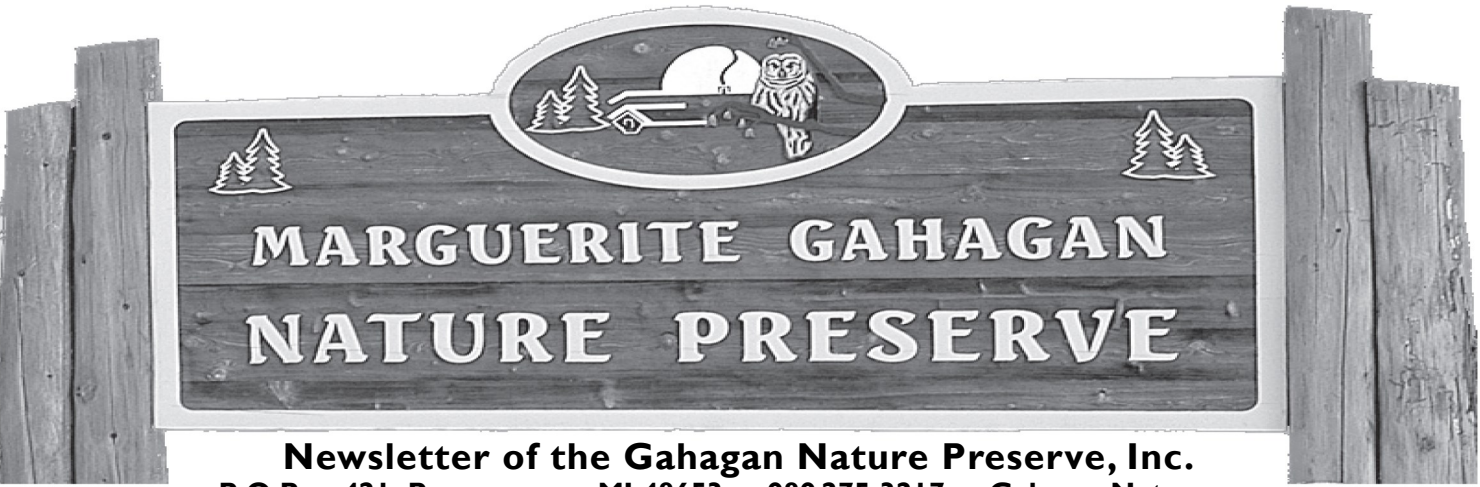
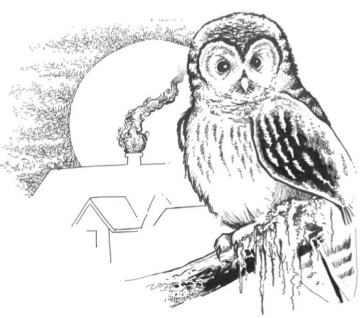


Marguerite Gahagan Nature Preserve  
P.O. Box 421  
Roscommon, MI 48653



**Newsletter of the Gahagan Nature Preserve, Inc.**  
**P.O Box 421, Roscommon, MI 48653 • 989-275-3217 • GahaganNature.org**  
**Issue 32 - Spring 2017**

Letter from the Chairman

Gratitude  
Tom Dale

For many decades, patrons at The Cherven Drug Store and Soda Fountain in downtown Roscommon were treated to a lovely wall mural of a sailing ship on the ocean and this wise and prescient poem:

*The wise mariner always looks to the sea  
To see what he is about,  
And he never expects any ships to come in  
If he hasn't sent any ships out.*

Given its location and popularity with Roscommon students that attended the old high school next door, you just have to wonder what kind of impact that wise verse might have had on a whole generation of Roscommon's young people. It certainly had an impact on me, for I seem to have memorized it after just one reading. And now, perhaps you have too.

