



Heron Tracks

The Quarterly Newsletter of Seven Ponds Nature Center

VOLUME 59 NUMBER 1 • SPRING EDITION • MARCH—MAY 2026

COMMUNITY MEMORY

Article & Artwork by Adrianna Allen

Every year, but especially at the beginning of spring, I eagerly await the signs of the seasons. While the spring melt of ice and snow can last for weeks, many of nature's wonders live far briefer lives. Those subtle changes are the ones I treasure most. I check my pollinator garden every day so I won't miss the ephemeral bloom of bloodroot (*Sanguinaria canadensis*). I lay on the same mossy log of my backyard vernal pool during the first spring thaw, hoping to glimpse aquatic isopods stirring beneath the icy waters. I sit quietly at the forest's edge, straining my ears to catch the first trills of Western chorus frog (*Pseudacris triseriata triseriata*) or chuckles of Wood frog (*Rana sylvatica*). Each sound and sight of flora and fauna has its designated place in the carefully timed symphony of spring.

I believe that the melody of nature's seasonal events can only be fully appreciated if you are a long-term resident of a particular environment. That is not to say you do not value these events if you have less experience, but you will not have the same catalog of memories for comparison; you have only heard the symphony's composition a handful of times. You might not recognize a missing note or a shift in tempo. This is where **community memory** becomes an invaluable resource.

I have lived in the same small lake community for 30 years, but my family and neighbors have been immersed in our environment stretching back much further. My mother has witnessed the entire life cycle of our spruce forest. When she was little, she could leap over the newly planted saplings. Now, she watches as the high winds of our ever-intensifying storms knock over the 70-foot giants like dominos. I can only remember the spruces as a mature forest and cannot picture this pillar of my environment as the barren field it began as in my mother's youth. Nor can either of us fully imagine the majesty of the old growth forest that graced our hills when the Anishinaabek were the only humans here.

Our older neighbors carry a wealth of natural history memories, largely brought to the surface as an aside of their childhood stories. I love hearing about their joyous adventures in nature as they fished, swam, climbed trees,

explored creeks, and rode horses to school. Only recently have I realized that the natural world they experienced as children is not the environment I know. The life of the lakes, forests, and fields I hold so dear seems to be an echo of what it was 30, 50, 80, 100 years ago. A lakeside lawn used to be a wetland full of muskrats... now I know of only two huts on the entire lake and feel lucky to spot a rippled V in the water. Every summer, minks would dart from the forest's swamps to play along the lake's edge... it has been almost ten years since we have seen one. As boys, my uncles would wander the fields and forests, enjoying the freedoms and innocence of a summer so typical for their generation. They tell stories of handfuls of many species of snakes, excitedly depicting their encounters with massive black rat snakes (*Pantherophis obsoleta obsoleta*) whose home they ventured too close to... now I might cross paths with one or two garter snakes (*Thamnophis sirtalis sirtalis*) every summer. What about those dark ribbons of migrating blackbirds whose flocks my father claims would stretch for miles, blotting out the sun? I have never witnessed such wonder.

Are these stories only of loss? No. Neighbors sigh with relief at the recovery of American Robin (*Turdus migratorius*) and Eastern Bluebird (*Sialia sialis*) numbers. Trumpeter Swans (*Cygnus buccinator*) and Sandhill Cranes (*Antigone*



continued on page 3

Ramblings from a Nature Center Executive Director...

Last year for the staff book study we read *Braiding Sweetgrass* by Robin Wall Kimmerer. This book created the opportunity for the staff to have wonderful conversations, new perspectives and insights, and reinforced, I think, how important our work at Seven Ponds is. One of the dominant themes in the book is reciprocity, especially between us and nature. This is the mutual give and take, where we give back as much as we take... a balance of interconnectedness between giving and receiving. This was not new to us. I mean, it is the business of the nature center; building connections between people and nature. Hopefully, showing people how to give back as much as our Earth gives to us.

Since the start of 2026, I have been thinking about reciprocity within our human community, and how I... we... the nature center... can give back as much as has been given to us from our community of members, visitors, donors, and neighbors.

