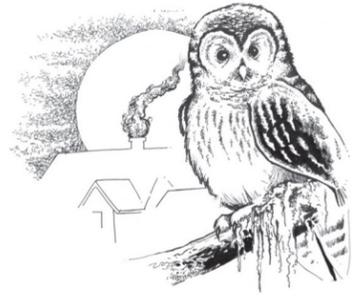


Marguerite Gahagan Nature Preserve

P.O. Box 421

Roscommon, MI 48653



## Gahagan Open House and Chili Cook Off Event Sunday, October 14 1—4 PM

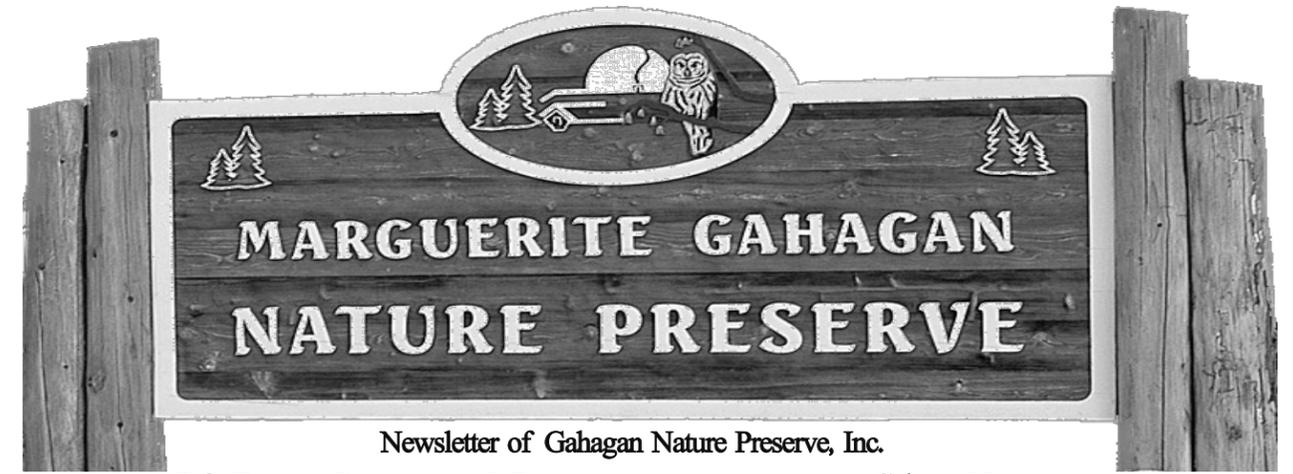
### 4-H Forestry Camp a Rousing Success!

This past June, 11 children from all over northern Michigan (and one from Illinois) learned about forestry while exploring the forests of the Gahagan Nature Preserve at this 4-day camp sponsored by Michigan State University Extension 4-H.

During the first two days of the camp, the children learned how to use forestry tools to take measurements of the trees growing in the forest, and that not cutting trees is a valid management decision. The children also learned about different forest types, and were able to compare the soils and hydrology of the lowland swampy cedar-birch forest with the mixed pine forest on the uplands of the preserve. All in all, we had a lot of fun hiking around the Preserve and taking a closer look at the details of how a forest ecosystem functions.

The last two days of the camp were designed to introduce the children to careers related to forestry as well as the local forest products industry. To facilitate that introduction, we toured the Logging Museum at Hartwick Pines with the help of the resident historian, Hillary Pine. We also visited the AJD Sawmill and an active timber harvest with Tom Barnes and Brenda Haskill of the Michigan DNR. The children and adult chaperones were in awe as we witnessed the transformation of a forest of trees into the lumber and other products we use in our daily lives.

Does this sound like it might interest your child? Stay tuned to the Gahagan Nature Preserve website as we plan to announce dates for the 2019 camp early in the year. Children aged 11-15 as well as parents are welcome to attend. Hope to see you next year!



Newsletter of Gahagan Nature Preserve, Inc.

