



Go Green! Celebrate Earth Day!

It was back in 1962 that the late Sen. Gaylord Nelson of Wisconsin got the idea to put some focus on the environment.

He had been troubled that the environment was a non-issue in the government and for the country's politicians. He took his concerns to President John F. Kennedy, who he was certain would embrace the idea of promoting the environment with a national conservation tour.

Both the President and the Attorney General (the President's brother Robert Kennedy) liked the idea. President Kennedy embarked on a five-day, eleven-state conservation tour in September 1963. It didn't start Earth Day that year, but the word got out.



Sen. Nelson was an environmental pioneer – an unusual concept in the 1960s when the environment was not high on the nation's political agenda. At that time, there were many anti-Vietnam War demonstrations across the country, called "teach-ins." These inspired Sen. Nelson to organize a grassroots event about the environment.

In the spring of 1970 Senator Nelson announced that

there would be a nationwide grassroots demonstration on behalf of the environment – the first Earth Day. More than 20 million people participated, along with schools and local communities across the country.



Thirty-one years later, Earth Day is still going strong. You can celebrate by joining the Jackson Area Outdoor Coalition and other area outdoor organizations on Saturday, April 30 at Cascades Park. There will be many vendors on hand to help you learn what you can do to make your life a little greener.

JOIN US FOR EARTH DAY 2011
SATURDAY, APRIL 30
 1:00 - 4:00 pm
 Sparks (Cascades) Foundation Park, Jackson

Join us for...

- Kid's crafts and hands-on activities
- Canoe and kayak rides on the ponds
- Bike round up—donate an old bike
- Educational displays and materials

And MORE!

Admission is free!



Visitor Center Hours
 Tuesday - Friday
 9:00 am - 5:00 pm
 Saturday
 10:00 am - 5:00 pm
 Sunday Noon - 5:00 pm

Trail Hours
 Trails and grounds are open
 daily dawn to dusk.
 The entrance gate opens at
 6:30 am and closes at 9:00 pm

Contact
 7117 S. Jackson Rd.
 Jackson, MI 49201
 Phone: 517-782-3453
 Fax: 517-782-3441
www.dahlemcenter.org



From the Director's Desk

I remember sitting at a dinner party a couple of years ago, and while I can't remember what we ate that night, I will always remember one particular conversation. It was about volunteering. Most of us had been coordinating a large state-wide nonprofit conference for people in environmental education, and the 12 months of work we had put into making it happen was all voluntary. The conference was now over. We were done, finished and relaxing, just enjoying the evening when the spouse of our host asked us: "Why did you do it? Why would you give up all that time and not get paid?"

Why would someone volunteer? When you volunteer, you give part of yourself – your time, energy, skills, and feelings. You give to your family and friends, to your neighbors, to your community. Your contributions bring feelings of self-fulfillment and the knowledge that you have made a difference. Volunteering is also a way of saying thank you. It's a way of recognizing the countless others who, in big ways and small, have made your life richer and better through donations of their time and effort. As a volunteer, you also reap personal benefits and enhance your personal growth. You: increase social awareness, learn through service, enjoy better health, gain self-confidence, discover your strengths and talents, build a sense of independence, and expand your social circle.

Right now we are looking for volunteers in many areas, but I'd like to highlight just a couple pressing needs. If you might be interested in *servicing on Dahlem's Board of Directors*, please get in touch with us. Our Nominating Committee is seeking a diverse mix of individuals with experiences and expertise in many areas. Could this be your calling? We are also seeking help with our fundraising and marketing efforts. Would you be willing to *host a Tour of Dahlem in your business, office, or home* (we bring a short mission presentation to you)? More people need to know who we are and what we do so we can erase the "Best Kept Secret" moniker.

Maybe you are passionate about Dahlem in general and the importance of our environmental education work. We need a few more people to *help guide our fundraising committee* in building relationships and partnerships in the community.

