

Thumb Land Conservancy News

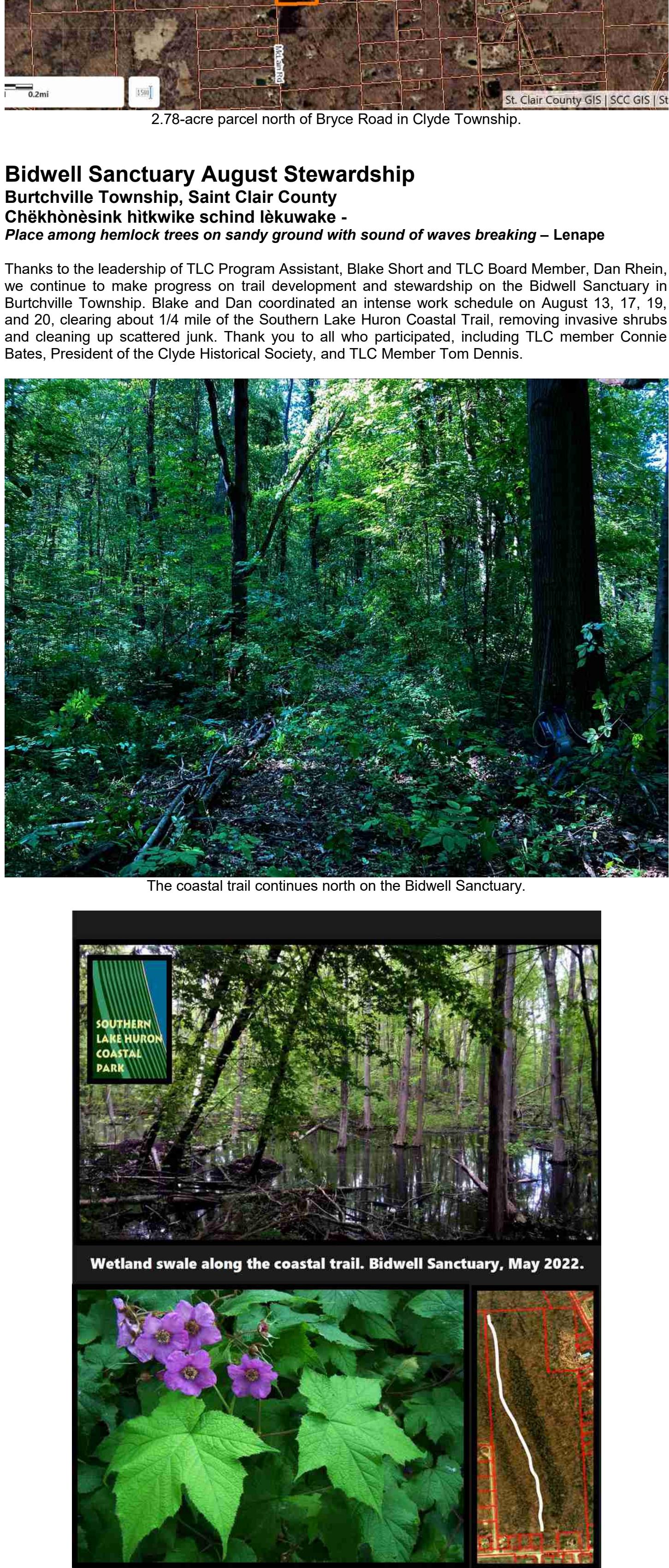
2022 September 12

Two New TLC Preserves

Kimball and Clyde Townships, Saint Clair County

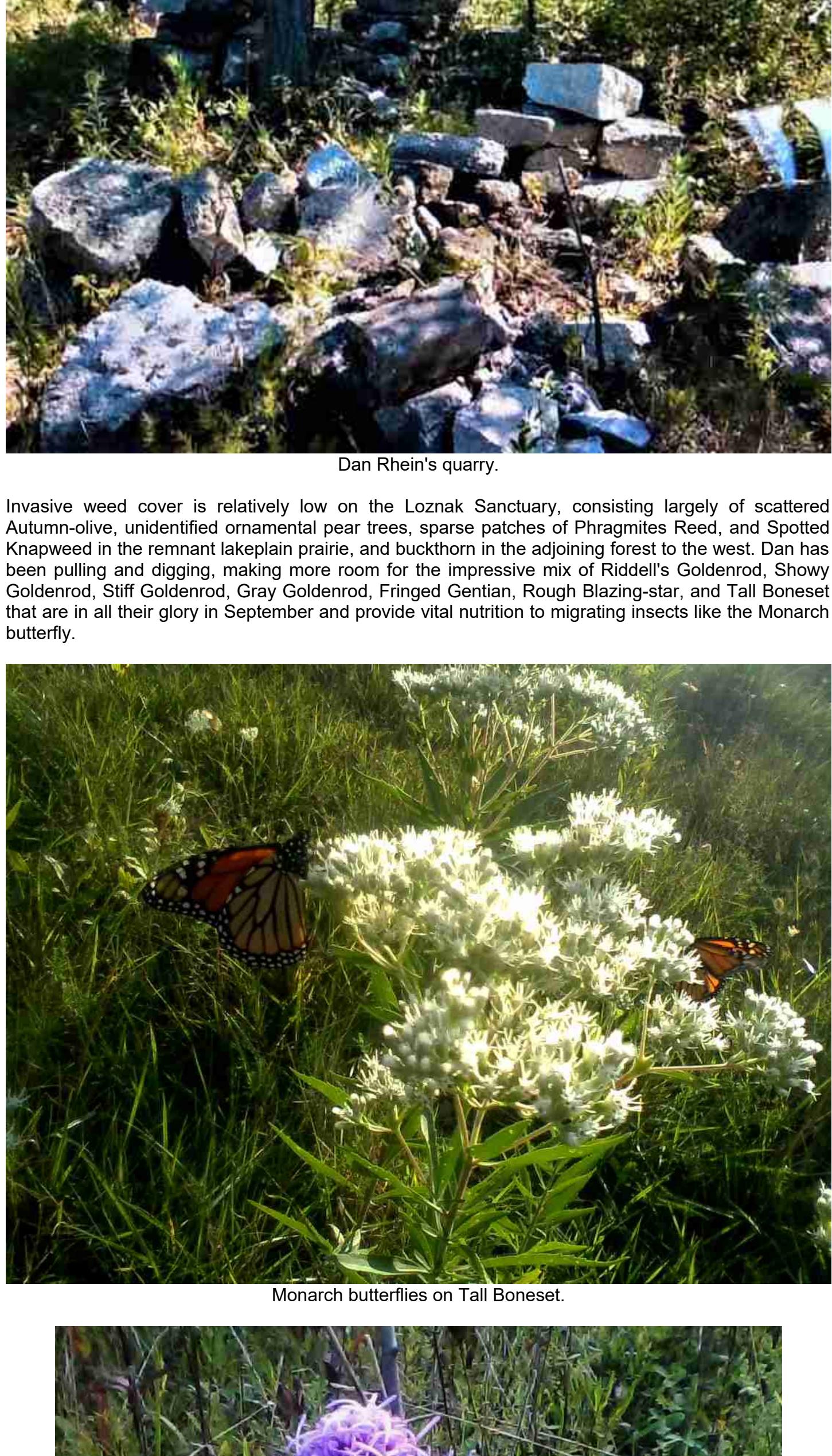
The TLC acquired two new preserves in the August 11 State land auction for Saint Clair, Sanilac, Lapeer, and Macomb Counties. They aren't big, but contain valuable habitat and were part of the Port Huron Game Area. The state of Michigan determined that these were surplus parcels. We are thankful that we can keep them in the public domain.

The largest parcel we acquired is 8.5 acres of forest at the southwest corner of Flinchbaugh Road and Barth Road in Kimball Township, Saint Clair County, outlined in yellow on the following aerial photograph. The parcel is completely forested and located in an area of well-documented Painted Trillium occurrence, a Michigan Endangered wildflower that is now recorded only from Saint Clair County in all of Michigan.



We also acquired a 2.78-acre parcel north of Bryce Road in Clyde Township, Saint Clair County, the narrow strip outlined in yellow near the top of the following aerial photograph. This parcel is also forested and located in a known Painted Trillium area. It is located adjacent to the Port Huron State Game Area (PHSGA) and is only several hundred feet west of our Bob Putze conservation easement.

