



Heron Tracks

The Quarterly Newsletter of Seven Ponds Nature Center

VOLUME 58 NUMBER 3 • FALL EDITION • SEPTEMBER—NOVEMBER 2025

AS NIGHT FALLS

Article by Nico Bradford

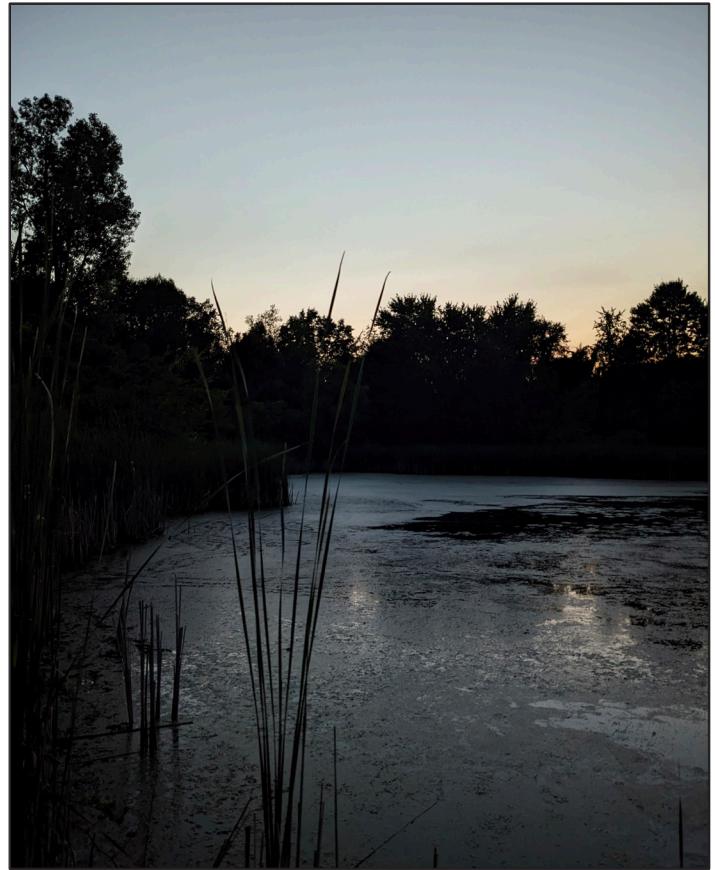
Dusk is a special time. It is a liminal period defined by blurred edges and creeping change, as daylight fades with the sun's setting and night has not quite fallen. In this brief intermission, the set dressings change, and a new cast takes center stage. And tonight, you have a private theater box: the observation tower overlooking Waterfowl Pond.

It begins with the fireflies (family Lampyridae). First, a few blinking lights along the treeline and in the tall grass, then you notice the shadows have lengthened and the sun has ducked out of sight. The remnants of the sunset tint the sky with pink flowing into purple into blue.

Look up from the setting sun and sweep your gaze in an arc above you till you're looking eastward. At the height of summer, three stars, Vega, Deneb, and Altair, shine the brightest in the early evening sky. Together, they form the Summer Triangle. This is an asterism, a group or pattern of stars made up of small pieces of a constellation or spanning several at once. On a clear, moonless night, it frames part of the Milky Way. The summer triangle is visible at different points year-round, but when it appears in the eastern sky, it signals summertime.

Competing with the stars, fireflies fade in and out of view, dotting the night with pulsing lights. There are dozens, maybe hundreds of them, but ask anyone who can remember, and they will confirm seeing thousands in decades past. Last year, 2024, had the highest record of fireflies in recent years. Despite this increase, firefly populations are facing a long-term decline in Michigan and across the United States.

Fireflies aren't unique among insects; we're in the midst of an "insect apocalypse." Their natural habitats grow inhospitable due to climate change, pollution, urbanization, and agriculture. They are attacked on all fronts; even our light pollutes the night and disrupts their carefully choreographed routines. As of 2020, between 250,000 and 500,000 entire species have been made extinct in the last 150 years. We continue to lose 1-2% of the global insect population every year. That means that within less than 40 years, we will have lost a third of all insects. These are conservative numbers. It's hard to imagine



the reality of the loss.

