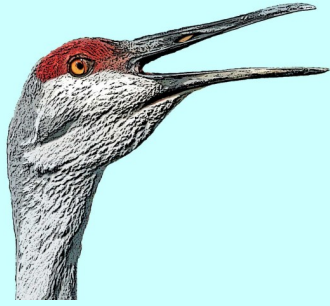


Haehnle Sanctuary News



Phyllis Haehnle Memorial Sanctuary

Owned By the Michigan Audubon Society

Maintained and Operated by The Jackson Audubon Society

Preserving and Protecting our Natural World

Fall 2022



From Where and Why Do Visitors Come?



The Haehnle sanctuary is well known as a good place for people to view wildlife, walk trails through a variety of plant communities, learn about various conservation practices, and just enjoy being outdoors. Where do these people come from and why? Some of them sign the visitor registry located at the Harold Wing Observation Site. Examining the registry sheets gives an indication of how far they have traveled and what they value at the sanctuary.

During the past four years, people have traveled from an amazing variety of places and distances. Of course, many are repeat visitors from southern Michigan and usually they don't sign the registry while others do take time to leave written comments. For example, one couple from the local area wrote "We love this place and come here a couple of times a week". Another person wrote "I always come here to calm down Thank you" while a couple from Ann Arbor remarked "still beautiful after 30 yrs."

Visitors from at least 34 states took time to sign the registry, most but not all for the first time. Not surprisingly, the majority came from Ohio.

Those traveling further came from California, Oregon, Washington on the west coast while others from the east coast came from Maine, Massachusetts, North Carolina, and Florida.

Haehnle's appeal extends to other countries. Visitors listed ten other countries of origin including North Korea (yes North Korea), South Korea, Peru, England, Germany, Netherlands, Austria, Poland, Denmark and of course Canada. Many learned of the sanctuary online or from friends living in the area.

Birds are of course the main attraction, especially when cranes are staging prior to migration in the autumn. A man from Massachusetts wrote "Look at the size of them", while another person commented "Excited to see Cranes" and another took time to write "Heard Am. Bittern calling from marsh".

Haehnle is more than a bird sanctuary for many people. Several remarked about seeing and hearing lots of frogs while another person was impressed by seeing a snake. Comments like "Beautiful!", "Peaceful", "Look at that View" and "Thank You" tell how Haehnle truly is a sanctuary for many reasons.

By Ron Hoffman

Come for the Fall Color!

Haehnle's trails are at their best in the fall. Prairies are ablaze with goldenrod and other bright yellow blossoms. The woodlands offer a colorful tapestry of reds, yellows, oranges, purples and coppery browns.

Shrubs are laden with colorful berries. Wildlife activity is high. Squirrels and chipmunks are scampering everywhere as they add to their winter larder.

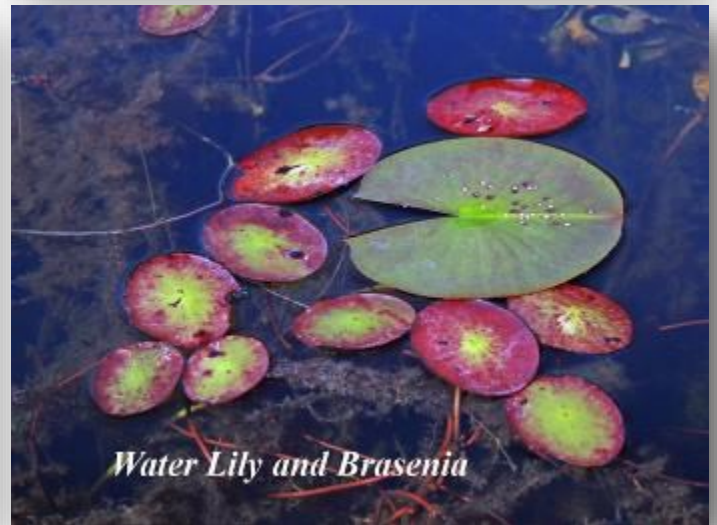
At times thousands of migrating blackbirds cover the sky. Their summer songs are replaced with the short call notes emitted as they fly by. Wetlands have their special colors. The smell of fall is in the air!



Virginia Creeper



Flowering Dogwood



Water Lily and Brasenia



Gray Dogwood



Sassafras

Don't Miss Out on This Wonderful Experience!



Sweetest Day is the third Saturday in October. It's a day to do something sweet for someone you love. Color this tree and put your picture in the heart. Then give it to someone in your family tree!

