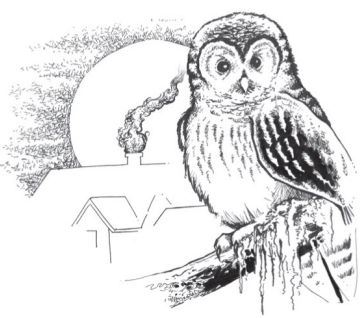


Marguerite Gahagan Nature Preserve
P.O. Box 421
Roscommon, MI 48653



Milkweed Planting
Jalen Williams

On November 11th, 2015, volunteers from the Second Chance Academy gathered at Gahagan Nature Preserve to help plant several milkweed plots around the property. This project aimed to create suitable habitats for the Monarch butterfly, a species that has suffered declining populations over the past few decades. Since 1996, the Monarch butterfly population has been reduced by an estimated 90%, and these declines are tied to habitat degradation, climate change, and uncontrolled pesticide use across the hemisphere. Monarchs are the only butterflies known to make a two-way migration in the winter, just like birds. During this time, all of the Monarchs east of the Rocky Mountains travel to one tiny stretch of land in the Sierra Madre Mountains of Mexico. These great colonies of butterflies gather together in groups so large that they can break the branches off trees!

Milkweed serves as a host plant to Monarch butterfly larva, and is vital to the Monarch caterpillar’s development and survival. After caterpillars ingest enough milkweed, protective toxins in the plants begin to accumulate in the insects’ bodies. These toxins do not harm the caterpillars, but are potent enough to leave a bad taste in an unwary predator’s mouth. While developing into an adult butterfly, these toxins shift to the wings and abdomen, and the Monarch’s bright coloration warns predators to stay away. Many species of milkweed are more noxious than others, but the Monarch depends on a select few species to survive.

Milkweed is generally shade-intolerant, and requires open areas or forest edges to grow. Many milkweed species are great colonizers, and these species often appear in large numbers after an ecological disturbance, such as wildfire, drought, or sustained clear-cutting. Gahagan’s white trail borders an area that was heavily disturbed after a wildfire swept through in June, 2013. A subsequent timber harvest cleared up much of the damage, and we determined that this open space would be a perfect place to plant patches of milkweed.



Six areas were staked out between Gahagan’s white and orange trails. Our volunteers cleared brush, loosened up soil, and opened up milkweed pods to spread seeds across each location. Wheelbarrow teams relayed soil back and forth to the volunteers working each plot, who diligently spread dirt around with rakes and shovels. After the seeds were buried, the students were rewarded for their hard work with a free pizza party. It’ll all pay off when we start seeing the new plots grow this year! Gahagan would especially like to thank the Kirtland Garden Club, whose generosity helped make this project possible. Thank you all for the hard work!



MARGUERITE GAHAGAN
NATURE PRESERVE

Newsletter of the Gahagan Nature Preserve, Inc.
P.O. Box 421, Roscommon, MI 48653 • 989-275-3217 • GahaganNagture.org
Issue #30 ~ Spring 2016

A Tribute to Jeremy Jones
Gahagan Board

The Gahagan Nature Preserve lost a friend on March 5, 2016 with the death of Jeremy Jones, at the age of 87. A true outdoorsman, hunter, trapper and naturalist, Jeremy was especially proud of his efforts to create a variety of wildlife habitats on his family’s 160-acre farm, including fields of wild rice. And there on the farm he would seek out interesting backgrounds, arrange a suitable branch or snag for a perch, and then retreat to a strategically situated blind to wait.... and wait... and wait for hours for his desired subject to arrive. The result is hundreds of artistically composed portraits of countless species of wildlife, especially birds. His photographs are widely known, collected and loved.

Jeremy was born in 1928 in St. Paul, Minnesota. He and his father William moved to the Roscommon area in the mid-fifties, living in a tent while they built a log cabin. In their early days in Roscommon, Jeremy and his father were instrumental in introducing dogsled-racing to Northern Michigan, and they raised teams of Siberian Huskies in their kennels just south of town. It was at this point that he met Marguerite Gahagan. In a swap with the Clinch Park Zoo in Traverse City, he had traded a live-trapped coyote for two timber wolf puppies that he named Timber and Tundra. Marguerite had heard stories of wolves in Roscommon and went over to the kennels to investigate. When she was informed that the pups were holed up under the bed and would not come out, she got down and crawled under the bed to check them out. After a short while, she came crawling out with one in her arms and the other trailing not far behind; she said they were attracted to her perfume!