An example of a wonderful "give" to the nature center came from the amazing Friends of Seven Ponds, aka "The Stingers". Through their hard work and fundraising, they were able to give us a \$20,000 gift to make repairs and paint the outside of the interpretative building. So, what do we give back in return? I think what we give is a wonderful space for everyone to feel safe. A place of solace. A place to rest your weary bones. A place to let the balm of nature restore you for just a little while.

The nature center would not be what it is without our community, and I hope we give back as much as we are given. This spring, as we polish the building and put the Stingers' funds to good use, come and rest here awhile. Let the renewal of spring soften some of the hard edges, and let the return of green rejuvenate our souls.

Take care and see you soon,

Carrie

2026 Native Plant Sale Saturday, May 16 9:00 am to 2:00 pm

There will be a large selection of native woodland and prairie flowers, grasses, shrubs, and trees available for purchase. Knowledgeable staff and volunteers will be on site to help with any native plant or gardening questions.

If you are interested in the plant list, please contact Seven Ponds closer to the sale date, as we will not have a final list until just prior to the sale.



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

Heron Tracks

is published quarterly by Seven Ponds Nature Center
a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation
www.sevenponds.org 810-796-3200

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:

Office Manager:

Naturalists:

Weekday Receptionist & Gift Shop Manager:

Weekend Receptionist/Seasonal Maintenance/Website Manager:

Maintenance Engineer - Buildings & Grounds:

Carrie Spencer

Amy Sadler

Adrianna Allen, Madison Christol, Nico Bradford

Gina Stoldt

Damian Goidich

Del Hunsinger

canadensis) have begun to loudly announce their visit as new residents to our lake every spring. Migrating monarchs (*Danaus plexippus*) have found our small neighborhood plantings of milkweed. These are welcome signs of nature's resilience, however, the loss seems to still far outweigh the gain.

So, is it my cynical imagination or the glorification of my community's childhood memories that make it seem like there is significant loss of biodiversity? Change is an inherent property of nature, but it does not feel like this speed or scale is normal. What does the unemotional, skeptical process of science say?

Years of rigorous, peer-reviewed conservation research confirm that this is NOT normal. In North America, our overall bird population has dropped by about 3 billion birds since 1970, which means we are now missing 1 in 4 birds (Audubon, Cornell). Approximately 60% of Michigan's reptile and amphibian species are facing significant population declines (HRM BMP). Even invertebrate species are being impacted. Recent studies from Colorado and Germany demonstrate losses of over 70% insect abundance within the last 20-30 years (Hallmann et al. 2017; Prior 2025). Overall, the rate of global species loss has been estimated to be at least 100 times faster than the usual background rate of loss that occurred before humans (The Royal Society).

Research revealing statistics like these is vital for helping all of us recognize the influence of something called **shifting baseline syndrome**. In a 2018 *Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment* paper, the authors explain:

"With ongoing environmental degradation at local, regional, and global scales, people's accepted thresholds for environmental conditions are continually being lowered. In the absence of past information or experience with historical conditions, members of each new generation accept the situation in which they were raised as being normal."

Like my community examples above, what I perceive as "normal" in my environment is not what was "normal" in the past. Because most change in our environment occurs slowly, it can be difficult to perceive the importance of subtle changes when our lifespans are so short compared to these natural processes. To better understand this phenomenon, sometimes I like to imagine my perception of the environment through the eyes of animals. For example, a Black-capped Chickadee (*Parus atricapillus*) living an average lifespan of 2-3 years, won't know that a week of 80 degree Fahrenheit temperatures in February is not "normal" in Michigan, only that her stomach feels like it should be more full of insects that haven't yet hatched. I am left to wonder, in what ways am I the chickadee? What am I missing that I don't even know that I should miss? Are we already experiencing Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* but are unable or unwilling to recognize the loss?

Why have I brought you to this dark alley of environmental woes? Certainly not for fun. I bring us here because I don't think we can move forward until we collectively acknowledge the problems we face. One of our greatest strengths as humans is our ability to achieve when we work together. Only by acknowledging issues like shifting baseline syndrome can we address them. So this spring, let's bear witness together, cherishing all the subtle seasonal shifts. Let's learn from our invaluable community memories and become more resilient through our shared experiences. Let's listen carefully to the symphony.

