



PAW PRINTS

The John and Mary Dahlem Environmental Education Center
A Program of The Dahlem Conservancy

December 2008

In this Issue

New Education Director	pg. 1
Message from Education Director	pg. 2
Benefit Breakfast	pg. 3
January Weekend Program	pg. 4
JAS Events/Meetings	pg. 4
Skiing at Dahlem	pg. 4
Communication Assistant Article	pg. 5
Naturalist Corner	pg. 5
People for Wildlife News	pg. 6
Avian Vocabulary	pg. 6
Memberships/Donations	pg. 7
Holiday Bazaar Craft Items	pg. 7
Nutshell Gift Shop	pg. 7
Efficient Home-Heating	pg. 8

Dahlem Center Hours

Tues - Fri.	9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Saturday	10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Sunday	Noon - 5:00 p.m.
Monday	Closed

The trails and grounds are open from dawn to dusk every day. The entrance gate is opened at 6:30 a.m. and locked at 9:00 p.m.

Contact

Phone: 517 - 782 - 3453
Fax: 517 - 782 - 3441
Website: www.dahlemcenter.org
Address: 7117 South Jackson Rd.
Jackson, MI 49201

New Education Director at Dahlem

We are pleased to announce that after months of searching, Dahlem has found its new Education Director, Kimberly May!

As many of you know, finding a new Education Director to fill Randy Hill's shoes was no easy task. However, after reviewing many well-qualified applicants, our search committee agreed that Kim-



berly was absolutely the best possible fit. She will receive her Master of Professional Studies Degree in Environmental Interpretation from the S.U.N.Y. College of Environmental Science and Forestry.

Her work experience is extremely impressive. She has an ample background in management, animal husbandry, biological research, and environmental education.

Kimberly comes to Dahlem with a wealth of experience in environmental education.

After completing her Bachelors Degree in the Biological Sciences at the State University of New York, she went on

to receive her Master of Professional Studies Degree in Environmental Interpretation from the S.U.N.Y. College of Environmental Science and Forestry. She comes to us directly from the position as Interpretive Program Coordinator of Chittenango Falls State Park, where it was her primary responsibility to research, design, and conduct various educational programs on natural and cultural history.

In addition to her overwhelmingly

...Continued on Pg. 2

Holiday Bazaar is Coming!



Don't forget that December 5th & 6th, Dahlem's annual Holiday Bazaar will be upon us. Beginning at 10:00 a.m. each day and ending at 4:00p.m., Dahlem's gift shop, and classrooms will be filled with various craft items, baked items and much more! Santa will also be stopping by on the 6th from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.! Hope to see you all there!

Mission Statement: The mission of The Dahlem Conservancy is to provide environmental education and land conservancy services to the residents of South Central Michigan.

Paw Prints is published for members of The Dahlem Conservancy.

DAHLEM CONSERVANCY BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Are You A Dahlem Member?

If not, become a member today and you will receive:

- Free admission to most public programs
- Advanced registration and reduced rates for Day Camps and Goblin Walks
- 10% discount on purchases in the Nutshell Gift Shop
- Paw Prints monthly newsletter of events and information
- Access to trails for cross-country skiing.

Membership Fees:

Individual Membership \$24
 Family Membership \$36
 Senior Membership \$12

Memberships also make great gifts for friends and family!!

Help us protect the outdoors for future generations!

Message from the Education Director...

Greetings from the new Education Director! Although I write this from my desk in Syracuse, NY, I hope to be nestled in Jackson, MI by the time this newsletter reaches your mailbox. I am eager to join Dahlem's exceptional team and share my passions for environmental education and conservation with you and the community.

"What *doesn't* Dahlem do?!" was my initial exclamatory reaction when I began researching and applying for the Education Director position. To my delight, Dahlem offers a lot! The center's impressive spectrum of innovative and well-established programming opportunities is exactly what I had been

looking for. Now, as a Dahlem team member, I look forward to becoming a part of that success and contributing to it as well. My initial exclamation has become a challenging question of "What *can* Dahlem do?". I see Dahlem's potential as limitless because of its hard-working staff and the support of members like you. Thank you for the opportunity to help Dahlem continue in its growth and I look forward to meeting you all this holiday season. See you at the center or on the trails!

Kimberly May
 Education Director

...Continued from Pg. 1

education, Kimberly brings a solid background in creative arts. As evidence by her studio art minor, we feel that she will bring the ability to improve Dahlem's various educational programs with a new and creative method.

