



# Heron Tracks

The Quarterly Newsletter of Seven Ponds Nature Center

VOLUME 54 NUMBER 4 • WINTER EDITION • DECEMBER 2021—FEBRUARY 2022

## THE MIGHTY OAK

Article and Drawing by Nicole Kopas

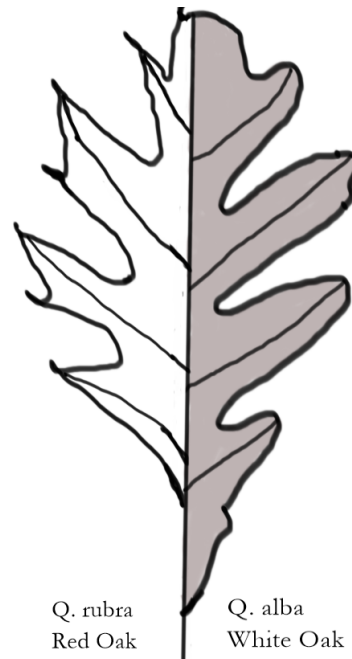
A recent webinar and my parent's big white oak in Virginia have me all excited about oaks! I recently attended Doug Tallamy's webinar on his new book, *The Nature of Oaks: The Rich Ecology of Our Most Essential Native Trees*. I knew that oak trees were vital to our environment, but I didn't realize just how vital they truly are. I also have been talking to my mom quite a bit about a white oak that is at my parent's house in Virginia. This oak tree has the University of Kentucky's Department of Forestry and Natural Resources excited about its acorns. I'll discuss this in more detail later. When we think of oak trees we tend to think of big, beautiful specimen trees that have branches full of bright green leaves that don't seem to be doing much. We may not think there is a lot happening with the still giants, but as I have recently discovered, there is a lot more than meets the eye with oak trees!

The oaks are in the family *Fagaceae*, a family that also includes beeches and chestnuts. The genus of our oaks is *Quercus*. This means that the scientific name of our oak trees start with *Quercus*. Here in Michigan we have 13 native oak tree species and in North America there are about 90 different species. Oak trees fall under two different categories: white and red oaks. White oaks are characterized by rounded lobes and the acorns are relatively sweet. Red oaks have leaves with bristle-tipped lobes and the acorns are relatively bitter. The differences in these two groups help you in identification of your oak tree. However, some oak trees regularly hybridize. Hybridization is when one species of a plant, in this case oak trees, breeds with another species. This can make identifying the tree rather difficult. For example *Q. shumardii* (swamp red oak) is known to hybridize with many oaks including *Q. rubra* (northern red oak) and *Q. velutina* (black oak).

Oak trees are vital contributors to any local food web. We all know that the beginning of most food chains or food webs is going to be the sun, but what follows the sun in the chain or web is going to be the plants! This could be our ever so important oaks. Oaks are keystone species, without them we would have a broken food web. Oak trees support hundreds of species of moths as well as many other insects, birds, and mammals. For example, one of the cool relationships I learned about during Doug Tallamy's presentation is between the Golden-crowned Kinglet and inch worms. Golden-crowned Kinglet (*Regulus satrapa*) is strictly an insectivore (eats insects) that does not migrate. How can that be? There aren't insects flying around in the winter. Trees also

don't have any leaves in the winter so there shouldn't be any caterpillars on the trees, right? Wrong. The family *Geometridae*, otherwise known as inch worms, overwinters camouflaged as twigs. They are able to overwinter due to antifreeze proteins that prevent their cells from bursting in the cold temperatures. These caterpillars are what the kinglet is feeding on during the winter. If you have any oak trees go on a scavenger hunt this winter and see if you can find any of these well camouflaged critters.

Another way the oak trees contribute to the local food web is by their acorns. Acorns feed many mammals and birds. One of the oldest relationships between an oak tree and another animal is the relationship of the oak and the Blue Jay (*Cyanocitta cristata*). This relationship was developed millions of years ago with ancestors of our blue jays. Oak trees rely on Blue Jays to help spread their acorns. Blue Jays can fly up to a little over a mile to bury their acorns. This is the farthest any acorn eater will travel. Blue Jays can bury up to 4,500 acorns each fall and they don't remember where all of them are buried. Those that are not found and eaten have the



*Q. rubra*  
Red Oak

*Q. alba*  
White Oak

The left side leaf is the general shape for the red oak.  
The right side leaf is the general shape for the white oak.

## Reflections...

The year's end brings with it an opportunity for reflection over the past twelve months, and a chance to look forward to the challenges of the coming year. As I think back over this year, it would be easy to lament the frustrations and disappointments of another year spent under the shadow of the pandemic, of school field trips that didn't happen, programs that required smaller attendance, and a second straight year without our year-end celebration, the Holiday Auction & Christmas Party. But I refuse to surrender to the negative, and instead prefer to embrace and celebrate the positive.

The year began with a sizable donation earmarked for a long dreamed nature playscape. We were able to break ground on this exciting project during the summer, and we anticipate a grand opening sometime next spring or early summer. This area will provide children with an opportunity to play, explore, imagine, create, develop, learn, and grow.

