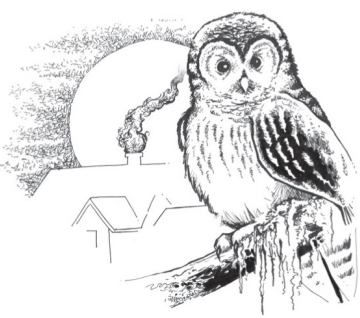


Marguerite Gahagan Nature Preserve  
P.O. Box 421  
Roscommon, MI 48653



OPEN HOUSE AT GAHAGAN  
Sunday    October 17, 2021    1-3 P.M.

**Why Support Gahagan Education Programs?**

**What kind of impact will your contribution have?**

Your support will help us pay a dedicated naturalist to maintain and deliver our education programs to schools across the area.  
Our organization provides longstanding, effective programming for minimal cost.  
Gahagan has a low overhead, so your money directly contributes to the education of our students and community.

**How will your contribution benefit schools and students?**

We try to lift the financial burden off the schools, and keep our educational programs at a low cost.  
Your support may secure education programming for hundreds of students who otherwise have a very minimal exposure to environmental science.  
Successive guided trips into the woods help our students develop an appreciation and kinship with nature that they will carry into their adult lives.  
Though surrounded by woods, many children in our area don't get the opportunity to explore these natural places and develop principles, values, and a conscience about protecting nature.

**How will your contribution benefit the community?**

Gahagan's public presentations and seminars at libraries and community centers educate participants about local ecosystems and encourage them to become stewards of our community's natural resources.  
Your sponsorship will help combat misinformation about environmental science, conservation, and resource management practices in our communities.



Newsletter of Gahagan Nature Preserve, Inc.

P.O. Box 421, Roscommon, MI 48653 ~ 989-275-3217 ~ [www.GahaganNature.org](http://www.GahaganNature.org)

Issue # 41 ~ Fall 2021

Meet Ken Paulson age 97. His generous contributions to the Preserve include a very rare butterfly and moth collection (you need to see it to believe it), his entire natural history library and many rocks and arrowheads as well. Ken is a long time conservation educator, having spent his career as a professional working for the Boy Scouts of America. His first butterfly collection won first place at the county fair. He was just five years old.



Ken Paulson hands over his super butterfly and moth collection to Kate Gammicchia.

Mr. Paulson's contribution, while unique, is just one among so many others who have chosen to support our Preserve. Having detected a leak in the cabin roof a few years back, re-roofing the cabin was placed on our 2019-2023 Five Year Plan. Hoisting a ladder this spring to take a look confirmed it was time to get serious about that goal.

We received an initial estimate for a metal roof-over of \$11,500. Since that would have pretty much used up our operating budget for the year, we decided to set aside a portion each year until we had enough. We noted this problem in our spring newsletter and asked if any of our members wished to help us out with a contribution to the fund. And you did. So far, 23 donations to the fund totals \$17,535. The new roof will happen early next spring and now includes removal of the existing shingles and replacement of all plywood. We will also be able to replace the rotting cedar roofing with steel shingles on both the Gazebo at Tank Creek and the Kiosk at our entrance.

Our donors, members, patrons and volunteers are the human capital that allows Gahagan Nature Preserve to exist. Without the efforts made by ten Eagle Scout candidates, we wouldn't have handicapped ramps on both entrances to the cabin. We also wouldn't have boardwalks, bridges, observation decks, the Green Trail, the deer enclosures, and the dock at the vernal pond.

The Scout projects are not an anomaly. Without the support of the Roscommon County Community Foundation, and many of its donor-advised funds, The Wiltse Foundation, the Colwell Challenge, Weyerhaeuser, the Houghton Lake and Roscommon Rotary Clubs, the Higgins Lake Foundation, the Kirtland Garden Club, generous anonymous donors and those of you who have kept us on your radar for 20 plus years, we'd be just a bunch of trees and a busted up cabin.

Tom Dale, Gahagan Chairperson



Marguerite Gahagan Nature Preserve  
Board of Directors

Chairperson: Tom Dale  
Vice Chair: Brian Hutchins  
Secretary: Julie Crick  
Irene Borak  
Alecia Catrell  
Dale Ekdorn  
Ken Elmore  
Sue Huffman  
Mike Petrucha

Tracy Bosworth, Executive Director  
(989) 390-0903 ~ adm@GahaganNature.org  
**www.GahaganNature.org**  
Directors meet on the 2nd Monday of the month, 6 PM.  
All are welcome to attend

Gahagan Calendar  
2021/2022 Events

**Sept-Oct:** Fall Field Trips at MGNP

**September 17-19:** Firemen's Memorial

**October 2:** Fall Firewise Offensive 10AM - 2PM

**October 17:** Open House 1PM at MGNP

**Jan-April 202:** Visiting Naturalist-Area Schools

**April 23, 2022:** Spring Clean-up 10AM - 2PM

Check our website or facebook for current info and events.

