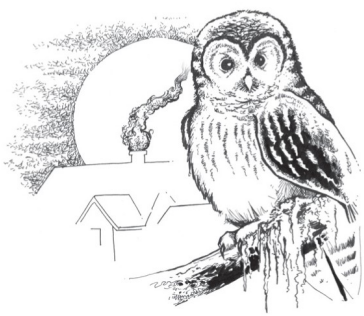


Marguerite Gahagan Nature Preserve
P.O. Box 421
Roscommon, MI 48653



OPEN HOUSE AT GAHAGAN
Sunday October 11, 2020 1:00 P.M.

Marguerite Gahagan Nature Preserve Adventure Lab By Mike Petrucha

The Marguerite Gahagan Nature Preserve Adventure Lab went live on June 24th. This Adventure Lab takes you to 5 of the interpretive signs along the paved trail and is a 0.4-mile round trip walk from the parking lot. Along the trail you will find QR codes (not part of this adventure) that will tell you something about that area. Even if you are not a geocacher, walking the paved trail and checking out the interpretive signs is a good excuse to get outside and learn some interesting information.

What is an Adventure Lab you ask? Adventure Labs are an experimental geocaching platform to find Lab Caches. Unlike traditional geocaching, Adventure Lab Caches are not required to have a cache container and can also be located indoors.

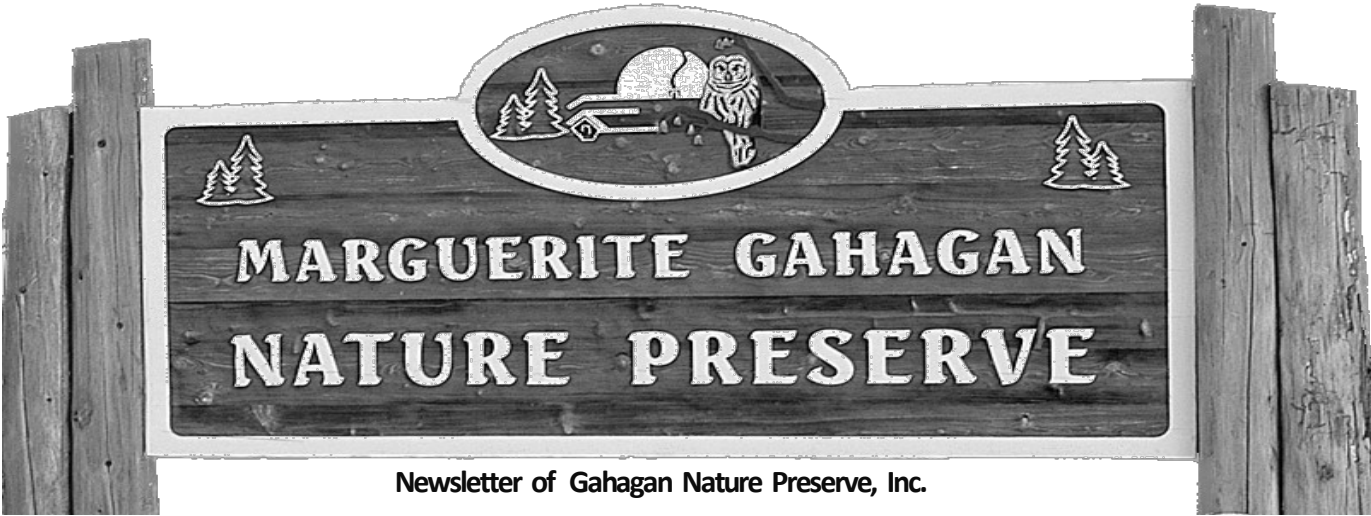
To find an Adventure Lab, download the free Adventure Lab app.

- You can log in with your Geocaching.com account or not.
- Select a nearby Adventure, like ours at Gahagan, from the map or list.
- Navigate to the Adventure location and follow the instructions in the description.



