

The Cygnet

Summer 2026

☀️ Summer weather has arrived! ☀️

Here's what's happening at the Muskegon Lake Nature Preserve this summer.

• President's message	P. 2
• Feature story: Managing Invasive Plant Species	P. 3
• Calendar of Events	P. 4
• MLNP Inaugural Nature Fest	P. 5
• Updates	P. 6
• Summer's favorite resources	P. 7
• Supporting the Preserve	P. 8



President's Message

Dear Friends of the Muskegon Lake Nature Preserve,

As I write my first President's Message, I am filled with gratitude and excitement for the future of Muskegon Lake Nature Preserve. It is an honor to serve as president of an organization that brings together so many passionate volunteers, members, partners, and supporters who care deeply about protecting and enhancing this special place.

This spring has already been an incredible season. We hosted our first annual Nature Fest fundraiser and expanded habitat and accessibility through community plantings at the Microforest and Native Plant Community Garden. These projects will provide beauty, education, and ecological benefits for years to come and are a testament to what can happen when a community comes together around a shared vision.

Looking ahead, summer promises to be just as exciting. We have Plant Patrol trainings for those interested in helping monitor and steward the Preserve, Saturdays with a Scientist presentations that will connect us with experts and new discoveries, visual turtle surveys via QR codes around the Preserve, and many other opportunities to learn, volunteer, and enjoy the natural world.

I am especially excited about the momentum we are building around environmental education. Our Education Committee has been working tirelessly to expand programs and create meaningful experiences for learners of all ages. One exciting project currently underway is the development of a yurt that will help us welcome school groups and host educational programming year-round, even when Michigan weather doesn't cooperate. I hope you'll read more about these efforts throughout this newsletter.

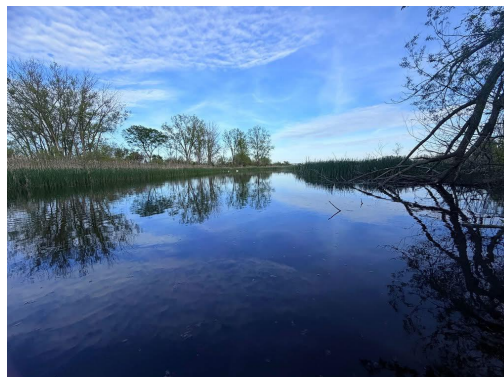
One of the things I appreciate most about the Preserve is that there is truly something for everyone, whether your passion is conservation, education, citizen science, or simply spending time outdoors. I hope you'll join us this summer, bring a friend, and take part in the many activities ahead.

Thank you for your continued support. I look forward to seeing you at the Preserve!

With warmest regards,

Andi Kantola

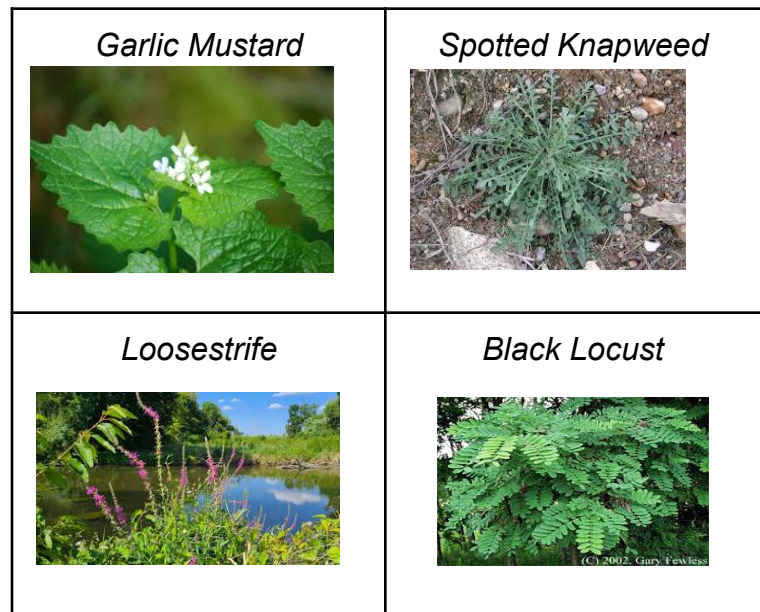
President, MERES Board of Directors



Managing Invasive Plant Species

We welcome all the good things summer brings at the Preserve - wildflowers, fishing, hiking, biking, birding, and photography - are all at their best! But summer also means invasive plant species make their appearance once again. Read more about what that means for the health of the preserve, how we address the invasive species issues, and what you can do to help.

Since its creation in 1998, the Muskegon Lake Nature Preserve has faced the challenge of monitoring and removing a wide variety of invasive plant species. These include Garlic Mustard, Honeysuckle, Phragmites, Canada Thistle, Japanese Knotweed, Loosestrife, Oriental Bittersweet, Spotted Knapweed, and Black Locust trees. These and other invasive plant species found on the Preserve property are non-native plants that spread quickly and outcompete native plants for vital resources such as light, water, and space.



