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ALDO LEOPOLD FESTIVAL MAY 27 - 31, 2026

LES CHENEAUX ISLANDS, MICHIGAN

Celebrating One of America's Most Influential Naturalists

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NATURE HIKES + PADDLING EXCURSIONS + NATURE INSPIRED ART

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2026 ALDO LEOPOLD FESTIVAL PHOTO CONTEST

Winners will be randomly selected from all entries, one for each photo category.
Submissions will be shared on the big screen during Saturday's picnic.



TO ENTER THE CONTEST:

SCAN THE CODE below with the camera on your smart phone or tablet, and follow the prompts. All photos must be taken during the 2026 Festival dates. Entries must be **MUST BE UPLOADED BY 4:00 PM** on Saturday, May 30. Winners will be announced on Saturday, May 30 at approx. 7:00 PM.

Photo categories include:

- Wild Encounters
- Nature's Details
- Festival Moments
- Scenic Views
- Festival Goers



Photo contest prizes
donated by:

Woods & Waters



2026 Aldo Leopold Festival Committee Members

This dedicated group of people help make the Aldo Leopold Festival possible. Thank you!

Applecree General Store

Amy Polk

Chippewa Luce Mackinac

Conservation District

Mike McCarthy

Evan Chalmers

Clark Township

Mark Clymer

DeTour Village

Suzie Baker

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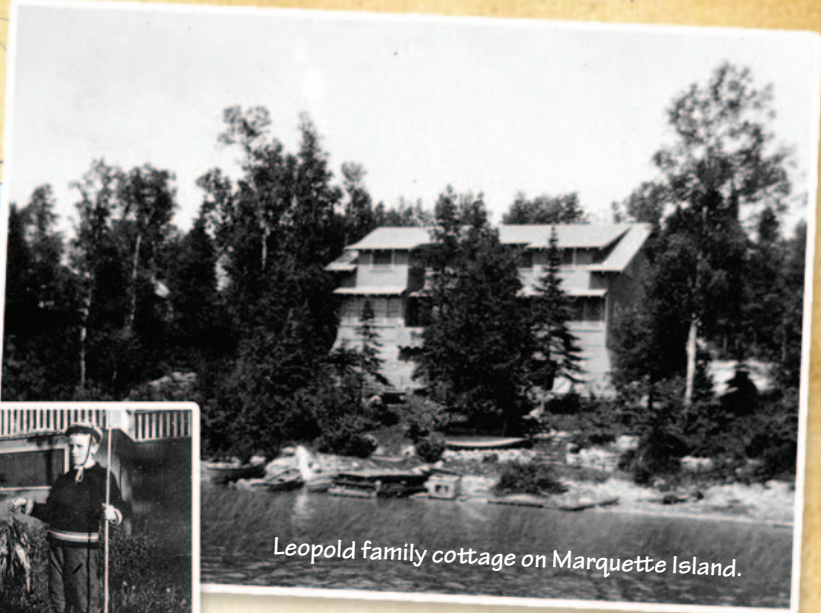
Dave Murray

Mary Whitmore

Thank You Festival Committee

ABOUT THE COVER: This year's Aldo Leopold Festival cover is by illustrator Katie Eberts.

To view more of her beautiful artwork, visit www.katieeberts.com



(Left) A young Aldo Leopold with his dog after a day of fishing the in the Les Cheneaux area. (circa late 1890s)

By the age of 24, he was promoted to Supervisor for the Carson National Forest in New Mexico. In 1922, he was instrumental in developing the proposal to manage the Gila National Forest as a wilderness area, which became the first officially-designated wilderness area in 1924. Following a transfer to Madison, Wisconsin, the same year, Leopold continued his investigations into ecology and the philosophy of conservation, and in 1933 published the first textbook in the field of wildlife management. Later that year, he accepted a new chair in game management — a first for the University of Wisconsin and the nation. In 1935, he and his family initiated their ecological restoration experiment on a worn-out farm along the Wisconsin River outside of Baraboo, Wisconsin.

Leopold's influence on modern land ethics, land and wildlife conservation, and the American love of the land, is still felt today. Leopold's legacy is celebrated in Les Cheneaux by a nearly 1,700-acre nature preserve on Marquette Island that bears his name and maintained by Little Traverse Conservancy. Additionally, the annual Aldo Leopold Festival, a celebration of one of America's most influential naturalists, is held in the Les Cheneaux area the weekend after Memorial Day. In 2026 we celebrate the 11th Anniversary of the festival.



(Right) Historical marker on Marquette Island establishing the Aldo Leopold Nature Preserve in the Les Cheneaux Islands area.

2026 ALDO LEOPOLD FESTIVAL



Wednesday, May 27

<u>START TIME</u>	<u>END TIME</u>	<u>EVENT</u>
8:00 AM	3:00 PM	Hike the North Country Trail
8:00 AM	3:00 PM	Wetland & Wetland Plants of Fulmer Lake
9:00 AM	3:00 PM	Treasures Underfoot: Discovering Rocks & Local Geology
9:00 AM	4:00 PM	Alvars, Forests, and Shorelines of Drummond Island
9:30 AM	4:00 PM	Niagara Escarpment Adventure by ATV (Drummond Island)
1:00 PM	4:00 PM	Intro to Creating Natural Stovetop Dyes
4:00 PM	8:30 PM	Capturing Nature with Smartphone Photography
5:00 PM	6:00 PM	Who Was Aldo Leopold and Why Do We Have a Festival in Hessel/Cedarville, MI That Honors Him?

Thursday, May 28

<u>START TIME</u>	<u>END TIME</u>	<u>EVENT</u>
5:30 AM	9:00 AM	Birding By Ear
7:00 AM	10:00 AM	Birding the Woollam Preserve
8:00 AM	11:00 AM	Lovable Lichens and Mosses
8:00 AM	11:00 AM	Sphagnum 101: Field ID and Peatland Ecology
8:30 AM	11:30 AM	Carnivorous Plants
8:30 AM	11:30 AM	Intro to Edible Plants & Mushrooms
9:00 AM	12:00 PM	Hiking the Derby Preserve
9:00 AM	12:00 PM	Spring Ephemerals Walk
9:30 AM	12:30 PM	Carmeuse Quarry Tour
10:00 AM	12:00 PM	Tour of the Maple Hardwoods Mill
11:30 AM	1:00 PM	Lunch and Learn: Recreation and the Economy
1:00 PM	4:00 PM	Loveable Lichen and Mosses
1:30 PM	4:30 PM	Wild Pigments: Crafting and Painting with Natural Watercolors
2:00 PM	5:00 PM	The Fish Thief: Invaders of the Great Lakes
2:00 PM	5:00 PM	Intro to Edible Plants and Mushrooms
2:00 PM	5:00 PM	Hiking the Mertaugh Preserve
2:00 PM	5:00 PM	The Sound of Nature: Light Movement, Natural Meditation & Zen Craft
2:00 PM	5:00 PM	Sphagnum 101: Field ID and Peatland Ecology
6:00 PM	8:00 PM	LIVE Raptors Show
6:00 PM	9:00 PM	Bird Rarities of the Eastern Upper Peninsula
8:30 PM	1:00 AM	Owl Banding with Friends of Whitefish Point

Friday, May 29

<u>START TIME</u>	<u>END TIME</u>	<u>EVENT</u>
5:30 AM	9:00 AM	Birding By Ear
7:00 AM	11:00 AM	Wetland Birds of Munuscong Bay
7:45 AM	12:00 PM	Exploring in Aldo Leopold's Paddlestokes <i>(Tickets for this tour available at Woods & Waters - www.woodsandwaters.eco)</i>



EVENTS AT A GLANCE

<u>START TIME</u>	<u>END TIME</u>	<u>EVENT</u>
8:00 AM	4:00 PM	Explore Seney Wildlife Refuge
8:30 AM	11:30 AM	Orchids and Wildflowers Walk
9:00 AM	11:00 AM	Experimental Whitefish Hatchery Tour
9:00 AM	12:00 PM	Freshwater Ecology
9:00 AM	12:00 PM	Exploring the Gerstacker Preserve
11:00 AM	12:00 PM	Avian Coloration: When Nature Breaks the Rules
1:00 PM	2:00 PM	Recycling in the EUP: Challenges, Changes, and Opportunities
1:00 PM	4:00 PM	Fern Walk
1:00 PM	4:00 PM	Spring Ephemeral Walk
2:00 PM	4:00 PM	The Cormorant Issue
2:00 PM	5:00 PM	Exploring the Gerstacker Preserve
3:00 PM	6:00 PM	Keeping a Nature Journal with artist Carol Hubbard
6:00 PM	9:00 PM	Bird Rarities of the Eastern Upper Peninsula
7:00 PM	9:00 PM	Restoring Our Relationship with Manoomin
8:30 PM	1:00 AM	Owl Banding with Friends of Whitefish Point