That insightful verse recently applied to our preserve as well. In early 2015, our board of directors was faced with the prospect of *change*. After working as the preserve's Education Director for 15 years, I had informed the board of my intent to retire. Unfortunately, my replacement was likely to cost the preserve more than our annual budget could afford. When the preserve first formed in 1997, the executor of Marguerite's estate turned the balance of her funds over to the new board of directors. So the board decided to spend from that reserve fund to hire a new educator. It was a gamble, as it was clear from the start that we would need to secure additional funding. So a fund-raising committee was formed with the charge of finding the needed money.

The committee sought wise counsel from local business men and women, and after a few false starts and with a generous push from the Colwell family, we finally chose to go directly to our friends, whoever they might be, and appeal for help. We composed a frank and truthful letter, and mailed it to a wide section of our community. We also appealed to our many members through the autumn issue of this newsletter. Then we crossed our fingers and waited.

To date, we have received responses from nearly 80 donors and a total of \$25,534, enough to effectively save our education programs for a year and beyond. We primarily have the Colwell family to thank for our success, as Cliff and Carolyn Colwell initiated a \$10,000 matching fund to help us reach our goal. This year, the money will be used to hire our new Education Director and reduce or eliminate fees for our Visiting Naturalist and spring/fall field trip programs. We will no doubt be asking for financial support in the future. But for now, our ship seems to have come in and we are grateful beyond all measure. You have demonstrated by your generosity that you believe in our mission and that you believe, as we do, that Marguerite Gahagan Nature Preserve is here forever and that we are all part of its success. Thank you.

*To learn more about the Colwell Challenge and our contributors, see page 4.*

Gagahan Nature Camp

Parents, be sure to mark your calendars for Gahagan's summer Nature Camp. Get the kids outdoors and join us for three mornings of education and fun! We explore the far reaches of the preserve, investigate various ecosystems on the property, play games and work on a few craft projects along the way. Camp favorites include puppet shows, feeding Sammy (our five-foot black rat snake), catching frogs in the pond and designing a nature-inspired t-shirt. The most important thing is developing new friendships!

Nature Camp takes place during the third week of July (July 19-21) from 9 AM to noon, with a Family Night presentation Thursday evening. Children of membership families attend for \$10. The fee for children of non-membership families is \$20. Participation is open to children in the age range of 7-11 and each camp is limited to the first 25 children who register. You can get on the list by calling Tracy Bosworth at (899) 390-0903 or by contacting us at adm@GahaganNature.org.

HELP WANTED - Volunteer Opportunities at Gahagan  
Volunteer Board Member  
Spring Cabin Clean-Up

Gahagan Nature Preserve, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization run by volunteers and funded by its members, generous donors and the endowment left by Marguerite. As you know, the preserve provides environmental education for many of the schools in the surrounding counties. The 60-acre preserve is open to the public for hiking, snowshoe-ing, birding, biking and many other uses.

We're looking for a few talented and conscientious volunteer board members who share this vision. If you can contribute your time, thoughtfulness, and leadership one evening a month, and are interested in exploring this opportunity, call Tracy Bosworth at (989) 390-0903.

Every spring, Gahagan calls on members and volunteers to help ready the preserve for school field trips. On Saturday, April 23rd, from 9 AM to 1 PM, we will meet to clean up the cabin and trails. Please consider joining in for a few minutes or a few hours. Snacks, lunch, and refreshments are provided!

Au Sable Watershed Monitoring

Every year, a group of dedicated river enthusiasts gather to monitor the Au Sable River's six main feeder streams. We sample temperature, stream velocity, substrate, and the presence of various "bug" species to assess the health of the watershed. We will meet at Gates Lodge (10 am) on May 20th. Email Tom Dale at thdale@core.com for details.