Like everyone at Dahlem, Kimberly has a passion for the outdoors that we are all excited to see in action. We invite everyone to stop by and welcome her to the Dahlem family. Dahlem would also like to send thanks to all those who applied for the Education Director position, and to everyone on the search committee.

Paw Prints Survey

Each month, The Dahlem Conservancy sends out over 700 editions of our newsletter, Paw Prints. We would love to know what you think about it. Your feedback will help us to improve the newsletter. Please cut out and mail this survey to the address on the front, or drop it off the next time you visit Dahlem. We greatly appreciate you taking the time to help us evaluate our services.

1) What do you enjoy reading most about in Paw Prints?

- Upcoming Dahlem Events
- Recap on past Dahlem Events
- Nature/Science articles
- Environmental-friendly tips
- Messages from the staff

2) Is there anything else you would like to see in Paw Prints? No Yes, If yes, what? _____

3) Is there anything we should take out? No Yes, If yes, what? _____

In the space below, please provide any additional comments or suggestions you have regarding Paw Prints. Thank you once again for taking the time to fill out this survey!

Celebrating the Gifts of Nature



1st Annual Benefit Breakfast a Huge Success



The Dahlem Conservancy hosted the 1st annual Benefit Breakfast on November 12th. We are pleased to announce that the event was a huge success with 280 guests gathering to hear the Dahlem Mission and Vision. All funds raised at the event are unrestricted operating funds that will support, maintain and sustain Dahlem programs.

Dahlem wishes to thank the sponsors whose generous support offset the event expenses. Special thanks to HFC (Household Finance Corporation), CP Federal Credit Union, American Title Insurance Company and McDonald's.

We wish to acknowledge Dorie Shelby, Cy Young, Spring Arbor University and Myrna Bertlet for video production, with special thanks to Dorie, Cy and Adam Evans for technical assistant the day of the event. Thank you to Dibble Elementary School 1st grade students of Ms. Julie Bisot and Ms. Mary Wilcox for performing "Nature Needs Kids & Kids Need Nature", directed by Ms. Jackie Livesay, words and lyrics by Jennie Morgan, with video-graphy provided by JCC Distance Learning Center. Thank you to Denise Curtis and Sandy Emmons for their creativity in designing and coordinating the beautiful, natural decorations, and Cathy McLaughlin and Karen Leja for assembling all of the favor bags, as well as Sandy Sweet for the nametags. Our appreciation also goes out to Adams Farm Market for providing all of the pumpkins and gourds used in the decorations.

A very special thank you to the Table Captains, table hosts and guests whose efforts and attendance made the event an overwhelming success.

Dahlem introduced the *Dahlem Legacy Circle* at the event, a multi-year giving opportunity designed to maintain and sustain The Dahlem Conservancy mission and vision. We welcome and thank the founding members who joined the *Dahlem Legacy Circle* with a Gift of Education, Gift of Community or Gift of Conservancy, making an investment in the ongoing success of the organization. In addition, thank you to the many other guests who generously contributed at the event. We would also like to acknowledge and thank the Dahlem Board & Staff for "leading the way" with a pooled Leadership Gift. All funds raised at the event are for our day to day operations in unrestricted operating funds, ensuring that Dahlem is able to provide, expand and sustain programming and services to inspire future stewards of the earth. If you have questions about or interest in the *Dahlem Legacy Circle*, or wish to contribute in other ways, please contact Becky at 782-3453.

The Dahlem Development Project is made possible through support from The Dorothy Blakely Foundation, James A. & Faith Knight Foundation, Jackson County Community Foundation, Weatherwax Foundation, Dorothy & the late George Dyer.

My sincere thanks and appreciation to the Dahlem Development Team. It couldn't have happened without each and every one of you!

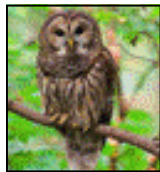
Rebecca Mehall
Development Coordinator



Free to
Big Brothers
Big Sisters
With ID

January 2009 Weekend Program:

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Family Wildlife Adventure.....

Hunters of the Night 3:00 p.m. Sunday January 4: The Howell Nature Center will help us learn about Michigan owls with live birds. Owl pellets will be provided to each family to take home and examine. An Owl Prowl will be held at 4:30 p.m. after the indoor program. Advanced registration for the prowl is required, as only 24 spots are available. First come, first serve!

Family Wildlife Adventure.....

