



# Paw Prints



VOLUME 33, ISSUE 1

JANUARY 2011

The John and Mary Dahlem Environmental Education Center

### VISITOR BUILDING HOURS

Tuesday - Friday  
9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Saturday  
10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Sunday  
Noon - 5:00 p.m.

### TRAIL HOURS

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

7117 South Jackson Rd.  
Jackson, MI 49201

Phone: (517) 782-3453  
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### From the Executive Director

## Dahlem Completes Conservation Easement — The Real Story

by Brad Whaley

And the Citizen Patriot front page headline reads: **"Dahlem Conservancy signs deal for almost 40 acres along Falling Waters Trail."**

Yes, Dahlem has completed its first transaction as a land trust! On December 10<sup>th</sup>, 2010, The Dahlem Conservancy and Dr. Bruce and Kathi Bigelow entered an agreement to protect the conservation values of their land from further development.

And now to dispel any rumors: We did not buy land along the Falling Waters Trail (see the headline).



**From left, Dr. Bruce and Kathi Bigelow, Dahlem Executive Director Brad Whaley and Dahlem Board President Bob Grover celebrate the new conservation agreement.**

The deal that Dahlem signed with the Bigelows is called a "Conservation Easement." This is simply a legal agreement between a landowner and a land conservancy or government agency that permanently limits uses of the land in order to protect its conservation values. The Bigelows continue to own and use their land, and they can sell it or pass it on to their heirs. Their land has not been opened to the public.

Thanks are first due to the landowners, Dr. Bruce and Kathi Bigelow, for their vision and commitment to maintain and enrich the quality of life in Jackson. Next, thanks go to our own Betty Desbiens, whose donations have made this new area of work possible. Additionally, Dahlem's Board of Directors deserves appreciation for their efforts during the last five years to build our capacity to function as a local land conservancy. I would like to highlight John McLaughlin Jr., Dahlem's Board President from 2005-2010, who has championed the cause and personally donated many, many hours of service to see us reach this milestone! Lastly, I would like to recognize the Legacy Land Conservancy of Ann Arbor who partnered with us on this project

All across America, thousands of people are determined to conserve the places they value. Landowners have a deep connection to their land and know the gifts undeveloped properties provide their communities: clean air and water, fresh food, wildlife habitat, and sheer scenic beauty. If you know of someone who may be interested in finding out more about what a Conservation Easement really is, please contact us at 517-782-3453.

**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.*

### **THE DAHLEM CONSERVANCY BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**President:** Bob Grover  
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**Executive Director:** Brad Whaley\*  
**Education Director:** Ellen Rathbone\*  
**Office Coordinator:** Denise Bigham  
**Receptionist:** Linda Danley  
**Naturalist:** Carrie Benham  
**Naturalist:** Gary Siegrist  
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**Green Schools Facilitator:** Jill Butterfield  
**Ecology Farm Coordinator:** Chris Gancsos  
**Ecology Farm Educator:** Lisa Brown  
**Communications Specialist:** Anne Noble  
\* denotes full-time employee

### **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

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

## **2010 Holiday Bazaar Raises More than \$7,000**

The holiday spirit was definitely in the air at The Dahlem Center's annual Holiday Bazaar Dec. 3rd and 4th. Patrons looked over a wide variety of donated items, as well as the nature-themed gifts in the Center's Nutshell Gift Shop.

It was a festive event, with hundreds of individuals coming through to complete some holiday shopping. It was cause for celebration for The Dahlem Center as well, as we raised just over \$7,000 at the event — beating last year's total!

The selection of items available included wreaths, cookies, pies, clothing, pottery, jewelry, unique bird houses, bird feeders, birdseed and much more.

The Dahlem Center would like to thank all the patrons who came out and supported us at the Bazaar by shopping, contributing items, attending the wreath making event, setting up and working the sale. We couldn't do it without you!



*Patrons look over the variety of gifts, clothing, baked goods and other items offered.*



*Naturalist Carrie Benham models a variety of scarves featured at the Holiday Bazaar.*

## **IRA Charitable Rollover Reinstated for 2010-2011**

The IRA Charitable Rollover has been reinstated through 2011. Contributions for the 2010 tax year can be made retroactively through January 2011. This is a short window of opportunity to take advantage of this incentive for 2010.