Marguerite Gahagan Nature Preserve  
Board of Directors ~ 2017

Chairperson: Tom Dale  
Vice Chair: Troy Fairbanks  
Secretary: Julie Crick  
Bobbie Werle  
Brian Hutchins  
Sue Huffman  
Ken Elmore

Beth Zuker, Education Director  
elizabethzucker82@gmail.com

Jalen Williams, Interim Education Director  
(989) 281-1211 jalen@umich.edu

Tracy Bosworth, Executive Director  
(989) 390-0903 tracyboz@yahoo.com  
adm@GahaganNature.org

www.GahaganNature.org  
(989) 275-3217

2017 Gahagan Schedule

**Jan-April:** The “Visiting Naturalist” program

**April 22:** Spring clean-up at the preserve (9 AM-  
Noon)

**April 24-June 16:** Spring field trips

**May 17:** Roscommon Business Expo (3-6:00 PM,  
CRAF center)

**May 20:** AuSable River Water Quality  
Collection (10 AM, Gates Lodge)

**June 3:** Kirtland’s Warbler Festival (7 AM-4 PM)

**June 19:** 4-H Forestry Camp (9 AM-3 PM)

**July 9:** Au Sable Riverfest (Wallace Park,  
Roscommon)

**July 11, 18, 25:** Nature Time at Roscommon  
Library (10:30-11:30 AM)

**July 18-20:** Nature Camp (9 AM - Noon)

**Sept.-May:** ELF program in local schools

**Oct. 15:** Open house at Gahagan (1-4 PM)

Board of Directors meet on the 2nd Monday of  
the month, 7 PM. All are welcome to attend.

For up-to-date schedule changes and event  
details, visit [www.GahaganNature.org](http://www.GahaganNature.org)

2016 Donations and Memorials

The Marguerite Gahagan Nature Preserve thanks the  
following organizations and individuals that donated  
to our mission in 2016 (See page 4 for 2017 donors)

Bob Andrus

Theresa Blamer in memory of William Blamer

Greg and Linda Bodker

Ann & RJ Bolzman in honor of RJ

Sherwood Boudeman

Julie Boushelle

Gary & Sharon Boushelle

William Burrows

EAA Chapter 1259 at Blodgett Memorial Airport

Martha Clapp in memory of Richard Clapp

Cliff & Carolyn Colwell

John & Betty Colwell

Carole Chilton

Larry Dashner

Karen Demers

Ken Elmore in memorial to Debra Elmore

Roger & Mary Fechner in memory of Joseph Kutkuhn

Higgins Lake-Roscommon Chamber of Commerce

Susan Huffman

Mike Kent

Art & Kathy Ketelhut

Anne & Russell Kidd

Kirtland Garden Club

Rich & Cathy Koupal

JoAnn and Mike Muston

Terry Nanry

Stewart Powrie

Crawford-Roscommon Conservation District

Bill & Patti Sarkella

Christine Schicker

Richard Seton in memory of Toni Seton

Jay & Lorrene Spaulding in honor of Tom Dale

Dan & Lisa Sutton

Betty Thomas in memory of John C. Thomas

John & Liz Wade

Kathy & Mike Wahl

Jerry & Bobbie Werle in memory of Frank, Ivan, &  
Leroy Brooks

**In memory of Jeremy Jones:**

Mark & Tracy Bosworth Rich & Carol Silverman

Tom & Phyllis Dale Bob & Dawn Tupper

Don & Elaine Granzine John & Liz Wade

Brian & Mary Hutchins Jerry & Darlene Weinrich

Jerry & Joyce Johnston

*MGNP Members are published in the Fall newsletter*

Come Join Us at the Marguerite Gahagan Nature Preserve!

Marguerite Gahagan Nature Preserve operates as a non-profit organization run by volunteers and funded by its members, generous donors and the endowment left by Marguerite. Did you know that it provides environmental education for many of the schools in the surrounding counties? Did you know that the 60-acre preserve is open to the public for hiking, snowshoeing, birding and many other uses? Did you know we have an asphalt and boardwalk trail that is wheelchair friendly? It travels through woods and wetlands and along the beginnings of Tank Creek. Interested in learning and helping? Please join us!

Yes, I/we want to join Marguerite Gahagan Nature preserve. Enclosed is my/our yearly membership.

