



# Heron Tracks

The Quarterly Newsletter of Seven Ponds Nature Center

VOLUME 58 NUMBER 2 • SUMMER EDITION • JUNE—AUGUST 2025

## Storytelling Rocks

*Article by Carrie Spencer*

Anyone who knows me understands I like rocks... no, I love rocks! I have rocks everywhere: in my house (almost every room), my car (friends worrying the rocks will become projectiles), in my coat pockets, in my gardens, and in my office at work. I like traveling to places that tend to have very cool geology, and rocks are the souvenirs I prefer to collect. Lucky for me, and everyone else that lives here, Michigan is very geologically interesting.

When traveling around Michigan, if you pay attention, the rocks will tell a story. The rocks tell us about volcanic eruptions, ancient creatures, shifting plates, and shallow seas. They paint a scene of a very different Michigan. One where Michigan is located south of the equator and the world's atmosphere has very little oxygen. Or what the lakes, hills, and strange, giant boulders, that seem to belong nowhere, could tell us about the glaciers that shaped Michigan. Our limestone-rich state tells us about the ancient sea that once covered Michigan, and all the fossils we find along our Great Lakes beaches, rivers, gravel drives, and even in our yards, tell us stories about the critters that once called Michigan home.

Let's take a little time travel tour through parts of Michigan. We'll start our tour in what will become the northwestern Upper Peninsula with a rock called BIF. Some of our oldest rock is found in the Keweenaw Peninsula moving down and east to Marquette, dating back about 2.5 to 3 billion years ago, during the Paleoproterozoic Period in the Precambrian Era. BIF (Banded Iron Formation), along with copper

and zinc, was formed at this time. This rock, with its layers of gray and red, tells us an amazing story of a very different Earth from our present day Earth.

Around 3 billion years ago, imagine an Earth with very little oxygen. Any oxygen that is around is combined with other elements, meaning there wasn't really any free oxygen moving around in the atmosphere, and instead of dissolved oxygen in the oceans, the water was full of dissolved iron. One of the main characters to this story, ancestors of cyanobacteria (blue-green algae), evolved, at some point, the ability to photosynthesize and make oxygen. Remember, the atmosphere doesn't have oxygen, so oxygen would have been poisonous to the cyanobacteria, as they had not yet evolved enzymes for living in an oxygenated environment. The cyanobacteria are protected, for a time, from their own poisonous oxygen waste because the oxygen rapidly oxidized with the dissolved iron in the water. The iron precipitated out of the sea water to form the dark bands of the BIF. Eventually there would be more oxygen than dissolved iron

in the shallow water, and the cyanobacteria would poison themselves along with the other living organisms, causing mass die offs. Their remains would settle on top of the iron layers at the sea bed creating the silica red layers (chert or jasper) in BIF. Most modern interpretations of this event (Great Oxidation Event) describe it taking over hundreds of millions of years. This is a very simple version of a very complicated story, and there are many



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## Reflections...

I was in my 17th year as a middle school teacher back in 2016, and I was struggling to remain the educator I believed my students deserved. I needed a change. Fortunately, I came upon the announcement that Seven Ponds Nature Center was seeking a new executive director. After talking it over with my wife, Laura, I decided to apply for the position.

That was more than eight years ago, and now it's my turn to step down – July 31 will be my final day as director at Seven Ponds. To paraphrase Henry David Thoreau, "I left (the ponds) for as good a reason as I went there. Perhaps it seemed to me that I had several more lives to live and could not spare any more time for that one." But, first, a reflection on the past eight years...

Looking back, it's easy to see just how fortunate I have been to be here at this wonderful place. I've had an incredible staff to work with. The board of directors has been supportive throughout. Longtime members and volunteers embraced me from the start. I have enjoyed coming to work every day.

Yes, there have been challenges. The boardwalk was in dire need of repair or replacement when I arrived, and for a time I wondered if we would ever find a way to meet that challenge. But we did – a major donor came through for us in a big way, and now we have a boardwalk of which we can all be proud. The pandemic hit hard, forcing building and trail closures, staff layoffs, canceled programs and fundraisers, and uncertainty. And yet we prevailed, as we always do. Seven Ponds has persevered for nearly six decades.