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

Issue# 35 ~ Fall 2018

### There is nothing permanent except change. Heraclitus

Gahagan Nature Preserve was formally established in 1997 with a mission statement and a transfer of property ownership. The following years brought planning meetings, by-laws, improvements to the Marguerite's cabin, additional acreage, boardwalks, trails, benches, a permanent conservation easement and in the year 2000, Education Director Tom Dale. Tom began a series of intentional environmental education lessons that morphed into field trips at the preserve. This grew into a fully developed, four-pronged, successful environmental program. When Tom retired in 2015, he left a well-established, well-provisioned, well-respected environmental education legacy. We continue to offer Project ELF during the school year, spring and fall field trips, the Visiting Naturalist in the winter months and Nature Camp in the summer. While our programming is "permanent" our Naturalist position has recently been the element of "change." We are welcoming our fourth education director to the Preserve and are thrilled that Kate Gammicchia has accepted the challenge. With Kate's enthusiasm, curiosity and diligence, we are looking forward to continuing Tom's legacy of exceptional environmental education. Welcome Kate.

Hello Gahagan. My husband's career brought our family to this community and I am a firm believer of blooming where you are planted. Personally I take great care to volunteer at the school for my children, even blooming into the Bookfair organizer, PTO President and Chairperson for Friends For Safe Schools committee. Professionally I chose to bloom as a part time exercise and yoga instructor; offering classes to all ages and seeking those in this community that didn't have the right set of circumstances to exercise. I have a degree in Business Administration and also in Exercise Science, each of which has been applicable to every aspect of my life; from being able to run my household to assisting in every civic opportunity I have been a part of. And now I am now embarking on yet another passion. With my love for nature, I have been given another chance to bloom as the Education Director at Gahagan. These flowers would not have come about had it not been for the relationships I have formed here in Roscommon. It takes a community... thank you for all of this!

Kate Gammicchia

### MGNP Open House/Chili Cook Off

Sunday October 14th 1-4 PM

The Marguerite Gahagan Nature Preserve has grown in size and scope over the years. It is a volunteer organization supported by its donors, contributors and members, like you. Its accomplishments depend on people who love the outdoors, value the environment and realize the need to educate our youth about the natural world. We depend upon you to continue to be a part of that mission. We are truly thankful for the support you give. We invite you to share in our collective achievements.

On Sunday October 14<sup>th</sup>, Gahagan will celebrate with an Open House from 1-4 PM. On tap for this year is a Chili Cook Off. Locate your tried and true recipe or give a newly found one a crack, fill up that crock pot, and bring it to the Preserve. While we wait for all the contenders, you can wander the trails, get a feel for our education programs, and enjoy the natural beauty of Marguerite's legacy.

So, come on and join us at the preserve and throw down your best chili recipe! Prizes will be awarded for the top contenders. We'll provide the bowls, napkins, spoons and desserts. You bring whatever type beverage you prefer. Warm, cold, fruity, or hoppy.

There is nothing permanent except change. Heraclitus

**Marguerite Gahagan Nature Preserve  
Board of Directors**

Chairperson: Tom Dale  
Vice Chair: Troy Fairbanks  
Secretary: Julie Crick  
Dale Ekdorn  
Ken Elmore  
Sue Huffman  
Brian Hutchins  
Jalen Williams

Kate Gammicchia, Education Director  
(989) 275-3217 ~ info@GahaganNature.org  
Tracy Bosworth, Executive Director  
(989) 390-0903 ~ adm@GahaganNature.org  
**www.GahaganNature.org**  
(989) 275-3217

Board of Directors meet on the 2nd Monday of the month, 7 PM. All are welcome to attend.

**Gahagan Calendar  
2018/2019 Events**

**Sept-Oct:** Fall Field Trips at MGNP  
**Sept-May:** ELF Program-Area Schools  
**September 13:** MGNP at Fireman's Memorial 4PM  
**October 14:** Open House 1-4 PM at MGNP  
**Feb-April 2019:** Visiting Naturalist-Area Schools  
**April 27, 2019:** Spring Clean-up 9-noon  
Roscommon Chapter of Citizen's Climate Lobby meets at Gahagan at 5:30 PM the 4th Wednesday of the month.

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

**Donations and memorial contributions made to Gahagan Nature are noted in the spring 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. Did you know that it provides environmental education for many of the schools in the surrounding counties? Did you know that the 60-acre preserve is open to the public for hiking, snowshoeing, birding and many other uses? Did you know we have an asphalt and boardwalk trail that is wheelchair friendly? It travels through woods and wetlands and along the beginnings of Tank Creek. Interested in learning and helping? Please join us!

Yes, I/we want to join Marguerite Gahagan Nature preserve. Enclosed is my/our yearly membership.

