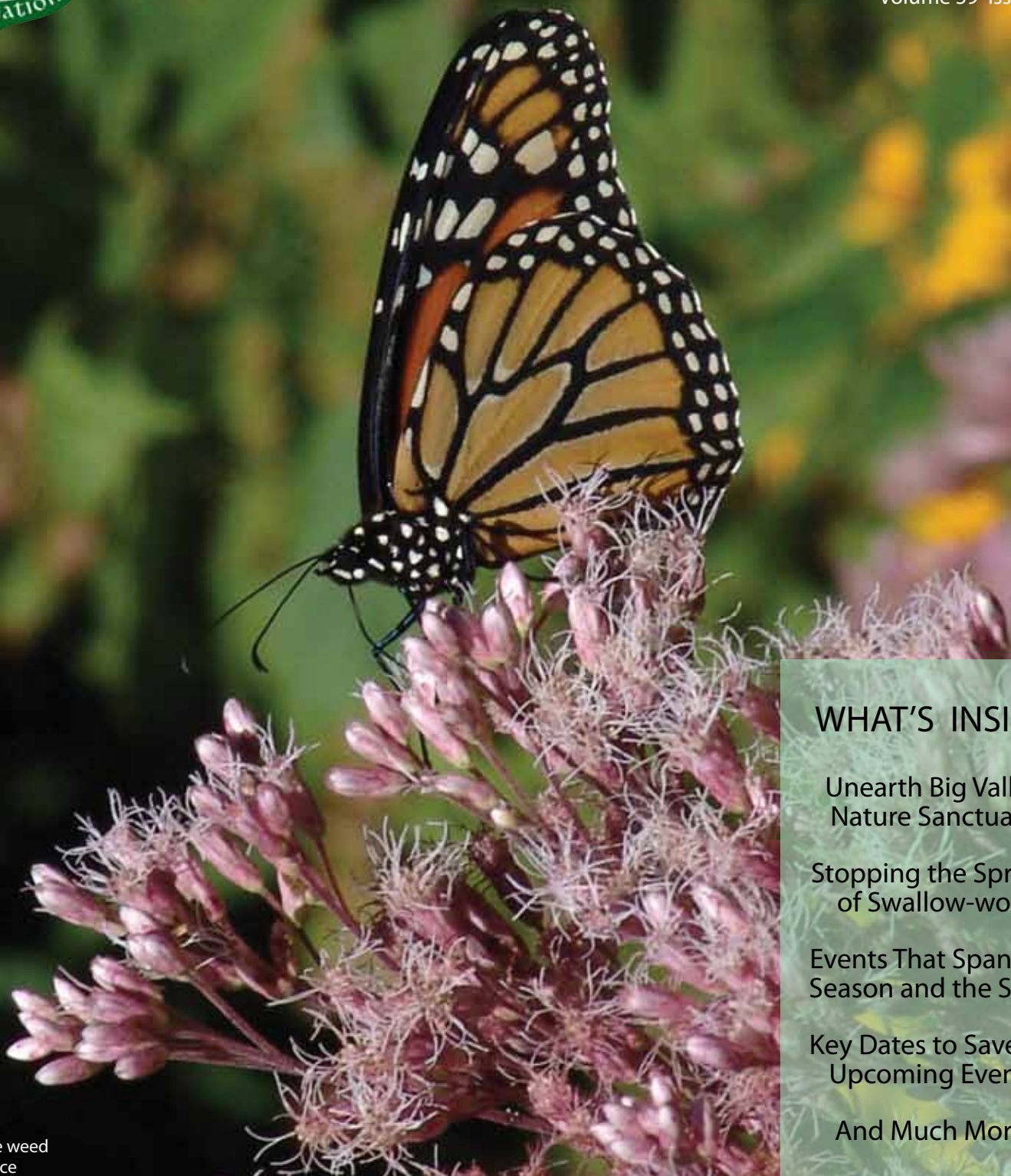


# michigan nature association



*Preserving Michigan's Natural Heritage Since 1952*

April to June 2010  
Volume 59 Issue 2



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Monarch on Joe-Pye weed  
Photo By Chuck Peirce

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# From the Director

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Spring is upon us, bringing new life. For MNA, it is also a new fiscal year, as our accounting year runs from March through February. I have good news in that regard. According to our unaudited financial statements, we finished the year in a positive financial position and we met the J.A. Woollam Foundation challenge grant. Many of you increased your gifts over the previous year's and many new members joined us. Every single one of you helped give MNA a stronger position coming into 2010, and we thank you.

You enable MNA to do the best work possible, including the ability to hire terrific staff members. One staff member who has been critical in our growth over the last half decade is Sherri Laier. Sherri was hired as MNA's first Stewardship Director and was charged with the tremendous task of maintaining over 150 nature sanctuaries across the state. As Sherri moves on to new opportunities and experiences,

I want to thank her, for she is responsible for the effort to steward and protect all of the MNA's special places.

Sherri moved to milder climates to work in natural areas protection in southwest Oregon. She will be working with new habitats, such as tidal pools and temperate rainforests, but will bring a piece of Michigan with her.

After working in natural lands stewardship for over a decade with other organizations, Sherri joined MNA in spring 2004 and immediately made a positive impact on our programs. Sherri quickly acquired grant funding for much-needed equipment for our stewardship efforts. Those funds also financed contract workers on particular sanctuaries and helped build a prescribed fire program from scratch, which has greatly enhanced and improved our native grasslands, wetlands and savannas.

Sherri built our network of volunteer stewards, consisting of many of you. She also developed relationships with partners in the nonprofit, for-profit and public sectors that enabled MNA to share and gain knowledge with those working in natural areas protection.

Lisa Brush, Executive Director of the Stewardship Network, and one of Sherri's partners in stewardship says of Sherri, "For eight years I had the great privilege to work with Sherri Laier as a partner, a collaborator, a friend, and an admirer. The State of Michigan has benefited from Sherri's knowledge of our region's natural areas. Her understanding of the complexity of ecosystem interactions and ability to translate that into inspired volunteer and paid staff stewardship efforts is the legacy she leaves behind. I look forward to our paths crossing as she brings her experience and wisdom to the west coast of our country."

Sherri is a fantastic mentor. In 2004, MNA was a smaller organization with a staff of three and, as Executive Director, I was doing much of the stewardship work in addition to my other duties. I was introducing Sherri to MNA and our sanctuaries during her first weeks here, and realized that I was learning lots of new information about stewardship through my work with her.

Sherri has the important traits of being highly competent and knowledgeable about the science and art of her work, as well as having a terrific sense of humor and personality. In a position that is very much about getting work done and working hard, Sherri made the experience a great one. **Continued on page 21.**



**A pearly crescent, *Phyciodes tharos*, perched upon the flower of a butterfly milkweed.  
(Photo by Chuck Peirce)**

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### Michigan Nature Association's Mission

The purpose of the Michigan Nature Association is to acquire, protect and maintain natural areas that contain examples of Michigan endangered and threatened flora, fauna and other components of the natural environment, including habitat for fish, wildlife and plants of the state of Michigan and to carry on a program of natural history study and conservation education as permitted under the Michigan Nonprofit Corporation Act.

# Inside this issue



# *Every Sanctuary Has a Story*

## **Big Valley Nature Sanctuary**



**These water bodies provide habitat and help sustain life in the sanctuary.**  
(Photo by: Keith Saylor)

### **By Tina Patterson Office Volunteer**

The Big Valley Nature Sanctuary located in western Oakland County is celebrating its fifteenth anniversary as a protected gem this year. Big Valley consists of 134 acres of magnificent wetlands surrounded by oak savanna and upland wooded hills. In 1988, Oakland County had only .5% of its total land in its natural condition; this included the area now known as Big Valley. By 1992, that number had been reduced even further. We are fortunate that the MNA was able to save this fragile ecosystem from development as it is a rare jewel.

With the support of members and other donors, the first purchase of what is now the Big Valley Nature Sanctuary was completed in 1995. Multiple parcels

of land were purchased over time to acquire a sanctuary of 94 acres which helped insure that the fen was no longer in danger of degradation. In 2004, an additional 40 acres became available and thanks to the generosity of MNA supporters, these additional threatened acres were added to the original 94 acres. As MNA Trustee Gisela King said when she had seen the Big Valley back in the 1980s, just looking over the fen for the first time she knew this land had to be protected.

To understand the importance of Big Valley you must first know what a “fen” is. Fens are marshy areas fed by mineral rich artesian groundwater bubbling up through peat or sandy glacial beds. Fens are sparse in Michigan and the Big Valley is what is known as a “prairie fen.” The unique characteristics of a prairie

fen are that they are rich in calcium and magnesium resulting in alkaline or neutral water. The Big Valley prairie fen is considered to be a high quality fen due to the variety of native plants, threatened animal species, sedges and grasses that are found there.