The parcel is also located only about a half mile north of the Michigan Nature Association Mary Stallins Ray Memorial Plant Preserve. As shown, there is still a lot of State land in the area, all part of the Port Huron State Game Area, but all at risk of expanding development and other land-use. The AMC - Mid Michigan Materials Burgess sand pit is just several hundred feet to the north of our new preserve (see the lake to the north) where Ruby Tree was, and they own other nearby parcels. We must be diligent if we want to protect the Port Huron State Game Area for the long-term.

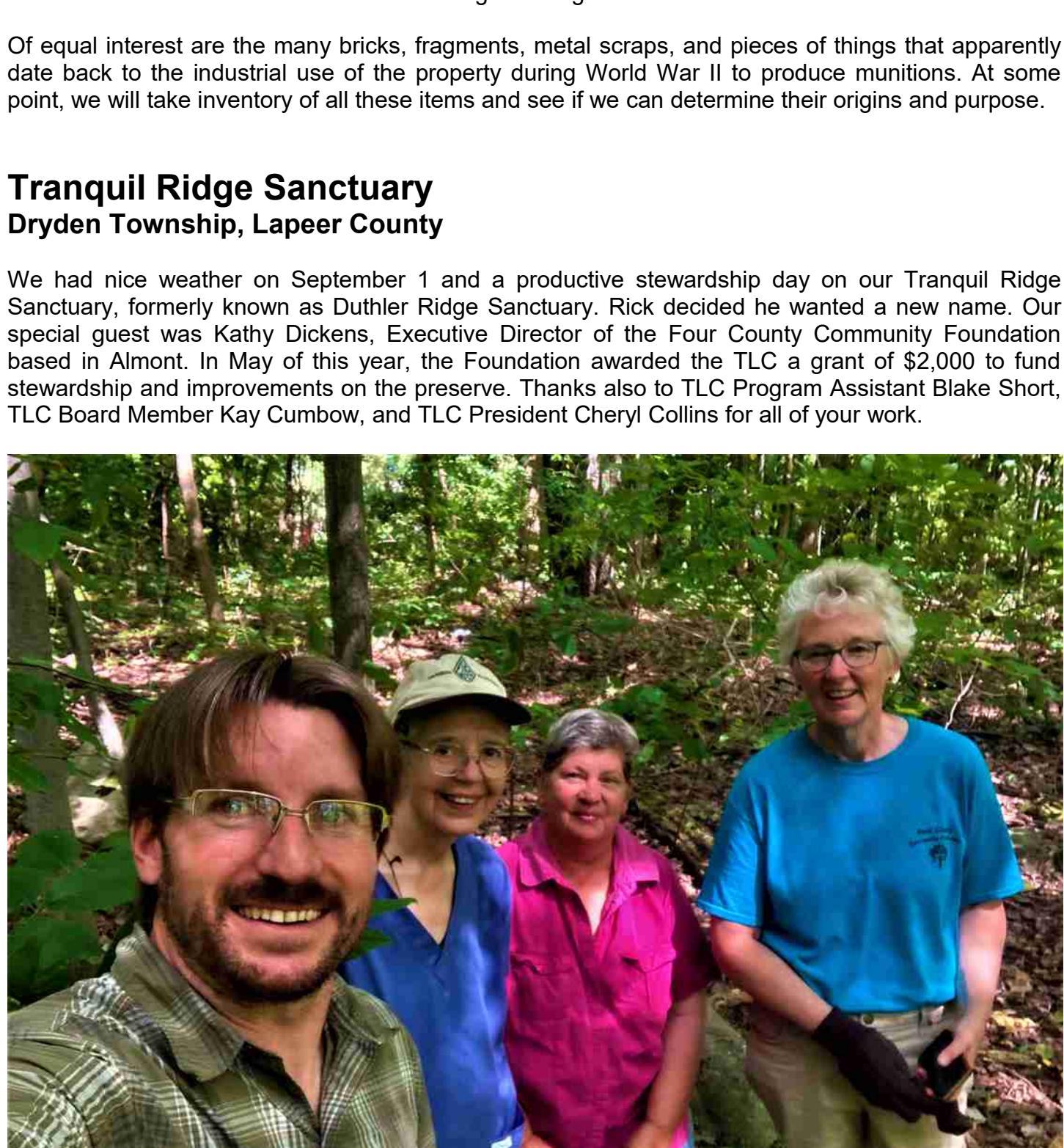


Bidwell Sanctuary August Stewardship

Burchville Township, Saint Clair County

Chékhónem hemtikwike tschind lèkuwaké - Place among hemtikwike trees on sandy ground with sound of waves breaking - Lenape

Thanks to the leadership of TLC Program Assistant, Blake Short and TLC Board Member, Dan Rhein, we continue to make progress on trail development and stewardship on the Bidwell Sanctuary in Burchville Township. Blake and Dan coordinated an intense work session on August 13, 17, 19, and 20, clearing about 1/4 mile of the Southern Lake Huron Coastal Trail, removing invasive shrubs and cleaning up scattered junk. Thank you to all who participated, including TLC member Connie Bates, President of the Clyde Historical Society, and TLC Member Tom Dennis.



