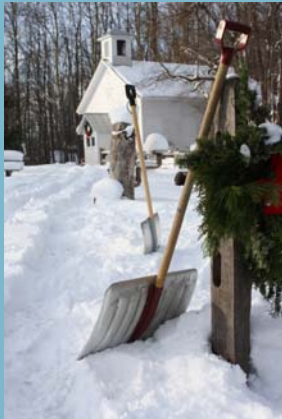


Index

Letter from Director
page 2

Upcoming Events
page 3



Homestead Holiday
preparation

New Interns
page 4

Community
Garden
&
Blandford
Membership
page 5

Wildlife Center
page 6

Volunteer
Activities
page 7

Idema Foundation
Renovation Work
Back Page



BLANDFORD | nature center

The Acorn: Blandford in a Nutshell

Volume I, Issue III

Harvest Festival a Huge Success!

Thanks to our dedicated volunteers, school partners (Blandford School and CA Frost) and spectacular weather, our annual Harvest Festival exceeded our expectations. We set a new attendance record with over 1200 visitors in one day!



Board of Directors

John Schneider
President
Clark Hill

Alan Supp
Vice-President
UBS

Bill Dangl
Treasurer
Amway

Brian VanDoeselaar
Assistant Treasurer
GVSU

**Emily Aleman-
MacAlpine**
Blue Cross Blue Shield

Jamon Alexander
Spectrum Health
Foundation

**Mayda Bahomonde -
Gunnell**
GRPS

Bert Bleke
Past President
Retired, GRPS

Mary Jane Dockeray
Director Emeritus

Hal Froot
Froot Enterprises

Rick Gillette
Goodwillie School

Craig Throne
Wolverine World Wide

Letter from the Director



Dear Friends and Neighbors of Blandford,

One of the things I've noticed, along with the board, staff, and weekend volunteers, is that it seems we get just as many visitors after hours and on weekends as we do during our Monday - Friday and Saturday business hours. Whether we're here working late, holding an evening board meeting, or hosting special programs, we are thrilled to see so many of you taking advantage of the trails and green space after hours! It tells us however, that we are grossly underestimating attendance and use of our facility.

We try our best to count visitors during working hours because our funders want to know that the community uses and values the nature center. Attendance numbers help prove that. But how do we prove to our generous funders that we are valued by the many visitors we don't see and can't count? I ask you to think about these questions:

How often do you visit Blandford to enjoy our programs and the peaceful surroundings? Are you a monthly visitor who comes in for a Saturday program and to grab an "upcoming events" postcard to stay informed? Are you a daily visitor who walks the trails with your dogs, kids, or sweetheart but never comes in the visitor center? What does each visit mean to you? Can you put a value on those visits?

Our goal is to keep this "oasis in the city" available to you and your families any time of day with no fencing and no admission fees. We need your support by way of paid memberships not only to help cover the costs of maintaining the nature center you enjoy so much, but to show our funders we have committed friends and neighbors who want to see Blandford remain open for everyone to enjoy. Enclosed is a membership opportunity; if you or your family are not already members of the Blandford Club, I ask that you please consider becoming a member. Thank you in advance for joining!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Annoesjka". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid.

Annoesjka Steinman



Upcoming Events

November 20, 12–5 pm, Free Sooper Yooper

Special program to learn about invasive species impacting the Great Lakes through the eyes of a super-hero. Using his book "Sooper Yooper", Mark Newman will share stories about the Great Lakes and its treasures. Stop in any time between Noon and 5:00 pm to see what's in the treasure chest.
Great for all ages.

December 11, 12–5 pm, \$5 Homestead Holiday

Our annual festival filled with fun family activities. Come enjoy the stress-free times of holidays during the Pioneer Days. Make crafts, take a wagon ride through the trails, sing carols, play pioneer snow games, and of course, enjoy hot chocolate and treats.