\$20  Individual / \$30  Family / \$50  Organizational \$\_\_\_\_\_ Donation

I am making a donation of \$\_\_\_\_\_  in memory of,  in honor of \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

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

You can also donate, join, or renew your membership on-line at [www.GahaganNature.org](http://www.GahaganNature.org)

**The following Memberships were received between August 1, 2017 through July 31, 2018**

- |                                   |                                   |                          |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Debra Beehler                     | Caryl & Ed Fischer                | Susan & Jack Nanry       |
| John & Jeanne Bennick             | Amy Fuller                        | Theresa O'Brien          |
| Theresa Blamer                    | Mike & Kate Gammicchia            | Don & Suzanne Pennell    |
| Bob Borak                         | Jlm & Carol Garlo                 | Mike Petrucha            |
| Irene Borak                       | Bob & Sandy Gennrich              | Bruce & Betty Phillips   |
| Hans Jeff Borger                  | Don & Elaine Granzine             | Stewart Powrie           |
| Mark & Tracy Bosworth             | Gary Harms & Kathy VanderMollen   | Deb & John Rosczyk       |
| Jack & Joanne Bouck               | Hart Ford Lincoln                 | Ralph & Nancy Rucinski   |
| Sherwood & Sharon Boudeman        | Jack Hipchen                      | Bill & Patti Sarkella    |
| Gary & Sharon Boushelle           | Robert House, MD                  | Richard Seton            |
| Chuck & Linda Brick               | Susan Huffman                     | Sue Shoemaker            |
| Brian & Janet Carson              | Brian & Mary Hutchins             | Roy & Betty Spangler     |
| Pat & Karen Casady                | Rich Jaskowski & Kathleen Kaufman | Jay & Lorrene Spaulding  |
| Carole Chilton                    | Joyce & Jerry Johnston            | Pat & Vicki Springstead  |
| Martha Clapp                      | Lois Jones                        | Dan & Lisa Sutton        |
| Julie Crick                       | Mike Kent                         | Anna & Don Sylvester     |
| Phyllis & Tom Dale                | Art & Kathryn Ketelhut            | John & Amanda Theil      |
| Dominic & Jennifer Dale           | Anne & Russell Kidd               | Jim & Pam Tucker         |
| Troy Daniel                       | Rich & Cathy Koupal               | Bob & Dawn Tupper        |
| Dan Dawson                        | Diane Lippert                     | JoAnn VanderMollen       |
| Karen Demers                      | Joseph Madore                     | Mike & Kathy Wahl        |
| Dave & Penny Dilts                | Jim & Nilah Mason                 | Eleanor Washburn         |
| Stan & Patti Dombrowski           | Jeff & Millie Mellgren            | Jerry & Darlene Weinrich |
| Lynn Donaldson & Cameron Avery    | Steve & Pam Miller                | Bobbie & Jerry Werle     |
| Dale & Theresa Ekdorn             | Mitchell-McCarthy Family          | Karrie & Gabe Williams   |
| Ken Elmore                        | Tom & Patti Moreau                | Jalen Williams           |
| Troy Fairbanks & Nancy Martindale | JoAnn & Mike Muston               | Tom & Joyce Zeneberg     |
| Roxie Fernelius                   | Doug & Ginny Nagel                | Beth Zuker & David Vogel |

**Our environmental education programs are at the very heart of what we do at Gahagan. These programs would not exist without your support. Thank You.**

**We have BEES! By Tom Dale**

Standing a safe distance from "our" hive, we watched in total fascination as dozens of honeybees flew in and out. Alecia Catrell, all decked out in her beekeeper attire, enjoyed pointing out some subtle differences. Some bees carried tiny colored, usually yellow, "dots" of pollen attached to their hind legs. Alecia related and I totally agree that watching the activity at the doorway to the hive has a fascination that is a lot like sitting and watching a campfire.



The hive was established this spring with the purchase of a 3000 Italian bee colony along with its queen. The hive, its set-up and maintenance is provided by our neighbors from just up Maplehurst a few blocks, Alecia and Doug Catrell.

A few years ago, the Catrells decided to go into the honey bee hobby/business. Alecia became an avid bee keeper as a little girl working with her nature loving father. Her husband, Doug provides his skills as a builder by providing the hives and project support. The Catrells wondered if our preserve was interested in hosting a colony. There were some contrary issues considered by the board. For example, the site chosen, inside one of our deer enclosures, seemed to conflict with its original intention. Another issue raised was the possible conflict between native pollinator species with an "invasive" colony of honey bees. In the end, the educational value of having the bees over ruled the contrary issues.