A great deal has been accomplished over the past eight years, but I know better than to claim it's all been my doing. It takes a team, and here at Seven Ponds we have an amazing team. Our members and supporters and volunteers come through for us again and again. Our staff is small but determined and mighty. Our board is filled with highly committed individuals who truly love Seven Ponds. I just happen to have "Executive Director" after my name. Somebody has to.

From the start I have said that I am privileged to stand on the shoulders of those who came before me. And now I'll gladly provide a shoulder for those who come after me. I look forward to supporting our next Executive Director in any way that I can. This place will always be a part of me, and I couldn't be happier to say that. But for now, I say farewell, my friends.

*It's time to move on, it's time to get going  
What lies ahead, I have no way of knowing  
But under my feet, baby, grass is growing  
It's time to move on, time to get going*

-Tom Petty, Time To Move On

Daryl Bernard  
Executive Director

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## Corks & Caps Fundraiser for Seven Ponds

Our annual Corks & Caps event will take place this year on Saturday, July 12 at the Metamora Golf and Country Club. This event is our most important fundraiser of the year, and we would love to see our supporters there.

As in the past, the evening will feature an amazing full course meal prepared just for us by the chef at the country club, along with a variety of wine and beer. Special features include raffles for a party tub and several custom-created baskets, a wine pull, and a live auction with a professional auctioneer.

This is always a fun evening and raises critical funds for the operation of the nature center. Registration will take place online at our website. Please check the event flier in this edition of *Heron Tracks* for additional information. Individual tickets are available, as well as sponsorships covering 2, 4, or 8 attendees. Space is limited and you won't want to miss out on this wonderful event.

## Stingers Rummage Sale

The Stingers' Annual Rummage Sale will be held Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, June 12, 13, 14 at the nature center from 9:00-4:00. A special "member's only" pre-sale will take place Saturday, June 7, 9:00-4:00. All items in the rummage sale are available on a donation basis - you name the price. The Stingers donate all proceeds from the sale to Seven Ponds to support environmental education programs for children, so please be generous. Mark your calendars and join us for this sale! **Item donations will be accepted through June 8.**

## Heron Tracks

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[www.sevenponds.org](http://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:

Director of Environmental Education:

Office Manager:

Naturalists:

Weekday Receptionist/Gift Store Manager:

Weekend Receptionist:

Maintenance - Buildings & Grounds:

Daryl Bernard

Carrie Spencer

Amy Sadler

Madison Christol, Adrianna Allen, Nico Bradford

Gina Stoldt

Damian Goidich

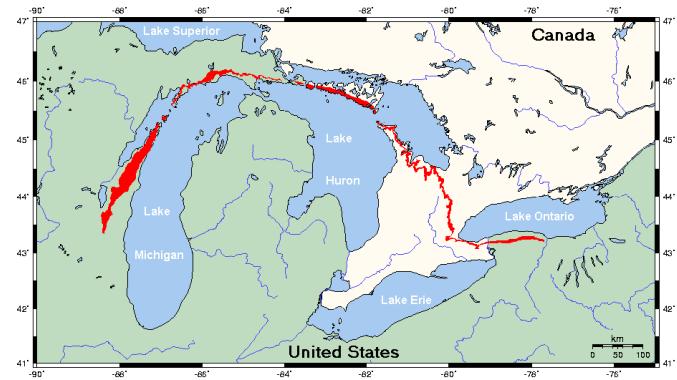
Del Hunsinger

different hypotheses as to why it took so long, but during this time Banded Iron Formations were formed and today this rock makes up more than 60% of the global iron ore reserves.

An excellent place to experience BIF is Jasper Knob in Ishpeming. This small mountain is made up entirely of Banded Iron Formation, and overlooks downtown Ishpeming. When looking at these rocks you can imagine an Earth where oxygen was poisonous and photosynthesis was just getting started, and a remarkable transformation was taking place.

