



# Heron Tracks

The Quarterly Newsletter of Seven Ponds Nature Center

VOLUME 57 NUMBER 1 • SPRING EDITION • MARCH—MAY 2024

This edition's feature article is a "throwback" originally printed in *Heron Tracks* thirty years ago,  
Volume 27, Number 1, Spring 1994

## LIFESTYLES OF A WOODLAND WILDFLOWER

Article by Mike Champagne & Art by Kendra Bills

The story begins each spring. As the snow melts and warm weather returns, wildflowers emerge from the ground in the woodlands of Michigan. During early spring, skunk cabbage and marsh marigold appear in swamp forests. Hepatica and trout lily color the upland woods. As the weeks of spring progress, a whole series of woodland wildflowers blooms in turn, including white and purple trilliums, spring beauty, wild geranium, blue phlox, and a host of others. Some bloom for several weeks, while others last only a day. Each has only a short time to emerge, bloom, produce seeds, and gather the resources required for the next spring's appearance. For people who enjoy these spring "ephemerals", their time of bloom is much too short. By late May, trees have leafed out and sunlight, the source of energy for the woodland wildflowers, will be much reduced on the forest floor. By this time the flowers are gone and in many cases the plants have died back to the ground.

During the last half of April, one of the best known and best loved of the spring wildflowers, jack-in-the-pulpit (*Arisaema triphyllum*), emerges in the woodlands of Seven Ponds and throughout the state of Michigan. This perennial favorite thrives in damp woods and swamps, but is also found in rich, mature upland forests. The plant first appears as a dark pink or green spike poking up through the leaf litter. At this stage it is generally overlooked by all but the most experienced wildflower watcher. Inside the spike, the familiar green flower structure and leaves of jack-in-



the-pulpit are neatly folded into a compact mass.

As days pass, the plant continues its upward growth. The sheath of the spike splits and the leaves and flower parts emerge into the spring air. As these unfold, the plant grows to a height of one to two feet, though it may approach three feet in some very robust specimens growing in rich soil. The plant is now in full bloom. It has a single flower structure of inflorescence on its own stalk emerging from the center of the plant and one or two three-part leaves branching off this main stalk. The shape of the inflorescence gives the jack-in-the-pulpit its unusual name. It looks like an old fashioned pulpit with a preacher inside. In botanical language the tube shaped "pulpit" with a flap over the top is called a spathe. This structure is a modified leaf and it varies greatly in color. In some plants it is uniformly green, while in others the green spathe is beautifully patterned with white or purple-brown stripes. The green finger-like "preacher" positioned inside the spathe is called the spadix. Note that while the spathe and

spadix together are often referred to as the flower of jack-in-the-pulpit, they really only house the flowers. The actual flowers of the plant are very small and are found on the surface of the spadix. They are only visible if you lift the flap and peer down into the tube-like spathe. Interestingly, male and female reproductive parts are found in separate small flowers and each jack-in-the-pulpit plant contains

## Reflections...

This spring issue of *Heron Tracks* will reach our members at the beginning of March, but due to the demands of publication deadlines, I find myself writing this Reflections article during one of the coldest stretches of winter. Perhaps the purpose of this column is to reflect on things past, to look back with thoughtful appreciation. But on days such as this—cold as it is—it's easy to look ahead and long for the warmth and green of spring, when everything is fresh and new and brimming with life. We tend to do that, don't we? It's human nature, I suppose, to look forward to the good things coming our way.

I have to remind myself not to do that. I want to live in the moment, embrace each opportunity and appreciate the day as it comes. As I look out my office window, I see the birds—chickadees, titmice, goldfinches, woodpeckers—busy with the business of the day, namely taking in enough calories to get them through the day and the cold night ahead. They're not thinking about the upcoming breeding season, who will be their mate, where they will build a nest, the eggs they will incubate, or the young they will raise. Today's tasks are enough to keep them occupied.

So as much as we might need to look back and reflect on our past, or look forward and plan for our future, let's not forget to take a lesson from the birds and simply live in the moment. And what better place to enjoy the moment than the trails of Seven Ponds? Several miles of trails traverse through fields and forests, alongside marshes and ponds, and provide access to benches, boardwalks, bridges, and observation towers.

Regardless of the season, take time to embrace the wonder of nature around you—there is always something interesting and exciting happening, if we'd only take time to enjoy the moment.