In 1995, the first comprehensive study of the Big Valley Fen was completed by MNA’s Jeremy Emmi, who is now the Executive Director. Over 324 species of plants were identified and of those 284 plants were native to the area. Forty or 12.3% were determined to be alien. Controlling the spread of the invasive species to prevent them from dominating the fen is a top priority for the MNA. Of Big Valley’s 284 native plant species, 15-20 are threatened and protected from all but the most motivated hikers due to the inaccessibility of the area.





**Big Valley abounds with rich plant life.**  
(Photo by: Art Tessier)

The location of Big Valley helped in its preservation, as the fen could not be farmed due to the constant presence of water. Surrounding the fen is an “upland” that is a hydrological re-charge area. A hydrological recharge area is any portion of the earth’s surface where water infiltrates the ground to replenish an aquifer. This “upland” area is dominated by oak and hickory as well as vernal pools, in the forested areas, which provide habitat and prime breeding ground for frogs, toads, and salamanders. Some of the uplands have the potential to be fully restored to dignified oak barrens and savanna.

The land surrounding Big Valley almost went in another direction. Instead of being a safe and tranquil home for native plants, snakes, birds and amphibians, a portion of the upland was being overrun with trespassing ORVs and ATVs. Photos on file with the MNA show large groups congregating on the fragile fen digging up tender root systems and altering the terrain by repeated and negligent use. The ATV and ORV riders were frequently

menacing to environmentalists who tried to police the area and protect the land from further degradation. The MNA purchased this portion of adjacent land that was being compromised by ATVs and ORVs and restricted the use of motorized vehicles on the property. Today there are few people who venture in as access is only by foot.

The Big Valley Sanctuary is considered to be an exceptional fen in southern Michigan. Big Valley also boasts a wet meadow, dry prairie, oak woods, and free flowing streams which have recently become home to a number of beaver families. Thanks to the beavers and the end of a dry spell over the past five years the fen has become wetter and the marsh area has grown.

The Big Valley Nature Sanctuary is part of the watershed for all of Rose Township and is home to the headwaters of Buckhorn Creek, (named by the early settlers who found a 20 foot log laying across with deer antlers stuck in it). The Buckhorn feeds the Shiawassee River, which flows into the Saginaw River on its way to Saginaw Bay. The Saginaw Bay watershed in turn is home to over 130 endangered or threatened species and the water provides a safe habitat for a variety of salamanders, turtles, and frogs. Over 90 species of fish can be found in the Saginaw Bay watershed that covers parts of 22 counties and encompasses over 8,700 square miles.

Walking the Big Valley Nature Sanctuary with my guides Gisela King and Kurt (MNA Trustee) and Maura Jung, I was able to see the remains of glacial action that occurred in the area 16,000 years ago. Steep hills and rolling, broad, sandy outwash plains made for a challenging hike in the winter cold. My guides pointed out old railroad pilings dating back to the mid 1800s when ice was cut from the ponds and taken by railroad car into Detroit before the days of refrigeration. New tracks have been laid and an active railroad line borders the property to the east.

King pointed out evidence of scarred land from the original gas pipeline which was laid across the fen in 1952. Currently a new 36” inch Consumers Energy pipeline is being laid through the sanctuary to provide increased energy to meet the demand of the growing western part of Oakland County. Working with the MNA, Consumers Energy is attempting to reduce impact

on the area by utilizing different drilling techniques, such as directional drilling. Modern techniques and concern for the fen are expected to reduce the impact on the environment, thus leaving the Big Valley as undisturbed as possible.

Consumers Energy owned an easement though Big Valley, and in 2003, proposed a new pipeline to serve the energy needs of southeast Michigan. The Consumers Energy easement allowed them to construct a larger pipeline than previously existed through the fen. Because of Consumers Energy’s desire to be “good neighbors” and be environmentally sensitive they worked with MNA staff to help protect the fragile fen from more extensive damage. At increased cost to Consumers they instituted directional drilling and moved the pipeline to the western edge of the sanctuary.

Numerous revisions to the pipeline’s path were made during 2003 and 2005, in order to accommodate the requests

**Continued on page 6**



**An adult Sandhill Crane at Big Valley.**  
(Photo by: Art Tessier)

Working closely with Consumers Energy's Senior Environmental Planner, Margaret Parker O'Connor, and James Sunday (Environmental Engineer), the MNA was able to not only preserve and protect the most sensitive parts of the fen but Consumers Energy also offered to assist the MNA in creating earth berms with their earth moving equipment in order to help prevent further erosion, and restore the land damaged by ORVs and ATVs.

Finding Big Valley is not for the easily discouraged as it is well hidden, and the entrance is not marked with any signage. Located in the south central portion of Rose Township, the roads leading in are confusing. Without a guide it is

difficult to tell where hikers may enter the sanctuary. With a railroad bed to cross, fences to navigate and nothing to say "you are here" the best way to see the Big Valley is to call the office and ask for one of the stewards who will gladly accommodate you. I was fortunate to be guided by Gisela King and Kurt and Maura Jung. All three have a love and reverence for Big Valley Nature Sanctuary and extensive knowledge of the many aspects of this magical fen.

Maura Jung, who, with her husband Kurt, purchased property adjoining the Big Valley, says that what they love about the area is, "To us it is breath-taking, I have always had a thing for the wetlands, and fens

are unique and special places. The sound of the sandhill cranes is magical. We like having our property as a buffer to the sanctuary. Even if we did build there one day, we would have as low of an impact as possible. At the moment we do not have any plans for the property."

Standing on the glacial ridge that overlooks the magnificent fen it amazed me that such a pristine spot still exists in Oakland County, and reminds me that we all should be grateful that it is preserved for future generations. If you would like to visit Big Valley, call the MNA office and we will be happy to assist you in arranging a tour. If you go, prepare properly as this is a hike for those who are physically fit.



**A side by side comparison of the fen during winter and summer at Big Valley Nature Sanctuary. A fen is a marshy area fed by mineral rich artesian groundwater bubbling up through peat or sandy glacial beds.**  
(Photos by: Kurt Jung)



# Stewardship Update: Black Swallow-wort

By Anusuya Das  
Journalism Intern  
(Photo by Sherri Laier)

A variety of native plants inhabit the Big Valley Nature Sanctuary. But of late, there is an unsightly intruder—black swallow-wort. This plant is tightening its grip in this sanctuary and threatening the existence of native plants.

Black swallow-wort, or *cynanchum louiseae*, is native to Europe. It is a perennial, twining herbaceous vine and part of the milkweed family. This non-native plant has rhizomes (underground stems) that sprout new plants and grow in clumps of several stems, forming wide-ranging patches that can stifle native vegetation in the absence of natural enemies.

The almost explosive growth pattern of the plant can be attributed to its tolerance of a range of light and moisture conditions. Associated exclusively with upland areas, the black swallow-wort can replace old field habitats of goldenrod and grasses and change their physical structure. Preliminary research also indicates that the black swallow-wort is having an adverse impact on the reproductive cycle of the monarch butterfly by mimicking native milkweeds. The monarch butterfly requires milkweeds for reproduction. The monarch will lay eggs on a black swallow-wort, but the larvae die after 2-3 days.

Though the growth of the black swallow-wort in Michigan is limited to the southern peninsula, “daily it is picking up a new spot,” said Mark Sargent, who is the Wildlife Division’s Private Lands Program Coordinator at the DNRE, and is in-charge of a number of projects addressing black swallow-wort removal. The DNRE has received grants from the U.S. government for the removal of invasive species and one of the projects is focused on black swallow-wort. For the removal project, the DNRE has identified various sites, across Michigan, where the invasive plant is taking root. The project is being run in cooperation with MNA at Big Valley and Sauk Indian trail.

The exotic plant was first discovered at Big Valley in the mid-1990s along the



railway tracks that run along the edge of the property.

“About 5-6 years ago you could see it (black swallow-wort) slowly spreading. But then it started multiplying rapidly, and between the summer of 2008 and last summer it has spread. I remember by Water Road all sorts of native plants and spring-flowers grew and blossomed. But now when you go down that road, there is nothing but black swallow-wort,” said MNA trustee, Gisela King. The invasive plant does not seem to be widespread but out-competes natives where it takes hold.

Black swallow-wort emerges in spring and flowers from June to July. It spreads seeds long distances via wind dispersal in late July and continues through fall. According to the Plant Conservation Alliance, thick infestations in full sun can produce 2,000 seeds per square meter. Seeds are polyembryonic with one to four embryos per seed which greatly increases the likelihood of seed survival and establishment.

With no biological controls identified, and with neither pulling nor burning a potent solution, the use of herbicides appears to be the best available weapon

to curtail black swallow-wort growth.

The non-native, invasive vine has also made its way into the Sauk Indian Trail, a one-acre preserve and one of MNA’s best preserves in terms of the quality and abundance of native plants. The black swallow-wort was first discovered in Sauk Indian Trail nearly 25 years ago. Now the black swallow-wort clusters are in the eastern fifth of the preserve. Land Steward, Clifford Welsch, is one of the few people working on the black swallow-wort removal at the Sauk Indian Trail. “It is not in many preserves, but it is one of the worst plants to get rid of. By far the best way to curtail it is to spray it with a pesticide.” June, July and August are the months in which it is possible to get rid of the black swallow-wort. As soon as it sprouts, it spreads.