Our next stop, on our time travel journey, takes place many, many years later into the Silurian Period during the Paleozoic Era (around 425 million years ago). The land that will become Michigan is under a warm shallow sea, south of the equator. In this sea was a huge chain of coral and sponge reefs, and it was full of life. The Earth's surface continued to change, and the Silurian Sea dried up leaving the reefs along with lots of calcium and magnesium-rich mud behind. The remains of the corals and sponges along with all the other critters that made the reefs their home would (over time and with pressure) turn into limestone and dolomite (or dolostone) bedrock. This would form what we know today as the Niagara Escarpment, a massive cliff face spanning nearly 1000 miles, stretching from Niagara Falls into Canada, across the lower edge of Michigan's Upper Peninsula, and into the Door Peninsula in Wisconsin.

Normally, we wouldn't see rock this old exposed at the Earth's surface. Instead, we would have to dig deep to encounter any of this ancient rock, but lucky for us Michigan and the Great Lakes were formed in a depression made by the Precambrian rock (think back to when BIF was being formed). Because of that basin (the Michigan Basin), all the bedrock that formed later would fill the basin like nesting bowls, and the oldest rocks could be seen at the exposed edges of the "bowls". After millions of years of erosion from ice (glaciers) and water, the weaker rock was worn away and the stronger dolomite (limestone plus magnesium) was left, and we are able to see this ancient rock at the surface.

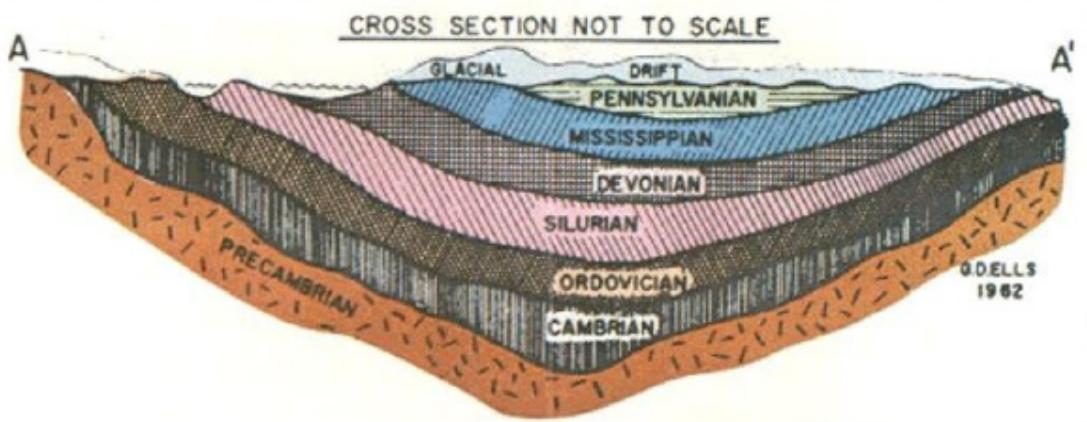


We see evidence of the Niagara Escarpment in Michigan when we visit Drummond Island or while looking at the limestone bluffs in Fayette State Park. Drummond Island has a very rare ecosystem called an alvar. This ecosystem was formed when glaciers stripped all the sediment away exposing limestone or dolomite pavement (bedrock), and over the thousands of years very little sediment has collected on the stone, making for a hostile environment of flooding or drought, hot and cold. The plants that make the alvar their home are very distinctive and pretty tough.

In the ghost town of Fayette (now a historic state park), you can see how our human history was affected by the limestone bluffs. This rock was used to build many of the structures, like the blast furnaces, in this old iron mining town, and the limestone was also used as flux to help remove many of the impurities found in the iron ore.

If you are able to visit someplace along the Niagara Escarpment, try to imagine those ancient reefs, the warm waters, and the incredible life; understand that ancient sea critters make up this rock.