As a newcomer to the world of Seven Ponds, I want to learn from your community memory! Do you remember when beavers lived in the North-80? Are the migrating birds different? How have the invasive species changed? Have you seen native species return to improved habitat? Please share your story with us next time you stop by the nature center, or send an email to aallen@sevenponds.org.



Volunteer News

We are thankful for the time spent in service to the nature center by several dedicated volunteers who helped with a variety of tasks this past winter

- **Bob Albrecht** – for cleaning and maintaining the fish tank in Critter Corner, and feeding and caring for the critters
- **Marianna Fitzgerald, Griffin Barkdoll, Bob Kelly, and Danielle Brigati** – for continuing and expanding the work on the library project
- **Luke Oliver and Austin Hoffman** – for helping to clean the bird feeders
- **Bobbi Green and Sherry Smith-Perry** – for cleaning the Discovery Room
- **Michelle Maust** – for teaching Pint-sized Explorers how to have fun exploring nature with their adults
- **Veleta Carpenter, Marianna Fitzgerald, Jeff Nedwick, Richard Klee, and Nancy Kautz** – for attending ASNAT training classes
- The **Board of Directors** – for their dedication to the nature center and various meetings and activities including Holiday Auction and Christmas Party
- **Anita Spencer, Paula LaFountain, Calysta Saxton, Jack Lintol, Nathan Spencer and Stingers - Chris Baker, Paige Bannister, Dianne Bishop, Bobbi Green, Linda Hartman, Barbara Holden, Joyce Korson, Mylene Neal, Beth Piatkowski, Julia Raymond, Laurie Sisco, Marci Stewart, and Kay Ullman** – for helping to make our annual Holiday Auction & Christmas Party a success again this year
- **Friends of Herbs** – for making the festive and beautiful wreath and swags to decorate for Holiday Auction & Christmas Party, and for the delicious lunch they prepared
- Thanks to **Allen Rosenbalm, Curtis Allen, Jayme Fields, Jeff Nedwick, Marianna Fitzgerald, Matt Smith, Nancy Kautz, and Veleta Carpenter** - for helping with our annual WinterFest event and making it a success.

AND ADDITIONAL THANKS TO:

- Our **Potluck Donors** – for providing all of the amazing dinner and dessert dishes
- **Mutch's Hidden Pines** (Lapeer) for the donation of a wonderful Christmas tree for display at the nature center. We appreciate your continued generosity and support!
- The **Seven Ponds Beekeeping Club** and **Seven Ponds Photo Club** for their generous Special Gifts donation.
- All our **members and supporters** for their donations of items for our silent auction and live auction at our Holiday Auction & Christmas Party. You helped us raise a lot of dollars!
- **E.G. Nick's** (Lapeer) for providing a keg of beer and to **Rowley's Grocery** (Attica) for loaning us a keg tap for our Holiday Auction & Christmas Party.
- **Crooked Creek Farms** (Lapeer) for keeping us well stocked with beef suet for our bird feeders. The birds thank you as well, especially on the coldest winter days!
- Our **Secret Santa** - the staff thanks you very much for the wonderful gifts! We appreciate you, Santa!



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 at asadler@sevenponds.org or call the nature center at 810-796-3200.

