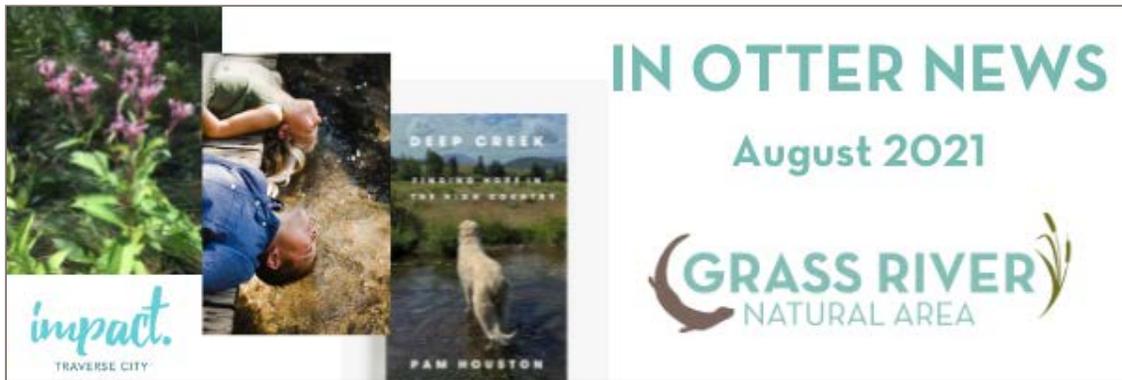


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## BREAKING NEWS (of the good kind)



On Monday, August 30th, Grass River Natural Area, Inc. was announced as a finalist for one of three \$110,000 grants to be awarded by Impact 100 in late September. If awarded, these funds will be used to fund the boardwalk reconstruction from the cabin to the dock beginning in 2022.

Impact 100 Traverse City, a chapter of a national organization, is made up of a group of women from Antrim, Benzie, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska, and Leelanau Counties who each contribute \$1,000 every year to be granted to nonprofits in the five-county area. There must be at least 100 women who contribute, as grants are made in \$100,000 increments to nonprofits who fall into one of five categories. In 2021, 330 women contributed, so there will be three \$110,000 grants awarded. The five categories are Environment/Preservation/Recreation, Education, Arts & Culture, Family, and Health & Wellness. Our request could have been qualified in multiple categories, but we were chosen to represent the Family category. We are honored to be among a group of very deserving organizations and will do our best to

represent GRNA at the Impact 100 annual meeting on September 21st, where Jenn will have ten minutes to present our story to the women who will vote for the three recipients at the end of the evening.

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## Say “Hello to Joe”-Pye-Weed

by

Anne Drake, Naturalist at GRNA

Every summer, the sedge meadow at Grass River has the amazing ability to tell me what month it is. Summer is the season when time zips by us much faster than any other part of the year. I found that keeping track of what’s blooming out in the meadow week by week helps slow summer’s whirlwind down a bit.

When I start to notice Tall Meadow Rue, Blue Flag Iris, and Swamp Milkweed growing in the thick sedge, I know that it must be getting near the end of June . . . or it might even be early July. No matter. . . there is still plenty of summer left to enjoy. So, I greet each pink dot of Swamp Rose on the bushes as a friend that I have not seen in a whole year!



I know that it is August now, even without my calendar, because as I walk along the boardwalk path, I find my friend Joe; Joe-Pye-Weed (*Eupatorium maculatum*). Throughout August and early September, Joe-Pye-Weed pops up its purple head, showing tall above the sedges, waving in the breeze.

Besides blooming in lovely lavender, Joe-Pye-Weed is recognizable by its leaves. It has four and sometimes five whorled around a dark purple stem.

Several species of Joe-Pye-Weed live in damp meadows, thickets, ditches, and along shores all across southern Canada and the northern United States. Spotted Joe-Pye-Weed is the species that is at home in Grass River.

Spotted Joe-Pye-Weed was one of the first plants that I came to know as I was learning my way around the wetland species at Grass River. It caught my attention first because of its name. Joe-Pye-Weed is a curious name. My questions are: “Was there a person named Joe

who the plant is named after?” and “Why is my gorgeous purple friend called a weed?”

I will address the second question first. Weeds are usually thought of as invasive plants you wish were growing elsewhere or not at all. Joe-Pye-Weed is native, not invasive, and is a welcome sight wherever it grows.

As to the first question, I found Joe-Pye-Weed memorable because another naturalist told me a story about it. I love stories! Stories ignite my imagination. When you know a story about something, you know more than just its name. When you hear a story about a plant, you begin to develop a relationship with it.

The story that I was told goes like this: Joe Pye was a young Indigenous medicine man. The legend says that Joe was called on to heal a broken leg. The leg belonged to the son of the chief. But Joe mistakenly chose our “purple-flowered weed” instead of another plant with white flowers that we now call Boneset. The name Boneset says it all. It was used to help broken bones grow back together. How did he make this mistake? Maybe it was because of a slight resemblance in the way the leaves grow around the stem of both plants or perhaps because both plants grow in the same habitat at the same time of year. At any rate, Joe’s medicine did not heal the boy’s leg and the Chief banished Joe from the tribe. From that day on, Joe wandered the countryside planting the weed with the purple flower to remind him of his mistake. The plant then became his namesake.

