

Working with Partners to Protect the Shiawassee

For more than 50 years, The Nature Conservancy has met its conservation challenges through partnerships with committed organizations and volunteers. In the Shiawassee River Watershed, our collaborative efforts with the Friends of the Shiawassee River (FOSR), the DeVries Nature Conservancy (DNC) and countless other community groups and volunteers have increased awareness for the importance of the river ecosystem and the rare species it supports. Since 2006, The Nature Conservancy has partnered with FOSR and DNC to remove invasive species from along the Shiawassee River. Together, 1900 pounds of garlic mustard were removed through two seasons of field work.

Working with the Livingston County Health Department and Drain Commissioner's Office, the Conservancy and the FOSR will begin monitoring insect communities in the Shiawassee to gain more insight about the rivers health. The program, supported by the Michigan Clean Water Corp, will train volunteers to collect and identify bugs with the guidance of trained experts.

Working with stewards from Lapeer, Genesee, and Shiawassee Counties, the Conservancy is collaborating with The Stewardship Network on the formation of a local stewards cluster to assist partner organizations in the tri-county area better achieve their stewardship goals.

Least Wanted Phragmites (*Phragmites australis*)

Phragmites comes from the Greek "phragma" for fence since it prefers inhabiting marsh-upland areas, forming continuous belts. This large perennial grass or reed originates in every continent except Antarctica and typically grows in marshes, swamps, fens, and disturbed areas. The cross-pollination of native phragmites with more invasive European varieties may have created new aggressive colonies.

Phragmites has a low tolerance for waves and currents that can break its stems and impede bud formation. It thrives in stagnant waters with poorly aerated sedimentation. Air spaces in the stems aboveground provide the underground parts of the plant with a relatively fresh supply of air.

The differences between native and aggressive phragmites are hard to identify. Control is only necessary when populations begin threatening rare plant and wildlife communities. Recent increases in phragmites may be caused by increases in soil salinity from road salt washing into nearby ditches and wetlands. To reduce large populations, spray herbicides in late summer. Control smaller populations in July or August by cutting off stems and immediately spraying them with herbicide. Although controlled flooding is not possible when it will harm rare natural communities, in other areas it can reduce populations if the shoots are cut and flooded three feet deep during the growing season. Mowing, discing and digging may increase populations.



(*Phragmites australis*).

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News

Keep informed about what's happening! Visit our website for these and other news articles at <http://nature.org/michigan>.

The Nature Conservancy Applauds Congress Passing the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Compact

This historic agreement will provide better protection of the world's largest freshwater ecosystem, the Great Lakes.

Understanding the Great Lakes Compact

Rich Bowman, chair of The Nature Conservancy's Great Lakes Public Policy Team, explains the impact of the Compact on the Great Lakes.

Free Field Friday: A Fantastic Success

More than 230 people participated in The Nature Conservancy's first-ever Free Field Friday on Sept. 26, far more than expected from organizers.

Careers

Interested in working for The Nature Conservancy? Check out these and other career opportunities at <http://nature.org/careers>.

Director: [Michigan Natural Features Inventory](#), Michigan State University Extension

Upcoming Workdays

The Nature Conservancy welcomes everyone interested in helping the environment and Michigan by participating at volunteer workdays. Please visit our website at <http://nature.org/michigan> to sign up for any of the volunteer projects listed below or for more information.

Ives Road Fen Preserve, Lenawee County

Help clear invasive shrubs from the prairie fen next to the River Raisin. You will be amazed at how much area we can clear in just four hours. There will be fall color and many different autumn seed heads. To join us at one of the workdays, all led by Volunteer Crew Chiefs, e-mail Rebecca at eastmichigan@tnc.org or call (517) 316-2282. October 18 is our annual pot luck lunch at the end of the workday. The following dates start promptly at 9 am and end at 1 pm.

Saturday, October 4
Saturday, October 11

Saturday, October 18
Saturday, October 25

Upcoming Events

To learn more about events and field trips all around Michigan as well as how to sign up, visit us on the web at <http://nature.org/michigan>.

MICHIGAN: Our Land, Our Water, Our Heritage

The engaging essays in this book illustrate the range of ecosystems The Nature Conservancy has protected. Included are essays by nine acclaimed Michigan authors; numerous quotes from leading figures in Michigan; and full-color photographs by well-known Michigan photographers of the land, water, and shorelines of the Great Lakes state. Contributors to the book will be appearing at events throughout Michigan in 2008.

Partner Event: Land Conservancy of West Michigan Korth Lecture

Please mark your calendar for the October 16 program on natural landscaping featuring Bret Rappaport, a leader in the Natural Landscape Movement and past national president of Wild Ones. The Nature Conservancy's partnership with Meijer continues to help people avoid planting invasive species in their landscaping and has been recognized around the country for its innovative approach to consumer education.

Partnership Projects

The Nature Conservancy in Michigan works with several partners around the state. Those interested in posting volunteer opportunities, please contact Danielle Miller at ddmiller@tnc.org. Opportunities may be posted on a rotating basis.

Hiawatha National Forest

The Munising Ranger District is sponsoring a Native Seed Collection workday on October 11, from 1-4p.m. each day. Volunteers will gather native seeds that will be used in Forest Service site restoration projects next year. To register, call Hiawatha National Forest at 906-387-2512 x19.

Michigan Department of Natural Resources
oin the Parks and Recreation Division, Stewardship Unit as we collect native prairie grass and wildflower seed in October to restore high quality prairie remnants within these parks. For workday details, directions, and to register, please visit www.michigan.gov/dnrvolunteers; or contact Laurel Malvitz at 248-359-9057 or malvitzl@michigan.gov.

Everyday Environmentalist: Michigan Natural Features Inventory (MNFI) – a plethora of information at your finger tips

The mission of MNFI is to deliver the highest quality information that contributes to the conservation of biodiversity, especially rare and declining plants and animals and the diversity of ecosystems native to Michigan.

If you've ever wondered what a prairie fen was and where they can be found in Michigan, everything you want to know is a click away! Anyone can access MNFI's website and find information on habitat community types, rare, threatened and endangered species, maps, and much more. Check it out at <http://web4.msue.msu.edu/mnfi/> and see for yourself!

How is MNFI information used?

- Reveal population trends and ecological requirements
- Determine the rangewide significance of individual occurrences
- Set conservation priorities and assign "rarity" ranks
- Identify data gaps and research needs
- Guide land use and management activities
- Access change over time and at different spatial scales
- Inform regulatory agencies