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Dear GRNA volunteers,

We're ushering in the beginning of summer out here at GRNA. Ruffed grouse are scurrying through the fern undergrowth with their downy chicks, the showy lady-slippers are blooming along the sun-dappled edges of the cedar swamps, and female snapping turtles are returning to their ponds after venturing onto sandy soil to deposit their eggs.

With all this activity in the natural world at this time of year, there's also much to be done in the world of volunteering! From skill-building trainings to events and stewardship work-bees, check out what we're planning below, and as always, don't hesitate to reach out with any ideas or questions.

I hope you're enjoying the start of glorious summertime in northern Michigan, all!

Emily Burke  
Conservation & Education Specialist  
[emily@grassriver.org](mailto:emily@grassriver.org)

P.S. Many of you are already aware of this, but I will be taking 8 weeks off this summer to fulfill a life-long goal to finish hiking the Pacific Crest Trail, beginning on July 22. During my absence, you'll of course be in very good hands with Brian, Betsy, James, and others. I hope to see many of you at our various events before I leave, but if not, I look forward to reconnecting when I return in September, or at our annual Volunteer Appreciation Gathering, set for the evening of October 6 at GRNA.

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# THANK YOU!

Thanks to everyone who voted for GRNA for the Great Lakes Energy Community Grant Giveaway - we're so happy to say that we were selected as the recipient for the North Region! We will be receiving a \$7,000 unrestricted grant from Great Lakes Energy to help with general operating and program expenses. Thanks to you all for making it possible!



**GREAT LAKES  
ENERGY**

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Now that the busy season is upon us,

**PLEASE FILL OUT YOUR VOLUNTEER WAIVER!**

If you plan to volunteer in 2022, we need you to fill out and sign a volunteer waiver. This must be done every year. Though you have all already done this in the past, in order to be cleared for volunteering in 2022, we need to have a current copy on file.

Steps for completing your wavier:

1. Click **HERE** to access the waiver
2. Print it
3. Fill it out and sign it
4. Submit it using either of these options:
  - Scan it and email it to [emily@grassriver.org](mailto:emily@grassriver.org)
  - Bring the paper version with you next time you come to the Center

Alternatively, if you'd rather just complete your waiver in person, you can stop into the Center any day from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm to fill out a hard copy.

Thank you, and thanks to everyone who has already submitted their 2022 waivers!

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**UPCOMING VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES**



### **SUMMER WEDNESDAY WORK-BEES**

**July 6 & 20; Aug 3, 17, & 31; all from 9:00 am - 11:00 am**

Come help us keep the trails and grounds in good shape this summer during our Wednesday stewardship work-bees. Activities will vary depending on the week, but may include clearing fallen trees, trimming back branches along trails, spreading wood chips, repairing sections of the boardwalk, or pulling invasive plants. Come dressed for the weather.

### **INVASIVES IDENTIFICATION**

**Thurs, July 14 from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm**

Join us in learning how to identify common invasive plants in the natural area and the surrounding region, like the purple loosestrife pictured at right. This is a great primer for helping us control invasives at the July 20 stewardship work-bee and for beginning to identify invasive plants you might have on your own property. We will also discuss the different control options specific to each species. Email Emily at [emily@grassriver.org](mailto:emily@grassriver.org) to sign up.



### **RIVERFEST VOLUNTEER**

**Ongoing through August**

Each year, GRNA holds our primary fundraiser in August. This year the date is Thurs, Aug 11. A committee of volunteers helps us plan and execute this event, and there is always room for more help in several areas. Jobs that are ongoing include soliciting auction donations - we particularly need help for this in Traverse City - and planning the event itself. On the day of the event, we need help setting up, staffing the registration table, serving as a greeter, showing people to their seats, being a spotter at the live auction, taking photographs, staffing check out at the end of the evening, and tearing down after the event. If you're interested in any of these jobs, please contact Betsy at [betsy@grassriver.org](mailto:betsy@grassriver.org) or at (231) 838-0269.

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**VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT:**

## GARY BUCZKOWSKI

This month, we're putting the spotlight on GRNA volunteer Gary Buczkowski. Gary has been a very active volunteer for the last year and a half, ever since he fully retired and moved up to Elk Lake with his wife Lisa. A former landscape architect in Elk Grove, IL, Gary brings important design and project management skillsets to GRNA, and he's already helped in various volunteer roles as a land steward, parcel monitor, member of the Land Management Committee, and more. Specifically, if you've hiked the Rail Trail west of the entrance road and noticed that the washout over one of the culverts has recently been repaired, you have Gary to thanks! He designed and coordinated the whole project with Elmer's.

We recently caught up with Gary to hear about his time at GRNA over the last 18 months:

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

I volunteer for GRNA because of a need to contribute to an organization with a mission and values that are important to me.



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

Even in retirement, I can learn much from the GRNA staff and volunteers I work with!

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

How unique it is and the importance of preserving it for the environment's sake.

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

I enjoy working around my home garden and kayaking with family and friends on the Chain of Lakes.



Save the date!

# RIVERFEST 2022

**Thurs, Aug 11**      **Cedar River Lodge @ Shanty Creek**

Join us for fun & fundraising for GRNA

Online auction runs Aug 11-25





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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.

## DONATE



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