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Dear GRNA volunteers,

Out here at the natural area, we're enjoying the dichotomies brought on by October's transitions. Hikers might still be able to spot garter snakes sunning themselves on the boardwalks on the warmest of days, but crisp maple leaves are forming a natural red carpet along the upland trails. The purple blooms of New England asters are still shining brightly from the native plant gardens around the Center, but the tamaracks have begun their shift from green to burnished gold.

We too are shifting from the crazy-busy seasons of summer and fall to a slower pace as the colder weather sets in, but we are still looking for volunteers for a handful of events in the coming weeks. And as always, if you have a different idea for a way you'd like to help, don't hesitate to reach out.

Cheers!

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

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## **VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION RE-CAP**

Thanks to all of you who came out to celebrate at our annual Volunteer Appreciation

gathering on October 6. So far in 2022, 98 different people have volunteered their time and talents at GRNA for a total of 1,434 volunteer hours! We are so grateful to have such generous and dedicated supporters. You are truly the backbone of GRNA, and we can't wait to see what we can accomplish together in 2023!



## HUNTING SEASON REMINDER

While hunting is never allowed at GRNA inside the Education Zone, it is allowed year-round in some form outside the Education Zone, and fall marks the season when the most hunters are likely to be out in the natural area. We want to remind everyone to stay safe when hiking on trails outside the Education Zone this fall - including the Rail Trail and Algonquin Loop - and when volunteering in off-trail areas. Wear orange, avoid dawn and dusk outings, and review the following chart to see which types of hunting are permitted when at GRNA. Please use extra caution during deer rifle season during the second half of November.

APPROXIMATE HUNTING SEASONS IN ANTRIM COUNTY/NORTHERN MICHIGAN								
	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April
Coyote, red squirrel...								
Black Bear								
Grouse								
Woodcock								
Small Game								
Wild Turkey								
Waterfowl								
Deer (Bow)								
Beaver trapping								
Deer (Rifle)								
Deer (Muzzle)								
Bobcat								

## UPCOMING VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES



### WILD TURKEY TROT HELP

**Sat, Nov 12 from 10:30 am to 12:30 pm-ish**

For our Wild Turkey Trot 5k race, which starts at 11:00 am, we need volunteers to assist with snacks, timers, and as course guides. We will need 1-2 volunteers stationed at the start/finish line and 3-6 course guides stationed solo or in pairs (if you want a buddy) along the route to guide runners and walkers on key turns of the course. And if you would like to bring a snack for runners and volunteers at the end of the race to enjoy around the campfire, we are looking for muffins,

cookies, fruit, granola bars, etc. Please email [james@grassriver.org](mailto:james@grassriver.org) if you can help!

### LIGHTING OF THE BRIDGES HELP

**Sat, Dec 17 from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm**

We started this tradition last year, and it was wildly popular, drawing about 100 folks out for a magical evening of strolling the lit bridges of the boardwalks and warming up around the fire with hot cocoa in the pavilion. This year, we're tacking on some holiday crafting inside the Center. We're looking for a handful of volunteers to help us staff the craft tables. If you're willing to help out, please email [emily@grassriver.org](mailto:emily@grassriver.org).



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## THE 2022 PHOTO CONTEST IS OPEN!

Show us what GRNA means to you! Enter up to three photos taken anywhere within GRNA or on Grass River, and you could win a care package from the Grass River Gift Shop. See the full contest details [here](#). Below: the 2021 People's Choice Award winning photo by Robert Lawshe.



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**VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT:  
ELLEN WHITEHEAD**

This month, we're putting the spotlight on Ellen Whitehead, who started taking classes at GRNA years ago and enjoyed them so much that she decided to volunteer. Ellen helps out year-round with our events, takes lots of beautiful photos for GRNA, and lends a hand at some stewardship work-bees. With her easy smile and deep love of the outdoors, Ellen is a natural at volunteering, especially when it comes to working with kids. We recently caught up with Ellen to hear about her time at GRNA over the years:



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

I've always loved being outdoors. Nature is a great healer and I like to share my experiences in that regard with others. GRNA has it all, from its water features to its forests and fens. Plus, it boasts a fantastic nature center!

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

That "it takes a village" to bring environmental programming to others. People are as varied as the flora and fauna that live at GRNA. The volunteers that help with its various programming all have unique talents and are happy to share them with others.

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

How it is a beautiful place to be in all seasons with a variety of hiking trails, classes, and opportunities to get to know Mother Nature a bit better.

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

I love hiking. I have hiked at least 100 miles on the North Country Trail (NCT) for the past six years to earn my NCT 100 Badge. I adopted a 4-mile section of the NCT near me and am responsible for keeping it safe and clean for others to enjoy. I also volunteer for my church (Mancelona United Methodist), my lakes community as secretary of the Blue Lake-Coldsprings Civic Association, and once a week at Mancelona High School in The Iron Vault (a free store and clothing shop for students). I love writing poetry and photography.

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

I write a haiku with a photo every day and have done so for the past six years - they are on my Facebook Page: Daily Photo Haiku.





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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.

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