I couldn’t find much current information on the medicinal values of Joe-Pye-Weed. In colonial times, herbalists used Joe-Pye-Weed to treat fevers.

Folklore and mystery surround this humble marsh-dwelling plant. One such story is of a benevolent medicine man from a First Nation tribe near Massachusetts that healed a whole community of Typhus using Joe-Pye-Weed.

Another legend tells of a traveling snake oil salesman from New England (not an Indigenous person) who went around the countryside peddling his herbal concoctions. His “Joe Pye” mixture treated fevers.

The truth is out there somewhere. Wherever legends exist, tracking down the truth can be a difficult process. I found a very interesting 25-page research paper dedicated to finding out how Joe-Pye-Weed got its name. The paper concluded that:

"Although other persons, at other times and in other places, have been known as Joe Pye or Joseph Pye, the evidence we have presented above indicates that *Eutrochium* species [closely related to our *Eupatorium* Joe-Pye-Weed species] called Joe-Pye-Weed were named for

the Mohican sachem (chief or leader) Joseph Shauquethqueat, who was also known, especially among his white neighbors, as Joe Pye." \*

The paper concluded further that Joe Shauquethqueat may not have been a “medicine man” but being a First Nation Mohican may have possessed a good knowledge of herbal medicine that the surrounding white community did not have. Joe S. was respected in both the Mohican and Stockbridge, MA communities.

If you are up for a late summer walk on the boardwalk at Grass River, take the loop out to the sedge meadow and look for my friend Joe-Pye-Weed.

Say hello.

\* Pearce RB and Pringle JS. (2017). Joe Pye, Joe Pye's Law, and Joe-Pye-Weed: The history and eponymy of the common name Joe-Pye-Weed for *Eutrochium* species (Asteraceae). *The Great Lakes Botanist* 56: 177-200.

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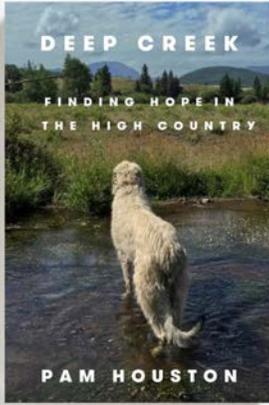
## A VERY SPECIAL OPPORTUNITY FOR LOVERS OF BOOKS AND NATURE



GRNA, Inc., the National Writer's Series, and Traverse Bay Children's Advocacy Center are working together to bring you two unique experiences with the award-winning environmental author Pam Houston. In advance of Houston's National Writer's Series appearance on Thursday, September 9th, you can hike with her at GRNA and/or attend a reception with her on Wednesday, September 8th.

*Wednesday, September 8th from 4:00pm at GRNA (1 hr), \$10 per person*

Take a hike for healing with Pam Houston. This event includes an intimate guided hike along GRNA's boardwalks with Pam Houston, capped at 30 participants. The hike cost is \$10. Add a copy of Pam's latest book, *Deep Creek: Finding Hope in the High Country*, for an additional \$15, available at the hike.



Wednesday, September 8th from 5:30 - 7:00 pm at Cellar 152 in Elk Rapids, \$25 per person

The post-hike reception will include appetizers, iced tea, soda, and a cash bar; and is open to hikers and those who just want the chance to meet Ms. Houston. You can add a copy of Pam's latest book, *Deep Creek: Finding Hope in the High Country*, for an additional \$15, available at the reception.

**Note: everyone who attends either event must be fully vaccinated or, if not vaccinated, must wear a mask.**

[Click here to reserve your chance to enjoy either/or both of these opportunities.](#)

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## RIVERFEST 2021- A BIG SUCCESS

### A FRESH PERSPECTIVE



Thanks to 146 bidders, 100 attendees at the live event, 20 volunteers, and 15 sponsors, Riverfest 2021 exceeded our expectations. We set a goal of raising \$52,000 for the overall event - \$1,000 for each year GRNA has been in existence. We raised 11% more than that goal, including nearly \$26,500 in cash donations through the Paddle Raise.

The evening of the 19th was picture perfect, the food from Shanty Creek delicious, the opportunity to see old friends and meet new ones exciting, the fairy house centerpieces made by campers were fun, the presentation about how we found fresh perspectives in 2020 by Executive Director Jenn Wright was engaging, and the generosity of those in

attendance was incredibly gratifying. The star of the evening was the auction sale of a lifetime membership to Short's Mug Club, which was so successful that Short's allowed us to sell a second membership.

Riverfest 2021 was magical! And plans for Riverfest 2022 are already underway! Don't miss your chance to be a part of the magic!

Thank you to absolutely everyone who made this month-long event successful.

