

Thumb Land Conservancy NEWS

June 30, 2020

Fundraiser Sale

Blue Water Indigenous Alliance

Saturday, July 4, noon to 6:00 PM

M-25 and Jeddo Road, Burtchville

The Blue Water Indigenous Alliance is holding a fundraiser sale at Jeddo Road and M-25 this Saturday, July 4, from noon to 6:00 PM. The event will be held in the triangle between M-25, Jeddo Road, and Lakeshore Road in Burtchville. They will be selling food and crafts roadside and are asking for donations of food and other items to sell. Proceeds will go towards the purchase of birch bark to complete a wigwam building project at the Odezibi Cultural Center. The TLC will be there. Please join us, enjoy the company, and maybe gain some indigenous knowledge. Be prepared for a refreshing dip in Lake Huron.



Garlic Mustard Pulls

Dead End Woods Sanctuary

Fort Gratiot Township, Saint Clair County

Our Garlic Mustard removal in the Dead End Woods Sanctuary this May was very successful. Garlic Mustard is all but eliminated across the southwest of the sanctuary, and we hit it hard to the east where a large patch has slowly spread. It now looks like the west half of the sanctuary is largely free of Garlic Mustard. Thanks again to our volunteers, especially TLC member Bob Haas, TLC member Pete Catlos, TLC member Brian Davis and his gang from Christians for a New Tomorrow church (<https://cantministries.org/>),

helpful neighbor Howard Parish, and TLC board members Kay Cumbow, Scott Ferguson, Dottie Craig, and Cheryl Collins. Thanks again to Jimmy Rankin's Meat Market on Lapeer Road in Port Huron Township (jimrankinmeats.com) for donating hotdogs.



What to do with all the bags of Garlic Mustard was an issue our first few years. We can't leave it piled in the woods because it will still set seed a few weeks after being uprooted. It didn't seem right that all of this organic material should go to a landfill either. We have since found that if picked before early to mid June, it is best to take the bags home, let the Garlic Mustard decompose in the trash bags for a few weeks, then empty the bags and let the plant material dry out. The best place to do this is in a garden where it will add to the topsoil. There is little or no risk of seed development or survival with this method. Ideally, the material is composted. Sometimes, we burn it so at least we are getting nutrients from the ash. Another benefit is that we can re-use the trash bags rather than sending them to a landfill. What to do with Garlic Mustard picked in June when the seed pods have developed is still a conundrum. The best thing would be to leave it piled on the site it came from and go back later and burn it if possible. A helpful neighbor will sometimes do this for us.

Southern Lake Huron Coastal Park 42-Acre Bidwell Preserve Burtchville Township, Saint Clair County

The Bidwell property acquisition and Southern Lake Huron Coastal Park project continued to receive grant funding in May and June. On May 22, the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan (<https://cfsem.org/>) awarded a grant of \$50,000 through the Wilson Legacy Design and Access Fund. We are very grateful for this grant. Among other focus areas, the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation (<https://www.ralphcwilsonjrfoundation.org/>) supports physically active lifestyles through trails, parks, and green design. Ralph Wilson was a Detroit native and the founding owner of the Buffalo Bills football team. In 2015, the Wilson Foundation made a grant to create a permanent legacy endowment fund with the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan (<https://cfsem.org/special->

[opportunities/ralph-c-wilson-jr-legacy-funds/](#)). Specifically, the Wilson Legacy Design and Access Fund supports projects in southeast Michigan that serve to increase the walkability and bikeability of local communities and/or increase outdoor recreational activities within the region. Both the Community Foundation and Wilson Foundation determined that the Bidwell property acquisition and Southern Lake Huron Coastal Park project will support these goals.

Our fundraising continued through June with new individual donations and a very generous donation of \$20,000 from the Franklin H. and Nancy S. Moore Donor Advised Fund of the Community Foundation of Saint Clair County (<https://www.stclairfoundation.org/>). The fund effectively matched our previous grant from the foundation. As many of you know, the Moore family of Saint Clair has a long history of philanthropy in the area. Until this donation, our prospects for completing the fundraising were unclear. The Moore Fund donation was a real relief.

Our sincere thanks to the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan and Moore family for their support of the Southern Lake Huron Coastal Park project. Although we have basically completed fundraising for the Bidwell property acquisition, we continue to seek funding and donations of material and labor for park and trail construction.

