Grant to Restore Grand River Habitat

Ottawa County Parks has been awarded a $110,000 grant to restore shoreline habitat in the Lower Grand River by planting wild rice and controlling Phragmites infestations. Phragmites, also known as common reed grass, is a highly invasive wetland plant which can grow over ten feet in height and block views. (Pictured to the right.) It forms extensive, dense stands crowding out native plants, such as wild rice. Wild rice once thrived in the lower Grand River and was an important food source for both wildlife and Native Americans. This project will restore the threatened variety of wild rice, Zizania aquatica var. aquatica. Phragmites control and wild rice planting will restore riparian lands, both public and private, in the lower Grand River from Lloyd’s Bayou in Spring Lake Township to Kuit’s Bayou in Allegan Township. The project is being coordinated by Melanie Manion, Natural Resources Management Supervisor for Ottawa County Parks. The grant is through the Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Restoration Act, a program of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. It will be matched with $41,837 in staff time and funds from Ottawa County Parks and several project partners including the Ottawa County Invasive Phragmites Group and the Michigan Natural Features Inventory.

Fall Stewardship Workdays

Join us to remove woody, invasive plants threatening native habitats.

- Hawatha Forest: Thursday, September 12 from 5 - 7pm
- Grose Park: Saturday, September 14 from 10am - 12pm
- Crockery Creek: Saturday, September 28 from 10am - 12pm
- Pigeon Creek: Thursday, October 3 from 5:30 - 7:30pm

Bring work gloves, insect repellent and appropriate outdoor gear. Advance registration is not required. All ages are welcome; however, those under age 16 must be accompanied by an adult. Park addresses and directions are listed inside this newsletter. Call 616-738-4811 for details or questions.

Annual Meeting & Special Program:

John Muir’s Thousand Mile Program:

Retrace John Muir’s thousand mile journey to the Gulf with interpretative naturalists Wil & Sarah Reding, who will share their experiences and encounters as they followed in his footsteps. Using Muir’s journals, Civil War maps and many other resources, the Redings set out on their hike, starting in Indianapolis, Indiana and ending in Cedar Key, Florida. This informative and entertaining program is being offered by Friends of Ottawa County Parks on Wednesday, September 18, at 7pm in the VanderLaan Room of Hager Park. Park address is listed inside this newsletter. The program is open to the public and there is no fee to attend. (However, donations will be gladly accepted.) A short business meeting will precede the program. Friends of Ottawa County Parks is a non-profit organization dedicated to connecting people with nature, recreation and community by partnering with Ottawa County Parks. Learn more and find out how you can join at the annual meeting.

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Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday
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Sept 8 | Sept 9 | Sept 10 | Sept 11 | Sept 12 | Sept 13 | Sept 14
**Bird Walk** | Hemlock Crossing | 7PM | **Bird Walk** | Hemlock Crossing | 7PM | **Bird Walk** | Hemlock Crossing | 7PM
**Volunteer Workday** | Pine Creek Bog | 8AM | **Volunteer Workday** | Waftter Forest | 9AM | **Volunteer Workday** | Pine Creek Bog | 8AM
**Seasonal Stroll** | Seasonal Stroll | 9AM | **Seasonal Stroll** | Seasonal Stroll | 9AM | **Seasonal Stroll** | Seasonal Stroll | 9AM
**Spawning Salmon** | Scenic Loop | 9AM | **Spawning Salmon** | Scenic Loop | 9AM | **Spawning Salmon** | Scenic Loop | 9AM
**Fungus Workshop** | Fungus Workshop | 9AM | **Fungus Workshop** | Fungus Workshop | 9AM | **Fungus Workshop** | Fungus Workshop | 9AM
**Aspens** | Aspens | 9AM | **Aspens** | Aspens | 9AM | **Aspens** | Aspens | 9AM
**Colorful Trees** | Colorful Trees | 9AM | **Colorful Trees** | Colorful Trees | 9AM | **Colorful Trees** | Colorful Trees | 9AM
**Coffee with Birds** | Coffee with Birds | 9AM | **Coffee with Birds** | Coffee with Birds | 9AM | **Coffee with Birds** | Coffee with Birds | 9AM
**4th Annual Coffee with Birds** | 9AM | **4th Annual Coffee with Birds** | 9AM | **4th Annual Coffee with Birds** | 9AM | **4th Annual Coffee with Birds** | 9AM

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**Directions**

- **Bur Oak Walk** (1913 Oracle Drive, Cooperville) From Leonard, travel south on 90th Avenue. Parking for near the end of 90th.
- **Creek Drive** (9813 Whirlwind Drive, Nuttie) Travel west on Whirlwind Drive from Intersection with Pinhook Road.
- **Eastmanville Bayou** (1500 6th Avenue, Albertus) Near the intersection of Lake Michigan Drive and 104th Avenue. Parking for near parking lots south of the bridge.
- **Grand River Ravines** (3915 Pine Hill Road, Jenison) Access is off of 40th.
- **Olive Shore Drive** (2220 24th Avenue, Casnovia) Take Hoover to 24th then travel south to the park.

- **Alger Park** (1914 28th Avenue, Jenison) On 28th Avenue near the intersection of Bassar Boulevard.
- **Hemlock Crossing-Nature Education Center** (3615 West Olive Road, West Olive) From US-31 North on Hemlock Crossing.
- **Eastmanville Bayou** (13507 68th Avenue, Allendale) Near the intersection of 68th and Leonard. The parking area is south of the bridge.
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Visit michiana.org/parks to learn more about Ottawa County’s 6,400 acres of park and open spaces available for your enjoyment. One month improvements and programs are funded by various grants and a parks millage. If you own a $150,000 home, you pay $2.4 annually investing in opportunities for outdoor recreation and nature education today and for future generations. Thank you.