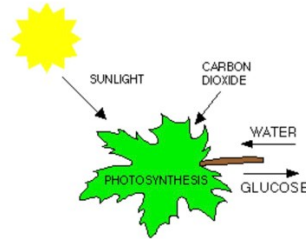


***Strong roots produce
beautiful leaves***

How Do Leaves Change Color?

By taking water from the ground through their roots and a gas called carbon dioxide from the air, plants feed themselves.

Water and carbon dioxide turn into food and oxygen, another gas in the air that we people need too breathe,



so plants help us. Plants also make their food using sunlight and something called chlorophyll, which gives leaves their green color.

In the fall, days are shorter and drier, and many plants stop making food. The chlorophyll goes away, and we see orange and yellow colors. These colors were there all summer, but the green covered them up.

Some leaves turn red, a color made from food trapped in the leaves. Brown leaf colors come from wastes left in the leaves.

What did one autumn leaf say to the other?



"I'm falling for you!"

Astro Bash At Haehnle Sanctuary

Hi! My name is Andrew Euscher and I am a physics and astronomy teacher at Northwest High School in Jackson Michigan. I started teaching an astronomy elective course in the spring of 2021. Enrollment and excitement about the class was immediately very high. Sadly there is only so much astronomy you can teach inside of a classroom.

To truly learn how to stargaze you need to find a dark sky and look up. When I took astronomy in high school my teacher hosted “star parties” at a local park a couple times a trimester. These star parties were nighttime meetings of our astronomy class as a way to practice stargazing. They were so much fun! Definitely one of my highlights from high school.

I knew when I started teaching astronomy that I had to find a way to replicate these for my students. There were two main issues though, naming and location. What to call my nighttime stargazing meetings was an unexpected issue. I assumed I would call them “star parties” because that is what my teacher called them and that is the standard name for meetings of this type in the astronomy community.

The problem was, the word “party” has always meant a specific thing to high schoolers and my school's administration did not want any part of that. So I came up with a novel idea: I would let the students name the event. Surely no administrator would crush a student's creativity by rejecting the name they came up with. I tasked my astronomy club with naming and they came up with the name “Astro Bash”.

Admin approved it and Astro Bash was born! Location is always a very contentious issue with stargazing. You need to be free of light pollution but you also want your location to be easily accessible. No one wants to trek 3 hours into the wilderness with a heavy telescope. Thankfully I had solved this problem beforehand. In early 2020 a Comet named “Neowise” was discovered plunging through the solar system towards Earth. It was predicted to be visible from a dark sky location in July.



Being the astronomy nut that I am, I immediately knew I had to see it. I just needed a dark sky location and some dedication.

I searched and searched for good locations around Jackson and came upon the Haehnle Audubon Sanctuary. I had gone hiking there a few months before and loved it. It is a very calm nature preserve surrounding a wetland. Due to the wetland, there is an enormous “sky box” (area of open sky) in the middle of the sanctuary. In July of 2020, I successfully observed Comet Neowise at the Haehnle Sanctuary, it was a beautiful moment.

In the fall of 2021 I told my Astronomy students about the Haehnle Sanctuary and asked them what they thought about hosting Astro Bashes there. They loved the idea. It has the perfect mix of close to Jackson, a dark sky, a huge sky box and easily accessible with a large parking lot. So far we have hosted 3 Astro Bashes there, one in October, one in November and one in December.

Students have loved it and learned so much! Seeing the craters on The Moon, the exceptional brightness of Venus and the beauty of Saturn's rings were highlights. Astro Bashes are on hold now until the weather warms up but I have more planned for the spring, summer and fall of 2022. Thank you to the Haehnle Sanctuary for providing a perfect location for students and parents to see the exceptional beauty of space with their own eyes.

Some Quotes from Students: “It is a great place for an Astro Bash because it is really flat, very open and well groomed” - Megan Daniels “You really can see a lot of stars from the Haehnle Sanctuary” - Leah Hanks “It has a great sky box and fun wildlife” - Ben Shephard