The thing about volunteering is that you get as much out of it as you put into it. And often, you get a whole lot more! So, roll up your sleeves and get involved. If this has sparked your interest, the first step is simply to get in touch with us (517-782-3453). The success of Dahlem in our community in direct relation to the level of volunteering spirit of this community. I believe it's one of the primary reasons for our growth the past five years. So many people have been so giving. By catching the volunteer bug, you will be giving to others and giving yourself rewarding experiences and a lifetime of memories. Thanks everyone for your past support! -- Brad Whaley

The Dahlem Conservancy Board of Directors

President: Bob Grover
V. President: Myrna Berlet-Dutcher
Treasurer: Gary Krupa
Secretary: Kelley Emerson

Trustees: Kathy Clark Todd Emmons
 Victor Marshall John McLaughlin, Jr.
 Rod Melling Steve Patch
 Bill Sonnett Andy Walz
 Samuel Barnes - JCC Representative

The Dahlem Conservancy Staff

(* denotes full-time staff)

Executive Director*: Brad Whaley
Education Director*: Ellen Rathbone
Development Coordinator*: vacant
Office Manager: Denise Bigham
Receptionist: Linda Danley
Naturalist: Carrie Benham
Naturalist & Stewardship Coordinator: Gary Siegrist
Facilities Coordinator & Weekend Mngr.: Mark Snedeker
Facilities Assistant: Dennis Morton
Green School Facilitator: Jill Butterfield
Ecology Farm Coordinator: Chris Gancsos
Ecology Farm Educator: Lisa Brown
Communications Specialist: Anne Noble
Database Coordinator: Sandy Sweet

The Friends of Dahlem

There are busy days ahead for the Friends of Dahlem:

- On April 16, we are serving lunch for all who help clean and renew The Dahlem Center at the Work Bee.
- Join us on April 30 at Cascades Park for Earth Day 2011. We are selling popcorn and have small items to give children who visit our booth.
- In May, we are holding our annual Friends Meeting. Any suggestions for officers, or the group in general, are welcome.

About every two years the Friends hold a Valentine Tea fundraiser. This has always been very successful. This year our participants have again been very generous and we would like to thank the following people:

| | | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| Todd Zeller | Bea Hills | The Manga Family | Dottie Griebenow |
| Margaret Eaton | The Moore Family | The Fojtasek Family | The Tompkins Family |
| Mary Clemes | The Hubbard Family | Dorothy Schultz | The Price Family |
| The Danley Family | Alice Truax | William Allen | John Hand |
| The Howell Family | Karlene Rydjord | The Wellman Family | The Eden Family |
| The Clark Family | Linda Goings | Dale Kurtz | The May Family |
| The Davey Family | The Emmons Family | The McLaughlin Family | The Vandebroek Family |
| Shirley Chu | The Gamble Family | Fran Weaver | Jodi Snyder |
| The Best Family | The Childs Family | Gene Wandel | Acro Legal Copy Services |
| The Clevenger Family | The Marshall Family | The Miller Family | The Meyer Family |
| Lois McGauley | Nancy Jennings | The Potts Family | The Henning Family |
| Millie Lower | Bev Strickrodt | The Gretz Family | The White Family |
| Barb Anderson | Phyllis Kostich | Carolyn Brandt | The Barczak Family |
| Susan Lovel | The Krupa Family | The Grace Family | Kathryn Laughlin |
| Margaret Bradley | David Mitchell | The Preston Family | The Depew Family |
| Jean Barlow | Paul Brencher | Alyce Oosting | Dorothy Dyer |
| The Riggs Family | The Warren Family | Lilly Sill | Margaret Tietjen |
| Myrna Berlet-Dutcher | The Murphy Family | Cindy Krauz | Betty Desbiens |
| Don Dutcher | Jean Laughlin | Mike Brown | Julie and Andy Walz |
| The Fleming Family | The VanWinkle Family | The Siegrist Family | Vera Tuttle |
| The Boyer Family | Bea Warren | The Rehor Family | Nancy McCormack |

WANTED!

Instructors for
Our World of Water

Must like working with kids and getting up early in the morning!

Training Day: Wednesday
April 6, 9:00 AM - Noon
at The Dahlem Center

(Refreshments will be served.)

Call Ellen at 517-782-3453

WANTED!

Volunteer Trail Leaders
for Spring School Programs

Will learn about the signs of spring,
the birds and the bees!

Training Day: Thursday
April 7, 9:00 AM - Noon
at The Dahlem Center

(Refreshments will be served.)