The coastal trail continues north on the Bidwell Sanctuary.



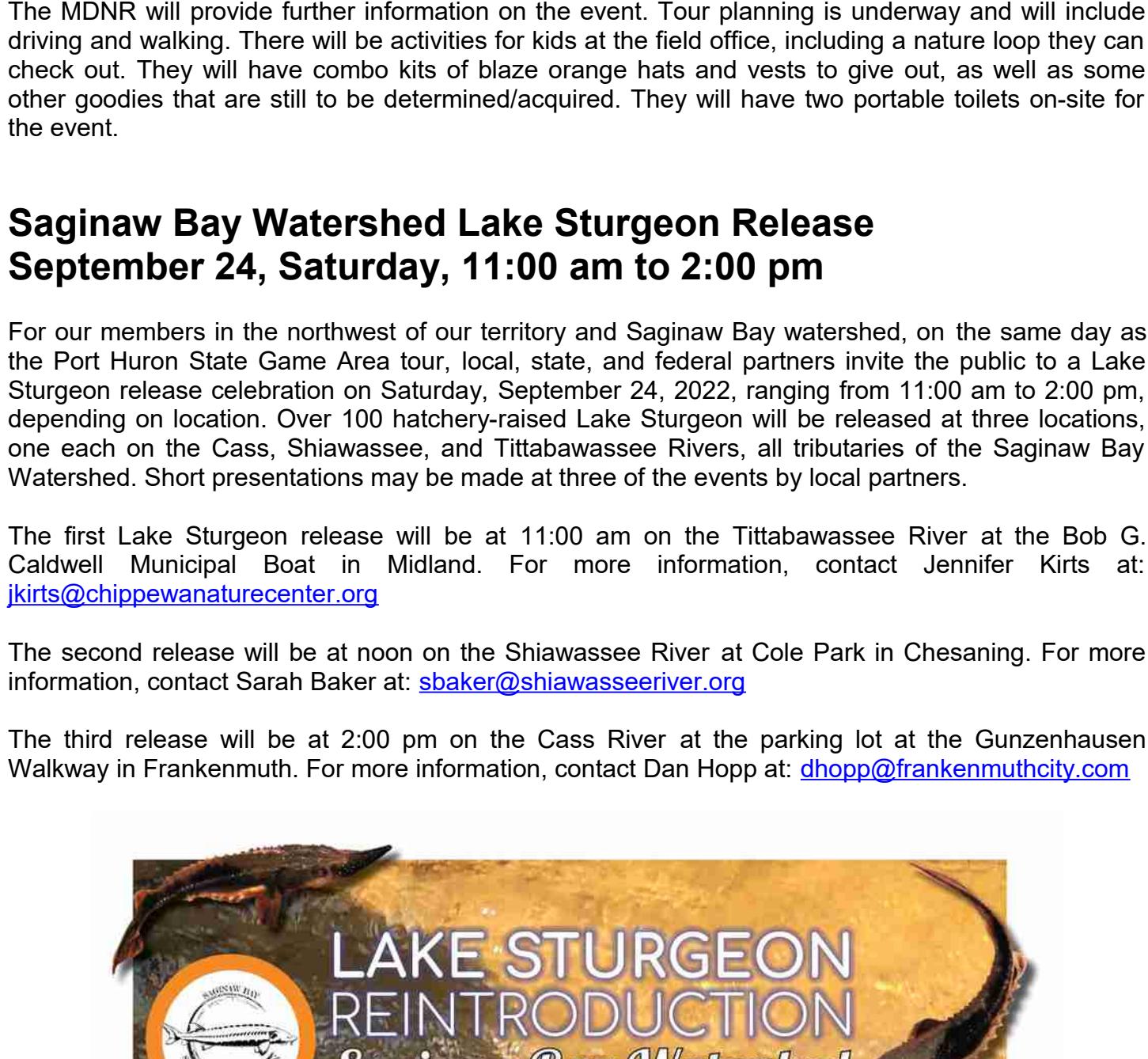
For equal interest are the many bricks, fragments, metal scraps, and pieces of things that apparently date back to the industrial use of the property during World War II to produce munitions. At some point, we will take inventory of all these items and see if we can determine their origins and purpose.