The IRA Rollover was first enacted in 2006 as part of the Pension Protection Act. The provision allows individuals aged 70½ and older to donate up to \$100,000 from their Individual Retirement Accounts (IRAs) to public charities without having to count the distributions as taxable income.

Since the provision was first enacted, Americans have made millions of dollars of new contributions to nonprofits.

*Happy New Year*

*From Your Friends at The Dahlem Conservancy!*

## The Dahlem Conservancy Introduces New Education Director

The Dahlem Center welcomes its new Education Director, Ellen Rathbone, to Michigan.

Ellen comes to Dahlem from New York, where for the last ten years she worked as an Environmental Educator for New York State at the Visitor Interpretive Center in Newcomb, which is in the heart of the Adirondack Mountains.

Ellen's background in environmental education stretches back several years, including stints at Merck Forest and Farmland Center in Vermont, The Utica Zoo, and with the Somerset County Park Commission in New Jersey.

On the academic front, Ellen received her Bachelor of Science degree from the State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry (ESF), where she was enrolled in the college's Dual Program, which concentrated in Environmental and Forest Biology as well as Resource Management (forestry). Seven years later Ellen returned to ESF to work on her Master's degree in Environmental and Forest Biology and became the first graduate student to go through the college's Environmental Interpretation program.

Like many naturalists, Ellen's hobbies reflect her work life. She is an outdoor photographer, a paddler, a rambler (with the dog) and an organic gardener. When the weather keeps her inside, she quilts, maintains a nature blog, and catches up on her reading.

Please introduce yourself to Ellen the next time you are the Dahlem Center.



### Cross Country Skiing at the Dahlem Nature Center This Winter!

Winter in Michigan can be a snowy one, so come out and make the most of it at Dahlem! Cross country skiing is FREE to all Dahlem members. With over five miles of scenic winter trails, it's 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!

Be sure and check in at the Gift Shop before skiing the trails.

### The Dahlem Book Club

New members are always welcome! For more information, please call 517-782-3453

February 16 at 3:00 p.m. at The Dahlem Center

February is Reader's Choice!

Select a nature or environmental book of your choice

Read and share with the group.



### Yoga

at

The Dahlem Center

Mondays

Jan.10-Feb. 14

5:45-6:45 p.m.

A combination of strength, stretch, & balance poses in fusion with breath work and meditation.

All fitness levels welcome.

Contact Instructor Nance Scott at 517-414-8547

Free to  
Big Brothers  
Big Sisters  
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# January 2011 Public Programming

Free to  
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Discover Dahlem Outdoors.....

## Winter Bird ID, Saturday, January 8, 2:00 p.m.

Lead by Dahlem naturalist Gary Siegrist, this refreshing winter event is not to be missed. Gary will lead you on a tour that will identify and show you which of our feathered friends are staying with us here in Michigan for the winter.

Discover Dahlem Outdoors.....

## Guided Nature Hikes: 9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. Every Tuesday

Join Dahlem staff for an educational and rewarding hike on a portion of Dahlem's five miles of scenic trails in search of our seasonal fauna and flora. Whether you are a birder with your eyes to the sky, an amateur botanist with your nose to the ground, or you simply enjoy a stroll outdoors, all are welcome. Please wear appropriate outdoor attire and hiking shoes. Binoculars suggested but not required.



Discover Dahlem Outdoors.....

## Community Garden Program, 10:00 a.m. Sunday, January 9

Dahlem's Ecology Farm Educator Lisa Brown will introduce you to winter gardening or season extension. She will explain the basics of this process, as well as the how & why, where and when. Participants who are interested will also get a tour of Lisa's hoop house at the end of the session!

Discover Dahlem Outdoors.....

## Of Birds and Berries : 7:00 p.m., Thursday, January 13

Researcher Julie Craves from the Rouge River Bird Observatory - UM of Dearborn, will share her knowledge of the fall migrating birds and what fruit they eat to gain fat for their Southerly trip. She will focus on her work with Thrushes (Bluebirds & Robins).



