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Dear GRNA volunteers,

### **Where in the World is Emily?**

*Dare to live the life you have dreamed.  
Go forward and make your dreams come true.*

*~Ralph Waldo Emerson~*



As she makes her way north along the Pacific Crest Trail in search of completing her goal of finishing the section of trail from southern Oregon to Canada, Emily has checked-in and let us know she's doing great! We are all living vicariously through her adventures, and we can't wait to hear her stories when she returns mid-September. Enjoy the pictures she has shared.

But as they say...the show must go on!

With the arrival of cool, damp mornings and earlier sunsets, we are doing all we can to enjoy these waning days of summer, and we certainly hope you are too!

As you'll see below, fall programming is coming, and we have several ways for you to engage with our staff and visitors over the next several months. I look forward to seeing your smiling

faces, and I encourage you to take time and enjoy the fruits of YOUR labor by exploring a new trail or paddling the river.



THANK YOU for

your selfless contributions of time and talents which allows us to fulfill our mission! We hope you will join us on the evening of October 6<sup>th</sup> (see details below) when we formally recognize the immense gifts each of you give us and take time to celebrate the heart & soul behind our work...YOU!

Until then, enjoy the canvas of goldenrod in the fields and the sound of late summer insects in the evenings.

Cheers!

Jenn Wright

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**YOU'RE INVITED!**

**ANNUAL VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION GATHERING**

Thurs, Oct 6th  
5:00pm - 7:00 pm  
Location Grass River Center

Join us for food, drinks,  
and celebration,  
honoring you!

Please RSVP to [emily@grassriver.org](mailto:emily@grassriver.org) by Sept 29th

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**UPCOMING VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES**



### **TRAINING: INTERPRETATION FOR VOLUNTEERS**

**Thurs, Sept 22 from 10:00 am - 12:00 pm**

You've gained a lot of naturalist knowledge volunteering at Grass River. Now it's time to learn how to communicate that knowledge effectively in educational programs, during outreach events, or just when you're informally interacting with visitors. Learn the art of interpretation and environmental education from James in this training suitable for interpretation beginners and for those wishing to brush up on their skills. Contact James at [james@grassriver.org](mailto:james@grassriver.org) to register.

### **FALL STREAM MONITORING**

**Sat, Sept 24 from 9:00 am - 1:00 pm**

New and seasoned volunteers of all ages are invited to join us as we collect data for our biannual stream monitoring program. This year, teams will be collecting macroinvertebrates (creek "bugs") at four sites along Finch Creek and then will return to the Grass River Center to sort through their critter samples. Pre-registration is required - email Emily at [emily@grassriver.org](mailto:emily@grassriver.org). Note: new volunteers will be put into groups with more experienced volunteers. Dress for the weather and bring hip waders if you have them (though we have more than enough pairs to loan out!)



### **FALL STEWARDSHIP DAY**

**Sat, Oct 1 from 9:00 am - 12:00 pm**

Summer will soon be ushering in autumn, which means it's almost time for cooler weather and some good ol' fall season work! Come on out and join the many stewardship activities as we prepare the buildings, trails, and grounds for winter. No experience is necessary; just a pair of work gloves and an open spirit. Pre-registration is encouraged - email Brian at [stewardship@grassriver.org](mailto:stewardship@grassriver.org).

### **AUTUMNFEST HELP**

**Sat, Oct 22 and during the weeks leading up to the event**

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Autumnfest is GRNA's annual family-friendly celebration of all things fall. There will be kids' activities in the Center and out on the trails, refreshments, and a likely appearance by the Grass River otter itself! Volunteer opportunities associated with this great event include joining our Events Committee to help plan Autumnfest, as well as lending a hand on the day of for set-up and clean-up. Email us at [info@grassriver.org](mailto:info@grassriver.org) if you're interested in helping out.



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## **VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: SUE & RANDY THOMAS**

This month, we're putting the spotlight on GRNA volunteers Sue and Randy Thomas. They've been volunteering with GRNA ever since moving to Bellaire in 2001, though Randy's family has been vacationing in the area for much longer, since the 1950s. Sue and Randy have lent a hand with many activities at GRNA, including stream monitoring, invasive plants removal, the Grass River Shiver, painting the Grass River Center's fascia, and trail monitoring. We recently caught up with Sue and Randy to hear about their time at GRNA over the years:

### **What inspires you to volunteer for GRNA?**

We are inspired to volunteer at GRNA to help maintain the beauty and integrity of this Antrim County gem!

### **What's the neatest thing you've done since you started volunteering with GRNA?**

One of the neatest things Sue did was tramp through the woods with former GRNA employee Kendra Luta to find the headwaters of Finch Creek, GPS-ing the location of invasive plants along the way.



### **What do you wish more people knew about GRNA?**

We are consistently introducing visitors to GRNA so that they may enjoy the beauty and solitude of the area. We remind family, friends, and neighbors of how close by such a wonderful area is for exploration!

### **When you aren't volunteering, what do you spend time doing?**

We love the four seasons of Michigan and also like to travel to discover places we haven't seen or been to previously. In the spring and summer, you will find us stand up paddling, kayaking, water skiing, golfing, and hiking. In the winter, we enjoy skiing and snowshoeing. Our favorite season at GRNA is winter!

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Grass River Natural Area is a nonprofit organization that has flourished for fifty-two years because of the generous support of people who value our mission "to manage the Grass River Natural Area, conserve and protect its watershed, and provide opportunities that increase knowledge, appreciation, and community-wide stewardship of the natural environment".

If you believe in our mission and want to help us fulfill it for many years to come, please click on the Donate button below. Your support is greatly appreciated.

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**Our mailing address is:**

PO Box 231

Bellaire, MI 49615

**Natural area address:**

6500 Alden Highway, Bellaire MI 49615

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