Jan 8, 1–3 pm, \$5 Winter Survival

Could you survive in the harsh winter climate? Learn how many animals of Michigan survive and glean a few tips. Learn to make an emergency fire and shelter as well. Suitable for ages 10 and up.



Jan 13, 6–7:30 pm, \$3 Owl Moon

Listen to a winter classic tale about a boy and his grandfather's adventures during a night hike while sipping hot chocolate. Then take a guided hike to talk with owls after the story. All ages.

Jan 22, 2—3pm, \$3 Anishinabe Program

Learn how the first people of Michigan lived and hunted in the winter. Visit our wigwam and hear a story around the fire.

Feb 12, 1–3 pm, \$4 or \$8 Snowshoe Adventure

Enjoy a guided hike through our trails and learn basic snowshoeing techniques. Cost is: \$4 without snowshoe rental and \$8 with snowshoe rental. Ages 8+.

Feb 26, 2–3 pm, \$3 Winter Tracks

The winter snow makes for great animal track identification. Come and explore the tracks left by animal and humans alike.



New Interns, by Kristin Tindall

This autumn, we have been fortunate to have five passionate young people join our team as Blandford Nature Center interns. By committing to volunteer their time through the semester, they are able to tackle larger projects and at the same time increase their skill level. Read on to learn what this experience has meant to them.



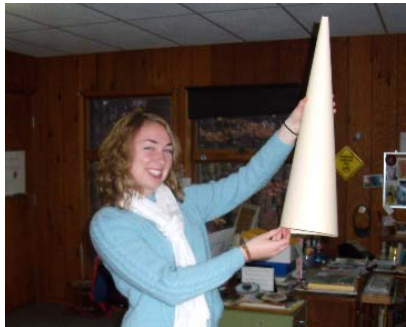
Josh Usadel
Education Programs Intern

I like that Blandford gets kids out of the classroom and into the environment for direct, hands-on learning. I like taking school groups on nature walks. Combining mild exercise and learning about the environment should be done more often!



Kelly Haley
Education Programs Intern

While taking classes at Grand Valley State University, I was offered a chance to work with Blandford Nature Center. I have really enjoyed learning the trails and being able to show kids how nature plays a role in their everyday lives.



Victoria VanDragt,
Education Programs Intern

I love getting the opportunity to interact with kids in nature, as well as create other learning opportunities for them, like the dunce cap used in the one-room school house programs. It has been very rewarding to watch kids get engaged. They're so excited to be outside and learning. I'm learning a lot of methods to encourage students to get outside, enjoy and respect nature.

Laura Quist,
GVSU Sociology major and a Blandford maintenance intern.

As a former BEEP, I feel very privileged to be a part of Blandford again. What was true then is just as true now; I'm enjoying every experience! Whether the task is mowing lawns, digging post-holes, co-leading volunteer groups or directing traffic, I've always come away having learned something new. Whenever I'm asked about how my maintenance internship ties into my academic interests, I always reply that the best way to understand the relationship between society and nature is to get out into it and get your hands dirty!



Clara Trippel
Land Management Intern

I am so excited to be a part of the process that brings Blandford Nature Center's visions and goals into reality! As the Natural Resources Management Intern I look forward to sparking off the beginning stages of a Forest Management Plan by applying my current skills and knowledge while developing a new expertise in my field of study. Also, I am looking forward to helping Blandford update to a more user-friendly trail signage system. Thanks for letting me be a part of this magical place!





Farm Update, by Mark Rankin

Our farm expansion activities for 2011 are in full swing. Thanks to funding from Steelcase Foundation, we are working with Trillium Haven Farm to develop a 25 share CSA (Community Supported Agriculture), expand our community garden area from 24 to 50 plots, and make land available for other nonprofits who want to grow food to feed the hungry in our community.

Our farmer (still to be hired) will help community gardeners and offer exciting workshops, from growing food and soil health to cooking and canning. Blandford Farm will be all about community involvement.

Wish List: We need your gently used garden tools. We hope to offer a new and improved tool shed for next year's gardeners.



