

# Howling Herald



Spring 2007


Newsletter for Northern Michigan's Young Naturalists



## It Sounds Like Spring!

The level of the sun in the sky, "springing" our clocks forward an hour, snow melting, buds popping on tree branches.... There are so many things happening this time of year that tell us spring is on the way. But the sign we notice most is when the woods suddenly come alive with sounds of our feathered friends who have returned from the south.... Songbirds! A few birds stay behind and stick it out in the chilly northern Michigan weather, such as the black capped chickadee and the cardinal, but most fly to warmer skies. Though we

enjoy hearing the sweet tweet of our little chickadee friends, and the cherio-cheery-ay! of the cardinal, there is just something about the woods full of chirping activity! If you haven't already put out a feeder, spring is a great time to place a feeder or a watering hole for these high fliers. Below is a list of returning birds to keep your eye out for. If you would like more information on other birds who will soon be on their way home, check out: [www.enature.com/birding/migration](http://www.enature.com/birding/migration)



Robin  
Warblers  
Swallows  
Wood Thrush  
Indigo Bunting  
Scarlet Tanager  
**Baltimore Oriole**  
Red-winged blackbird  
Ruby-Throated Hummingbird

## Inside



The Dirt on Soil



Get to Know Nature



Nesting Instincts



Under One Rock

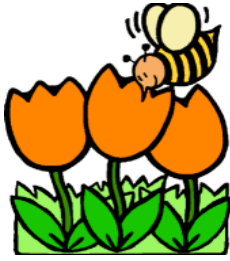


Springfest!



An Outdoor Challenge for Kids of All Ages

## Club News



### Winter Outing Cancelled

The winter program, like the fall, was cancelled because of bad weather. The below zero temperatures made getting outside hard to do. We hope next year will bring better weather for the fall and winter outings! Check out what's in store for the spring outing!



## Springfest

Goodhart Farms Nature Preserve

Saturday, May 26th 10:00 - 11:30am



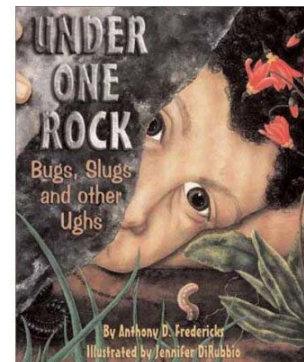
Spring is coming! Join us while we celebrate the signs of the spring season at Goodhart Farms Nature Preserve. Learn to identify signs of spring with a quick scan of your eye! **Bring a sketchbook** to capture this beautiful time of year. The program is offered at no charge, but please let us know if you plan to attend by contacting Alison at 231.347.0991 or [alison@landtrust.org](mailto:alison@landtrust.org).

## Tell a friend about YN!

Bring a friend with you to the springfest at Goodhart Farms Nature Preserve. Everyone is welcome to attend. If your friend has a good time - and how could they not? - they can become a Young Naturalist member too! Friends just need to be 7 to 12 years old, and they must be from one of these counties: Emmet, Charlevoix, Cheboygan, or Mackinaw & Chippewa counties in the U.P.

## Read About It!

Have you gone on a hike in search of rocks, but instead find tiny creatures scurrying all about? Rocks are more than just pretty to look at. Rocks provide shelter for insects, earthworms, roly polly's, and many other creepy crawlies. The author, Anthony Fredericks will have you peeking under rocks everywhere the next time you go outside.



# The Great North Outdoor Challenge!

With nearly 30,000 acres of land protected by LTC throughout northern Michigan, kids like you should be outside playing and enjoying it! So here's a fun outdoor challenge to get you outside running, laughing and playing - and all the funny things kids do - in the fresh air this spring...

## Here's what you do:

- ✓ Pick a preserve to explore
- ✓ Gather up your family
- ✓ Choose a day to "G.O." (aka: Get Outside)
- ✓ Use the sample scavenger hunt below or make up your own adventure!



## Choose a Nature Preserve

We listed a few fun ones for you. Go to [www.landtrust.org](http://www.landtrust.org) for more preserves and directions (click on nature preserves, then click on the county you would like to explore) or call 231.347.0991.

- McCune Preserve (east Petoskey)
- Round Lake Preserve (Harbor Springs)
- The Headlands County Park (Mackinaw City)
- North Point Preserve (Charlevoix)
- Susan Creek Preserve (Petoskey/Charlevoix)
- Seven Springs Preserve (Indian River)
- Round Island Point Preserve (Brimley)



Tell us about your visit!  
Email: [alison@landtrust.org](mailto:alison@landtrust.org), or send us artwork, a story, or a list of the things you found during your exploration.

## Scavenger Hunt!

- Match a Leaf to the correct tree
- Find a seed
- 2 Red Rocks
- Something BLUE
- A Feather
- Smell a Flower
- Something that makes NOISE!
- A sign that an animal has been here.
- A piece of litter
- A leaf with teeth
- Something YOU like
- A camouflaged animal or insect
- Something ROUND
- A cone from an evergreen
- STOP! Close your eyes & LISTEN.
- Something a bird would eat
- 3 different things from nature - PLEASE DON'T PICK!