The addition of several seasonal staff, including a weekday receptionist, a maintenance worker, a summer naturalist team, and an invasive species field crew helped us accomplish much more than our small staff would have otherwise been able to do. Two of the seasonal staff were retained as year-round employees, bringing us back to our pre-COVID staffing level.

Our annual Corks & Caps fundraiser was pushed back from early June to August because of the pandemic and proved to be our most successful fundraising event ever, netting just over \$48,000 in revenue that helped support everything we do here.

A generous donation from a local foundation provided the funds necessary to carry out a number of projects, some of which are ongoing. Our Treetop Pond dock was completely rebuilt, with two nice benches added. We added a canoe and kayak launch to our dock to make launching a craft both easier and safer for our members and canoe programs. The old dock lumber salvaged from the dock project was used to build a small boardwalk through Rain Barrel Marsh. We replaced the roof on our boathouse, which was long overdue. A patio dock was ordered for the Waterfowl Pond in the North-80. This dock will be used extensively by our naturalists for teaching and pond dipping.

All things considered it was a good year here at Seven Ponds. Our staff and volunteers came together to make the grounds look great and our programs successful. The generosity of our members and supporters provided the means to accomplish a lot of exciting projects. And best of all, school children are once again visiting the nature center with their teachers.

Here's to an even better year in 2022!

Daryl Bernard  
Executive Director

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## Special Gifts Reminder

Recently you received Seven Ponds' annual "Special Gifts" appeal in your mailbox. Our Special Gifts campaign provides critical funds for the operation of the nature center, and helps close the budget gap between what we collect in admission and program fees and membership dues and the real cost of maintaining Seven Ponds as a quality nature sanctuary and environmental education center. We hope members and friends will help us by being as generous as they have in the past. This year's Special Gifts campaign goal is \$35,000 - a mark we can reach with your help. Thank you for thinking about the nature center during this season of giving.

## 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 our website at [sevenponds.org](http://sevenponds.org).

## *Heron Tracks*

is published quarterly by Seven Ponds Nature Center  
a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation  
[www.sevenponds.org](http://www.sevenponds.org) 810-796-3200

*The mission of Seven Ponds Nature Center is to conserve the natural environment of Seven Ponds as a sanctuary for native plants and animals, as a living classroom for environmental education, and as a peaceful retreat for its visitors. The nature center fosters an understanding and appreciation of our natural world and helps develop an environmental ethic in the people and communities of Southeast Michigan through education, service as a community resource, and responsible stewardship of Seven Ponds and adjacent lands.*

<b>Executive Director:</b>	<b>Daryl Bernard</b>
<b>Director of Environmental Education:</b>	<b>Carrie Spencer</b>
<b>Office Manager:</b>	<b>Diane Rankin</b>
<b>Naturalists:</b>	<b>Nicole Kopas, Katie McKiernan, Dominique McKillop</b>
<b>Gift Store Manager/Weekend Receptionist:</b>	<b>Stacey Holinsworth</b>
<b>Weekday Receptionist:</b>	<b>Krincy Rice</b>
<b>Maintenance - Buildings &amp; Grounds:</b>	<b>Mike Grappin</b>

All of the relationships we have been talking about so far have been positive. However, there are some relationships which are detrimental to our oak trees. One of them is oak wilt which is caused by the fungus *Bretziella fagacearum*. The origins of this fungus are unknown at this time, but scientists believe it was likely introduced to North America. The fungus was first described in Wisconsin in the early 1940's. Since then oak wilt is now a problem in most of the Midwest states, including Michigan. Oak wilt affects the vascular system of the trees and is spread among trees through root grafts and open wounds in the tree. Root grafts are where roots of different oak trees entangle and end up growing together so the roots are connected. Oak wilt is also spread by spore-infected sap beetles. This fungus has a higher transmission rate through root grafts rather than the beetle moving from the infected tree to uninfected ones.

It is very important that we do everything we can to protect our oak trees from getting infected. Red oak trees are significantly more susceptible to oak wilt than white oak trees. The main way to protect your tree from oak wilt is by preventing open wounds on your trees. Now obviously storms and accidents happen, but one way to prevent open wounds is to not prune your oak trees until the dead of winter. The greatest risk of beetle transmission is from April 15-July 15 and the lower risk time frames are from March 15-April 14 and July 16-October 31. The absolute safest period is from November 1-March 14. This is not when we would typically be doing yard maintenance but in order to help protect our oak trees this is the best time to do any pruning or trimming. There are great resources online for more in depth information about oak wilt and where it is found more specifically. Fortunately, here in

Lapeer County it has not yet made an appearance.

Remember how at the beginning of this article I mentioned a very dear-to-my-heart white oak that resides in Virginia at my parents' house? Well, that oak tree is now a part of a really cool program called White Oak Genetics and Tree Improvement Program. This program is operated by the University of Kentucky's Department of Forestry and Natural Resources. The goals of this program are to 1) quantify genetic variation in white oak and 2) improve traits that have economic and ecological value. This program is very important in making sure that our white oak trees stay strong and healthy with all of the invasive species and human pressures on oak trees. This year the program was specifically asking if my parents' oak tree had produced acorns again this year because it is the largest in its planting group. Unfortunately, it did not produce this year. The university is very excited about the saplings and they hope it carries good genetics that can be passed along in the program.

