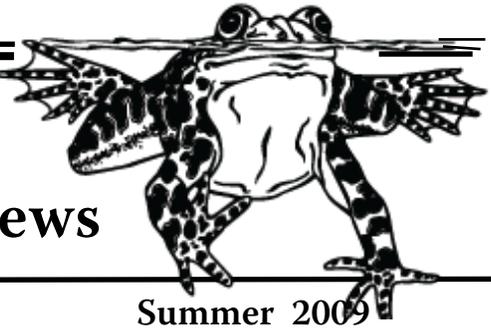


Water's Edge

Gratiot Lake Conservancy News



Volume 11

Summer 2009

Open House at the Noblet Field Station

Saturday, August 15 from Noon until 3 PM

- Come by land or by lake.*
- Visit with friends and neighbors.
- See the Memorial Plaque dedication.
- Participate in art and craft projects.
Activities for all ages!
- Walk the newly expanded Bear Paw Path.
- Learn about GLC and its programs.
- View slides/videos on
Aquatic Invasive Species and Eagles.

Refreshments served.

Food and beverage contributions are welcome.

Assistance appreciated.

Contact Bonnie at 337-5476.

*If you come by boat, please beach your boat rather than attempt to use the old dock. The cabin is accessible by logging road to 4 wheel drive and high carriage vehicles. A map will be available near mailboxes on Gratiot Lake Road or can be e-mailed (contact belh@verizon.net). If the weather on August 15 looks questionable, call 337-5476 for an update. ***Rain may cause cancellation.***



Photo by Jim Hay

Immature Loon on Gratiot Lake prepares for crayfish supper.

GLC's Annual Members Meeting Loon Slide/Talk July 28th

GLC's Annual Members Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, July 28 at the Eagle Harbor Community Building (across from the Shoreline Motel on M-26). The business meeting will begin at 7 PM after a brief reception at 6:45. Following refreshments at 7:30, Keren Tischler of Hancock will give a presentation on loons at 8:00.

For 15 years, Tischler has been involved in loon research in projects from Minnesota to Nova Scotia. Recently, she has worked with *Common Coast Research & Conservation*, a nonprofit which promotes the viability of Michigan loons through long-term research of population demography and contaminants exposure, through protection and restoration of lake habitat, and through public education.

Tischler's slide/ talk titled "Sharing the Commons: a Natural History of Loons" will cover loon breeding biology, history, and status in Michigan and threats to population viability, based upon current research and the written record of early natural historians. She hopes to extend our sense of wonderment for loons into stewardship of the "coast" that we share with these unique birds.

Please invite friends to join us for this exciting slide/ talk which will begin promptly at 8.



Memorial Plaque

A beautiful slab of maple milled from a tree which fell on Virginia Jamison's home at Gratiot Lake has been made into a memorial plaque. The plaque displays the names of those in whose memory donations have been made to Gratiot Lake Conservancy with space remaining for future additions.

Mike LaMielle volunteered his time to cut and finish the wood slab on which plates bearing the names of those memorialized are mounted. An image of the Noblet Field Station (above) donated in memory of Diana Nicholas by artist Marilyn Brandenburger adorns the plaque. The plaque to be installed at the Noblet Field Station, will be dedicated at the GLC Open House on August 15.

Gratiot Lake neighbors mourn the passing of Daniel I. Jamison, III. The Jamison family, spent all their summers at Gratiot Lake where Dan's former wife Virginia now lives. Like the rest of his family, Daniel, a psychologist and educator, was involved in figure skating- as an avocation- here and nationally, and became a gold level figure skating judge. On a lighter, historical note, Dan's daughter Dorothy fondly recalled that her father was part of the Gratiot Lake group that put together a Gratiot Lake historic outhouse float for the 1975 parade celebrating Calumet's Centennial and afterwards brought the outhouse back to the lake to fuel the best bonfire ever.



