy Owl

This white owl breeds in the arctic tundra where it dines on lemmings and ptarmigan. It is an irruptive species in Michigan, that is, during some years (like this fall and last fall and winter) Snowies venture south after breeding season in search of better hunting opportunities. According to reports, hungry Snowies were arriving in the U.P. in October. They are the heaviest North American owl, in part because of their thick insulating feathers. Unlike most owls, the Snowy owl hunts by day, usually in flat, open areas. They sometimes perch on fence posts or low buildings to scan open fields or wetlands. Their white plumage can really stand out if there is no snow on the ground. Hedwig, from the Harry Potter movies, is a Snowy Owl.

### Northern Hawk Owl

This owl hunts by day. When in flight it might be mistaken for a hawk. It can detect the small mammals that are its prey up to ½ a mile away. Snowshoe hare and red squirrels are important menu items.

### Great Horned Owl

These owls (photo at right) are found in most of North America. They are extremely adaptable in their choice of habitat but prefer second growth forest near open areas such as wetlands or fields. Their deep voiced hoots make them easily identifiable hoot owls. Although the feathery “horns” look like ears, they are not actually ears at all. Great horned owls are among the largest and most powerful owls and can take prey even bigger than themselves. The talons of this powerful owl require a force of 28 pounds to pry apart. They are eclectic diners – reptiles, fish, birds, and mammals up to the size of a small dog or cat (watch out kitty)!



Photo by Jim Hay

## Hoo Knew?

Owls, like many predators, have eyes positioned to look forward. This allows greater depth perception necessary for hunting prey. Of course those eyes are large to let in more light. They have great vision for distance but poor for close-up. Owl retinas are packed with cells called rods, that facilitate capturing light for night vision.

Owl eyes do not rotate in their sockets. Instead owls have spinal, ligament, and blood vessel adaptations that allow rotation of their head 270 degrees without snapping tissue or blocking blood flow to the brain. Also, the owl skull is connected to the spine by only one socket pivot. Thus an owl is able to turn its head to the right and look over its left shoulder!

Most owls are nocturnal, i.e. mostly active at night. Sight is important, but hearing even more so, in detecting their prey. Owls can move their facial disc feathers to direct sound to one ear or the other.

Many owls have ear openings that are asymmetrically placed on their heads... one higher, one lower. This positioning allows for more accurate location of prey, identifying not only the direction of the prey but how high up it is located. Acute hearing is essential when hunting in the dark or finding rodents under the snow cover.



Owl wing feathers are specially adapted for stealthy flight with comb-like sound baffling structures fringing each feather edge. Owls can fan their wing feathers to allow air to flow over these sound deadeners, yielding silent flight. Under their wings and on their legs, owls also have velvety down feathers which absorb flight sounds.

An owl regurgitates a neat, roundish packet containing the fur and bones of its prey several hours after a meal. The dry owl pellets I've seen looked felted gray and rather egg shaped. Pellets are often found under trees where an owl roosts. It is an interesting forensic exercise to pull apart an owl pellet with a tweezers to extract piece by piece the perfectly cleaned tiny bones and skull from last night's dinner.

Owl hoots and calls can often be heard in winter. Courtship calls begin in early winter.

Remember, not all owls give a hoot!

## Avery Scholarships Awarded

Quinn Collins, an AmeriCorps member serving at the U.P. Resource Conservation & Development Council in Marquette, received a *Janet M. Avery Scholarship* to attend the *Aquatic Plant ID Workshop* in August. In his AmeriCorps work Quinn works with prevention and management of non-native and invasive species. He plans to go on to graduate studies focusing on plant ecology.

Ryan Van Goethem received a scholarship to attend the Aquatic Plant ID workshop in August. An undergraduate biology major at Michigan Tech, Ryan is studying macrophyte communities in the Portage waterway with respect to stamp sand deposits, and he is working on an Upper Great Lakes watermilfoil research project. He hopes to continue to research macrophyte communities and nutrient interactions in graduate studies at Tech next year.



Canada Darner makes itself comfortable during the Dragonfly Workshop.

Sen Hou received a scholarship to attend the Dragonfly Workshop in August. Sen came to the U.P. from China with his wife who is at Michigan Tech. He learned about the workshop from Frann Grossman who coordinates and teaches in a program at Michigan Tech for the spouses of international scholars and grad students.

