



Jan Heminger has participated in a slew of Nature Discovery birding trips over many years, both, in-state and across the country. She's become such a fixture that our kids have taken to calling her "Aunt Jan."

THIS ISSUE

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Email Address Change Alert

More Supporter Commentary

In celebration of 25 years, here are more comments from some of our steady supporters...

In the summer of 2009 I was working as a naturalist at Camp Tuhsmeheeta which is an outdoor educational opportunity for blind children. Searching for a program which was "blind person friendly" led me to Jim and Carol McGrath and Nature Discovery. This was the beginning of a long and enjoyable sensory experience for blind children and adults such as me. I have challenged Jim and Carol to present in a way that stimulates all the senses except sight. They have risen to the challenge by providing a birding field day, an owl prowl, a week long birding camp and many other programs which we have enjoyed. The same message has always come through. A person can't care about what they don't understand and Jim and Carol have gone the extra mile to insure that blind people have had the opportunity to understand and interact with the environment. Because some of us blind folks keep showing up at their programs we have called ourselves "Nature Discovery Groupies". Thanks Jim and Carol for opening up the natural world to us.

- Donna Posont, Field Services Director Opportunities Unlimited for the Blind

Jim McGrath has been the nature studies star at our school, Montessori Children's House of Lansing, for well over twenty years now. It continues to amaze me how his energy and enthusiasm are just as high now as when he first set foot in our building some time ago. Jim doesn't just talk to the children about nature and the importance of being a young naturalist, he engages the students by bringing in live (and sometimes dead!) specimens. Just as importantly, from an educator's perspective, he helps the children see through the eye of a scientist. Jim's teaching leaves the students with the right tools to assist them in classifying and making sense of our natural world. The interrelationships of living things from all the kingdoms of life are made clear. We all know why it's important not to step on that spider we may see on a sidewalk. We look forward to our Thursday sessions with Jim. There's never a dull moment.

-Claud Agnello, 1st-3rd gr teacher, Montessori Children's House

I have been the naturalist at Hartwick Pines State Park, near Grayling, for over ten years, and every year I have hired Nature Discovery to come and present their live animal programs to our visitors. There are many reasons why I invite them back to the park every year.

Jim and/or Carol generally show up to the campsite the night before their scheduled presentation(s). Once their campsite is set up, out come the animals! Whether they're in tanks or in a small wading pool, the reptiles and amphibians are on display for all campers to experience and enjoy. If there is a more efficient or better way to promote conservation and education about some of Michigan's magnificent wildlife, I do not know of it.

Jim and Carol's knowledge is evident during their presentations but it is their passion for these creatures and the future of their existence that shines through. Their enthusiasm is contagious. Jim and Carol's programs not only turn our future generations on to the importance of conservation but help to dispel some of the fears or untruths about Michigan's reptiles and amphibians. Additionally, their programs are always well attended and they stay long after their presentation to engage individual members of the audience and answer countless numbers of questions. Bravo!

-Craig Kasmer, Naturalist, Hartwick Pines State Park

I think you've hit the right balance between fun and education: My son, Zachary, comes home talking about the fun he had AND the things he learned or discovered, both in equal measure. Zachary consistently ranks Nature Discovery as one of his favorites and that is why we keep coming back. The atmosphere that Jim and Carol provide is both, welcoming and engaging. They are very knowledgeable both on science and how to interact positively with kids. My son is eager to go before I drop him off, and when it is time to pick him up from the center I have to drag him away. We are so grateful to have this wonderful resource in our community! Thank you again, Jim and Carol, for letting Zachary explore and learn new things. Each time he comes he is more excited to return.

- Joy Gietzel



A fledgling American Kestrel perches on Carol's hand. Neighbors Royce and Barbara Kendall called one morning during a summer camp to ask our advice when their dog showed up with this little guy in its mouth. The students participated in getting a ladder out of the barn and returning it to a high tree branch out of harm's way.

What an amazing gem we have in our community with Jim and Carol and their awesome Nature Discovery Center. Not only are they two of the nicest people you would ever want to know, they are also brilliant when it comes to anything involving nature. Jim has been on our property several times for birding, plant identification, and reptile related things. His respect of the land and everything that lives on it is beyond the norm. We always consider it a privilege to have Jim on our land and we always get a little smarter with each of those opportunities.

-Brad & Lou Sharp

Thank you, again, to those who took the time to submit one of these glowing commentaries. For anyone else, please feel free to drop us a line any time with your impressions. We'll slip it into a future newsletter. Like any business, we'll take all the testimonials we can get!