Oak trees are legacy trees. Anytime we plant one, that tree isn't necessarily for us. It is for those who come after us. Throughout history oak trees were seen as the king of trees. They have always been respected, appreciated, and needed. For future generations and future forests and animals who may enjoy them...plant some Mighty Oaks.



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## 2022 SEVEN PONDS FIELD TOURS

Seven Ponds Nature Center offers birding and natural history field tours to amazing destinations throughout North America. Led by expert naturalists, our field tours offer a unique experience for participants and help generate important revenue for the nature center. Please see our website for detailed tour itineraries and complete registration information. Space is limited.

### Winter Birding the Minnesota North Country

JANUARY 24-28, 2022

A birding field tour organized by Seven Ponds Nature Center and NatureScape Tours.

### Colorado Spring Chickens

APRIL 1-11, 2022

A birding field tour organized by Seven Ponds Nature Center and Colorado Birding Adventures.

### Copper Harbor & Isle Royale Experience

JUNE 19-25, 2022

A natural history field tour organized by Seven Ponds Nature Center.

### New England Birding: Sea to Summit

JULY 1-10, 2022

A birding field tour organized by Seven Ponds Nature Center and New England Bird Tours.



## Wandering with the Birds by Daryl Bernard

It was a picture-perfect autumn morning: the temperature was cool and crisp, the sky was deep and blue, and there was not a whisper of wind. Although the trees seemed to be holding tight to their summer greenery, there was no doubt about the season - fall was in the air. And so were the birds: in the sky, in the trees, in the shrubbery, all around us!

American Robins crisscrossed the sky high above, their stuttering wingbeats and profiles giving them away even when their robin-red-breasts were not visible. Canada Geese cruised by in a misshapen V-formation. Blue Jays hurried about, this way and that, announcing to all who would listen that this was indeed a good morning (or, at least that's what they seemed to be saying to me). A pair of Eastern Bluebirds sat high in a black walnut tree, soaking up the warming rays of the early morning sun. Flitting about in the goldenrods were dozens of American Goldfinches, some already fading toward their dull winter attire. To our left a shy Gray Catbird popped up for a moment in the shadows, its subdued plumage blending perfectly with its surroundings, then just as quickly disappeared back into the thickery.

Turning down a trail that always seems to be particularly birdy, we were not disappointed. Downy Woodpeckers and White-breasted Nuthatches worked the branches, checking nooks and crannies and crevices for hidden morsels. A Red-bellied Woodpecker called out, but wouldn't reveal itself to the group, at least not without effort. And - there! - a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, always a welcome passerby in these parts during migration. We watched as a traveling band of White-

throated Sparrows worked their way ahead of us down the trail, their vibrant throat patches glowing white in the darker underbrush. Further on we spotted a couple House Wrens, notably silent in this season as opposed to their chattering behavior earlier in the year. One of our group spotted a small bird working the branches directly overhead. We watched for a few moments as the tiny songbird moved in frenetic, non-stop action through the branches. Sure enough: Ruby-crowned Kinglet. Palm Warblers, fresh from their breeding grounds in the northern boreal forests of Canada, bobbed their tails constantly as they hunted the branches and scoured the ground for insect treats.

As we approached a small pond up ahead, a Great Blue Heron landed on the dock and gave us nice looks for a few moments before lifting off and heading out to less busy wetlands for the day. More White-throated Sparrows and Ruby-crowned Kinglets were working the pond's edge. And as we walked away an unseen Belted Kingfisher called out a series of rattles.

Proceeding onward, we were greeted by more feathered friends, including Common Yellowthroats, Cedar Waxwings, Tufted Titmice, Black-capped Chickadees, Song Sparrows, Northern Flickers, Swamp Sparrows, Red-winged Blackbirds, and a lone Blue-headed Vireo, another northern breeder on its way to a warmer winter.

By the time we turned to head back to the parking area, the air had warmed sufficiently to support the dihedral wings of Turkey Vultures, which soared overhead in lazy circles, generally heading south. We all agreed that it had been a spectacular autumn morning, out wandering with the birds.

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# Around the Center

## Ready to Launch, Captain!

If you have not checked out our new dock there is now a special addition to sweeten your trip. We recently put in place a new kayak and canoe launch to help make getting in and out of the water much easier. Members of the nature center can launch their canoes and kayaks off of the dock and enjoy the interconnected waters of the ponds. During open hours, please check in at the center before launching. Hopefully this new addition will make your next adventure on the ponds even sweeter.

## Nature Playscape Update

Things are moving along in the new nature playscape area. The forestry mower cleared out all the understory and we have begun to take out some trees that needed to go. A well is being dug for the new water feature that will be added and the fencing will soon be in place. Check back for more updates as we move forward with this project.