\$20 ☐ Individual / \$30 ☐ Family / \$50 ☐ Organizational \$\_\_\_\_\_ Donation

I am making a donation of \$\_\_\_\_\_ ☐ in memory of, ☐ in honor of \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Ph: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_ @ \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks to Gahagan Nature Preserve, Inc. and mail to P.O. Box 421, Roscommon, MI 48653

You can also donate, join, or renew your membership on-line at [www.GahaganNature.org](http://www.GahaganNature.org)

A Gahagan Welcome

*Beth Zuker*

Many years ago, in the woods surrounding Higgins Lake, a little, blonde haired girl excitedly picked blueberries with her grandmother. She watched the spiders crawling across the berries, the bluejays and crows calling from pine and oak trees, and even spotted the occasional deer or rabbit bounding away from the noisy intruders. On the shores of Higgins Lake, she and her sisters industriously re-routed the little creek that flowed into the lake, making a new home for all of the wonderful little minnows. This is how my curiosity and love of the natural world began.

My name is Beth Zuker. That child was me. From the time I was about two years old, I spent at least several weeks each summer at Higgins Lake with my grandmother and my family. I loved the area so much that I moved up here in 1978, and actually attended Kirtland Community College for a couple of years. Flash forward about 10 years, and I was back in college again. I graduated from Central Michigan University with a Bachelors in Elementary Education, major in biology and minor in history. I began working at Roscommon Middle School in 1996, and right from the beginning I taught science. I taught primarily 7th and 8th grade science and history, but ended my career teaching fifth grade. I retired from Roscommon Area Public Schools in February of 2017.



Gahagan’s educators, past and present:  
Beth Zuker, Jalen Williams, & Tom Dale

I have a wonderful husband, and in our blended family, we have five grown children and one grandchild. Currently we have a crazy dog named Sadie, and two cats, Hawkins and Lebowski. We love camping, hiking and fishing, and I also enjoy gardening.

For many, many years, I have attended various environmental classes offered by a variety of organizations. I’ve participated in many activities at Gahagan, and my students and I thoroughly enjoyed them - and learned from them. Now I have switched roles and will be the one teaching those classes and programs. I look forward to working at the Marguerite Gahagan Nature Preserve. I hope that I can inspire and excite students to learn about the world they live in.

# Project E.L.F.

For eight straight months, volunteers take Gahagan’s **ELF** kits into local classrooms and deliver fun, one-hour science lessons to students from five schools. These **Environmental Learning for the Future** lessons cover topics ranging from earth science to ecology, and volunteers learn how to run each lesson at a monthly training session. The materials and lesson plans are provided by the preserve so that everyday citizens like you can help give back to our schools and our students in a way that supplements their academic development. The program features puppet shows, hands-on activities, and experiments that make science fun!

We asked one of our long-time volunteers to describe what she has learned from her past three years running the ELF program in Roscommon schools. While reading her testimonial below, consider volunteering for the program next year!

## Three Years of ELF

Sue Jock

Things I have recognized over the past three years of being an ELF mentor and volunteer:

- ◇ Kids are excited about the subject and content covered.
- ◇ Students recall their favorite lessons years later!
- ◇ Typically 3-4 kids out of 20 have some knowledge of the subject, either through learned knowledge or experience. The rest are experiencing topic exposure for the first time.
- ◇ Only 2-3 have parents or grandparents mentoring them on this subject manner.
- ◇ It is obvious that kids do not go outside and explore like they used to.
- ◇ Students are curious and soak up the subject matter and most have excellent recall by year’s end.
- ◇ It is interesting to me that when I recall lessons from years back, the kids that have had an ELF volunteer know the answers to science questions that the other kids do not.



# Performance Propane

After receiving our fundraising appeal in December, Performance Propane of Roscommon suggested we meet. To say that the upshot of that meeting “made our day” would be a large understatement! Performance’s contribution reaches much further. They have graciously offered to supply all the propane used at the preserve. This means we are now able to keep the cabin open year-round for programming. This is a huge benefit for the preserve and we are tremendously thankful to Performance for their generosity and support.