The *Janet M. Avery Scholarship* was established in 2006 in memory of Janet, a long-time Gratiot Lake resident who founded a local environmental action group, A.W.A.K.E., in the mid-1990's. Janet and her husband Bud loved Gratiot Lake and saw the potential threat to stream and wetland ecology posed by a copper mine proposed nearby. A.W.A.K.E. drew scrutiny to this issue. Janet knew that education was key to good stewardship of land, and she and Bud were members of GLC from its inception. When A.W.A.K.E. dissolved in 2005, the bulk of residual funds were donated to GLC for education.

**With a contribution of \$500 or more you can become a GLC Life Member!**

## *And a special “thank you” goes to...*

Vicky Doyle for taking care of GLC’s Facebook page. If you “do” Facebook take a look.

GLC webmaster Jim Hay. Visit the GLC website to see the latest: [www.GratiotLakeConservancy.org](http://www.GratiotLakeConservancy.org)

Dorothy Jamison for recording lake water transparency data for a decade. You can see the data chart on the GLC website. In the “Nature Topics” drop down and scroll to “Water Monitoring”.

Jim Tercha for pro bono assistance in purchase of conservation land.

Jim Cox and Kerrie Richert for painting at Noblets and staining the picnic table and benches.

Ruth Baker who donated an aluminum canoe, canoe motor, and paddles to GLC.

Karen Cladas and Will Lytle for transporting (from Baraga to Gratiot Lake) the canoe, paddles, and motor donated by Ruth Baker.

Eagle Harbor Township for use of the township Community Building for GLC programs

The Keweenaw County Historical Society for GLC Watercolor Workshop use of Building #10 at Central and use of Eagle Harbor Lighthouse complex grounds for sketching.

Everyone who provided refreshments and helped with GLC’s Members Meeting.

GLC board officers Louis Lizzadro, Joseph Lizzadro, and Gina Nicholas for helping to keep GLC on track.

Newsletter proofreaders Jim Hay and Ben Hay.

**All who donate to and support GLC in ways big and small!**

Sustain GLC’s future by contributing to the

***Gratiot Lake Conservancy Fund***  
at the Keweenaw Community Foundation.

A fund donation form is on the GLC website.  
Earmark donations “*Gratiot Lake Conservancy Fund*”.

Mail to:  
Keweenaw Community Foundation  
236 Quincy Street  
Hancock, MI 49930  
906-482-9673    [mail@k-c-f.org](mailto:mail@k-c-f.org)    [www.k-c-f.org](http://www.k-c-f.org)

## *A Headless Corpse and 89 Butts on the Beach!*

Well, at least the corpse and butts are not there anymore thanks to Mike and Mary Bingham, Dorothy and Virginia Jamison, Sarah Klemm, Janet Marr, and Bonnie Hay.

This clean-up crew collectively combed over three miles of Gratiot Lake shoreline during the September Alliance for the Great Lakes Clean-up. In all, nearly forty pounds of trash were removed including remnants of an ice fishing shack, large globs of melted plastic and metal (presumably from a very, very hot fire), fireworks remnants, bait containers,



broken glass, plastic, styrofoam, cans, bottles, spent shotgun shells, and 89 cigarette butts. Dorothy Jamison took the melted metal hunks home with her, perhaps for a recycled art installation?

Bonnie spied the headless red-tailed hawk. Speculation is that an owl may have picked it off. This item was left for hungry furred or feathered carrion eaters to dispose of.

The trash collected was considerably more than that collected in the previous two years when Gratiot Lake water levels were too high to access much shoreline.

**Many thanks to the cleanup crew and many others who walk at Gratiot and routinely pick up trash.**

### ***About Water’s Edge***

*Water’s Edge*, the newsletter of the Gratiot Lake Conservancy, reports Conservancy news, informs about the ecology and history of Gratiot Lake and its environs, and shares ways to improve environmental stewardship.