The black swallow-wort population is still at a beginning stage at Big Valley Nature Sanctuary. We would like to thank the various stewards, volunteers, and DNRE who contribute to inhibiting the growth of black swallow-wort at the MNA sanctuaries and invite anyone else who is interested to join us in the field as we work to manage this species.



**The Markel Family of Sandusky, Michigan are active members of the MNA. The Markels are devoted to each other as well as Michigan's wildlife. From left to right: Mary, Ralph, Jerico, and Marena.**

### **Story and Photos By Tina Patterson Office Volunteer**

I never had the privilege of meeting Bertha Daubendiek, the guiding force behind the Michigan Nature Association, but if I had met her I believe she would have said, "Tina, I would like to introduce you to the Markel Family. They are the future of the MNA." As Bertha is no longer with us it is my privilege to introduce you to the Markel family of Sandusky Michigan.

Sandusky is located "in the heart of the thumb." It is an area of rich, flat farm land that had once been lake bottom. Amish farms and buggies dot the landscape and I felt as I drove along the back roads that I was stepping back in time. My goal was to meet the Markels, a family of four with a strong commitment to the mission of the MNA. With so many options for a young family I wondered why do they belong to the MNA, and what is their connection to this land?

I soon discovered that the Markels are,

in many ways, like the families of old, a family rich in love and commitment. This is a family that enjoys nothing more than being together, laughing, learning and sharing, a family without a television, a family that knows its values and "walks the talk." Spending time with the Markels gives one hope for the future, lifts one's spirit, makes one smile and say this is a family that "gets it."

Dad, Ralph Markel has a slow grin, and when asked about his family he can't hide his rightful pride. Jerico is his 14 year old son with a typical teenager's love of video games. Jerico also loves being outdoors, "but not so much in the winter." He loves reading and Boy Scouting and is looking to a future in some form of engineering. His mom says Jerico is anticipating earning Eagle Scout ranking by building an MNA trail or bridge. This is a boy on the cusp of manhood who has his feet firmly planted in Michigan's rich soil, with the solid backing of his parents.

Next in the family is Mary, just 12 years old with dazzling blue eyes and

an inner strength that already speaks volumes of the woman she is becoming. Mary is a true outdoors woman who hikes the woods, creates gardens and builds "shelters" out of tree limbs and twigs. A girl who ranks being outside as her top priority, she says she can't live without the woods and I believe her. Mary loves being outdoors in any weather and anticipates a career as a guide or working with animals.

Mom, Marena, is that amazing blend of wife, mother, volunteer, full time working woman who does it all and does it well. She bakes, she quilts, she is a volunteer scout leader with Ralph, she raises peacocks and, like Ralph, loves being outdoors with their children. She told me she has raised her children to care about the land as she had been raised, "Just because we don't own it doesn't mean we can't keep it clean." She wants Mary and Jerico to have respect and take responsibility for Michigan's land and be knowledgeable about what it means to be good stewards.

Ralph inherited his love of the land from his parents who were farmers. One



of the reasons he strongly supports the MNA's mission is the sense of loss he feels when he sees what was once open land is now a housing development. He remembers as a child walking two and three miles across open fields and now sadly says, "you can't do that any longer, as you would be on private property." Ralph's goal is to guide his children, teaching them how to survive by knowing their resources and strengths. He wants Jerico and Mary to have strong opinions, express them freely and not to succumb to peer pressure. Marena adds that she wants the kids to, "be comfortable in their own skins" and it is obvious that goal has been met. These are adolescents who can meet a stranger in their home with open smiles and have the ability to communicate with ease and grace.

So how did this family become active in the MNA? Was it giving their time, talents and financial resources? A chance meeting between Marena with Bertha Daubendiek about seven years ago introduced the Markels to the organization. Bertha sold Marena a sanctuary book upon introduction and that led to an MNA sponsored orchid hike in the U.P. Additional activities followed and the Markels were impressed with the depth of knowledge that members had, how diverse their backgrounds were, and that everyone came together for a common cause. The older members welcomed the young family and were eager to share their knowledge. Some MNA highlights for the Markels were a photography seminar that Charles Peirce led and MNA Director Jeremy Emmi's knowledge of the geological formations of Michigan. Marena said

she loves wild flowers and has taught the children how to recognize them but that Sherri Laier, MNA's former stewardship director, told her, "don't just look at the flower, know what it looks like in the winter too" and that was an eye opener for her.

The Markels have chosen to live a simple life without television, a house filled with books, everyone is proud to be a reader. They have chosen to have their children connected to nature, from the peacocks and flowers that they raise in the back yard, to the joyous pup, May, that bounced from person to person. They have chosen to live equal distance from both Ralph's and Marena's families so they can enjoy the love and mutual support of extended families. They choose activities they can participate in together encouraging personal growth and interests. Family activities like visiting the Polovich Memorial Sanctuary to see trilliums and Jack in the Pulpits. They choose to spend their resources wisely, building a

strong family, a strong commitment to the environment, and a strong future.

Already Ralph and Marena are looking forward to the day when they can retire from their jobs and contribute even more to the MNA. They would love one day to become stewards or trustees, knowing the work will continue, the need will be great, and together they will help rescue land from development and protect endangered species.

Mary wrapped up our time together by sharing what she said is her family's golden rule, "Treat others as you want to be treated" and it was clear that they treat not just each other but the earth with that same care. If the family had one wish for the MNA it would be that they offer more programs specifically designed for families with young children in order to introduce even more people to the organization.

The future of the MNA is in good hands with the Markels, thanks for letting us get to know you!



**(Left) A couple of peafowl being raised by the Markel Family. (Right) Seated inside of one of Mom's "tree shelters" we find the Markel children. Mary and Jerico are true Michiganders who have been raised with a sense of reverence and accountability for Michigan's rich habitats.**



## Become a Steward

The Michigan Nature Association relies heavily on volunteer stewards to help care for our sanctuaries. The basic requirements for a steward are to visit the sanctuary twice a year and report on its condition. Many stewards go above and beyond by leading field trips and volunteer days but it is not mandatory. By becoming a steward, you will not only help MNA protect its sanctuaries, but also witness the amazing events that happen throughout the seasons. If you are interested in becoming a steward, please contact (517) 655-5655 or [volunteer@michigannature.org](mailto:volunteer@michigannature.org).

MNA is in particular need of stewards in these counties:

Livingston

Van Buren

Hillsdale

Shiawassee



**By Mary Ann Czechowski**  
**Board of Trustees Member**

Trustee Stan Kuchta is a long-time active in the Michigan Nature Association, initially working with many of the early leaders, including Bertha A. Daubendiek and Richard Holzman, helping to find and establish many of the first sanctuaries and plant preserves. Here he gives his unique view of the MNA, based on his years of experience, activity, and field work. Stan Kuchta can be contacted at [skuchta@comcast.net](mailto:skuchta@comcast.net).

**When and how did you first learn about the Michigan Nature Association?**

In 1982 or 1983, I found Michigan Nature Association included in a listing of conservation organizations in a reference at the main Detroit Public Library, it impressed me that the scope of the MNA was not only local, but included all of Michigan. I quickly learned about the purpose of the MNA when I joined as a member of the MNA Explorers Group, a dedicated group of volunteers who investigated potential properties.

**What are some of your fondest memories with the MNA?**

When I first joined the MNA, it was a time of truly amazing discoveries and successful efforts for the Explorers Group, when I worked with kindred spirits, including Bertha Daubendiek, Mason Schaefer, Dave Green, Harvey Ballard, not to mention the awesome

field contributions by Fred Case, Dick Holzman, Bob Pleznac, Mark Sellars, Charlie Eschbach and many others. It was a special time and place.

**What kindled your initial interest in the MNA, and what has continued that interest?**

When I first joined the Michigan Nature Association, I purchased a guide book which recognized that the Estivant Pines, I had seen as a child, were now in the care of the MNA. This along with its statewide scope kindled my initial interest and I have been a volunteer ever since. The MNA has done much for me; without it I may well have never sought to learn the warbler bird songs and open my mind to appreciate the diversity of warbler habitats that occur in Michigan and elsewhere.

**What, to you, is special about Michigan and about the natural environment of Michigan?**

You are never very far from a Great Lake and therefore from both direct and indirect impacts of the Lakes. We are blessed with a variety of ecosystems that support a great diversity of plants in habitats which are home to a great variety of animals, many more than most of us can imagine.