I have BIF, limestone, and dolomite rocks scattered around my house and yard. Many hold places of honor in my gardens or on bookshelves, or are lovingly placed in piles in bowls on my porches or window sills. With many of the rocks, I still remember where I found them, who was with me, and how I felt at the moment I found them. These rocks not only have a geologic story, but they hold my story as well.



# Seven Ponds Appoints Next Executive Director

The Board of Directors is excited to announce that Carrie Spencer has been appointed as the next Executive Director of Seven Ponds Nature Center following the departure of current director Daryl Bernard at the end of July. Carrie will be the seventh director in the center's 58-year history.

Carrie started her tenure at Seven Ponds as a full-time naturalist in 2002 and has faithfully served the nature center ever since. In 2017 she became the center's Director of Environmental Education, overseeing the naturalist staff and coordinating the nature center's educational programming.

After graduating from Lake Orion High School, Carrie earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Fisheries and Wildlife from Michigan State University. Following college, she served as a seasonal naturalist at the Lewis Wint Nature Center at Independence Oaks County Park and at several state parks before joining the staff of Seven Ponds. Furthering her education and her interest in the nonprofit world, Carrie earned a Master's degree in Public Administration with a concentration in Non-Profit Administration and Social Entrepreneurship from UM-Flint in 2022.



Carrie's passion for observing, learning, and sharing nature with others has been the driving force behind her efforts during her 23 years at Seven Ponds. She has developed countless programs, written numerous articles for *Heron Tracks*, and interacted with tens of thousands of program attendees. Carrie's knowledge of natural history is vast, but she is ever curious, constantly learning, and always seeking new ways to connect people with the nature she loves.

After careful consideration, the Board determined that it would be impossible to find anyone with more love for and devotion to Seven Ponds and its mission than Carrie and were thrilled that she accepted their offer of the director position. "There is no one more qualified, creative, or dedicated to lead Seven Ponds," stated Board chairman Joanna Pease. "The entire Board is looking forward to a bright future for the center under Carrie's leadership."

Likewise, outgoing director Daryl Bernard was equally pleased with the decision, knowing that the nature center would be in very good hands after his time is up. "Carrie has been there with me from the start and has been the rock I lean upon for sage advice and sound ideas. I cannot imagine anyone better suited to take the reins than Carrie, and I am very excited for her to have this much deserved and well-earned opportunity – she is more than qualified," Bernard said. "Further, promoting from within the organization will result in a very smooth transition."

Regarding her time at the nature center and her upcoming promotion, Carrie said "I fell in love with Seven Ponds and her people many years ago, and I am so excited to help lead this amazing organization into the future. I am looking forward to partnering with our community, reacquainting myself with long-time supporters, and making new connections. I am eager to start this next chapter in my Seven Ponds' life."

Next time you're at the nature center, be sure to congratulate Carrie and offer her a warm welcome to her new position or send her an email at [cspencer@sevenponds.org](mailto:cspencer@sevenponds.org).

# Seven Ponds Tributes

Memorials, Buy-a-Tree, In Honor

## ***In honor of Michael Champagne***

• Dan & Ann Hayes

## ***In memory of Ed & Shirley Korman***

• Dan & Ann Hayes

## ***In memory of Mike Mercier***

• Dan & Ann Hayes

## ***Buy-a-Tree in memory of Jean Cheger***

• Daughters of the American Revolution - Nipissing Chapter

## ***Buy-a-Tree in memory of Mary Alice Cobb***

• Daughters of the American Revolution - Nipissing Chapter



## **Around the Center**

### **Grants & Gifts**

Seven Ponds received \$1,572.41 in earnings from our **La-  
peer County Community Foundation** endowment fund to be used to support school groups visiting the nature center.

The **Rochester Garden Club** sent a donation in the amount of \$300 in support of our programs.

The **Rochester Garden Club** also sent us a Special Projects donation of \$500 to help us purchase new books for our revamped natural history library. This club has supported numerous special projects at Seven Ponds over the years, and we truly appreciate their continued support.