Saturday, May 30

<u>START TIME</u>	<u>END TIME</u>	<u>EVENT</u>
5:30 AM	9:00 AM	Birding By Ear
7:00 AM	11:00 AM	Wetland Birds of Munuscong Bay
8:30 AM	11:30 AM	Intro to Edible Plants and Mushrooms
8:30 AM	11:30 AM	Carnivorous Plants
9:00 AM	12:00 PM	Vernal Pools: Seasonal Wetland and Citizen Science
9:00 AM	12:00 PM	Precious Pollinators
9:00 AM	12:00 PM	Intro to Foraging
9:00 AM	1:00 PM	Maxton Plains Preserve - Alvar Grassland Community
11:00 AM	12:00 PM	Great Lakes Bird Migration
1:00 PM	3:00 PM	Dead Moose on Isle Royale
1:00 PM	4:00 PM	Modern Trail Stewardship in Leopold's Footsteps: Active Volunteer and Discussion Session with The Nature Conservancy
1:00 PM	4:00 PM	Keeping a Nature Journal with artist Carol Hubbard
2:00 PM	4:00 PM	Aldo, the Naturalist Map, and You
2:00 PM	5:00 PM	Intro to Edible Plants and Mushrooms
2:00 PM	5:00 PM	Precious Pollinators
6:00 PM	8:00 PM	Picnic Dinner and Presentations

Sunday, May 31

<u>START TIME</u>	<u>END TIME</u>	<u>EVENT</u>
7:00 AM	11:00 AM	Wetland Birds of Munuscong Bay
7:00 AM	11:00 AM	Birding the Woollam Preserve
8:00 AM	11:00 AM	Birding Les Cheneaux Hotspots by Car
8:00 AM	11:00 AM	Secretive March Birds
8:30 AM	11:30 AM	Orchids & Wildflowers Walk



BOLD items are special evening programs.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS



Hiking the North Country Trail

This session is for North adventurers! Join us for a moderately easy eight-mile hike (approx. 5 hours) on the North Country Trail where you will enjoy the varied terrain and forest types as well as an abundance of flora to be discovered with your guide, Tom Walker. The North Country National Scenic Trail is a 4,900 mile long trail that crosses 8 states from Vermont to North Dakota with 1,150 miles of it in Michigan. Walking along the outcropping of the Niagara Escarpment, crossing streams, and seeing a beaver dam are just a few highlights of this adventure day. Participants are encouraged to bring a sack lunch to enjoy along the trail. (Limited to 20 people.)



Time: 8:00 AM - 3:00 PM

Guide: Tom Walker

Location: Meet at Hessel School House. Carpool to location

Tour Fee: \$25.00



Wetlands and Wetland Plants of Fulmer Lake

When you want to go look for wildflowers, you probably don't think about going to a pond. Yet, aquatic plants are more than just "pond weeds" and there are plenty of wildflowers beyond pond lilies to look for. This foray will be a botanical foray via kayaks on Fulmer Lake in the eastern U.P. Though most aquatic plants are not flowering by the end of May, we will find plenty of wonder as we explore the different wetlands types that make up Fulmer Lake. Boxed lunch provided. (Limit 10 people.)



Time: 8:00 AM - 3:00 PM

Guide: Derek Shiels - Hosted by Ken Drenth

Location: Meet at Hessel School House and carpool to the location

Tour Fee: \$90.00



Treasures Underfoot: Discovering Rocks and Local Geology

Come and explore the fascinating world of rock collecting with us! Our program combines educational fun with an exciting outdoor adventure, leading to amazing rock discoveries. We'll kick things off with a captivating lecture on the essential concepts and methods to make a rock collection. Next, try your hand at identifying and classifying rocks using hands-on activities, just like a geologist. To finish, join a guided beach walk to find specimens and learn about the local geology. This tour includes a catered boxed lunch. (Limit 20)



Time: 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM

Guide: Steven Veatch

Location: Meet at Hessel School House, carpool to locations after lunch

Tour Fee: \$60.00



Alvars, Forests, and Shorelines of Drummond Island

Spend a full day exploring the remarkable geology and plant communities of Drummond Island. The morning begins with a guided driving tour of Maxton Plains Preserve, home to one of the Great Lakes region's most distinctive alvar ecosystems. With frequent stops for short walks, participants will learn how thin soils over limestone bedrock—shaped by fire, ice, and water—create open grasslands that support an abundance of rare and specialized plants. After a buffet lunch at Pins at the Drummond Island Resort, the afternoon continues with a moderate 3-mile loop hike along the Heritage Trail through cool boreal forest and along Lake Huron's limestone cobble shoreline. Along the way, we'll explore how glacial history, microclimates, and natural disturbance influence forest structure and shoreline vegetation, highlighting the resilience of plants adapted to exposed rock, shifting stones, and wave action. (Limit to 24)



Guide: Rob Ayotte, president of the Michigan Botanical Society

Time: 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Location: Drummond Island Visitor Center

34974 S. Townline Rd, Drummond Island, MI 49726

Tour Fee: \$70.00 (Ferry fee not included)

Outdoor Tour Difficulty Rating System

Our outdoor tour rating system is designed to help participants make informed decisions that suit their skill level, manage their risk, and improve their experience at the Aldo Leopold Festival. **GREEN** being the easiest and **RED** being the most challenging with long segments of hiking with continual unevenness.





Niagara Escarpment Adventure by ATV

Explore Drummond Island's remarkable plant life on a guided ATV adventure along the Niagara Escarpment. Travel by four-person side-by-sides from Beavers ATV Rentals to reach remote limestone landscapes where rare plants thrive. Expert guides will highlight unique species found in cracks and forest edges of the escarpment. A special highlight is viewing Wall Rue, an endangered fern found in Michigan only at the Marblehead Escarpment on Drummond Island. This immersive tour combines botany, conservation, and off-road exploration for a deeper appreciation of this fragile ecosystem. Boxed lunch will be provided. (Limited to 12)



Time: 9:30 AM - 4:00 PM

Guide: Brad Von Blon, Little Traverse Conservancy

Evan Chalmers, Chippewa, Luce, Mackinaw Conservation District

Location: Beavers on Drummond Island Side-by-Side Rentals
35239 E. Johnswood Rd, Drummond Island, MI 49726

Tour Fee: \$125.00 (Ferry fee not included)



Intro to Creating Natural Stovetop Dyes

Discover the art and science of natural dyeing using everyday materials and plants from the landscape. In this hands-on class, we'll explore how to create rich, lasting color at home using kitchen scraps and locally foraged dyestuffs. Participants will learn the basics of mordanting, how different materials influence color, and tips for achieving the best results with natural dyes. We will also utilize shibori techniques to create surface design before dyeing. By the end of the class, students will take home a beautifully dyed silk scarf along with practical knowledge to continue natural dyeing on their own. (Limit 16 people.)



Time: 1:00 PM - 4:00 PM

Guide: Jasmine Lace Petrie

Location: Hessel School House

Tour Fee: \$80.00



Smartphone Photography

The best camera is the one you have with you—and for most of us, that's our smartphone. This hands-on workshop is the perfect way to prepare for the weekend's nature hikes and birdwatching tours. Through a blend of short, practical instruction and guided photo walks, participants will learn how to use their phone's camera more intentionally, with a focus on composition, light, and simple digital editing techniques. Photographers of all experience levels are welcome. The session includes a catered dinner and concludes at sunset. (Limit 12)



Time: 4:00 PM - 8:30 PM

Guide: Sue Bakkila

Location: Hessel School House

Tour Fee: \$65.00



Who was Aldo Leopold and Why Do We Have a Festival in Hessel/Cedarville, Michigan That Honors Him?

Kick off the Aldo Leopold Festival with an engaging and reflective presentation that explores the life, legacy, and local connections of Aldo Leopold. Presented by Susan Affholter, his program combines a showing of the documentary film "Green Fire" with readings from "A Sand County Almanac", bringing Leopold's words and ideas to life. For those who are already familiar with Aldo Leopold, you will be warmly encouraged to share some of your favorite Leopold readings, or to talk about how Leopold has influenced you.