Are you... A cookie baker, a litter picker-upper, a wildlife watcher, a weed puller? Have you always wanted to... write for a newsletter, see a photo you took in print, teach children, or help clear a trail? The Conservancy is seeking volunteers to share their talents and interests. If you are handy with a pen, a chain saw, or a spatula, please e-mail or call Bonnie at GLC.

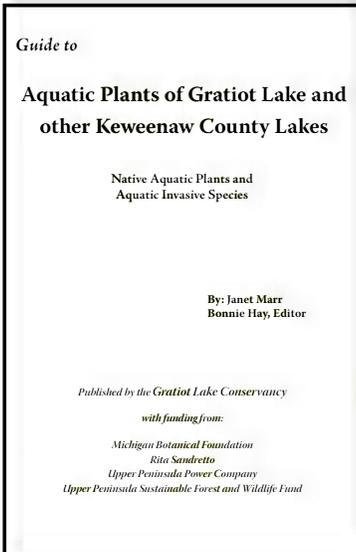
About *Water's Edge*

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, *Water's Edge* Editor
Gratiot Lake Conservancy
P.O. Box 310
Mohawk, MI 49950**

**e-mail: belh@verizon.net phone: 906-337-5476
Visit our web site: www.mlswa.org/gratiot-lake-1508/**

Aquatic Plants Handbook and CD Available Soon



GLC has published a “Guide to the Aquatic Plants of Gratiot Lake and Other Keweenaw County Lakes.” This 22 page full color handbook with accompanying CD is intended for use by organizations and individuals interested in the ecology of our inland lakes. Written by botanist Janet Marr, it covers identification of common, rare, and invasive species of aquatic plants found in Keweenaw lakes. In addition, it includes model protocols for monitoring lakes and a detailed list of resources.

The production of the handbook and CD was partially funded through donations from The Michigan Botanical Foundation, Rita Sandretto, the Upper Peninsula Power Company, and the Upper Peninsula Sustainable Forest and Wildlife Fund.

Copies will be distributed free of charge (except shipping fees where applicable) to non-profits, local governments, libraries, science teachers, community groups, and individuals interested in learning about lake ecology and lake monitoring in Keweenaw and Houghton counties. Contact Bonnie at GLC for further information or to obtain a copy.

Aquatic Plant Workshop with Janet Marr on August 29 and 30

The Gratiot Lake Conservancy is sponsoring an *Aquatic Plant Workshop* Saturday, August 29 and Sunday, August 30 from 9 AM to 4 PM. The workshop will be helpful to those whose professional life includes helping to protect lake ecology. This class will also be useful to those who live near and love Keweenaw’s inland lakes and want to learn how to monitor them.

Botanist Janet Marr will be teaching the two day workshop. Workshop activities will take place at the Eagle Harbor Community Building and in the field at several Keweenaw lakes and channels/coves connected to Lake Superior. Participants should be prepared to get their feet wet!

Submersed and floating-leaved aquatic plants will be identified with a focus on identification of pondweeds and rosette-formers including the Michigan endangered awlwort. Techniques for collecting and herbarium specimen/label preparation will be demonstrated. Differences between aquatic invasive species such as Eurasian water-milfoil and curly-leaf pondweed and their native relatives will be discussed. Aquatic plant survey techniques useful in inland lake monitoring will also be introduced.

Workshop size is limited and advance enrollment is required. The fee for this 2-day workshop is \$70 (\$55 for Gratiot Lake Conservancy members). Click here to for registration information or contact GLC to request a form. Registration and payment should be sent to the Gratiot Lake Conservancy.

Two Janet Avery Scholarships will be awarded on July 1st. Interested applicants should email Bonnie Hay at belh@verizon.net. Scholarship applicants should indicate how they intend to use knowledge gained at the workshop. Please include a paragraph or two about your background or interest as it relates to the workshop topic.