Loznak Sanctuary Stewardship

Marysville, Saint Clair County

Yáñhdawá' yeh de yenhtá' iyaen' - The Prairie is Near the River - Huron - Wendat

Thanks to the consistent "slow haste" this summer of TLC Board Member Dan Rhein, the Loznak Sanctuary is shaping up and new things are being discovered. Dan has essentially adopted the Sanctuary, removing invasive weeds, cleaning up debris along the railroad spur, digging up buried material and industrial artifacts, and restoring soil and native vegetation cover. About once a week, Dan updates us on his latest work and his observations.



Dan Rhein's quarry.

Invasive weed cover is relatively low on the Loznak Sanctuary, consisting largely of scattered Autumn-olive, unidentified ornamental pear trees, sparse patches of Phragmites Reed, and Spotted Knapweed in the remnant lakebed prairie, and buckthorn in the adjoining forest to the west. Dan has been pulling and digging, making more room for the impressive mix of Riddell's Goldenrod, Showy Goldenrod, Stiff Goldenrod, Gray Goldenrod, Fringed Gentian, Rough Blazing-star, and Tall Boneset that are in all their glory in September and provide vital nutrition to migrating insects like the Monarch butterfly.

The MDNR will provide further information on the event. Tour planning is underway and will include driving and walking. There will be activities for kids at the field office, including a nature loop they can check out. They will have combo kits of blaze orange prints, gender identity signs, age, height, weight, disability safety belts, sexual orientation, marital status, family size, and veteran status.

Saginaw Bay Watershed Lake Sturgeon Release

September 24, Saturday, 11:00 am to 2:00 pm

For our members in the northwest of our territory and Saginaw Bay watershed, on the same day as the Port Huron State Game Area tour, local, state, and federal partners invite the public to a Lake Sturgeon release celebration on Saturday, September 24, 2022, ranging from 11:00 am to 2:00 pm, depending on location. Over 500 hatchery-raised Lake Sturgeon will be released at three locations, one each on the Cass, Shiawassee, and Tittabawassee Rivers, all tributaries of the Saginaw Bay Watershed. Short presentations may be made at three of the events by local partners.

The first Lake Sturgeon release will be at 11:00 am on the Tittabawassee River at the Bob G. Caldwell Municipal Boat in Midland. For more information, contact Jennifer Kirts at kirts@chipewannaturecenter.org.

The second release will be at noon on the Shiawassee River at Cole Park in Chesaning. For more information, contact Sarah Baker at sbaker@shiawasseeriver.org.

The third release will be at 2:00 pm on the Cass River at the parking lot at the Gunzenhausen Walkway in Frankenmuth. For more information, contact Dan Hopp at dhopf@frankenmuthcity.com.

Join local, state, and federal partners for the reintroduction of juvenile sturgeon into the Saginaw Bay watershed. Come join the fun at these locations:

- 11 a.m. Tittabawassee River, Bob G. Caldwell Municipal Boat Launch, Midland, MI
- 12 p.m. Shiawassee River, Cole Park, Chesaning, MI
- 2 p.m. Cass River, Gunzenhausen Walkway, Frankenmuth, MI

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Lake Sturgeon are a unique Great Lakes species. They can grow up to 7 feet long and can weigh up to 300 pounds. The slow-maturing fish do not begin reproducing until they are 15 to 20 years old. Once abundant in many Michigan lakes and rivers, Lake Sturgeon were nearly eradicated due to over-fishing and habitat loss, particularly the destruction of rocky reefs in rivers that sturgeon and other native fish species use for spawning. In recent years, many partnerships and projects are working to restore sturgeon to a self-sustaining level in Michigan. This work includes restoring sturgeon habitat, reintroducing sturgeon into their native ranges, and raising awareness and appreciation for this unique species.

