

Haehnle Sanctuary News



Phyllis Haehnle Memorial Sanctuary

Owned By the Michigan Audubon

Maintained and Operated by The Jackson Audubon Society

Preserving and Protecting our Natural World

Spring 2023



Burn Baby Burn!!!



Again this spring we will be conducting a prescribed burn at the Haehnle Sanctuary. We will burn the west side of the prairie site adjacent to the observation hill and the savanna area next to the main parking lot.

Fire has been prescribed at Haehnle since 2003 to create and maintain wildlife habitat for a variety of plants and animals that are adapted to periodic burning. Many native prairie grasses and wildflowers are resistant to fires because their extensive root systems penetrate deep into the soil in contrast to shallow-rooted alien species.

Each fire managed site is scheduled to be burned every 3-5 years, but never is an entire unit burned at once. This leaves some undisturbed habitat for wildlife while the burn area recovers. In the future, the use of fire will be expanded to the fen restoration area. The cost of hiring a company to burn is not cheap, averaging around \$320/acre so it is a major sanctuary expense.

Burning also kills off invading woody plants, releases nutrients into the soil to support future growth and exposes the mineral soil to the sun's warmth, which enhances seed germination.

Sandhill cranes, bluebirds, field sparrows, and northern harriers are a few of the birds that forage in fire managed areas. Bees and butterflies, including monarchs, pollinate the wildflowers. Painted turtles and snapping turtles leave the wetlands to lay their eggs in the grasslands.

Threatened species like rattlesnake master, cup plant, and compass plant are now found in the grasslands. They, along with the spectacular display of wildflowers and native grasses that we will witness this summer are proof that burning works.

(Information for this article supplied by Ron Hoffman)

Haehnle Grant Updates By Steve Jerant

Like many nonprofit organizations, we rely on various funding sources to maintain and improve the Sanctuary. We obtain the bulk of our funding through grants. With grants, organizations apply for funds to cover the cost of labor and/or materials for projects they wish to complete. The grant managers then select grantees based on various selection criteria. Organizations that provide grants can be businesses, non-profits, or government entities.

The Phyllis Haehnle Sanctuary has a long history of utilizing grants to meet one of our primary management goals to “conserve the native flora and fauna at the sanctuary, especially sandhill cranes.”

USDA NRCS EQIP

The most confusing things about grants are all the associated acronyms. This grant is managed by the Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS), a part of the US Department of Agriculture (USDA). The goal of the grant is to work with landowners to improve the overall quality of a habitat. The Environmental Quality Improvement Program (EQIP) delivers funding for practices including herbicide treatment of invasive species, planting of native species, and prescribed burns.



*Ox-Eye
Sunflower*

The Quality of the of plants is the focus of the program. They must provide blooms for native pollinators, vegetative structures for food sources as well as concealment for various animal life cycle stages.

Careful selection of plants is required. We are currently receiving funding under the second EQIP grant we have won for the Sanctuary. In the past seven years this program has allowed us to convert an old agricultural field into a new native grassland and to maintain several other established prairie sites. These grassland projects take 3-5 years to become established. Since the planting of this new area in 2021, each spring has shown better results. I’m excited to see what comes up this spring.

In a survey Lathe Claflin and I did last year, we found 14 of the 24 species of grasses and wildflowers from the 2021 seeding. These included Indian grass, ox-eye sunflower, and Maximilian sunflower. In addition we found Indian hemp, which was not planted by the program, but volunteered from a local seed source. (continued on the next page)



*Indian
Grass*

Haehnle Grant Updates (continued)

Wingspan

This spring we were awarded a Project Wingspan grant managed by the non-profit Pollinator Partnership (pollinator.org). It is a truly collaborative program in that both their financial and material inputs are diverse. They receive grant funding from the USDA, business partners, and donations. The grant provides native plant seeds and plugs (small seedlings) from commercial native plant suppliers as well as other partner properties. In the past few years we provided the Pollinator Partnership access to collect seeds from Haehnle to be used for distribution to winners of future grants.