So we have BEES! School classes will have an opportunity to learn about this fascinating project by stopping by the colony and experiencing life in the hive (from a safe distance). The bees establish a flight path to the hive's landing pad, so you never want to be standing there. A problem we have concerns having the hive in the woods which results in an obstructed flight path. Having an obstructed flight path means that the bees will need to expend more energy getting to and from the hive. Alecia and Doug will try to remove some of the obstructions to improve that pathway. We hope the bees do well in their new home and that we are able to learn more about the lives of honey bees. We are very grateful to Alecia and Doug for helping us with this great experiment.



## Gahagan Nature Camp 2018

Bugs, bugs and more bugs. It was Insectomania. Gahagan had 21 kids for our day camp this year. Fun was had by all; many games 'morphed' our group of kids into insects. Through discovery and investigation, they thought like entomologists, calculating stream and pond populations and created their own healthy stream.



Insects go through metamorphosis, so why not have the kids act like the four stages of this change? Our great group of kids had to pretend they were bugs with activities that took them through insect life cycles. They played as if they were an egg, larva, pupa and an adult butterflies and other insects. The larva looks dramatically different to the adult insect, and must go through a pupal stage before it develops into an adult in order to reproduce. They enjoyed learning how to dance like bees do in order to communicate with each other.

We collected and sorted bugs from our pond and compared them with specimens collected from the South Branch of the AuSable. Using hand-lenses, tweezers, wobbly fingers, and classification charts, anything that wriggled was sorted for classifying and counting. The type, quantity and variety of these macro-invertebrates are used to score the quality of the water system. We learned some insects make their home from small pebbles or tree parts, like a hollowed log, and live inside for protection. Some bugs float without any protection. These smart kiddos surmised bugs in the river have more variety and seemed to grow bigger than the bugs in our little pond. What great observations!

The children then became crime scene investigators to determine what may have killed a deer that has died on our Preserve. We looked at teeth, bones and fur for clues. Did the deer die from disease? From old age? From a human interaction such as a hunter? Or was it hit by a car? We can't be sure but the kids all had their thinking caps on and each had a theory of how it died.

Rounding out the Nature Camp experience are two honored activities: T-shirt makin' and froggin' in the pond. One exuberant camper discovered why frogs love Marguerite's pond...Slippery banks and a marly, mucky bottom. Releasing frogs is nearly as much fun as catching them. All in all, a fabulous way to end the week.



### Astronomy Night

Thursday, July 19th presented us with a beautiful cloudless evening for viewing the northern sky. There were literally tens of thousands in attendance. Mosquitos, that is. And of course, stars. Over a dozen families joined in as well. Tom Dale had our large Celestron telescope set up across the road from our parking lot to have a look. As the sky darkened, Venus became visible in the western sky and the moon was bright and full overhead to the south. Soon we were able to observe Saturn and Jupiter, with moons and rings clearly visible.

**Thank You to Ron Wiltse of NuCraft Metal Products for shutting off all exterior lights, making a dark sky viewing possible for us.**

AuSable River  
Watershed Monitoring  
Saturday,  
September 8, 2018

Contact Tom Dale  
at [thdale@core.com](mailto:thdale@core.com)  
for details about volunteering for this important project.

## Environmental Learning for the Future

Project ELF, which stands for Environmental Learning for the Future, is an award-winning environmental education for elementary-aged children program developed by the Vermont Institute of Natural Science. ELF has been a very popular and successful program for getting parents and grandparents into elementary classrooms for over 30 years. The ELF program is in hundreds of schools around the country, including four in our area. Roscommon Elementary, Roscommon Middle School, Collins Elementary and Houghton Lake Middle School. ELF program is also being used by home-school groups within Roscommon County.