The Lake Sturgeon release events are supported by a variety of partners including City of Frankenmuth, Chippewa Nature Center, Flint River Watershed Coalition, Friends of the Shiawassee River, Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Michigan Sea Grant, Michigan State University Department of Fisheries and Wildlife, MSU Extension, Saginaw Bay Watershed Initiative Network, Sturgeon for Tomorrow – Black Lake Chapter, The Conservation Fund, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and more. For more information about the Lake Sturgeon release and restoration efforts on the Saginaw Bay, see the following web sites:

<https://www.michiganseagrant.org/event/sturgeon-to-be-released-into-saginaw-bay-watershed-saturday-september-24/>

<https://www.saginawbaysturgeon.org/home>

Bidwell Sanctuary Information Kiosk Southern Lake Huron Coastal Park

Chékhónésink hitkwike schind lèkuwake -
Place among hemlock trees on sandy ground with sound of waves breaking - Lenape

The TLC is working on a design for an information kiosk to be located near the coastal trail entrance on the Bidwell Sanctuary in Burtchville Township. We are considering various designs and materials, using locally harvested wooden posts, sand stone fragments left on the Sanctuary from the former residence, and a sheet metal roof. The kiosk portion of the structure will be roundish with panels to post information about the Bidwell Sanctuary, the ancient beach ridge (or dune) and swale ecosystem along Lake Huron, the Southern Lake Huron Coastal Park and Trail, project supporters, and the TLC.

In April of this year, the TLC was awarded a grant for \$4,500 from the Bioregion Reparation Fund, a donor-advised fund established by the Full Circle EcoHouse of Prayer of Port Huron and administered by the Community Foundation of Saint Clair County. Sister Veronica Blake and Sister Concepcion González, who are well-known members of the Blue Water area environmental community, initiated the Bioregion Reparation Fund in 2018 in order to carry on their legacy of ecological education, spirituality, and restoration in the bioregion defined by Lake Huron, the Saint Clair River and the Black River watersheds.

Thank you again to the Full Circle EcoHouse of Prayer and administrators of the Bioregion Reparation Fund.

CYO Girls Camp Forester Township, Sanilac County

Back in May of this year, the pending sale of the Catholic Youth Organization (CYO) Girls Camp south of Forester came to our attention. The camp has been used for decades by the CYO of the Archdiocese of Detroit as a summer camp for girls. It is just over 24 acres with about 1,000 feet of shoreline on Lake Huron, mature forest, dune and swale landscape, and a stream that runs through the middle of the camp. There are several buildings including a central hall and cabins. The CYO plans to sell this camp and continue their program for girls and boys at the CYO Boys Camp south of Port Sanilac.

FOR SALE
24 ACRES LAND | ±1,000 FEET OF LAKE FRONTAGE

FRIEDMAN
REAL ESTATE

CATHOLIC YOUTH ORGANIZATION GIRLS CAMP
1564 N LAKESHORE RD | PORT SANILAC, MI 48469

PROPERTY HIGHLIGHTS:

- 24.03 acres overlooking Lake Huron along Michigan's east coast for sale
- Ideal site for residential development
- Approx. 1,000 feet of lake frontage with accessible and walkable beach
- Site is positioned a quarter mile north of the Huron Shores Golf Club
- Average household incomes within a one-mile radius ±\$22,000 annually
- Located 30 miles north of Port Huron
- Sale Price: \$2,500,000

The information provided herein along with any attachments(s) was obtained from sources believed to be reliable; however, Friedman Real Estate makes no guarantees, warranties, or representations as to the completeness or accuracy thereof. It is the responsibility of the buyer to conduct his/her own due diligence. Friedman Real Estate shall not be liable for reliance on such information or errors or omissions as contained. The presentation of this property is subject to prior sale, price change, or withdrawal without notice. Copyright © 2022 Friedman Real Estate. All rights reserved.

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

JOSEPH ROSENBERG
joseph.rosenberg@freg.com

248.324.2000 eCODE 009

Saving a property like the Girls CYO Camp fits the TLC mission almost perfectly. Most of our leadership got our start at local camps and have very fond memories of our experiences as youth. The TLC believes that our region should and can offer the public the very best camps and opportunities for outdoor recreation. This is particularly important for children. The Thumb has a lot of great things going for it if people will just look around. With more development and a growing population in Southeast Michigan, we should be increasing public access to the Great Lakes, not decreasing it. Obviously, maintaining access to the Great Lakes is very important.

