

[View this email in your browser](#)



Dear GRNA volunteers,

We're wrapping up the last of springtime out here at GRNA. The white-throated sparrows and black-and-white warblers are once again singing from the wetlands, and polygala, starflower, and wild columbine now dot the trailsides. The green frogs are "thunking" out by the dock, the early-season caddisflies are emerging as adults out of Finch Creek, and long-legged fawns are taking their first few steps through GRNA's lush maple forests.

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.

Enjoy the transition to glorious summertime in northern Michigan, all!

Emily Burke
Conservation & Education Specialist
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 in late July. 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!

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
 - 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!

UPCOMING LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

PLANT AND TREE IDENTIFICATION

Thurs, June 2 from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm

Being able to identify plant and tree species in the natural area is a great skill for any GRNA volunteer, and is useful during many different volunteer projects, including stream monitoring, parcel monitoring, land and trail stewardship, and working in the native plant gardens. Join us to build or brush up on your identification skills and learn strategies for differentiating look-alike plants. We'll meet at the Grass River Center and head out on the trails from there. Email Emily at emily@grassriver.org to sign up.





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. This is a great primer for helping us control invasives at the July 20th 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 to sign up.

UPCOMING VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

GREEN ELK RAPIDS NATURE FEST

Sat, June 18 from 11:00 am to 3:00 pm

We're looking for 1-2 volunteers to help staff the GRNA booth at this year's Nature Fest. We will be one of about 40 nature-oriented organizations at booth stations located around beautiful Veteran's Memorial Park in Elk Rapids. The day's activities also include noted speakers, activities for kids, entertainment, and refreshments. Come represent GRNA at this family-focused, fun-filled community outreach event! Contact James at james@grassriver.org if you'd like to help out.



SUMMER WEDNESDAY WORK-BEES

Wed, June 22; 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.

RIVERFEST VOLUNTEER

Ongoing through August

Each year, GRNA holds our primary fundraiser in August. This year the date is Thurs, Aug 11th. 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 Elk Rapids and 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 or at (231) 838-0269.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: SUE HAADSMA-SVENSSON & KJELL SVENSSON

This month, we're putting the spotlight on GRNA volunteers Sue Haadsma-Svensson and Kjell Svensson. Sue and Kjell have been active volunteers for the last two years, ever since they retired and moved up north to Clam Lake. Incredibly capable and endlessly generous with their time, this couple is not afraid of hard work, whether the day's task is pulling invasive plants, repairing sections of boardwalk, or pulling every last weed in the native plant gardens. We recently caught up with them to hear about their time at GRNA over the last few years:



What inspires you to volunteer for GRNA?

The Grass River Natural Area is a special place for us. We are lucky to have both retired recently and want to give back. We both love being outdoors and meeting other volunteers with similar interests, so it is a great fit. For us, it is really important to protect and preserve this beautiful area.

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

We learn something new each time we visit! The diversity of the flora and fauna at GRNA is amazing. Last year we did an orchid walk with James, and who knew there were so many native orchids in this area!?

What do you wish more people knew about GRNA?

It is really a place for everyone and all ages. There is tons to do. If you want to hike the boardwalks, take out a kayak, snowshoe or ski in the winter, visit the educational center, or take part in a program, it is all there for everyone.

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

We love the water and enjoy early morning paddles - especially on Grass River - and boating.



We stay active hiking and skiing. We also volunteer for Paddle Antrim and Glacial Hills, where Kjell does trail maintenance and Sue



leads the invasive species crew, in addition to being on the Friends of Glacial Hills board.

Any fun facts you want to tell us about?

We both love to travel, especially to Sweden to visit Kjell's family.

IT'S TIME FOR GRNA'S ANNUAL NATIVE PLANT SALE

Sat, June 4
10:00 am - 1:00 pm

Choose from a wide variety
of wildflowers, shrubs,
grasses, and more.

Click [here](#) for more info





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



Copyright © 2021 Grass River Natural Area, All rights reserved.

Our mailing address is:

PO Box 231

Bellaire, MI 49615

Natural area address:

6500 Alden Highway, Bellaire MI 49615

Want to change how you receive these emails?

You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#).