Daryl Bernard  
Executive Director



## Welcome, Paula!

We have a new face at the nature center, as Paula Cope joined us as our Office Manager in early January. Originally from Troy, Michigan, Paula now resides in Capac, and comes to the nature center with a solid background in bookkeeping and finance. Paula's passions include family, gardening, and literature. Paula's love for the outdoors extends beyond her garden. Walking is not just a form of exercise for her but a meditative practice that allows her to connect with nature and clear her mind. Whether strolling through the quaint streets of Capac or exploring nearby parks, Paula finds joy in every step. Before venturing into finance, Paula's professional path led her through the healthcare sector. The transition from healthcare to finance showcases her versatility and adaptability, demonstrating her ability to thrive in different environments. With her varied background and experience, we are confident Paula will find success in her new role at Seven Ponds Nature Center, and we are happy to welcome her.



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*The mission of Seven Ponds Nature Center is to conserve its natural environment as a sanctuary for native plants and animals and to serve as a community resource for environmental education that fosters an understanding, appreciation, and stewardship for our natural world.*

**Executive Director:**

**Director of Environmental Education:**

**Office Manager:**

**Naturalists:**

**Weekend Receptionist:**

**Weekday Receptionist/Gift Store Manager:**

**Maintenance - Buildings & Grounds:**

**Daryl Bernard**

**Carrie Spencer**

**Paula Cope**

**Katie McKiernan, Madison Christol**

**Damian Goidich**

**Gina Stoldt**

**Del Hunsinger**

numerous male or female flowers, but not both. Thus there are male plants (jack-in-the-pulpits) and female plants (jill-in-the-pulpits). Male plants typically, but not always, have one three-part leaf attached to the stem. Female plants typically have two such leaves. Male and female plants can usually be easily differentiated in the field by the above characters. Many jack-in-the-pulpit plants however, are neither male nor female. These plants produce no flower at all, but only a single three-part leaf.

A walk along the woodland trails below the Interpretive Building at Seven Ponds reveals jack-in-the-pulpits of all sizes, ranging from two-inch tall plants without flowers, to much larger plants with either male or female flowers. To understand this phenomenon, one must remember that spring wildflowers have limited amounts of energy available to them. Unlike plants of the field which are exposed to full sunlight throughout the growing season, woodland wildflowers live in a shady world. They gather as much energy as they can and then use it carefully. Woodland wildflowers have a variety of adaptations to help them accomplish this.

Most woodland wildflowers risk the frosts of March, April, and May to gather sunlight before the trees leaf out. Because so little energy is available on a year to year basis, the plants typically grow slowly, taking many years to store up the resources and reach the size required for flowering. Trilliums for example take at least seven years to grow from seed to flowering plant. Jack-in-the-pulpits are similar. Plants which are young and have few reserves produce only a single three-part leaf in the spring for many years. The plant builds upon the reserves in its rootstock or corm and in some future year it may also be able to produce flowers.

Jack-in-the-pulpits with moderate reserves produce a male flower structure and one three-part leaf. This allows the plant to pass its genes onto the next generation of jack-in-the-pulpits without the heavy expenditure of energy required for the production of seeds and the berries which enclose them. Once the male flower structure dies back in the spring, the leaves can gather energy and help increase the plant's underground reserves. Amazingly, this plant also has the capability of producing a female plant in some future spring and will change its sex once it has accumulated adequate reserves.

Jack-in-the-pulpits which have stored large reserves of food and energy will produce a female inflorescence and a pair of three-part leaves. These plants are sometimes over twenty years old and have the resources necessary to nurture developing seeds and berries. They are aided in this by having twice the foliage of male plants to gather sunlight and produce food through photosynthesis. Female plants which are unable to gather sufficient reserves during the year due to leaf damage or some other factor will revert to a male plant or even a leaf-only plant the following spring.

Jack-in-the-pulpit's ability to change its sex from year to year is unusual, but it makes a great deal of sense when one examines the ecology of this woodland wildflower. It adjusts resource use with resource availability. Scientists have found that in any one year about a third of the adult jack-in-the-pulpit plants change sex. The sex of the plant in the spring is determined the previous fall when plant parts form underground for the coming year.

Though the jack-in-the-pulpit plants are beautiful and unusual, the average person often misses them because the plants blend in with the other spring greenery. Fortunately, fungus gnats which are the pollinators of jack-in-the-pulpit find the plants much more easily. Apparently the color or odor of the plant simulates that of a fungus on which the gnats mate and lay their eggs. They are thus attracted to the plant and deceived into assisting with pollination.

Pollination is accomplished as follows: The fungus gnat enters a male jack-in-the-pulpit spathe from the top. Once inside, the gnat is unable to fly out of the narrow chamber or climb its slick walls. Instead it must travel down to the bottom of the spathe where it can escape through a small hole at the point where the flaps of the spathe overlap. In the process of doing this, the insect gets dusted by pollen from the male flowers on the spadix. The gnat may then enter the top of a female jack-in-the-pulpit spathe. Once again the gnat is trapped by the flower structure. Only this time there is no escape hole. The gnat thrashes about in the flower chamber spreading pollen to the female flowers and eventually dying inside the spathe. By the end of spring the bottom of the spathe may be cluttered with dead gnats that have provided a valuable service to the plant.