Please be sure to change Nature Discovery's email in your address book to naturedisc87@gmail.com.

*Making the Ultimate
**Winter Bird
 Feeding Station**
 for Maximum Birds
 & Enjoyment*



***Sunday, December 9
 at 2pm***

Doors open from 1 to 5pm

Admission: \$5/person

Here's a unique seasonal gift for all ages that keeps on giving. By way of beautiful Powerpoint images and a walk through our two active feeding stations, participants will learn why making, and then,

treating a bird feeding station as if it is your own upscale restaurant is sure to bring in the maximum abundance and variety of birds. In addition to what species to expect, learn about the best choice of seed, the best mix of feeders, and how to easily enhance the “ambiance” to suit the taste and comfort of the pickiest feathered patrons.

***Receive a discount coupon, exclusively for participants of this event, from SOLDAN’S Feed & Pet Supply for bird feeding items at any of their stores.

Visit our huge interactive Michigan reptiles & amphibians zoo. Hold a rat snake, feed turtles and frogs. Take a guided trail walk. There is plenty of knowledgeable staff on hand to help visitors of all ages make the most of your visit!

Make an extra donation, and have your picture taken with an animal from our zoo. Then, we’ll help you create your very own custom holiday greeting card to print or email to family or friends.



Catch Nature Discovery on WLNZ Radio’s Coffee Break

Jim is scheduled to appear this month on Wednesday, December 17 at 9:45am. The show airs weekdays from 9 to 10am on 89.7 FM. Listen live online at lcc.edu/radio/onair/ or watch it live (or later in the day at 6pm) online at lcc.edu/tv/watch. We’ll also post a reminder on Facebook prior to the show.



New Year Wildlife Day Camp

Wed thru Fri, January 2-4, 9am-3pm

For K & older. Enroll for one, two or three days of hands-on Michigan nature. Participants will have a blast at our highly interactive Michigan reptiles & amphibians zoo! Identify, handle and feed many of our 11 snake species, 10 turtles, 13 frogs and 8 salamanders. We'll watch and identify birds at our busy feeders then check them off on personal checklists. We'll spend time outside and on the trails, too. A photo of your student in action will be emailed to you. Hot lunch, hot chocolate, and snacks provided! Enroll in advance by phone or email. COST: \$50/day; \$135/three days. Ask about our siblings discount and half-day option for K & preschool children.

Arrange an Owling Night

Do you have a small group - family or friends - who would like to participate in an owling program? Arrange a night with us by appointment over the holidays or almost any night through March. A two-hour time slot includes a Powerpoint presentation about all ten species of owls found in the state. At the presentation's conclusion, we will go into the night and attempt to "call one in" with audio recordings for a close encounter. Very little walking is required. Base fee: \$15/person. Minimum fee: \$100. An audience size of 10 or less is strongly recommended. An abbreviated version is available for a gathering of children, for an evening birthday party or other occasion. Not recommended for preschool children. Contact us to discuss your special circumstances. Dress warmly and don't forget your binoculars and camera!



The state-threatened Sharp-tailed Grouse is nearly automatic south of the Soo. Photo © Steve Sage.

Winter Birding the U.P. January 18-21

There are still 2 spots left for this unique and fantastic trip over MLK weekend. See birds here that are rare or impossible to see near home. COST: \$375 (\$150 NR deposit), covers all transportation, lodging, "road lunches," and two hearty breakfasts. This trip is limited to only four participants, so contact us soon to reserve your spot. For more details check out the October newsletter on the website or give us a call.

Climate Change Realist: Watch This Program!

We found a *Frontline* episode on the internet that aired on television the week of October 23. Somehow, we had missed it that first time around. This program documents the well-funded, sophisticated and highly-successful campaign being played out across the country to undermine the credibility of overwhelming scientific consensus regarding human-generated climate change. It's mandatory viewing for every American. Here's the link: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/climate-of-doubt/>

Cedar Creek Veterinary Clinic



Official Vet of Nature Discovery!

www.cedarcreekveter.com

OUR EMAIL ADDRESS IS CHANGING

*Please update our contact information in your e-address book to naturedisc87@gmail.com.
As of January 31, our cablespeed email address will be discontinued.*

Become a fan of *Nature Discovery* on Facebook!

Check out our Youtube channel, *Wild Williamston*, too!

NATURE DISCOVERY 5900 N. Williamston Road Williamston, MI 48895

(517) 655-5349 naturedisc87@gmail.com www.naturediscovery.net