Seven Ponds Tributes

Memorials, Buy-a-Tree, In Honor

In memory of Margaret Alyea

- Tess and Greg Cox
- Claire and Steve Marshall

In memory of Elaine Clampitt

- Candace Clampitt and Shea Ennin

In memory of Henry

- Ginger Gellmen

In memory of Paul Johnson

- Carole Johnson

In memory of Mike Mercier

- Anne Whipple

In memory of Philip Nash

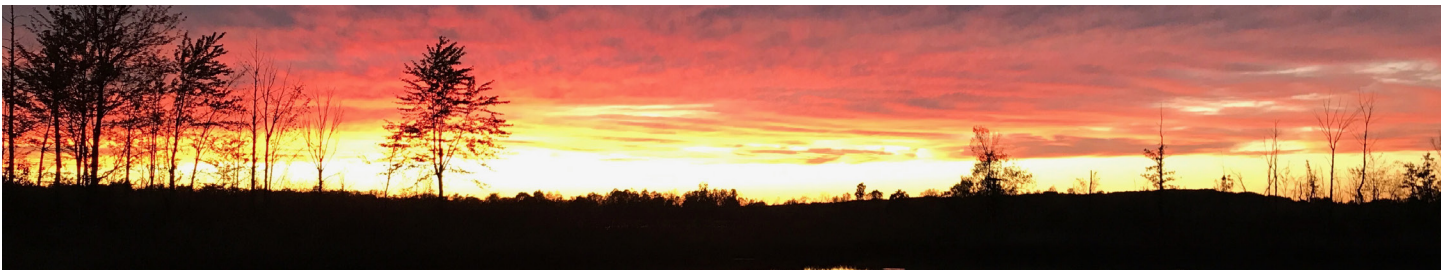
- Ellen Nash

In memory of Sue Ann Vermillion

- Robert and Sharon Winstead

In honor of Marianna Fitzgerald

- Tom and Leslie Weyhrich



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 helping to educate and inform visitors of the nature center, contact Amy Sadler at 810-796-3200 or asadler@sevenponds.org.

MARCH 19

Tips and Tricks of the Trails

Every group we lead outside is unique. What activities can we do to refocus active groups and maintain attention? Let's learn together!

APRIL 16

Ziibiwing Center Field Trip

Pre-registration required! Join us for a day trip to the Saginaw Chippewa Tribe's Ziibiwing Center of Anishinabe Culture and Lifeways. Carpooling options will be available. If you plan to attend, please email Adrianna at aallen@sevenponds.org by March 19th.

MAY 21

Take A Hike

How do you feel on our trails? Let's talk about our relationship with nature, and the techniques we use to build a safe learning space for both people and wildlife.



Community Connection

By Madison Christol

For the spring, I'd like to highlight the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's NestWatch program. This citizen science project tracks reproductive trends in cavity nesting birds. Participants use human-made birdhouses for weekly visits from April to August. Each week things like nest status, adult activity, number of eggs, and progression of hatched young are recorded. The data is then put into nestwatch.org where scientists can access it for research.

What can this data tell us? Lots of things! By studying the past and present breeding success of different species, scientists can predict the future and give recommendations to keep populations healthy. Widespread monitoring can help pin down problems affecting birds such as invasive species expansion, loss of habitat, and climate change. It can also tell us if birds are expanding their breeding ranges.

This program is great for those interested in becoming more tuned in to the nature in our backyards and communities. Nestwatch.org has helpful tips for creating and placing your nest boxes, including ways to keep predators from finding their way inside. They even have tips and tricks on how to monitor your boxes without disturbing the nesting pair. Not sure what nest you're looking at? No problem! The project's website also covers nest identification, bird behavior, incubating times, and more. If you're worried about building your boxes, check out Seven Ponds' own Rookery Gift Shop where we sell pre-assembled nest boxes.

You've probably seen some of ours while visiting the nature center because we have over 80 nest boxes spread throughout our trails and fields. That's a lot of boxes! We rely on volunteers to collect data from each and every box to make sure all of our birds get counted. If you are interested in volunteering for Seven Ponds' NestWatch, please fill out a volunteer form either in person or at sevenponds.org.

Happy data collecting!



Critter Corner Giving Tree

A HUGE thank you to everyone who donated to the 2025 Critter Corner Giving Tree! With your generosity, we exceeded our \$1,000 goal! Your donations will help buy food and equipment all year, allowing us to continue to give our critter friends the special care that they deserve.

Thank you to **Jonathan McDowell, Jay Geitz, Adam Rose, the Schienle Family, Hudson, Karen Kunkler, Marianna Fitzgerald, Lydia Zenero, Anita Spencer, Meriah, Beatrice and Magnus, Veleta Carpenter, Rey Marie, Sharon Korte, Wyatt, Marci Stewart, Kathleen Ambrose, Carrie Spencer, Erica Stimac, Charlie Turner, Tony Darin, Franklin Adcox, Chris Baker, Sara Betker, Doris Applebaum, Courtney Bradshaw, Melissa Christol, and our many anonymous donors.**



CornellLab  **NestWatch**

Around The Center

Grants & Gifts

Seven Ponds has graciously been given a gift of \$10,000 from the **Lapeer Optimist Club**! This gift will be used to fund field trips to us for Lapeer County students, as well as cover transportation costs for the students bussing. Lapeer Optimist Club is a great friend of Seven Ponds and their partnership has allowed us to see thousands of kids over the years. THANK YOU, Lapeer Optimist, for your continued support!