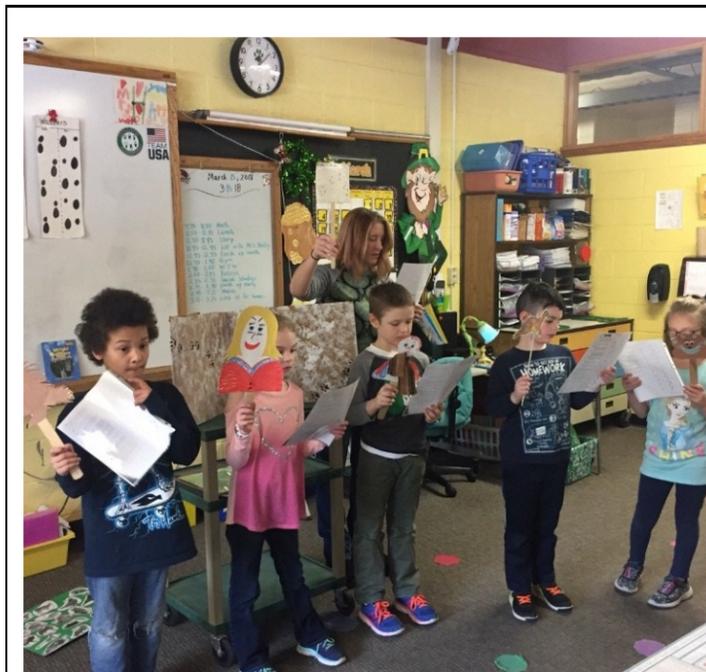
ELF encompasses five ecological concepts: Habitats, Cycles, Adaptations, Designs of Nature, and Earth and Sky. Each ELF school focuses on one concept each year. Marguerite Gahagan Nature Preserve has assembled approximately 80 ELF teaching kits to cover the 5 concepts. Each ELF teaching kit contains detailed lesson plans, a puppet show, manipulatives, posters and hands on activities specific to that kit's subject.

ELF provides a great way for volunteers to get involved with the classroom. ELF volunteers can attend an hour-long training workshop every month or they can simply review the lesson guide on their own. They will review the month's teaching guide with each other and rehearse the information and activities with Gahagan's Education Director. Afterward, volunteers coordinate with the teacher(s) of their chosen classroom(s) and schedule a date to arrive in class to deliver the hour-long presentation. Since lesson plans and teaching supplies are provided in each ELF kit, the program requires a very minor commitment from its volunteers to be successful (~2 hours/month).

Additional parent, grandparent or community volunteers are always welcome. Volunteers are the lifeblood of this program. Please consider sharing your time with the youth of our communities. For more information, please contact Kate Gammicchia at [info@GahaganNature.com](mailto:info@GahaganNature.com) or call (989) 390-7933



Roscommon volunteer, Jackie Bertsch, along with students from Mrs. Nester's classroom prepare to perform the puppet show from "Snug in the Snow" of the Habitats theme. The activities in the kit stress that many animals that are active in winter find warmth, protection and even food beneath a blanket of snow.



Michele Hasty, Houghton Lake ELF volunteer, leads the students in performing the puppet show from the Tracks and Traces kit from the Designs of Nature theme. Track patterns can provide a glimpse into the lives of animals whose actions are otherwise hidden from us. Animals flee. Tracks remain to be examined, measured, followed.

### ELF Schedule for 2018-2019

#### Roscommon: Cycles Theme

Kits: Insect Lives, Meet a Tree, Seed Dispersal, Fly Away or Stay, Galls. Winter Twigs, Bird Songs, Inside a Flower, Dandelions

#### Houghton Lake: Earth and Sky Theme

Kits: Finding Your Way, Erosion, Pebbles and Rocks, Breath of Life, Sound Symphony, Water, Wind and Clouds, Sun Power

#### Home School Groups: Designs of Nature Theme

Kits: Spiders and Webs, Variations on a Leaf, Cones, Snow and More, Tracks and Traces, Winter Weeds, Camouflage, Honeybees

*"A kindergartener cannot listen to an adult for two minutes, but they can listen to a puppet all morning long, and ask to hear the same thing again and again."*

Tom Dale  
Naturalist and Puppet Master

## Controlling Knapweed at Gahagan

By Brian Hutchins

You've certainly seen fields of spotted knapweed (*centaurea stoebe*). It is a plant that likes open fields and by late July it flies its pink-purple flowers on its gray-green stems well into late summer. Knapweed, an invasive species that came from central Europe and spread to the US, can take over open fields and loves our poor, sandy soils. It nudges out native plants reducing diversity. In recent years it found its way to Gahagan Nature Preserve and by this year had grabbed a strong foothold into our parking lot and adjacent flower beds. If you are not sure what knapweed is, take a look at the lawns and fields around the Roscommon Schools. It is abundant.