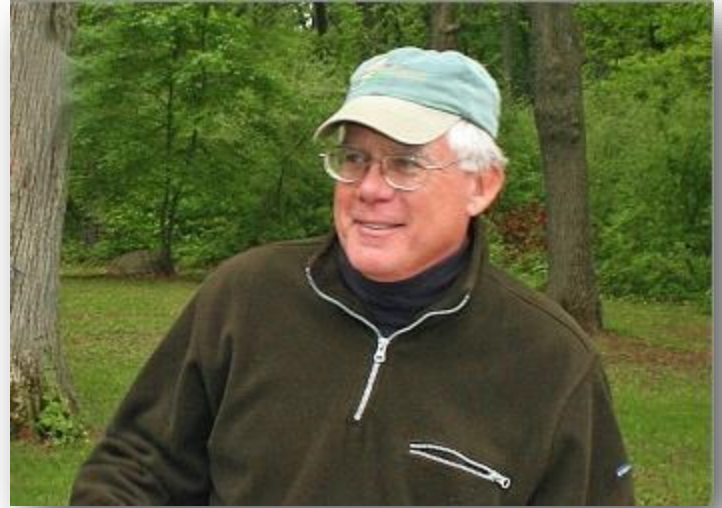
By Andrew Euscher



Thank You Gary!!!

This past August, Gary Siegrist stepped down after nearly six years as the Chairperson of the Haehnle Sanctuary Committee. A potluck meeting held in the flower-filled yard of Bill and Cheryl Wells, gave former committee chairs, Lathe Claflin and Ron Hoffman, the opportunity to pay a tribute.

Interestingly both described him a a “people person” who connected easily with everyone and made an extra effort to reach out to visitors of the sanctuary. Lathe described him as “The Haehnle Ambassador.” Gary was presented with a painting of a Rough-legged Hawk by Carl Freeman, a thank you from the entire committee. Steve Jerant was nominated as the next committee chair and the members voted unanimous approval.



Gary Receiving Red-shouldered Hawk Print



After studying horticulture, Gary started his own landscaping business, and also managing the Siegrist Family's Waterloo Golf Course. He also joined the Jackson and Michigan Audubon Societies, eventually serving a term as president in each organization.

As an active member of the Haehnle Sanctuary Committee Gary was involved in various projects. Together with Lathe Claflin and Don Siegrist and Ron Hoffman, he erected an Osprey nesting platform built by Stockbridge High School students. When the Childs Family donated the funds to construct a kiosk on the Harold Wing Overlook in memory of their son, Tobin, Gary volunteered his expertise as a builder.

Gary Siegrist came to his position with years of personal history with Haehnle, as well as professional experience and recreational interests that added to his role.

Gary describes himself as a youngster who just loved being outdoors and exploring all things natural. When he was 7, his Uncle Bill Riggs and his wife, Irene, took him to his first Jackson Audubon Meeting and nurtured his interest in birds. He accompanied his uncle on Christmas Bird Counts.

Gary was first introduced to Haehnle Sanctuary by Professor Myrna Berlett who took her biology students there to view birds at the Harold Wing Overlook. With his interest sparked, he spoke with then Chair Ron Hoffman. (both being acquainted through their family memberships in St. Jacob's Lutheran Church.) Ron then introduced him to the Haehnle workbees.



Gary Building Kiosk

Continued on page 6.

Thank You Gary, continued

Gary became Chair of the Sanctuary Committee in August of 2017 after spending almost a decade at Dahlem Center as a naturalist and land manager.

During his chairmanship at Haehnle several notable projects have been accomplished. The weekly work crew was organized and supervised by Gary, who often joined their efforts. They made huge improvements to the sanctuary. Removing invasives and improving habitat, clearing land for the north prairie, building benches for the Bob Whiting Overlook at Eagle Lake, clearing and creating the new trail north of Eagle Lake, building boardwalks, rebuilding Wooster road parking lot, and much more.

**Gary and Bob Whiting giving presentations
At the Dedication of the Schroeder Tract**



Jim Rossman, one of the regulars on the work crew, wrote: *"Gary certainly provided well respected leadership of the Haehnle volunteers. On work days, he was always ready with a plan, and willing to explain the whys and wherefores as well as answering any questions."*

Gary was also very good at making sure that we always had the necessary supplies on hand. Much appreciated as well, was Gary's willingness to share with us his extensive knowledge of the sanctuary and the natural world."



Building Osprey Platform



In August 2018, Heather Good of MA, Ron Hoffman and Gary signed the papers for the purchase of the 25 acres of the Smith Property, now called the Peter and Gwyneth Schroeder Tract. This land acquisition helped secure the boundary on the west side of the sanctuary, ensuring no development. This acquisition was the result of numerous hours of work by the subcommittee of Gary, Lathe Claflin and Ron Hoffman.