Many other wild animals in turn lived with the Jones family and so too with Marguerite Gahagan. The playful foxes Vickie and Rennie and a badger named Pancake all spent time living at the kennel. Marguerite, on the other hand, preferred her raccoons. In 1959, Jeremy and Lois Derr married in Bowling Green, Ohio and had a son named Eric. And in early 1961, Jeremy, Lois and young Eric moved to Colorado with their sled dogs where he often led trips into the mountains. After a few seasons, they moved back to Roscommon. Colorado's loss was our gain.

Jeremy graduated from Central Michigan University and eventually became an instructor of fine arts at Kirtland Community College. He loved Shakespeare, opera and classical music. He was particularly proud of his assignment as an instructor at Camp Lehman State Correctional Facility. The state’s decision to end that program was a mistake, in his opinion. He maintained his connection with Kirtland, speaking out at meetings, teaching music appreciation, supporting the Kirtland's Warbler Festival and co-founding the festival’s juried fine-arts competition. He worked with Joe Donna, then head of Kirtland’s art department, to create methods of using computers to edit and print photographs before present-day systems were available.

One of the enduring interests of Jeremy and Lois was to preserve the wildlife haven they had created on their farm. This they accomplished through their work with the Headwaters Land Conservancy. It was Jeremy’s nature to look forward, while valuing the past. He will be missed.



Marguerite Gahagan Nature Preserve Board of Directors ~ 2016

Chairperson: Jeff Mellgren
Vice Chair: Troy Fairbanks
Secretary: Bobbie Werle
Brian Hutchins
Tom Dale
Sue Huffman
Gabe Williams

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

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

www.GahaganNature.org
(989) 275-3217

2016 Gahagan Schedule

Jan-April: The "Visiting Naturalist" program

April 23: Spring clean-up at the preserve (9 AM-Noon)

April 25-June 17: Spring field trips

May 18: Roscommon Business Expo (3 PM-6:30 PM, CRAF center)

June 4: Kirtland Warbler Festival (check website for list of events and times)

July 17: Au Sable Riverfest (10 AM-4 PM, Wallace Park, Roscommon)

July 19-21: Nature Camp - 1st

Aug. 9-11: Nature Camp - 2nd

Sept.-May: ELF program in local schools

Sept. 10: AuSable River Water Quality Collection (10 AM, Gates Lodge)

Oct. 9: Open house at Gahagan

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

Donations and Memorials

The Marguerite Gahagan Nature Preserve thanks the following organizations and individuals that kindly donated to our mission during 2015 and early 2016.

Karen Demers
Mike and Kathy Wahl
Richard Seton in memory of Toni Seton
Jack & Liz Wade in honor of Tom Dale
Karen Casady
Ralph and Nancy Rucinski in honor of Ted Thomas
John and Betty Colwell
Jerry and Darlene Weinrich
Bob and Dawn Tupper
Richard Seton
Dr. Robert and Donna House
Sherwood & Sharon Boudeman
Pat and Vicki Springstead in honor of Tom Dale
Martha Clapp in memory of Richard Clapp
Bill and Patti Sarkella
Anne & Russell Kidd
Lisa & Dan Sutton
Julie Boushelle
Gary & Sharon Boushelle in honor of Bill Suidema
Mike Kent
Kirtland Garden Club
Lynn Donaldson
Theresa Blamer in memory of William Blamer
Tom & Mary Lou Jennette
Mike & Kathy Wahl
Duncan & Kathy Lawrence
Stewart Powerie
Roger & Mary Fechner in memory of Joseph Kutkhun
Mark & Tracy Bosworth in memory of Jeremy Jones
Jack & Liz Wade
Larry Dashner
Stéphane Lafortune
Bob Andrus
Tom & Phyllis Dale in memory of Jeremy Jones

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

SPRING CLEAN-UP

At the beginning of every spring, Gahagan opens up the cabin and 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. Windows, walls, floors, and furniture are scrubbed, the trails are cleared of brush, trail markers and maps are refurbished, the asphalt, decks, and roofs are swept, and the garage gets a good broom-out. Please consider joining in for a few minutes or a few hours. Snacks, lunch, and refreshments are provided!