As spring turns to summer the male jack-in-the-pulpit inflorescences wither, their role complete. Female flower parts continue to receive nutrients from the plant and the small flowers on the spadix develop into shiny green berries. The resulting berry cluster looks a bit like a miniature corn on the cob. As summer turns to fall the leaves of both male and female jack-in-the-pulpit plants die back to the ground while the ripening berries turn bright orange-red.

These conspicuous structures are often noticed by fall school groups. Birds feed on the berries and distribute the jack-in-the-pulpit seeds across the woodland in their droppings.

Come out to Seven Ponds this spring and take a closer look at jack-in-the-pulpit. If you can find all the stages of the plant's life cycle you'll not only learn a great deal about jack-in-the-pulpit, but the other spring wildflowers as well.





## Wandering with the Birds

By Daryl Bernard

I recall vividly my first encounter with Sandhill Cranes in Michigan. It was 1997 and we were headed to Ironwood in the western Upper Peninsula for a state Little League tournament. Driving the long stretch of M-28 that runs between Seney and Munising, suddenly we spotted a pair of large birds feeding in the grass along the highway. "Those were Sandhill Cranes!" I exclaimed to my family, who were (perhaps) not quite as excited as me.

I didn't realize it at the time, but Sandhill Cranes were on the verge of a great comeback – a conservation success story worthy of celebration. After the population nearly bottomed out in the early 1900s, surveys in 1986 tallied 4,000 cranes statewide. By 2002 that number had risen to 10,000 cranes; the current Michigan Sandhill Crane population is approximately 20,000.

We have enjoyed Sandhill Cranes at Seven Ponds for many years, with nesting first documented in 2012. Cranes have since been seen annually at the nature center on their nest or leading a young colt around. Much to our delight, their loud, rattling call has become regular throughout much of the year at Seven Ponds.

Last year we had two nesting pairs, but unfortunately both nests failed. With no young crane to look after, one pair of adults decided to make the nature center grounds their home for the summer. Day after day we saw them wandering the fields around the nature center building, poking around the parking lot, greeting visitors out near the road, and foraging in the North-80. They grew to tolerate the nearby presence of staff, visitors, and even school groups and summer campers. We often heard their calls as they communicated with each other and any other cranes in the vicinity. Sandhill Cranes mate for life, and we were privileged to witness their beautiful dance many times as they reinforced their bond and commitment to one another.

The pair continued at the nature center into early December before apparently heading south for better weather and dependable food resources. With spring approaching, we're hopeful as we eagerly await their return. Maybe some day this spring we'll run into them while we're out, wandering with the birds.



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## NEW BINOCULARS AT SEVEN PONDS!

For many years, the nature center has maintained a "collection" of vintage binoculars that we've used with school groups, homeschoolers, summer campers, and other groups. These binoculars, mostly donated over the course of many years, were a mixed bag of brand names and had one thing in common: they weren't very good. Many were heavy (especially for children), were difficult to focus, and optically they left much to be desired.

Enter Vortex Optics and our wonderful Holiday Auction supporters! We have been carrying Vortex binoculars in our Rookery Gift Shop for a couple years now. Vortex produces high quality optics at affordable prices, and offers the very best warranty in the optics field. We approached our dealer rep at Vortex to see if they would offer a price discount on a small number of binoculars to replace the odds and ends we've collected over the years, and Vortex came through for us, happy to support the nature center.

All we needed was our Holiday Auction attendees to support the endeavor. At the conclusion of our live auction, we asked attendees to make a bid donation of \$25 toward the cost of these new binoculars. And, WOW, did our supporters step up! Many hands went up, some with two, three, or even four fingers raised, indicating multiple bid donations. When the bidding ended, we had raised nearly \$2,000 for binoculars. This allowed us to purchase 20 Bantam 6.5 x 32 youth binoculars and 10 Crossfire 8 x 42 adult binoculars.

With our new binoculars on hand, we are excited to conduct programs for youths and adults utilizing these new optics, which will enhance nature discovery and allow participants to see things in a whole new way. Whether we're looking at birds, mammals, turtles, frogs, dragonflies, butterflies, or wildflowers and fungi off the trail, bringing them several times closer with quality binoculars makes the observation that much more exciting.