## A New Home

Thanks to a grant from the Four County Community Foundation we were able to build a brand new habitat for our two eastern box turtles. It was becoming clear that the male was no longer content in his old habitat, and something new would have to be built. This larger exhibit will allow the turtles to practice their natural digging skills, and create a more enriched habitat for them both. Please check out our new habitat in the Discovery Room on your next visit.

# Seven Ponds Tributes Memorials, Buy-a-Tree, In Honor

## ***In memory of Patricia Zach***

- Nancy Ballentine
- Sharon Bark
- Carolyn Beutler
- Joe & Barb Boots and Family
- Roy Buzalski
- Mike & Jamie Champlin
- Terry, Grace, Paula, and Karla Clark
- Kevin & Carol Cotter
- Maria & Mike D'Andrea
- Wayne Didion
- Karen Eichler
- Swiss Farms
- The Heinz Family
- Lisa Henderson
- Jeff & Teresa Holden
- Patricia Hooper
- Walter & Barbara Hunt
- Patricia & Herman Keller
- Beatrice Kimball
- Joan & Ron Knoblock and Family
- Randy & Sara Kromer
- MFC Netform
- Donald & Lois Pierce
- Nancy Ruedi
- Penn Yan Elementary School

## ***In memory of Carol Leonard***

- Joan Grawe
- Geraldine Howard
- WNF&G Pontiac Branch

## ***In memory of Tom Osmer***

- Dave Osmer

## ***In memory of Adolph Arendt***

- Dianne Bishop

## ***In memory of Harold Prowse***

- Dianne Bishop

## ***In memory of Gregory Valesco***

- Martin & Valerie Cotanche
- St. Andrew's Society of Detroit

## ***Buy-a-Tree in honor of Gary & Sheryl Schultz 50th Wedding Anniversary***

- Rick & Pat Stier

## ***Buy-a-Tree in memory of Judy Rachwal***

- Rick & Pat Stier

## ***Buy-a-Tree in memory of Sharon Updike***

- Seven Ponds Nature Center Staff

## ***Buy-a-Tree in memory of Patricia Zach***

- Karen Franks

## ***In honor of Elaine Clampitt-McDonald***

- Candace Clampitt

## ***In honor of Mike Champagne***

- Nancy & Rich Kautz

## ***Meet Krincy Rice - Seven Ponds' Weekday Receptionist***

If you have called the nature center or stopped by on a weekday over the past six months or so, chances are you interacted with Krincy Rice, our weekday receptionist. Krincy was hired as a seasonal employee back in April. She made such a positive impact on our guest services in particular and nature center in general that we had to find a way to keep her on board as a year-round staff member. We're very happy she accepted!

Krincy is a Michigan native who grew up with a love of horses, both riding the trails around her home and showing her horses throughout the United States. Her love of nature and exploring the outdoors started at an early age with parents who took their family on birding trips, backpacking adventures, as well as cross-country and downhill ski vacations. Krincy and her husband love traveling to the Upper Peninsula, especially in autumn to see the beautiful color changes in Northern Michigan. Krincy has three children and two grandchildren. When she's not at work, she enjoys spending time with her family and her 100 pound Labrador, reading mysteries, binge watching Disney movies with her daughter, working on puzzles with her son, and feeding her backyard birds.



# Volunteer News

## Here and There ~ special thanks to...

**Marianna Fitzgerald & Kathy Cole** for helping teach groups of children who came to the center for an adventure.

**Anne Melnik** for helping with invasive species around the trail.

**Claudine Zach** for coming in to take care of our animals time and time again.

**Don Dukelow** for his help around the nature center.

**Noah Elkins** for his dedication to helping out the center every week and taking on any task we give him.

**The Butterfly Gardeners** for another amazing year of beauty in the garden.

**The Friends of Herbs** for their work in the sensory delight that is The Herb Garden.

All the wonderful volunteers who helped out at this year's Enchanted Woodland. We could not have put on this event without you!

Characters: **Rachel Toon, Joe Whited, Suzanne Marie, Nathan Spencer, Jackson Spencer, Cynthia Stroebel**

Fireflies: **Marianne Bohm, Nancy Buck, Marianna Fitzgerald, Peg Flower, Bruce & Polly Young**

Pumpkin Carvers: **Vicki Baden, Allen Rosenbalm, Bruce & Polly Young, Margaret Pinkerton, Julia Raymond**

Food: **Catherine Downey, Chris Baker, Crystal Campagne**

Craft Helpers: **Allen Rosenbalm, Penelope Spencer**

Costume Setup: **Nancy Kautz, Miriam Marcus**

Trail Set-up: **Don Dukelow**

Reception: **Anita Spencer**

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## ***Meet Dominique McKillop - Seven Ponds' newest Naturalist***