**Where do you live? Are you from Michigan?**

I currently live in Ann Arbor. I was born in Detroit, and spent some of my young adulthood in Baton Rouge Louisiana. I was a journeyman grain grader at many ports on the Mississippi, Missouri, Illinois and Saginaw Rivers; the work, took me up the St. Lawrence River, to Bai Comeau and Trois-Riveres. During the 1970s, I lived on a Great Lakes freighter for most of one year, working as a deckwatch, which helped fund my way through Botany and Plant Pathology at Michigan State University. You might say that my heart is from Michigan.

**What is your occupation?**

I am a plant industry regional specialist, also known as a Field Scientist, for the Michigan Department of Agriculture. I am proud to say that at one time I

could issue a state certificate for plants to enter Canada. Now we are treated as a separate country in that regard, and I issue Federal certificates, even though the Great Lakes ecosystem is the same in both countries. Survey work, part of the Department of Agriculture continuing effort with harmful insect pests and disease, has taken me too often during the last five years to places like St. Ignace and Manistique, on emerald borer projects.

**When did you become interested in nature and in the natural environment?**

I would like to think that the vacations my family went on, nearly every year of my childhood, to Pioneer Lake near Conover in northern Wisconsin, had something to do with it. During the time of *Silent Spring*, there in the northern forest, isolated from the Dutch elm disease die-off and from the eagle decline in the Great Lakes basin. You could still appreciate and not escape the call of the loon, the view of nesting eagles, and warblers singing about you, or even the bear at the township dump. You might say my parents fostered it. Years before the MNA acquired the Estivant Pines, we visited those pines in the Keweenaw. That ancient old growth left a lasting impression on me, especially because it was seen at an early age.

**Do you have a favorite MNA Sanctuary? Why is it a favorite?**

That's not a fair question; it's more complicated. With such a diverse amount of habitats, species composition, and structure of the land cover in the various sanctuaries, you might think that I at least would have regional preferences, but like many stars, even those within shine at different times of the year. So, if I played favorites, it would be the one I would be most currently volunteering and advocating for.

**What, to you, is special about the Michigan Nature Association, and its accomplishments?**

I would refer everyone to pick up a copy of *In Retrospect*, and check out page 86, a short essay written by Harvey Ballard. The number of natural communities has expanded, but the



basics remain. I would add that the MNA acquisition of top notch wild areas for certain “landmark” species brought along with it a host of other biodiversity also in pristine condition that is still being recognized and will continue to be so in the future. I would suggest that MNA keep up with the latest findings of the scientific community, care for sanctuaries for as they originally were acquired for, and to further develop Strategic Conservation Plan, to set the acquisition standards for the next 15 to 25 years. Such a plan could both strategically identify Michigan’s natural communities that are under-protected in the state, and thus candidates for MNA protection, and/or even express expansion of those current sanctuaries in further need of protection for natural

processes to function in a useful way.

### **Do you have any particular goals for helping the Michigan Nature Association as a Trustee?**

As a member of the Stewardship Subcommittee, I help ensure that stewards are assigned a monitoring program is implemented and that it meets the standards for each of the sanctuaries. From a visioning viewpoint, I would not mind seeing the MNA set a goal for a sanctuary outside of the Great Lakes Basin watershed. I understand that there is a small section of the Mississippi River watershed in the western Upper Peninsula along the Wisconsin border, and that might just meet that requirement. It would be not at all that different from a place where I spent those summers in

my childhood!



**MNA is always looking for volunteers. Many of these opportunities occur on our sanctuaries. The map above shows where all of MNA's sanctuaries are located.**

## **2010 Fall Adventure**

**By Anusuya Das  
Journalism Intern**

The Fall Adventure was first started in 2002, with the celebration of MNA’s 50th anniversary in the Keweenaw Peninsula. We have come a long way since then. The 2009 Fall Adventure that took place in the eastern Upper Peninsula, from October 2-4, is a testimony to how far we have come. The aim of this event is to provide our members the opportunity to visit several sanctuaries in one weekend with expert guides, pointing out interesting features and educating the group about Michigan’s habitats.

Jeremy Emmi, MNA’s Executive Director, said that he enjoyed participating in the 2009 Fall Adventure as the weather was terrific and it did not rain, despite the weather forecast. Jeremy boasts that “In eight years of having the Fall Adventure, it has only rained once!”

Last year the MNA had approximately 45 participants who visited six of our 165 unique sanctuaries. Participants had the opportunity to meet new members and foster new friendships, while learning about the rare and endangered species found in each of the six sanctuaries visited.

The 2009 Fall Adventure shed light on the dedication of our stewards, trustees and staff in their efforts to make the event a success. We hope that those of you who participated in the 2009 event had an enjoyable time, as we enjoyed organizing it.

The 2010 Fall Adventure will take place September 10-12. Join the MNA staff and Trustees for a weekend exploring Michigan’s western Upper Peninsula! We will be picking up participants around lower Michigan and taking a bus to the Keweenaw. The trip will consist of guided tours and exploration of some of

MNA’s showcase protected lands in this unique part of the state. Look to the July newsletter for additional information about this trip.



**Fall 2009 adventure. Members on a hike at Parsons Memorial enjoying the spectacular fall colors.**  
(Photo by: Jeremy Emmi)

## **Welcome Andy!**

**By Paul Steiner  
Operations Director**

MNA is excited to welcome Andy Bacon back to Michigan as our new Stewardship Coordinator. Andy comes to us with a strong background in stewardship and non-profit organizations. He was the Director of Land Stewardship

for the Natural Lands Institute in Illinois for the past nine years. There he was in charge of organizing the stewardship of over 1,800 acres of wetlands, prairies, woodlands, riparian zone, shrublands, and savannas and monitoring over 1,000 acres of conservation easements.

Although he has lived out of state recently, Andy was born in Woodhaven just south of Detroit and grew up in

Williamston, a couple miles from the MNA office, from the age of two, roaming the banks along the Red Cedar River and riding his bike through the woods. A graduate of Lake Superior State University, Andy spends most of his free time with his wife Christine and being a dad to Olivia, 9, and Jack, 3, frittering away hours and days, experiencing life like a child again.

# Letter from the President



**By Steve Kelley**  
**MNA President**

By the time you see this, MNA will have successfully completed another fiscal and Board year (February 28). And, more importantly, Spring will have sprung!

On the back cover of the Newsletter is information on our Annual Members Meeting on May 8 at the Cambridge Township office in Lenawee County. I hope to see as many of you there as possible for an interesting program and chance to visit one or more of our nearby sanctuaries immediately following the program. We look forward to an interesting meeting when the weather is better and we can get out and we can get out afterwards to see Mother Nature's Spring handiwork.

Thanks to the support of many of you, we expect to finish our fiscal year in the black. A short financial report will be part of the annual meeting. Your continued support is very much appreciated and we are actively looking for new members and supporters to help us carry on what was started by others 58 years ago.

We have always depended on our local stewards to be our eyes-and-ears (and frequently our arms, legs and backs) to protect our statewide sanctuaries (in 56 Michigan counties). We have seen stepped up volunteer involvement in the organization over the last several years, in terms of stewards, office volunteers, committee volunteers, and trustees. Our volunteer trustees on average are putting in more than 300 hours per year, not only on governance issues but fundraising,

volunteer recruitment, planning, and in some cases day-to-day office and field work.

David Wendling, M.D., and Don Reed have been elected (and David Sharpe re-elected) to the Board. We look forward to these outstanding additions. Dave and Don both attended our November 2009 and January 2010 Board meetings, so they are well aware of the diverse range of sometimes difficult issues considered by the Board during a typical meeting. These meetings, which typically last five to seven hours on a Saturday, typically are attended by at least 14 if not all 16 of the very dedicated trustees.

Since my last letter, we have said goodbye to Stewardship Director Sherri Laier, who left MNA to take a conservation position with the State of Oregon. We wish Sherri well in her new endeavors in the Pacific Northwest!

Sherri's departure, however, created an unexpected opportunity for us to restructure the Stewardship staff to implement a more regional stewardship approach. Coupled with Natalie Kent-Norkowski's earlier shift to a part-time land protection role, we stopped our earlier search for Natalie's replacement and reconfigured those two Williamston-based positions into three different positions. Under the new model, we will have a Williamston-based Stewardship Coordinator (part office, part field position) to supervise two new Regional Stewardship Organizers. The Regional Stewardship Organizers will be regionally based outside of the Williamston office to implement more local stewardship initiatives on separate sets of regional sanctuaries. As of this writing we have hired an outstanding Stewardship Coordinator, Andrew "Andy" Bacon, and Regional Stewardship Organizer interviews are underway. We have been blessed with many great candidates.

So, how did we create three new positions out of two existing positions? Partly economics, partly faith! After much discussion (and a Special Board Meeting), we convinced ourselves that (1) our sanctuaries need more stewardship, (2) the right regionally-based folks should more easily be able

to work with existing and new stewards and volunteers and spend more time with "boots on the ground", and (3) we will be able to raise an extra \$40,000 or so each year to make this work. Please keep this in mind as you consider your contribution this year. If this works the way we hope it will work, we will add more Regional Stewardship Organizers in other parts of the State in coming years.