The **Troy Garden Club** donated \$300 in support of our Forest of the Future tree planting.

We received a wonderful donation of \$7,500 from a **faithful supporter** to help cover the true cost of Camp Seven Ponds!

### **Here and there...**

Many thanks to the following for their generosity:

- To **all the folks** who dropped off items for our Stingers Rummage Sale.

### **Miller Pond Boardwalk Reconstruction**

Way back in 2002 an exciting addition was made to the trail in Paul's Woods: a quarter-mile boardwalk running through the swamp along Treetop and Miller ponds. The 20+ years of weathering had taken its toll, and the boardwalk was due for an upgrade. Thanks to a generous donation by one of our longtime members along with a donation from the Polk Foundation, we were able to purchase the materials necessary to reconstruct the boardwalk. Our head of maintenance Del Hunsinger, along with a cadre of volunteers, worked hard over the past several months to revamp the boardwalk, including making it wider. Check it out next time you stop by the nature center.



# Volunteer News

## On the Trail

Thanks to all the many volunteers who helped with a variety of tasks this past spring:

- **Claudine Zach** – for consistent help feeding and caring for the critters
- **Marianna Fitzgerald** – for her hard work and dedication to the library project and for assisting Naturalist staff at Cranbrook's Spring into Science event
- **Griffin Barkdoll** – for assisting Marianna with the library project
- **Bob Albrecht** – for consistent help cleaning and maintaining the fish tank in Critter Corner and feeding animals
- **Michelle Maust** – for running the Pint-Sized Explorers program
- **Abigail McClusky** – for cleaning the discovery room and bird feeders and participating in land steward projects, removing invasive species and cleaning out the Demonstration Garden
- **Connor Grappin** – for helping with work on the farmhouse
- **Kathy Cole and Jayme Fields** – for assisting Naturalist staff at the Flint Outdoor Expo
- **Board of Directors** – for their dedication to the nature center and various meetings and activities in February and March
- **Kathy Cole, Nancy Kautz, Jayme Fields, Marianna Fitzgerald, Richard Klee and Melissa Macfarlane** – for attending ASNAT training classes & events
- **John & Dimitry Keem, Bill Burkholder, Ike Allen, Mike Grappin, Chris Fillmore, Lukas Mueller-Trathen, Trevor Mattoon and Chas Miller** – for their hard work on the Miller Pond Boardwalk reconstruction project
- **Mike Grappin and Connor Grappin** – for assisting with the spring prairie burn
- **Gerald Buck** – for grading the driveway and parking lot
- **Michael Jagenow** – for helping on the Miller Pond Boardwalk and grounds maintenance
- **Paula LaFountain** – for assisting at the Native Plant Sale
- **Kathy Cole, Nancy Kautz, Jayme Fields, Allen Rosenbalm, Karen Blaszyk and Matt Smith** – for their tremendous help during Eco Day

## 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, contact volunteer coordinator Amy Sadler at 810-796-3200 or [asadler@sevenponds.org](mailto:asadler@sevenponds.org).

## Board of Directors News

At the March 22 meeting of the Seven Ponds Nature Center Board of Directors, the board appointed three new members and elected officers. Sally Kwaiser, Lisa Yarema, and Nan Toppin all concluded their terms of service to the board. After serving on the board for nearly three decades as the representative of Grosse Pointe Audubon, Joanna Pease stepped down; Joanna and her husband Chris will be moving to Pennsylvania soon to be closer to family. We wish Joanna well and extend many thanks for her many years of dedication to Seven Ponds. Trina Bresser-Mattous was named the new representative of Grosse Point Audubon. Two new at-large members were appointed: Evelyn Slagon (Metamora), and Richard Klee (Dryden). The following slate of officers was elected: Nancy Kautz, Chairperson; Micaela Boomer, Vice-Chairperson; Nancy Buck, Treasurer; Paul Messing, Secretary. To see a complete list of board members, visit our website at [sevenponds.org/board/](http://sevenponds.org/board/).