For more information, see our Project page at:

<http://www.thumbland.org/projects.html>

Project summary at:

<http://www.thumbland.org/SouthernLakeHuronCoastalParkSummary02152020.pdf>

Major project funders page at:

<http://www.thumbland.org/ProjectFundersDetailedDescription.pdf>

Help Us Transplant Purple-Flowering Raspberry



We currently have a rather unique opportunity to save some special native plants. A small site is being developed adjacent to the Presbyterian Villages of Michigan, Lake Huron Woods senior living facility in Fort Gratiot. A new facility is being developed by the Region 7 Area Agency on Aging based in Bay City to assist senior citizens with health care. The development will occur on about 3 acres of forested beach ridge and swale landscape.

The Area Agency on Aging director gave the TLC permission to transplant Purple-flowering Raspberry and other native plant species from the site before they begin clearing and said they will also make a donation to the TLC for our work. The plants will be moved to nearby preserves in the same landscape. As you should know from reading the promotional material for our Southern Lake Huron Coastal Park project, Purple-flowering Raspberry is essentially the Lower Peninsula's equivalent of the Upper Peninsula's Thimbleberry, being so closely related that they apparently hybridize. Purple-flowering Raspberry is very uncommon, with native populations recorded from only 7 coastal counties in Michigan, mostly along Lake Huron and largely restricted to forested dune and swale habitat near the shoreline. Our transplanting work will need to be completed soon. If you are interested in helping, please contact us.

2020 Event Schedule

The TLC plans to participate in several events through the summer and fall, assuming the COVID-19 virus doesn't shut things down. If you are interested in representing the TLC or have suggestions for other events, please contact us.

Date	Event	Location and Time
July 10-12	Lavender Festival	Indigo Lavender Farm, 631 North Van Dyke Road (M-53), Imlay City, 10:00-7:00 Friday-Saturday, 12:00-5:00 Sunday
August 01-02	Lavender Festival	
August 02	Blue Water Sturgeon Festival	Fort Gratiot Light Station, 2800 Omar Street, Port Huron, 5:00 – 9:00 PM
August 15	Port Huron Pow Wow	Fort Gratiot Light Station, 2800 Omar Street, Port Huron
September 13	Clyde Historical Society, Summer Festival	Bill Bearss Park, northwest corner of M-136 and Wildcat Road, Clyde Township, St. Clair County

Summer and Fall Stewardship

Following is a rough schedule of our planned stewardship activities for the rest of 2020. We are planning to work at the North Street Station and our new Loznak Sanctuary through July and August, but we are simply waiting for the temperatures to cool off a little. It feels like we might be waiting until November at this point. If you are interested in helping, please contact us.

Date	Activity	Location
July-August	mow, clean-up	North Street Station, North Street, Saint Clair County
July-August	post signs, clean-up	Loznak Sanctuary, Marysville, Saint Clair County
August-September	remove invasive Japanese Barberry	Algonquin Power Deerfield Preserve, Huron Township, Huron County
August-September	cut trees and shrubs	Fish Point State Wildlife Area, Bradford Road near Saginaw Bay, Wisner Township, Tuscola County

August-September	assist owner with invasive buckthorn removal	Koester Conservation Easement, Fort Gratiot Township, Saint Clair County
September-October	repair siding, paint	North Street Station, North Street, Saint Clair County
September-October	clean-up, install barriers	Loznak Sanctuary, Marysville, Saint Clair County
September-October	collect and sow milkweed and prairie seed	Gerrits Sanctuary, Ira Township, Saint Clair County
October-November	burn invasive Reed and Reed Canary Grass	Springborn Wetland Mitigation Bank, East China Township, Saint Clair County
November-December	post new signs	Dead End Woods Sanctuary, Fort Gratiot Township, Saint Clair County
November-December	post new signs	Peltier Beach Ridge Sanctuary, Fort Gratiot Township, Saint Clair County
November-December	post new signs	Bertha's Haven Sanctuary, Fort Gratiot Township, Saint Clair County

TLC Member Profile

Connie Bates

Clyde Township, Saint Clair County

Connie Bates has been an active member of the TLC for 4 years, participating with us in board meetings, the Saint Clair County Earth Fair, the Port Huron State Game Area Garlic Mustard pulls, and a partner in protecting the North Street Station. Connie is the President of the Clyde Historical Society, a partner organization of the TLC.