Dominique McKillop joined the Seven Ponds staff as a part-time naturalist in August. Dominique grew up in the local area, where she used to visit Seven Ponds during school trips. She earned a B.A. in Environmental Science and Biology with a concentration in Ecology and Organismal from Olivet College. Dominique enjoys camping, traveling, and experiencing new things. While attending Olivet College she was able to study abroad for a semester in Bahía de Kino, Mexico. There she was able to do field courses in marine studies, ecology, culture, and the environment of the Sea of Cortez region, including Spanish immersion. Dominique worked with local Mexican citizens and Comcaac tribe members in sustainability and ecology. She also worked in the field with Biologists on their research projects. Dominique has traveled to places like Costa Rica, Puerto Rico, and South Africa with Olivet for community service. In Puerto Rico she helped repair homes after Hurricane Maria. In Costa Rica she explored their National Parks. In South Africa she lived on a safari resort where she was able to study the animals closely. Prior to coming to Seven Ponds Dominique worked at Pokagon State Park in Fremont, Indiana as a Seasonal Naturalist. There she created programs about local environments and animals for children and their families.

Dominique spent the summer of 2017 as an intern at Seven Ponds during her college years. This past summer she worked as a Summer Naturalist overseeing sessions of Camp Seven Ponds. We are excited that Dominique has joined the Seven Ponds team and will be sharing her worldwide experiences with us. We look forward to watching as she grows as a naturalist and environmental educator.

Dominique says, "I cannot wait to work with my fellow Naturalists. Coming to Seven Ponds as a child is where I learned how to love nature. I love nature and informing others about it. I had an amazing experience during my internship here at Seven Ponds so when I moved back to the area, I was excited about having an opportunity to work at Seven Ponds again."





## Grants & Gifts

Seven Ponds was the recipient of several grants and donations over the past year. Some of these gifts have a specific purpose, while others are donations intended for general use. Many thanks to the following:

- **O'Neil Foundation** \$25,000 to be used for special projects around the nature center.
- **Rochester Garden Club** \$125 to be used in support of the Forest of the Future program.
- **Four County Community Foundation** \$1,302 to construct a Hymenoptera Hotel and a new enclosure for our two Box Turtles.
- **Franklin Branch WNFGA** \$300 for general use in the nature sanctuary and environmental learning center.
- **Lapeer Optimists** \$2,500 to support environmental education opportunities for Lapeer County students.
- **Four County Community Foundation** \$7,200 to support environmental education opportunities for students in the following school districts: Dryden, Imlay City, Romeo, Capac, Almont, Armada, Oxford, Richmond.
- **Ted Rankin Memorial Scholarship Program** \$28,420 to help fund our nature playscape.

## Trek the Trails Recap

In August the staff challenged themselves and anybody else who wanted to participate to "Trek the Trails" both at the nature center and elsewhere. Pledges and donations were sought, and despite the August heat our small staff trekked 255 miles and raised a total of \$2,126.33 - not bad for our first effort! We hope to expand this effort in 2022 and encourage more of our friends and supporters to participate. Thanks to all who contributed to the success of this endeavor.

## Forest of the Future

Thanks to many donations made in honor or memory of a friend or loved one, the 2021 Buy-a-Tree program resulted in the planting of 139 native trees at Seven Ponds Nature Center this fall. Among the trees planted were Northern White Cedar, Silver Maple, Serviceberry, Paper Birch, Hackberry, Alternate Leaf Dogwood, American Hazelnut, Tamarack, White Oak, Red Oak, Black Oak, and Spicebush. These young trees and shrubs were planted with protective fencing around them to prevent deer and other animals from browsing. Look for these fence enclosures and check out all the trees in our "forest of the future" next time you visit Seven Ponds.

## CORKS & CAPS ~ Save the date!

The 2022 edition of our annual Corks & Caps Fundraiser will be held Friday, June 17 at the Metamora Golf & Country Club. This fun event is one of our most important fundraisers of the year and we hope you will be able to attend and support the nature center. Corks & Caps keeps getting better year after year, and the revenue generated during the event help make everything we do possible. Mark your 2022 calendars now so you won't miss this exciting event.

## Holiday Auction & Christmas Party

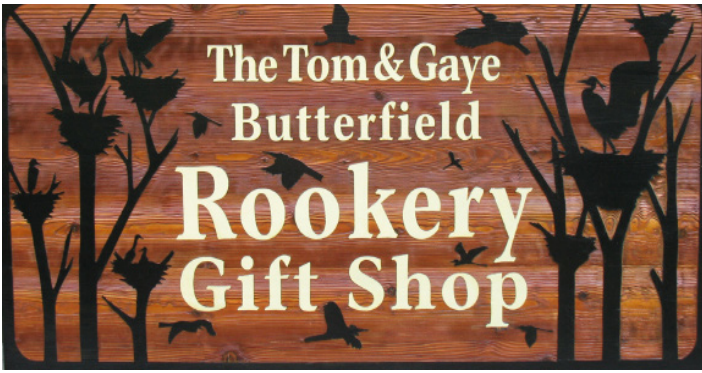
The Development Committee of our Board of Directors recently made the difficult decision to forego this year's Holiday Auction & Christmas Party. Although it was a difficult and disappointing decision, ultimately we didn't feel it would be responsible of the nature center to crowd the building with 100-150 people in light of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. We are hopeful that we will be able to revive this fun event in 2022!

