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WE LOVE PHOTOS FROM VISITORS

The photos featured above are two more examples of pictures submitted to our 2020 Photo Contest.

Kathryn Gray submitted the photo on the left and AnnaMarie Sala took the one on the right.

Entries for the 2021 contest will open soon. Watch here and on Facebook for more information. Photos from all seasons are appreciated, as we love to use them to promote all that GRNA has to offer.

ODDER NATURE

Second in a series

by

Arlene Westhoven, Naturalist at GRNA

THE FASCINATING FUNGI OF GRASS RIVER NATURAL AREA

I was going to call this WEIRD Fungi, but in a sense all fungi are weird. Fungi, commonly called mushrooms, are neither plant nor animal, but decomposers. They digest the material they live on. Like plants, fungi have roots, which in the case of fungi are called mycelia, that spread underground, behind the bark of trees and into dead material. The mycelia of some fungi spread through hundreds of acres and are considered a single organism. They break down and absorb nutrients and return them to the ecosystem. Fungi use oxygen to digest material and release carbon dioxide. They are essentially the recyclers of the ecosystem.

The mushroom, or cap, of most fungi is actually the fruiting body of the organism. It rises from the mycelia and the mature fungus releases spores to start new mycelial colonies. The underside of the cap, where the spores are released, usually has gills, pores or teeth; however these are not present in puffballs or corals. Most fruiting bodies are supported by a stalk, or stipe. The stipe may have a ring around it, scales, or a cup at the base. Puffballs emerge directly from the mycelia.



The above are characteristics that help identify species. One of the most effective ways to identify a gilled mushroom is to make a spore print. To do this, remove the cap from the stipe and place it gill side down on a black/white paper, cover it with a plastic cup and wait several hours for it to drop its spores. The contrasting paper allows you to observe the various colors that are important identifying factors. I include an example of a white spore print on black paper.

It is our purpose to introduce you to the fascinating world of fungi. We are not going to tell you which ones are edible, or toxic, and which ones you can use for cloth dyes. We want you to become fascinated with the amazing variety, beauty, and growth patterns of these organisms. Here are some of them that are found midsummer into fall at GRNA.



OYSTER MUSHROOMS

Oysters grow on dead trees or dead parts of trees. The fruiting body is white or buff, oyster-shell shaped, and has a very short stipe attached to the tree. The gilled underside looks like a fan. The fruiting bodies emerge like shelves up the trunk. These mushrooms have an anise fragrance when fresh. Also often associated with oysters is a half-centimeter-long black and orange beetle called the pleasing fungus beetle who lay their eggs on the mushroom. I have

never seen it on any other mushroom.



CHANTERELLES

The highly sought-after chanterelles are trumpet-shaped and have decurrent gills that extend down the stipe. At Grass River, we find a variety that grows in the wetlands amongst the sphagnum. It is commonly called the Moss Chanterelle. The stipe is bright orange. Although it is small, it fruits in large groups. It has an apricot fragrance, another identifying characteristic.



SHAGGY MANES

“Shaggies” fruit in large groups in poor soil, even gravel or broken pavement. The cap is a tall, white column with light brown scales. The cap fits over the stipe like a tall stocking cap. As it ages, the bottom of the cap turns pink, then liquefies from the bottom up into a black goo which contains the spores that are spread by water. The cap gradually drips away to nothing.



PUFFBALLS

Puffballs are truly weird. The giant ones can be as big as volleyballs. Smaller ones tend to be pear-shaped. Some are “decorated” with geometric patterns similar to a Petoskey stone, while others are smooth and leathery. Puffballs are often found in open fields as well as among decaying leaves. There is no stipe. Puffballs are basically a big bag of spores that are completely white when young. As the spores ripen, they become yellowish and finally black when mature. At this

point, a pore bursts at the top of the cap and the spores blast out. The spores are tiny and easily carried by the wind. Do your best not to breathe these spores.

CORAL FUNGI

Unique among the fungi are the corals because they do not have the typical stipe or cap. Rather, they look like antlers and remarkably like the underwater version. And like the underwater corals, they come in a variety of colors: white, yellow, and even purple and blue. At Grass River, look for these growing in clusters in hardwoods and moss.



I hope you've enjoyed this glimpse into the weird world of fungi and that you want to learn more. We have several mushroom forays at Grass River throughout the spring, summer, and into the fall. Please check our website, www.grassriver.org for schedules.

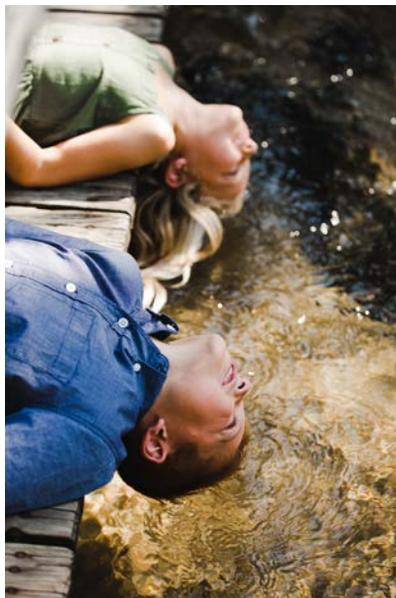
If you want help identifying fungi, take a photo noting the habitat; soil type; moisture present; and if it is growing on wood, in leaf litter, or grass. Another factor to note is the association with vegetation such as tree or plant species. Please send your photo to info@grassriver.org and it will be forwarded to me and another naturalist, who will get back to you with comments. We look forward to your finds.