We also are moving ahead with our strategic planning, including strategic conservation planning to help guide us through acquisition and stewardship priorities for the next 5 to 20 years. In the meantime, we continue to work with interested land donors to evaluate potential future MNA sanctuaries protecting special plants, animals, geological features, and habitat. Given limited resources, we need to be very selective on what we accept (or agree to accept in the future by bequest), always keeping in mind the significant additional financial responsibilities accompanying any new sanctuary.

Thank you also to those of you who have sent a letter or email to me in response to one of these columns. We appreciate your insights and input, and are very grateful for the numerous new and continuing volunteers who offer their time and talents to MNA. Please let us know if you are interested in receiving periodic email updates from MNA.

Stephen M. Kelley  
skelley@michigannature.org  
(586) 563-3500

Fall Adventure 2010 to  
western Upper Peninsula:  
9/10/10 through 9/12/10.  
Be sure to read the July  
2010 newsletter for  
essential updates!



# Nature Notes: Butterfly Milkweed

By Anusuya Das  
Journalism Intern

The *Asclepias tuberosa*, commonly known as the butterfly milkweed, belongs to the milkweed family (*Asclepiadaceae*). The common name has been derived from the fact that these flowers tend to attract butterflies due to their bright color and abundant production of nectar. For queen and monarch butterflies, butterfly milkweed serves as their larval food plant. There are some species of butterflies that can lay their eggs on a variety of plants, but some can only lay their eggs on plants which their larvae can feed on, like butterfly milkweed. Butterfly milkweed is classified as a perennial herb which is a plant whose stem does not produce significant woody tissue above or at the ground. Butterfly milkweed grows 1-3 feet tall. Peak bloom is usually observed in mid-summer, with seed production starting in late summer and continuing into fall. In fall, after the end of the bloom period, the flowers are often burned to eliminate dead stalks and stimulate new growth. Burning stimulates flowering and seed production and stimulates more vigorous new growth. The plant has a slow growth rate and a moderate life span in comparison to most native plant species.

## Habitat and Range

Butterfly milkweed thrives in clusters. They grow in wide open spaces on dry, sandy or gravelly soil of prairies, open woodland areas, by the banks of streams, roadsides, savannas, and on vacant farmlands. Though its population ranges from Maine to Minnesota, it is mostly abundant in the southern states of Florida, Texas and Arizona.

## Description

The butterfly milkweed has some medicinal uses, which is why its scientific name "*Asclepias*" has been derived from the Greek god of medicine, Asklepios. The species name, "*tuberosa*", means full of swellings or knobs, referring to the butterfly milkweed's bloated roots. The plant has green foliage with a moderate amount of brown fruits or seeds. The leaves are mostly alternate, lance-



(Above) Detail of nectar.  
(Photo by: Ben Blazier)

(Right) Butterfly milkweed flowers in shades of orange and yellow. The nectar of the blossoms attract butterflies that use milkweed as a larval food plant.  
(Photo by: Bill Bliss)



shaped, and bright green. Leaves grow, in a spirally arranged pattern, up to 2-5 inches long and nearly one inch broad. Within the stems and leaves is a milky sap. The flowers bloom in hues of orange and yellow. The flower's stems are hairy, vertical, and grow in countless clumps. The flowers near the ends of branches are in showy, rounded to flat-topped groups. Each flower has five petals, bent downward, canopied by a crown of five erect hoods, each one containing a short horn. Fruits are hairy, spindle-shaped pods 3-6 inches long. The butterfly milkweed has numerous seeds and each has a tuft of long white hairs at the tip which aid in seed dispersal by the wind.

## Establishment

Butterfly milkweed can easily spread and grow both by seeds and rhizome cuttings. Propagation by rhizome cuttings is easy and reliable. Although cuttings will occasionally bloom during their first year, both cuttings and seedlings usually bloom in their second year. Butterfly milkweed grows quite easily and irrigating the plant in the first year improves its chances of survival. By the second year, the plant's root system is established firmly in the ground, and it is capable of surviving on its own.

## Uses

All over the United States, butterfly milkweed has been put to various uses such as medicine, fiber, and food. In ancient times, butterfly milkweed was known to have several medicinal uses. Native American tribes like the Omahas and Poncas used the raw root of the butterfly milkweed to cure bronchial and pulmonary ailments. The ground root of the plant was also used to heal wounds.

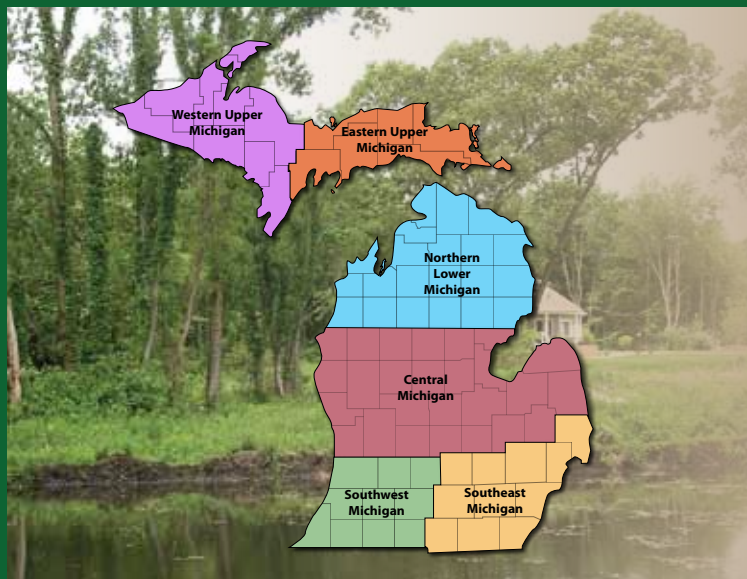
The dried stalks of the butterfly milkweed can be used in making string. When used for fiber, the butterfly milkweed is collected after the leaves have begun to fall off in autumn and the plant has dried up. It is usually time to harvest when the stems break off at the ground. The dried stalks are then split open and the fibers are twisted into string.

Prehistoric textiles made of fibers from the stems of the plant were discovered and identified in the Pueblo region. In Rio Grande, people still make string and rope from these fibers. At the Zuni Pueblo, the silky seed fibers are spun on a hand-held wooden spindle and made into yarn.

1. USDA, and NRCS, comps. "*Asclepias tuberosa* L. ." *Plants Database*. USDA, 31 May 2006. <<http://plants.usda.gov/plantguide>>.

# mna schedule of activities

Through September 2010



The map to the left will assist you in finding what region of Michigan you are located in. Use the following pages to see activities scheduled in your region from January to March 2010.

As always, please call the MNA office to R.S.V.P. for these events at (517)655-5655 or you can email us at [volunteer@michigannature.org](mailto:volunteer@michigannature.org). Please let us know if you are planning to attend so we can share that with our program leaders, most of whom are volunteers. It helps greatly with planning. When you R.S.V.P. you will also get directions to the sites.

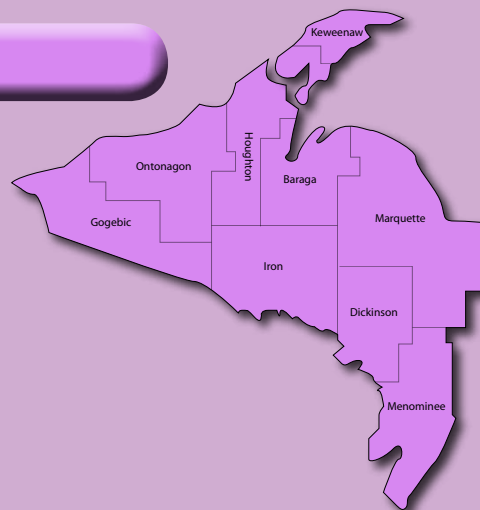
## WESTERN UPPER PENINSULA

**Sunday, May 23**

12 p.m. to 3 p.m.

**James H. Klipfel Memorial Sanctuary and  
Rooks Memorial Preserve ( Brockway Mountain)  
Keweenaw County**

Join Dr. Dana Richter, steward, to identify native flora, help eradicate invasive vegetation along the trail, and perform some clean-up and maintenance. At 2:00 PM the group will meet at the Brockway Mountain lookout to remember Dr. Lawrence Binford, a prominent Keweenaw County ornithologist, who passed away last fall. This event is sponsored by the Copper Country Audubon. This is a popular MNA site because of its openness and grandeur.