## Fish of Seven Ponds

THURSDAY, JUNE 19, 3:00 PM

Our ponds are filled with fish of all kinds, so let's talk about them.

July & August - NO CLASSES

SEE YOU IN SEPTEMBER!

## Seven Ponds Clubs!

**Astronomy Club**

**Beekeeping Club**

**Birding Club**

**Photography Club**

**Butterfly Gardeners**

**Friends of Herbs**

**Friends of Seven Ponds (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](http://sevenponds.org).**

## Staff Happenings

### Welcome Full-time Naturalist Nico Bradford

Whether foraging for serviceberries or exploring a new trail, Nico has always loved the outdoors and the unique tastes, smells, sights, and sounds it offers. During the pandemic, she served as an Americorps NCCC member. There, she partnered with nonprofits to do work including land conservation, fire management, and trail building. At Michigan State University, she earned her degree in Environmental, Science, and Health Reporting. She also minored in Environmental and Sustainability Studies and in Environmental Social Science. While studying and working part-time as a journalist, she found her passion in science communications and engaging communities with their environment. In her free time, she enjoys starting new crafts, playing piano, and spoiling her cat, Beans, with belly rubs. Nico is excited to gain hands-on experience with outdoor education and to learn from her new coworkers at Seven Ponds.

### Summer Intern Emma Bahm

Emma is a third year Fisheries and Wildlife management major at Northern Michigan University. Emma says, "Growing up in Michigan, I have always enjoyed being outdoors and learning about everything in it. I look forward to working with the Seven Ponds Nature Center team this summer to expand my knowledge on local species and ecosystems." We look forward to working with Emma this summer!

### Damian Takes on New Duties

Our weekend receptionist, Damian Goidich, is taking on additional responsibilities at the nature center. Going forward Damian will be our *Heron Tracks* editor and our website manager. Additionally, this summer he is working an additional three days per week as our summer maintenance worker. Damian has been a valuable team member since joining our staff in March of 2022, and we are excited to expand his role at Seven Ponds.



Nico Bradford



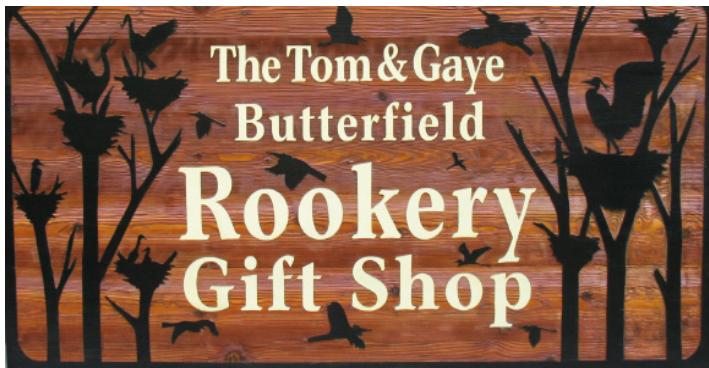
Emma Bahm

### Wandering with the Birds *By Daryl Bernard*

I first introduced this column, "Wandering with the Birds," back in the Summer 2020 edition of *Heron Tracks*. We were in the midst of the pandemic, with no programs or activities taking place, and needed a bit more content to fill the pages of our newsletter. Since then, if you've followed along, I've taken you far and wide as I've wandered with the birds from my backyard, throughout Michigan, and beyond.

One thing I've attempted to convey through words written here is that birds, and nature in general, are wherever you happen to be. We might find ourselves longing for some grand adventure, perhaps a trip to Africa or South America – but the truth is some of the best adventures take place close to home. You don't need to venture to some far away land to enjoy the spectacles that nature offers – just step out your front door and take a look around. Or take a trip to Seven Ponds! The observant eye sees the natural wonder that abounds all around us. And birds? Well, they are everywhere you might wander.

Now, as I resign from my position as Executive Director at Seven Ponds, I find myself writing my final column for *Heron Tracks*. I've enjoyed sharing my adventures, and I hope you've enjoyed reading about them. But it's time to move on. Rest assured, however, that I'll still be out there, wandering with the birds.