Call Carrie at 517-782-3453

April/May 2011 Public Programs



Purple Martin Workshop

Saturday, April 2, 2:00 PM

Have you ever seen strange-looking bird condos high on poles in people's yards? These are purple martin houses. Purple martins have experienced drastic population declines over the last several decades. Join Jackson Audubon president and purple martin enthusiasts Connie Spotts and Gary Siegrist as they talk about the plight of the purple martin, its biology and ecology, and what you can do to help this beautiful bird.

Spring Migration

Sunday, April 3, 2:00 PM

Imagine flying for thousands of miles, passing many dangers, to return to the same location where you were born, without any help from your parents. Have you ever wondered how and why birds migrate? Join naturalist Gary Siegrist for an in-depth look at the wonders and magic of spring bird migration.



Woodcock Watch & Campfire

Saturday, April 9, 7:00 PM

As evening closes in, out in the fields and lawns a strange, nasal sound breaks the silence: *peent!* It's the call of the woodcock, a strange little bird that puts on a terrific aerial display just after sunset. Join us for an evening of entertainment, starting at a campfire to learn about these amazing birds, then progressing into the fields to watch them perform.

Container Gardening and Herbs

Sunday, April 10, 2:00 PM

If you crave fresh, home-grown vegetables, but have limited time or space, then container gardening may be your solution. And most foods taste better when you add a few fresh herbs. Many herbs are quite hardy and are fairly easy to grow. Join Dahlem's Farm Educator, Lisa Brown, for a quick tutorial on creating container gardens and growing herbs.



Night of the Amphibians

Fri., April 15 & Sat., April 16, 7:00 PM

Ah, spring. The nights are mild, the air is humid – conditions are right for romance. Meet some of our local frogs and salamanders, and learn how to identify the adults, tadpoles and songs as we go for a "stomp in the swamp." Wear boots, dress for the weather, and bring a flashlight and net, because we will have you out in the water catching and releasing any amphibians we can find. (If you don't have a net, you can borrow one of ours.)

Work Bee

Saturday, April 16, 9:00 AM

Come join our corps of enthusiastic volunteers for a day of clean up and camaraderie. Whether it's sprucing up the trails, tidying the gardens, or attacking invasive plant species, we have plenty of chores to go around. Families, individuals, and organized groups are all welcome to come and lend a hand. Lunch is provided by the Friends of Dahlem. Please call 517-782-3453 and let us know if you are able to join us for this fulfilling work event. There is no fee for this event.



Great Animal Songs and Stories

Sunday, April 17, 2:00 PM

Perennial favorite Tom Hodgson is back to entertain you and your family with songs and stories about the great outdoors. With Tom, however, it's not just a listening experience – you also get to participate. So bring the family, recruit some friends, and spend part of your afternoon at the Dahlem Center – you won't be disappointed.

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

 **Michigan Automotive Compressor, Inc.**

April/May 2011 Public Programs

Birding 101

Thursdays, April 21 & 28, 6:30 - 8:30 PM
Field Trip TBA

Whether you like watching birds in your back yard or are planning to travel the world to see 10,000 species, you will want to join naturalist Gary Siegrist to discover the secrets of becoming a better birder. This three-part workshop includes two classroom sessions and one weekend field trip (TBA) to a birding hotspot. Topics include: use of binoculars and field guides, bird identification, habitat, and the when, where, and hows of finding them.

Members: \$25/individual, \$40/family; Non-members: \$35/individual, \$55/family.



Adopt-a-Stream Training Class - Thursday, April 21, 6:30 - 8:30 PM Collection Day - Saturday, May 7, 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Are you interested in learning more about the many streams and wetlands that wind their ways in and around the Jackson area? Would you like to help keep these waterways healthy? Then join the Jackson County Conservation District for an evening training session in their popular Adopt-a-Stream program. To register call Alison at 517-784-2800. There is no fee for this program.

Organic Pest, Disease and Weed Control

Sunday, May 8, 2:00 PM

Do you have Colorado potato beetles? Is powdery mildew attacking your beans? Are the weeds taking over your spinach and peas? Before you toss in the towel or turn to harsh chemical solutions, join Dahlem's Farm Educator, Lisa Brown, for an informative class to learn how to control pests, diseases and weeds while keeping your garden organic. Work with nature instead of against her; it doesn't always have to be a huge battle.