Tonight, it may be hard to believe in an "insect apocalypse." The fireflies blink, the moths flutter, the crickets sing, and the mosquitoes bite. A lot. Mosquitoes (family Culicidae) are most active during dusk. Like some more mythical blood-suckers, they also avoid the sun's blaze. As it grows dark, many of their natural predators retire, and resting animals become an easy target.

In contrast to most insects, mosquito populations are thriving. Every year, it's noted that the mosquitoes are worse than ever, and it's not crazy to think so. The lengthening summers and dramatic rainy seasons create the perfect breeding grounds. They are more than a nuisance; mosquito-borne diseases are

Continued on page 3

Reflections...

As I write this, we are in our last week of summer camp, the nights are getting longer, the cicadas are singing during the day, the fireflies are displaying at night, and the rhythms of Seven Ponds continue from the dog days of summer to the crisp, cool air of autumn. I have officially stepped into my role as executive director at Seven Ponds, but this place is not new to me. In my 23 years working here, I have had the pleasure of experiencing the ebb and flow, or rhythms, of Seven Ponds through the seasons and over the years.

In 2002, just two years out of my undergrad degree, I was a “baby” naturalist, a newlywed, and so green! I had worked other naturalist positions in state and county parks, seasonally, but this was my first full-time position with benefits and a house. I felt so lucky! The staff brought me into their fold as if I had been here forever, and the volunteers welcomed me so graciously into the big Seven Ponds family.

I have had many roles here: naturalist (of course and always), land steward, special event organizer, social media coordinator, field tour leader, chair moverer (I have moved so many chairs), administrator, exhibit designer...just to name a few. Knowing, years ago, that I wanted to become executive director at some point, I went back to school and earned a graduate degree in Public Administration focusing on nonprofit organizations. That degree and all those years of experience, I think, will help me step into my new role as leader.

Through the seasons and years, I have changed, the lakes and forests have changed, staff have changed, the building has changed, we've said “good-bye” to many special people...So many changes in the last 23 years, but some things have and, I believe, will always remain the same: our cemented role in the community, the love and support we have from our community, and our mission of helping people build connections to our natural world. This is very important work!

I still remember some of the kiddos from my first Knee-High Naturalist classes during summer camp, or what was once called “Field School.” Those “kiddos” are now bringing their children to camp. This legacy program is our mission at work; we can see our mission with the returning campers and their parents year after year after year. It is my hope that these kiddos will, in 23 years, bring their own children to experience Seven Ponds.

Thank you for trusting me with Seven Ponds and our mission! I hope to serve her well.

See you soon,
Carrie Spencer, Executive Director

Trek the Trails with Seven Ponds!

October 1 through 31

Throughout the month of October, Seven Ponds staff will be hiking the trails in a (mostly) friendly competition with one another - here at the nature center and elsewhere, in Michigan and beyond.

You can partake in this healthy fun by hiking on your own or joining us here at Seven Ponds. Nature center staff will be leading a hiking-paced trek around the trails each Tuesday and Thursday morning throughout the month of October.

You can also follow the staff's progress throughout the month by checking the nature center's website for mileage updates and fun photos.

Through this event, we hope to encourage you to get outdoors, stay active, and be healthy. Nature is a great place to get in your daily steps!

Tuesday and Thursday treks at Seven Ponds

October 2, 7, 9, 14,
16, 21, 23, 28, 30

9:00-10:00 AM
rain or shine



Heron Tracks

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The mission of Seven Ponds Nature Center is to conserve its natural environment as a sanctuary for native plants and animals and to serve as a community resource for environmental education that fosters an understanding, appreciation, and stewardship for our natural world.

Executive Director:

Carrie Spencer

Amy Sadler

Office Manager:

Madison Bristol, Adrianna Allen, Nico Bradford

Gina Stoldt

Naturalists:

Damian Goidich

Weekday Receptionist & Rookery Gift Shop Manager:

Del Hunsinger

Weekend Receptionist:

Daryl Bernard

Maintenance Engineer - Buildings & Grounds:

Birding Field Tour Leader:

reported further north every year. More than ever, it's important to protect yourself. Bug spray is helpful, but protective layers are the best option.