Ecology and Environment Series.....

## Owl Prowl: 4:00 p.m. Saturday, January 15

Whooo's calling tonight? Join us for a live owl presentation by the Howell Nature Center. Learn when the breeding season begins, what species of owls are here in Michigan and who is calling at Dahlem. After the indoor presentation, an Owl Prowl hike begins at 5:30 p.m. There is a limit of 24 people for the hike. Advanced registration is required.

Discover Dahlem at Night.....

## Moonlight Skiing: 7:00 p.m. Friday, January 21

Don't miss it! Moonlight skiing on Dahlem's trails with Jim Seitz. See nature at night!



All programs presented at the Dahlem Center at  
7117 South Jackson Rd. Jackson, MI 49201

**Advance Registration is Required.**

To register call 517-782-3453

Admission is \$3 per person

**Dahlem Conservancy Members Admitted**

**FREE unless otherwise noted**

**Check [www.dahlemcenter.org](http://www.dahlemcenter.org) for the most up-to-date program offerings!**

*The Dahlem Conservancy is proud to announce that these programs are sponsored by a generous grant from:*



Free to  
Big Brothers  
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## January 2011 Public Programming

Free to  
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### Ecology and Environment Series.....

#### Learn About Leatherback Sea Turtles: 2:00 p.m. Saturday, January 22

They shared the Earth with the Tyrannosaurus Rex and have changed very little since that time. So different were they from other sea turtle species, that they were not classified as turtles until the 1950's. Come travel to Matura Beach, Trinidad, the home of the amazingly well adapted Leatherback Sea Turtles. Kathy Shaw, Earthwatch facilitator, will share pictures and information about how these giant leathery creatures have adapted so well to their ocean environment and why they are critically endangered now. The program will be geared for all ages.



### Ecology and Environment Series.....

#### Which Foot Where? 2:00 p.m., Sunday, January 23

The secrets of animal locomotion are revealed in this hands-on program for teens and adults who want to add to their tracking knowledge. Join Dahlem's new Education Director Ellen Rathbone as she shares her enthusiasm and expertise with you.

### Discover Dahlem Outdoors.....

#### Winter Stonefly Hunt 1:00 - 3:00 p.m. Saturday, January 29

(Backup date in case of bad weather, Saturday, February 12, 1-3p.m.)

Join Cecilia Govrik at The Dahlem Conservancy as she searches the streams for Plecoptera insects, more commonly known as stoneflies. These fascinating creatures have evolved a life cycle that allows them to emerge during the winter and early spring in order to maximize the abundance of oxygen found in cold water. Dress to be outdoors for approximately an hour. All training and equipment will be provided. Kids 12 and up may attend if accompanied by an adult. Please contact Adopt-A-Stream Coordinator, Alison Rauss at 517-784-2800 x5 or [Alison.rauss@macd.org](mailto:Alison.rauss@macd.org) to RSVP.



## Tap Into Some Fun!

### Help Needed for Maple Sugaring Program



#### Maple Sugaring Program Volunteer Training

Thursday, February 17 9:00 am - 12:00 pm

March is ideal for sharing the art and science of maple sugaring with elementary and pre-school students. Anyone and everyone interested in volunteering is welcome to attend! Meet the other enthusiastic volunteers and learn a wealth of information. We'll set up the equipment, fire up the evaporator, and familiarize you with our unique Sugar Bush Tour. Students and parents love this early spring program. You will too! Join us in sharing a sweet experience!

For more information, please call (517) 782-3453.

# Nature's New Year Resolutions

**Looking to make some changes this year? Having trouble setting goals you would like to accomplish? Listed are just a few of the many ways in which you can make a difference this year for your local environment. Try a few out. You'll be amazed at how much these small steps can greatly benefit the world around you.**



- **Plant with Natives** - Introducing and using Native plants and flowers in your garden is possibly one of the most effective ways of helping your local environment. Native plants provide food for local insects, which in turn supplies birds and other animals with an abundant food source. This way, you provide a natural habitat and plentiful food source for all sorts of local animals, which encourages bio-diversity. Natives are also extremely low-maintenance, as they are specifically adapted to the area.