In June, local organizations working to promote youth, families, churches, outdoor recreation, and the environment signed a TLC support letter urging the CYO to seriously consider a sale that will keep the property as a camp. Sign-on supporters included: Camp Cavell of Lexington; Bridge Builders Counseling and Mentoring of Port Huron; the Blue Water District Commissioner of the Boy Scouts of America in Saint Clair, Sanilac, and Huron Counties; Thumb Outdoor Alliance of Croswell; Cass River Greenway of Frankenmuth; Presbytery Villages of Michigan in Southfield and Fort Gratiot; Mooretown Brethren In Christ Church of Sandusky; Blue Water Audubon Society of Saint Clair County; Save Our Neighborhoods and Streets Outreach of Port Huron; and Operation Transformation of Port Huron.

We asked that the Catholic Youth Organization consider not only the monetary value of the camp, but its social and environmental values to our community according to the encyclical *Laudato si'* by Pope Francis, subtitled *On Care For Our Common Home*. The encyclical describes not only our responsibilities regarding environmental issues, but also to the poor. With ever increasing private development along the lakeshore, significant habitat is being destroyed and opportunity for Great Lakes access by the underprivileged is decreasing. Camps like the Girls CYO Camp have been sold at an alarming rate in recent years, many of them for private development benefiting only a very few people. Camps are places where we can really experience creation, a common home, and a common humanity that makes the world a better place.

Not knowing exactly how we would raise the necessary funds to purchase the CYO Camp, the TLC submitted a substantial offer in May. We have had encouraging discussions with Sanilac County and various groups and individuals that could provide funding and support for this acquisition. Based on further discussions with the CYO representative, the TLC has since increased its offer. Time will tell if the CYO gives us the opportunity to acquire the camp. In addition, this is a test of the resolve of the State of Michigan and outdoor recreation industry to invest in getting people outdoors and public access to the Great Lakes in our region.

Fall Stewardship

Details will be sent in future e-mails. If you want to work on your own on any of these, let us know.

Date	Activity	Location
September - December	clean-up and restoration	North Street Station
September - December	trail and park entrance work	Bidwell Sanctuary
September - December	clean-up and restoration	Tranquil Ridge Sanctuary

Broad-winged Hawk, *Buteo platypterus*

By Tom Dennis



Tom Dennis

Photo Credit, Roy Churchill, Blue Water Audubon

Late September, specifically September 22 in 2020, marks the autumnal equinox. This event marks the moment the Sun crosses the celestial equator, an imaginary line in the sky above Earth's equator, from north to south (and south to north in March for vernal or spring equinox). September also marks the beginning of "Hawk Watch," which extends through November in Michigan. Hawks, as well as other raptors and Turkey Vultures, are counted, largely by trained volunteers, at five sites in the state; Detroit River, Whitefish Point, Mackinaw Straits, Brockway Mountain, and Port Crescent. Each of these sites is strategically chosen since they are locations where the birds can cross relatively short distances across large bodies of water that would otherwise be difficult for soaring birds to travel without expending precious energy. The raptors depend on the rising thermal air currents from the sun-warmed Earth to provide lift and allow them to soar large distances. All that said, sunny days are best for these birds to travel and the best time to sight them traveling as they travel south to warmer climates for the winter.

Broad-winged Hawks are an interesting species locally for a few interesting reasons. The first reason being they are usually seen only for a few weeks during spring and fall migration. Since they spend summers nesting and raising young in dense forests throughout northern and eastern North America but mostly in boreal forests in Canada, they winter in Southern Mexico and South America. While some individuals accept living near humans, even those birds avoid human settlements and interactions. Local sightings are rare except during their long-distance travels. They make their migration flights in large flocks that are commonly called "kettles," which often contain hundreds of individuals at such heights that they appear as specks of pepper to the naked eye. The fall migration is larger due to the addition of new fledglings, and it typically peaks in Michigan from mid-to-late September. Research has shown that they usually migrate about 4,300 miles, traveling an average of 70 miles per day. When migrating to South America, they avoid crossing large bodies of saltwater. There are several small populations on the Caribbean Islands that are year-round residents, including endangered sub-species with a population of about 100 birds in Puerto Rico.