If you prefer to go paperless, go to the "Contact Us" tab and sign up for an electronic copy of our newsletter.

**Come Join Us at the Marguerite Gahagan Nature Preserve!**

Marguerite Gahagan Nature Preserve operates as a non-profit organization run by volunteers and funded by its members, generous donors and the endowment left by Marguerite. MGNP provides environmental education for many of the schools in the surrounding counties. The 60-acre preserve is open to the public for hiking, snowshoeing, birding and many other uses year round. We have an asphalt and boardwalk trail that is wheelchair friendly, travelling through the woods and wetlands along the beginnings of Tank Creek. It is through the preserve that Marguerite Gahagan continues to share the north country she loved with others. Please contribute to keep the Preserve and its programs moving forward.

**Yes, I/we want to support the Marguerite Gahagan Nature Preserve.**

Members	Supporters	Partners	Stewards	Patrons
(up to \$30)	(\$31-\$249)	(\$250-\$499)	(\$500-\$999)	(\$1,000 and up)

I/We am/are making a donation of \$\_\_\_\_\_ I/We are including \$\_\_\_\_\_ for the Cabin Roof Project

Please accept this donation \_\_\_in memory \_\_\_in honor of\_\_\_\_\_

Name:\_\_\_\_\_ Ph:(\_\_\_\_\_)\_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address:\_\_\_\_\_ City:\_\_\_\_\_ State:\_\_\_\_\_ Zip:\_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail:\_\_\_\_\_@\_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks to Gahagan Nature Preserve, Inc. and mail to P.O. Box 421, Roscommon, MI 48653 Thanks!

**Looking for the "Friends of Gahagan" List?**

With the Spring 2019 newsletter, we have altered the way we acknowledge our friends. In the past, we had noted donors and memorial contributions in the spring publication. We had then listed our members in the fall newsletter, as that is the time of year we remind our friends to renew their membership contributions. This has led to a bit confusion over the years, as some contributions were not noted in the very next issue of the newsletter. To rectify this, we are noting all contributions taken in throughout the entire current calendar year in the next year's spring publication.

We have also updated the way we report the contributions you give to the Preserve. Our "Friends of Gahagan" page will reflect contributions in the following fashion:

Members	Supporters	Partners	Stewards	Patrons
(up to \$30)	(\$31-\$249)	(\$250-\$499)	(\$500-\$999)	(\$1,000 and up)

The Gahagan Board of Directors is incredibly thankful for each and every contribution that you make. We spend much time and endeavor to make wise, long-lasting, conservative decisions regarding where your dollars are spent here at your preserve. It is through the preserve that Marguerite Gahagan continues to share the north country she loved with others.

**Help us Grow**

Please don't forget to take care of your MGNP membership. These dues are one of the biggest sources of revenue for our organization. We need to not only hang on to every membership we have, we need to grow as well. So spread the word by sharing this newsletter!

If you are an internet user, you can log on to [www.GahaganNature.org](http://www.GahaganNature.org) and quickly take care of your dues through the secure PayPal link. You can process your payment through your PayPal account or by entering your debit or credit information as a stand-alone purchase.

You can also make a personal donation or a memorial contribution through a link on the website. So please, don't forget to join us by updating your membership today. If you are receiving our newsletter and prefer to be removed from the mailing list, just let us know. You can email us at [adm@GahaganNature.org](mailto:adm@GahaganNature.org) or call 989-275-3217. Thank You!

October at Marguerite's Cabin

The sun moved on its journey west, touched a maple, leaves falling, and the thick carpet of crimson, pink, lavender, gold, the dull purple of blueberry leaves, the verdant green of wintergreen, the sodden brown of dying brakes, each a pattern of fall's magic.

Marguerite Gahagan  
October 14, 1964

*Cabin Roof Project Donors*

The contributions for our roof project from our friends and community members have touched our hearts. Thank you for your generosity.