## Board of Directors News

Seven Ponds board member Susie Stroh recently moved to her new home in Florida, vacating her position on the board of directors. We appreciate Susie's years of service to Seven Ponds and will greatly miss her enthusiasm and many contributions, and we wish her well in the sunshine state. Fortunately for us, longtime supporter Julie Markgraf stepped up to fill this board vacancy. We are excited to welcome Julie to the board of directors and we are confident she will be a positive addition to our organization.

## Invasive Species Management Yearly Review

Thanks to our awesome seasonal field crew we accomplished a lot in the way of invasive species management in 2021. The plants that we have been able to work on this year are: Canada thistle (*Cirsium arvense*), crown vetch (*Securigera varia*), garlic mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*), Dame's rocket (*Hesperis matronalis*), spotted knapweed (*Centaurea stoebe*), purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*), phragmites (*Phragmites australis*), glossy buckthorn (*Rhamnus frangula*), autumn olive (*Elaeagnus umbellata*), Japanese barberry (*Berberis thunbergii*), and oriental bittersweet (*Celastrus orbiculatus*). If you want to learn more about invasive species or how to manage them, feel free to contact Naturalist Nicole Kopas at the nature center at (810) 796-3200 or via email at [nkopas@sevenponds.org](mailto:nkopas@sevenponds.org).



Looking for a unique holiday gift for that nature lover in your life? The Rookery Gift Shop now has holiday ornaments and holiday cards. We offer a variety of locally hand-made items, including products like body powder, foot scrub, lip balm, lotion bars, and soap. Want to cut back on plastic use? We now have locally made shampoo bars! As always, we have our locally made honey, maple syrup, teas, sniffle bags, wax melts, vinyl decals, faux leather earrings, beaded bracelets, hand crafted jewelry, and artwork made by local artists. Coming soon: new jewelry items from local artist Tree Trunk Arts. Other items include birdseed, bird houses, bird feeders, field guides, children's books, nature-themed jewelry, note cards, toys, puzzles, games, stuffed animals, puppets, and wind chimes. So come get your unique items today!

**Seven Ponds Nature Center**

3854 Crawford Road  
Dryden, MI 48428  
810-796-3200  
[www.sevenponds.org](http://www.sevenponds.org)

*Address Service Requested*

To help reduce the abundance of single-use plastic items we have reusable Chico bags that are made from recycled materials. Other reusable items are Blue Q bags, totes, pencil cases, lunch bags, and coin purses all made from 95% recycled materials.

**GIFT MEMBERSHIPS & GIFT CERTIFICATES**

Include a gift membership or Rookery gift certificate with your next purchase. These are the gifts that keep giving through all the seasons.

**BIRDSEED HOME DELIVERY**

We now offer birdseed delivery within a 20-mile radius for just a small \$5.00 delivery fee.\*

**CURBSIDE SHOPPING**

Curbside shopping is also available - just call the nature center to place an order and we will deliver right to your vehicle.\*

\*All delivery and curbside orders must be prepaid.

*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!*

Non-profit Organization US Postage PAID Permit No. 2 Dryden, MI 48428
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# Winter Programs

December - February  
2021-2022

Exploring the winter world can be a wondrous experience with endless possibilities for adventure. If you are not sure what these activities may entail, come out to Seven Ponds and we can help you out. Look over this winter's offerings of activities and make plans to join us as we explore winter's nature. Seven Ponds offers something for everyone from preschoolers and families to adults. **All programs require advance registration through our website.** Mark your calendar for some programs in our Winter Series, seasonal activities, or WinterFest. Most activities are \$3.00 for adults and free for members and children under 12, unless otherwise noted. COVID-19 precautions may be in place for various programs - check our website for more information. **Please register online.**

## *The Winter Series from Seven Ponds*

Each winter Seven Ponds sponsors the Winter Series, a series of Sunday afternoon programs highlighted by noted naturalists and photographers, live animals, fascinating natural history, and enjoyment for all ages. Come out for one or all of these programs. Sessions are open to everyone, **but pre-registration is required.** Seating is limited and these programs often fill quickly. If you register but are then not able to attend, please contact the nature center to cancel so that someone on the wait list may attend. COVID-19 safety protocols will be in place in adherence to local health department recommendations. **Please register online.**

### ***Quest for Survival***

Science Alive

SUNDAY, JANUARY 30, 2:00 PM

For an animal to survive within its environment, it must rely on a myriad of adaptations. Join Science Alive as they explore live animals from around the world, and their abilities to stay alive! Science Alive is a hand-on science education organization. Through personalized, interactive presentations with live reptiles, amphibians, birds, and mammals, Science Alive brings the study of science to life for students. This is a family-friendly program. Fee: \$5.00 (Seven Ponds Members \$3.00)

### ***Controversial Coyote***

Holly Hadac - Retired Wildlife Rehabilitator

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2:00 PM

Holly is a DNR Licensed Wildlife Rehabilitator with 25 years of experience. She specializes in large mammals and coyote education. Holly has worked with wildlife biologists trapping and studying coyotes in other states, and most recently was an assistant researcher with the Southeastern Michigan Coyote Research Project. This was a PhD study from Wayne State University where the team trapped, radio collared, and tracked coyotes. She will discuss the results of that study along with her experiences as a wildlife rehabilitator having coyotes in her care from three day old pups to injured adults. Holly wants people's opinions of coyotes to be based on facts backed up by research and personal experiences, not media hype. Intended for older children and adults.