Like many raptors, the Broad-winged Hawk is relatively drably colored, but they are easily distinguished from other hawks by a few features. The adult's body is dark brown with a white belly and chest with horizontal rufous barring. The short, broad wings come to a distinctive point and are white underneath with a dark border on the wingtips and trailing edge. The tail is relatively short with distinctive dark banding. There are two types of coloration; a dark morph with fewer white areas and a light morph that is pale overall. Like most raptors, the females are slightly larger than males. They average 15 inches in length, have a wingspan of about 35 inches, and weigh an average of 16 ounces, approximately the size of the American Crow. Their call is a high-pitched and whistle-like "kee-ee" and is used for communication with their mate and offspring and displays toward intruders or threatening predators, including larger raptors, that feed on adults and many mammals that may eat the eggs and young.

They are carnivorous feeding on small mammals, frogs, lizards, insects, small birds, snakes, and crabs. Unlike many raptors, they give special attention to food preparation and will skin frogs and pluck birds prior to consumption. They rarely drink water and are able to survive with the water present in their food.

If you would like to see a Broad-winged Hawk, I recommend you visit Lake Erie Metropark in Gibraltar, Michigan on a mostly sunny day during September or October. You can also check Detroit River Hawk Watch monitoring at detroitriverhawkwatch.org for count data, events, hawk identification, and other news about migration.

If you wish to learn more about birds you are welcome to attend Blue Water Audubon meetings held at The Point, 5085 Lakeshore Road, in Fort Gratiot. Please visit our Facebook page, "Blue Water Audubon Society," for meeting details and be sure to friend us. Tom Dennis is a free-lance writer, passionate birder, zoologist, creation scientist, and naturalist.

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We asked that the Catholic Youth Organization consider not only the monetary value of the camp, but its social and environmental values to our community according to the encyclical *Laudato si'* by Pope Francis, subtitled *On Care For Our Common Home*. The encyclical describes not only our responsibilities regarding environmental issues, but also to the poor. With ever increasing private development along the lakeshore, significant habitat is being destroyed and opportunity for Great Lakes access by the underprivileged is decreasing. Camps like the Girls CYO Camp have been sold at an alarming rate in recent years, many of them for private development benefiting only a very few people. Camps are places where we can really experience creation, a common home, and a common humanity that makes the world a better place.

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Fall Stewardship

Details will be sent in future e-mails. If you want to work on your own on any of these, let us know.

Date	Activity	Location
September - December	clean-up and restoration	North Street Station
September - December	trail and park entrance work	Bidwell Sanctuary
September - December	clean-up and restoration	Tranquil Ridge Sanctuary

Broad-winged Hawk, *Buteo platypterus*

By Tom Dennis

Tom Dennis

Photo Credit, Roy Churchill, Blue Water Audubon

Late September, specifically September 22 in 2020, marks the autumnal equinox. This event marks the moment the Sun crosses the celestial equator, an imaginary line in the sky above Earth's equator, from north to south (and south to north in March for vernal or spring equinox). September also marks the beginning of "Hawk Watch," which extends through November in Michigan. Hawks, as well as other raptors and Turkey Vultures, are counted, largely by trained volunteers, at five sites in the state; Detroit River, Whitefish Point, Mackinaw Straits, Brockway Mountain, and Port Crescent. Each of these sites is strategically chosen since they are locations where the birds can cross relatively short distances across large bodies of water that would otherwise be difficult for soaring birds to travel without expending precious energy. The raptors depend on the rising thermal air currents from the sun-warmed Earth to provide lift and allow them to soar large distances. All that said, sunny days are best for these birds to travel and the best time to sight them traveling as they travel south to warmer climates for the winter.

Broad-winged Hawks are an interesting species locally for a few interesting reasons. The first reason being they are usually seen only for a few weeks during spring and fall migration. Since they spend summers nesting and raising young in dense forests throughout northern and eastern North America but mostly in boreal forests in Canada, they winter in Southern Mexico and South America. While some individuals accept living near humans, even those birds avoid human settlements and interactions. Local sightings are rare except during their long-distance travels. They make their migration flights in large flocks that are commonly called "kettles," which often contain hundreds of individuals at such heights that they appear as specks of pepper to the naked eye. The fall migration is larger due to the addition of new fledglings, and it typically peaks in Michigan from mid-to-late September. Research has shown that they usually migrate about 4,300 miles, traveling an average of 70 miles per day. When migrating to South America, they avoid crossing large bodies of saltwater. There are several small populations on the Caribbean Islands that are year-round residents