Anonymous  
Irene Borak  
Robert Borak  
Mark and Tracy Bosworth  
Clayton and Mary Brown  
Martha Clapp  
Karen Demers  
Kay Duncan  
Roxie Fernelius  
Caryl and Ed Fischer  
Carolyn Meyer  
Mike and JoAnn Muston

Don and Suzanne Pennell  
Ken and Suzanne Poulson  
Rotary Club of Houghton Lake  
Rotary Club of Roscommon  
Bill and Patti Sarkella  
Richard Seton  
JoAnn VanderMolen  
Jack and Liz Wade  
Mike and Kathy Wahl  
Eleanor Washburn  
Jerry and Darlene Weinrich

**2021 June Gahagan Bird Count**

**By Mike Petrucha**

On June 2nd, four participants met in the Gahagan parking lot at 8:00 a.m. with sunny and 56-degree weather. The light south wind made for great listening conditions. Unlike last year, there were zero mosquitoes this year, but I did find four ticks on me later. We formed two groups to cover Gahagan, finding 180 individuals of 33 species in two hours of counting. All birds were counted by sight and sound. The number of species found was right on average, but the 180 individuals were the highest ever. Blue Jay was the most numerous species with 23 individuals found. We added one new species to the count, Least Flycatcher, bringing the total number of species found on the June Count to 68. New high counts were established for Canada Goose (59 flyovers), Blue Jay (23), and White-breasted Nuthatch (7). Although no Wild Turkeys were seen on the count, there were tracks in the parking lot.



White-breasted Nuthatch

The current 2021 plus past June counts can be seen on eBird, by going to: **www.ebird.org**  
Click on the "Explore" tab, then click on "Explore Hotspots," then type in "Marguerite Gahagan Nature Preserve."



## Avian Spotlight: Least Flycatcher

By Mike Petrucha

A new species, Least Flycatcher (*Empidonax minimus*), was a new addition to the Gahagan June Bird Count list in 2021 (see summary in this newsletter). They breed in open deciduous or mixed forests, usually around clearings or edges. These forests tend to have a few shrubs or small saplings in the understory and a well-developed canopy. They spend the winter in Central America.

Least Flycatchers are part of the confusing *Empidonax* flycatcher group. Their small size, bold white eyering, and distinctive “chebec” song make them easier to identify than the other species of this group. They are grayish olive above with two white wingbars, a ducky colored breast, and have a yellowish belly.



Least Flycatchers build a cup nest constructed from grass, bark, twigs, lichens, and plant fibers, usually bound together with webs of spiders or caterpillars, and are lined with fine grass, plant down, animal hair, or feathers. Nests are placed in a vertical fork of a branch in deciduous sapling or small tree and built by the female. Nests may be found 2-65 feet above the ground but are normally 12-25 feet high. It takes them about 5-7 days to build a nest that is around 2.5 inches wide and 2 inches tall. Three to five eggs are laid and incubated by the female. Eggs hatch in 13-15 days and the young are fed by both parents. The young birds can fly in 12-17 days and may be fed by the parents for up to two more weeks.

Least Flycatchers feed almost entirely on insects. They usually watch from perches in the middle to lower levels of trees, and fly out to catch insects in mid-air, occasionally picking food from leaves while hovering.

Least Flycatchers only spend about two months on the breeding grounds. It takes them about 58 days to find a mate, build a nest, lay eggs, and raise their young from nestlings to independence. They travel between 60 and 72 miles per day to reach their wintering grounds, a journey that takes about 25 days.

## Check it out!



Suzanne Luck, RCCF, with Tom & Tracy

The next time you are driving on M-18 south of Roscommon, please take a look at our new sign. It is on the corner of Southline and M-18, kitty corner from the Roscommon Area District Library. The upright posts containing our 25-year-old sadly weathered sign (seen on page 4) were sanded and repainted. The new sign was made by Dealers Supply Company is twice the original size and showcases activities at the preserve with a row of icons along the bottom.

The cost for the new double-sided sign was completely covered by the Roscommon County Community Foundation's (RCCF) Kellogg Youth Fund. Income from the Kellogg Youth Fund is used for youth activities, programs, and projects within Roscommon County. All grants from this fund are determined solely by the members of the Roscommon County Youth Advisory Council (YAC). Many of the members of the YAC have fond memories of the school field trips they attended at Gahagan when they were in elementary school.

**Thank you to the RCCF and the YAC for greatly improving our visibility.**

## Fall Firewise Offensive Saturday October 2<sup>nd</sup> 10AM-1PM

Keeping the 60-acre preserve open and accessible is a challenge for a volunteer organization. A brush fire during spring 2013 quickly brought to light the need to reduce the brush fuel surrounding our buildings. Our Spring Clean-up this year was a rousing success, yet there is still more work needed to keep the preserve's trails open and the buildings protected from fire hazard. To that end, we are hosting a Fall Firewise Offensive.