The Bogus Lake Fen Project was completed during Gary's Chairmanship as well. In 2014 the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service provided funds for the removal of the invasive Buckthorn and the planting of native plants to support wildlife of this ecosystem. Jackson Audubon, Michigan Audubon, and other conservation organizations also provided funds for this successful project which now supports wildlife appropriate to this 60-acre jewel

Aptly described as a people person, Gary was active in various organizations prior to becoming Sanctuary Chairman. The relationships he established in these groups enhanced the profile of Haehnle in the community and beyond and, in many instances, provided reciprocal bridges with Haehnle Sanctuary.

For example, Gary was – and is – an active member of the Jackson Men's Garden Club, giving programs on the importance of replacing invasives with native plants. While Gary was Chair of the Sanctuary, they granted Haehnle \$500 for the seeding of native plants around the kiosk.

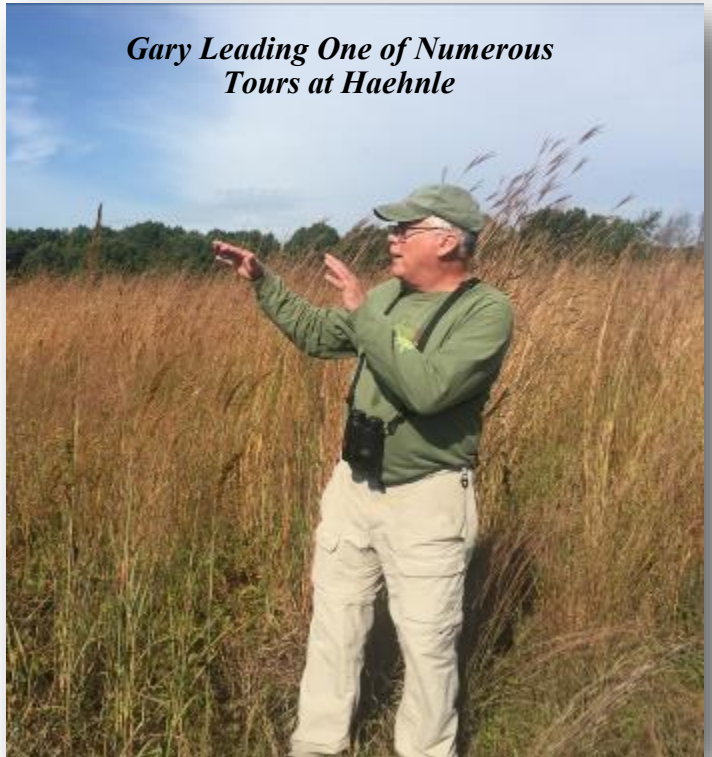
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Thank You Gary, continued

Gary was a board member for a time of Kay Charter's organization, Save Birds through Habitat. While Gary was Chair of the Haehnle Committee, they presented Haehnle with their plaque, as a result of all the successful habitat renewal work done at Haehnle. (This plaque can be seen on the Kiosk.) Gary served on the Advisory Board of The Big 400.

There he met Heather Price of Sanhill Crane Vineyards and together they organized the Cranes, Cabernet and Color Fall Festival for several years. Through his membership on Stewardship Network of Ann Arbor Gary gave many presentations on "Fifty Years of Restoration at Haehnle Sanctuary." During his tenure as President of Michigan Audubon Society Gary made many contacts with other chapters who continue to visit Haehnle: Detroit Audubon Society is scheduled to come to Haehnle this Fall. Gary has truly been The Haehnle Ambassador.

Although Gary has retired from the position of Chair of the Haehnle Committee, he will continue to be active on it. With a little more time for his hobbies, he looks forward to playing more golf, watching college basketball and football games, going on fishing trips, gardening, and traveling with his lovely wife, Nancy.



Gary Leading One of Numerous Tours at Haehnle

By Helena Robinovitz

Introducing Our New Chairperson—Steve Jerant

At his first Sanctuary Committee Meeting Steve agreed to be the nest box coordinator. Immediately he enrolled Haehnle in the Nest Box Program at Cornell University. Under his stewardship the Haehnle Nest Box Program has flourished. In 2013 there were 17 Bluebird and 4 Wood Duck nests. As of 2022 there are 23 Bluebird, 4 Wood Duck, 2 Prothonotary and 2 Kestrel nest boxes.

In 2016 Steve became involved in the work of the EQIP Grant and he was the Haehnle Coordinator of the 2018 EQIP Grant. The goal of these USDA grants is to increase plants for pollinators by providing funds to prepare the habitat for planting.

Always eager to learn more, Steve is currently working on Michigan Master Naturalist certification through Michigan State University's Extension Services. This, of course, will deepen his knowledge of Haehnle's natural residents and their habitats, valuable in his new role as Chairman of the Haehnle Sanctuary Committee.