Mosquitoes can be a nuisance and even dangerous, but it's important to appreciate their part in the web of life. It's not their fault the balance is disrupted. Fireflies might be easier to love, but mosquitoes and other "pests" play a crucial role in a healthy ecosystem. Without insects, animals starve, plants turn barren, and dead things rot in open air.

Our plain-nosed bats (family Vespertilionidae) are one of these animals that depend on insects for food and, in turn, keep their populations at a healthy level. Fix your gaze above the treeline, and you'll notice black blurs swooping up and down. Their movements look erratic, but their acute senses are honed to their tiny prey. They don't seem to mind the abundance of mosquitoes. All bats in Michigan are insect-eating. An adult bat consumes about 50% of their body weight in insects in a single night. A nursing or pregnant female might consume 100% of their body weight. In addition to birdhouses, Seven Ponds encourages bats to stick around with bat houses. There are also a few resident bats in the rafters above the front entrance. In exchange for their insect control, we tidy up after them. It feels like a fair trade.

Echolocation is emitted at frequencies beyond human hearing, but if you listen closely, you might hear them squeaking and chirping. This is one way they communicate with each other. Tonight, though, they're drowned out by mourning doves, bullfrogs, crickets, and cicadas.

This droning harmony is interrupted by a round of howls. It carries across the field, and responding howls seem to come from all around. The grazing deer freeze for a moment before cautiously returning to their meal. A brief thrill of fear also shoots through you, but there's no danger. Coyotes (*Canis latrans*) tend to avoid humans, even deer are usually too much trouble to prey on. Much like your family dog, they are opportunistic eaters and will happily hunt a rabbit or eat some berries. And despite their ringing cries, this group is much smaller and further away than they seem. Their reputation as tricksters is appropriate. Coyotes communicate with a variety of yips, howls, and barks. They manipulate their voices almost like a ventriloquist. This is known as the "beau geste effect," an auditory illusion which makes their numbers sound larger and closer. The nickname "Song Dog" is well earned.

Still, you feel grateful for your position on the tower, the security, and the view it provides. The coyotes' howling

ends, and the deer continue grazing on the grasses, wild-flowers, and brush. They are not picky. Deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) are crepuscular, meaning they are most active during the twilight hours of dawn and dusk. This helps them avoid predators that hunt more in the day than night, as well as shielding them from the harshest summer heat. When you drive back tonight, you'll likely see their eyes flashing in the headlights along the roadside. Combined with potholes like moon craters, dusk is a risky time to drive in rural Michigan.

There are plenty of other animals starting their day at dusk. Although you don't see them from the tower, the skunks, raccoons, opossums, and other nighttime critters leave plenty of evidence. Tracks in the mud, berry seed-filled droppings on the tower stairs, and scattered litter where a trash can was left open.

Life buzzes around you, but the air is warm and still. Breathe in and look back up. The moon hangs full and bright in the sky, outshining the stars. In July, depending on who you ask, it's called a buck moon, a salmon moon, or a berry moon. The names range across cultures and time, marking the rhythms of life.

You watch the purplish hue of twilight fade to black. In a blink, dusk has fully given way to night, and unlike the life teeming around you, you are not nocturnal. When you step inside, make sure to turn off the porchlight, it's not needed. And maybe tonight, open your bedroom window and let the night seep through the screen.

Further reading:

Learn more about insect population decline:

<https://www.reuters.com/graphics/GLOBAL-ENVIRONMENT/INSECT-APOCALYPSE/egpbykdxjvq/>

Explore the summer night sky:

<https://earthsky.org/tonight/summer-triangle-predominates-during-the-summer-season/>

Michigan bats:

<https://www.michigan.gov/dnr/education/michigan-species/>



Volunteer News

In recognition of all the many volunteers who helped with a variety of tasks this past summer we give thanks to:

- **Claudine Zach** for her care of the animals in our Critter Corner every week - her dedication to our education animals is truly appreciated!
- **Bob Albrecht** for consistent help with cleaning and maintaining the fish tank in Critter Corner and also feeding and caring for the critters!
- **Marianna Fitzgerald** for continuing and expanding the work on the library project, **Griffin Barkdoll** for creating a spreadsheet that will become an online book database for the library project, and **Bob Kelly** for working on copy cataloging and other various tasks for the library project.
- **Abigail McClusky** for monthly deep cleaning the Discovery Room.
- **Marianna Fitzgerald, Kathy Cole, Nancy Kautz, Jayme Fields, Richard Klee and Jeff Nedwick** for attending ASNAT training classes & events in June.
- **Mark Fournier and Trevor Mattoon** for helping to finish the Miller Pond Boardwalk Project.
- **Mark Fournier, Connor Grappin and Mike Grappin** for helping to add mulch to the Boardwalk/Paul's Woods trails, as well as the **Stellantis Chrysler Group** for helping to build a boardwalk to the viewing tower in Paul's Woods and spreading mulch along the trail through Paul's Woods to the new Eagle Scout bridge.
- **Emma Krueger** for working with our naturalists in the pouring rain in the wildflower garden area.
- **Gerald Buck** for grading the driveway and parking lot.
- **Emma Bahm** for working all summer in various areas throughout the property removing invasive plants after her internship completed.
- The **Board of Directors** for their dedication to the nature center and various meetings and activities in June, July and August including another successful Corks & Caps event.
- **John Ballard, Marianne Bohm, Karen Blaszyk, Marianna Fitzgerald, Gina Stoldt, Kathy Cole, Chuck Samples, Nancy Kautz, Melanie Boose, and Carrie Spencer** for nest box monitoring.
- **Jeanette Farley, Kelly Poole, Beth Piatkowski, Meli, Lois Koltunowicz & Nancy Schliebe** for working to keep the Herb Garden beautiful.
- **Karen Ford, Ginger Fricke, Sandy Vukonich, Ella McIntyre and Ron Schank** for their work helping our pollinators in the beautiful Butterfly Garden.
- **The Stingers** for their hard work and dedication coordinating and organizing another successful rummage sale to raise funds for the nature center.
- The **WYLD Group** for spending 2 days with our Land Steward tackling invasive species around the center.
- The **Oakland County Children's Village Juvenile Justice Day Program** for assisting with trail maintenance in the North-80 and for spreading mulch near the A-Frame bridge over a two-day period.



If you have a heart for service and community, we are always looking for volunteers like you! Please visit the Volunteer page on our website to sign up for the available opportunities we have listed and fill out the Volunteer Interest form. You may also reach out to Amy Sadler asadler@sevenponds.org.

ASSISTANT NATURALIST CLASSES

These classes are open to Assistant Naturalists only. Classes take place on the third Thursday of the month and begin at 3:00 PM. If you would like to become a part of this rewarding program in helping to educate and engage visitors of the nature center, contact Volunteer Coordinator Amy Sadler at 810-796-3200 or asadler@sevenponds.org.

SEPTEMBER 18

Slugs and Snails

What's the difference between slugs and snails? Join us to find out!

OCTOBER 16

Seeds

Let's go on a hike and talk all about seeds!

NOVEMBER 20

Spiders

Creepy, crawly and cunning! We'll learn about the spiders that live among us!

Seven Ponds Tributes

Memorials, Buy-a-Tree, In Honor

In memory of Nancy Wurst

- The Swiss Farm Families
- Kevin Dennis
- Sandra Erhart
- Patty & Jerry Nelesen
- Joan Arndt
- Jeanette & Dwight Simpson
- Maria Zardis
- Nancy Ruedi

In memory of Elaine Clampitt-McDonald

- Dave & Carol Fletcher

In memory of Jocelyn Scofield

- Mark Frank

In honor of Joanna Pease

- The Grosse Pointe Audobon Society

In honor of Daryl Bernard

- Patricia C. Gall

Buy-a-Tree in memory of Rosemary Marsh

- Kathy Cole



Ramblings of A Well-Loved Summer

By Madison Christol

A season in a breeze
A season in a wave
A season in a sun ray
A season up close

A striped blanket laid in a field of wildflowers
A well-loved book
A tart bite of a Michigan cherry
A season up close

A flash of white as a tree swallow takes off
A flash of white as a deer runs away
A flash of white as lightning streaks the sky
A season up close

A cold shiver as water brushes your toes
A warm sigh as sun touches bare skin
A hot burst as a new log catches in the fire
A season up close

A golden pink sky
A sea of constellations revealed
A firefly in the palm of your hand
A season gone by

The above poem by Seven Ponds Naturalist/
Land Steward Madison Christol won 2nd place
in the 10th Annual Yule Love It Lavender Farm
Poetry Contest! Congratulations Madison!