Annual Plant Sale

Saturday, May 14, 9:00 AM- 1:00 PM

Whether you are planning a new garden or are just looking to spruce up the old one, you won't want to miss the annual Master Gardener Plant Sale at the Dahlem Center. Master Gardeners will be on hand to help you select the best plants for your site, and advise you on garden design. Proceeds help benefit programming at the Dahlem Center. There is no fee for this event.

Exploring the Florida Peninsula

Sunday, May 15, 2:00 PM

Retired Naturalist Tom Hodgson returns to share images and stories of some of the most colorful, exciting, and interesting birds, mammals, and reptiles that he has encountered in his travels throughout the sunshine state. He has paddled Florida's rivers, lakes and estuaries with camera in hand, in search of remote rookeries and elusive species.



Birding 201

Thursdays, May 19 & 26, 6:30 - 8:30 PM

Field Trip: May 28

A companion course to Birding 101, Birding 201 teaches you birdsongs, warbler ID, and how to tell the LBJs apart. Naturalist Gary Siegrist will expand on the topics addressed in Birding 101 during this three-part workshop, which consists of two classroom sessions and one weekend field trip (28 May) to the Waterloo Recreation Area, a birding hotspot for southern Michigan.

Members: \$25/individual, \$40/family; Non-members: \$35/individual, \$55/family.

BirdFeeding 101 with Dick E. Bird

Sunday, May 22, 2:00 PM

Richard Mallery, well-known author, publisher, naturalist and humorist (a.k.a. Dick E. Bird) explores with a tongue-in-beak talk about the fun and frustration of backyard birdfeeding and squirrel self-defense. For 21 years he was the editor of *The Dick E. Bird News*, a newspaper about nature—human or otherwise. He is the author of *Birdfeeding 101*, *Nuts About Squirrels* and most recently *Crossing the Divide*, which details his 3800 mile trek along the continental divide.



All programs require pre-registration. Call 782-3453. \$3/person and members free, unless otherwise noted.

Stewardship Snippets

Sunday, March 20th, found Dahlem staff and volunteers out on our prairie with Dave Borneman and his fire crew, setting fire to sixteen acres of Dahlem's open habitat.



Historically, Americans suppressed fires in natural areas, fearing they would get out of hand and set homes and businesses alight. Studies have shown, however, that many ecosystems require fire to rejuvenate and remain healthy.

With this in mind, part of Dahlem's stewardship policy is to treat our fields/prairies with prescribed burns - intentional fires that are set by experienced burn crews who can read the weather and landscape in such a way that they know where to ignite the fire and how it will burn.

This particular fire began with a backburn: a cool-burning fire that was lit on the downwind side and burned across the field into the wind. This created a scorched area that acted as a firebreak.

Once the backburn was completed and we had a scorched area of 20-30 feet, a headfire was lit. This is a fast-burning fire that burns with the wind. When the two fires met in the middle, we had some tall flames, reaching ten or so feet into the air.

Prescribed fires serve several purposes. They help keep invasive species, like autumn olive, under control; they stimulate germination of certain native seeds; they open the landscape so sunlight can reach the ground; they help return nutrients to the soil; they remove dead vegetation and help prevent wildfires that can burn out of control when fuel builds up over many years.

After a fire burns through a habitat, many birds, like owls, woodcocks, bluebirds and robins, fly in to take advantage of newly exposed food sources, and new plants green up the scorched landscape in record time.

News from the Farm



Spring is here and it is time to get those gardens under way. We are thrilled to have 85 percent of last year's Community Gardeners signed up for another summer at the Dahlem Ecology Farm. In addition to our returning friends, the Farm is highlighting some educational garden plots, including heirloom vegetables, native plants, monarch butterflies, a children's garden, and a vegetable plot that will produce food to be donated to the Interfaith Shelter.

Keith and Jessica Stellar, owners of Stellar Apiaries, are teaching beekeeping classes at the Farm again this year. The Stellers approach bee-keeping from a natural point of view, eschewing the use of common beehives in favor of hollowed logs and other more natural structures. This year we are running individual bee keeping classes, rather than asking for a year-long commitment from participants.