## Business After Hours

Last October, members of the Higgins Lake-Roscommon Chamber of Commerce gathered at Gahagan’s interpretive center for “Business After Hours”. The event, hosted by the Roscommon Rotary Club, brought several first-time visitors to the preserve for an enjoyable evening of camaraderie. Thanks to Ron Alden, Wally Chwan and Cathy Boyle for reaching out and promoting the preserve. It was a ton of fun!



## Weyerhaeuser Waves

MGNP would like to acknowledge the continued support from Weyerhaeuser Grayling OSB. “Making Waves” is a program created by the Weyerhaeuser Giving Fund that promotes the volunteerism of their employees. According to Kathi Moss, Grayling OSB Environmental Manager, “We did a river clean-up in July which enables us to request a grant for a qualifying organization and I hear that yours could use a shot in the arm this year.”

This contribution marks the fourth time that the Grayling OSB employees have chosen to award the grant to Gahagan. We are very grateful to the Grayling OSB employees and the Weyerhaeuser Giving Fund for their generosity.

# Inevitable Change Brings Inevitable Opportunity

## Gahagan Board

In May of 2015, Gahagan hired Jalen Williams to replace Tom Dale as the preserve’s Education Director. Tom had developed and directed our environmental education programs for 15 years before retiring from his position. Hoping to find a capable contender, the board found Jalen to be an exceptional employee. He prepared and hosted his first field trip the very day he started at the preserve. Since then, with little to no guidance, Jalen has created dozens of environmental education programs. He has presented to thousands of children and adults over the past two years. His audiences have included every age group, from preschool students on field trips to adults attending programs at the local library.

Jalen’s duties have not been limited to environmental education programs. He has assisted in all aspects of the nature preserve’s operations. The trails, boardwalks, parking area and buildings require continual maintenance, particularly after a wind or snow event. Jalen presided over the publication of five of our twice-yearly newsletters, formatting each of them in-house. He redesigned our trifold brochure, maintained the preserve’s website and created a detailed, accurate, publishable trail map as well. You can find these maps posted throughout the preserve.

As a non-profit organization that provides education programs to the public, we must constantly find ways to raise money. Jalen solicited donations through direct appeal presentations and submitted a number of grant proposals to local service organizations. He has represented Gahagan at many community events and festivals, always promoting while informing. We knew two years ago when we hired Jalen that it would be a trial to see if we could support a full-time naturalist. It seems best now to return to a part-time naturalist, leave some tasks for the “to do” list, and perhaps limit some community involvement in order to continue to provide the school programming that makes up the core focus of our mission.

Beth Zuker has signed on as our new naturalist. She will work with Jalen starting mid-May and take over when he leaves in early June. Jalen has been accepted into the Rackham Graduate School at the University of Michigan and will be pursuing a Master’s degree in secondary education. He is excited to know where he is headed, but is sad to be leaving Roscommon. He has done so much for the Preserve in the last two years, and we are happy that his experience at Gahagan has helped him determine his new career pathway. We happen to think that he will be an excellent science teacher, and we wish him the best as he pursues this opportunity.



Read about our incoming Education Director, **Beth Zuker**, on page 7!

The Colwell Challenge

If you are a long-time reader of the Gahagan newsletter, you are already aware of the fundraising effort we have made this year to raise money for our future education programs. When we kicked off our general fundraiser during our annual October Open House, some good friends of the preserve learned of the impending demise of our education programs. These friends, Dr. Clifford and Carolyn Colwell of San Diego and Higgins Lake, first discovered us years ago while on a bird-watching outing, and were very enthusiastic about our fundraising drive. They soon presented us with an incredible opportunity.

With support from other members of their family, the Colwells offered to match every dollar given by other donors in our community up to a total of \$10,000 dollars. This incredible offer soon became "The Colwell Challenge", and the community response has been tremendous! Our preserve, our schools, and our students have the Colwells and the following contributors to thank. We cannot express how thankful we are for all of your support!

