

Taking Nature to the Classroom

Gladwin High School teacher Chad Donahue lights up when talking about the projects his students are working on. And there are a lot of them.

Students are growing native plants to use as a fundraiser. Others are working together to build a better pond for a class turtle. Another student is combining art and science to sculpt elephant tusks.

"A lot of times I'm taking four or five independent study students," Mr. Donahue said. "It works almost like a grad program, because it's all junior or seniors."

These are just some of the ways Mr. Donahue is bringing nature to his classroom.

"If you're learning about nature and

biology, but all you do is sit in the classroom then you're probably not doing a very good job," he said. "You have to be out there where it is."

Little Forks has become increasingly involved in helping Mr. Donahue's students get outside.

Andrea Foster, conservation outreach coordinator, has joined his classes for a rusty crayfish survey, salmon releases, and more.

"It's been an amazing partnership," Mr. Donahue said. "Andrea and I, we're just bouncing things off each other all the time."

Mr. Donahue sees the value of partnering with Little Forks as more than knowledge sharing.

"Andrea has become a mentor and a good friend to many of my



Gladwin High School teacher Chad Donahue in the school's greenhouse. Growing native plants is just one way he is introducing nature to his students.

students," he said. "As far as a role model, you can't even put a value on that. They can see what she's doing and have something to shoot for."

His efforts have grown over the years, and we hope to continue to be a part of his success.

Read more at <http://bit.ly/LFC052017>.

Volunteers Complete Stream Sampling of Cedar River



More than 30 volunteers helped collect, sort and identify macroinvertebrates from the Cedar River. The species they collect help determine the water quality at each site. The results are shared with the State of Michigan. To learn more or see the latest results, visit www.littleforks.org/stream-sampling.

The Little Forks Conservancy permanently protects and preserves natural lands that add to the quality of life in our mid-Michigan community.



Director: The Feeling of Spring

by Greg Yankee,
Executive Director

“It is Spring again. The Earth is like a child that knows poems by heart” – Rilke

What a wonderful way to think about what has been happening all around us the past few months!

The sun is shining, flowers and trees are blooming, and more shades of green than that one word can seemingly capture appear every day.

While I was in college, I studied abroad in Ireland and took the opportunity of learning the official language, Irish (which most people mistakenly refer to as Gaelic!).

Something that has stuck with me since then is that the Irish have two separate words for the color green. One is mostly used for things that are alive – like

grass; the other is mostly used for things that are not alive – like a shirt.

Now, a linguist would likely tell us that this is not surprising for an agrarian society, especially one located on an island. The Rilke-inspired poet in me, however, prefers to see that distinction as one anybody who spends time in nature knows firmly and deeply: the new green of young leaves in Forestview or Szok Preserve is different than my green jacket. The greenness of our office grounds or a Riverview trail is different than a Spartan coffee mug. That difference is precisely the poem the Earth knows by heart and what we call Spring.

So here’s to spending time in your garden or on one of our trails or traveling our beautiful region and state. I hope to see you out and about!

Joelle Says “See You Around”

by Joelle Ferguson,
Community Relations
Director

For nearly eleven years, it has been my pleasure to put together this newsletter. I’ve loved sharing the exciting things that are happening at

Little Forks with you, our wonderful members!

And there’s been a lot to share! I’m very proud of what you have helped us achieve.

I am so grateful for the support of our members, and I know Little Forks will continue to accomplish great work!

Starting in June, I’m taking on a new role with Midland Center for the Arts. Thank you for an amazing adventure!



See how your gift made an impact!
2016 Annual Report Available Now
at <http://bit.ly/LFC2016>

Schedule Your Site Visit

Nice weather means that it’s time again for Conservation@Home site visits!

Whether you’re already including Conservation@Home practices or simply want to learn more, Andrea Foster can help!

Contact Andrea at 989.835.4886 or afoster@littleforks.org to



schedule your site visit today!

Learn more about how you can bring nature to your yard at www.littleforks.org.

Averill Construction Beginning

Thanks to the generous support of local foundations, businesses, and members like you, Little Forks has reached our initial fundraising goal and will begin construction on our Access for All project!

The project will create our first hard-surface trail, improve the Overlook, create a nature play area, and improve native planting areas.

A portion of the property will be closed for several weeks during construction.

“We know that many people love to explore the Averill Preserve,”



said Greg Yankee, executive director.

“We greatly appreciate everyone’s cooperation as we work to make it accessible for all.”

Little Forks is hoping that construction will begin soon.