Through film, literature, and open discussion, participants will gain insight into Leopold's land ethic, his lasting influence on conservation, and his meaningful ties to the Les Cheneaux area. This thoughtful and welcoming presentation sets the tone for the festival, offering context, inspiration, and a deeper understanding of why Aldo Leopold's work continues to be celebrated in Hessel today. All are welcome to attend and take part in the conversation. (Limit 60)



Time: 5:00 PM - 6:00 PM

Location: Hessel School House

Tour Fee: \$10.00

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Birding by Ear

Greet the sunrise and listen to the dawn chorus as birds awaken the landscape. This guided walk will be led by two of Les Cheneaux's most passionate bird lovers, Duane and Clifford Utech, who will share their knowledge, keen eyes, and love for local birdlife. Perfect for beginners and experienced birders alike, this early-morning outing offers a quiet, memorable way to connect with nature. (Limit 15)



Guides: Duane & Cliff Utech

Time: 5:30 - 9:00 AM

Location: Meet at Hessel School House, carpool to location

Tour Fee: \$20.00

Birding at The Woollam Preserve

Enjoy a relaxed walk along one of the most beloved trails at Woollam Preserve. This trail features easy terrain winding through a mixed deciduous and conifer forest, opening out to more than 4,300 feet of striking glacial erratic shoreline. This scenic setting offers excellent opportunities to spot migratory birds and admire a variety of native flowering plants, making it a rewarding outing for birders, plant lovers, and anyone who enjoys being immersed in a beautiful natural landscape. (Limit 15)



Guides: Sarah and Wil Reding

Time: 7:00 AM - 10:00 AM

Location: Meet at Hessel School House, carpool to location

Tour Fee: \$20.00

Lovable Lichens and Mosses

Tiny, resilient, and often overlooked, lichens and mosses make up one of the most fascinating parts of our natural world. Michigan is home to nearly 800 species of lichens and at least 200 species of mosses, and the limestone-rich landscapes of the Les Cheneaux region provide especially ideal conditions for these small but mighty organisms. Join Brad—beloved storyteller and naturalist—for an engaging walk that brings this “notoriously tricky” group to life. Along the way, you’ll learn how to recognize many common species and uncover surprising stories and fun facts about how lichens and mosses grow, survive, and support the ecosystems around us. Come prepared to slow down, look closely, and gain a new appreciation for these often under appreciated wonders we usually take for granted. (Limit 15)



Guide: Brad Von Blon

Times: 8:00 - 11:00 AM and 1:00 PM - 4:00 PM (Repeated session)

Location: Meet at Hessel School House, carpool to location

Tour Fee: \$20.00

Sphagnum 101: Field ID & Peatland Ecology

On this guided walk, we'll learn how to recognize several common groups of Sphagnum using simple, hands-on field identification features—no microscope required. Along the way, we'll explore how these humble mosses act as ecosystem engineers, influencing water chemistry, storing carbon, and gradually building the peat lands themselves. By slowing down and looking closely, participants will gain a deeper appreciation for how Sphagnum mosses create and sustain some of the most distinctive landscapes in our region. This walk is ideal for curious beginners, naturalists, and anyone interested in wetland ecology. (Limit 15)



Guide: Quinn Sommer

Times: 8:00 - 11:00 AM and 2:00 PM - 5:00 PM

(Repeated session)

Location: Meet at Hessel School House, carpool to location

Tour Fee: \$20.00

Festival Tip

Temperatures can vary wildly in the spring, as well as by proximity to Lake Huron, so consider dressing in layers.

Carnivorous Plants

The lakeside fens and wetlands along Lake Huron's shoreline are home to an extraordinary group of plants that capture and digest insects in order to survive. These carnivorous plants thrive in nutrient-poor, sandy, and lime-rich soils where few other plants can compete. On this guided walk, we'll look for four fascinating types—butterworts, bladderworts, sundews, and pitcher plants—and learn how each attracts, traps, and digests its prey. Led by Steve Baker, this tour offers a close-up look at some of the Great Lakes region's most remarkable wetland plants. (Limit 15)



Guide: Steve Baker

Time: 8:30 - 11:30 AM

Location: Meet at Hessel School House, carpool to location

Tour Fee: \$20.00

Intro to Edible Plants and Mushrooms

Participants will take a guided nature hike to learn how to identify common edible plants and mushrooms, discuss ethical foraging practices, and gain practical tips for safe, responsible harvesting. This immersive class is ideal for beginners curious about wild foods and deepening their connection to the natural world. (Limit 12)



Guide: Eowyn Bates

Times: 8:30 - 11:30 AM and 2:00 PM - 5:00 PM

This session is offered twice on Thursday. Choose a time.

Location: Meet at Hessel School House, carpool to location

Tour Fee: \$20.00

Hiking the Derby Preserve

Join Amy Lipson, Little Traverse Conservancy's Conservation Specialist, on a walking tour through the Derby Preserve named after the Derby family that farmed the area and provided much of the summer and fall food for residents of the Les Cheneaux Club. Discuss what plants can be found here and view the large glacial erratic boulders for which this preserve is known. (Limit 15)



Guide: Amy Lipson, Little Traverse Conservancy

Time: 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Location: Meet at Hessel School House, carpool to location

Tour Fee: \$20.00

Spring Ephemerals Walk

Join us for a guided nature hike focused on spring ephemerals—the wildflowers and woodland plants that burst to life in early spring and fade back by summer. We'll practice practical, field-ready identification skills: how to spot key features like leaf shape, flower structure, and habitat, plus how to use simple ID tips you can take with you on future hikes. Even though we'll be catching some species toward the end of their peak, there should still be plenty to see—including favorites like wild leeks (ramps) and a variety of spring-blooming wildflowers and emerging forest plants. Expect a relaxed pace with lots of stopping, looking closely, and learning together. (Limit 15)



Guide: Logan Ferguson

Time: 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Location: Meet at Hessel School House, carpool to location

Tour Fee: \$20.00

Carmeuse Quarry Tour

The landscape of the Les Cheneaux area is shaped by a long, geologic history - 400 million years in the making, when the area was a warm, shallow sea, then later scraped by mile high glaciers. Gain a deeper understanding of what is literally underfoot by visiting this working quarry with a geologist who can explain how this limestone deposit came to be. Meet at the Hessel School House for short video before being bussed to the Carmeuse Quarry for this exciting tour. Minimal hiking involved. Must be able to board a school bus. Participants are encouraged to wear sturdy shoes and bring binoculars to look more closely at quarry walls. (Limit 30)



Guides: Kunal Singh and Carmeuse staff

Time: 9:30 AM - 12:30 PM

Location: Meet at Hessel School House, bussed to location.

Tour Fee: \$30.00

Tour of Maple Hardwoods Mill

Step inside one of the region's newest forest products facilities on this guided tour of the Maple Hardwoods Saw Mill, located just north of Hessel. This state-of-the-art hardwoods plant showcases how modern technology and responsible forestry come together to make the most of our maple forests. Learn how logs are transformed into finished lumber, how efficiency reduces waste, and how sustainable forest management supports healthy ecosystems and local economies. This tour offers a fascinating look at innovation in action and connects well with Leopold's focus on land stewardship and conservation. (Limit 20)



Guides: Andrew Jaroche and Maple Hardwoods staff

Time: 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Location: Meet at Hessel School House, carpool to location

Tour Fee: \$20.00

Lunch & Learn: Recreation and the Economy

Enjoy a midday break during your festival experience for a moderated panel discussion on recreational trails and their impact on local economies as well as the environment. Hear from experts representing conservation organizations, trail groups, and outdoor recreation leaders as they explore the future of trails and their vital role in our communities. Discover how these spaces support economic growth, environmental stewardship, and quality of life. Learn practical ways to get involved in protecting and sustaining trail systems. Catered lunch included. (Limit 45)



Panel: The Nature Conservancy, Little Traverse Conservancy, Drummond Island Silent Sports. Moderated by Andrea Daar

Time: 11:30 AM – 1:00 PM

Location: Hessel School House, Assembly Room

Fee: \$25.00 includes lunch

Wild Pigments: Crafting and Painting with Natural Watercolors

Discover the vibrant colors hidden within our local landscape! Join Mike McCarthy from the Chippewa Luce Mackinac Conservation District for a hands-on workshop that bridges the gap between botanical science and artistic expression. In this immersive session, participants will learn how to make all-natural watercolor paints using everyday ingredients. We will guide you through the process of extracting pigments using natural sources, and turning nature into colorful paints. Participants will then put brush to canvas and paint a native Michigan wildflower, to take home and enjoy for years to come. (Limit 12)



Guide: Mike McCarthy

Time: 1:30 PM – 4:30 PM

Location: Hessel School House, East Classroom

Tour Fee: \$50.00

The Fish Thief: Invaders of the Great Lakes

The program begins with a screening of *The Fish Thief*, a documentary about the invasion of sea lampreys—prehistoric, blood-feeding fish that entered the Great Lakes in the early 1900s. Following the film, Lauren Holbrook of the Great Lakes Fisheries Commission will present on how sea lampreys impact the Great Lakes today and the ongoing efforts to control them. Live sea lampreys will be on hand for a rare, up-close look at these fascinating and unsettling creatures.