# Seven Ponds Tributes

Memorials, Buy-a-Tree, In Honor

## ***In memory of Jocelyn Scofield***

- Robert & Gretchen Bityk
- Curt & Marty Carter
- Betsy Harper
- Claire Pasquin
- Patrice & Bruce Robinson
- Colleagues of Julie Scofield SCORE N.E. Mass.
- Dean & Anne Sousanis
- Douglas & Nan Toppin
- Charles & Yolanda Turner
- Casey & Wendy Wise
- James Hodge
- Seven Ponds Nature Center Board of Directors

## ***In memory of Suzie Robinson***

- Harry Fisher
- Kenneth Hull
- Shannon, Cliff, Aaron, & Leslie Hurd

## ***In memory of Marlin Marshall***

- Julian Donahue
- Rick & Christine Turpen

## ***In memory of Barbara Scrimger***

- Lloyd & Charlotte Bruce
- Charles & Lucy Russell
- Michael Polzin & Angela Autera

## ***In memory of Shirley Spicer***

- Dawn Worrill

## ***In honor of Julie & Dale Markgraf***

- Victoria & Terry Grimes

## ***Buy-a-Tree in honor of Chris & Kelly Heyner***

- Diane Swanson

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## **Here and There...**

Thanks to **Mutch's Hidden Pines** (Lapeer) for the donation of a wonderful Christmas tree for display at the nature center. We appreciate your continued generosity and support!

Thanks to auctioneer-extraordinaire **Brian Rowley** of **Rowley's Auction Services** (Attica) for once again donating his services during our live auction at our Holiday Auction & Christmas Party.

Thanks to the **Seven Ponds Beekeeping Club** and **Seven Ponds Photo Club** for their generous Special Gifts donation.

Thanks to our **Stingers (Friends of Seven Ponds)** for all their work preparing for and helping at our Holiday Auction & Christmas Party.

Thanks to all our **members and supporters** for their donations of items for our silent auction and live auction at our Holiday Auction & Christmas Party. You helped us raise a lot of dollars!

Thanks to **Rowley's Grocery** (Attica) for loaning us a keg tap for use at our Holiday Auction & Christmas Party.

Thanks to **Crooked Creek Farms** (Lapeer) for keeping us well stocked with beef suet for our bird feeders. The birds thank you as well, especially on the coldest winter days!

Thanks to our own **Friends of Herbs** for adorning the nature center for the holidays with wreaths and other festive decor.

Thanks to our **Secret Santa** - the staff thanks you very much for the wonderful gifts! We appreciate you, Santa!

Thanks to **Edward Kern** for the generous donation of sunflower seed to help fill our bird feeders!

# Volunteer News

## On the Trail...

Thanks to all the many volunteers who helped with a variety of tasks this past winter.

Thanks to **Claudine Zach** for coming in to take care of our animals. She is fantastic with our critters!

Thanks to **Marianna Fitzgerald** for her work organizing the library and cataloging all our volumes.

Thank you to all the **countless volunteers** who helped out at the annual Holiday Auction & Christmas Party. Your efforts helped raise money for the center while providing a quality time for all who attended.

We want to thank everyone who came out and helped with our annual Winterfest event. The wonderful winter weather made for a great day, and our volunteers made it all possible. Thank you to **Kathy Cole, Nancy Kautz, Calysta Saxton, Alan Rifembark, Allen Rosenbalm, Eric Smith, Marianna Fitzgerald**, and the **Stingers** for their help making Winterfest a success!

## Volunteer Opportunities

Call us at 810-796-3200 or contact Katie McKiernan at [kmckiernan@sevenponds.org](mailto:kmckiernan@sevenponds.org) if you are interested in volunteering at Seven Ponds. You can also fill out the volunteer interest form located on our website at [sevenponds.org](http://sevenponds.org)

## ASSISTANT NATURALIST CLASSES

These classes are open to Assistant Naturalists only. Classes take place on the third Thursday of the month and begin at 3:00 PM. If you would like to become a part of this rewarding program, contact naturalist Katie McKiernan at 810-796-3200 or [kmckiernan@sevenponds.org](mailto:kmckiernan@sevenponds.org).

### Animals of the Past

THURSDAY, MARCH 21, 3:00 PM

### World of Vernal Pools

THURSDAY, APRIL 18, 3:00 PM

### Wild Edibles: Can I Eat That? What About That?

THURSDAY, MAY 16, 3:00 PM



## Seven Ponds Clubs!

**Astronomy Club**  
**Beekeeping Club**  
**Birding Club**  
**Photography Club**  
**Friends of Herbs**  
**Butterfly Gardeners**  
**The Stingers**

Visitors are welcome at all club meetings.