To log an Adventure Lab, players must visit the location, discover the location answer, and then enter the code into the app to mark the cache as found. After completing all locations within an Adventure, you may also rate the Adventure and leave a comment. As of this writing, over 25 individuals have completed the Gahagan Adventure Lab, all with positive comments.

Adventure Lab and Geocaching.com are both easy to set up. Try something new to get you out and about!



Newsletter of Gahagan Nature Preserve, Inc.
P.O. Box 421, Roscommon, MI 48653 ~ 989-275-3217 ~ www.GahaganNature.org
Issue # 39 ~ Fall 2020

A Note from Tom Dale, Gahagan’s Sage on the Stage

Greetings from the Cabin in the Woods. Although it seems that everything in the world is in full stop because of COVID19, Gahagan Nature Preserve is busy changing and getting things done. We are especially excited that restructuring of RMRA (the owner of the preserve property) is complete and the Roscommon Area Recreation Authority (RARA) has been recognized by the State of Michigan. The new charter finally makes it possible for our Preserve to qualify for DNR Recreation Grants.

Our Preserve along with the Lions Club has been working to develop a “sensory trail” or trail for the blind. It is a bold idea with a hefty price tag. The Recreation grants programs offer us some hope. We also would like to develop a “challenge course.” Plus, we have a great natural setting in the far corner of the preserve. We have avoided opening it up. With some additional financial help, perhaps we can. So much opportunity!

Our Preserve is dedicated to the education of children. Due to the COVID19 issue, field trips are very much in doubt. We still want to help. With that in mind, our education committee is busy constructing science activity lessons for grades K-5. To the extent that teachers are able to implement our efforts, we are set to prepare lesson packs for individual students in line with State of Michigan learning objectives that can be engaged by students at home or in the classroom.

Keeping the paths clear and maintaining boardwalks is always a priority, especially as we have seen increased traffic at the preserve. We hope our new friends continue to visit. We are excited also to have just finished a seating area near our entrance. It is wonderful.

Without the support of our friends, this would not be possible. Thank you.

MGNP Open House Annual Meeting Sunday October 11th 1-4 PM

Please join in for a bit of socially compliant fellowship, some light refreshments, a few words of thanks and a rousing presentation of “The Wonders of Weasels.” Afterwards, Board members will host small group tours of the trails, so come prepared to get your daily walk. You can even participate in the Gahagan Adventure Lab. See the article on the back page for details and download the Adventure Lab app.

Accomplishments at the Marguerite Gahagan Nature Preserve depend on people who love the outdoors, value the environment and realize the need to educate our youth about the natural world. Grab your mask and come on in on Sunday to see what you have helped to create.

Marguerite Gahagan Nature Preserve Board of Directors

Chairperson: Tom Dale
Vice Chair: Brian Hutchins

Secretary: Julie Crick
Irene Borak
Alecia Catrell
Dale Ekdorn
Ken Elmore
Sue Huffman
Mike Petrucha

Kate Gammicchia, Education Director
(989) 390-390-7933 ~ Hoffmanshands@gmail.com
Tracy Bosworth, Executive Director
(989) 390-0903 ~ adm@GahaganNature.org
www.GahaganNature.org
Directors meet on the 2nd Monday of the month, 7 PM.

Gahagan Calendar 2020/2021 Events

Sept-Oct: Fall Field Trips at MGNP

October 11: Open House 1-4 PM at MGNP

Jan-April 2021: Visiting Naturalist-Area Schools

April 25, 2021: Spring Clean-up 9-noon

Check our website or facebook for current info and events.

If you prefer to go paperless, go to the "Contact Us" tab and sign up for an electronic copy of our newsletter.

Activities held at the preserve will follow current COVID19 requirements for masks and social distancing.

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. MGNP provides environmental education for many of the schools in the surrounding counties. The 60-acre preserve is open to the public for hiking, snowshoeing, birding and many other uses year round. We have an asphalt and boardwalk trail that is wheelchair friendly, travelling through the woods and wetlands 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

I am making a donation of \$ _____

I wish my donation to be ___ in memory of ___ in honor of _____

Name: _____ Ph: (____) _____

Mailing Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

E-Mail: _____ @ _____

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 online at www.GahaganNature.org

Looking for the "Friends of Gahagan" List?