"With Steve's increasing knowledge and appreciation of the natural world, his work ethic, and understanding of all things computer-related," Gary Siegrist said, "Steve will make a wonderful Chairman of the Haehnle Sanctuary Committee and bring us technologically into the 21st Century."



Steve Jerant

By Helena Robinovitz

We Upgraded the Parking Lot



Although the majority of the time and resources for Haehnle are spent restoring or improving wildlife habitat, we do also want to provide easy access for visitors.

The main Sanctuary parking lot on Seymour road was becoming a bit wear worn. Visitors needed to navigate potholes, muddy spots and standing water after rains. The Sanctuary Committee reviewed options. We decided on a solution to add several inches of gravel to make a proper parking lot, not just some repairs.

The work hardened areas from just inside the road entrance all the way up to the gate area of the parking lot. We hope this will improve the visitor experience at Phyllis Haehnle Memorial Sanctuary. Special thanks to Ron Hoffman for managing the on-site work by the vendor while I was out of town.

By Steve Jerant



Haehnle Nest Box Report By Steve Jerant

I finally built and staged two prothonotary warbler nest boxes for the 2022 season. The legacy boxes I inherited along the Portage River dike trail were in bad shape and their locations were prone to early spring flooding.

As this was the first year for these I did not have high hopes. So, the three nesting attempts by house wrens was no surprise. We shall see if future years bring us any of those beautiful water loving warblers.



Kestrel

While on the topic of nesting species not occupying the boxes assigned to them, the two kestrel boxes staged last year were used by tree swallow and house wren pairs. The house wren laid eggs but did not hatch and the tree swallow yielded a partial clutch.

I also added two new bluebird boxes in the new Schroeder tract on Wooster Rd. This section of the Sanctuary is undergoing a prairie restoration effort funded by the USDA EQIP Grant. The EQIP program promotes the development of grassland habitat rich in full-season pollinator species. One of the boxes supported a clutch of 6 Tree Swallows in its first season.

Several repairs and replacements were done for the water bound wood duck nest boxes in the early spring. Two of the boxes monitored off the Portage Rd. dike were successful this season. However, I found lots of eggs in most of the boxes with high failure rates with unhatched and broken eggs.

Here are the summary numbers: 32 Nest boxes and 2 other nest sites monitored, 39 nesting attempts, 200 eggs, 150 young, and 150 fledglings. Species nesting behavior monitored this year were Eastern bluebird, tree swallow, house wren, wood duck, mallard, and American robin.



Prothonotary Warbler

The early season dryness left mosquitoes with a low fledgling count. I enjoyed the lowest mosquito bites in my career at Haehnle. But not to worry, I got two cases of poison ivy to make up for it.

After two down-trending years the tree swallow numbers this year were the largest yet. I've been adding boxes over the years but our previous high in 2020 of 62 fledglings was eclipsed by 98 young this year. Their success rate of 73% was about on par with historical levels.



Eastern Bluebird Male

Our Target species, eastern bluebird, had a productive year. A bit lower than last but steady for the last three years. I did not see the fledgling failures of last year and the nesting success rate was 75%. Thirty-seven eggs yielded 27 fledglings.

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Nest Box Report, continued

House wrens also had a good year. They produced 12 fledglings, a huge gain over last year's weak showing of 2. They demonstrated their trademark behavior for diversification of nesting choices by laying eggs in our Prothonotary, Bluebird, and Kestrel boxes.

Like last year, I found a mallard nest in one of our prairies. This is the third mallard nest I've found since monitoring nesting at Hahenle and the second that was successful. As this species breed *precocial* young, they spend very little time on the nest between hatching and fledgling. This is very common for waterfowl species. Our songbird species, on the other hand, are *altricial*. This type of young spends much more time on the nest once they are hatched.



House Wren



Mallard Pair

I've been doing the nest box management at Hahenle for 9 years and with my new duties as the Sanctuary chairperson, I am looking to transition this to one of you naturalists out there. If you are interested in managing a blue bird nest box trail, reach out to me at jacksonaudubon@gmail.com.

Our data for nest box monitoring data is submitted to NestWatch (<https://nestwatch.org>) and the Michigan Bluebird Society (<http://michiganbluebirds.org/>). These are both excellent organizations that can provide you with information on observing, managing, and monitoring nesting birds in your area.

Thanks to the Following For Their Generous Donations

General Donations:

Carolyn Elmer
Angela L. Johnson

In Memory of Ann Marie Church:

Gary and Nancy Siegrist





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Thank You