Guide: Lauren Holbrook

Time: 2:00 PM – 4:00 PM

Location: Hessel School House, Assembly Room

Tour Fee: \$10.00

Hiking the Mertaugh Preserve

The Mertaugh Preserve recently added 77 acres to the Birge and Mertaugh Preserves, now boasting nearly 900 contiguous acres. The property has been in private ownership for decades, therefore, it was not accessible to the public. With the lower water levels, you will hike the shoreline looking for the unique plants that have adapted to this ecosystem. (Limit 15)



Guide: Amy Lipson

Time: 2:00 PM – 5:00 PM

Location: Meet at Hessel School House, carpool to location

Tour Fee: \$20.00

The Sound of Nature: Light Movement, Natural Sound Meditation, and Zen Craft

Natural sounds of the environment around us can make for a meaningful meditation experience. This session will introduce participants to integrative movement and natural sounds vibration and its healing properties. Using bird songs and other natural sounds this session will provide a guided sound meditation and movement session led by Marquita Mullen from the Chippewa Luce Mackinac Conservation District. This will lead its way to an understanding of how nature, music, song birds can help co-regulate our nervous systems and bring our bodies into relaxation and harmony. After the movement/meditation session, participants will create a Zen craft with the intention to invite harmony into your home or outdoor space to bring this practice home with you.



Guide: Marquita Mullen

Time: 2:00 PM – 5:00 PM

Location: Snows Heritage Park Pavilion, Blindline Rd, Cedarville

Class Fee: \$20.00 (Limit 12)

LIVE Raptors Show

Are you ready to soar into a world of wonder? We're thrilled to invite you to a captivating Live Raptor Presentation hosted by Wildlife Recovery! This is a fantastic opportunity for all ages to meet live owls and other raptors up close. Learn about these fascinating birds and their vital role in our ecosystem. Whether you're a nature enthusiast, a curious child, or simply looking for a unique activity, this event promises to be educational and fun! (Limited to 60)



Presenters: Wildlife Recovery Association

Time: 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM

Location: Hessel School House, Assembly Room

Tour Fee: \$10 (all ages)

Bird Rarities of the EUP

Exploring for the more rare birds of the Eastern Upper Peninsula. No, you won't be blindfolded as you will have to caravan but you will be visiting private property where many birds of the more rare birds like Golden-winged Warblers, Black-throated Blue Warblers, Upland Sandpipers, Mourning Warblers, Rails & Soras are often found. (Limit 12)



Guide: Duane Utech and Cliff Utech

Time: 6:00 PM – 9:00 PM

Location: Meet at Hessel School House, carpool to location

Tour Fee: \$20.00

Owl Banding with Friends of Whitefish Point

A Rare Late-Night Adventure at Whitefish Point

Step into the night for a truly unforgettable experience—Owl Banding with the Friends of Whitefish Point. For most participants, this is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to witness the magic of migrating owls up close under the dark skies of Michigan's Upper Peninsula.

We will meet at the Hessel School House before carpooling to Whitefish Point, where the Friends of Whitefish Point operate an Owl Banding Station each spring, summer, and fall. During the program, you'll learn about the fascinating world of owl migration, research efforts, and conservation work taking place at the Point. If conditions are right, you may even have the extraordinary chance to see an owl up close as it is safely studied and banded before continuing its journey. (Limit 20)



Guides: Chris Neri and Nova Mackentley

Time: 8:30 PM – 1:00 AM

Location: Meet at Hessel School House, carpool to Whitefish Point
Please plan for approx. 1.5 hours of drive time to and from the banding site. Dress in layers as the weather is cooler near Lake Superior at night.

Tour Fee: \$35.00

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Exploring in Aldo Leopold's Paddlestrokes

Friday, May 29 • 7:45 AM – 12:00 PM

For details about this tandem paddle excursion and to make reservations, call Woods & Waters (888) 502-8373 or visit www.woodsandwaters.eco



Birding by Ear

Greet the sunrise and listen to the dawn chorus as birds awaken the landscape. This guided walk will be led by two of Les Cheneaux's most passionate bird lovers, Duane and Clifford Utech, who will share their knowledge, keen eyes, and love for local birdlife. Perfect for beginners and experienced birders alike, this early-morning outing offers a quiet, memorable way to connect with nature. (Limit 15)



Guides: Duane & Cliff Utech

Time: 5:30 – 9:00 AM

Location: Meet at Hessel School House, carpool to location

Tour Fee: \$20.00

Wetland Birds of Munuscong Bay

Munuscong Bay provides a shining example of the massive and sprawling Great Lakes marshes and wetlands that were once found across every region of the Great Lakes. The two-mile round-trip hike to the dikes on Munuscong Bay is a great place to see birds that love the wetlands and make it their favorite place to nest and call home. Black terns, sedge wrens, rails, and a variety of ducks and warblers are seen most years. (Limit 15)



Guide: Elliot Nelson

Time: 7:00 AM – 11:00 AM

Location: Meet at Hessel School House, carpool to location

Tour Fee: \$20.00

Explore Seney Wildlife Refuge

Since 1935, Seney NWR has been a place to slow down, reconnect with nature, and witness the beauty of the seasons. From trumpeter swans and loons to beaver, turtles and wolves, this refuge is a haven for wildlife—and a peaceful retreat for people. During this field trip we will join Refuge staff on a guided auto tour through parts of Seney refuge to explore a small piece of the rich habitats and fascinating inhabitants of this national wildlife refuge in the heart of Michigan's Upper Peninsula. (Limit 12)



Guide: Jennifer Wycoff

Times: Full Day Tour - 8:00 AM – 4:00 PM

Location: Meet at Hessel School House, passenger van to location.

Tour Fee: \$80.00

Orchids and Wildflowers

The eastern Upper Peninsula is home to a remarkable network of nature preserves that protect a wide variety of habitats, from shoreline limestone and open wetlands to rich northern forests. This field trip will visit several carefully selected sites in search of spring-blooming wildflowers, offering a chance to experience the region at one of its most colorful and fleeting moments. Highlights may include iconic species such as Dwarf Lake Iris, gaywings, Bird's-eye Primrose, and Lakeside Daisy. With a bit of luck, we may also encounter early-season orchids, including Yellow and Pink Lady's Slippers, Striped and Early Coralroot, Ram's-head Lady's Slipper, and the delicate Heart-leaved Twayblade. Expect a relaxed pace, close observation, and plenty of time to appreciate the diversity and beauty of these special places. (Limit 15)



Guide: Steve Baker

Times: 8:30 AM – 11:30 AM

Location: Meet at Hessel School House, carpool to location

Tour Fee: \$20.00

Freshwater Ecology

EUP SMSTEM Regional Director Kevin St. Onge will facilitate a freshwater ecology field experience to engage participants in a hands on scientific investigation involving the use of biotic and abiotic parameter sampling to assess the health of a local stream. Through this investigation, participants will experience Place-Based Learning, which is aimed at solving community problems while seeking learning opportunities derived from the cultural, economic, environmental, and geographical aspects of a community. Along the way, participants will learn about how community partnerships have enabled 30 years of citizen science in the Les Cheneaux Islands. (Limit 15)



Guide: Kevin St. Onge

Time: 9:00 AM – 12:00 AM

Location: Meet at Hessel School House, carpool to location

Tour Fee: \$20.00

Exploring the Gerstacker Preserve

Discover one of northern Michigan's most remarkable natural landscapes on a guided exploration of the Carl A. Gerstacker Preserve. Led by Emily Clegg of The Nature Conservancy and Robert Ayotte, president of the Michigan Botanical Society, this immersive outing offers a rich introduction to the preserve's sweeping shoreline forests, inland lakes, and rolling terrain. Participants will hike moderate trails across varied elevations, visit both Big and Little Trout Lakes, and gain insight into the geology and ecological significance of this 1,600-acre preserve with five miles of Lake Huron shoreline. This trip is designed as an engaging overview—perfect for curious naturalists and festival-goers eager to deepen their connection to place. (Limit 15)



Guides: Emily Clegg and Rob Ayotte

Times: 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM and 2:00 PM – 5:00 PM (Repeated session)

Location: Meet at Hessel School House, carpool to location

Tour Fee: \$20.00

Experimental Whitefish Hatchery Tour

Michigan's native whitefish are at a critical crossroads—and innovative restoration work is underway. Join this behind-the-scenes tour to explore the Sault Tribe's experimental efforts to protect and rebuild whitefish populations. Learn why whitefish are so vital to the Great Lakes ecosystem and Indigenous culture, what caused their dramatic decline, and how science and traditional knowledge are coming together in the hatchery. This engaging tour offers a rare look at hands-on conservation in action and the challenges of raising whitefish to support future recovery. A meaningful experience for anyone passionate about ecology, stewardship, and the Leopold land ethic. (Limit 20)



Guide: Rusty Aiken

Time: 9:00 AM – 11:00 AM

Location: Meet at Hessel School House, carpool to location

Tour Fee: \$20.00

Avian Coloration:

When Nature Breaks the Rules

Join us for a fascinating one-hour presentation exploring the science behind avian coloration. Dr. McGraw's research into bird coloration took a compelling turn following widespread interest in an unusual snowy owl spotted in Michigan's Thumb region that displayed striking orange coloration. This rare and eye-catching phenomenon prompted deeper scientific investigation into how pigments are produced, altered, and expressed in birds, and what these color variations can reveal about diet, environment, physiology, and evolutionary biology. Whether you're a bird enthusiast, student, or simply curious about the science of color in nature, this presentation promises to be both informative and captivating.