Tips for avoiding Swimmer’s Itch

1. Don’t feed waterfowl or encourage them to come up to the shore. Ducks and geese are the desired hosts to the swimmers itch parasite in one stage of its complicated life cycle.
2. When swimming, towel off immediately after you leave the water. The tiny parasite takes time to imbed and toweling off rather than air drying seems to deter it. Showering after swimming helps too.
3. Don’t sit, wade or swim for long periods in the shallows during a swimmer’s itch outbreak—particularly when winds are blowing towards the shore. The parasite inhabits snail territory in shallow water for part of its life and most easily attaches to humans there.

One Man's Trash-Another Man's Treasure

Although Michigan was forward thinking in putting a returnable bottle bill in place in the late 1970's, generally speaking a lot more care is given now to the safe disposal of household waste in the Keweenaw than was thirty years ago. In the 1980's trash was still being open dumped locally. We would take our kids for evening outings to these sites, affectionately referred to as "bear pits." Although the bears may look back on these good old days with nostalgia, I am happy that we are finding better ways to handle our trash now.

Each township has a trash disposal protocol, and many now have the waste compacted and trucked out for more environmentally sound disposal. Of course, trucking all our trash away leaves a bit of a carbon footprint behind. Paper is sometimes burned to cut down on the weight of trash to be hauled. Unfortunately, paper, especially colored and glossy papers, unless burned at extremely high incinerator temperatures, can release toxins and heavy metal into the air. These dioxins, formaldehyde, PCB's, and heavy metals can promote cancer, birth defects, and alter immune system function.

Luckily, as the old saying goes, "One man's trash is another man's treasure." By reducing/reusing/recycling the amount of trash to be burned or trucked and landfilled can be greatly lessened.

Here are some ways to reduce the amount of paper which needs to be disposed of.

- Donate old magazines and books to schools, hospitals or nursing homes.
- Purchase items with less packaging.
- Take along reusable cloth bags when shopping.
- Eliminate junk mail. Cancel unwanted catalogs at www.catalogchoice.org and get off several junk mail lists at www.newdream.org/junkmail/form.php
- Drop off clean paper, magazines, catalogues, books, phonebooks, newspaper, and cardboard at the Waste Management Recycling facility (south of Sharon Ave across from Charter Communications) in Houghton. WM now handles a number of recyclables (including #1 and #2 plastics, cans, and plastic bags!) in single stream, which means you don't have to sort it! It must be clean though. Check guidelines and hours before you go:
WM Recycling, 1108 Enterprise Drive, Houghton (906) 482-0320

http://cseo.mtu.edu/community/recycle/WM_recycling_8-08.htm

Unwanted appliances in good condition, furniture, fixtures, tools, and building materials can be donated to Copper Country Habitat For Humanity ReStore, 25971 Pine St, Calumet, MI, (906) 337-0020, ccrestore@pasty.net

Previously used clothing, shoes, accessories, housewares, furnishings, sporting goods, toys, and books can be donated to

- Goodwill, 911 Razorback Drive, Houghton, MI 49931, (906) 482-3680.
- Salvation Army, 435 Hancock Street, Hancock, MI 49930, (906) 482-4596.
- St. Vincent DePaul, 204 W. Quincy Street, Hancock, MI 49930, (906) 482-7705.

If you are an Eagle Harbor Township resident, bring unwanted items (but not hazardous waste) to the July 12 Junk Jettison Day (9-5). Some of these items will be claimed as treasures by other township residents! Look for details at the trash drop off site in Eagle Harbor.

Keweenaw Peninsula Freecycle™ is a website open to all who want to give away that "special something" rather than throw it away. It is amazing how just about any item you want to get rid of will find a new home when posted here. This local part of a global online community has more than 500 members. <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/KeweenawMIFreecycle/> KeweenawMIFreecycle-owner@yahoo.com

MTU Center for Science and Environmental Outreach has an informative list of local businesses which take materials such as old batteries, paint, appliances, scrap metal, cell phones, tires, etc., on the web at: http://cseo.mtu.edu/community/recycle/Kew_recycling.htm

Western UP District Health Dept RSVP Program has held collections of computers, televisions, phones, microwaves, VCRs, batteries, fluorescent tubes, etc. The electronics are sent to a recycling facility in Wisconsin. The last collection for this area was held earlier in June. Call or visit their website to find out about future collections. http://www.wupdhd.org/?page_id=70 (906) 482-7382

Unused or out-of-date prescription drugs can be bagged and deposited in the trash (never flush down the drain), but are better brought to these local hospital pharmacies which safely dispose of drugs with high temperature incineration.