For additional information about any of the clubs which meet at Seven Ponds, please visit [sevenponds.org](http://sevenponds.org).

## Stingers Rummage Sale and Resale Shoppe Reminder

The **Stingers' Annual Rummage Sale** will be held Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, June 13-15 at the nature center. A special "members only" pre-sale will take place Saturday, June 8.

ITEMS ARE NEEDED! The Stingers will be accepting items for the sale from March 1 to June 9 during our regular open hours, Tuesday through Sunday, 9:00-5:00. Donations can include clean clothing, household goods, toys, tools, and other items. We cannot accept appliances, television sets, computer equipment, or building materials. All revenue generated by the rummage sale directly benefits the nature center by helping us fulfill our mission to provide high quality environmental education and to effectively manage our woods, fields, and ponds.

# Around the Center

## Winterfest 2024

### A Day of Winter Fun!

Winterfest 2024 has come and gone. The fires are out and an army of penguins and snowmen are all that remains of the day's festivities. What a nice day it was though. After a week of rain, with school being canceled multiple days due to some scary back roads, Mother Nature granted us a lovely day to celebrate the winter season. This was our best year yet for our snowman building competition. Snowmen (and women) were scattered all over the front lawn in a variety of sizes. Some Detroit Lions fans built a little lion to celebrate the home team's success. Gingerbread and brownies sold by the Stingers tempted many enough to try a bite...or three. A scavenger hunt sent guests out on the trails to collect a cool prize at the end for their efforts. Crafts were artfully made, snowshoes tested guests' walking abilities, and pond critters waited under the ice to be discovered during pond dipping. We can't wait to welcome everyone back for another fun day in the snow during Winterfest 2025!

## Grants & Gifts

The **Lapeer Optimists** came through once again with a donation in the amount of \$3,000 and **Kiwanis of Lapeer** made a donation of \$3,500 - these two service groups continue to provide support for Lapeer area students attending Seven Ponds for educational field trips. The **Ralph L. and Winifred E. Polk Foundation** made a donation in the amount of \$5,000 to help fund protective fencing around the Butterfly Garden to protect the plants from browsing deer and munching rabbits and woodchucks. Thank you to each of these organizations for supporting area students. The **Rochester Garden Club** provided \$405 to help us construct our new Pollination Nation exhibit in the Discovery Room. We truly appreciate the support of these amazing organizations.

## 2024 Field Tour Announcement

Seven Ponds Nature Center has offered high-quality, multi-day field tours to unique destinations throughout North America since 1992. In late September we will be taking a birding trip to legendary Cape May, New Jersey. With its south-facing peninsula, this area funnels incredible numbers of migrating songbirds, shorebirds, waterfowl, and raptors each fall. Space is limited, and registration for this tour opens on May 7. For more information and a detailed itinerary, visit the Field Tours page of our website.

## Holiday Auction Recap

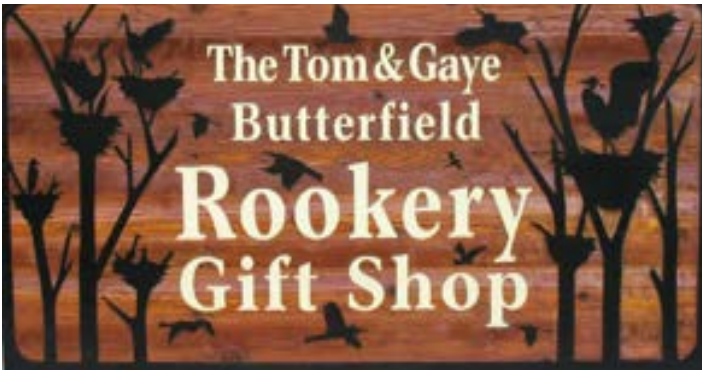
In early December we held our annual Holiday Auction & Christmas Party. Just over 140 members and their guests attended the event, which is both a fundraiser and a celebration. The nature center was converted to an auction house and party place, and it sure did seem like folks had a good time! Well over 100 items were claimed during our popular silent auction, where the competitive bidding spirit kicked in just before the final bell rang. At that time we moved into the multi-purpose room, where a nice array of items and experiences were put on the auction block by professional auctioneer Brian Rowley, who once again donated his services for our cause. Special thanks to our wonderful Stingers for all the work they put in to help make the evening a success. When the dust settled, the nature center netted over \$16,000 during the evening. Thank you to all who supported the nature center by donating items and attending the event. Mark your calendars for Saturday, December 7, 2024 - we'll see you there!