Presenter: Dr. Kevin McGraw

Time: 11:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Location: Hessel School House, Assembly Room

Presentation Fee: \$10.00

Recycling in the EUP: Challenges, Changes, and Opportunities

This presentation will explore the current landscape of recycling in the region, examining what services are available today, where they are located, and how materials are collected and processed once they leave our communities. We'll also take a practical look at what happens to the materials we recycle and why certain items are more challenging to manage than others. Finally, the discussion will focus on opportunities for improvement under the new legislation, including potential solutions, partnerships, and the real-world challenges of expanding or enhancing recycling services in a rural region like ours. Attendees will come away with a clearer understanding of the system as it exists today—and what steps could lead to a more effective, sustainable future for recycling in the EUP.



Presenter: Sherry Kruch
Time: 1:00 PM – 2:00 PM
Location: Hessel School House, Assembly Room
Presentation Fee: **FREE presentation**

Fern Walk

Learn how to identify common and unique ferns, understand their life cycles, and hear stories about the habitats they depend on. Along the way, we'll touch on the ecological roles ferns play and how they reflect the health of the land—an idea deeply connected to Aldo Leopold's land ethic. This walk is designed for curious beginners and seasoned nature lovers alike. Come ready to stroll, observe, and see the forest through a slightly more frond-filled lens. (Limit 15)



Guide: Evan Chalmers
Time: 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM
Location: Meet at Hessel School House, carpool to location
Tour Fee: \$20.00

Spring Ephemerals Walk

Join us for a guided nature hike focused on spring ephemerals—the wildflowers and woodland plants that burst to life in early spring and fade back by summer. We'll practice practical, field-ready identification skills: how to spot key features like leaf shape, flower structure, and habitat, plus how to use simple ID tips you can take with you on future hikes. Even though we'll be catching some species toward the end of their peak, there should still be plenty to see—including favorites like wild leeks (ramps) and a variety of spring-blooming wildflowers and emerging forest plants. Expect a relaxed pace with lots of stopping, looking closely, and learning together. (Limit 15)



Guide: Logan Ferguson
Time: 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM
Location: Meet at Hessel School House, carpool to location
Tour Fee: \$20.00

The Cormorant Issue

Research has shown a direct correlation between the managing of cormorants with the rise and fall of the local perch population. Matthew Curry, Wildlife Biologist QAWB, USDA/APHIS/Wildlife Services - MI, will share research and how the organizations are cooperating on controlling the numbers of both species.



Presenter: Matthew Curry
Time: 2:00 PM – 4:00 PM
Location: Hessel School House, Assembly Room
Presentation Fee: \$10.00

Experience Difficulty Rating



Easiest



Easy



Moderate



Moderately Difficult



Difficult

Keeping a Nature Journal

"The journal is a room of your own, as a place of retreat...as well as a way of participating in the life around you..." This nature journaling workshop features fun and engaging activities that build the skills of a scientist, naturalist, artist, and observer. This program will connect science, language arts, visual arts, and mindfulness through a series of fun and engaging activities. Bring your camera or smartphone to capture nature during a short walk through the storybook trail then return to the classroom for sketching, coloring, and interpreting the world you explore. All materials will be supplied. (Limit 12)



Art Instructor: Carol Hubbard
Time: 3:00 PM – 6:00 PM
Location: Hessel School House, East Classroom
Class Fee: \$30.00

Bird Rarities of the EUP

Exploring for the more rare birds of the Eastern Upper Peninsula. No, you won't be blindfolded as you will have to caravan but you will be visiting private property where many birds of the more rare birds like Golden-winged Warblers, Black-throated Blue Warblers, Upland Sandpipers, Mourning Warblers, Rails & Sora are often found. (Limit 12)



Guide: Duane Utech and Cliff Utech
Time: 6:00 PM – 9:00 PM
Location: Meet at Hessel School House, carpool to location
Tour Fee: \$20.00

Restoring Our Relationship with Manoomin

Frank Zomer, Lead Inland Fisheries Biologist for the Bay Mills Indian Community, and Katie Schultz, Wildlife Program Manager for the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians will introduce the audience to the significance of manoomin—wild rice—as more than a plant: a relative, a teacher, and a cornerstone of Anishinaabe lifeways. They will share how their respective Tribal Nations are working to restore manoomin beds, protect watersheds, and rekindle reciprocal relationships with this sacred species, with a special focus on efforts happening right here in the local area. Grounded in Indigenous knowledge and contemporary science, this presentation offers insight into what it means to care for manoomin—and how that care sustains both ecosystems and communities.



Presenters: Frank Zomer and Katie Schultz
Time: 7:00 PM – 9:00 PM
Location: Hessel School House, Assembly Room
Presentation Fee: \$10

Owl Banding with Friends of Whitefish Point

A Rare Late-Night Adventure at Whitefish Point

Step into the night for a truly unforgettable experience—Owl Banding with the Friends of Whitefish Point. For most participants, this is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to witness the magic of migrating owls up close under the dark skies of Michigan's Upper Peninsula.

We will meet at the Hessel School House before carpooling to Whitefish Point, where the Friends of Whitefish Point operate an Owl Banding Station each spring, summer, and fall. During the program, you'll learn about the fascinating world of owl migration, research efforts, and conservation work taking place at the Point. If conditions are right, you may even have the extraordinary chance to see an owl up close as it is safely studied and banded before continuing its journey. (Limit 20)



Guides: Chris Neri and Nova Mackentley
Time: 8:30 PM – 1:00 AM
Location: Meet at Hessel School House, carpool to Whitefish Point
Please plan for approx. 1.5 hours of drive time to and from the banding site. Dress in layers as the weather is cooler near Lake Superior at night.
Tour Fee: \$35.00

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Birding by Ear

Greet the sunrise and listen to the dawn chorus as birds awaken the landscape. This guided walk will be led by two of Les Cheneaux's most passionate bird lovers, Duane and Clifford Utech, who will share their knowledge, keen eyes, and love for local birdlife. Perfect for beginners and experienced birders alike, this early-morning outing offers a quiet, memorable way to connect with nature. (Limit 15)



Guides: Duane & Cliff Utech

Time: 5:30 - 9:00 AM

Location: Meet at Hessel School House, carpool to location

Tour Fee: \$20.00

Wetland Birds of Munuscong Bay

Step into one of the Great Lakes' last great marsh landscapes on a guided morning walk at Munuscong Bay. This two-mile round-trip hike to the bay's dikes explores expansive wetlands that echo the vast marshes once common across the region. Led by naturalist Chace Scholten, participants will quietly observe birds that depend on these habitats for nesting and feeding. Black terns, sedge wrens, rails, along with a variety of ducks and warblers, are often seen gliding over open water or calling from the reeds. This immersive outing offers a chance to slow down, listen closely, and experience the richness of a thriving wetland ecosystem. (Limit 15)



Guide: Chace Scholten

Time: 7:00 AM - 11:00 AM

Location: Meet at Hessel School House, carpool to location

Tour Fee: \$20.00

Intro to Edible Plants and Mushrooms

Participants will take a guided nature hike to learn how to identify common edible plants and mushrooms, discuss ethical foraging practices, and gain practical tips for safe, responsible harvesting. This immersive class is ideal for beginners curious about wild foods and deepening their connection to the natural world. (Limit 12)



Guide: Eowyn Bates

Times: 8:30 - 11:30 AM and 2:00 PM - 5:00 PM (Repeated session)

Location: Meet at Hessel School House, carpool to location

Tour Fee: \$20.00

Carnivorous Plants

The lakeside fens and wetlands along Lake Huron's shoreline are home to an extraordinary group of plants that capture and digest insects in order to survive. These carnivorous plants thrive in nutrient-poor, sandy, and lime-rich soils where few other plants can compete. On this guided walk, we'll look for four fascinating types—butterworts, bladderworts, sundews, and pitcher plants—and learn how each attracts, traps, and digests its prey. Led by Steve Baker, this tour offers a close-up look at some of the Great Lakes region's most remarkable wetland plants. (Limit 15)