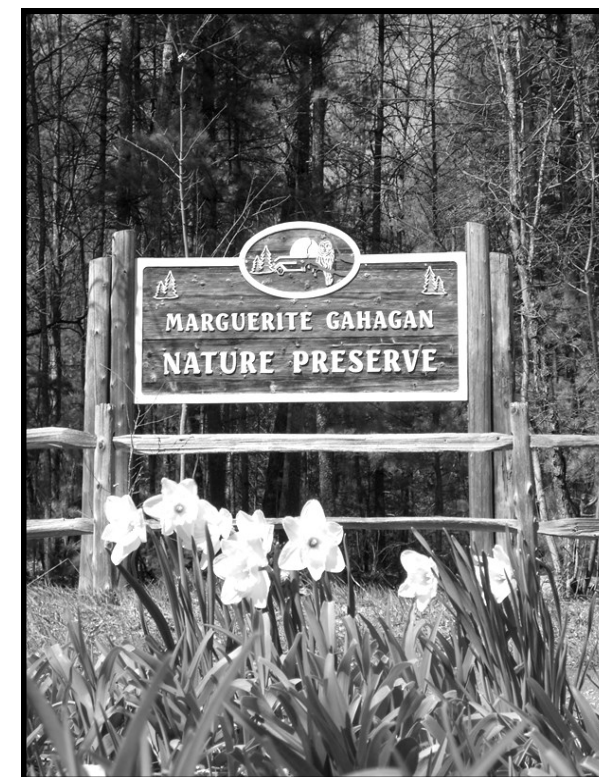
Spring Shot...

High above the forest floor the pines talk to the moon;
Wind-talk high in the sky
As below, new life in changeless pattern flows.

Popple leaf uncurling,
Small maple pushing upward,
Balsam seedling swelling in an old stump.

Moon and tall pines in the stillness of night,
Ageless,
Watching the cycle of life unfolding.

-Marguerite Gahagan
"Night Talk"
5/27/1959



New Trail Maps

Next time you're at the preserve, make sure to check out one of the maps marking each trailhead. Over the past several years, we have improved or rerouted many of the preserve's hiking trails, and our updated map presents a more accurate vision of Gahagan's twisting walkways. You can also find the new map in the information kiosk, located near the parking lot.

Summer Programs

If you're looking for something to do this summer, Gahagan has a ton of community programs to keep you busy all season-long! You can spot us at various events like the Roscommon Business Expo (May 18), the Kirtland Warbler Festival (June 4), and the AuSable Riverfest (July 17) in downtown Roscommon. Additionally, Marguerite's cabin will again serve as our "interpretive center" throughout the summer. The cabin's open-hours for 2016 are yet to be determined, so check out the website for updates as spring approaches. You can stop by for guided tours, activities, and a personal Q & A with our naturalist Jalen Williams. Also make sure to check out the Roscommon Area District Library schedule for Gahagan events, as we will be continuing last year's "Nature Time" series with Jalen, and also presenting encore presentations of the Visiting Naturalist program's "Wonders of Weasels" (Apr. 14, May 25). Don't miss it!

New Policy - Pets & Bikes

Pet-owners and cyclists rejoice! Gahagan's board of directors decided to officially revise the rules that prohibit leashed pets and bicycles on the trails. You can now enjoy our

60-acres from behind the handlebars of a bicycle or beside a leashed canine companion. Unleashed dogs are still prohibited in the preserve, as they can disrupt ground-nesting birds and trample sensitive vegetation just off the path. The most important priority for a nature preserve like us is to *protect* nature in the preserve. So remember to keep your dog on the leash, stay on the trails, and please - pick up after yourselves!

