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GRNA Volunteers,

It's officially summer now, which means things are really picking up around GRNA! We've hosted several school field trips and NMC Extended Education classes in the last few weeks and have a very full line-up of educational programming on tap for the next few months, including the return of summer camp. On the conservation side, the 2021 parcel monitoring season kicked off last week, with regular stewardship work bees and native garden caretaking set to begin this week. And as always, all our valued board and committee members are busy behind the scenes making sure everything runs smoothly. Check out the upcoming volunteer opportunities below and, as always, if you're looking to get involved in other ways, don't hesitate to reach out.

Cheers to what should be a fantastic summer, folks!

Emily Burke

Conservation & Education Specialist

emily@grassriver.org

UPCOMING VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

SUMMER STEWARDSHIP WORK BEES

****Time Change Alert! This Wednesday's (6/23) work bee will be from 3:00 - 5:00 pm****

All other scheduled workbees (July 7 & 28, Aug 11 & 25) will be from 9:00 to 11:00 am
In person at the Grass River Center

Come help us keep the trails and grounds in good shape this summer during our regular stewardship work bees. Activities will vary depending on the week, but may include trimming back branches along trails, spreading wood chips, securing the beaver exclusion zones, or pulling invasive plants. Come dressed for the weather.



NATIVE PLANT GARDENS WORK BEE

Sat, June 26 at 9:00 am

In person at the Grass River Center

Join the native plant gardening crew for their first work bee of the summer to keep the gardens in tip top shape. GRNA's gardens are comprised of a variety of native plants that promote pollinator and wildlife health, as well as keep the area surrounding the Center looking beautiful. The crew will meet about every other week throughout the summer to weed, water, and prune.

Future dates and times are still to be determined. Come dressed for the weather, and bring gardening gloves if you have them. Email Lyn Petty at lynwpetty@gmail.com to RSVP.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: JULIE HURD

Julie has been volunteering for over a decade with GRNA as a docent for our weekly Birds and Blooms walks and as one of the leaders for the native plant garden crew. For our first Volunteer Spotlight feature, we caught up with Julie to get her take on her experiences at GRNA over the years.

What inspires you to volunteer for GRNA?

After a career that involved teaching, I knew I wanted to find volunteer opportunities that might include teaching/instruction. After retiring and relocating from Chicago to Bellaire, I attended a meeting for prospective volunteers at GRNA. I hiked there many times to enjoy the wildflowers, so I immediately offered to help with wildflower hikes. After more than 10 years, I continue to anticipate each weekly hike and look forward to sharing what I know and what I learn from others.

What's the neatest thing you've learned since you started volunteering with GRNA?

I continue to be amazed at what I learn from so many visitors with such diverse

backgrounds during wildflower hikes.

Just a few examples:

-A visitor from Interlochen learned from



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er horsetail (*Equisetum fluviatile*) can be dried and used to clean the insides of wind instrument reeds because its stem contains a silicate that acts like a natural sandpaper.

-Another visitor fondly recalled all-night study sessions during his college days when Labrador tea (*Rhododendron groenlandicum*, pictured at left) was served as a low cost alternative to purchased No-Doze.

-A local foodie who enjoys foraging for native edibles uses cattail (*Typha latifolia*) pollen as a high-protein substitute for some of the flour in baked goods.

What do you wish other people knew about GRNA?

I often ask visitors where they live. "Traverse City" is a frequent response, and many have lived there for years but are visiting GRNA for the first time! How can they have missed such a treasure just a few miles away? You don't necessarily need to travel around the globe to enjoy a very special place!

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

- Fiber art: weaving, spinning, knitting, and natural dyeing with plants, fungi, and lichens
- Gardening and cooking with local foods
- Listening to classical and folk music

Any fun facts about you that you want to tell us about?

I had a post-doctoral appointment at the University of Chicago analyzing lunar samples from several of the final Apollo missions. I was part of a research group that identified the minerals found in the various rock samples the astronauts collected, and I could often be found



in the lab with tiny bits of the moon in my hands. (That I would offer this as a "fun fact" is truly a mark of a science geek!)

SAVE THE DATE: THURS, AUG 5th
for the start of the Riverfest online auction! More
details to follow.



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.

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