Guide: Steve Baker

Time: 8:30 - 11:30 AM

Location: Meet at Hessel School House, carpool to location

Tour Fee: \$20.00

Intro To Foraging

Join Michelle Jarvie for a guided introduction to spring foraging in the Eastern Upper Peninsula. This session begins with a short overview of ethical harvesting and plant identification, followed by a nature hike at a nearby location. Participants will learn to recognize common edible and medicinal plants, understand sustainable foraging practices, and gain confidence exploring the landscape. Perfect for beginners, this hands-on experience connects you with seasonal rhythms and the abundance of the natural world. (Limit 15)



Guide: Michelle Jarvie

Time: 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Location: Meet at Hessel School House, carpool to location

Tour Fee: \$20.00

Vernal Pools: Seasonal Wetlands and Citizen Science

Vernal pools are temporary—here one day and gone the next—but they play a critical role in forest ecosystems. These seasonal depressional wetlands provide essential habitat for distinctive plants and animals, many of which depend on vernal pools for part or all of their life cycle. Participants will learn how to identify vernal pools, understand their ecological importance, and discover the species that rely on them. The program also introduces opportunities to become a Citizen Scientist by participating in the Michigan State University and Michigan Natural Features Inventory Vernal Pool Patrol, helping to document and protect these important habitats. (Limit 15)



Guide: Sarah Reding

Time: 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Location: Hessel School House, then carpool to location

Tour Fee: \$20.00

Precious Pollinators

Butterflies and other pollinators play a vital—yet often overlooked—role in healthy ecosystems. On this guided nature hike, we'll explore meadows and trails in search of colorful butterflies and the plants they depend on throughout their life cycles. Learn how host plants support caterpillars, why diverse habitats matter, and how pollinators connect wild landscapes to our own gardens and food systems. This relaxed, observant walk is perfect for nature lovers of all ages who want to deepen their appreciation for these small but powerful partners in the natural world—and discover simple ways to help them thrive. (Limit 15)



Guide: Talus Rutger

Time: 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM and 2:00 PM - 5:00 PM

Location: Meet at Hessel School House, carpool to location

Tour Fee: \$20.00

Maxton Plains Preserve - An Alvar Grassland Community

Explore one of the Great Lakes region's most distinctive—and globally rare—ecosystems at The Nature Conservancy's Maxton Plains Preserve. Alvars form where thin soils over limestone bedrock create extreme conditions of drought, flooding, heat, and cold, allowing only highly specialized plants to thrive. With frequent stops for short walks and close observation, this guided outing will explore how geology, hydrology, and natural disturbance—especially fire and ice—shape this open grassland mosaic. The Maxton Plains are renowned for their botanical richness and host many regionally rare species. Participants may encounter prairie smoke, limestone-loving sedges, Hill's thistle, rock sandwort, and upland white goldenrod, each offering insight into the remarkable adaptations needed to survive on exposed bedrock. (Limit 20)



Guide: Rob Ayotte

Time: 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Location: Drummond Island Visitor Center
34974 S. Townline Road, Drummond Island, MI 49726

Tour Fee: \$20.00

NOTE: Drummond Island Ferry ticket is not included. Ferry schedule and fees available online at <https://tinyurl.com/DIFerry>. Also, due to heavy weekend traffic, it is suggested to catch the 7:40 AM ferry if possible and arrive early. The drive to the Visitor Center is 8 miles from the ferry you land on Drummond Island.

Great Lakes Bird Migration

Dave Ewert, a conservation biologist with The Nature Conservancy and the American Bird Conservancy, will explore the remarkable journey of migratory birds and the habitats that support them. Drawing on decades of research in Michigan, he will highlight the importance of critical stopover sites along the northern Lake Huron shoreline and Great Lakes islands, where birds find essential food and rest during migration. His work has been especially influential in conserving species such as the Kirtland's Warbler. During this session, Ewert will share updates on migratory bird research, discuss how these landscapes influence migration success, and explain why protecting stopover habitats is vital to the future of migratory birds.



Presenter: Dave Ewert

Time: 11:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Location: Hessel School House, Assembly Room

Tour Fee: \$10.00

Modern Trail Stewardship in Leopold's Foot-steps: Active Volunteer & Discussion Session with The Nature Conservancy

Join the Nature Conservancy for a walk-and-talk discussion and active volunteer session as we put Aldo Leopold's Land Ethic into action! We will meet at the Bush Bay Trail (AKA "Narnia") which has seen an astonishing increase in use - and subsequent impacts to the land - since recently going viral on social media. We will walk a section of the trail and stop along the way to install signage, clear brush and perform other simple tasks together (TBD based on weather and current need). TNC will also talk about practical management techniques to help balance the need for people to recreate in nature and the need to protect fragile ecosystems, and how you can help wherever you are recreating. A variety of relatively easy but critically important volunteer tasks to help TNC prepare the trail for summer visitation will be available for participants to choose from, based on their own abilities and skills. Tools and materials will be provided. Participants must be willing to sign a TNC waiver, must be over 18 and must wear sturdy, closed-toed shoes. The Bush Bay Trail is rocky and uneven, with large steps up and down over rocks and roots; it is likely to be muddy and slippery in spots, and may have flooded sections. (Limit 12)



Presenter: Andrea Daar and The Nature Conservancy staff

Time: 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM

Location: Bush Bay Overlook parking area, east of Cedarville
Map to location will be provided.

Fee: \$10.00

Dead Moose on Isle Royale

Dead Moose of Isle Royale takes audiences deep into one of North America's wildest national parks and the world's longest-running predator-prey study. Author and Wolf-Moose Foundation board president Jeffrey Holden shares stories from years spent trekking Isle Royale's rugged interior with teams of citizen scientists searching for fallen moose. Braving brutal weather, difficult terrain, and heavy bone packs, volunteers collect vital data that helps researchers understand the complex relationships among moose, wolves, climate change, and parasites. Blending vivid wilderness adventure with accessible science, this lecture offers a rare look at how ordinary people contribute to extraordinary ecological discovery—and why this iconic ecosystem matters now more than ever



Presenter: Jeffrey Holden

Time: 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM

Location: Hessel School House, Assembly Room

Presentation Fee: \$10.00

Keeping a Nature Journal

"The journal is a room of your own, as a place of retreat...as well as a way of participating in the life around you..." This nature journaling workshop features fun and engaging activities that build the skills of a scientist, naturalist, artist, and observer. This program will connect science, language arts, visual arts, and mindfulness through a series of fun and engaging activities. Bring your camera or smartphone to capture nature during a short walk through the storybook trail then return to the classroom for sketching, coloring, and interpreting the world you explore. All materials will be supplied. (Limit 12)



Art Instructor: Carol Hubbard

Time: 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM

Location: Hessel School House, East Classroom

Class Fee: \$30.00

Aldo, the Naturalist Map, and You

Aldo was an avid personal map maker throughout his life and you'll discover that maps don't have to be fancy or even precise to be useful at capturing important information like your favorite hike, a road trip, how a place evolves, or even your garden in a meaningful way. We will look at examples of personal maps and then, fresh with ideas, you will be guided through starting your own personal map making project. Basic supplies provided. (Limit 12)



Instructor: Sue Bakkila

Time: 2:00 PM – 4:00 PM

Location: Woods & Waters, 633 W M-134, Cedarville

Class Fee: \$20.00

SAVE THE TREE SWALLOWS!

Paint a Birdhouse at Pickle Point

138 S Pickford Avenue ~ Downtown Hessel

Saturday, May 30, 2026

10:30 AM - 4:00 PM

Traditional Wood Swallow House: \$15.00 each

GreenBird House: Free



Call Pickle Point directly to reserve your art time: **906-484-3479**

Wetland Birds of Munuscong Bay

Munuscong Bay provides a shining example of the massive and sprawling Great Lakes marshes and wetlands that were once found across every region of the Great Lakes. The two-mile round-trip hike to the dikes on Munuscong Bay is a great place to see birds that love the wetlands and make it their favorite place to nest and call home. Black terns, sedge wrens, rails, and a variety of ducks and warblers are seen most years. (Limit 15)



Guide: Chace Scholten

Time: 7:00 – 11:00 AM

Location: Meet at Hessel School House, carpool to location

Tour Fee: \$20.00

Birding the Woollam Preserve

The Woollam Preserve is a favorite to explore with its easy trails through a mixed deciduous and coniferous forest with 4,300 feet of stunning, glacial erratic shoreline. It affords a wealth of migratory birdlife and flowering native plants to please the eye of the truly discerning. (Limit 15)