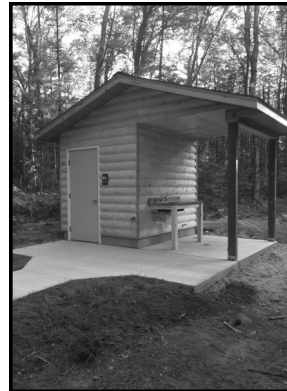
Trail Damage

If you visited the preserve this winter, you probably noticed that a large section of the asphalt trail had been closed off for the season. A series of December storms brought trees down over Gahagan's boardwalk. The walkway was damaged in several places, and the snow cover made repairs impossible for several months. Expect the boardwalk and other trails to be restored in time for spring!



Looking Good!

Here is the first published picture of the outdoor restroom. This addition is a much-needed asset to the preserve. Thanks again to all who made this possible, particularly the Wade Family Donor Advised General Fund and the Sherwood Boudeman Family.



Watershed Update—River Day 2016 is Sept 10!

Tom Dale

We have been monitoring the health of the Upper AuSable River Watershed since September of 2008. Each spring and fall a large troop of dedicated river enthusiasts, including many of you, have systematically sampled 300-foot sections of the River's six main feeder streams. Sampling included many parameters such as temperature, stream velocity, and the nature of the river bottom and banks, while focusing primarily on benthic (bottom dwelling) macroinvertebrates; mostly insect larvae. We follow the river day event with an extensive effort to identify and score the collections according to the MiCorp quality assurance model. The results are then posted to the MiCorp online database as well as Gahagan Nature Preserve's own webpage, *GahaganNature.org*. The complete collections are placed in the permanent collection at the AuSable River Center in Roscommon. You should stop in and check out the collections some time! After all these years and 13 sampling events, we have identified 93 families of organisms and recorded an average MiCorp score of 53.4. These results indicate that we have been monitoring a very healthy watershed.

The project has two major goals that have been our focus from the start: to develop a cadre of river enthusiasts that will be on guard to monitor the health of the watershed and to develop a database with baseline data that can be used to assess the health of the watershed for both short-term and long-term monitoring.

With all of the sampling and scoring, we have reached something of a tipping point. Over the long-term, the effort is hard work, while the results continue to be very consistent. Over the past few years we have identified only a few macroinvertebrate families that did not appear in earlier collections. With this in mind and to reduce conflicts with other popular activities, we have decided to cut our collection events to once per year. The next sampling event will be September 10th of 2016. Please sign up to help. We need you!

Tracy Bosworth

Since you are reading this newsletter, you likely have some sort of connection with Gahagan Nature Preserve. You may have been fortunate enough to have known Marguerite Gahagan herself. You might have a child or grandchild who has visited the preserve on fieldtrips, attended our Nature Camp, or benefitted from Project ELF. You may be a long-time member of the preserve, or previously contributed once and found yourself on our mailing list. If you just picked this newsletter up for the first time, let us welcome you.

Marguerite Gahagan Nature Preserve is a non-profit organization run by volunteers and funded by its members, generous donors, and the endowment left by Marguerite Gahagan herself. Her former estate now serves as a public wildlife sanctuary and is open to the community for hiking, biking, and sightseeing. MGNP is dedicated to preserving Marguerite Gahagan's legacy of outdoor appreciation and communication by offering environmental education programs for area students and communities. We host field trips, camps, and guided tours for many schools and organizations in the area. Additionally, we provide environmental presentations to a wide variety of audiences in area schools, libraries and community centers.

Last year, more than 4,500 children and adults in the surrounding area benefitted from Gahagan's environmental education programs. Countless others have taken advantage of the preserve by getting out and exploring our trail network. We are very proud of what has been accomplished, but we need assistance to continue moving forward. Please consider joining the MGNP Board of Directors. We need you!

Board members typically help direct the course of our strategic planning, provide financial oversight, and offer advice and counsel regarding the management of the preserve and its programs. That may sound intimidating, but it's really not that difficult or time consuming. Our board meets the second Monday of every month – excluding December – from 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM. We also participate in "Spring clean-up" in April and an open house in October. Since the Education Director manages our education programs and the Executive Director takes care of administrative responsibilities, the board members commit varying amounts of time to bring their many different talents to the preserve. All members share the same understanding that nature matters and education is the key to spreading that viewpoint. If you too share this view, maybe it's time you join us. Please consider and give s a call. We love to talk about the preserve and can answer any questions you may have.

SPRING FIELD TRIPS

TEACHERS!