Frog Bit Pull

Maintaining the ecological balance of the Preserve requires regular monitoring and frequent field work by the Preserve Habitat Committee, with support and recommendations from WMSRDC, Michigan Conservation District, and GEI Consultants. There is no paid staff at the Preserve. Volunteers do all of the work needed to maintain the Preserve. The Habitat Committee meets every Monday and every third Saturday of the month from 9 am to noon. Activities include hand-pulling identified invasive species from May to October and planting native trees, shrubs, and groundcovers as needed.

For ongoing invasive species control, the Preserve is organizing a volunteer Plant Patrol group. Email muskegonlakenaturepreserve@gmail.com for more information

Muskegon Lake Nature Preserve
Join the
Plant Patrol

⚠ Please make sure you have received training before pulling any plants at the Preserve. Do not remove unknown plants. Do not remove large woody shrubs. When in doubt → Leave it.

There will be a volunteer frog bit pull at the Preserve on Jun 5 - [info here](#)

Calendar of Events



Summer 2026

DATE	TIME	EVENT
Monday 6/1	9 am to Noon	Maintenance & Habitat Committee Work Session
Tuesday 6/2	Noon to 3:30 pm	Pavilion Reserved for MAISD
Friday 6/5	9 am to Noon	Volunteer European frog-bit Hand Pulling
Saturday 6/6	11 am to Noon	Saturdays with a Scientist (Composting)
Monday 6/8	9 am to Noon	Maintenance & Habitat Committee Work Session
Saturday 6/13	9 am to 3 pm	Pavilion Reserved (MCD, 4-H, & MSU Extension)
Monday 6/15	9 am to Noon	Maintenance & Habitat Committee Work Session
Thursday 6/18	6 pm	Board Meeting
Saturday 6/20	9 am to Noon	Stewardship Saturday Workday and Invasive Species Training
Monday 6/22	9 am to Noon	Maintenance & Habitat Committee Work Session
Monday 6/29	9 am to Noon	Maintenance & Habitat Committee Work Session
Saturday 7/4	11 am to Noon	Saturdays with a Scientist (Butterflies)
Monday 7/6	9 am to Noon	Maintenance & Habitat Committee Work Session
Monday 7/13	9 am to Noon	Maintenance & Habitat Committee Work Session
Thursday 7/16	6 pm	Board Meeting
Saturday 7/18	9 am to Noon	Stewardship Saturday Workday and Invasive Species Training
Monday 7/20	9 am to Noon	Maintenance & Habitat Committee Work Session
Monday 7/27	9 am to Noon	Maintenance & Habitat Committee Work Session
Monday 8/1	11 am to Noon	Saturday with a Scientist (Mushrooms)
Monday 8/1		Microforest Naming Contest Deadline
Monday 8/1	TBD	Watch Us Go Boating (Paddle for Purpose)
Monday 8/3	9 am to Noon	Maintenance & Habitat Committee Work Session
Monday 8/10	9 am to Noon	Maintenance & Habitat Committee Work Session
Saturday 8/15	9 am to Noon	Stewardship Saturday Workday and Invasive Species Training
Monday 8/17	9 am to Noon	Maintenance & Habitat Committee Work Session
Thursday 8/20	6 pm	Board Meeting
Monday 8/24	9 am to Noon	Maintenance & Habitat Committee Work Session
Monday 8/31	9 am to Noon	Maintenance & Habitat Committee Work Session

Inaugural MLNP Nature Fest !!!!

A Good Time for a Great Cause!

Our inaugural MLNP Nature Fest on May 21 was a resounding success! Familiar faces mixed with first-timers, and together we learned, laughed, ate, and soaked in everything the Preserve has to offer. We raised over \$1,000 for our general fund, and we're just getting started! There are so many people, community organizations, and businesses to thank. We couldn't have done it without you!

Prize sponsors

- Northshore Ace Hardware (super prize)
- Bellacino's Pizza & Grinders
- Consumer's Credit Union
- Coney Land
- Deb Couch (The Bird House gift certificate)
- Earth's Edge
- Hobo's Tavern & The Handsome Hobo
- HomeTown Pharmacy
- Meijer North Muskegon
- Norm's Ice Cream Shop
- Rebecca Sandee (rootdown gift certificate)
- Tractor Supply Co.