- Portage Health Apothecary, 500 Campus Drive, Hancock
- Keweenaw Memorial Retail Pharmacy, 205 Osceola, Laurium

Unfortunately, there is no local site which accepts hazardous household waste, such as solvents, herbicides, pesticides, wood preservatives, flammables, and mercury-containing devices (like thermometers and blood pressure cuffs). If you are traveling to Marquette, the Marquette County Solid Waste Management Authority may accept these items for safe disposal. Please check information on their website or call before you make the trip.

The Marquette Service Center, 850 W. Baraga Ave., Marquette, (906) 249-4108
<http://www.mcswma.com/hhw2009infosheet.html>

By taking these reduce/reuse/recycle steps together we can make a positive impact on the environment and on human health.

Beaver: those furry engineers we love...and hate

Photo by Jim Hay



Beaver Fast Facts

- ◆ **Adult rodents weigh from 40 to 60 pounds. Their lifespan in the wild is 10-12 years.**
- ◆ **Busy beaver can work for 12 hours a night and can fell a 5" diameter tree in 3 minutes**
- ◆ **They swim with webbed hind feet, tail serving as a propeller and rudder, at up to 6 mph.**
- ◆ **Babies, called kits, are born fully furred and ready to take to the water within a half-hour of birth. When on land, mom's can carry kits on their tails or hold them in their forepaws.**
- ◆ **Beaver can stay submerged for up to fifteen minutes. When underwater, valves close off ears and nostrils and skin-flaps cover part of the mouth but leave the front teeth exposed for carrying branches.**
- ◆ **Besides castor sacs (which produce scent), the beaver has two sacs which provide oil for waterproofing fur.**
- ◆ **They usually live in colonies of 5 to 12. Two year olds move on to establish new colonies.**

If you are intrigued by beavers and our other Keweenaw wildlife neighbors, consider attending the August 22, *Reading the Landscape* field trip, *Living with Our Wildlife*.

**Support GLC.
Click here to donate.**

“Ahmeek” is Ojibwe for “beaver,” historically an important game animal, used for meat and fur by the tribes of this region. In pre-European settlement times, beaver ranged throughout the U.S. and their population peak was estimated at 90 million. Their dam building prowess created wetlands supporting lush and diverse animal and plant communities. However, by the mid-1800’s, after over two centuries of the fur trade between European settlers and Native Americans, their thick fur nearly drove the beaver to extinction. In America and Europe, beaver pelts were in constant demand for robes, coats, and felted top hats. Castoreum, a secretion (used by the beaver in territorial scent marking) from castor sacs near its tail, was prized in perfume and medicine manufacture. Some of America’s greatest financial empires, think John Jacob Astor, were founded on beaver profits!

Beaver have had nearly two centuries to recover from their near extirpation. They now number an estimated 6-12 million in the U.S. Today, our beaver neighbors are among the wildlife we humans have conflicted feelings about.

Beaver’s engineering wonders are sometimes considered engineering disasters from a human viewpoint. Beaver dams can cause unwanted and damaging flooding of roadways and lands for which people have other plans. On the other hand, beaver still create lush wetland environments which support a wonderfully diverse ecosystem. These wetlands serve as havens for frogs and other herptiles, stopovers for migrating waterfowl, habitat for songbirds, filters for aquifers, nurseries for fish fry, and river flood control devices. And what a thrill it is on a quiet evening kayak excursion to hear a beaver slap its tail on the water, or to spot a beaver diligently swimming along with a willow branch securely clenched in its teeth.