It's time to begin scheduling your spring field trips to Gahagan. Slots are available from April 25th until June 17th, and those dates are already filling up fast! We prepare unique lessons for every grade-level to ensure that your students get a new educational experience with every visit to the preserve. These field trips can be tailored to meet the objectives of any particular classroom, as needed. Please contact Education Director Jalen Williams, at jalen@umich.edu to get your class on the schedule.

Gahagan Nature Camp 2016

Parents, be sure to mark your calendars for one of our summer Nature Camps. 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 wraps up on Thursday evening with a Family Night presentation. Family Night is an event geared to all ages and open to the public. These professional programs have covered a variety of subjects including bats, raptors, reptiles and amphibians, mammals of Michigan, biodiversity, and Michigan habitats. The Family Night presentation usually runs for 2 hours, with much audience participation. This year's topic is yet to be determined.

The first of our two camps will take place during the third week of July (July 19-21), and the second camp will run during the second week of August (August 9-11). 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 Jalen Williams at jalen@umich.edu.

“Wonders of Weasels”

Jalen Williams

When I became Gahagan’s Education Director, I knew I had some pretty big shoes to fill. Tom Dale created our environmental education programs 15 years ago, and had been developing and improving those programs ever since. Well-known and beloved by the students in our community, Tom educated thousands of children about the natural world with a uniquely personal approach to teaching that very few educators possess.

At the time Tom was creating this curriculum from scratch, I was young enough to have attended his first field trip. At that age, I didn’t have a clue that I would be educating the next generation of students. Now I find myself running from one school to the next, excited to talk about the thing I love most: *nature*! I’m incredibly fortunate to have Tom as a mentor, and I am honored to continue running the education programs he built for Gahagan.

One of the most important of these programs is the “Visiting Naturalist”, which brings me to classrooms all across the region. This year’s program was “*The Wonders of Weasels*”, but the program also cycles through three other groups of predatory mammals every year, including canines (“*Wolf Songs*”), felines (“*Cat Tales*”), and bears (“*Bear Tracks*”).

The weasel family includes some of the most vicious mammal carnivores, especially given their small size. Weasels have slender bodies and big appetites. They are constantly hunting to keep up their energy, especially during the cold winters. Most species are solitary hunters on the ground, but equally adept at traversing treetops, streams, and underground burrows. They’re the all-terrain predators!



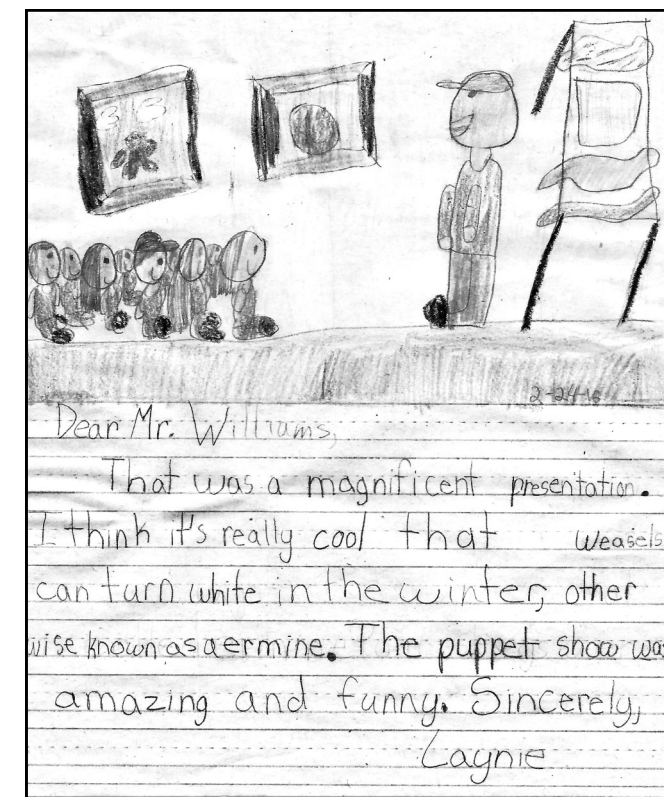
Students get to see the pelts and skulls of Michigan’s weasel species up close, and learn how to identify these animals in the wild. They also learn about weasel relatives and some of the weasel species that live outside of our state—including the famous wolverine! Children especially love the puppet show, which stars Wally Weasel and friends. The Visiting Naturalist program offers students the chance to interact with nature from the comfort of their own school.