As participants in the seed gathering, we were eligible to apply for the 2023 grant. We submitted our plan in 2022. This spring we won seed and plug awards. So, unlike the EQIP grant where we received funding for a project, this program provides materials in the form of seeds and plants. We will need to provide the labor and equipment to complete the plantings.



As the name of the organization may suggest, the plants provided will be assisting our native pollinators. Our application specified that plantings will be located in grassland habitats. Based on our current clearing and burn projects, we plan to add some of the seed to the prairie grassland scheduled to be burned in April.

The adjacent savanna areas around the overlook have been cleared and are also scheduled to be burned this spring. These savanna areas do not have a strong base of native understory plants, so plugs and additional seed will be applied there. This will create competition with non native plants that recently colonized disturbed areas. Many of these non native plants are not desirable, and some can be quite invasive.

I hope to report on good progress on these grant projects in the Fall Newsletter. In addition, I will be discussing two more grants that are pending. The first is a USDA LSR grant for improving habitat to benefit woodland bird species. The second grant, the MDNR WHGP, is offered by the Michigan DNR for the development of wildlife habitat.

Thanks for Many Years of Service



Helena Robinovitz



Marsi Darwin

This winter, two long time volunteers on the Haehnle committee decided to step down. Marsi Darwin and Helena Robinovitz have been the creative engines for our organization for many years.

Of all the members, I've known Helena the longest from my time at North Creek Elementary where I worked as one of her Odyssey of the Mind coaches back in the 90's. It was a wonderful surprise for me to get to work with her again over the past 10 years on the committee. Helena kept our Harold Wing overlook kiosk filled with informative content in the display cases and volunteer greeters on the ground.

Marsi joined the team the same year I did. We worked in concert to change over the Haehnle and Jackson Audubon websites onto new platforms. She has managed the Haehnle website, Facebook, and email systems for the last decade to keep our visitors informed. Marsi strengthened our ability to bring in new visitors, and those that knew Haehnle to keep coming back.

Both these wonderful women provided dozens of articles and other content for the Haehnle newsletter. Through their creativity, they managed to add beauty to this special place.

Steve Jerant

(Editors Note) I too had the pleasure of working with both of these ladies. Both were dependable sources of quality articles for the newsletter. Helena also periodically lit a fire under other folks to submit articles, which made my job easier. Marsi's newsletter family page was always very creative.

Marsi's work on the website and Facebook page was invaluable in getting out our message and fostering communication with potential supporters and volunteers. At the time, there was really no one else on the committee with the experience and knowhow to do that. Her work setting up the mass electronic mailings also enabled us to reach over 1,000 people with our newsletter issues.

It was only after I recently took over maintaining the Kiosk display cases that I realized what a mammoth job that is. Helena had that responsibility for over ten years and did a marvelous job! I believe Marsi helped with that as well.

Helena also managed the weekend greeters program for many years. It is so important to have that personal contact with the public. Thank you ladies, you were and are the best!

Tom Hodgson

Vernal Pools - Ephemeral Wetlands



Vernal pools are seasonal wetlands that fill with water from spring snow melt and rains. These shallow depressions in the landscape team with life in the spring. Most are dry by fall. A few retain water for a year or two before they too dry up.

Fish, major predators in permanent bodies of water, are absent from vernal pools. Many organisms have evolved to use these temporary wetlands where they are not eaten by fish. These organisms are the "obligate" vernal pool species, so called because they **must** use a vernal pool for some part of their life cycle. The wood frog is one of the most prominent obligate species at Haehnle.

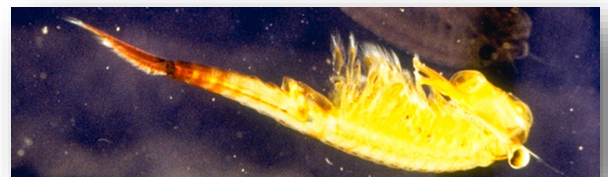
Haehnle is home to several vernal pools. They are easiest to locate in April when temperatures are fifty degrees or above. That is when the chuckling calls of wood frogs can be heard as they break hibernation and invade the vernal pools to mate and lay eggs. By the time the pools dry up, their tadpoles have already changed into frogs and are busily catching insects and other invertebrates among the leaf litter on the forest floor.