2025 Rummage Sale Results

The ever-popular Stingers' Annual Rummage Sale held in June at the nature center helped raise just shy of \$6,000, all from donations for items purchased. These funds directly benefit the programs and projects at Seven Ponds, and we are truly grateful for their effort. The Stingers would like to thank everybody who donated items for the sale, and all those who came out shopping, with special thanks to **Amy Gucciardi**, **Natalie Collins**, and **Caleb Wilson** for helping with this year's sale. We will begin accepting items for next year's sale on March 1. Look for a further announcement in the winter edition of *Heron Tracks*.

Seven Ponds Clubs!

Astronomy Club • Beekeeping Club

Birding Club • Photography Club

Butterfly Gardeners • Friends of Herbs

Friends of Seven Ponds (The Stingers)

**Visitors are welcome at all
club meetings.**

For additional information about any of the clubs
which meet at Seven Ponds,
please visit sevenponds.org
or call the nature center at
(810) 796-3200

2025 CAMP SEVEN PONDS! PHOTO RECAP



Around the Center

The Stingers Make Us Proud!

The Stingers are happy to share with all of you that they have donated \$20,000 to Seven Ponds Nature Center for the repainting and repairs to the interpretive building. We could not have done this without the help and generosity of our members and community!



Farewell Delaney and Emma

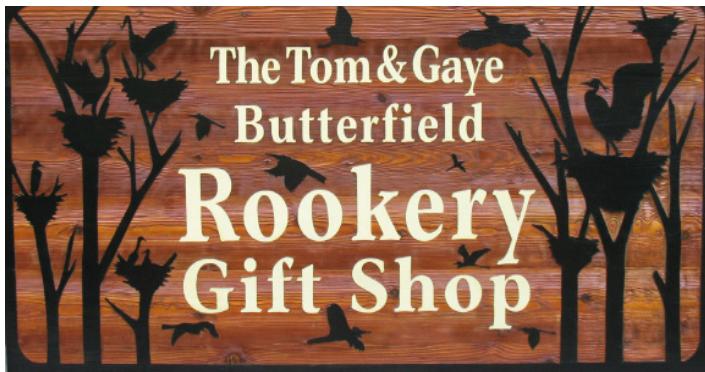
The staff of Seven Ponds expanded this summer with the addition of two seasonal employees, and it was a pleasure to host both of them. **Delaney Tunney** was our Summer Naturalist, helping with school groups in June and leading Camp Seven Ponds! groups throughout the summer. Delaney has BS degrees in Educational Studies (with a minor in Sign Language) from Kent State University, and Elementary Education from Oakland University. **Emma Bahm**, a student at Northern Michigan University, worked as a Summer Intern, taking on all manner of tasks, including, but certainly not limited to, invasive species management and various projects around the center. We truly appreciate the contributions each of these summer employees made at Seven Ponds, and we wish them the very best as Emma returns to her university studies, and Delaney embarks on what will no doubt be a rewarding career in the field of Education.



Holiday Auction & Christmas Party

Save the Date - December 6, 2025

We are excited to announce the nature center's annual **Holiday Auction and Christmas Party** will take place Saturday, December 6 at 6:30 PM, so mark your calendars now! We are ready to celebrate the season with you - our members - and we hope all of you will consider joining us for this wonderful celebration. The evening is always a lot of fun and all Seven Ponds members and their guests are invited. Now is a good time to start thinking about items for the silent and live auctions. Auction items might include artwork, antiques, holiday decor, services, or gift certificates. Use your talents and resources to provide a unique item for the auction. This is a very important event for the nature center and we need everyone's help to make this year's auction a big success. Make a contribution and then join us for a fun and entertaining evening. Proceeds help support environmental education activities and land stewardship efforts at Seven Ponds. See the event flier insert for details.