The warm months are here again and the longer days mean more time for outdoor adventures! Our Rookery gift shop has many items to assist you on your nature quests. A pair of Vortex binoculars are just the thing to help you get a better look at that bird, butterfly, or whatever else crosses your path. We sell them at the best price possible so that everyone can afford a great pair of binoculars.

Come in and browse our great selection of books and field guides. There is sure to be something here to pique your interest! You will discover gardening, rock hunting, foraging, birding, and many more topics on our shelves.

We now carry Whistle Creek hiking sticks! The folks at Whistle Creek have been hand-crafting hiking sticks for over 35 years. The pieces they create are made from quality hardwood carefully chosen with sustainability and a love for the American wilderness in mind. These hiking sticks would make a wonderful gift for any nature enthusiast, including yourself!

The Rookery Gift Shop is open Tuesday through Sunday, 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM. We offer a 10% discount for Seven Ponds members (Vortex binoculars are excluded). We look forward to seeing you soon at the Rookery!



*When you shop with us, you know your dollars are supporting our mission.*

#### **Seven Ponds Nature Center**

3854 Crawford Road  
Dryden, MI 48428  
810-796-3200  
[www.sevenponds.org](http://www.sevenponds.org)

# Summer Programs

June - August  
2025

Summer is the perfect time to visit the nature center and participate in our programs. Seven Ponds offers something for everyone, from preschoolers and older children to families and adults. Mark your calendar for some programs, walks, and classes. Unless indicated, program fees are \$3 for Seven Ponds members and \$5 for non-members. Pre-registration is required for all programs, and registering online is quick and easy. Visit [sevenponds.org](http://sevenponds.org) to register.

## June

### **Ponds & Prairies Walk**

Sunday, June 8, 2:00 PM

As spring rolls into summer we'll take a walk around the ponds and through the prairie to discover who and what is out and about this afternoon.

### **Close Up Photography for Kids w/ Daniel Mitchell**

Saturday, June 14, 9:00 AM to 10:00 AM

(Rain Date: June 21)

The old saying, "You can't see the forest for the trees," does not apply to this class! Students will look at the tree and what is at the base of it, maybe a frog or small flower. The forest floor is covered with many subjects for close-up photography. Bring a camera and a tripod (if you have one), and wear comfortable shoes. The class will be outside on Seven Ponds grounds. Ages: 8 -18, and accompanying adult is requested.

### **Herpetology Adventure**

Saturday, June 14, 2:00 PM

Let's search around the trails and ponds for reptiles and amphibians. You can help us contribute to citizen science as we add pictures of our herpetofauna findings to the Michigan Herp Atlas!

### **Yoga at the Ponds with Peaceful Moon Yoga**

#### **Beginners/Basic Yoga Class**

Thursdays, June 19, 26, July 3, 10, 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 entire 4-week series (June-July).

### ***Invasive Species Work Day***

Sunday, June 22, 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.

### ***Paul's Woods Walk***

Saturday, June 28, 10:00 AM

Join us on an adventure hike over the A-frame bridge to explore the wetlands and forests of Paul's Woods!

### ***Mission: Moths!***

Sunday, June 29, 8:00 PM

How many moth species can we find? Moths are most active at night, so we'll set up a viewing area and wait for them to arrive. Bring your cameras and curiosity!

## July

### ***Butterfly Count***

Saturday, July 5, 10:00 AM

Join us for our annual count for the North American Butterfly Association. Nets available for all participants. Fee: \$3.00.

### ***Prairie Walk***

Sunday, July 13, 1:00 PM

Summer is a busy time for plants and animals in our prairie! Join us for a walk as we explore what wings and things hide in the tall grass.

### ***Bird Walk on the Polly Ann***

Saturday, July 19, 9:00 AM

The Polly Ann Trail is both a beautiful place to walk and a great birding spot. It's also just a short drive from Seven Ponds. We will meet at General Squire Memorial Park on S. Mill Road. Loaner binoculars are available, please call the nature center to let us know if you would like a pair for the walk.