Weasels have a long history in the fur trade, and all of the species discussed in the presentation have been trapped for their fur at various points in history. The students were sad to hear how many mink are killed on fur farms every year (~50 million annually), and were especially upset to learn about the weasel species that humans have extirpated from Michigan over the years. One of the principle goals of the visiting Naturalist program is to impress upon the children the need for responsible stewardship of wild places and wild animals.

Thank you to the Morely Foundation of the RCCF for their financial support for the 2016 Visiting Naturalist Program.



ABOVE: A display of Michigan’s weasel species – pelts and skulls
RIGHT: One of the many great thank-you letters that Mr. Williams received after an elementary school presentation.



The ABC’s of Project ELF

Project **ELF**, “**E**nvironmental **L**earning for the **F**uture”, is an award-winning environmental education program offered to local schools. Gahagan trains parent volunteers and supplies them with the materials to deliver monthly ELF lessons in the classroom. The theme for Roscommon schools this year was “Earth & Sky”, which included 8 lessons about physical science.

We asked Roscommon Elementary School students to list some of the things they learned about or liked during this year’s program:

Animals
Boulders
Carbon Dioxide
Dirt and soil
Echolocation
Finding your way
Groundwater
Hot gasses
Igneous Rocks
Joking
Kids learn and play
Living creatures
Microscopes
Nitrogen
Outdoors
Pebbles
Questions & answers
Rivers and ponds
Sound waves
Teamwork
Using a map
Vibration
Water cycle
eXciting
Young minds at work
Zero Trash



The ELF program depends on volunteers to succeed. If you are a parent, grandparent, or community member that would like to participate in the (2016-2017) ELF program in Roscommon or Houghton Lake, please do not hesitate to contact us! It is an excellent chance to interact with students in the classroom, and requires a very minimal time commitment (~2 hours/month). No background necessary. Simply contact Ed. Director Jalen Williams (jalen@umich.edu) and volunteer today!

Fifty years of U.S. Education Legislation: “Every Student Succeeds”

Tracy Bosworth

In 1965, the **Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)** was passed by the United States Congress. Some of our readers may recall that ESEA was part of President Lyndon B. Johnson’s “War on Poverty.” The act focuses on shortening the achievement gaps between students by providing all children with fair and equal access to quality education. ESEA authorizes funds for eligible schools and districts eager to raise the academic achievement of struggling learners and address the challenges that arise for students with disability, mobility problems, learning difficulties, poverty, or transience, or who need to learn English. ESEA has been reauthorized every five years since 1965.

The 2001 reauthorization of ESEA by President George W. Bush is known as the **No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)**. NCLB requires all public schools receiving federal funding to administer a statewide standardized test annually to all students. Schools that receive funding through must make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in test scores (e.g. each year, sixth graders must do better on standardized tests than the previous year’s sixth graders). NCLB uncovered achievement gaps among traditionally underserved students, prompting a national conversation on testing and education improvement. Parents, educators, and elected officials across the country recognized that an updated law was necessary to expand opportunity to all students; support schools, teachers, and principals; and to strengthen our education system.

On December 10, 2015, President Barack Obama reauthorized ESEA with the 114th Congress passing the **Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)** on December 16th. The new law builds on key areas of progress in recent years, made possible by the efforts of elected officials, educators, communities, parents, and students across the country. Unlike NCLB, the new act includes provisions that support learning about the environment, conservation, and field studies:

- Congress supports the basic idea that environmental literacy and conservation education should be included as a part of a well-rounded education for any student.
- Congress encourages the enrichment of After School programming with environmental and conservation education.
- Congress supports more Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) education highlighting the desirability of field study and service learning both of which are solid engagements of environmental and conservation education approaches.

For educators everywhere, particularly for us at Gahagan, this is a very big deal. ESSA validates the importance of the education programming we have been focused on since the establishment of the preserve. We are looking forward to assisting our local school districts with the environmental and conservation education efforts of **Every Student Succeeds!**