THINK GLOBALLY, SHOP LOCALLY

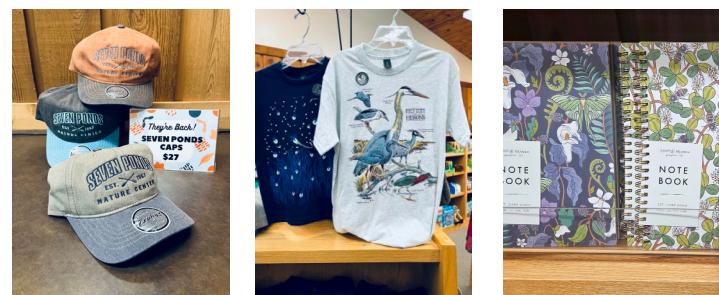
If you haven't been out to see us lately, what are you waiting for? The Seven Ponds property is spectacular in the autumn months! Each season brings something new to see.

We have some new things to see at the Rookery Gift Shop as well! New Seven Ponds caps are in stock, with three different color schemes to choose from. We also have a new stock of adult-sized t-shirts with a heron themed design, and a glow in the dark firefly tee for the young folks - both with the Seven Ponds logo on the sleeve. We also have a fresh selection of nature-themed notebooks, just in time for a session of crisp autumn nature journaling!

It's time to start thinking about your holiday shopping, and you'll find plenty of options at the Rookery. Stop in and see us soon!

The Rookery Gift Shop is open Tuesday through Sunday, 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM. Ask us about becoming a member! Members receive a 10% discount in the gift shop. Binoculars are excluded from the discount as we are already offering the lowest price possible.

Purchases made in the Rookery Gift Shop support the nature center, including all of the programs we do and land stewardship we perform. Your purchase dollars help us do good things!



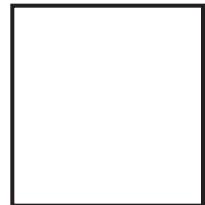
Seven Ponds Nature Center

3854 Crawford Road

Dryden, MI 48428

810-796-3200

www.sevenponds.org



Fall Programs

September - October - November 2025

Autumn brings crisp, cool air, and glorious colors to the landscape, making it a wonderful season to visit Seven Ponds. Check out the line-up of fun and informational programs below, and join us as we celebrate the season. Programs are \$3 for members and \$5 for non-members unless otherwise noted. **Pre-registration is required for all programs unless otherwise noted, and registering online is quick and easy.** Visit sevenponds.org to register.

September

Backyard Foraging

Saturday, September 6, 2:00 pm

You don't have to travel far to forage. There's a whole world of wild edibles in your backyard! A naturalist will lead a walk around the nature center to learn about some edible plants you could easily find on your own. We'll also get to try some tasty treats made with wild edibles!



Party at the Ponds

Saturday, September 13, 11:00 am-5:00 pm

See website for complete details.

Invasive Species Work Day

Sunday, September 14, 2:00 pm

Join our Land Steward for an afternoon of working on non-native invasive plants around the center. Bring your own work gloves and water. We will provide all necessary tools.

Yoga at the Ponds with Peaceful Moon Yoga

Thursdays, September 18 & 25, 6:00 - 7:00 pm

Unwind, rejuvenate and relax with Cat Minolli and the 'Peaceful Moon' series. These classes are designed for newcomers and beginning yoga students and/or those who wish to become re-acquainted with the practice. Participants will experience the mind, body, spirit connection while learning basic yoga poses in a serene environment. You don't have to be able to touch your toes or twist into a pretzel to participate, however many postures are done from a seated or prone position on the floor. Participants should wear comfortable clothing and bring a yoga mat or a blanket. Pillows, additional blankets, and any other "creature comforts" are also welcome. Fee is \$15.00 per session or \$50.00 for the full four-week series.

Night Hike

Saturday, September 20, 8:00 pm

Come experience Seven Ponds from a new perspective! Even if you're familiar with Seven Ponds during the day, it's entirely different once night falls. We'll let our eyes adjust to the darkness and go on a hike, enjoy the stars, and maybe see some nocturnal creatures!

Explore the Microverse

Sunday, September 21, 2:00pm

Discover new worlds as we search for the teeny-tiny treasures of nature! We'll provide magnifying glasses to take on our hike, and then we'll bring some of the treasures we find inside to get an even better look with our microscopes.