This spring we will be able to complete two much needed projects with the help of a grant awarded to us from the **Ralph L. and Winifred E. Polk Foundation**. With this \$5,000 grant, a new cedar split-rail fence will replace the old fence around the Herb Garden. Though we will miss the very cool lichen found on the old fence, a structurally sound fence is much more important. In addition to the fence, funds will be used to add a concrete floor to our pavilion. The Polk Foundation has also been a great partner, and their partnership has allowed us to complete many projects at Seven Ponds, like the boardwalk through Paul's Woods and the deer fence around the Butterfly Garden.

Holiday Auction Recap

In early December we held our annual Holiday Auction & Christmas Party. Just over 160 members and their guests attended the event, which is both a fundraiser and a celebration. The nature center was converted to an auction house and party place, and it sure did seem like folks had a good time! Well over 100 items were claimed during our popular silent auction, where the competitive bidding spirit kicked in just before the final bell rang. At that time we moved into the multi-purpose room, where a nice array of items and experiences were put on the auction block by professional auctioneer **Brian Rowley** of **Rowley's Auction Services** (Attica) who once again donated his services for our cause. Special thanks to our wonderful **Stingers** for all the work they put in to help make the evening a success. When the dust settled, the nature center netted almost \$19,000 during the evening. Thank you to all who supported the nature center by donating items, sharing your yummy food, and attending the event. Mark your calendars for Saturday, December 5, 2026 - we hope to see you there!

Special Gifts Campaign

The final six weeks of 2025 marked our Special Gifts Campaign - an opportunity for members and friends of the nature center to show their support with a monetary gift. This year, with the help of all of you and the rest of our community, we raised over \$38,000! These dollars help us finish off the year in good standing, and kickstart the next fiscal year, providing critical operating funds to help ensure the nature center's ability to continue fulfilling our mission of connecting people with nature and being responsible stewards of these woods and waters. Thank you to all who supported Seven Ponds during our Special Gifts Campaign.

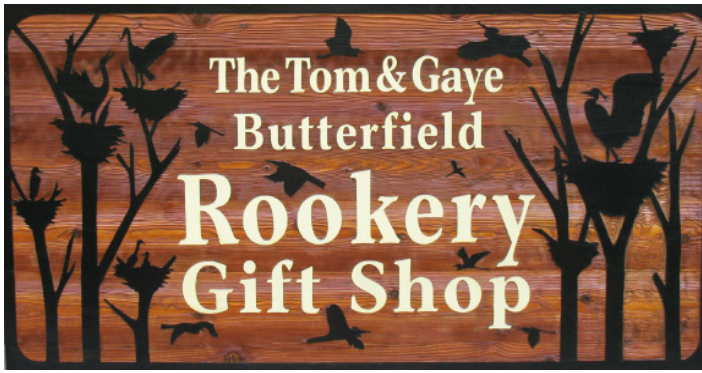
Stingers Rummage Sale

The **Stingers' Annual Rummage Sale** will be held Friday and Saturday, June 19th and 20th, 9:00 am - 4:00 pm at the nature center. A special "members only" pre-sale will take place Saturday, June 13, 9:00 am - 4:00 pm.

ITEMS ARE NEEDED! The Stingers will be accepting items for the sale from **March 1 to June 14** during our regular open hours, Tuesday through Sunday, 9:00 am - 5:00 pm. Donations can include clean clothing, household goods, toys, tools, and other items. **We CANNOT accept baby cribs, appliances, television sets, computer equipment, or building materials.** All revenue generated by the rummage sale directly benefits the nature center by helping us fulfill our mission.

WinterFest 2026 Wrap Up

Despite the day's temperatures being colder than Antarctica, WinterFest participants still bundled up and braved the cold! Attendees kept warm by playing in the fluffy snow, marching through the prairie in snowshoes, and roasting marshmallows over the fire. Meanwhile, there were adventures to be had indoors, as participants created pinecone bird feeders, searched for tiny critters in pond water, felt owl feathers, and provided our Blanding's turtle with the proper praise. Thank you to everyone who joined us this year, and we look forward to next year's WinterFest adventures!