## Special Gifts Campaign

The final six weeks of 2023 marked our Special Gifts Campaign - an opportunity for members and friends of the nature center to show their support with a monetary gift. Although we fell short of our budgeted target of \$45,000, we were very pleased that our supporters came through with donations totalling nearly \$35,000. These dollars help kickstart the next fiscal year, providing critical operating funds to help ensure the nature center's ability to continue fulfilling our mission of connecting people with nature and being responsible stewards of these woods and waters. Thank you to all who supported Seven Ponds during our Special Gifts Campaign.

## Animal Giving Tree

We want to extend a huge thank you to everyone who donated towards our Animal Giving Tree this past holiday season. Through your generosity we were able to get food, a new pool and hides for the animals, lights, and bedding (to name just a few) to help with the continued care of our Critter Corner inhabitants. We would like to thank **Lennon and Bennett Swailes, Pat Garvey, Tony Darin, Linda Jezuit, Prudence Cook, Gail Sheeran, David Anthony, Chris and Kelly Heyner, Julie Markgraf, Paul Messing, Denise Eckersly, Jessica Alger, and the Terry Family** for all their kindness. Please check out the new supplies in Critter Corner the next time you visit!



Visit the gift shop for many great non-candy educational Easter gifts. A gift membership to Seven Ponds is a very thoughtful gift for the whole family that will be appreciated all year. Call or stop by to purchase a gift membership.

The Rookery Gift Shop is open during our normal business hours, Tuesday through Sunday, 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM.

*Purchases made in the Rookery Gift Shop support the nature center, including all of the programs we do and land stewardship we perform. Your purchase dollars help us do good things!*

### THINK GLOBALLY, SHOP LOCALLY

We are looking forward to spring at the Rookery Gift Shop! Come on out and browse our great books on native plant gardening, foraging, and so much more! We also have a nice variety of field guides and posters to help you identify the flora and fauna of the season.

Get ready for spring birding with a new pair of Vortex binoculars. If you haven't looked through a new pair of binoculars in a while, you need to check these out! Vortex offers a lifetime warranty and we have the best prices around.

Warmer weather is around the corner, but a nice sweatshirt is great to have right now! We have some beautiful new men's and women's zip-up hoodies. Stay warm while supporting and representing your favorite nature center.



### Seven Ponds Nature Center

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# Spring Programs

March - April - May  
2024

Spring has arrived! As the ponds thaw and the forest wakes up from its winter slumber, it's a great time to get outdoors and explore. Seven Ponds offers something for everyone, from preschoolers and families to adults and seniors. Mark your calendar for some programs, walks, and classes. **Space is limited, and all programs require advance registration through our website unless otherwise noted.** Programs are \$3.00 for members and \$5.00 for non-members unless otherwise noted.

## March

### ***Family Night Hike***

Saturday, March 2nd, 6:30 PM

On this hike we'll explore nature after dark by walking our trails, calling for owls, and learning all about nocturnal adaptations.

### ***Critters in the Corner***

Saturday, March 9th, 2:00 PM

We will spend the first part of the program meeting some of our ambassador animals in Critter Corner. The second part will take us outside for a hike to see what animals we can find on the trails.

### ***End of Winter Wanderings***

Sunday, March 10th, 1:00 PM

The end of winter is upon us and nature is ready to make the change into spring. It may already be doing so! With the equinox just around the corner, we will venture out and see what stirs and what still has some more slumbering left to do. Drop-ins welcome.

### ***Nature String Art Class***

Saturday, March 16th, 1:00 PM

For this class we'll tap into our creative side and create a picture using only wood, nails, and string! This is a very simple art technique, which makes it fun for those of all skill levels. Fee: members: \$20.00, non-members: \$25.00.

### ***Goodbye Winter, Hello Spring!***

Sunday, March 17th, 2:00 PM

Join one of our naturalists for a hike as we reminisce on winter and look forward to spring. We'll talk about what this new season means for the plants and animals around the nature center and beyond. Drop-ins welcome.

### ***Spring Stroll***

Saturday, March 23rd, 10:00 AM

Spring is here! Join us this morning for some trail trekking and interpretation along the way. Drop-ins welcome.

### ***Yoga at the Ponds with Peaceful Moon Yoga***

#### **Beginners/Basic Yoga Class**

Thursdays, March 21, 28, April 4, 11, 6:00-7:00 PM

Unwind, rejuvenate and relax with Cat Minolli and the 'Peaceful Moon' series. These classes are designed for newcomers and beginning yoga students and/or those who wish to become re-acquainted with the practice. Participants will experience the mind, body, spirit connection while learning basic yoga poses in a serene environment. You don't have to be able to touch your toes or twist into a pretzel to participate, however many postures are done from a seated or prone position on the floor. Participants should wear comfortable clothing and bring a yoga mat or a blanket. Pillows, additional blankets, and any other "creature comforts" are also welcome. Fee is \$15.00 or \$50.00 for the 4-week series (March - April).