At Gratiot Lake, beaver have an influence on already fluctuating lake levels by building dams along the Little Gratiot River. So, if you value deeper waters because you need only a short stretch of dock for your boat, you love those beavers at work in the Little Gratiot River. If, on the other hand you wish you had a wide beach to sunbathe on, you are distressed by the beaver’s efficiency. Also, beaver use trees and shrubs (preferably but not exclusively aspen, willow, birch, and maple 2”-6” in diameter) for food and building materials, and they have no respect for private property.

Human engineers are constantly dreaming up ways to thwart beaver’s handiwork. Pipes are used to penetrate through dams at an angle which allows water to flow through and regulates water levels behind the dams. Beaver baffle exclosures are constructed to keep beaver from producing culvert obstruction which can flood roads. Fencing (at least 3 or 4 feet tall) is put around prized trees. Alternatively, trees are wrapped in wire mesh or slathered in beaver repellents (some of which are toxic and many of which repel more than beavers). When all else fails, beaver, dams, and lodges are removed.



Kayak Tour of Gratiot Lake

GLC is sponsoring a kayak trip on Gratiot Lake on Saturday, July 25 from 10 AM to 3 PM. Participants may bring their own kayaks, life jackets (pfd's), and equipment or may rent a single or tandem kayak and all equipment from Keweenaw Adventure Company, who will be outfitting and guiding the tour. The trip around the lake will launch at 10 AM from the lake's public access.

Participants will picnic at the Noblet Field Station on the Conservancy Preserve and have an option for a guided walk on the newly expanded Bear Paw Path.

Pre-registration with Keweenaw Adventure Company is necessary if you intend to reserve equipment. Limited equipment is available, so sign up early. Children under the age of 18 must be accompanied by an adult. Small children may have difficulty with this tour. Please consult Sam at Keweenaw Adventure Co. if you are considering bringing your small child or have questions about the kayaks. Phone: 906-289-4303; website: www.keweenawadventure.com.

In addition to reserving or bringing a kayak, paddles, and pfd, bring a bag lunch and plenty of water, sunscreen, and insect repellent. If it's hot, you may want to wear a swimsuit. If you want to take a short hike after lunch, bring along a pair of walking shoes.

Participants should meet at the public boat access to Gratiot Lake at 9:30 if they are renting equipment or wish to participate in a technique refresher. We'll begin the paddle at 10 AM. Heavy rain or winds will cancel this event. Call 337-5476 if in doubt.

**To be added to the GLC e-mail list and receive updates 6 times a year,
e-mail BELH@VERIZON.NET**

We are extending the trail across the GLC Gratiot Lake Preserve and adding a loop. New boardwalk will be added to safely cross wet areas. Volunteer help is needed weekdays July 8-25. Please call or e-mail GLC if you can assist.

See Stars on Brockway Saturday, August 1st, 9:30 PM-Midnight

Bring your insect repellent, blankets, beach chairs, binoculars, and telescopes to the Brockway star gathering around sunset. Michigan Tech's Dr. Robert Nemiroff and his astronomy students will be on hand to introduce us to the celestial highlights.

Prior to coming up on the mountain, Nemiroff will give a slide talk on astronomical highlights at 7:30 PM at Fort Wilkins State Park (West Barracks) in Copper Harbor. Although the GLC Brockway event is free, there is an entry fee for the Fort Wilkins slide/talk which precedes it.



Photo by Jim Hay

2009 GRATIOT LAKE CONSERVANCY CALENDAR

Reading the Landscape of the Keweenaw Living in the Landscape

Four Saturdays, June 27, July 18, August 22, and September 19

Fee. Registration required. Call 482-0160 or 289-4930 for information.

Summer Youth Program Exploration: Aquatic Ecology at Gratiot Lake

Sunday, July 19 - Saturday, July 25

Call SYP at 1-888-773-2655 or 906-487-2219 for information.

Kayak Tour of Gratiot Lake

Saturday, July 25, 10:00 AM to 3 PM

Meet at the Gratiot Lake public access and bring equipment and a bag lunch, or to rent equipment call Keweenaw Adventure Company at 906-289-4303.

Review of Kayaking technique at 9:30. Launch at 10:00 AM.