The hoop house, owned and operated by Lisa Brown of Paradise Farms, was nice and mild inside all winter, allowing Lisa to grow her first commercial crop of spinach, which she is selling to Allegiance Health as part of the Four Seasons Produce Co-Op. The first harvest took place in late March, and by April, Lisa will begin transplanting tomato seedlings into the hoop house. The spinach will remain intact, to help control weeds and deter pests.

("Stewardship," continued)

If you look at the burn now, you will see distinct clumps of native grasses. This growth form (non-natives form solid mats) allows wildlife to move more easily through the field, and provides them with room to nest and hide. The spaces between the clumps also provide room for forbs to grow, allowing for a rich mixture of vegetation in an area that might otherwise convert into a monoculture.

We encourage everyone to come on out and see how fire can be another tool in the land steward's arsenal to keep the landscape healthy and vibrant.

Planned Giving

It's a big thing to ask, and an even bigger thing to contemplate, but no single act can do more to sustain our efforts for the long term in our community. To have someone contact you about planned giving (with no obligation), call us at 517-782-3453 or write to:

The Dahlem Conservancy
7117 South Jackson Road
Jackson, MI 49201

Include your contact information and any questions you may have. All inquiries are kept confidential.

IRA Charitable Rollover Reinstated for 2010-2011

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 just like The Dahlem Conservancy. For detailed questions, contact your accountant or financial advisor.

Open House at the Hoop House

Curious about the Hoop House?
Come see what it's all about!

**Saturday, April 9th
2 PM**

- Meet Lisa Brown, the Farm Educator
- Learn the benefits of growing produce inside a hoop house



Got Bees?



Beekeeping is the latest craze, and our friends at Stellar Apiaries are ready to help you learn how to keep bees the natural way.

Classes start May 4th, at 6:00 PM
(May 4, 18; June 1, 15, 29)
Meet at the barn at the Ecology Farm
\$3/person/class; members free

Community Notes

Jackson Audubon Programs:

- **Work Bee** - Apr. 9, 10 AM
at Kate Palmer Sanctuary
- **Simply Dragonflies** - Apr. 14, 7 PM
at Ella Sharp Museum
- **Crane Creek Field Trip** - May 11
For more information, call
Joyce Peterson at 517-563-8725
www.jacksonaudubon.org

GREAT (Grand River Environmental Action Team) Trips:

- **Paddle the Grand River** from
Ella Sharp Park to CMS Energy
Apr. 17, Noon
- **Paddle the Grand River** from
US 127 (near Reed Rd.) to
Vandercook Lake Park (Floyd
Ave.) - May 22, Noon

*** to reserve a boat, call 517-416-4234***
Cancellations posted at www.great-mi-org



Naturalist's Niche

by Mickey Kress, Dahlem Volunteer and Director of
Nestbox Development



The Dahlem Center is a great place to see eastern bluebirds, one of our most colorful nativebirds. Today, visitors see or hear bluebirds on nearly every walk around the prairie. The bird's vibrant, royal blue head and back, rusty orange breast, and wavering, warbling call are welcome sights and sounds, especially in early spring before plants green up.

Bluebirds were once rare sights in Michigan, however. European starlings and house sparrows, both introduced into the United States for misguided purposes, out competed bluebirds for nesting sites in tree cavities excavated by woodpeckers. Bluebird populations began picking up in areas where people set out nest boxes to replace woodpecker holes lost to the invaders. The Dahlem Center first set out bluebird nest boxes roughly 30 years ago.

More chicks fledge when someone checks nest boxes regularly. Volunteers monitor Dahlem's 38 boxes weekly to keep track of eggs, chicks, and fledglings and to remove any nests started by invasive house sparrows. Removing bluebird nests after chicks fledge increases the chance that the parents will raise another brood. Placing nest boxes in pairs allows bluebirds and tree swallows to each use a box without competing with each other. In 2009, 49 bluebird and 48 tree swallow chicks fledged from Dahlem nest boxes. Fledgling rates improved slightly to 54 bluebirds and 56 tree swallows in 2010.

If you would like to help monitor bluebird nest boxes at Dahlem this season, please call Gary Siegrist, staff naturalist, at 517-782-3453, or email GSiegrist@dahlemcenter.org. For more information about eastern bluebirds, visit the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's bluebird website: http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Eastern_Bluebird/id.

Return Service Requested

The Dahlem Conservancy
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