### ***Annual Meeting***

Saturday, March 23rd, 9:00 AM

Members are welcome to attend our Board of Directors at the Annual Meeting this morning. Drop in only.

### ***Survival Skills Day***

Sunday, March 24th, 2:00 PM

You wanted us to run it again so here we go for a fun day of testing your survival skills! Do you know what to do if you're lost in nature? Can you build a debris shelter to stay safe? What about building a fire? All will be taught during this program.

### ***Wonderful Weather***

Saturday, March 30th, 10:00 AM

This program is all about weather! We'll learn about clouds, thunder, lightning, rain, snow, and other weather phenomena through a walk outside, some experiments, and a craft.

### ***Feathers***

Sunday, March 31st, 2:00 PM

Feathers are amazing structures! Learn the how, what, and why of feathers through a presentation and lots of examples.

# April

## ***Yoga at the Ponds with Peaceful Moon Yoga***

### **Beginners/Basic Yoga Class**

Thursdays, April 4 and 11, 6:00-7:00 PM

See March for program description. Fee: \$15.00 per session.

## ***Rain and Sun Scavenger Hunt!***

Saturday, April 6th, 2:00 PM

Can you find these springtime clues along the trails?! Look high and look low for what you need to complete this scavenger hunt. Show up anytime between 2:00-4:00 p.m.

## ***Jonathan Woods Walk***

Sunday, April 7th, 1:00 PM

Visit our beautiful satellite property and hike the glaciated hills of Johnathan Woods. A naturalist will meet you at the nature center where we will all carpool over to the property.

## ***Apple Grafting Practicum***

Saturday, April 13th, 10:00 AM

*Presenter: Paul Holcroft, owner and founder of Holcroft Acres*

In this class we will learn about apple propagation and the science behind apple grafting. After learning how to graft you will have the opportunity to graft two apple trees to take home with you. Fee: \$30. Limited to 12 participants.

## ***Search for Salamanders***

Saturday, April 13th, 1:00 PM

It's the perfect time of year to look for salamanders! Join us as we look for and learn about some of Michigan's most interesting amphibians. We'll meet at the nature center and carpool over to Jonathan Woods. Space is limited.

## ***A Walk in Paul's Woods***

Sunday, April 14th, 2:00 PM

Spend the afternoon among the trees as we take a walk along the boardwalk and into Paul's Woods. We'll cross the A-Frame Bridge and follow the boardwalk all the way into this beautiful beech-maple forest. Drop-ins welcome.

## ***Morning Hike***

Saturday, April 20th, 10:00 AM

Don't you just love a hike to wake you up in the morning? Greet the day with a naturalist and wander the trails as Seven Ponds wakes for spring. Drop-ins welcome.

## ***Pond Dipping Day***

Sunday, April 21st, 1:00 PM

What lies below the waters of Seven Ponds? We'll use nets and buckets to look for aquatic insects that call the waters home.

## ***Invasive Species Work Day***

Saturday, April 27th, 10:00 AM

Join our Land Steward for an afternoon of working on non-native invasive plants around the center. Bring your own work gloves and water. We will provide all necessary tools.

## ***Nature Detectives***

Saturday, April 27th, 1:00 PM

Are you good at solving clues? Enjoy time on the trails? Let's see if you can solve the mystery of the stolen bird seed!

## ***Sunday Bird Walk***

Sunday, April 28th, 2:00 PM

Let's grab some binoculars and hit the trails! We'll learn about migration and see which birds are hanging out around the nature center. We will provide binoculars, but participants are welcome to bring their own if they prefer. Drop-ins welcome.

# May

## ***Yoga at the Ponds with Peaceful Moon Yoga***

### **Beginners/Basic Yoga Class**

Thursdays, May 2, 9, 16, 23, 6:00-7:00 PM

See March for program description. Fee is \$15.00 or \$50.00 for the 4-week series.

## ***Morning Paddle***

Saturday, May 4th, 10:00 AM

What better way to spend a morning than on the water? Join this naturalist-led canoe paddle to explore the ponds. Dress for the weather. Minimum: 5 years old to ride and 10 years old to paddle. Space is limited.

## ***Spring Craft Day***

Sunday, May 5th, 2:00 PM

A selection of fun spring crafts will be waiting for you!

## ***Eco Day & Native Plant Sale***

Saturday, May 11th, 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM

See flier insert for details. Registration required for Eco Day; no registration required to stop by and purchase native plants.