***Please send questions, comments, or articles to  
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P.O. Box 310  
Mohawk, MI 49950***

***[info@GratiotLakeConservancy.org](mailto:info@GratiotLakeConservancy.org)  
906-337-5476***



Photo by Bill Donovan

**Perfectly hidden,  
Neon-green on a maple leaf,  
But called GRAY treefrog?**



Photo by Jim Hay

**Early autumn warm-up,  
Warblers flitting around rooftops  
Watch out cluster flies!**



Photo by Jim Hay

**I walked by oblivious to the  
turtle nest beside Gratiot Lake Drive,  
until shells were strewn about.**

### *JustGive.org*

This is a quick and easy way to make a last minute donation to the Conservancy.

*Just Give* deducts 4.5% of your donation as a service fee.

Click here to donate to GLC at [JustGive.org](http://JustGive.org)

## *Seeking Keweenaw Carnivores*

Biologist John Yunger has posed the question: “Why is there a very high diversity of carnivores in the Keweenaw?” He notes the number of different species of carnivore in the Keweenaw rivals tropical regions which are touted for their biodiversity. So, how is it possible that weasels of many kinds, black bears, coyotes, gray wolves, gray foxes, red foxes, bobcats, and cougars can coexist with such a degree of habitat and diet overlap?



Photo by Jim Hay

John proposes an on-the-ground, citizen science based survey of the area to help understand these predatory mammals and their behavior. Volunteers for this project would walk on preset routes called transects to gather observations of mammal signs including photos of actual mammal sightings, tracks, rubs, fur, but especially scat (a.k.a. feces). Records of observations could be uploaded immediately using the smartphone app iNaturalist. If you have a smartphone both photos taken and text information entered could be submitted on site, that is if there is a live connection! Collections of scat might be required from time to time. Such things as diet, physical health, and even identification of particular individuals can be determined from analysis of scat.

This project would require volunteers with a love of nature and a desire to contribute to further understanding of Keweenaw natural history. Volunteers must be able bodied enough to walk out-of-doors, and preferably have a smartphone and willingness to download and learn how to use the iNaturalist app.

If you are interested in participating in this project, please contact John directly at [juunger@govst.edu](mailto:juunger@govst.edu) and copy me on the email [director@GratiotLakeConservancy.org](mailto:director@GratiotLakeConservancy.org).

Full color *Water's Edge Newsletters*, articles, program information, photos, video clips, and more at

[www.GratiotLakeConservancy.org](http://www.GratiotLakeConservancy.org)

## GLC Members Meeting

About 55 people attended GLC's Annual Members Meeting on August 13<sup>th</sup> at the Eagle Harbor Community Building. Board president Joseph Lizzadro greeted the group and proceeded with the election of directors and a financial report.

Director Bonnie Hay's slide show began with an update on land stewardship and the maintenance of the Noblet Field Station which is now overseen by Keweenaw Community Forest Company. She also described GLC's events, walks, and workshops. Bonnie mentioned ongoing stewardship programs including water monitoring, invasives removal, and the botanical survey at Gratiot Lake. She reported that GLC had 138 member families and 12 life members. Bonnie thanked donors, members, and volunteers for their help in sustaining GLC and furthering the mission of conservation, environmental education, and natural history research in the area. Bonnie expressed gratitude to Eagle Harbor Township and the Keweenaw County Historical Society for the use of their buildings for some of GLC's events. A report on GLC's Bammert Farm was given by Gina Nicholas. At the end of the business meeting a surprise announcement was made that GLC had just finalized the purchase of a 2 ½ acre addition to the GLC preserve at the lake.

After a prize drawing and refreshments, biologist John Yunger presented an informative slide talk on *The Keweenaw Presettlement Forest*. John also announced a proposal for volunteer participation in a study of carnivores in the area (see article on page 7).

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to receive only a full color digital copy of  
*Water's Edge* and no paper copy.



Photo by Allen Brandenburger

*Marilynn Brandenburger's Watercolor Sketching Workshop students display their artwork created at the KCHS Eagle Harbor Lighthouse Complex.*

### It's time to renew for 2015!

**CLICK here to download and print a form to mail in.**

### Great stocking stuffer: Gift a Membership to GLC!

### Become a GLC Member!

Conservancy members receive a biannual newsletter, notice of special events, and an invitation to the Annual Members Meeting. Some GLC programs that have fees are discounted for members. Memberships renew 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.