- **Install Bird and/or Bat Boxes** - Installing bird and bat boxes can benefit your home, mainly your yard, in many ways. In addition to providing an excellent opportunity to observe these animals up-close and personal, both will provide your yard with a natural insect-repellent team, which can help control the population of insects at your native garden.



- **Recycle** - Perhaps the most obvious, yet undeniably effective way to help not only your local environment, but the world, is by recycling. The statistics that support recycling are truly astounding, and too numerous to list. If you find yourself curious however, check out some of the numbers at <http://www.oberlin.edu/recycle/facts.html>.

***What are your environmental New Year's resolutions for 2011?***

## Upcoming Community Event

### Jackson Community Forum Presents: The Grand River Expedition 2010, A Virtual Tour



The latest installment in the ongoing Jackson Community Forum series will feature "The Grand River Expedition 2010, A Virtual Tour," held on Thursday, January 20th, 2011 at 6:30 p.m. at the Jackson District Library Carnegie Branch, 244 W. Michigan Ave. in downtown Jackson.

Paul Rentschler, aquatic ecologist and planner for the Upper Grand River Watershed Alliance, will present a virtual tour of "The Grand" as seen through the eyes of the expedition participants, with photos from the Grand Rapids Press as well as local photographers.

GREAT (Grand River Environmental Action Team) board member Jim Seitz will relate his experiences on the river as one of eight from Jackson County who paddled the entire 225-mile distance over 12 days. He joined over 300 participants this past July, paddling the Grand River from the headwaters south of Jackson to Lake Michigan in the Grand River Expedition 2010. The diverse group of participants from across the state experienced the beauty and majesty of this natural treasure in an extraordinary experience. This is the third expedition, following similar quests in 1990 and 2000.

***Thank You For Your  
Generous Donations:***

**(11/11/10 - 12/17/10)**

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*In memory of Richard E. Basore*

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Johnine & Larry Bauman  
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Sheila Troxel  
Beverly & Fred Walters

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Carol Ann Saum  
*To sponsor Green Frog*  
Berlet Films and Video  
*In memory of Robert Whiting and  
Marijane Black*  
Jackson Garden Club  
*For camp scholarships, native gar-  
dens & to sponsor Dr. Doug Tallmay*

Gifts in Kind  
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Adams Farm Market

## Naturalist's Niche

by Ellen Rathbone

### The Wonderful World of Tracking



***Echo, a Siberian Husky/German Shepherd mix, demonstrates his version of tracking.***

Every time I walk the dog, he sniffs away at animal signs that only he can detect, but once there is snow blanketing the ground, even if it is just the thinnest of layers, I can see what he's known all along: the landscape is full of critter activity.

I tell students that tracking is as much an art as it is a science. Sure, we can all learn what each animal's footprint looks like, and memorize its preferred gait, but that is only the tip of the iceberg. Once the animal is identified, it is time to figure out just what it was doing. This is when tracking gets interesting.

Really good trackers can tell just by looking at the signs around them if the animal they are following is male or female, if it was looking over its shoulder, if it is the dominant or subordinate member of its pack (canines), if it is a female in heat. The clues are there, just waiting to be seen by an observer with a keen eye. Most of us, however, never take the time to look.

My favorite part about tracking is reading the stories tracks leave behind. Was the animal just out looking for a meal, or was it looking for a mate? Was it trying to escape a predator? Did it climb that log to get a better view of its surroundings? Maybe I've come across a carcass surrounded by tracks – who was there first, and how did they react to interlopers?

Learning to track is a lifetime endeavor. There is always something new to discover. Training the eye to pick out a single hair caught on the bark of a tree, or the tiniest drop of urine indicating breeding receptiveness takes time and patience. It's not for everyone, but for those who choose to pursue it, it is immensely rewarding.

Join me on Jan. 23rd to start your journey into the world of tracking.

Return Service Requested

[www.dahlemcenter.org](http://www.dahlemcenter.org)

Jackson, MI 49201

7117 S. Jackson Rd.

The Dahlem Conservancy

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