They are not the first obligate species to appear in spring. Several species of mole salamanders often arrive at vernal pools when snow is still on the ground. So named because they spend so much time under ground.

The most common mole salamanders at Haehnle are the spotted, blue spotted and tiger salamanders. By the time the wood frogs entered the vernal pools, the salamanders are already gone. Only their egg masses remain.



A host of invertebrates also inhabit vernal pools. Some are obligate species while others are also found in permanent bodies of water. The fairy shrimp below only exists in vernal pools. Its eggs become encysted as the pools dry up, and hatch the following spring.



Welcoming New Volunteers

Penny Rund

We are welcoming Penny as a new committee member to oversee our finances. This role will mesh with her new position as Treasurer for the Jackson Audubon Society.

She is a recent migrant to Michigan from Illinois and a birder since 2007. Since getting the birding bug, she's birded in SE Arizona, Rio Grande Valley, San Diego, Florida and, of course, NW Ohio.

Penny's volunteer experiences include Church Treasurer and working at the BWIAB Festival for several years. I'm looking forward to working with Penny at Hahenle and JAS.

She sends this picture of her birding on a vacation in Texas. She takes over the financial duties that have been done so well for so many years by Ron Hoffman.



Chad Machinski

While not a Haehnle volunteer, I'd like to also welcome Michigan Audubon's new Conservation Manager. Chad will be our main point of contact with MA and will be helping Haehnle's future progress with stewardship, community engagement, and winning grants to help fund work on the property.

Alex Johnson

She has volunteered to take over the nest box monitoring program which includes all of our bluebird, kestrel and wood duck nest boxes..

She comes with extensive volunteer experience from organizations including North American Bluebird Society, Michigan Bluebird Society (where she just became the Ingham County Coordinator), University of Georgia, Georgia DNR, Seattle Audubon Society & Eastside Audubon (Kirkland, WA), Sarvey Wildlife Care Center, and Harris Nature Center in Okemos.

A birder for 25 years, she loves to travel so she can see these fascinating creatures. I'm feeling a little bittersweet about turning over the nest boxes I've managed for the last decade. But after a few tours at Haehnle with Alex, I'm confident she'll do a great job caring for my little babies.

Steve Jerant



We Invite You to support The Phyllis Haehnle Memorial Sanctuary

I would like to support The Haehnle Sanctuary

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

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Level

Amount

<input type="checkbox"/>	Basic	\$30
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<input type="checkbox"/>	Supporting	\$100
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sustaining	\$500
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<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Make my donation in memory of the person(s) below: _____	

Make a check out to Michigan Audubon
or Jackson Audubon Society
noting "for Haehnle Sanctuary."

Send to:

Michigan Audubon
2310 Science Parkway, Suite 200
Okemos, MI 48864

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Jackson Audubon Society
P.O. Box 6453
Jackson, MI 49204

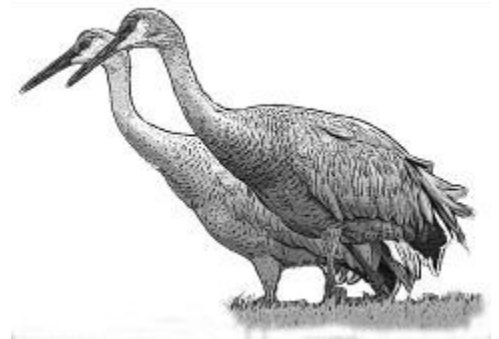
Thank You



*Phyllis Haehnle Memorial Sanctuary
c/o Jackson Audubon Society
P.O. Box 6453
Jackson, MI 49204*



*Official News Letter
For The
Phyllis Haehnle Memorial Sanctuary*



Coming in the Fall Issue

Nest Box Report

Grant Report Part Two

Reactivating the Work Crew

More!