With the Spring 2019 newsletter, we have altered the way we acknowledge our friends. In the past, we had noted donors and memorial contributions in the spring publication. We had then listed our members in the fall newsletter, as that is the time of year we remind our friends to renew their membership contributions. This has led to a bit confusion over the years, as some contributions were not noted in the very next issue of the newsletter. To rectify this, we are noting all contributions taken in throughout the entire current calendar year in the next year's spring publication.

We have also updated the way we report the contributions you give to the Preserve. Our "Friends of Gahagan" page will reflect contributions in the following fashion:

Members	Supporters	Partners	Stewards	Patrons
(up to \$30)	(\$31-\$249)	(\$250-\$499)	(\$500-\$999)	(\$1,000 and up)

The Gahagan Board of Directors are incredibly thankful for each and every contribution that you make. We spend much time and endeavor to make wise, long-lasting, conservative decisions regarding where your dollars are spent here at your preserve. It is through the preserve that Marguerite Gahagan continues to share the north country she loved with others.

MGNP Honor Roll

Since 1999, many individuals and organizations have been instrumental in assisting with this mission. By way of thanking those who have made significant contributions to the preserve, Gahagan has an Honor Roll plaque on permanent display in the cabin. The contributions to the preserve and the continuing support has helped our efforts to provide quality environmental education for many years.

We are pleased to announce the addition of Sue and Carl Jock to the Marguerite Gahagan Nature Preserve Honor Roll Plaque at our Annual Open House on Sunday, October 11.

Kirtland's Warbler GeoTrail Update by Mike Petrucha

The Kirtland's Warbler GeoTrail (KWGT) launched on June 6, 2020 with over 100 geocachers attending the launch event in the parking lot behind the CRAF Center. People came from all over Michigan, seven came from Ohio, and one traveled all the way from Houston, Texas to earn a KWGT geocoin. I am sure the local business owners appreciated the business during the pandemic. At least 22 geocachers gathered at Fred's for food, drinks, and conversation.

The weather cooperated with sunny conditions and temperatures in the 70s. A few people even saw or heard Kirtland's Warblers. All comments about the KWGT experience were positive other than a couple of complaints about mosquitos at one location. Out of the initial 100 geocoins, 99 were earned the first day and last earned the next day. The majority of the geocoins were handed out at the Gahagan parking lot from noon to 7:00 PM.

Due to the first weekend's rousing success, 250 more trackable geocoins were ordered, along with 50 non-trackable coins to sell to non-geocachers. Since the launch, nearly 200 individual geocachers have navigated the KWGT, bringing them to stop at Gahagan for one of the 25 caches located on the GeoTrail.

Help us Grow

Please don't forget to take care of your MGNP membership. These dues are one of the biggest sources of revenue for our organization. We need to not only hang on to every membership we currently have, we need to grow as well. So spread the word by sharing this newsletter!

Individual memberships are just \$20 per year and family membership dues are \$30. If you are an internet user, you can log on to www.GahaganNature.org and quickly take care of your dues through the secure PayPal link. You can process your payment through your PayPal account or by entering your debit or credit information as a stand-alone purchase.

You can also make a personal donation or a memorial contribution through a link on the website. So please, don't forget to join us by updating your membership today. If you are receiving our newsletter and prefer to be removed from the mailing list, just let us know. You can email us at adm@GahaganNature.org or call 989-275-3217. *Thank You!*

2020 June Gahagan Bird Count

By Mike Petrucha

After a hiatus of 10 years, the Spring Gahagan Bird count returned in 2020. On June 1st nine participants met in the Gahagan parking lot at 8:00 AM with sunny and 50 degree weather. We formed three groups and braved the mosquitos to cover our designated areas of the preserve.

