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Grass River Natural Area prepares for leadership change

Antrim County, MI - Grass River Natural Area, Inc. will mount a nationwide search for a new top administrator this spring following the departure of Executive Director, Haley Breniser.

Haley Breniser has served as Grass River's Executive Director since November 2013. She is a well-respected leader in her field having recently accepted a national leadership award from the Association of Nature Center Administrators in August 2017. Haley has announced plans to step down from her position at Grass River come June 2018. She leaves the organization on an optimistic note, excited for what the future brings. She is very proud of her team's accomplishments over the past 4.5 years and plans to stay involved as an active volunteer and fervent ambassador for Grass River.

Her plans to leave the organization focus primarily on a shift in personal priorities. Haley and her husband, Adam Brown, are expecting their first child in March, and she looks forward to spending precious time with their new son as well as helping to expand their organic farm business in Kewadin. That said, Haley is fully committed to staying active in the conservation and non-profit fields and is grateful for the experience Grass River Natural Area (GRNA) has provided her.

[GRNA](#) is a 1492-acre public natural area and environmental education center providing 7.5 miles of recreational trails, 100+ public programs, and various opportunities to get involved in hands-on conservation. It protects nearly 1500 acres of emergent wetland, river corridor, upland forest, and northern fen habitat and is located at 6500 Alden Hwy, Bellaire MI (just 7 miles south of the county seat of Bellaire).

Board President James Costello noted that Breniser's contributions to the organization have been significant, and that her leadership will be greatly missed. The board will be conducting a nationwide search to fill the position, and hopes to name a new executive director by June.

With her departure on the horizon, Haley reflected, "I feel very fortunate to have followed in the footsteps of many dedicated and courageous Grass River leaders who throughout our history have emerged in the form of community volunteers, county commissioners, board members, and staff. Together over nearly 50 years, we have worked together to create a more ecologically aware community, preserve significant water resources, and sustain a non-profit organization built by the community for the community. I believe the following quote by Ken Robinson contains words to live by as a leader in any field... *'The role of a creative leader is not to have all the ideas; it's to create a culture where everyone can have ideas and feel that they're valued.'* I hope that is the legacy I leave behind at Grass River Natural Area, Inc."

For more information about Grass River Natural Area, please visit <http://www.grassriver.org/>.

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