The plan is to drag downed brush to the driveway and parking lot. From there we can use our trailer to haul to the compost site. The Village of Roscommon has a chipper and has been doing a fantastic job managing the brush and compost since taking over operations in February 2020.

We'll have a set of new work gloves, lots of water and a yummy barbecue lunch in exchange for a few hours of fellowship and light duty exertion. So please come out and give us a hand.

This beautiful cabinet was built in 2005 by Curt Losee to house the preserved insects stored at the AuSable River Center. We have catalogued the collection and moved the cabinet to the preserve. It fits perfectly and is a useful addition to the office.



## The Watershed Report by Tom Dale

The water quality in the AuSable Watershed, based on “boots in the water” evaluation and extensive benthic macro-invertebrate sampling is excellent. On May 5<sup>th</sup>, a team sponsored by the Mason Griffith Founders Chapter of Trout Unlimited (TU) sampled the Main Stream at Guide's Rest. They collected bugs representing 30 families and generated a MiCorp score of 53.5; which is excellent. Another TU team sampled the East Branch at the Karen Lake Rd Bridge. They collected bugs representing 22 families and generated a score of 42.9, which is good.

One month later on June 12, a team from Gahagan sampled the South Branch upstream from Chase Bridge. The sampling day followed a pretty stormy and rainy day, so we put up with cloudy water and a fast current. We collected bugs representing 28 families and generated a score of 59.2; excellent.

The Upper AuSable River Watershed Monitoring Project began in 2008 with a grant from the Michigan Clean Water Corp or MiCorp. Since our beginning, we have sampled the watershed from sites on 6 branches, spring and fall for a total of 18 sampling events. The collections, which remain in storage at Gahagan include 96 families of benthic (bottom dwelling) macro-invertebrates (mostly insect larvae). The MiCorp scores (the widely used standard) have always been good or more often, excellent. The AuSable River is very healthy and loaded with big trout!

## You are cordially invited to our Annual Open House and Membership Meeting Sunday, October 17, 2021 from 1—3 p.m.



Gahagan Nature Preserve has grown in size and scope over the years. It is a volunteer organization whose accomplishments depend on people who love the outdoors, value the environment and realize the need to educate our youth about the natural world.

The Preserve is always open to the public. At any time you can wind your way through the trails observing the huge pines, hemlocks and cedars, meander out to the gazebo to search for the beginning of Tank Creek, and linger by the pond listening to the sounds of nature. By attending a program or event, are you truly able to grasp the heart of the preserve and appreciate its progression.

Please plan on joining us to celebrate what our collective contributions have been able to accomplish. Our program will begin at 1:30. Tom Dale, our own master storyteller, will enlighten and delight you with a rousing presentation about the Andromeda Galaxy. Mike Petrucha, expert Geocacher, will then take us out to discover geocaches on our property. Be prepared for this hands-on tutorial by downloading a geocaching app on your cell phone prior to arrival. Interpretive guided walks on the trail of your choice will also be available, with the Annual Membership meeting to start at 3:00.

Due to COVID concerns, we will be forgoing our usual snacks and refreshments.



## Catch-up on our Clean-up

Over the years, our annual Spring Clean has been met with a mixed bag of northern Michigan meteorological conditions. Be it sunny and mild or snowy and wild, a small dedicated group of volunteers have eagerly pitched in to spruce up. However, this spring yielded a well-seasoned battalion!

Along with our MGNP neighborhood community folks, we had support from the Roscommon High School National Honor Society, Michigan geoachers, and Weyerhaeuser employees. The largest volunteer group ever and accomplished more than any previous year.



♥ Thanks. Thanks. And More Thanks to.....

Kathi Moss, Mark Bosworth, The Abneys and the Clarks from Weyerhaeuser for the work on the trails and the sign posts at M-18.

Ken Elmore for replacing the entire length of the cedar fence around the front of the cabin.

The geocaching crew for the cataloguing the AuSable Watershed Insect Collection.

The RHS National Honor Society kids for raking, planting and all the brush hauling.



Photo courtesy Houghton Lake Resorter



Weyerhaeuser

### Weyerhaeuser Employees Make Waves

“Making Waves” is a program created by the Weyerhaeuser Giving Fund that fosters volunteerism and supports Weyerhaeuser employees’ good works in the community. We are very grateful to the Grayling OSB employees and the Weyerhaeuser Giving Fund for their generosity. Our heartfelt thanks go to the Grayling Weyerhaeuser employees who have volunteered over the years and have chosen Gahagan to be the recipient of several Making Waves grants. The Weyerhaeuser Giving Fund has granted \$1,000 to Gahagan for employee participation in the 2021 Spring Clean-up.