## EASTERN UPPER PENINSULA

**Saturday, May 15**

10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

**Epoufette Bay Sanctuary  
Mackinac County**

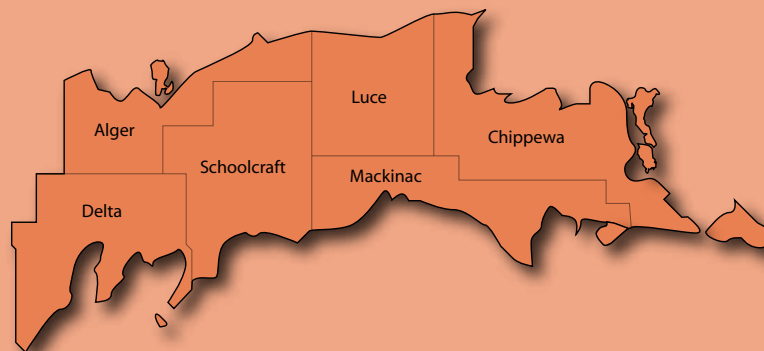
MNA's Keith Saylor and Stewards Pete and Sallee Poole will lead a volunteer day for non-native plant removal. A clear cold stream that courses through the preserve provides for an array of unusual wetland flora.

**Sunday, May 16**

10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

**Twin Falls Memorial Preserve  
Alger County**

MNA's Keith Saylor, Eastern Upper Michigan field representative, and Stewards Adrienne Bozic, Pete Poole and Sallee Poole will lead a volunteer day for non-native plant removal. This is an area of our state that has a large number of waterfalls. The preserve contains a number of species of ferns that only grow in select areas of Michigan.



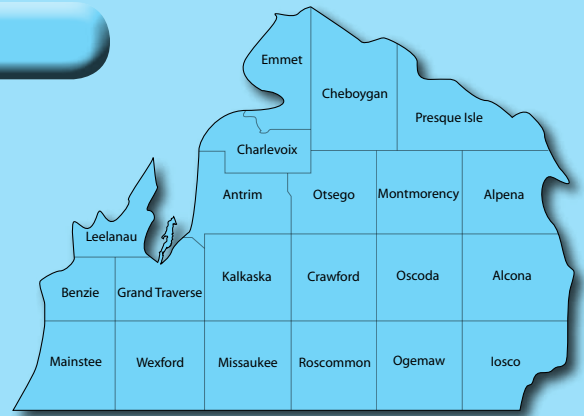


## NORTHERN LOWER MICHIGAN

**Saturday, May 1** (first weekend of every month through October)  
10 a.m.

**Mystery Valley Nature Sanctuary and Thunder Bay Karst Preserve**  
**Presque Isle County and Alpena County**

In partnership with the Michigan Karst Conservancy, the Michigan Nature Association's Mystery Valley Nature Sanctuary will be one of the locations. The volunteer day will consist of trail completion at Mystery Valley along with surveying boundaries and installation of boundary markers. Regular maintenance at Twin Sinks and Bruski Sinks will also be conducted. Meet in the parking lot of the Stevens Twin Sinks unit of TBKP (on Leer rd.) at 10:00AM Saturday morning. Contact Dave Luckins (deluckins@aol.com) or Aubrey Golden (goldencamp@comcast.net) for directions and details concerning overnight accommodations and dining.



## CENTRAL MICHIGAN

**Friday and Saturday, April 23 and 24**

10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

**Karner Blue Sanctuary**  
**Newaygo County**

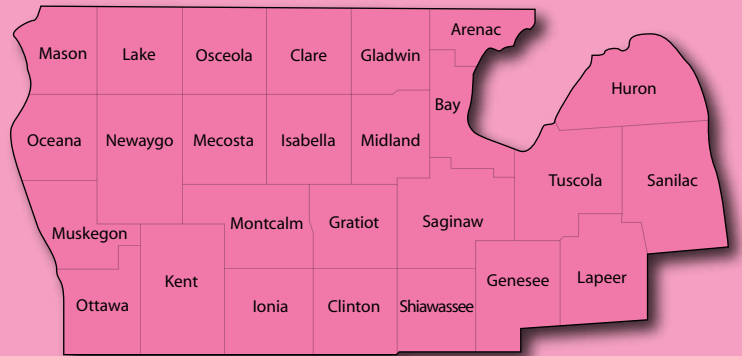
Join us in consolidating brush from downed white pines, we cut last year into piles for future burning.

**Saturday, July 17**

10 a.m.

**Newaygo Prairie Preserve**  
**Newaygo County**

Steward Chuck Vannette will lead a prairie walk to observe rare flora that are particularly adapted to a dry sparta sandy loam.



## SOUTHWEST MICHIGAN

**Saturday, April 24**

**Wednesday, April 28**

**Saturday, May 1**

**Wednesday, May 12**

10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

**Dowagiac Woods Nature Sanctuary**  
**Berrien County**

MNA will host a series of volunteer days for removal of garlic mustard. You will also be treated to a tour of the sanctuary's spectacular spring wildflowers.

**Sunday, April 18**

**Saturday, May 8**

**Saturday, June 12**

10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

**Cambell Memorial at Helmer Brook Prairie Plant Preserve**  
**Calhoun County**

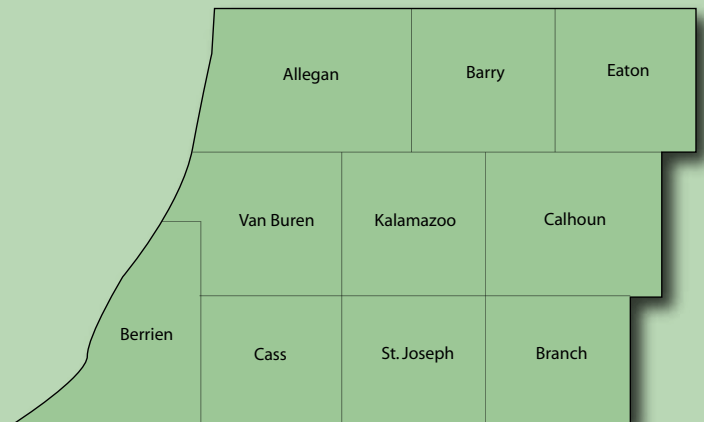
Join us for trash pick-up (bring gloves). We will also conduct a tour of this small fragile preserve, giving those who attend an opportunity to observe one of the richest, most diverse and least disturbed native grasslands in Michigan.

**Saturday, May 1**

10 a.m. tour 1 p.m. volunteer day

**Trillium Ravine**  
**Berrien County**

MNA will host a tour followed by a volunteer day for removal of garlic mustard; bring gloves and a sack lunch.



**Saturday, June 5**

**Sunday, June 27**

10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

**Prairie Ronde Savanna Plant Preserve**  
**St. Joseph County**

Join MNA for a volunteer day removing aggressive, non-native vegetation at this unique MNA preserve. In addition to the volunteer day, Cliff will conduct a tour of the abundant native flora, a number of which are rare and threatened in our state.

# SOUTHEAST MICHIGAN

**Saturday, March 6**

**Wednesday, March 10**

**9 a.m. to 3 p.m.**

**Goose Creek Grasslands Sanctuary  
Lenawee County**

If the ground is still frozen, join MNA's Eastern Upper Michigan Field Representative Keith Saylor and Steward Sherman Schultz for a volunteer session at this unique MNA preserve. The work entails removing the aggressive glossy buckthorn. This exotic is one of our state's most aggressive non-natives and has the potential to dominate a site. Goose Creek Grassland Sanctuary is considered by many to be one of MNA's most successful ecological restoration efforts and one of our most cherished preserves. Snacks will be provided for lunch to accommodate the longer work day.

**Saturday, March 13**

**Wednesday, March 17**

**10 a.m. to 2 p.m.**

**Lefglen Nature Sanctuary  
Jackson County**

If the ground is still frozen Keith Saylor, and Stewards Julie Van Aken and Michael Seabrook have organized a volunteer session removing glossy buckthorn at Lefglen Nature Sanctuary. Lefglen is situated in a picturesque part of southern Michigan and consists of a collection of varied habitats that include, wooded uplands, cattail marsh, a lake, bogs and prairie. There have been 690 native plant species identified at this preserve, it is the highest recorded number of species at any MNA preserve!

**Saturday, April 17**

**10 a.m. to 2 p.m.**

**Lakeville Swamp Nature Sanctuary  
Oakland County**

Keith Saylor, and Stewards Caryl Lindsay and trustee Fred Dye will conduct a volunteer day for the removal of the aggressive non-native grass phragmites and shrub honeysuckle. This is one of MNA's first acquired sanctuaries. Located in the fringe of Detroit, it is a swamp wilderness at a large metropolitan's doorstep and for this reason is extra special.