Guide: Dave Ewert

Time: 7:00 AM – 11:00 AM

Location: Meet at Hessel School House, carpool to location

Tour Fee: \$20.00

Birding Les Cheneaux Area

Hotspots by Car

This trip will explore a variety of local hot spots by carpool, starting with the local wastewater lagoons as well as a few nearby protected bays and marshes, which are great spots for amazing breeding bird species. We will also look for breeding waterfowl, shore birds, marsh birds, and warblers. This trip will include easy, short hikes to view birds at each location. Please bring your own binoculars, observing birds without them will be very difficult. (Limit 15)



Guide: Sarah Reding

Time: 8:00 AM – 11:00 AM

Location: Meet at Hessel School House then caravan to nearby locations

Tour Fee: \$20.00

Secretive Marsh Birds

Join us for an early morning trip to the marsh! On this field tour, we will share an introduction to the secretive marshbirds that call the Les Cheneaux Islands home in the summer. We will visit examples of Great Lakes marsh communities and discuss the importance of wetlands for secretive marshbirds such as rails, bitterns, and pied-billed grebes. We will broadcast marshbird calls and listen for these secretive marsh dwellers. Muck boots or rubber boots are highly recommended for this field outing. (Limit 15)



Guide: Elliot Nelson

Time: 8:00 AM – 11:00 AM

Location: Meet at Hessel School House, carpool to location

Tour Fee: \$20.00

Orchids and Wildflowers

The eastern Upper Peninsula is home to a remarkable network of nature preserves that protect a wide variety of habitats, from shoreline limestone and open wetlands to rich northern forests. This field trip will visit several carefully selected sites in search of spring-blooming wildflowers, offering a chance to experience the region at one of its most colorful and fleeting moments. Highlights may include iconic species such as Dwarf Lake Iris, gaywings, Bird's-eye Primrose, and Lakeside Daisy. With a bit of luck, we may also encounter early-season orchids, including Yellow and Pink Lady's Slippers, Striped and Early Coralroot, Ram's-head Lady's Slipper, and the delicate Heart-leaved Twayblade. Expect a relaxed pace, close observation, and plenty of time to appreciate the diversity and beauty of these special places. (Limit 15)



Guide: Steve Baker

Times: 8:30 AM – 11:30 AM

Location: Meet at Hessel School House, carpool to location

Tour Fee: \$20.00



Les Cheneaux Shop Hop

May 22 – May 30, 2026

Get ready to explore, shop, and win! Grab your passport at the Hessel School House and start your adventure through the charming shops, galleries, and businesses of the Les Cheneaux area. Collect stamps from participating locations – no purchase required – and when you gather five stamps, you'll be entered to win a fabulous prize baskets!

Want even more chances to win? Every purchase you make along the way earns you an extra entry slip for the drawing!

The more you explore, the more opportunities you have to win – and discover all the unique treasures our local businesses have to offer. Be sure to turn in your completed passport at the Hessel School House. **The Shop Hop Passport drop-off deadline is Saturday, May 30 before 6:00 PM.**

Shop local. Stamp often. WIN BIG!



SATURDAY, MAY 30
FESTIVAL PICNIC

Picnic served 6:00-8:00 PM

Award and prize presentations begin at 7:00 PM

Dinner catered by:



Join us for a delightful evening of connecting with fellow festival attendees while you savor a picnic dinner catered by the Les Cheneaux Culinary School accompanied by live Americana music from the talented Bear Berends and friends.

Afterwards we will announce the winners of the photo contest, Shop Hop winners and more. It's an event not to be missed! Limited tickets available. Reservations required.

Tickets: \$35/person

Includes picnic buffet dinner, lemonade, ice tea, or water.

You are also welcome to bring your beverage of choice.

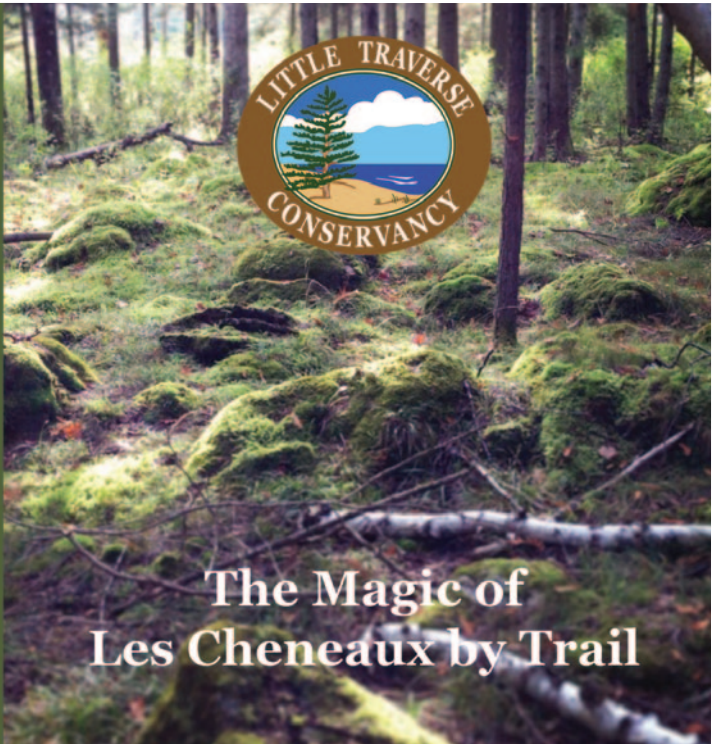
**Reservations
close on May 15th!**
*Be sure to get your tickets early
to avoid disappointment.*



Visit
LTC trails
protected by
and for the
community of
Les Cheneaux

*such as the
William B. Derby
Nature Preserve
1308 W. Club Rd.
Cedarville*

*Discover many
more in the
Trails & Nature
Preserves
brochure found
at the Hessel
Schoolhouse.
or at
www.landtrust.org.*



**The Magic of
Les Cheneaux by Trail**

Helpful Tips for Attendee

Registration

Before attending any Aldo Leopold Festival events, all participants must pre-register for the festival, either online at www.aldoleopoldfestival.org, by calling 906-484-1333, or by visiting the Hessel School House Tuesday - Saturday 9:00 am - 4:00 pm.

New this year, there is no festival pass required to attend events, but advanced registration is still required. Each tour, workshop and lecture has it's own fee. Each participant will be given a registration packet with a name tag identifying you as a participant. Please wear your badge or have it ready to identify yourself as a participant.

Weather, Mosquitoes, and Ticks, Oh My!

Temperatures can vary wildly in the spring, as well as by proximity to Lake Huron, so consider dressing in layers. It also should be no surprise that bugs and insects exist in Les Cheneaux – the birds and bats are grateful for that! Mosquitoes and ticks can be abundant in some areas, so plan accordingly. Consider using insect repellent for mosquitoes and treating your footwear with permethrin for ticks. Wearing lighter-colored pants and tucking pants into socks can also make spotting ticks easier.

No Pets Please

The mere presence of pets alters the natural behavior of wildlife, which can alter the experience of our tours. Dogs are predators that can chase, scare and transmit diseases to local wildlife. Therefore, **pets are NOT allowed on any of the nature walks, hiking trips, birdwatching tours, or adventure tours.** Pets may not be left unattended in vehicles. Pet excrement must be immediately collected by the pet handler and disposed of in the nearest trash receptacle. Service animals that have been individually trained to perform specific task(s) for the benefit of an individual with a disability are allowed. Therapy, companion, or comfort animals are not service animals under the Americans with Disabilities Act and are restricted from outdoor tours. Certain exceptions may be made only with the approval of the guide and festival committee prior to the event.

Birding Apps

Please ask your guide and others in your group if you may use a bird sound app or playback sound on your electronic devices while birdwatching. Even if it's allowed, use playback sparingly and limit it mostly to identification purposes and not to make the birds come closer to you.

Cell Phones

Please mute your cell phone and refrain from use during tours, trips and presentations.



Emergencies: Call 9-1-1


Hessel School House

Phone: 906-484-1333

Email: office@hesselschoolhouse.net

DISCOVER NEW PATHS

EXPLORE NORTHERN LAKE HURON



Enjoy a guided audio tour of
**Carl A. Gerstacker Nature
Preserve at Dudley Bay**



Explore the alvar ecosystem
at **Maxton Plains Preserve**
on Drummond Island



Take a hike on the shoreline at
John Arthur Woollam Preserve

Find your next adventure: [nature.org/miexplore](https://www.nature.org/miexplore)

2- & 4-
Seater SxS
Rentals



ORV Parts &
Accessories
Available

BEAVERS

ON DRUMMOND ISLAND

SIDE-BY-SIDE RENTALS

Drummond Island has over 60 miles of 50" trails and 40 miles of 72" routes for you to explore on your self-guided tour.