Owl Prowls 5:30 p.m. Monday January 5 - Wednesday January 7: Due to the overwhelming turnout of last year's Owl Prowl, additional hikes will be held the following Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, starting at 5:30 p.m. There is a limit of twelve people for these additional hikes, as traveling with a smaller group will increase the chance of hearing owls, so be sure to reserve a spot in advance, because these are sure to fill! Bring a flashlight, warm coat, hat and gloves.



**Look for many more January and February Weekend Programs in our January edition of PawPrints and on our website soon.*

*The Dahlem Conservancy is proud to announce that
This Program is Sponsored By a Generous Grant From*

All programs presented at the Dahlem Center at
7117 S. Jackson Rd.

Advance Registration is required.

To Register Call 517-782-3453

Admission is \$3.00 per person

Dahlem Conservancy Members Admitted Free



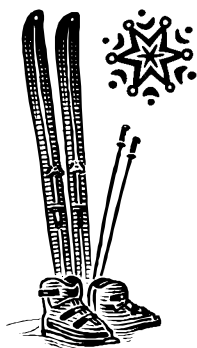
Michigan Automotive Compressor, Inc.

Jackson Audubon Society Events & Meetings

Saturday, December 20, 2008 - Christmas Bird Count - Join a count team and help gather data to be used in determining national trends in avian population numbers and distribution. Lunch at Gary and Nancy Siegrist's home at noon; dinner at Steak's Eatery (Vandercook Lake near the McDevitt Road exit off I-27) at 6:30 p.m. for count tally and great bird sightings. If you can't participate in the count, join us for dinner. Contact Don and Robyn Henise (795-7752) for more information.

Thursday, January 8, 2009 - "The Captive Care and Conservation of Local Reptiles" - Scott Hasbrouck is known as Mr. Snake Man around Spring Arbor College. Scott's program will help us to identify and care for our native snakes.

**Meetings and programs will be held at Ella Sharp Museum, 3225 S. Fourth St., Jackson, MI, except where otherwise noted. Regular meetings will begin with a social time at 7:00 p.m. with meeting and program to follow. Bring "recyclables" (magazines, books, feeders, etc.) to the programs.*



Cross Country Skiing at Dahlem



This winter promises to be a snowy one! Come out and make the most of the snow at Dahlem! Cross country skiing is free to all Dahlem members. With over 5 miles of scenic winter trails, its hard to imagine anywhere better in Jackson to enjoy the breathtaking beauty of winter in Michigan. Not a member? Call 517-782-3453 or stop by to join the Dahlem family!

An Investment to Last a Lifetime

What is it about Nature that intrigues us? Not only birders, gardeners, and scientists, but everyone. What is it about a rubescent, fiery, summer sunset that can cause even the most environmentally-unaware to stop and gaze in awe at such beauty? Although it is becoming increasingly difficult to witness, in an age of rapidly-evolving technology and constant news of our environmentally-destructive ways, I would declare it safe to assume that nearly every person on this planet possesses some sort of a seemingly unexplainable passion for the environment, no matter how unapparent it may seem.

Though it is nothing more than my humble opinion, I would hypothesize that if one were to observe closely, answers to this apparent mystery can be found with relative ease, in the universal aspects of nature that seem to set fire to the curiosity of all.

Take the sun for, perhaps the best, example. There is possibly no other symbol that is celebrated so frequently and variously throughout all of human culture. From ancient, primitive paintings found in caves, to today's most profound works of literature, the sun is extraordinarily abundant throughout our culture. Surely this is not just random coincidence. There must be something more to this widespread obsession, but what? It is obvious that the overwhelming beauty of the sun would likely be identified by most as the cause, but I still beg for a deeper explanation. I am certainly not doubting or denying the



beauty of such a magnificent creation, I am simply asking why.

The answer could be in any number of forms. The most common, as one might expect, would be the intoxicating display of colors the sun presents, most notably at the ever-important times of dawn and dusk. I personally find a pleasurable characteristic of such times in the way that not only humans, but all of nature, seems to celebrate these times as well. As any birder will tell you, dawn and dusk are the unrivaled times for an abundance of activity among not only birds, but all wildlife as well. Insects flutter anxiously at the rays of warmth provided, deer are spotted with extraordinary ease grazing, and a representative of plants is even provided with Morning Glories as they open their new flower each morning to greet the anxious bees, butterflies and hummingbirds awaiting their bloom.