**Sunday, May 2**

**11:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.**

**Joan Rodman Memorial Plant Preserve  
Washtenaw County**

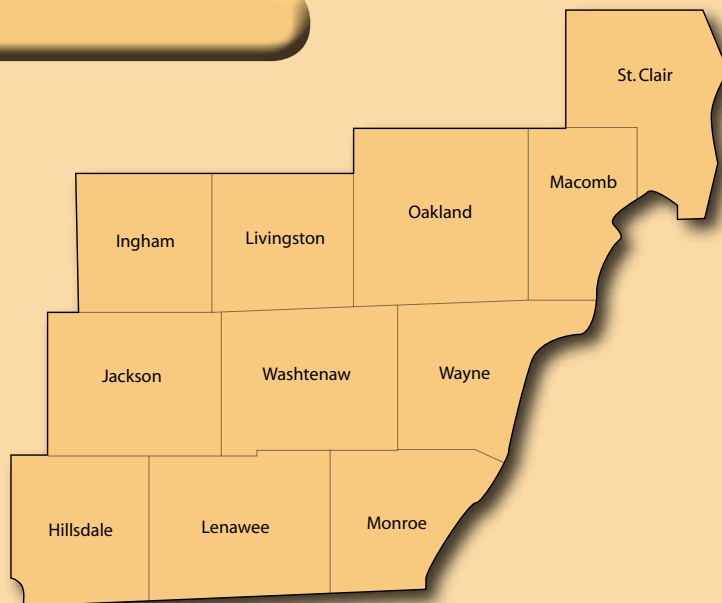
Steward Brett Harris has scheduled a field trip from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and a volunteer day from 1:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. at this Saline River flood plain forest. The morning field trip will provide an opportunity to observe a variety of spring wildflowers located within the flood plain and in the adjacent elevated land. The work will entail removal of an array of aggressive non-native flora.

**Saturday, May 15**

**10 a.m. to 2 p.m.**

**Rizor Nature Sanctuary  
Livingston County**

Larry Detter, steward, will host a volunteer session for removal of garlic mustard; bring gloves and a sack lunch.



**Tuesday, May 4**

**Tuesday, May 11**

**Tuesday, June 8**

**10 a.m. to 2 p.m.**

**Williamston Red Cedar Floodplain  
Ingham County**

Join Land Stewards Joanne and Megan Falke and Jim and Betsy Pifer for a volunteer day. Join them at this beautiful Mid-Michigan river floodplain. The Williamston Red Cedar Floodplain is one of MNA's most recent acquisitions; it is rich in diverse flora and a variety of bird species. All of this can be enjoyed near the MNA office in Williamston.

**Saturday, May 22**

**2 p.m.**

**Lakeville Swamp Nature Sanctuary  
Oakland County**

Join Jeremy Emmi for a memorial trail dedication and hike at 2 p.m. The new trail will be named in memory of MNA member Raymond Lambeck.

**Saturday, June 19**

**2 p.m. to 3 p.m.**

**Lakeville Swamp Nature Sanctuary  
Oakland County**

Join local stewards for a tour of Lakeville Swamp to see the showy lady's slippers orchid in full bloom.

**Saturday, September 25**

**9 a.m.**

**Lakeville Swamp Nature Sanctuary  
Oakland County**

Keep this date free on your calendar for a very special field trip led by Keith Saylor. If possible bring magnifying glasses as we view the fascinating and beautiful world of lichens. Lichens are the bellwether of air quality in a plant community. This will be an entertaining and educational outing for all ages, do come! As many as 50 different lichen species might be on a single tree; it is a small and fascinating world overlooked by many as our eyes tend to focus on the larger, more colorful flora along the trails.

Please help your program leaders plan for these events by registering with the office at  
(517)655-5655 or emailing [volunteer@michigannature.org](mailto:volunteer@michigannature.org).



# Members and Donors

## From March 1, 2009 to February 28, 2009

### Dwarf Lake Iris (\$10,000 or more)

Estate of Maurice Becker  
Consumers Energy Foundation  
Vivian Day  
Estate of Jean Fair  
Fellowship for Today  
Addison and Debby Igleheart  
Estate of Margaret Watkins  
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### Karner Blue Butterfly (\$5,000 - \$9,999)

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Huron Audubon Club  
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Virginia Tripp  
Anonymous Donor

### Piping Plover (\$2,500 - \$4,999)

Fred Dye  
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Stephen Kelley and Mary Catherine Rentz  
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Ruth Vail

### White Pine (\$1,000 - \$2,499)

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and habitats for future  
generations.

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Bill Bouton  
**Viola Brown**  
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**Ellen Canterbury**  
Anonymous  
**Jeremy Emmi**  
Marion Emmi  
**Stephen M. Kelley**  
Barbara Kelley  
**Sherri Laier**  
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#### In Memory of

**John Anderson**  
Patricia Davenport  
**Federico Arcari, M.D.**  
Dr. Lewis Rosenbaum  
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Sharon Blankenship  
Bonde Family  
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Keith Bonka  
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### Business Sponsors

*Please patronize these important Michigan Nature Association sponsors at every opportunity*

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*We apologize for any errors or omissions.*

## BECOME AN MNA PROTECTOR

*Join our monthly giving program!*

The MNA Protector Program is MNA's monthly giving program where members like you can work together with our staff every month to preserve and protect Michigan's natural heritage. As an MNA Protector, your contribution will go towards our general support fund, providing MNA with the critical support necessary to preserve, protect and maintain our sanctuaries and preserves.

With your monthly gift as an MNA Protector, you will provide sustainable, predictable support for our ongoing efforts. It is also a great way to help MNA keep costs down because we save money by not having to send out membership renewal notices each year.

### IT'S SIMPLE

Determine what amount you wish to give each month – the minimum monthly contribution is \$10 – and provide MNA with your bank account or credit card information (Visa, MasterCard, or Discover only). Your contribution will either be automatically transferred from your bank account or charged to your credit card.

And, if you would like to increase your monthly contribution, decrease it, or stop it altogether, just contact us. MNA will handle any changes you wish to make.

### IT'S CONVENIENT

Each month, the transaction will appear on your bank or credit card statement showing the date and amount of your contribution. In addition, MNA will send you a year-end statement reflecting your total contribution because, as is the case with your other gifts to MNA, your contributions as an MNA Protector are tax-deductible.

### AND YOU CAN BE ASSURED, IT'S SAFE

Your checking account or credit card information is stored in a secure location in MNA's office and the monthly transactions are conducted by a trustworthy MNA staff member. And, MNA will only transfer the specified amount from your bank account or charge your credit card.

### THREE WAYS TO BECOME AN MNA PROTECTOR

- 1) Complete the enclosed remittance envelope and return it to MNA
- 2) Sign-up online at [www.michigannature.org](http://www.michigannature.org) (for credit cards only)
- 3) Call the MNA office at 517-655-5655

*We encourage you to become an MNA Protector today!*



Tom VanWagner recalls being recruited by Sherri, mentioning, “I can remember when I was with a group building boardwalks into a sensitive area. It was hot and we were sweating. Someone asked me how did I come to volunteer and the discussion led to the fact that we were all “Sherri-ized,” meaning almost mesmerized but by Sherri. We all had a good laugh.”

One of Sherri’s long-time volunteers, Chuck Pearson, said, “it was one of Sherri’s field trips that led to me doing what I do now, living where I live, and having the friends I do.”

J.R. George, who worked on several grant-funded large-scale projects with Sherri observed, “I have been enriched by knowing Sherri and the love she has for nature. Usually in the past while outside, hunting was my focal point, and she has brought out the love for the land, plants, flowers and trees. These things I now treasure and look for as I step into the outdoors.”

Sherri taught many of us much of what we now know about nature and stewardship. Her new approaches to maintenance helped MNA’s work become more effective. For example, a problem of managing invasive shrubs at a sanctuary had confounded those working at the sanctuary, when Sherri introduced new methods. Mark Sellars, a volunteer steward at the sanctuary in Hillsdale County, said, “the preserve is much the better for the long-term after her stewardship and habitat management work, especially in the swamps, along with her quick-working volunteers. Her methods have worked and thanks so much for that!”

MNA was an all-volunteer organization until 2001, and MNA’s trustees, who only a few years before had been responsible for working with volunteers themselves on the sanctuaries, had in 2004 a true leader for the organization’s stewardship efforts. Beverly Bandt, a long-time MNA member and current trustee, gleamed, “Sherri Laier brought the Michigan Nature Association to a new level of stewardship in the five plus years she was with us. We were so fortunate to have her.” Indeed, MNA’s stewardship program has reached a new level under Sherri’s watch. Sherri has worked to ensure that our new stewardship staff will have a well-developed program to come into.

Thank you, Sherri; you have made MNA better at what we do.



Above, former Stewardship Director Sherri Laier, with one of her fire crew members at a controlled burn at Newaygo Prairie.

## Help Support the MNA...and Unwind!

Ruth Vail has generously donated one week at her cottage on Mullett Lake, near Cheboygan, to the Michigan Nature Association! For an \$800 contribution to the MNA and you can stay for one week in this northern Michigan cottage. The cottage has three bedrooms and can sleep ten. There is a great room, a dining area, fieldstone fireplace, ping pong room, dock, a large deck, and lots of yard space. The cottage is located near many MNA sanctuaries and there is an array of biking trails nearby. This could be a great time to spend with your family swimming, fishing, and enjoying the area! There are no pets or smoking permitted. If you are interested in this unique opportunity to donate to the MNA please contact Ruth Vail by phone: (734) 426-4473.