The southwest 10mph wind made it a little difficult to hear birds in the distance, with all birds being counted by sight and or sound. In two hours of counting, we were able to find 84 individuals of 29 species. While the day's results were on the low side of average, it was not the lowest count we have ever recorded. The Red-eyed Vireo was the most numerous species with 14 individuals found. We added three new species to the count, Canada Goose, Field Sparrow, and Nashville Warbler, bringing the total number of species found onsite for the June Count to 67. A new high count was established for Turkey Vulture with two seen circling above. It was a bonus to find the nests of two Black-capped Chickadees in old woodpecker holes.

The current 2020 plus past June counts can be seen on eBird, by going to: www.ebird.org. Click on the "Explore" tab, then click on "Explore Hotspots," then type in "Marguerite Gahagan Nature Preserve."



Red-eyed Vireo

Kiosk Seating Project

Seasonal field trips make up Gahagan's oldest and most cherished environmental education program. Since 2000 when Tom Dale hosted the very first trip, thousands of students have come through the front entrance to be introduced to the preserve. Taking a seat on an upended log, their visit always begins at the kiosk with a few words about Marguerite and some gentle instruction on how to respectfully walk in the woods. While the spring 2020 field trip season was devoid of school children, we were able to complete a much needed student seating area at the trail head.



Field trips cover a variety of subjects, and a unique presentation is prepared for every grade-level to ensure that participating students get a new educational experience with every visit to the preserve. These trips cover diverse topics ranging from ecosystem studies to plant and animal adaptations, to physical science and geology.

Gahagan possesses a wealth of exceptional education materials, and these are used to illustrate lessons in a natural and comprehensive way to elementary-aged students.

Many of the field trips involve projects and hands-on activities across the preserve's diverse array of natural habitats. Classes often choose to eat lunch at Marguerite's cabin, which provides students additional time to ask questions and interact with our naturalist.

These field trips offer a guided interaction with nature that is just not possible within school grounds. With developing technology being further integrated in today's classrooms, there are very few opportunities for students to interact with the outdoors. Gahagan offers the chance for students to escape the classroom and experience nature first-hand. Students navigate the Preserve's trails, explore habitats, and encounter wildlife while using their senses to make inferences and first-hand discoveries about the natural world. We look forward to the time when we are able to resume our field trip programming.

Thanks to Jeff Mellgren for taking the initiative to excavate the site.

Our sincerest appreciation to the Wade Family Donor Advised Fund of the Roscommon County Community Foundation for their support.

Kudos to Dave Cokewell, Mike Zelki and Michael Cokewell for the layout and construction.

Our gratitude to NuCraft Metal Products for fabrication of the aluminum bench seats.



Dave and Mike Z. level seat posts

The Blitz in On

A Bioblitz is like a scientific treasure hunt. The goal is to create a make a record of the biodiversity on the preserve by posting observations of different species. The observations recorded will build our profile in a worldwide diversity databank.



This is a citizen science project, meaning you aren't expected to be an expert. Your observations are valuable even if you don't know what it is you are observing. The iNaturalist site we will use to post observations is full of dabblers and scientists alike who can help identify species. Anyone may participate. The more the better, as it will allow us to collect more data!

HOW TO GET STARTED:

1. Grab your camera or phone and head to Gahagan. When you find something interesting, take pictures of it. Get clear pictures, close up, and from different angles, if possible. Any living thing like a plant, animal, insect, or fungus can be an observation on iNaturalist
2. Set up an account on the iNaturalist website or app on your phone. Follow the prompts and to find Roscommon County and join the "Gahagan Nature Nerds."

WE ASK PARTICIPANTS:

Try not to disturb the nature you are observing and recording. Stay on trails and do not handle wildlife. Observe social distancing. Take precautions to protect yourselves from ticks and other insects.

Visiting Naturalist 2020

By Kate Gammicchia

Gahagan's 2020 Visiting Naturalist program, Wonders of Weasels, was off to a great start, visiting Mio-AuSable Elementary on March 9, before COVID-19 shut down Michigan's schools. I was able to present "WOW" several times that day to over two hundred students. The program features stories and natural histories of various wild weasel species. There is a particular focus on species native to Michigan and North America, and with emphasis on wildlife biology and stewardship of our natural resources. The educational collection for the Wonders of Weasels program features skulls, tracks, pelts, fake scat, toys, games, hands on activities and a puppet show.