### ***Wizards, Wands, and Potions***

Sloan Museum

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2:00 PM

Step into another world full of wizards and witches. Cauldrons will bubble and potions will change color. Is it magic or chemistry? Build your own light-up wand and squish your fingers into ghost brains. This program is best for children ages 8 to 12 years old. Fee: \$5.00 (Seven Ponds Members \$3.00)

### ***Citizen Science 101***

Nicole Kopas - Seven Ponds Naturalist & Land Steward

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2:00 PM

Did you know that you could help scientists while spending time in your own backyards? Many scientists need the help of everyday citizens to gather information on wildlife and plants. That information informs scientific research and provides needed information for decision makers. Join Nicole as she shares some of the awesome citizen science opportunities you can join.

### ***Michigan Snakes Alive!***

Nature Discovery

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2:00 PM

Snakes can be scary for some people and there is a lot of misinformation about our scaly friends. Nature Discovery will address those misconceptions and help put your fears to rest during this live snake program. We will learn about the snakes that call Michigan home, and get a chance to handle many of them. This is a family-friendly program. Fee: \$5.00 per person (\$3.00 Seven Ponds Members)

# December

## ***Coffee With A Naturalist***

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 4, 11:00 AM

Feel like taking a stroll with a hot cup o' joe? Bring your questions and a thermos, if you choose. We will fill up our cups then hit the trails for a morning walk. Coffee and fixings will be provided.

## ***Sunset Walk***

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 9, 5:00 PM

Do you love watching the sun set? Well, come join one of our naturalists on a sunset walk alongside our ponds to catch a glimpse of the beauty that nature has to offer.

## ***Wee Readers***

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 11, 10:00 AM

As we read *In The Snow: Who's Been Here?* we will learn about the clues that our winter critters leave behind. After we finish our book, we will go on our own hike looking for critter clues!

## ***Sunday Walk***

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2:00 PM

Join a naturalist for a late fall walk around the ponds. We will be exploring the late fall habitats of Paul's Woods and Rain Barrel Marsh.

## ***Natural Ornament Making***

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 19, 2:00 PM

Get ready for the holiday season by making your own natural ornament to help decorate your home. Supplies will be provided. Fee: \$4.00 (members \$2.00).

## ***Dinner Time***

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 22, 1:00 PM

Join one of our naturalists to help feed and handle our animals in the Critter Corner. This is fun hands-on learning about each of our animals.

## ***Boxing Day Walk***

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 26, 1:00 PM

The day after Christmas might be the best time to get out of the house, and get some fresh air. It was a lot of time with those relatives, after all! Join a naturalist and walk the trails during one of the final days of the year.

## **NATURE CENTER HOLIDAY CLOSURES**

The nature center interpretive building will be closed on Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Year's Eve, and New Year's Day. As always, Seven Ponds members may access the trails during these holiday closures.

# January

## ***Jonathan Woods Hike***

SUNDAY, JANUARY 2, 2:00 PM

Let's start 2022 off right with a beautiful hike in our Jonathan Woods. There might be snow, there might not. Come dressed for the weather as we explore this winter habitat.

## ***Winter Kisses Snowflake Wishes***

THURSDAY, JANUARY 6, 2:00 PM

Come to Seven Ponds and make different snowflake crafts with one of our naturalists. All supplies will be provided for you. Please pre-register by January 5th, space is limited. Fee: \$5.00 per person (\$3.00 for members).

## ***Let it Snow!***

SATURDAY, JANUARY 8, 3:00 PM

Have you ever wanted to make snowflake catchers and learn about how snowflakes form? Join a naturalist as we make our own snowflake catchers. We will go for a walk to look at snowflakes and see their unique shapes.

## ***Winter Nature Journaling***

SUNDAY, JANUARY 9, 2:00 PM

It will be cold, but this will also be the perfect time to reflect and journal about our wintery weather. The naturalist will have journaling prompts to follow, but please bring your favorite pens and pencils.

## ***Snowshoeing***

SATURDAY, JANUARY 15, 1:00 PM

Dashing through the snow on your own pair of snowshoes sounds like a fun way to spend an afternoon! Old-fashioned snowshoes will be provided for you on this guided hike. In the event of no snow, there will still be an interpretive walk. Space is limited.

## ***Managing Invasive Species 101***

SATURDAY, JANUARY 22, 9:30 AM

Want to learn about our common invasive plant species, and how to manage them? Our Land Steward will give a presentation on how to identify the plants and different management techniques for controlling their populations. If you have any specific questions about how to manage certain invasives on your property, bring them along!