# Volunteering: Fun and Rewarding!

## Your Time is Needed

### Field Volunteers

#### Trail Maintenance

Removing debris, trimming limbs, posting and maintaining trail markers

#### Invasive Plant Control

Uprooting invasive plants or applying wetland-approved herbicide to cut stumps using a special applicator (Volunteers working around herbicide must be at least 15 years of age).

#### Erosion Control

Stabilizing soil on slopes and installing hand rails to assist visitors climbing or descending steep sections of trail

#### Boardwalk and Bridge Construction

Creating bridges to cross rivers and boardwalks to traverse wetlands

#### Boundary Identification

Working with surrounding landowners and surveyors to locate and mark sanctuary boundaries

#### Photography

Taking pictures of species and landscapes to help us monitor sanctuaries

#### Trash Removal

Helping clean sanctuaries of debris

#### Inventory and Monitoring

Recording plants and animals observed at different times of year

#### Global Positioning System Data Collection

Using a GPS unit to record locations of features and create trail maps

#### Native Seed Collection and Planting

Helping restore a sanctuary by harvesting native seeds from its healthy areas and planting those seeds in its degraded areas

#### Field Trip Leadership

Showing people a sanctuary and all it has to offer

#### Sign Installation

Installing entrance or general rules signs at MNA's sanctuaries

### Office Volunteers & Internships

#### General Office

Aiding in the day-to-day operations of the MNA

#### Cartography

Collecting geographic information and using this information to prepare stylized maps and charts

#### Graphic Design

Designing and developing graphics and ideas for a variety of publications

#### PR / Communication

Executing strategic public relations with supporting media relations and communications while aiding outreach efforts

#### Journalism

Working with news, descriptive material and ideas of MNA via a widening spectrum of media

#### Accounting

Analyzing and preparing financial information, and utilizing accounting control procedures

#### GIS (Geographic Information Systems)

Utilizing geographic information systems to generate maps for management plans

#### Legal

Resolving discrepancies in the property files for nature sanctuaries.

#### Stewardship

Assisting in the management of sanctuaries, volunteers, and the stewardship staff's daily goals.



## 4 Steps to Start in Volunteering

1. Determine how much time you have available. Every little bit helps!
2. Visit [michigannature.org](http://michigannature.org) to figure out sanctuaries around you and learn about MNA.
3. Decide which projects you may be interested in from those listed above. For a list of scheduled VolunteerDays, refer to the Schedule of Activities in this Newsletter or visit [michigannature.org](http://michigannature.org).
4. Contact the MNA office at (517)655-5655 to discuss specific project details and needs.





# 10 Ways to Contribute

**1** Leave a lasting mark with a planned gift as part of MNA's Guardians of the Future Society. Your bequest can create an enduring legacy through a number of paths, including a will, trust, annuity, life insurance, or other planned or deferred gift. Contact MNA for more information.

**2** Join MNA's Guardian Society for those who pledge to support MNA's general operations at the \$1,000 level per year or above. MNA Guardians commit to the long-term sustenance of the organization through annual general support gifts.

**3** Become an MNA Protector. The MNA Protector program is a monthly giving program. Each month, MNA will automatically charge your credit card or deduct from your checking account an amount you choose. By becoming an MNA Protector, you provide sustainable, predictable support and it's also a great way for MNA to keep costs down.

**4** Renew your membership or donate general support. Individual and family memberships and additional general support donations are the bedrock of MNA's operations, allowing us to carry out our mission efficiently.

**5** Give to an MNA endowment where your contribution will grow over the years. Each year, part of the income from the endowment will be used to support programs. MNA endowment funds include:

## Contribution Levels

\$10,000+	Dwarf Lake Iris
\$5,000 - \$9,999	Karner Blue Butterfly
\$2,500 - \$4,999	Piping Plover
\$1,000 - \$2,499	White Pine
\$500 - \$999	Brook Trout
\$250 - \$499	Northern Maidenhair Fern
\$100 - \$249	Partner
\$50 - \$99	Friend
\$35 - \$49	Member
\$20 - \$34	Living Lightly

*At the conclusion of each fiscal year, you will be recognized as a contributor at the level that reflects your total contributions to MNA throughout the year.*

- General Endowment
- Bertha Daubendiek Stewardship Endowment
- Land Acquisition Endowment
- Dowagiac Woods Endowment
- Estivant Pines Endowment

**6** Make a memorial contribution or an honorarium. You can pay tribute to the memory of a friend or loved one, or honor them, by donating to MNA in their name. Contributions are put toward MNA's General Endowment so that your gift will produce a lasting legacy in memory or honor of those close to you unless otherwise specified.

**7** Contribute to MNA through Earth Share of Michigan at your workplace giving program, where available. If your workplace doesn't have a workplace giving program, contact MNA for more information.

**8** Contribute to one of three MNA community foundation funds. The Community Foundation of Greater Flint, the Keweenaw Community Foundation,

and the Community Foundation for Muskegon County – which provide support of MNA's properties and future land acquisition in specific counties. Checks are made out to the community foundation with a memo note designating the gift to the "Michigan Nature Association Fund."

**9** Change your internet search engine to GoodSearch ([www.goodsearch.com](http://www.goodsearch.com)) and choose MNA as your organization of choice. It will donate 50% of its revenue to the charities designated by its users. Each search you make earns about one penny. The more MNA supporters use Goodsearch, the quicker those pennies add up! The site also has a counter so you can view how much those clicks add up to.

**10** Do your online shopping through [igive.com](http://igive.com). Join at [www.igive.com/mna](http://www.igive.com/mna) and every time you shop at one of over 600 online stores, the store gives a donation to MNA.

For more information contact us at 517-655-5655 or [michigannature@michigannature.org](mailto:michigannature@michigannature.org)

## To double your contribution to MNA

Many employers offer matching gift programs on behalf of their employees, so your contribution to MNA could be matched by your employer. For example, if your contribution is \$100, your employer matches that, resulting in a total contribution of \$200 to MNA. Contact your human resources department to determine if they will match your contribution and to obtain the form which you complete and include with your contribution.



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*Preserving Michigan's Natural Heritage Since 1952*

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# Save the Date: Members' Meeting

**By Anusuya Das  
Journalism Intern**

Spring is the time of the year when nature is in full bloom after a long hibernation. The lush green leaves rustle; flowers of all hues, shapes and sizes dot backyards and meadows. Spring is also that time of the year when the Michigan Nature Association members come together for the annual Members' Meeting.

This year the MNA is holding the Members' Meeting on May 8, 2010 at the Cambridge Township Offices in Onsted. The meeting is scheduled to start at 12:00 p.m. Light refreshments will be provided at the venue during the event. This meeting is open to the public in order to promote shared efforts and enthusiasm in preserving Michigan's natural habitats.

The annual Members' Meeting provides an opportunity for members to

meet, get acquainted, and participate. It is also a time for the MNA to recount and review past and current activities and discuss future endeavors. The meeting also provides attendants with a chance to meet and socialize with current and potential members, contributors and volunteers.

The agenda for this year's meeting will include brief presentations by MNA members and the guest speaker will be Dr. Forest Haines, Professor of Earth Sciences at Adrian College. Soon after the meeting, the attendees will have the option of going on a field trip to either Goose Creek Nature Sanctuary or Frances Broehl Memorial #1 Nature Sanctuary. Flyers with the directions to both sanctuaries will be distributed at the meeting. The field trips will enable members to explore the nature sanctuaries and give attendees ample time to learn from MNA staff and trustees about each location.

The Goose Creek Nature Sanctuary is predominantly a wetland and the Frances Broehl Memorial #1 Nature Sanctuary has some wet terrain. Therefore, dress casual but it is highly recommended that you wear or carry a light jacket and a pair of mud boots for the sanctuary field trips.

For those of you who may be traveling long distances to join the MNA for the Member's Meeting, you are encouraged to explore the option of lodging at nearby hotels in Brooklyn, Michigan. Local dining can be found in Brooklyn as well.

Please feel free to bring family and friends, and join the MNA for the annual Members' Meeting. If you plan on attending, you may R.S.V.P. by calling (517) 655-5655 or emailing [michigannature@michigannature.org](mailto:michigannature@michigannature.org). Having accurate information is helpful for the MNA to plan accordingly. It's also important so you can be informed of any changes that may occur. We look forward to meeting you!

## Quick Facts

**When: Saturday May 8, 2010  
at 12:00 p.m. EST**

**Where: The Cambridge Township Offices,  
located in Lenawee County. 9990 M-50  
Onsted, MI 49265**

**Sanctuary field trips: Goose Creek  
Nature Sanctuary or Frances Broehl  
Memorial # 1 Nature Sanctuary**

**R.S.V.P. Phone: (517) 655-5655 E-mail:  
[michigannature@michigannature.org](mailto:michigannature@michigannature.org)**



**Cambridge Township Offices – Venue for  
the 2010 annual MNA Members' Meeting.  
(Photo by: Jeff Proulx)**