### ***Turtle Tour***

Saturday, July 19, 2:00 PM

It's turtle time around the ponds! Let's meet some of our ambassador animals and then take a walk on the trails to learn about the turtles that call Seven Ponds home.

## July (continued)

### ***Invasive Species Work Day***

Sunday, July 20, 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.

### ***Aquatic Plants Paddle***

Saturday, July 26, 10:00 AM

Would you like to learn how to identify aquatic plants? Join a naturalist for a morning canoe paddle as we explore the edges and islands of our kettle lakes. Be prepared for adventure! We will be getting in and out of our canoes, walking on uneven terrain, and getting our feet wet. Canoes, paddles, and life jackets are provided. Program is open to 18 years and older, and space is limited.

### ***Family Field Netting***

Saturday, July 26, 2:00 PM

Who doesn't love bugs? Come along on an insect adventure as we search for butterflies, moths, and more! Nets provided.

### ***Yoga at the Ponds with Peaceful Moon Yoga***

#### ***Beginners/Basic Yoga Class***

Thursdays, July 31, August 7, 14, 21 6:00-7:00 PM

See program description for June series.

Fee is \$15.00 per session or \$50.00 for the entire 4-week series (July-August).

## August

### ***Evening Canoe Paddle***

Saturday, August 2, 6:00 PM

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.

### ***Lovely Lavender Tea Party***

Sunday, August 10, 1:00 PM

Come relax and enjoy some tasty lavender tea and snacks and learn more about the history and uses of this wonderful herb! Your hosts are two local Katies: Katie Neal and Katie Underhill, who are passionate about learning about the world around them and helping others to live life abundantly. They will offer fun information on lavender, its history, and how to enrich your life with it. There will be a quiz with prizes, plus some informational handouts. Cost is \$7 per person. Please register by July 30th.

### ***Pond Dipping Day***

Saturday, August 30, 1:00 PM

What lies below the waters of Seven Ponds? We will use nets and buckets to look for aquatic insects that call the waters home.

### ***Snake Search***

Sunday, August 31, 2:00 PM

We'll learn all about the snakes that call Michigan home and meet our resident snake! After that we'll hit the trail on a search for snakes.

## **SUMMER BIRDING TRIPS**

This summer we will offer two bird trips in June. Our bird trips 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. Bird trips are \$5 for members and \$10 for non-members. Pre-registration is required online, and space is limited. See the program description for starting time and meeting place. Please arrive on time and ready to go birding! Vortex Crossfire 8x42 loaner binoculars available upon request.

### **SUMMER BIRD TRIP - Bird Drive on the Wild Side**

**Wednesday, June 4, 7:30 AM (depart from Seven Ponds at 6:00 AM)**

Join us as we take a bird drive on the wild side at Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge in Saginaw County. We'll meet at the refuge parking lot on Curtis Road, and from there we'll proceed slowly through the 6.5 miles Wildlife Drive, making numerous stops along the route. Birds we may encounter on this trip include herons, egrets, cranes, shorebirds, eagles, hawks, terns, songbirds, and more. We encourage carpooling for this trip to reduce the length of our caravan on the refuge drive.

### **SUMMER BIRD TRIP - Evening at Nayanquing**

**Wednesday, June 18, 4:00 PM (depart from Seven Ponds at 2:00 PM)**

Evening is a wonderful time to spend in the marshlands, and Nayanquing Point State Wildlife Area is one of the premier birding areas in Michigan. We'll caravan to northern Bay County, arriving at Nayanquing late afternoon to begin our birding adventure. We'll encounter ducks, geese, swans, herons, egrets, cranes, shorebirds, and songbirds - including one of Michigan's only populations of Yellow-headed Blackbirds. This trip will involve 2-3 miles of walking and will conclude with sunset on the tower overlooking the marsh, where we may see or hear American Bittern and Least Bittern.