## ***Family Bird Walk***

Sunday, May 12th, 2:00 PM

Join one of our naturalists for a beginner-friendly bird walk around the nature center. We will provide binoculars, but participants are welcome to bring their own if they prefer. Drop-ins welcome.

### ***Birds and Blooms***

Saturday, May 18th, 10:00 am

The birds and the spring wildflowers are back at Seven Ponds! We will take a leisurely stroll to look into our Woodland Wildflower Area all while keeping our eyes and ears open for spring migrating birds. Binoculars will be provided. Drop-ins welcome.

### ***Volunteer Work Day***

Sunday, May 19th, 1:00 PM

Looking for ways to help out Seven Ponds? We will be hosting a Volunteer Work Day to get various tasks around the center done. Do you need national honor society volunteer hours, or community service? This would be a great day to get some hours towards your goals. Or you can just come out and have a good time with friends for a great cause!

### ***Paddle the Ponds***

Saturday, May 25th, 10:00 am

Let's enjoy a beautiful spring morning out on the ponds. We'll head under the A-Frame Bridge and see where the water takes us. Come dressed for the weather. Minimum: 5 years old to ride and 10 years old to paddle. Space is limited; please register by Friday, May 24th.

### ***Invasive Species Work Day***

Saturday, May 25th, 2:00 PM

Join our Land Steward for an afternoon of working on non-native invasive plants around the center. Bring your own work gloves and water. We will provide all necessary tools.

### ***Prairie Play***

Sunday, May 26th, 2:00 PM

For this program we'll take a journey into the prairie. We'll play games, use magnifying glasses to investigate our surroundings, and learn how prairies are different from forests and fields!

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## **SPRING BIRD WALKS**

Spring is the most exciting season for birders! Our bird walks and trips are open to birders of all skill and experience levels, and beginners are always welcome. Bring your binoculars, your enthusiasm, and be sure to dress for the weather. Bird walks are \$3 for Seven Ponds members and \$5 for non-members. Bird trips are \$5/\$10. Online pre-registration is required, and bird walks are limited to twelve (12) participants. We meet at the destination parking lot at the time indicated.

**Spring Bird Trip – Wednesday, April 3, 8:30 am**

FISH POINT STATE WILDLIFE AREA

**Spring Bird Walk – Wednesday, May 1, 7:00 am**

CRANBERRY LAKE PARK

**Spring Bird Walk – Wednesday, May 15, 7:00 am**

SEVEN PONDS NATURE CENTER

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## **Pint-Sized Explorers**

For children 1 to 3 years old.

**Thursdays 9:30 – 10:15 AM**

### **Tiny Nature**

MARCH 7, 2024

### **Colors of Spring**

APRIL 4, 2024

### **Life Under a Log**

MAY 2, 2024

## **Knee-High Naturalists**

For preschool children around 3 or 4 years old.

**Fridays 10:00 – 11:30 AM**

### **Spring**

MARCH 22, 2024

### **Fish**

APRIL 19, 2024

### **Baby Animals**

MAY 17, 2024

Fee: \$7 for child and caregiver.

Come out and enjoy nature with your child.

All classes include nature fun like walks, crafts, games, stories, snacks, and so much more!

**Space is limited. Online registration required.**

# Nature Study Series for Homeschoolers

## Spring Sessions

Seven Ponds Nature Center is an ideal outdoor classroom where children can experience nature first hand. In this series of programs, our experienced naturalists guide students toward an awareness and appreciation of our natural world, using hands-on activities, specimens, slide shows, and nature walks. These programs complement state science objectives and focus on specific ecological concepts. Fee: \$4.00 per person. Register for the *Nature Study Series for Homeschoolers* sessions online at [sevenponds.org](http://sevenponds.org).

### A SHAPE SHIFTING WORLD

Grades K-2 and Grades 3-6

**Wednesday, March 20, 1:00 - 3:00 PM**

What shapes the Earth and how, will be the questions your homeschool geologists figure out during this hands-on program. Through building, experimentation, and discussion, students will see how Earth's natural forces can change and shape the land.



### HUMANS AND NATURE

Grades K-2 and Grades 3-6

**Wednesday, April 17, 1:00 - 3:00 PM**

Earth Day is just around the corner, let's celebrate! Through hands-on activities, discussion, games, art, and play we will learn how humans are connected to nature. We will learn how to be stewards to our planet.



### YEAR OF THE DRAGON

Grades K-2 and Grades 3-6

**Wednesday, May 22, 1:00 - 3:00 PM**

This year, 2024, is the year of the dragon! In this session we will learn about the "dragons" that make their home at Seven Ponds: dragonflies. Through discovery and nature exploration, we will learn about these fierce predators: where they live, how they live, and what they do.