# RIVERFEST 2021 SPONSORS

**The Pelican Family**

Adams Madams	Centennial Golf Course
Alden Hardware & Lumber	Central Lake Hardware & Lumber
Bellaire Hardware	Gabby's Restaurant
Blue Pelican Inn	The Chief Golf Course
	The Pelican's Nest



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**Desmond Liggett**  
Wealth Advisors



Cover photo by Allison Ferris

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**PROGRAMS ON THE HORIZON**

**During the summer months, we repeat many of our most popular programs on a regular basis. These are listed first.**



**Blooms & Birds Wildflower Walks**

**Weekly on Tuesdays at 10:00 am through at least September 7 & 14**

**Free, but donations are appreciated**

Go for a relaxing stroll on the trails with GRNA docents Julie Hurd and Phil Jarvi each week to find and identify the beautiful and unique wildflowers at Grass River. Along the way, we will listen and look for the birds that call Grass River home. If the weather cooperates, these walks will continue throughout September. Check our website for added dates.



**Kayak Grass River**

**Wednesday, September 15, 2021**

**10:00 am - 12:00 pm**

**\$45 per person - *includes tour, kayak, PFD, and paddle for each participant***

There is no better way to experience Grass River than by paddling its calm waters and enjoying its unique wildlife! On these morning guided tours, visitors explore Grass River by kayak and find out about GRNA's conservation efforts, wetland plants, and wildlife. Adults only. Limited to small groups, must pre-register. Call GRNA to register: 231-350-9461, or email [james@grassriver.org](mailto:james@grassriver.org). This program meets at the Grass River Center and then walks to the dock to launch kayaks. Kayaks and paddles are provided and ready for you at the dock.



**Paddle Antrim Festival**

**September 16 - 18**

Hosted by Paddle Antrim

For more info, check out [www.paddleantrim.com/paddle-antrim-festival/](http://www.paddleantrim.com/paddle-antrim-festival/)



**Native Seed Collecting**

**Friday, September 24**

**5:00 pm - 6:30 pm, \$10 per person**

Many native plants have gone to seed by early fall. Now is a great time to collect the seed if you would like to add native plants to your yard, lakeshore, woods, or wetlands. Join us as we learn to ID native plants and their seeds as well as how to collect, store, and plant them! Everyone will go home with a bag of native seeds that they collected. For more information go to <https://www.grassriver.org/classes-and-programs.html> or [register here](#).



### September Sunset Paddle

**Friday, September 24 - 6:30 pm - 8:00 pm, \$35 per person** - includes tour, kayak, PFD, and paddle for each participant

There is no better way to enjoy the sunset than on the Grass River, paddling its calm waters and enjoying its unique wildlife! On these guided tours, visitors explore

Grass River by kayak (provided) with a naturalist and find out about GRNA's conservation efforts, wetland plants, and wildlife while enjoying sundown. Adults Only. Limited to small groups, must pre-register. Call GRNA to register: 231-350-9461, or email [james@grassriver.org](mailto:james@grassriver.org). This program meets at the Grass River Center and then walks to the dock to launch kayaks. Kayaks and paddles are provided and ready for you at the dock.



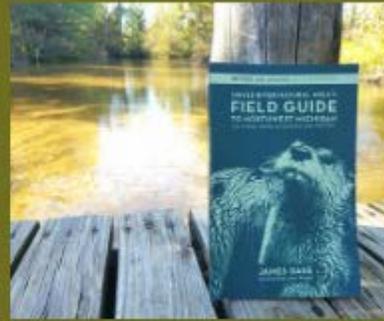
**NEW LOGO WEAR**

**Purchase a shirt for yourself or as a gift and GRNA benefits**



Choose from any of the logos featured above printed on a variety of styles, colors, & sizes from youth to adult. Order online by clicking on this box. A portion of the sale comes back to GRNA as a donation.

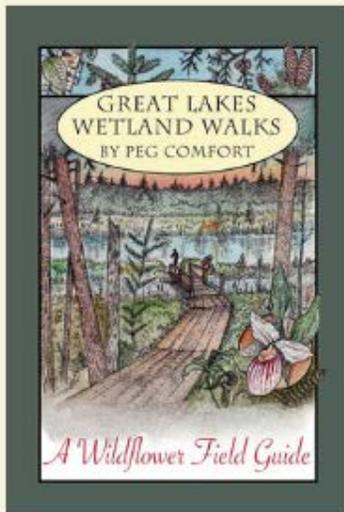
**The 2nd Edition of  
Grass River Natural Area's  
FIELD GUIDE  
to Northwest Michigan  
is now available.**



This guide is written and compiled by GRNA Education Director James Dake. It features several new and expanded sections and a new Foreword by Executive Director Jenn Wright.

Cost is \$18.87 plus tax

Order online by clicking on this box or available at the Grass River Center Gift Shop



**This beautiful and  
informative book  
is available online and in the  
Grass River Center Gift Shop.**

**It is perfect for hikers, gardeners, and  
nature enthusiasts.**

**Artistic illustrations and photographs  
add to the book's appeal.**

[Click here to order](#)

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Grass River Natural Area is a nonprofit organization that has flourished for fifty-one 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.

**DONATE**



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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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