

ANTRIM COUNTY'S
GRASS RIVER
NATURAL AREA

50th
FLASHBACK



1968

Dr. Alfred Austin approaches Warren Studley, working with Antrim County's Soil Conservation Service, about protecting his 62-acre plot along Grass River and Lake Bellaire after attempted development.

1969

Concerned citizens discuss the possibility of protecting Grass River from development and with the help of Three Lakes Association, the Grass River Wildlife project is formed. Over the next decade, the project is developed through the efforts of the Antrim County Board of Commissioners, The Nature Conservancy, The Kresge Foundation, The Department of Natural Resources, the U.S. Soil Conservation Service, and many motivated individuals.





1971

The first parcels, totaling 69 acres, were acquired through The Nature Conservancy.

1975

The Delange property and cabin were acquired. This serves as the ambassador property for GRNA and the cabin was used for educational programming until 2011.

1976

The official dedication ceremony of 1,050 acres is held at Grass River Natural Area and the site is dedicated as a nature preserve. That same year, the State of Michigan deeds 116 acres at the north end of the river.





This is to Certify That

GRASS RIVER NATURAL AREA, INC.

was validly incorporated on May 22, 1979, as a Michigan nonprofit corporation, and said corporation is validly in existence under the laws of this State.

This certificate is issued to attest to the fact that the corporation is in good standing in this office as of this date and is duly authorized to transact business or conduct affairs in Michigan and for no other purpose. It is in the usual form, made by me as the proper officer, and is entitled to have full faith and credit given it in every court and office within the United States.



Sent by Facsimile Transmission

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In testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the Seal of the Department, in the City of Lansing, this 7th day of April, 1999.

Julie Croll

, Director

Corporation, Securities and Land Development Bureau

1979

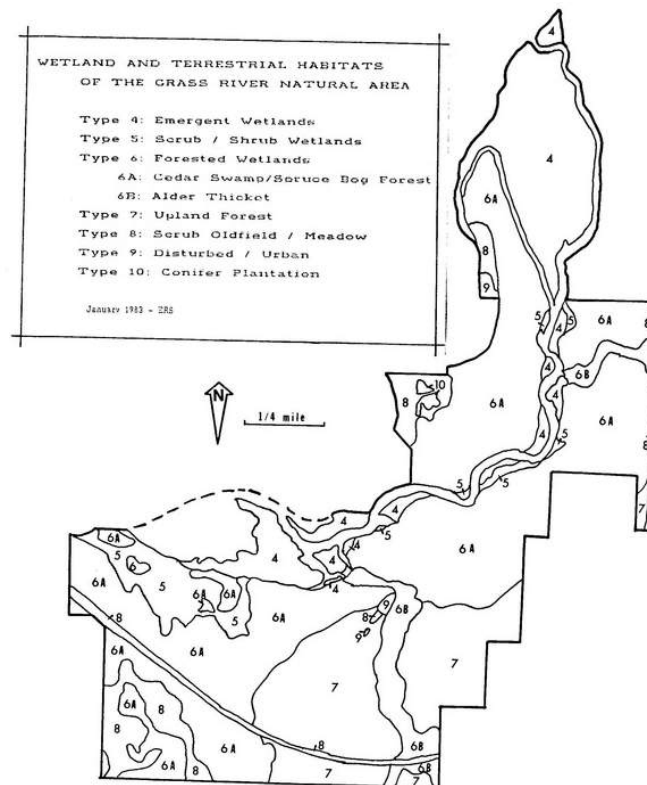
Grass River Natural Area, Inc. files Articles of Incorporation with Michigan Department of Commerce and becomes a 501(c)3 non-profit organization in Michigan.

1980

A management contract between Antrim County and GRNA, Inc. is generated and a partnership is established.

1981

GRNA, Inc. contracts Dr. Edwin Squires of Taylor University to conduct an ecological inventory of the property, providing a baseline for the flora, fauna and natural communities found at GRNA. The study was completed in 1983.





1982-84

The parking lot and the boardwalk of the Sedge Meadow Trail and Fern Trail are constructed. This allowed for visitors to easily access and learn about the cedar wetlands and northern fen surrounding these trails.

1984

Grass River Natural Area's first environmental education classes led by summer naturalists are offered to the public.

1991

GRNA, Inc. hires its first Executive Director, Mark Randolph.





1999

The Chippewa Trail and Nipissing Trail are built in GRNA's upland forests.

2003

The Algonquin Trail is constructed south of the Rail Trail, bringing the total trail mileage to over seven miles.

2004

GRNA, Inc. hires its first Education Director, Melynda Bagley.

2011

The Grass River Center is constructed, replacing the Delange cabin as the visitor center for the natural area. This construction allowed GRNA to expand its year round hours and educational programming.





2015-16

GRNA, Inc. acquires two parcels equaling 49 acres and brings the total for the natural area to 1,492 acres.

2016

GRNA, Inc. contracts Michigan Natural Features Inventory to update the biological inventory and natural communities of the property. The survey was completed in 2017.

2019

GRNA, Inc. observes its 50th anniversary! This year celebrates the people that have made Grass River Natural Area what it is today, the many, many projects that GRNA, Inc. has taken on over the past 50 years and the legacy of providing outdoor education to the community. As we look forward we see another 50 years of promoting preservation, conservation, stewardship of the land and water and continued outdoor education experiences.