GLC Annual Members Meeting

Tuesday, July 28

6:45 Reception, 7:00 Meeting, 7:30 Refreshments

8:00 *Slide/Talk by Keren Tischler on Loons (public invited)*

Eagle Harbor Community Building

Astronomy Gathering On Brockway Mountain

with Robert Nemiroff and MTU Astronomy Students

Saturday, August 1, 9:30 PM to Midnight

Top of Brockway Mountain

Open House at the Noblet Field Station

Saturday, August 15, Noon to 3 PM

Refreshments, Children's Activities, Nature Walk, Visit with Neighbors!

At the GLC Preserve at Gratiot Lake. Come by land or by water!

Aquatic Plant Workshop

taught by botanist Janet Marr

Saturday, August 29 and Sunday, August 30

See description in this newsletter and visit the GLC website for registration form.

Coastal Cleanup at Gratiot Lake

Sunday, September 20

Help clean up debris from the shoreline!

Meet at Public Access at 9:00 AM or contact GLC to begin at other location.

Questions? Call 337-5476 or e-mail BELH@verizon.net

Updates? Visit the GLC website at www.MLSWA.org/Gratiot-Lake-1508/

Stopping the Spread of AIS

Here are precautions from protectyourwaters.net that are recommended when transporting boats and other aquatic recreational equipment between lakes. These precautions can decrease the likelihood of spreading spiny water flea, VHS (fish virus), and other aquatic invasive species from lake to lake.

- Remove all visible mud and plants from boats, trailers, boots, buckets, etc. when you leave a lake.
- Drain out all water from boats and equipment when leaving a lake. Remove water from motors, jet drives, live wells, boat hulls, scuba tanks and regulators, boots, waders, bait buckets, seaplane floats, swimming floats.
- Clean and allow to dry out every item that came in contact with the water. Spraying or wiping off with hot water (>104 ° F), vinegar, or a 1% salt solution to disinfect is advised. A five day dry out period is recommended before entering new waters.
- The Eagle Harbor marina has a boat spray station equipped with the Virkon Aquatic™ which is an EPA approved viricide useful in stopping transmission of VHS (fish virus.) This method is also being used by the Michigan DNR to disinfect their vessels.
- Do not release or put plants, fish, or animals into a body of water unless they came out of that body of water.
- Do not release unused bait into the waters you are fishing. Dump unwanted bait in a trashcan or on the land, far enough away from the water that it cannot impact this resource.



Photo by Jim Hay

Reading the Landscape of the KEWEENAW Living in the Landscape

This series of art and natural history field trips for adults is scheduled for 9:30 AM to 2:30 PM on four Saturdays, June 27, July 18, August 22, and September 19.

The August 22 field trip, *Living with Our Wildlife*, will be held at the GLC preserve at Gratiot Lake. Artist Joyce Koskenmaki and environmental educator Brian Rajdl will be the guides.

Reservations are necessary and group size is limited. The fee is \$15. A reduced fee of \$13 is available for GLC members - just indicate that you are a GLC member when you enroll and e-mail GLC to request the discount. Teachers or students may be eligible for a *Janet Avery Scholarship* to attend.

A brochure may be enclosed with this newsletter or call GLC (337-5476) to obtain a paper brochure. The brochure and registration form can be downloaded on the GLC website.

Reading the Landscape of the Keweenaw, in its seventh year, is co-sponsored by Copper Country Audubon, Gratiot Lake Conservancy, Houghton Keweenaw Conservation District, Keweenaw County Historical Society, Keweenaw Land Trust, Michigan Nature Association, and Trout Unlimited.



Photo by Jim Hay

Support GLC !

Gratiot Lake 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.

Donations to GLC are always welcome.

[Click here to download the membership/donation form](#) and send it in with your \$15 membership or donation. The membership year is from January 1st to December 31st, but you may join at any time.

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

Click here to view this hummingbird and other Gratiot Lake notecard photos in full color!

www.mlswa.org/Gratiot-Lake-1508/