**N**ature is all around us. It's in our backyard, in the local park, it's on our walk to school, it's even in our schoolyard. But how often do we take a close look and learn about the life around us? Nature is really fun to watch, and the best part of all...it's free! Here are a few fun things you can look for the next time you are outside, and some fun tips on observing...



### Observation Station

- ✓ Look carefully
- ✓ Listen quietly
- ✓ Stand Still for a few minutes
- ✓ Search for signs:
  - scat
  - tracks
  - holes
  - chewed plants
  - resting spots
- ✓ Find a quiet space
- ✓ Sketch or Draw your findings

### Critter Carpenters:

Have you ever watched a spider weave her web? Each kind of web-building spider builds its own special design. How many different kinds can you find? See if you can draw them in your notebook.

## Bird Basics

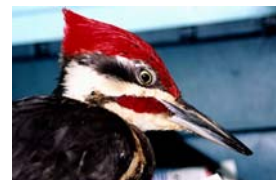


Seed eating birds have more parrot like beaks (Cardinal)



Insect eating birds have pointed beaks (Bluebird)

Birds are probably the easiest type of wildlife to watch. Nesting time is usually late spring in most areas and lasts throughout the summer. During this time, birds sing, gather nesting materials, and sometimes fight over nesting sites. Watch birds who are carrying building materials in their mouths and see where they go. Also watch for a bird carrying insects or worms, as it is either feeding its partner as he or she sits on the eggs or it is feeding baby birds!



Woodpeckers have long, slender beaks for drilling into trees (Pileated Woodpecker)



Grub eaters have pointed beaks for digging (Robin)

## Nesting Instincts

For most birds, nest building supplies consist of whatever nature has lying around: wood, grass, twigs, feathers and fur. You can provide the birds in your backyard with easy-to-obtain nest materials by stuffing a mesh onion bag with materials such as pet fur, strands of cloth, bits of stuffing, hay, hair from your brush, or feathers from an old down pillow. Just make sure you avoid anything sharp or synthetic. Snip a few large holes in the sack so birds can poke around, then hang it in a tree, ideally near a feeder so it will get noticed.

Be on the lookout for birds visiting the sack, then watch what trees they return to.

## Activity Corner



Activity from: [wondertime.go.com](http://wondertime.go.com)

## Easy, Fun Outdoor Games

### RED LIGHT GREEN LIGHT

One person plays the "stop light" and the rest try to touch him/her. Everyone except the "stop light" person form a line away from the stop light. The stop light faces away from the line of kids and says "green light". All the kids move towards the stoplight until the stop light says "red light!" and turns around. If any one is caught moving they are out. Everyone else waits until the stop light says "green light". The stop light wins if all the kids are out before anyone is able to touch him/her. Otherwise, the first player to touch the stop light wins the game and earns the right to be "stop light" for the next game.

### CAPTURE THE FLAG

There are two teams. Team 1 has the front yard and Team 2 has the back yard. The teams are given a time period, like 5 minutes, to hide their flag in their part of the yard. During this period spies are sent out to see where the flag was hidden as well as look-outs to catch the spies. When the flag is hidden you call out that you are finished. Then you simply try to get the other teams flag. If you get caught and tagged by the opponent on their territory you have to go to jail and can only be freed by a teammate who grabs you when your opponent isn't looking. The first team to capture the flag wins. In most versions both teams have to get the flag, and bring it back to their own side.

### TOMATO

Everyone sits in a circle. One person who is it stands in the center of the circle. This Person is called "It". Each person asks the person who is "it" a question. The only answer to every question has to be "Tomato". The first person to make the center person ( It ) laugh wins a try in the middle. Ex: What color is your hair? Tomato. What do you brush your teeth with? Tomato . (Obviously other funny Questions can be used for variety )

# Ask Henry

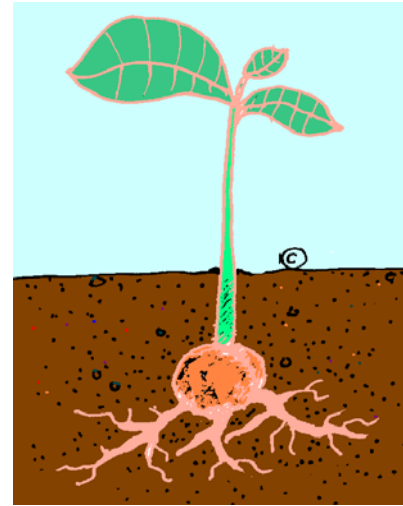
Young Naturalist Club  
Little Traverse Conservancy  
3264 Powell Rd.  
Harbor Springs, MI 49740



## How Does the Soil Help Plants Grow?

Soil is a mixture of organic and inorganic materials. The organic part consists of living things and the remains of once-living things. The inorganic part is made up of particles (tiny pieces) of rocks and minerals. The organic matter in soil is called humus (hew-muss). The humus layer allows air and water to enter the soil. It also provides food for bacteria and other micro (teeny-tiny) organisms in the soil.

Many kinds of animals live in the soil. The scat (droppings) left behind by the animals helps enrich the soil. Earthworms are important too. They turn over the soil to help improve it. All these animals help break the organic material into minerals, gases, and liquids. Plants can then use the substances for growth.



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