Remember, have FUN looking at FUNgi!

RIVERFEST 2021

A FRESH PERSPECTIVE

Silent Auction online from Thursday, August 5 - Thursday, August 26
In-person and virtual event - Thursday, August 19 from 5:30 pm - 8:30 pm
On the patio at Cedar River Lodge, Shanty Creek



This photo, taken by Allison Ferris, is the People's Choice Award winner from our 2020 Photo Contest. We thought it was the perfect depiction of our theme for this year's Riverfest - *a fresh perspective!* Over the last year, we all learned to look at things differently. For this year's Riverfest we are using some of the things we learned from last year's completely virtual event to create a blended event.

The silent auction will remain online this year as we were able to reach a much broader bidding audience. It will once again take place over a three-week period starting Thursday, August 5 at 8:00 am. You can log in to bid at fundraiser.bid/Riverfest2021 once the auction begins on the 5th. There will be a wide variety of experiences, items, and gift cards on which to bid, and we will be sending you regular email glimpses of some of those items.

On Thursday, August 19th, up to 100 people will be able to gather in person, outside on the patio at Cedar River Lodge, Shanty Creek for live music, drinks, dinner, a presentation about our fresh perspective by Jenn Wright, a live auction, and a paddle raise to benefit Grass River Natural Area, Inc. Others local to the area may choose to receive a light snack from Shanty Creek and beverages from Shorts Brewing Co., delivered to them by Short's and a GRNA volunteer. They can enjoy these snacks while watching the event streamed from Shanty Creek, bid on live auction items, and raise their paddle.

Invitations will go out soon with a variety of ticketing options available. You will also find these options on our website and may reserve there beginning July 31st or by calling Betsy Willis at 231-838-0269.

No matter how you choose to support GRNA, Inc. during the Riverfest, we would really appreciate your support as this is our primary fundraising event each year. New education opportunities, growth in programming, and the payment of operating expenses are made possible because of generous donors, grants, and program registration. Over the past year, program registration was necessarily reduced greatly, so donor participation is more important than ever in 2021.

Help us keep our perspective fresh!

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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Cover photo by Allison Ferris

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 September

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.



Naturalist on the Trail

Fridays throughout the season, 10:30 am - 1:30 pm

Every Friday this summer a naturalist will be stationed outdoors on our trail system offering a new mobile mini-program each week. Stop into the Grass River Center to find out where the naturalist is that day, or go find them on the trail! You can drop in any time during the 3-hour window of the

program. For all ages!



Kayak Grass River

Monday, July 26, 2021, 9:00 am - 11:30 am

\$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. 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.



Art on Thursdays

1:00 - 3:00 pm

Pastel Art Class, Thursday, July 29, 2021

Clay Art Class, Thursday, August 12, 2021

Pen, Pencil, and Brush, Thursday, August 26, 2021

\$10 per person, materials supplied

On select Thursdays this summer, join a naturalist for a reoccurring art program outdoors! We will explore painting, sketching, journaling, clay, and more! [Please](#)

[pre-register.](#)



Antrim Creek Hikes

10:00 am - noon

Early Settlers of Antrim Creek, Saturday, July 24, 2021

Mushroom Foray, Saturday, August 7, 2021

Free

On Select Saturdays this summer, join a Grass River naturalist at the Antrim Creek Natural Area South Entrance for an outdoor nature program and hike. Free to all ages!

Non-repeating Program



Intro to Kayaking

Thursday, July 29, 2021, 10:00 am - 11:30 am

\$30 per person - includes class, kayak, PFD, and paddle for each participant

New to paddling? Enjoy an easy paddle on the river to learn basic techniques and kayak skills & safety. Adults only. Limited to small groups, must pre-register. Call GRNA to register: 231-350-9461, or email 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

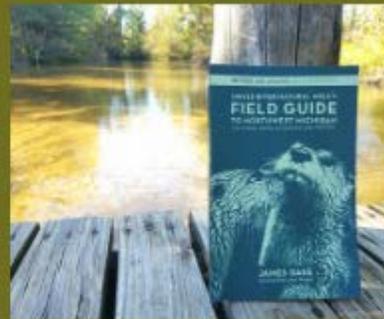


Choose from any of the logos featured above printed on a variety of styles, colors, & sizes from youth to adult.

Order online by clicking on this box.

A portion of the sale comes back to GRNA as a donation.

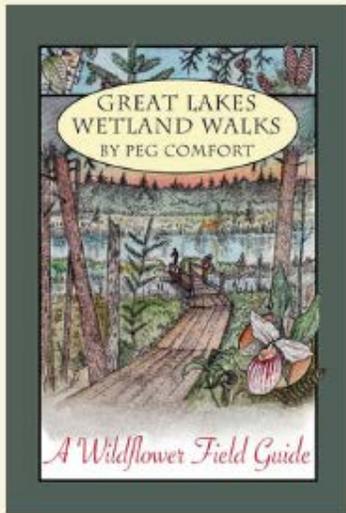
**The 2nd Edition of
Grass River Natural Area's
FIELD GUIDE
to Northwest Michigan
is now available.**



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](#)

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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