

THIS ISSUE

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**25 Years Later:
Impressions &
Reflections**

At the end of our opening essay in the October issue regarding the inception of Nature Discovery we encouraged supporters, past and present, to write a few lines (or more) that portray impressions or reflections of their experiences with us. Here are some submissions.

I loved your October issue and your story about how you and Carol have developed Nature Discovery. Yours is a great and satisfying story! Congratulations on your 25 years! I feel very lucky to have such a vital and dynamic nature classroom so close by and your expertise to draw on. Not to mention your championing of our environmental needs. *-Judy Marr*

You are some of the most passionate and dedicated naturalists that I have ever known, and you do a fabulous job passing that excitement on to other people – both kids and adults. Thank you!
-Frances Tourtellot

My sons Max and Louis Boyang enjoyed the summer camp so much. They have always asked when they can go again. They are so interested in the nature now. They tried to find snakes, bugs, frogs in our backyard all summer long. And I found out Carol is hosting a Saturday class in LCC, so I hurried and signed them up. Thanks for creating such a great program. Congratulations for 25 years of good work!
-Heidi Ma

I will always remember how to tell the difference between sedges, rushes, and grasses because of a simple rhyme that Jim in his alter ego of “Little Jimmy” taught us on an eco-tour for teens to Drummond Island. It goes, “Sedges have edges, rushes are round, and grasses have ligules wherever they’re found.”
-Will Gold



This is one of the reasons I love my son's school: because they include snakes from Nature Discovery with Jim McGrath in their curriculum. How awesome is that?
-Senta Goertler

Jim and Carol McGrath have added a dimension to our program curriculum that we had only dreamed possible! Because of their efforts, our children have gained a respect for and love of all of Michigan's flora and fauna! Jim's enthusiasm and passionate love for his subject is contagious! Thanks, Jim and Carol for all you do for us! *-Rena Slaton, Director, Okemos Nursery School*

Our 4-year-old daughter loves the days that Mr. Jim comes to her preschool! We are so glad that he brings snakes and turtles and toads and many other creatures into her classroom. She has learned so much about the animals living around us, and plants, too! Now, when she sees something that other people might think is 'gross', she tells us she thinks it is 'interesting'. Her dad told her she was getting to be a pretty good naturalist after she correctly identified a tree in our neighborhood. She replied, 'It's because of Mr. Jim!' *-Ginger Ogilvie*

My first visit to Nature Discovery was during a Scouting field trip several years ago. What began as an obligatory trip as a chaperon quickly morphed into an exciting and all-engaging adventure for both the Scouts and their parents. The McGrath family's passion for Michigan wildlife is contagious and their enthusiasm for passing their wealth of knowledge on to others is inspiring. Although we have participated in many of the programs Nature Discovery has to offer, our family never fails to come away with something new with each successive visit. Jim, Carol, and their children are truly an asset to the future of Michigan nature conservation.

-Valery Huberts

Over nearly 20 years, my students and I invited Jim to bring his reptiles and amphibians into our classroom. His visit was always the highlight of the year. For many of these children, this was the first time they had held a snake, observed the variation in species of turtles, or seen a toad devour an earthworm. Their squeals of delight, open-eyed curiosity and thoughtful questions convinced me that my money was well spent. More recently, field trips to Nature Discovery included hands-on lessons about invasive species. Jim and Carol's wealth of experience with Michigan's plants and animals and their engaging manner nurtured the students' developing interest in the future of our natural resources. One of my greatest concerns is that as our children become increasingly tied to virtual learning and entertainment, they are growing ever more distant from the world around them. Getting outside and grubbing about in a field or woods is rare for many kids. Nature Discovery provides the "wow" to excite them about the outdoors *and* the important learning to engage them in the stewardship of our natural world. Some of my students are now studying biology in college, thanks in large part to Jim and Carol. Supporting Nature Discovery is a hedge against the indifference and ignorance that must not be allowed to destroy our planet's living treasures. Long live Nature Discovery! *-Wendell Hocking*

Wendell supplies this link: <http://www.childrenandnature.org/blog/tag/no-child-left-inside/>

Thank you to everyone above for your flattering submittals. We still have more. We'll print them in the December issue as a wrap-up to our 25-year milestone. There is still time to send us your thoughts or reminisces about Nature Discovery experiences. We'd love to hear from you.

-Jim & Carol McGrath



During this Nature Discovery insect camp, adults were as immersed as the kids in their quest to capture, identify and classify as many specimens as possible.

Winter Birds: Backyard & Beyond

Sunday, November 11

Doors open from 1 to 5pm

Admission: \$5/person



The Purple Finch, often mistaken for a House Finch, is showing up at feeders in the lower part of the state now.

While there are unquestionably more birds to be seen around Lower Michigan in summer than in winter, few people recognize that there are a slew of species that can *only* be seen here during the colder months. A surprising wealth of unique birds migrate south every fall from Canada and the Arctic to call our area “home” in winter. Visit Nature Discovery on Sunday, November 11 for the 2pm presentation,



2011-12 was a banner winter for Snowy Owls in Michigan and throughout the country. The number that fly south from the tundra varies greatly from one winter to the next. How many will this winter bring?

Winter Birds: Backyard & Beyond. Beautiful Powerpoint images enhance this lecture highlighting northern visitors to your birdfeeders as well as those spending the winter in area fields, forests and waterways. Highlights include identification, behavior and audio recordings, as well as tips on where to go to find them. It’s a great incentive to get outside in spite of the cold. At the presentation’s conclusion, participants will view birds at our feeders and carpool to Lake Lansing to view some migrants from the north among a host of other species. Don’t forget the binoculars!

Doors are open from 1 to 5pm. Visit and interact with any or all of our huge zoo of Michigan snakes, turtles, and salamanders. Take a guided walk on the trail. Our staff is always available to help visitors of all ages make the most of their time here.

Lansing Area Birding Day

Monday, November 19

8am to 1pm

Join an intimate group for a week day of local guided birding with all transportation covered. We’ll start the day birding the feeders at Nature Discovery, then hit Lake Lansing, Potter Park, MSU farmlands and other locations to tally as many species as possible in 5 hours. Checklist provided. Maximum enrollment 5 adults. FEE: \$30. Contact us in advance to reserve a space.





Catch Nature Discovery on WLNZ Radio's morning show, Coffee Break

Jim is scheduled to appear this month on Friday, November 30 at 9:15am. 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 Facebook reminder prior to the show.

Climate Change Realist

A recent issue of the German news magazine, *Focus*, reported a poll result that 72 percent of its citizens support the country's plans for an energy changeover from nuclear to renewable energies within a decade, with only 24 percent opposed. This, despite the realization that a typical family of four will have to pay about \$325 more per year above their usual electric bills. From this side of the Atlantic, it's refreshing to see that citizens of a country understand and act upon the reality that a healthy environment for all trumps personal economy.

Here's an appropriate Sunbeam quote from *The Sun Magazine*:

"When it comes down to it, would you really choose economics over the environment? Where will you be when there is no clean air or water? Screw economics. I want to live."

-Clara Price

Juan Cole is a professor of history at the University of Michigan. NASA scientist James Hansen explains that we are facing a planetary emergency and that the public is still largely unaware of how menacing it is.

<http://www.juancole.com/2012/11/nasa-scientist-we-face-a-planetary-climate-emergency.html>

Other links to peruse.

www.energyemergencyenergytransition.org

www.gofossilfree.org

Become a fan of *Nature Discovery* on Facebook!

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

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