The weasel family is a diverse group of vicious predators. They have long been sought by humans for their luxurious fur coats, while also being reviled for their rank smell and blood thirsty and thieving ways. From the tiny least weasel to the ferocious wolverine, early European explorers scoured North America in search of their valuable pelts, driving them to the very edge of extinction. Today, healthy populations of many species can be found in Michigan, thanks to the implementation of population management through regulated trapping, habitat restoration, and re-introductions of formerly extirpated (population no longer exists within a certain geographical location) species.

The presentation runs for nearly an hour and varies in content depending on the grade-level. The program is primarily designed to engage children K-7, but it is easily modified for older audiences. WOW will be offered again for the 2020-2021 school year, as scheduled presentations to the other surrounding districts were cancelled. The presentation can follow social distancing guidelines if presented in the school gymnasium, cafeteria or other large gathering area.

On a more personal note, the Wonders of Weasels program was a great education in predation for my two daughters. We are now proud owners of 5 chickens housed in their coop fondly known as "The Egg Plant." We continually watch for signs of sneaky predators, especially with the fox den at the bottom of our driveway!



Gabby and Lexi

Why Weasels?

By Tom Dale



Well, there is a lot more to weasels than you might think. When I started the Visiting Naturalist in 2002. I spent the winter months travelling around to schools presenting. The first year the program was about wolves, then I did one about cats and then there was one about bears. It's really all about food chains.

Plants grow in the sunshine. Animals, the herbivores, eat the plants. Then other animals, the carnivores, eat the plant eaters. These meat eaters are the predators. The herbivores are the prey. Consider the size of the prey. Then think about the size of the predators.

During the Ice Age the plant eaters included mastodons, woolly mammoths, giant bison, and the giant ground sloths. The predators were the saber tooth cats, the American lion, the giant short faced bear, and packs of dire wolves. They all went extinct by the end of the Ice Age.

Today the big prey are the white-tailed deer, moose and elk. The predators are cougars, packs of wolves and bears. But what if the prey was a mouse?

That's why weasels. The most ferocious group of predators are not the big cats, not a pack of wolves. and not the big bears. Some of the worlds most ferocious predators belong to the weasel family. If a weasel was as big as a cougar, it could probably beat the stuffing out of it.

There are 15 North American species in the weasel family. They all have long bodies and short legs. The Family Mustelidae consists of a variety weasels, otters, martins, fishers, minks, badgers and the wolverine, which is the largest of the weasels. But Michigan is not the Wolverine State.

Minnesota is the Gopher State,
Louisiana is the Pelican State,
New Hampshire is the Granite State,
Oregon is the Beaver State,
South Dakota is the Coyote State,
Wisconsin is the Badger State,
Georgia is the Peach State,
Utah is the Beehive State,
And Michigan is..... the Great Lakes State!

Every state in the nation is host one or many species from the weasel family, including Hawaii. Although, with virtually no natural predator, the mongoose is a very destructive invasive. Yep, weasels are everywhere and they are critical to maintain balance in the ecosystems.

Marguerite Gahagan Nature Preserve Board of Directors

In our Fall 2019 issue, we published the MGNP Five Year Plan (2019-2024) as well as an historical list of all board members from the creation of the preserve in 1997. One of the goals in the plan is to “Develop new board members by working at recruiting from general membership and community.” Along with the plan and the list was an open plea to consider joining the board. We are pleased to have three new members since that newsletter and still have room for more. We thought you might appreciate knowing a bit more about the crew.



Tracy Bosworth - Executive Director

Retired Roscommon Area Public Schools. Western Michigan University, BS in Emotional Impairments (1983). Grand Valley State University, BS in Learning Disabilities (1990). Special Education Teacher, COOR ISD (1983-89). Roscommon Middle School Math & Science Teacher (1989-2008) Associated with MGNP since 1999. Executive Director beginning 2012.