Sustainability Series: Upcycle Your Closet

Saturday, September 27th, 1:00pm

Do you have any clothes that you still love, but have seen better days? Bring your stained, hole-y, in-need-of-a-touch-up clothes and we'll use fabric, patches, and stamps to give them a second life. You provide the clothes, we provide everything else! Members: \$5.00, Non-Members: \$7.00

October

Trek the Trails!

Tuesday & Thursday mornings throughout October

See page 2 of this edition of *Heron Tracks* for complete details.

Yoga at the Ponds with Peaceful Moon Yoga

Thursdays, October 2 & 9, 6:00-7:00 pm

See September for the full yoga program description.

Fee is \$15.00 per session or \$50.00 for the full four-week series.

Enchanted Woodland

Saturday, October 4 - see flier insert for complete details.

Beginner Fall Watercolor Landscape Class

Saturday, October 11, 10:00 am - 12:30 pm

Join Anne Estelle as she teaches everyone how to make their

own lovely fall landscape watercolor painting. Anne is a local retired elementary teacher who has painted with watercolors for the last seven years and has had her work featured at Gallery 194 in Lapeer. She looks forward to sharing her love of watercolor painting with others! This class is intended for adult students. All supplies are included.



Mushroom Walk

Saturday, October 18, 3:00 pm

Fungi come in a spectacular variety of shapes, colors, textures, and sizes! Join us on a walk to see how many kinds we can find. You might be surprised by just how much we'll see.

Sustainability Series: Water

Sunday, October 19, 1:00 pm

Do you know where your water comes from? Or where it goes? Let's find out together! Join a naturalist for an exploration of our local water. We will take a little hike, search for aquatic animals, and test for water quality.

Nature Journaling

Saturday, October 25, 2:00 pm

Nature journaling is one of the best ways to hone your observational skills and learn about the outdoors. A naturalist will lead a nature journaling workshop and showcase some favorite strategies and techniques. Supplies will be provided, but you are welcome to bring your own journal to work in. This program is open to all skill levels, it's all about the process not the product!

Autumn Hike in Jonathan Woods

Sunday, October 26, 2:00 pm

The cool, crisp days of autumn are upon us, and the big trees in Jonathan Woods should be ablaze in fall color. Take a walk through Jonathan Woods with one of our naturalists and enjoy the October air. We'll meet at the nature center and carpool over. Space is limited.

November

Paul's Woods Walk

Sunday, November 2, 10:00 am

Paul's Woods has something new to offer in every season. Let's explore the wonders of fall on a hike together!

Bioplastic Suncatchers

Saturday, November 8, 2:00 pm

Have you heard of bioplastics? Come learn about this exciting area of science from a naturalist. Then, we'll create some bioplastic of our own and use it to make a beautiful suncatcher!

Tower Tour

Sunday, November 9, 2:00pm

Let's go climb every tower at Seven Ponds! For this program we'll explore Paul's Woods, Earl's Prairie, and the North-80.

Sustainability Series: Scrap Collages

Saturday, November 15, 1:00 pm

Reusing materials is a critical part of sustainability. Bring your old magazines, newspapers, and books, or use some of ours, to create something new out of "scraps!" You can make a 2d collage to display on your walls, or you can bring an object to decorate instead (boxes, lamp shades, picture frames, etc.) Supplies will be provided, but please make use of any "scraps" you have at home!

Prairie Seed Collecting

Sunday, November 16, 1:00 pm

Want to add gorgeous, low-maintenance native wildflowers and grasses to your yard? Follow our naturalist on a walk in Earl's Prairie to collect unique local seeds that butterflies and other pollinators will love! Two small paper collection bags provided per person; bring your own additional collection containers if desired.

Black Bears: Shadows of the Forest

Saturday, November 22, 3:00pm

Have you ever wanted to learn more about the only bear species that calls Michigan home? Let's learn about their history, diet, behavior, and more.



Nature Center Interpretive Building Closure

Thursday and Friday, November 27-28

The Interpretive Building will be closed so the staff can enjoy Thanksgiving. As always, Seven Ponds members may enjoy the trails dawn to dusk.

Knee-High Naturalists Classes

Fridays

10:00 - 11:30 am

Fee: \$7.00 per child

For preschool children around 3 or 4 years old.