There is an obvious appreciation for the sun among all forms of life. Would

it be completely absurd to speculate that our universal appreciation for our luminous friend is closely related, if not completely based on its life-giving qualities? Perhaps the most valuable chemical reaction on earth (photosynthesis), comes with a great deal of help from the sun. Without this reaction, humans, plants and even the paper upon which you read this would not exist. I am not suggesting that every organism on

earth, or even every human for that matter, understands this complex process. However, I would suggest that through a long evolutionary history on this planet, we and all forms of life have noted the importance of the sun in some way.

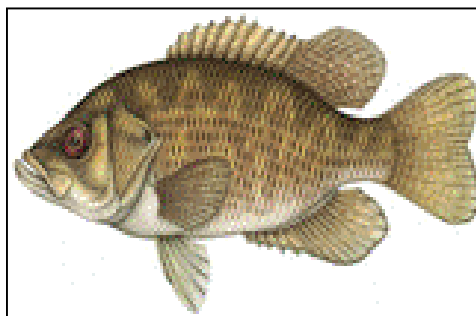
The sun, in all its glory, is not the only example out there of an aspect of nature that we can all find an appreciation for within ourselves. Whether it be the dazzling colors of autumn trees, the soothing patter of rain on a summer night, or even something as simple as the peace and solidarity of the woods after a hectic day, there is something out there for everyone. Most of you have more than likely already discovered this. If you haven't, go out there and find it. You will discover a part of your life that, unlike many things in this world, is guaranteed to remain for as long as you do.

Cody Porter
Communications Assistant

Naturalist Corner

Fish During Winter

The days are becoming shorter, snow is even beginning to appear, and the temperature continues on a downward spiral to well below freezing. During these extreme conditions, all forms of life have their own unique ways to handle the cold. Most birds migrate south, and certain animals like bats, and woodchucks find a warm area to hibernate for the frigid months. It may be hard to believe for most to think that anything could possibly survive these treacherous months underwater.



Though we cannot expect a fish to survive anywhere else, it still seems remarkable that they are able to keep from freezing to death in the deep depths of lakes. However, as most of us know, it is actually significantly warmer near the bottom of lakes as opposed to outside the water. It is esti-

mated that the temperature of lake water near the bottom rarely dips below 40 degrees Fahrenheit throughout winter. Fish also have a unique adaptation for dealing with significantly lower temperatures. To avoid using up too much energy, as food is scarce during winter, fish have acquired an adaptation which allows their metabolism to be regulated by the temperature of the surrounding water. Fish are still able to swim and even eat if food is available, but generally move at a much slower pace, appearing almost in dormant state. In addition, some fish even have specialized "anti-freeze" proteins which prevent a fish from becoming frozen by binding to tiny ice crystals in their body, which inhibits further growth.

Avian Vocabulary for Beginners

Tired of finding yourself in a confused mess as your more experienced birding partners constantly spew out words like raft, mantle and crop; words that seem to have no relevance to birds? Although certainly not the complete list, provided are a few definitions of common terms you can expect to hear out on the trails. Learn them, use them, impress your friends and finally become part of that conversation on that Bluebird's abnormally large clutch.

- **Kettle**: A large concentration of hawks, usually seen during migration.
 - **Covey**: A brood or flock of partridge, quail or grouse.
 - **Mantle**: The area that includes the back and upper sides of the wings.
 - **Flushing**: A behavior in which frightened birds explode into flight in response to a disturbance.
 - **Raft**: A gathering of birds resting on the water (American Coot raft pictured right).
 - **Crop**: An enlargement of the esophagus; serves as a storage structure and (in pigeons) has glands that produce secretions.
 - **Clutch**: The number of eggs laid by the female at one time.
- * Source: Black, Ted and Kennedy, Gregory. *Birds Of Michigan*. Lone Pine Pub, 2003



Photo By: Douglas Leffler

Got Winter Blues? A Bird Count Could be in Order

I opened up the shade in my office today and to my surprise, winter had arrived. Scattered on the ground before me was a flock of Dark-eyed Juncos, feverishly looking for seed around the building. What the heck happened to late fall? I would think Mother Nature would ease us into the cold, not slap us in the face with it. Oh well, at least the last couple of weather fronts have brought back to us our winter bird friends from the north.



Dark-eyed Junco

As we prepare for winter's icy grip, another phenomenon begins to take shape with the preparation of the National Audubon Christmas Bird Count. Members of Jackson Audubon have been using this count as a great way to get outdoors in December since the 1960s.