Drummond Island's trails and routes vary from easy gravel roadways to rugged, rocky two-tracks. Explore the Steps at Marblehead, Fossil Ledges, Shale Beach, Glen Cove, the rare Alvar ecosystem, beautiful sugar maple forests, cedar swamps, and rocky beaches. Watch for white-tailed deer, black bear, sandhill cranes, beaver, eagles and much more!

Beavers on Drummond Island

Side-by-Side Rentals

35239 E. Johnswood Rd

Drummond Island, MI 49726

906-430-8448

www.beaversondi.com



*Proud sponsor of the
Aldo Leopold Festival*



UPCOMING EVENTS

May 15 - June 6, 2026

Annual Pike Fishing Contest

June 13, 2026

Annual Banquet

Township Community Center

August 15, 2026

Waterfowl Festival and

50 Gun Raffle Drawing

August 22, 2026

Slammin' Salmon Tournament

Late February/Early March 2027

Steve Tassier Memorial

Fishing Tournament



For additional information, visit
www.facebook.com/IslandsWildlife

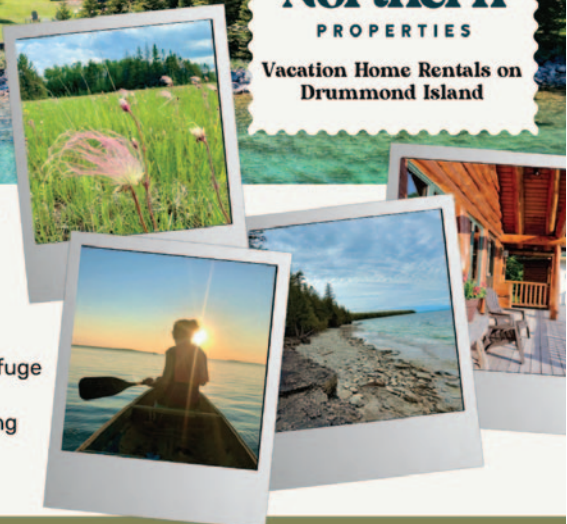


Northern
PROPERTIES

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There's more to discover on Drummond Island!

- Maxton Plains Alavar
- Fossil Ledges
- Shale Beach
- Harbor Island National Wildlife Refuge
- North Huron Birding Trail
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- Kayaking
- 40+ Miles of ORV & ATV Trails



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10 Nature Preserves

to explore in the Eastern Upper Peninsula



1. Birge/Mertaugh/Nye Nature Preserves

This 528-acre preserve features beautiful wildflowers, excellent migratory bird habitat, and 1.5 miles of Lake Huron shore. A 2.2 mile trail follows a historic road looping through the cedar forest and wetlands. A separate, short (.1 mile) trail takes visitors to scenic Loon Lake.

2. Clark Township's Hessel Beach

Since 1994 this township park has offered free parking, a place to carry kayaks and canoes to the water, a swimming beach, and public restrooms. An excellent access point for experienced paddlers who are headed out to LTC's Marquette Island preserves.

3. Marquette Island Nature Preserves

More than 1,900 acres and five miles of Lake Huron shoreline are protected with the Seiberling Stewart, Aldo Leopold, and Sheppard-Hardy preserves on this island within Les Cheneaux. (Leopold is 1,683 acres alone.) A public park in Hessel provides one access point for paddlers (See Hessel Beach above).

4. William B. Derby Nature Preserve

This 200-acre preserve includes an all-season, nearly three mile, figure eight, trail loop. The trail meanders through natural, moss-covered rock gardens, evergreen forest, and along the rugged Lake Huron shore. Because of its easy access to town, this preserve is becoming a local favorite and trails are generally compacted for snowshoeing in the winter.

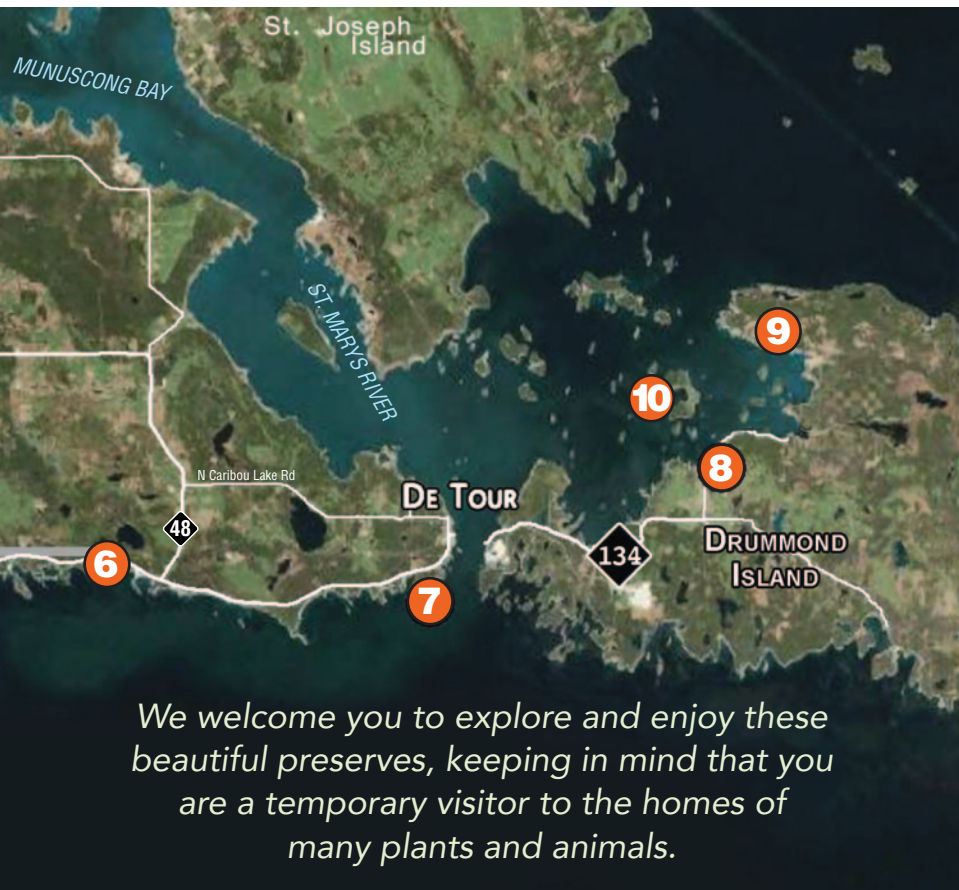
5. John Arthur Woollam Preserve

The 185-acre preserve consists of 4,300 feet of stunning rocky shoreline with huge boulders and coastal wetlands, and a coniferous forest grading into northern hardwoods. The preserve offers significant shoreline for migratory and breeding birds, and habitat for plant species such as Houghton's goldenrod.

6. Carl A. Gerstacker Nature Preserve

Enjoy five miles of beautiful shoreline across four bays on Lake Huron, two small islands, Big and Little Trout Lakes, and parts of two creeks. Visitors might also see a variety of animals including loon, pileated woodpecker, osprey, wolf, and several species of neotropical migratory songbirds such as the American redstart and magnolia warbler.





We welcome you to explore and enjoy these beautiful preserves, keeping in mind that you are a temporary visitor to the homes of many plants and animals.

7. De Tour Peninsula Nature Preserve

More than three miles of northern Lake Huron shoreline and 145 acres on Point DeTour comprise this gorgeous Great Lakes preserve. From the parking area a two-track trail leads through middle of preserve. You have to pick your own way to the rugged shoreline from the trail.

8. Clyde and Martha Williams Preserve

This 80-acre Little Traverse Conservancy preserve on Drummond Island include an easy 1.3 mile trail system. Points of interest include several forest types and an old stone wall.

9. Maxton Plains Preserve

The 1,210-acre Maxton Plains Preserve protects the globally significant alvar landscape and 10 Michigan state rare plants, eight found in the Alvars and two found in the forests. The alvars found on Drummond Island are the largest remaining high-quality alvars in North America. The Maxton Plains Preserve protects nesting and feeding habitat for the state-threatened osprey and potentially for grassland, forest, and shore birds.

10. Harbor Island National Wildlife Refuge

Harbor Island National Wildlife Refuge is a 695-acre horseshoe-shaped island, located just two miles off the coast of Drummond Island. The island has a large, marsh-lined harbor popular with boaters. The islands have sandy beaches and mature stands of balsam fir, white cedar, paper birch, sugar maple and red oak. The gently rolling terrain of the island peaks around 100-feet above lake level. Resident wildlife species include ruffed grouse, snowshoe hare, white-throated sparrows, white-tailed deer, gray jays and magnolia warblers. Open from dawn to dusk. No overnighting allowed on the island.

For more information about these preserves, visit:

Little Traverse Conservancy
www.landtrust.org

The Nature Conservancy
www.nature.org

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
www.fws.gov/refuge/harbor-island



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