Colwell Contributors

Dr. Clifford & Carolyn Beall Colwell  
Dr. John & Betty Colwell  
Dr. Chris & Jane Colwell  
Dr. Matthew & Jill Colwell  
Connie Colwell Jabari  
Lynn Donaldson

A Letter From the Colwell Family

*My first memories and many of the best memories of my life are of my times at Higgins Lake. My father had purchased a piece of property on Pine Bluffs and built a cabin in 1935 for a vacation spot from his busy surgical practice in Flint. He wanted to expose his family to the beauty of Higgins Lake and the nearby areas where we could learn to swim, canoe, sail, fly fish and water ski. When he returned from World War I to the Flint area, I had the desire to return to Higgins Lake whenever possible to be a part of this environment and have never lost that desire despite a life that has taken us far from Michigan.*

*My wife, Carolyn fell in love with Higgins Lake and our cabin at her first visit and has maintained this feeling for the past 55 years. Our children and grandchildren have all spent some part of their summers there despite great travel distances. As soon as we learned of Marguerite Gahagan and her wonderful gift to the area we began visiting the facility and enrolling first our children and then our grandchildren in the available outdoor programs. Both Carolyn and I are vitally interested in preserving our present and future environment and feel that our contribution can make a difference to the Roscommon area specifically to the children growing up here, through their exposure to the Visiting Naturalist Program. It is an opportunity for the entire Colwell family to give back a portion of what Higgins Lake has given to us over our lifetimes.*

-Cliff and Carolyn Colwell

Community Sponsors

Brook Retirement Community  
Carey & Jaskowski PLLC  
Fick and Sons  
Hart Ford Lincoln  
Higgins Lake Foundation  
Navigator Wireline Services

Nester Automotive  
Northern Family Dentistry  
Performance Propane  
Roscommon Auto Recyclers  
Rosc. County Community Foundation  
Roscommon Teachers Association  
Woodland Family Dentistry

Individual Donations

Hazel Babcock  
Debra Beehler  
Carolyn & Ty Black  
Theresa Blamer  
Jerry Boone  
Bob & Julie Borak  
Mark & Tracy Bosworth  
Jack & Joanne Bouck  
Gary & Sharon Boushelle  
Linda Brick  
Mark Burger  
Lisa Burmester  
Brian & Janet Carson  
Carol Chidester  
Martha Clapp  
Tom & Phyllis Dale  
Karen Demers  
Dave & Penny Diltz  
Stan & Patti Dombrowski  
Herman Donovan  
Dale & Theresa Ekdorn  
Ken Elmore

Jean Evans  
Roger & Mary Fechner  
Karen Coe & Roxie Fernelius  
Denis & Carol Fitzgerald  
Jim & Carol Garlo  
JoAnn & Keith Gave  
Barb Gielincki & Brett Yardley  
Mike & Sue Glover  
Don & Elaine Granzine  
Brian & Mary Hutchins  
Jason & Pauline Jobson  
Lois Jones  
Art & Kathryn Kettlehut  
Tom & Elisabeth Kish  
Rich & Cathy Koupal  
Duncan & Kathy Lawrence  
Diane Lippert  
Leona Martin  
Jim & Nilah Mason  
Jeff & Millie Mellgren  
Frank & Nancy Michelson  
Liz & Bernie Milnes

Cheryl Mitchell  
Mike & Jo Muston  
Susan & Jack Nanry  
Terry Nanry  
Don & Suzanne Pennell  
Bruce & Betty Phillips  
Ralph & Nancy Rucinski  
Richard Seton  
Jay & Lorrene Spaulding  
Pat & Vicki Springstead  
Dan & Lisa Sutton  
Betty Thomas  
Bill Tudor  
Bob & Dawn Tupper  
JoAnn VanderMollen  
Liz & John Wade  
Charlotte Wagner  
Mike & Kathy Wahl  
Eleanor Washburn  
Jerry & Bobbie Werle  
Karrie & Gabe Williams  
Robert & Clarice Williams

Wolf Songs - Jalen Williams

In my last outing as Gahagan's Visiting Naturalist, I travelled to schools across northern Michigan to talk about one of my favorite animals: wolves. I also speak about many other North American "dog" species during the Wolf Songs program, but wolves always take a starring role. The wolf program was the first Visiting Naturalist presentation developed by Tom Dale back in 2002, which alternates yearly between Wolf Songs, Cat Tales, Bear Tracks, and Wonders of Weasels.