**Thank You Weyerhaeuser!**



## Fall Field Trips are back! Book a fall 2021 free field trip for your class now. Yup. FREE.

Field trips for the fall season have begun. Gahagan is again hosting fall field trips from now through October. We are thankful to have Tom Dale who has stepped in to our naturalist position to help make this possible. The scheduling times are 9-10:30, 10:30-12:00, and 12:30-2:00pm. Classes are welcome to bring lunches to eat during 10:00-12:30 time slot.

Hands on lessons are planned for each grade level and include energizing games to help retain and reinforce learning. We provide quality environmental education, coordinated with the latest NGSS standards. And...there will be no cost for fall field trips! A 2020 grant to the preserve from the Weyerhaeuser Giving Fund will offset the usual fee. Our distribution from the Roscommon County Community Fund will cover the naturalist’s participation, so we are ready and excited to be back on mission to provide educational programming!

Kindergartners can expect the help Robins get south for the winter. First grade will learn about trees and how to use all their senses experience the forest. Second graders will focus on the “three R’s” to experience natural versus unnatural. Our third graders explore patterns in nature and life cycles – just in time for winter! Fourth grade will discover the importance of adaptations. Fifth grade keys in on classification. Middle and high school programs are available on request.

**Contact Tom at 989-889-9562 or thdale@core.com to schedule your class field trip.**

## MGNP

### Mission

“The Marguerite Gahagan Nature Preserve was established to perpetuate Marguerite’s lifelong appreciation of the north woods. It is a not-for-profit organization whose mission is to protect and maintain the diverse habitats of the preserve, and to provide environmental education for our communities.”

## Hemlock woolly adelgid has found its way to Michigan

By Irene Borak

We weathered the gypsy moth storm. The fire danger has been acceptable. You can even find young ash trees if you look for them! Our forests seem to have made it through this chaotic summer in fairly good shape.

I’m sorry to say, however, that danger looms on the horizon. Exotic pests continue to find their way to our cities and shores and, over and over again, our forests have been paying the price. From Dutch elm disease to the emerald ash borer, pest species have established themselves in our forests and changed both our yards and natural areas into different versions of themselves.

One of the newest invaders to be on the lookout for is the hemlock woolly adelgid – an exotic, invasive forest pest that is becoming established in Michigan and will be on the move toward Gahagan NP soon enough. With the power to kill its namesake tree, it’s worth being on the defensive!

While Eastern hemlock doesn’t tend to be a large component of our Northern Michigan forests, where it is found, it is a valuable component of the ecosystem.

In Michigan, hemlock tends to grow around water, but can add to the diversity of an upland hardwood forest as well, occupying low or wet spots. Often found in conjunction with Northern white cedar, hemlock offers an added layer of winter browse and protection for many creatures.

I consider hemlock one of my favorites for purely esthetic reasons – it’s a beautiful tree! I planted one close to the window of my home office just so I could watch it grow. It’s relatively small cones and short needles make it yard friendly and its wispy, almost graceful branches are such a pleasant contrast to the pines and oaks.

I’m now keeping an eye out for the tell-tale signs of the bug that wants to kill it – a tiny sap-sucking adelgid.

The life cycle of the hemlock woolly adelgid (HWA) is such that we’re more likely to notice it has arrived while it’s in its “woolly” stage during the winter months. The tiny immature stages produce small, cottony masses during this time (November to July) at the base of the tree’s needles. All the while they’ll be underneath, feeding on the tree’s stored reserves – sucking the life out of it!



**Hemlock woolly adelgid**

photo credit Michigan.gov.

As with many pests, the health and age of an infested tree will be big factors in how long it will take the HWA to kill the tree. There isn’t much active management for hemlock in Michigan, so the resource in the state tends to skew toward older, more susceptible trees. It may take a couple of years, but most infested trees will eventually die after extensive twig and branch mortality has occurred.

This pest arrived in the New England area likely sometime around 1950 and now covers much of the southern range of hemlock, from southern Maine to Tennessee. It has been slower to move into the northern portions of its range, including Michigan. However, there is a spotty infestation currently brewing along the lakeshore in five of our west-central counties – Mason, Oceana, Muskegon, Ottawa and Allegan - that bears watching.

HWA is more likely to be spread – by wind, animals or humans moving infested material – during the spring and early summer months when the insect is in its mobile stages. But whenever you’re around hemlock, try to take a closer look and report any sightings you make.

The Michigan Department of Agriculture offers great reading on HWA and other pests at [Michigan.gov/invasives](https://www.michigan.gov/invasives). They offer helpful information for identifying, treating and reporting this newest addition to that ever-growing list of pests to be on the lookout for.