Connie's love of history and nature came about in her teen years. She felt very fortunate to live in Ruby with the Port Huron State Game Area right next-door. It was the place to go have fun and spend the day. She was also fortunate to have a horse and a group of friends that shared her interests. Connie's favorite childhood memories are horseback riding through the woods, not always knowing where she was, but letting the adults take the lead. Her horse always seemed to know when they were getting close to Mill Creek and the Black River. Those days were such an adventure. She remembers, as a kid, seeing foundations of the Old Ruby settlement and it was like traveling back in time. Just being so deep in the woods, with the big trees towering above and patches of forest wildflowers, she now realizes how lucky she was to experience it.

In the late 1980's, Connie applied for a job helping a woman with her household chores. She lived less than 3 miles away, so she thought, "How convenient. Close to home. Not many hours a week. This will be perfect." Little did Connie know that this woman lived at a nature preserve, and to her astonishment, had established many preserves all across Michigan. Most of you can guess who this was; none other than Bertha Daubendiek, founder and director of the Michigan Nature Association, who lived along the Mill Creek in Kenockee Township for many years. Working part-time for Bertha Daubendiek opened a new door for Connie. Before meeting Bertha, she hadn't given any thought to the different species of plants; whether they were native, invasive, rare, or whatever. Bertha opened her eyes to the world of nature. Oddly, her first little assignment

was to pick the heads off of all the dandelions in Bertha's yard. Did Bertha make dandelion wine? Connie's first impression was that Bertha was one interesting lady. But soon, Connie's job was to pack Bertha's supplies for her adventures and jaunts across Michigan to find particular rare plant species. When Bertha returned, she would discuss her findings and Connie would help press her plant specimens in newspaper for drying. Connie feels very fortunate to have worked for Bertha. She learned a lot from her. Bertha was an extraordinary lady and Connie gained a greater appreciation of nature through her wisdom.

In 2015, Connie was invited to hear a speaker at a Clyde Historical Society meeting. Since she enjoyed researching her family history for years, she decided to attend. Long story short, after one meeting, she became a member of the Clyde Historical Society, and after another meeting, became the Treasurer. The Clyde Historical Society had established itself as a non-profit organization and had acquired the old Clyde Township hall as its meeting place. By the time she joined, the hard work of fundraising to acquire the hall and upgrading it was completed. But, as with many groups, the members were getting older, some passed away, and there is always need for new members. Once again, she was learning and doing new things. Learning about history, in any form, is something Connie finds very interesting, rewarding, and wants to encourage.

In 2016, Bill and Cheryl Collins of the Thumb Land Conservancy attended a Clyde Historical Society meeting to discuss the recent acquisition of the old North Street post office and rail station by the conservancy. Bill had been acquainted with Janet Kruger of the historical society for many years. Bill and Cheryl discussed the shared interests of the conservancy and historical society, proposing a partnership to restore and protect the North Street property. With both groups having a mutual interest in preserving the land and its story in our region, it was natural that we should join forces. Since then, the CHS and TLC have helped each other out, working together on the North Street property, the Saint Clair County Earth Fair, the CHS annual summer fundraiser, Silver Trails Scout Reservation, and the annual Garlic Mustard removal in the Port Huron State Game Area.

It was at the first 2017 Garlic Mustard pull in the Port Huron State Game Area, down on the beautiful forested slopes of the Black River valley, that Connie, CHS President Jim Bearss, and TLC Director Bill Collins discussed the future of our groups - What was needed to keep our organizations successful; How to keep it interesting; How to get new members, and so on. That's when Jim Bearss asked Connie if she was interested in being the President of CHS. It's been 3 years since she said yes. She is still learning and the CHS has had new events and gained new members. Connie is optimistic for the future of Clyde Historical Society and excited about the opportunities to work together with the Thumb Land Conservancy. Having a mutual friendship and interest only makes sense in preserving land and its history for us now and for future generations.

Note from Bill: Thank you Connie! You are very much appreciated. I look forward to our continued work with the Clyde Historical Society.



Connie Bates, with a cicada on her finger. Of course.

2020 TLC Membership

With your membership, the TLC is better enabled to protect important natural areas in our region. We offer three membership levels as shown below: Individual \$25, Family \$30, and Business \$100. Members will receive our e-mail news. Some of you are members based on your previous donations, volunteer efforts, or other help. You can also make donations in honor or memory of someone or something. For donations of \$100 or more, your name will be listed on our web site. For larger donations, please contact us for details. You may print and complete the form below. Make checks payable to "Thumb Land Conservancy". Mail checks and forms to: Thumb Land Conservancy, 4975 Maple Valley Road, Marlette, Michigan 48453

To download and print the membership form, click [HERE](#).

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