# February

## **Snow and Shoes**

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 5TH, 12:00 PM

Join a Naturalist on a walk on the Polly Ann Trail in Imlay City. There is a small parking lot across from 505 W 4th St. Snowshoes will be provided for you on this guided hike. In the event of no snow, there will still be an interpretive walk. Space is limited.

## **Night-time Senses**

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 6:30 PM

Many animals are out and about at night, and they use different senses to help them navigate their dark world. During this family night hike, we will do lots of different activities using our senses to explore nature in the dark, just like some of our nocturnal animal friends.

## **Game Night**

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 6:00 PM

How well do you know your state? Join one of our naturalists to test your knowledge about Michigan's wildlife. The winner will receive a small prize. This program is for people 15 years and older.

## **Winter Craft Day**

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 3:00 PM

Celebrate the winter season by making a fun seasonal themed craft. All supplies will be provided, you just need to bring your creativity.

## **Family Trivia**

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 6:00 PM

How well do you and your family know wildlife? Join a naturalist for our family game night. We will be asking questions for the whole family on what kind of animals live in Michigan. The winning team will receive a prize!

## **Winter Scavenger Hunt**

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 1:30 PM

The power of observation will be your greatest asset! Let's see if you will be able to find everything, and answer all of the questions on this family scavenger hunt.

## **Kid Trivia Night**

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 5:00 PM

How well do you know animals and nature? Join a naturalist in a kid-friendly game night. Prizes will be handed out to the kids. Minimum age of six years old and maximum of twelve years old to participate.

## **Wee Readers: Stranger in the Woods**

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 10:30 AM

Seven Ponds will be partnering with Dryden Township Library for this story time, as we figure out the stranger in the woods. After the story, we will make our own stranger-in-the-woods outside the library. Part of this program will require playing in the snow! We will meet at the Dryden Township Library in Downtown Dryden.

## **Campfires and Constellations**

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 6:00 PM

Cozy up around a campfire as we make s'mores, stargaze, and maybe listen to coyotes serenade us. Please bring a lawn chair for the fire portion. In the event of cloudy skies, we will still enjoy a fire and venture out onto the trails for some nighttime fun.



## **Assistant Naturalist Classes**

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

### **SNOW SCIENCE**

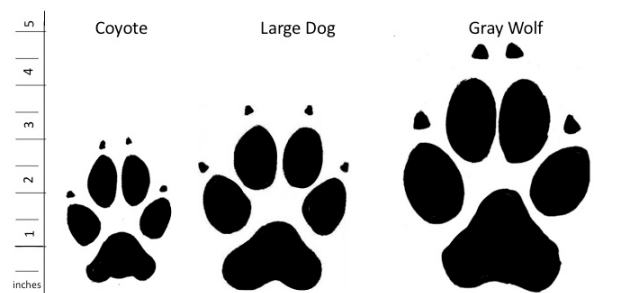
THURSDAY, JANUARY 20, 3:00 PM

WinterFest is right around the corner and it is time to brush up on those winter science skills.

### **WILD DOGS**

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 3:00 PM

Get ready to howl for joy when you learn about the different wild dogs that call Michigan home.





# Nature Study Series for Homeschoolers

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 children toward an awareness and appreciation of our natural world using hands-on activities, specimens, slide shows, and nature walks. These programs compliment state science objectives and focus on specific ecological concepts. Classes will have an outdoor component - dress for the weather. Fee: \$4.00 per person. Participating parents must also pay the fee. Register for the Nature Study Series for Homeschoolers sessions online at [sevenponds.org](http://sevenponds.org).

## Special provisions in place due to COVID-19:

- Classes are limited in size.
- Participants must wear a mask unless otherwise directed.
- Classes may be canceled due to poor weather conditions.

## Winter Survival

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 19, 1:00 PM

Grades K - 6

We will test our limits as we learn how to survive in a winter world. We will learn how to keep ourselves safe in cold temperatures, what to do if we are stuck in the cold, and how to build snow shelters. Please come dressed to be in the snow!

## Wait...Who's My Mate?

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 1:00 PM

Grades K - 2 and Grades 3 - 6

It's getting close to spring and animals will start setting up territory and looking for mates. We will explore the many ways animals find their mates through this hands-on lesson. This session will be divided into younger and older learners. Younger learners will focus on life cycles. Older learners will examine physical and behavioral adaptations.

# Knee-High Naturalist Classes

For preschool children around 3 or 4 years old.

Fridays 10:00 - 11:30 AM

Fee: \$7.00 per child (\$6.00 for members)

Come out and enjoy nature with your child. All classes include nature fun like walks, crafts, games, stories, snacks, and so much more.

Online registration is required.

## Special provisions in place due to COVID-19:

- One adult per child.
- Only bring the child enrolled in the class - no siblings.
- All adults are required to wear a mask when indoors.

## The Mitten

DECEMBER 17, 2021

## Tracks

JANUARY 21, 2022

## Dogs of Michigan

FEBRUARY 18, 2022

## Cats of Michigan

MARCH 18, 2022

## Rainbows

APRIL 22, 2022

## Animals of the Past

MAY 20, 2022