Volunteers

- JoAnn Barrett
- Amy Bodbyl-Mast
- Rich Cater
- Katie Clark
- Jnai Closz
- Lynn Comried
- Keely Dunham
- Emily Garcia
- LeAnn Haywood
- Norman Hoag
- Pat Horn
- Andi Kantola
- Tori Martel
- Katie McLaren
- Anne McLaughlin
- Gale Nobes
- Eve Pattyn
- Wendy Potts
- Tracy Sodini
- Andrew Sylvester
- Steve Thompson
- Tom Willi

Organizations

- Lakeshore Museum Center
- Muskegon Conservation District
- Run Muskegon

Food & Parking

- Wesco for Free Popcorn!
- Food concessions: Dawg Waggin & Ice Box Brand Ice Cream
- Thanks to Steve Erickson for parking lot use



Updates

Education & Habitat

We had a full house at our *Coffee with the Birds* session on May 16th! Tori Martel shared insights about birding and photography and led a bird watching and photography tour of the Preserve. By popular demand, we are planning another session, so watch our Facebook page for an announcement!



We're Here for the Birds!
And the coffee courtesy of Aldea (thank you!)

The Plant Patrol training sessions are offered on the 3rd Saturday of the month through August. See the feature article on p.2 for more information about invasive species control at the Preserve. Check the calendar on p.3 for training dates.



Proud Plant Patrol members

Microforest

The microforest is planted and growing! With help from several local schools, organizations, and companies, we have planted the microforest. We couldn't have done it without all of the community's help! Schools included Twin Lake Elementary, Penn Kindergrarten, Central Elementary, and RP Intermediate. Many thanks to the Muskegon Conservation District for their water buffalo!

We are grateful for funding from the Muskegon Rotary Club, WMSRDC, and Run Muskegon!

Now that the microforest is mostly installed, **we are asking our community to help us name the forest.** Submissions can be made by emailing the Preserve at muskegonlakenaturepreserve@gmail.com, messaging us on the Preserve Facebook page, or by mail at P.O. Box 5038, N. Muskegon, MI 49445 by 8/1/26. The MERES Board of Directors will vote on the winning name.

For project updates or to learn more about how you can support the microforest, visit our website or Facebook page.



United Way Day of Caring

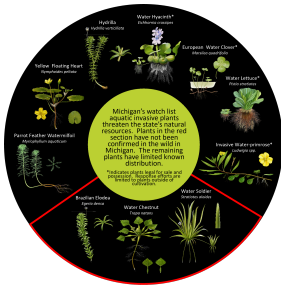


Grand Rapids & Muskegon Rotary Clubs

Summer's Favorite Resources

Invasive Species Resources

Michigan's Invasive Species Program is a joint initiative co-administered by three state departments: the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), the Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE), and the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD). The program operates under strategic state management plans specifically designed to protect Michigan's land and water ecosystems by preventing, detecting, and managing non-native, destructive species.



- **Six New Plant Bans:** The Michigan Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development voted to add six highly destructive plants to the state's regulated lists. Water lettuce and water hyacinth are banned as prohibited species starting June 19, 2026. Callery pear, Japanese barberry, common buckthorn, and glossy buckthorn will join the restricted list with enforcement taking effect January 1, 2028.
- **Report to MISIN:** General sightings of invasive species can be recorded through the [Midwest Invasive Species Information Network \(MISIN\) tool](#) or by downloading the MISIN smartphone app



The [West Michigan CISMA](#) serves a multi-county region that includes Muskegon, Ottawa, Kent, Allegan, Montcalm, Newaygo, and Oceana counties. Because the coalition is built on local partnerships, they operate a dedicated Invasive Species Strike Team based directly out of the Muskegon Conservation District office.



Follow Tori Martel,
MLNP's
bird/photography
aficionado, on
Instagram

@rubycreekbirds

Birding Resources

The preserve is a wonderful spot to observe birds year-round, especially during spring and fall migration. Here are a few free tools to help you get started:

Merlin Bird ID — Cornell Lab's free app identifies birds by photo or sound. The Sound ID feature is especially handy for picking out songs on the trail. ([merlin.allaboutbirds.org](#))

eBird — Log your sightings, explore what others have spotted at MLNP, and contribute to a growing record of the preserve's bird life. ([ebird.org](#))

iNaturalist — Not just for birds! Log any plant, insect, or animal you observe and contribute to citizen science. ([inaturalist.org](#))

Have a sighting to share? Tag us on social media or email — we'd love to feature your photos in a future issue!

Ways to Support the Preserve

The Preserve is free to all, but we depend solely on donations
and volunteers to:

- Maintain the Preserve
- Protect its beautiful habitats and wildlife
 - Conduct research
- Offer educational events and activities

You can donate to our operating fund or volunteer at our website.

You also can help guarantee our future by donating to the **MERES endowment fund** at the Muskegon Community Foundation.



Thank you, Lascko Services, for the \$1000 donation through your Lascko Gives Back program! And thanks to all of you who voted for us!

Welcome to the new members of the MLNP family!



Contact Information

Website: <http://muskegonlakenaturepreserve.com>

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Newsletter Email: thecygnet.mlnp@gmail.com

Facebook: facebook.com/MuskegonLakeNaturePreserve

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Physical Address: 2529 Lake Ave., North Muskegon, MI 49445