For years, the National Wildlife Federation has allowed us to borrow their "Wolf Trunk" for our program, which has a collection of wolf and coyote pelts, skulls and other education materials. Because the trunk was unavailable this year, we decided to create our own wolf trunk in-house. With help from the Morley fund in the Roscommon County Community Foundation, we purchased a replica wolf skull and a large wolf pelt that quickly became the most popular item in the presentation. Because the pelt is so large, it is hidden away during most of the program. Taking it out of its container always draws huge gasps from the audience, and students love to tell their parents that they got to "pet a wolf" during our program.

Wolves get a bad reputation, but there is very little that separates the fearsome wolf from man's best friend. Humans first domesticated wolves between 15 and 30 thousand years ago. We've been breeding their descendants into various kinds of dogs ever since! Wild wolves must live and hunt in packs in the wild, which means they are good at listening to the leader of their pack. We all know that the wolf's descendants are very good at following orders too... like sit, stay, and roll over.



By the end of each presentation, I encourage students to examine our cultural relationship with wolves and how our shared history informs conservation decisions about these animals in Michigan. I share pictures and tales from my own experiences studying "coywolves" (coyote -wolf hybrids) at the University of Michigan Biostation. We also discuss the benefits of "keystone" predators and how their absence affects the deer (one of wolves' favorite foods in Michigan) and coyotes (wolves' largest competitor) in our state.

At the time of this newsletter's publication, the program has been scheduled for 55 presentations at 14 schools, which will reach nearly 2,700 students. As April comes to a close, there may be a few more schools on the schedule before the program makes the library circuit this summer, starting with a June 10<sup>th</sup> presentation at the Roscommon Area District Library, 6 pm. Our library presentations are a chance for those in the community to see these programs outside of a school setting. Check with your local libraries this summer to participate!

Spring Field Trips

Every spring, students from Roscommon walk over from their school to Gahagan for our field trips. The preserve is practically in the elementary school's backyard, but we also host schools from across the region. With assistance from the Michigan Tree Farm Committee's "Wheels to Woods" grant, we are able to help schools from as far as Mio and Fairview get their travel costs reimbursed for taking their students to an outdoor forest like ours.

This year, Gahagan is also able to cover the fees that we would normally charge schools for field trips, all thanks to our generous donors and the success we have had fundraising this year. This means that classes across the area will be able to bring their students here for free! Teachers can schedule their classes to visit between April 24<sup>th</sup> and the end of the school year. We prepare unique lessons for every grade-level to ensure that all of our students get a new educational experience with every visit to the preserve. If you are a teacher that would like to visit, please contact our current Education Director, Jalen Williams, at [jalen@umich.edu](mailto:jalen@umich.edu) before the schedule fills up!

A Letter From the Wade Family

"Dear Tracy,

We hope the enclosed will help in meeting the desired funds to get the matching grant for Gahagan. We've been so blessed to be around as this precious place has grown from Marguerite's special land and home to a magical spot for the Roscommon Community. The cabin has provided hours and hours of education and a spot from which the programs Tom Dale developed could go forth to schools and other communities. It's marvelous that you've found Jalen to continue in Tom's shoes.

Having two eagle scout sons we've also seen multiple eagle projects done there both benefitting the preserve as well as their continuing to scouting's peak. It's fun to see this symbiotic relationship.

May Marguerite's values continue for many years to come!

- John & Liz Wade