The present-day Christmas Bird Count was started by ornithologist Frank Chapman in 1900 as a new way to count birds on Christmas day. Before this was proposed, it was common practice to choose up sides and go afield with guns. Whoever brought the biggest pile of birds in won the contest. Conservation was just beginning and

even then, many observers and scientists were becoming concerned about declining bird populations. That first year, twenty-seven birders at twenty-five different locations counted 90 species and 18,500 individual birds. Now, more than 50,000 observers participate each year in this all-day census of early-winter bird populations. In the year 2005 we had 57,156 birders at 2060 sites count 61,579,355 individual birds. Wow. Now that is "Citizen Science" at its best.

Other surveys that you can be involved in are the one-weekend, 12th annual "Great Backyard Bird Count", as well as the winter-long "Project Feeder Watch". The GBBC is Febru-

ary 13-16, 2009 and is a joint project between National Audubon and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Project Feeder Watch has been running for over twenty years and is also sponsored by Cornell. You can go to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology website (www.birds.cornell.edu) and click on the appropriate link for more information. As always, you can also call or e-mail me here at Dahlem for more information.

According to David Bonter, Project Leader of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, more than 100 studies have shown that getting closer to nature reduces stress and promotes a feeling of well-being in children and adults. Perhaps filling the feeders and counting the birds that visit may be just what the doctor ordered.

We should all think about participating in bird counts and surveys. What a great way to get involved with "Citizen Science". If interested, please call me at 517-782-3453.

Gary Siegrist
People for Wildlife

Members Corner

(Through 11/25/08)

We Welcome the Following New Members

Ken Butterfield
 Ryan Daly
 Ruth Kruger
 Regina Llanes
 Steve & Anne Noble
 Kon & Chris Prokos
 David & Janet Barrett
 Jim & Sharon Best

Thanks to the Following for Renewing Their Memberships

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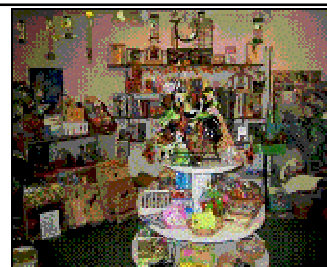
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**Just Starting to do some
 Holiday Shopping??**

Have no idea what to get someone in your family? Help them experience the outdoors!

Visit the Nutshell Gift Shop
 for all your holiday needs.....

Dahlem Members receive 10% off!!

Items include...

Books, Birdfeeders, Bird Seed, T-Shirts, Toys

It's Never too Early to begin Holiday Shopping!!!
 And remember, all proceeds go into educating youth and the public about the Great Outdoors!

5 Tips for a Warmer Home This Winter

(While saving money too)

- **Change Furnace Filters**

Though it is easy to forget, changing your furnace filters once a month during the heating season is extremely important. Dirty filters restrict airflow, thus increasing the amount of energy used. Another option is switching to a permanent, electronic filter which will capture up to 40% more debris, but may be a bit more expensive.

- **Turn Your Water Heater Down**

Most water heaters are set to 140 degrees Fahrenheit by installers. However, most households do not need this level, and end up paying for unused hot water. Lowering the temperature to just 120 degrees Fahrenheit would reduce the average water heating cost by 6 to 10 percent.

- **Turn Down the Heat Before You Leave**

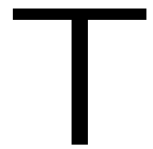
Most households spend 50 to 70 percent of their energy bill on heating and cooling. Why pay for this if no one is using it? For every degree you lower your thermostat, you'll save between 1 to 3 percent on your next heating bill. To make it easier, invest in a programmable thermostat, which generally costs about \$50.

- **Invest in an Energy Monitor**

Closely monitor your energy consumption as it occurs with an energy monitor. These devices indicate household electrical usage and project your monthly bill. Research has shown that users dramatically reduce their energy consumption after using one, as they become more aware of how much each appliance and activity costs. Most report average savings of around 15 to 20 percent a year.

- **Use Caulking and Weather-stripping**

Small leaks can lower energy efficiency by 5 to 30 percent a year, according to the U.S. Department of Energy. Caulking up these small leaks can become extremely noticeable on your next bill. To test for leaks and cracks, take a lit incense stick to probable problem areas such as corners, windows, chimneys, etc. and watch the smoke. If you see it begin to waver, you have a leak.



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