

# The Kettle

Straits Area Audubon Society newsletter dating from 1983



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## November Meeting Announcement—Discovering Dingman Marsh

by Jim Bricker

At 7 pm on Wednesday November 12 at the Cheboygan Area Public Library, several Cheboygan Middle School students and teacher Laurie Dykehouse will give a PowerPoint presentation about their field learning experience at Dingman Marsh. Over five days in May 2008, 160 students participated in three biological research activities to learn about the marsh and its inhabitants. They sampled the water using dip nets and fish seines to collect mudminnows, creek chubs, aquatic insects, frogs, and snakes. They observed birds such as tree swallows, Canada geese, and ospreys, and found signs of beaver. Based on these discoveries, back in the classroom they constructed a wetland marsh food web to demonstrate the interconnectedness of these organisms.

Straits Area Audubon Society enabled this hands-on nature study with a \$1,000 grant secured from Michigan Audubon Society and aquatic sampling equipment loaned from the University of Michigan Biological Station.

The environmental education project was assisted by SAAS volunteers Jim and Kathy Bricker, Faye Johnston, Nora Kilpatrick, Ben and Marilee Lillie, Marilyn Larson, and Alice and Roy MacFarland. In all, they donated 150

hours of time so that Cheboygan Middle School 6<sup>th</sup> graders could experience a real living ecosystem. We also thank teachers Laurie Dykehouse and Patti Dobias for their key role in creating classroom content to complement the outdoor learning.

Refreshments will be provided by Imogene Callander, Maureen Conklin, Susan Hansen. You may also participate in door prize and raffle drawings.

Put in boxes near Dingman Marsh article:

"I was very impressed with the concept behind the Dingman Marsh project. If we want to improve the planet, we first need to educate – not frighten, not threaten, but teach."

By SAAS Executive Committee member and former Michigan Audubon Society Board member Mike Supernault Your article for the *Jack Pine Warbler* winter issue is absolutely wonderful. Great project, great impact, great retelling. Thank you to all those who were involved in the (Dingman Marsh) project."

Sent to Laurie Dykehouse from Caroline DeMauriac, Information Services Director, Michigan Audubon Society

### Mission Statement

The mission of the Straits Area Audubon Society is to educate the community, including its children, about conservation and enjoyment of the natural world with emphasis on the local natural communities of wildlife. This will be accomplished through regular seasonal meetings and by sponsoring fieldtrips, classroom studies and field studies.

### Meetings

PLEASE NOTE that SAAS meetings for 2008-2009 will be held at the Cheboygan Public Library, no longer the middle school library. Call 627-2381 for directions to the Library at 100 S. Bailey St.

## Presidential Chirpings:

by Kathy Bricker

I experienced several stand-out moments while helping the Cheboygan Middle School Dingman Marsh project this May. SAAS volunteer Alice MacFarland had secured \$1,000 for this purpose, which Jim and I and twelve other volunteers got to use to introduce 160 6<sup>th</sup> graders to marsh ecology.

An excellent example of the combined value of the class and field study was the reaction of two of the young girls. Upon learning that a fish they caught in the dip net was a mudminnow, one asked incredulously "But is it an **Eastern** mudminnow?" When told yes, they excitedly explained that they had reported in class on this species so knew all about it. Now they had the thrill of meeting one in person!

I had made a colorful chart showing the life stages of some aquatic insects of the marsh. One photograph captured a boy looking at this chart to

identify one of his discoveries on his own. That was sweet to see, as was a northern water snake that the children captured and had fun handling.

The week did confirm the wisdom of my career choice of not becoming a teacher. I got totally exhausted every day and can't imagine how people survive in this career or have the energy for life outside school. I also better understand the satisfaction that teachers feel when they reach through to a student, and hopefully become included in that individual's positive memories and mindset. So thank you, 7<sup>th</sup> graders, for what you taught me! See you at Dingman Marsh someday!



## SAAS Field Trips

by Steve Baker

Saturday, October 4, 8 PM Owl banding with Ed Pike at Point Labarbe, St. Ignace. Join Ed in his efforts to learn more about the migration of Saw-whet Owls through the straits area. To reach Ed's banding location, head north to the UP, exit on US 2 west, turn left (south) at the Quality Inn (there is life size American flag moose on the corner) onto Boulevard Dr. Go south to the Bridgeview Park and then follow the road west along the lakeshore for 1.8 miles to a powerline complex of many poles and transformers. Take the right fork for a block or so, the banding area will be on your right. The mist nets are first checked about an hour after dark. If the weather is rainy, this outing is cancelled.

Friday, October 24, 9 am UP Waterfowl with Steve Baker and Ed Pike. Join Steve and Ed exploring the St. Ignace area for fall water birds and

migrating raptors. This is the season when large rafts of Redheads gather in the straits along with many other duck species. Meet at the Bridge View Park at the north west end of the Mackinaw Bridge. We will stop for lunch in St. Ignace and will be out all day, but participants can leave anytime. Rain or shine, no registration needed.

Saturday, November 15, 1 pm. Carp Creek Gorge Geology and Trees with Jim and Kathy Bricker. Learn a bit about landscape ecology in our region on this beautiful and rugged excursion from Riggsville Road to Burt Lake through Reese's Swamp. Depending on snow conditions and participant preference, we will either hike, snowshoe, or ski. Please register and let us know your favorite mode of travel. A potluck supper will follow the trip at Brickers' house. Contact [kathyhomeac-count@hotmail.com](mailto:kathyhomeac-count@hotmail.com) or 627-4830.