This summer we began an effort to control it on our site. Fortunately, forest and woodlands cover most of the preserve. Shade is not friendly to this plant, so it is not likely to be found on most of Gahagan's 60 acres. Because the edge of the parking lot is relatively small, our control strategy is to physically remove it, plant-by-plant. We dig out the plant, removing the visible portion plus the tap root. We have removed 5-6 trash cans this year.

Knapweed is a perennial but it spreads primarily by seed. Each plant can produce 1000 seeds. The seeds can stay viable for five to eight years. This makes it important to remove the plants before the flowers turn to seed. Wind doesn't blow the seeds very far. Seeds move by animals, people and vehicle traffic - and, of course the parking area gets traffic and snowplowing to help its distribution. The goal right now is to reduce the population to a manageable point - cutting next year's number by half of this year. It will take a few years to reach the realistic goal of "only finding a few plants in a season." With the neighboring compost area and regular car traffic, it's unlikely that we will ever be free of knapweed.

Does your yard have a knapweed problem? For more information on solving it look at the online available extension bulletins below. Cut-and-paste each of these references into your search engine and the article link should pop to the top of the results. For large areas, extension programs suggest mowing before flowers can seed. This will help stop the spread but the tap root will likely sprout back in following years. There are some herbicides that have helped farmers with the problem. We don't use them at Gahagan. Also, knapweed does produce a toxin that helps it squeeze out other plants. This can be an irritant when it is handled. Wearing gloves when handling or pulling the plant is highly recommended.

Brendan Carson and Douglas Landis. *Biology and Management of Spotted Knapweed in Michigan*. Department of Entomology, Michigan State University, East Lansing MI.

Brendon Panke, Ryan deRegnier and Mark Renz. *Management of invasive Plants in Wisconsin: Spotted Knapweed (A3924-13)*. University of Wisconsin-Extension, Madison, WI.

### Ad infinitum

*The vermin only tease and pinch  
Their foes superior by an inch.  
So, naturalists observe, a flea  
Has smaller fleas that on him prey;  
And these have smaller still to bite 'em,  
And so proceed ad infinitum.  
Thus every poet, in his kind,  
Is bit by him that comes behind*<sup>[1]</sup>

17th-century writer Jonathan Swift  
*On Poetry: a Rhapsody* (1733)

### 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 currently have, we need to grow as well. So spread the word by sharing this newsletter!

Individual memberships are just \$20 per year and family membership dues are \$30. 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 even make a donation 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!

## 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."



## Earth Day 2018

By Kate Gammicchia

MGNP had a great turn out for our combination Earth Day/ Clean Up on Saturday, April 21. We divided and conquered the day with work and fun. Members from the Roscommon Chapter of the Citizen's Climate Lobby, Girl Scout Troop 50945, Headwaters Conservatory and DNR Forestry, along with our faithful and trusty Board members all pitched in to spruce up the buildings and clear some trails to ready the preserve for spring field trips and summer visitors.

In the morning hours, the adults dusted, vacuumed and cleaned the windows of the cabin, flushed out the garage and performed some much needed maintenance on the trails of our beautiful 60 acres. We had Girl Scout Troop 50945 helping with field trip preparation, cleaning up the indoor classroom's tables and chairs and policing the grounds around the cabin. The outdoor work was a bit chilly and difficult, as we still had a fair amount of snow on the ground from a particularly wicked late April snowstorm.

After a warming potluck lunch, our friends from HeadWaters Land Conservatory provided a variety of hands on learning stations for the kids and adults alike. These interactive activities and demonstrations drove home the message that we need to double down our efforts to reduce, reuse and recycle.

Michigan Conservation District Forester Diane Bomer wrapped up our full day by leading a guided forestry hike through both upland and low land areas of the preserve. Diane spoke of many types of trees and leaves, and focused on how as a landowner, one can improve the health of your property.

We greatly appreciate the help and comradery from the many volunteers who participated, pitched in and created such a successful day.



*An acorn falls...  
A hazelnut breaks its husk...  
Busy tail flicks on a tree branch.  
Gather, hunt, store.  
Color must fade...  
Color must go as jewel-leaves flutter in their Autumn dance.  
Flutter and fall, a sweet-scented woods carpet,  
Leaving bare branches soon to be gentled with winter's snows.*