THINK GLOBALLY, SHOP LOCALLY

Thank you to all who came out to the Rookery to shop with us over the winter holiday season. Your support of the nature center means so much to us!

Here at Seven Ponds we are enjoying the warmer temps and the glimpses of green things sprouting around the property. This is a great time to grab a field guide and see what indications of Spring you can discover. The skunk cabbage and the Red-Winged Blackbird are among our favorite signs of the seasonal change.

Make sure you are ready for spring migration with a pair of Vortex Binoculars. These binoculars are top of the line, have a lifetime warranty, and are affordable enough for you to have a pair for the house and one for your vehicle so you

never miss a bird! Come take a look!

This is a great time of year to give the gift of a membership to Seven Ponds Nature Center. Give us a call or stop out and see us for more information or to purchase a Gift Membership. Stop in often to see what we are up to!

The Rookery Gift Shop is open during our normal business hours, Tuesday through Sunday, 9:00 am to 5:00 pm.

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

Address Service Requested

Spring Programs

March - April - May 2026

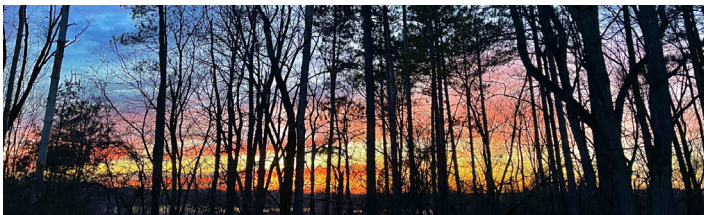
Spring has arrived! As the ponds thaw and the forest wakes up from its winter slumber, it's a great time to get outdoors and explore. Seven Ponds offers something for everyone, from preschoolers and families to adults and seniors. Mark your calendar for some programs, walks, and classes. **Space is limited, and all programs require advance registration through our website unless otherwise noted.** Programs are \$3.00 for members and \$5.00 for non-members unless otherwise noted. Visit sevenponds.org to register.

March

Sunset on the Ponds

Saturday, March 7th, 5:30 PM

It's no secret that Seven Ponds experiences some spectacular sunsets all year round! Join a naturalist for a peaceful walk ending with a stunning view of the sunset to kick off the spring season.



Flower Press Workshop

Saturday, March 21st, 1:00 PM

Assemble and decorate your own flower press! Perfect for preserving plants and learning to appreciate the beauty of nature. This program is for ages 13+. Cost: Members: \$15, Non-members: \$17

Springing Into Nature Walk

Sunday, March 29th, 2:00 PM

Come enjoy a naturalist-guided walk on our beautiful trails. We'll talk about all things spring, including what our plants and animals are up to this time of year. Drop-ins welcome.

Yoga at the Ponds with Peaceful Moon Yoga

Beginners/Basic Yoga Class

Thursdays, March 19, 26, 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, addition-

al blankets, and any other "creature comforts" are also welcome. Fee is \$15.00 per session or \$50.00 for the 4-week series (March - April).

April

Yoga at the Ponds with Peaceful Moon Yoga

Beginners/Basic Yoga Class

Thursdays, April 2, 9, 6:00-7:00 PM

See March for program description. Fee: \$15.00 per session or \$50.00 for the 4-week series (March - April).

Fairy Houses

Saturday, April 4, 1:00 PM

Add some whimsy and magic to your life by making a fairy house out of natural materials. This craft workshop will start with a short walk to collect supplies and talk about responsible collecting practices. Other crafting materials and tools will be provided. This program is for those age 10+. Cost: Members: \$5, Non-members: \$7



Search For Salamanders

Saturday, April 11, 1:00 PM

It's the perfect time of year to look for salamanders! Join us as we look for and learn about some of Michigan's most interesting amphibians. We'll meet at the nature center and carpool over to Jonathan Woods. This program is for participants age 10+. Space is limited.

Earth Day BioBlitz

Saturday & Sunday, April 18 & 19, 9:00 AM-5:00 PM

Celebrate Earth Day by helping us catalog the amazing biodi-

iversity found at Seven Ponds! Use iNaturalist to join our 2026 Spring BioBlitz project, and add your observations as you hike the trails (self-guided). Besides the regular cost of admission, this family-friendly event is free to participate.