Katherine Gammicchia - Education Director

Associate of Applied Science in Exercise Science, Oakland Community College (2000) Bachelor of Business Administration, Rochester College (2002) Roscommon Area Public Schools PTO President 2015 to present, Personal Trainer and Yoga instructor since 2003. Gahagan's Naturalist (2017-present)



Tom Dale – Chairperson

Retired Educator. Central Michigan University, BS in Biology & Chemistry (1966); University of New Hampshire, MS in Genetics (1969). Middle School Math & Science Teacher, Holly (1969-70). High School Biology & Chemistry Teacher, Ithaca (1970-73). Kirtland Community College Biology, Geology & Chemistry (1973-2000). Roscommon School Board (1990-2010). MGNP Education Director (2000-2015). Gahagan Chairperson since 2015



Brian Hutchins – Vice Chairperson

Retired Manager of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Forest Fire Experiment Station. Central Michigan University, BS in Math, Psychology (1973); Michigan State University BS in Mechanical Engineering (1979). Gahagan board member since 2003.



Julie Crick - Secretary

Natural Resources Educator for Michigan State University Extension since 2013. Bachelor of Forestry from Purdue University (2003). Master of Science from Purdue University (2006) Gahagan Board member since 2016.

MGNP Mission

“The Marguerite Gahagan Nature Preserve was established to perpetuate Marguerite’s lifelong appreciation of the north woods. It is a not-for-profit organization whose mission is to protect and maintain the diverse habitats of the preserve, and to provide environmental education for our communities.”



Irene Borak

Currently Admissions Support at Kirtland Community College, at KCC since 2004 in various staff positions; editor/reporter for newspapers owned by Sunrise Printing and Publishing, West Branch (1997-2004) forest entomologist with the USDA Forest Service, St Paul, MN (1990-1997); forest entomology technician, Indiana DNR (1988-1990). BS in Forestry (1985), Michigan Technological University; MS Forest Entomology (1987), Michigan State University. Roscommon High School class of 1981. Gahagan Board member beginning in March, 2020



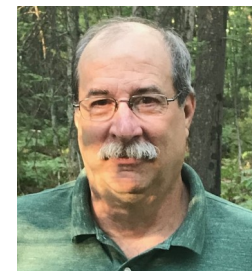
Alecia Catrell

Employed with Northsport Physical Therapy since 1995. Bachelor in Health Education from Saginaw Valley State University (1992) Associate of Applied Science Degree licensed Physical Therapist Assistant / Massage Therapist Delta College (1996) Sports therapist for the Kirtland Community College Firebirds. Certified open water scuba diver. Taught all levels of swimming through the American Red Cross including lifeguard training. Gahagan Board member beginning in January, 2020



Dale Ekdorf

Forester with Michigan Department of Natural Resources since 1994. Michigan State University, Bachelor's Degree in Forestry (1984), Master's Degree in Wood Utilization (1986), BSA Cub Scout/Boy Scout Leader (1995 – 2017), Gahagan board member since 2018.



Ken Elmore

Retired 2010, Fire Chief, City of Lincoln Park, MI. Fire Science curriculum, Madonna University, Livonia, MI, Henry Ford Community College, Dearborn MI. State Certified Fire Inspector, MSP 1989. Certified Cause and Origin Investigator, MSP 2005. Arson Investigator, Downriver Arson Task Force 2005-2010. Secretary Lincoln Park Police and Fire Retirement Commission 1988-2003. State License, EMT 1980-2010. Board Member since 2017.



Susan Huffman

Retired Teacher Consultant at COOR ISD: Hearing Impaired, Autism and Assistive Technology. Eastern Michigan University, BS Hearing Impaired (1971); Michigan State University, MA Educational Technology (1999). Teacher, COOR ISD (1973-2010) Gahagan board member since 2013.



Mike Petrucha

Retired Michigan DNR, Michigan State University, BS in Wildlife Management (1990). U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (1990-1993), Michigan DNR (1993-2012). Member of the Kirtland's Warbler Recovery Team/Conservation Team since 1990. Gahagan Board member beginning November 2019.