

The Cygnet



2529 Lake Ave. North Muskegon, MI 49445

<http://muskegonlakenaturepreserve.com>

NOVEMBER 2024

Welcome to the first edition of The Cygnet. We have long talked about doing this and felt this was the right time to expand both our communication to all who support us, and to showcase not only what we do but also all those who use and love the Preserve as much as we do.

The Preserve is a privately owned (by the board of directors) 501C3 non-profit that was created and is dedicated to Environmental Research and Education. It was conceived in 1998 and the non-profit Muskegon Environmental Research & Education Society (MERES) was formed in 1999 and the work began. It has been built with volunteers sweat, love, donations and grants from West Michigan Businesses.

There is a conservation easement on the island to guarantee that it will always be maintained natural and will never be available for development, so that our donors can feel comfortable that their “investment of time or money” will always be protected.

We have also started a donation driven endowment fund with the Community Foundation of Muskegon County in hopes of providing funding forever to maintain the preserve and provide educational opportunities to area students.

Please send any ideas, suggestions or photos to
thecygnets.mlnp@gmail.com

Congratulations Don!

Congratulations to Don Cole, the winner of our name the newsletter contest! Don's entry was "The Cygnet". What is a Cygnet you might ask? Well, according to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, a Cygnet is "a young swan".

And, as many of you already know, during certain times of the year, the Preserve is home to many Cygnets and their parents. In addition, our logo and signage at the Preserve have an image of a swan!



Giving Tuesday

Giving Tuesday is a global generosity movement, unleashing the power of people and organizations to transform their communities and the world. While Giving Tuesday happens every Tuesday, the annual celebration of generosity will happen this year on December 3, 2024. Giving Tuesday was created in 2012 as a day that encourages people to do good. Since that time, this idea has grown into a year-round global movement that inspires hundreds of millions of people to give, collaborate, and celebrate generosity.

People can show their generosity in a variety of ways during Giving Tuesday—whether it's helping a neighbor, advocating for an issue, sharing a skill, or giving to causes, everyone has something to give, and every act of generosity counts.





There are 3 ways to give on Giving Tuesday that will benefit the Muskegon Lake Nature Preserve:

1. Donate to our operating fund. [MUSKEGON ENVIRONMENTAL Payment](#)
2. Donate to our endowment fund. [MERES Endowment Fund](#)
MERES (Muskegon Environmental Research & Education Society) is our legally registered 501-C-3 non-profit name.
3. Become a MLNP volunteer. [Volunteer — M.L.N.P.](#)



Donor Board

Educators Corner

Attention educators! Did you know that the Muskegon Lake Nature Preserve is available for use with your students? The preserve is open for outdoor place-based learning experiences. The opportunities for you and your students are limitless from watershed studies to Michigan history walks...there is much to experience and learn from the Muskegon Lake Nature Preserve. There are canned student activities on the nature preserve website, and additionally, there is a covered pavilion for lessons and lunch when the weather is rough. Please contact us with any questions or to check on availability of the Pavilion.



Learning More About Nature & The Environment

Wilder River Walk Update

Success!! We are very excited to announce that we have met our \$20,000.00 Wilder River Walk fundraising goal! By reaching our goal we are now eligible to receive a \$20,000.00 matching grant from the Paul C. Johnson Foundation.

Thank you so very much to all the individuals, businesses and organizations who donated towards the repair of the Wilder River Walk. Our permits from the Army Corp of Engineers and EGLE for the repairs have been approved and issued!!! Depending on the weather and the schedule of the contractor doing the work, the River Walk will be repaired and re-opened to families, students & teachers, walkers, fishermen, bike riders and dog walkers by this coming spring!

As a reminder, the Muskegon Lake Nature Preserve is not owned by the city, county or state. The Preserve is a privately owned 501-C-3 nonprofit organization, with environmental education and research as its priorities. We are 100 percent supported by donations and the hard work of our volunteers. There is no paid staff. Because the Preserve is privately owned, we are not supported by local or county taxes.

Thanks again to everyone who donated and helped us reach our goal!



Attention Teachers & Other Interested Parties!

We invite you and your students to help us expand our QR Code Trail at the Preserve. We currently have 9 QR Code stations located throughout the Preserve, but our goal is to establish at least 60 stations, so we still have a lot of work to do.

Each station has a post with a specific QR Code attached to the top and that code is linked to our website. When scanned with a cell phone, information about a specific area or feature of the Preserve is sent to the phone. The process is simple. You and your class will pick a species from our list of over 400 species of plants and animals. Once a species is selected you and your students will research and then write a short narrative on your topic.

Once the narrative is complete, it will be added to the Preserve website on the Points of Interest Page and a QR Code will be printed and added to a post in a designated area related to your report. Your class name will also be added to the published report on the website! To get started, request a copy of our species list with your name, school and grade by emailing us at:

muskegonlakenaturepreserve@gmail.com.



QR Code Station

If You See Something, Say Something

Vandalism and littering at the Preserve are happening more frequently. There is no paid staff at the Preserve. A small, dedicated group of volunteers handle all maintenance, repairs, invasive species removal, new plantings, cleanup and board replacement. We work hard to ensure the Preserve is a safe, clean, fun and educational place to visit.

Please help us keep the Preserve a welcoming environment. If you see something, please say something. From damage, to litter, to vandalism, to suspicious activity, please let us know. There are several ways you can contact us. You can call or text our Board President, Steve Thompson at 616-405-3524, email us at muskegonlakenaturepreserve@gmail.com or message us on our Facebook Page. If you can get a picture, please send that to us as well.

The Preserve is not a park or campground. There is no camping, campfires, hunting or trapping allowed. Thank you for your continued support of the Muskegon Lake Nature Preserve!



Volunteers Needed!

We rely entirely on volunteers for maintenance and upkeep of the Preserve. There is no paid staff. Please consider joining us as a volunteer, whether it is on a regular basis or for occasional special events.

We have several volunteer opportunities to choose from and they include:

- **Board replacement on the Wilder River Walk and Al Bell Trail. This is an ongoing task and a high priority.**
- **Monitor & Removal of Invasive Species. This is also an ongoing task and a very high priority.**
- **Education Program (Facilitating education activities and preparing supplies/materials).**
- **Regular Maintenance (Trash pickup and cleaning pavilion & picnic tables).**

- **Countless other opportunities are limited only by your own ideas. Reach out, we are open to all ideas! To sign up to be a volunteer, please click on this link which will take you to our website: [Volunteer — M.L.N.P.](#)**



Trash Pickup

Volunteers in Action!



Planting Native Plants



Pier Repair

Privately Owned

Many people do not realize that the Muskegon Lake Nature Preserve is not owned by the city, county or state. The Preserve is a privately owned 501-C-3 nonprofit organization, with environmental education and research as its priorities. We are 100 percent supported by donations and almost everything we do is done by volunteers. There is no paid staff. Because the Preserve is privately owned, we are not supported by local or county taxes.

As a result, not only do we have to raise funds for day-to-day operations, but when there is a major repair needed, we conduct a special fundraiser to obtain the funds we need. Our most recent special fundraiser was for the repair of the Wilder River Walk.



Wilder River Walk

President's Message

**As Fall starts to wind towards winter, I find myself starting not only to plan for next year at the MLNP, but to look back at this year. I want to thank Shelly and her wonderful crew for spending all year fighting invasives, I want to thank Tom, Norm, Gale and others for keeping our walkways and paths safe for our families, to thank Cytiva for their wonderful help cleaning and everyone else who has given time, money, and encouragement. Thank You!!!
Steve T.**



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