The Amphibians of Vernal Pools

Saturday, April 18, 10:00 AM

Enter the springtime world of vernal pools! We'll meet some of the amazing amphibians who live in our indoor Critter Corner. Then we'll go on a hike to see what vernal pool treasures we can find.

Seven Ponds Volunteer Fair

Friday, April 24, 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM

Are you looking for opportunities to give back to your community? Are you looking to meet new people who share your interests in nature and the environment? Seven Ponds will be hosting a Volunteer Fair to give you a chance to learn about all the different volunteer and club opportunities available. This is a free event. Please register online. Drop-ins are welcome.

Junk Journal Workshop

Saturday, April 25, 1:00 PM - 4:00 PM

Join local artist Jayme Fields in creating nature themed junk journals. Junk journaling is a fun, creative outlet, similar to scrapbooking and nature journaling. All supplies provided. This program is for those age 14+. Cost: Members: \$10, Non-members: \$12.

Invasive Species Work Day

Sunday, April 26, 2:00 PM

Join our Land Steward for an afternoon of working on non-native invasive plants around the center. Bring your own water bottle. We will provide all necessary tools. No fee. Drop-ins welcome.

May

Woodland Wildflower Walk

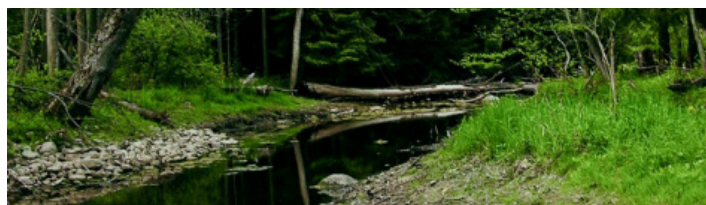
Saturday, May 2, 3:00 PM

Come enjoy the beauty of Michigan's spring ephemerals. From trillium to trout lilies, join a naturalist on a walk through our Woodland Wildflower area and learn about these special blooms.

Beginners/Basic Yoga Class

Thursdays, May 7, 14, 21, 28, 6:00-7:00 PM

See March for program description. Fee is \$15.00 per session or \$50.00 for the 4-week series.



MNA Birds and Blooms Field Trip Day

Saturday, May 2nd, 7:30 AM to 5:00 PM

Join a naturalist for a day trip to two Michigan Nature Association sanctuaries along the east I-69 corridor. We will explore the birds and wildlife of the James and Alice Brennan Memorial Nature Sanctuary, stop for lunch at the Raven Café in Port Huron, and then search for spring ephemeral wildflowers at the Stephen M Polovich Memorial Plant Preserve. This is an all-day trip; we will depart the nature center at 7:30 am and return by 5:00 pm. A carpool van will be provided for transportation. Participants are individually responsible for the cost of lunch. **Pre-registration is required and closes on Thursday, April 23rd.** Cost: Non-members \$20, Members \$18

Eco Day

Saturday, May 9, 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM

See flier insert for details. Registration required.

Native Plant Sale

Saturday, May 16, 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM

See *Heron Tracks*, page 2 for details. No registration required.

Family Pond Dipping

Saturday, May 23, 2:00 PM

Have you ever wondered what lives underwater? There's a lot more down there besides fish! Join one of our naturalists as we pond dip for aquatic invertebrates down at our dock.

Naturescape Play Day

Saturday, May 30, 2:00 PM

Meet new friends and have fun outdoors at our Naturescape; it's a play date! There will be naturalist-led activities and lawn games. This program is best for children from 3-6 years old and their adults.

Paddle the Ponds

Sunday, May 31, 10:00 AM

Come along on a naturalist-led canoe paddle. We'll journey on a peaceful paddle watching for fish, turtles, birds, and more! Minimum: 5 years old to ride and 10 years old to paddle. Space is limited.



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. Fee: \$4.00 per person. Register for the Nature Study Series for Homeschoolers sessions online at sevenponds.org. **Registration opens March 3, 2025 at 9:00 AM.**

BIZARRE NATURE

Wednesday, March 18th, 2026, 1:00 pm-3:00 pm

Grades K-2 and Grades 3-6

Nature can be bizarre! We will look at the icky, weird, and interesting facts of animals in nature. Through their different abilities, cool colors, or strange body parts, we will explore how these animals survive in their environments. We will also look at some of the nature center's "bizarre" specimens.