“Both the board and staff are looking forward to sharing the results of this wonderful project with our community,” said Greg.





Welcome New Board Members

Little Forks Conservancy is thrilled to welcome Sue Erhardt, Mary Haslam and Sally Hightower to our Board of Directors.

Sue is a lab director at Michigan State University.

Mary is retired from The Dow Chemical Company.

Sally is retired from Gladwin Public Schools. She also worked with Little Forks to protect her 37.5 acre tree farm last year.

Sue, Mary and Sally each bring a passion for nature to the board.

Find out more about Sue, Mary and Sally at <http://bit.ly/LFC051917>.



Sue Erhardt, Mary Haslam, and Sally Hightower have been elected to our board of directors. We're excited to bring their diverse talents to our board!

Three Long-Time Board Members Retire

After nine years, Bill Gebo and Jerry Ziarno have reached their term limit. Greg Dardas has also retired from the board after 6 years.

We are grateful for their service to the board over the years.

During his service, Bill helped Little Forks acquire two nature preserves. He also became involved statewide with Heart of the Lakes Center for Land Conservation Policy and nationally with TerraFirma, the



Bill Gebo

conservation defense insurance program.

During Jerry's service, he helped shape the organization through his work on the Land, Stewardship, and Board Development



Jerry Ziarno

Committees. He also shared his love of birding by helping identify birds at our nature preserves.

We thank Bill, Jerry, and Greg for their commitment to Little Forks Conservancy!



Memorials and Honoraria

The following donors have made gifts to The Little Forks Conservancy on behalf of friends and family.

In Memory of Alice Sias
Catherine Sias
James & Nancy Pollack

In Memory of Joseph Papp
Mark & Joann Doyle

Field Season is Underway!

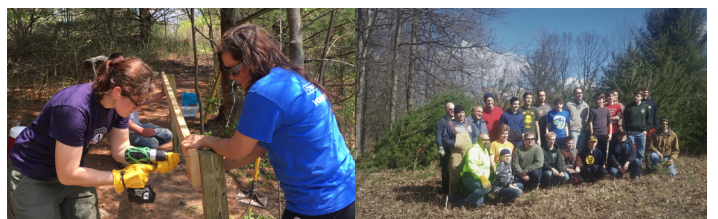
Volunteers have already been hard at work helping get Little Forks ready for summer!

Volunteers helped clear the trails, create new wildlife habitat, install structures to reduce erosion and more!

You can lend a hand at one of these upcoming workdays!

Join us at Riverview Natural Area June 15 from 1 to 3 p.m. to help us reroute a trail and clear vegetation.

Or help out on June 28 from 4 to 6 p.m. at the Averill Preserve for a summer clean-up. We'll be working along Averill Creek and removing invasive species.



Left: AmeriCorps member Sara gets some help from a volunteer with Comerica Bank. **Right:** Tyler Rabidue led a group to install rabbit habitat.

For full details, contact AmeriCorps member Sara at shuettman@littleforks.org.





The Little Forks Conservancy
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wild about nature

Your Spring Newsletter

2017 Chippewa Nature Center Programs with Little Forks Conservancy

Salamander Meander at Riverview Natural Area

Fri., June 16 | 2-3:30 pm

Silent and secretive, salamanders are often a creature of mystery. Join CNC Interpretive Naturalist Michelle Fournier as we hike and turn over logs to look for these shy amphibians.

We'll even check out any remaining vernal pools for salamander young!



Looking Under Logs at Forestview Natural Area

Thursday, July 20 | 6-7:30 p.m.

Worms, slugs, pill bugs and salamanders are just a few examples of life under a rotting log. Come flip logs with Interpretive Naturalist Michelle Fournier to discover what other treasures can be found in this unique microhabitat.

An Evening with Bela Hubbard at Averill Preserve

Tuesday, September 26 | 6-7 p.m.

By wagon, on foot and in canoes, three men (and a dog) set out to explore the new state of Michigan in September, 1837.

Join Kyle Bagnall in a costumed, first-person presentation based on the life of Bela Hubbard — geologist, naturalist, surveyor and explorer — as he describes an autumn journey 180 years ago when “there were no highways but the streams.”



Details and directions at www.chippewanaturecenter.org



See Us at the Farmers Market!

Little Forks Conservancy is sponsoring the Midland Farmers Market!

Stop by our booth on June 7, July 12, and August 16 to get the latest news!

MOVIES ON MAIN

Join us for a screening of

“LION”

June 21 • 9PM

Details at

www.moviesonmain.org