Come out and enjoy nature with your child. All classes include nature fun, like walks, crafts, games, stories, snacks, and so much more! Please make arrangements for your other children.

Please DRESS for the WEATHER

Space limited. Online registration required.

Things with Wings ~ September 12

Log Life ~ October 17

Rocks and Fossils ~ November 21

Nocturnal Animals ~ December 19

Critter Clues ~ January 16

Kindness is Key ~ February 20

Amazing Animals ~ March 20

Earth Day ~ April 17

Messy Mud ~ May 15

Pint-sized Explorers Classes

Wednesdays 10:00-10:45 am

Fee: \$7.00 per child

For children 1 or 2 years old.

Pint-Sized Explorers (1-2 years old) will have fun exploring nature with their adults. During this special time, toddlers and their adults will be outside exploring nature with the help of stories, songs, activities, and nature discovery. Please make arrangements for your other children.

Rocks

Wednesday, September 10th, 10:00-10:45 am

Acorns

Wednesday, October 8th, 10:00-10:45 am

Animal Homes

Wednesday, November 12th, 10:00-10:45 am

Please DRESS for the WEATHER

Space limited. Online registration required.

Nature Study Series for Homeschoolers

Seven Ponds Nature Center is an ideal outdoor classroom where children can experience nature first hand. In this series of programs, our experienced naturalists guide students toward an awareness and appreciation of our natural world, using hands-on activities, specimens, slide shows, and nature walks. These programs complement state science objectives and focus on ecological concepts.

Minecraft: Hands-on Mode

Wednesday, September 17, 2025 1:00 - 3:00 PM

Grades K-2 and 3-6

Minecraft can be a great way to get creative and learn about natural resources. In this Nature Study, we're bringing it to the real world! We'll learn about natural resources, practice design and engineering, and play Minecraft-inspired games and activities.

Wild Dogs of Michigan

Wednesday, October 15, 2025 1:00 - 3:00 PM

Grades K-2 and 3-6

Coyotes, foxes, and wolves, oh my! Michigan is home to four species of wild dogs. These often misunderstood animals play an important role in the ecosystem. We'll learn about their habits, explore predator-prey relationships, and get a close-up look at some of our taxidermy specimens.

Animal Ancestors

Wednesday, November 19, 2025 1:00 - 3:00 PM

Grades K-2 and 3-6

Do you have hazel eyes like your great-great-great grandma? Does curly hair run in the family? Just like us, animals have ancestors! We'll explore how animals have changed and adapted throughout Michigan's long natural history through fun activities and hands-on learning.

Please DRESS for the WEATHER

Space limited. Online registration required.

FALL BIRD WALKS

This fall we will offer three bird walks on Wednesday mornings, one for each month from September through November. Seven Ponds bird walks are open to birders of all skill and experience levels, and beginners are always welcome. Bring your binoculars, your enthusiasm, and be sure to dress for the weather. These bird walks are \$3 for Seven Ponds members, and \$5 for non-members, unless otherwise noted. Pre-registration is required, and bird walks are limited to ten (10) participants. Please note the start times below and arrive on time and ready to bird! We have Vortex 8x42 binoculars available for loan upon request. **NOTE: transportation to the birding destination is not provided, but carpooling may be an option.**

Fall Bird Walk #1

BEAR CREEK NATURE PARK

Wednesday, September 10, 8:00 AM

740 W Snell Road, Rochester MI 48306 (Oakland County)

FALL BIRD WALK #2

ORION OAKS COUNTY PARK

Wednesday, October 8, 8:00 AM

2301 Joslyn Road, Orion Township MI 48360

(Oakland County)

FALL BIRD WALK #3

SEVEN PONDS NATURE CENTER

Wednesday, November 12, 8:00 AM



UPCOMING SEVEN PONDS FIELD TOURS

Birding Southwest Colorado's Mesa Verde Country

May 9-16, 2026

A birding tour with Seven Ponds Nature Center and Rocky Mountain Birding



Adirondack Mountains

Late Spring 2026

A natural history field tour with Seven Ponds Nature Center

Birding, botany, and culture of the Adirondacks

Registration for both of these field tours opens Tuesday, January 6, 2026.

Visit the nature center's website for full field tour itineraries and registration information as it becomes available.