BOTANY BASICS

Wednesday, April 15th, 2026, 1:00 pm-3:00 pm

Grades K-2 and Grades 3-6

From tiny seeds to towering trees, plants tell incredible stories! We will learn some fundamentals about botany, meet some plants around the nature center, and have fun with themed crafts and activities!

DEATH EATERS

Wednesday, May 20th, 2026, 1:00 pm-3:00 pm

Grades K-2 and Grades 3-6

What happens when something in nature dies? For many animals, the end of one food chain is just the beginning! We will learn about food chains and food webs, with a special focus on decomposers.

Knee-high Naturalists

Fridays 10:00 am - 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.

Space limited. Online registration required.
Please dress for the weather!

Amazing Animals ~ March 20

Earth Day ~ April 17

Messy Mud ~ May 15

Pint-sized Explorers

Wednesdays 10:00 am - 10:45 am

Fee: \$7.00 per child

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.

Space limited. Online registration required.
Please dress for the weather!

Move Like An Animal ~ March 11

Fur, Feathers, Scales, and Slime ~ April 8

Who Lives in A Tree? ~ May 13

SPRING BIRD WALKS

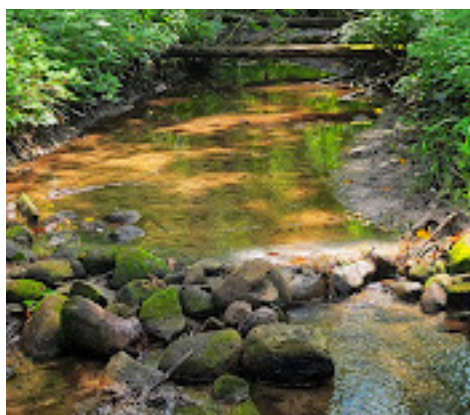
This spring we will offer two bird walks and one birding trip from March through May. Seven Ponds bird walks are open to birders of all skill and experience levels, and beginners are always welcome. Bring your binoculars, your enthusiasm, and be sure to dress for the weather. These bird walks are \$3 for Seven Ponds members, and \$5 for non-members, unless otherwise noted. Pre-registration is required, and bird walks are limited to twelve (12) or fewer 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.

Spring Bird Walk #1

**SUTHERLAND NATURE
SANCTUARY**

**SATURDAY, MARCH 28TH, 2026,
8:00AM**

This Lapeer County hot spot is a great place to spend a morning. The quiet trails provide plenty of different habitats to explore in search of our feathered friends.



Spring Bird Trip #2

PORT CRESCENT STATE PARK

**SATURDAY, APRIL 25TH, 2026,
7:00AM - 2:30PM**

We will leave the nature center at 7:00am and carpool up to Port Crescent State Park for a morning of birding along the Lake Huron shoreline. We'll keep an eye out for any migrating raptors and other birds throughout the dunes and forests. Participants are encouraged to bring a lunch, water, and any snacks they may want throughout the day.



Spring Bird Walk #3

SEVEN PONDS NATURE CENTER

**SUNDAY, MAY 10TH, 2026,
8:00AM**

It's officially migration season! Let's hit the trails and explore all of the different habitats Seven Ponds has to offer.



2026 SEVEN PONDS FIELD TOURS

**Copper Country Adventure:
Exploring the Birds, Botany and Rocks
of the Keweenaw Peninsula**

September 20-25, 2026

**A birding and natural history tour with
Seven Ponds Nature Center**

Join us as we travel north to explore the "upper peninsula" of the Upper Peninsula. A superior experience awaits as we venture out from Copper Harbor to discover the birds, plant life, geology, waterfalls, and cultural uniqueness that makes the Keweenaw Peninsula so special. Check our website for more details, including the tour brochure and registration information.



Join Seven Ponds staff as we explore beautiful wild places. Let us do all the planning and take care of the trip logistics while you come along for a grand adventure! Registration for the tour opens Tuesday, May 5 at 9:00 AM. Space is limited and tours often fill quickly.