Our volunteer Chris is spreading a compost soil amendment to our newly tilled farm area in preparation for next year's garden activity. Come check out the progress!

Membership in the Blandford Club!

Our fall membership enrollment is open! We still have \$5,000 of match money to earn from the Frey Foundation, O'Donovan Family Foundation and an anonymous donor who collectively put up \$20,000. Please use the enclosed envelope to join today! Here's what you'll receive:

- Invitations to special member-only events
- 10% discount in our General Store
- Special member pricing for programs and workshops, plus early-bird signup periods (excludes festivals)
- Quarterly newsletter
- Blandford button
- Acknowledgement in our newsletter and website of your membership
- Knowledge that you are helping to keep Blandford Nature Center open - we can't do it without you!



Please help us earn our remaining match dollars and become a member of the Blandford Club today!

Your membership helps us achieve our mission:
Changing lives through fun and engaging learning experiences in the natural world.



Wildlife Center Update, by Lori Martin. The Wildlife Department has some new additions and upcoming releases happening this Fall. We'll post updates and video clips on our Facebook page, E-news, and website (www.blandfordnaturecenter.org) so be sure to sign up for these if you haven't already. You don't want to miss the fun!

A new addition to Blandford's living educational animal collection is a Merlin, a type of falcon that is a threatened species in Michigan. She had been shot in the left wing and had damage to her soft tissue. Although all attempts to rehab the Merlin were made, she is unable to capture live prey and therefore could not survive in the wild.



Staff and volunteers are working to modify a currently vacant cage on the outdoor wildlife trail to accommodate our new permanent resident so she can't get out and no critters can squeeze in. These modifications will cost close to \$600. We welcome any donations to help defray the costs to the Wildlife Center budget.



We have been rehabilitating a Great Horned Owl that had a broken left humerus since late September. The owl was found by a Jenison couple who were very surprised to find a large owl in their yard, "clicking" at them.

We had Dr. Michele Vincent of the Animal Medical Center of Wyoming take x-rays and put a pin in the wing to hold the bone together. Dr. Vincent kindly donates her services to Blandford. Wildlife staff have been caring for the ornery Great Horned Owl for five weeks while waiting for the bone to mend. The pin was finally removed and the bone has healed.

The Great Horned Owl is now in a large rehab cage, working on building up his wing muscles; he is flying better each day. We hope to release him back into the wild by the couple's house in the next couple of weeks. Many thanks to the couple for caring enough to bring the owl to us for rehabilitation.

When you come into the wildlife center, you should look for a new critter on the counter, a Wood Frog. He was found by staff outside at Blandford, and wasn't moving.

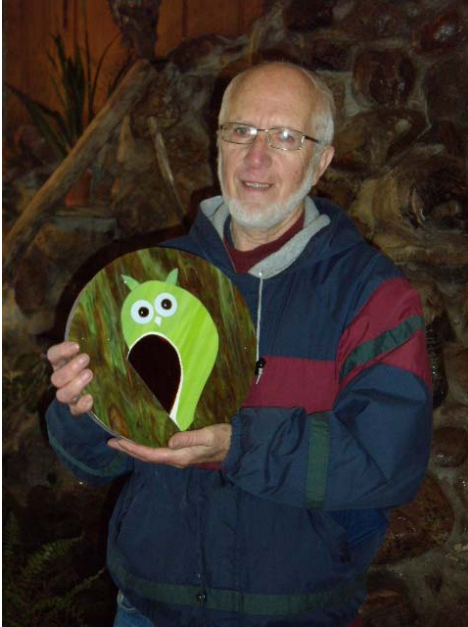
We discovered he had a broken pelvis, and though he could move his legs, he couldn't jump very well and often flipped himself over. He probably blended in too well with his surroundings and was stepped on. He was kept under observation to see if he could still eat and excrete, and it turned out he could! He can't survive in the wild but is doing well in captivity so we decided to add him to the living educational animal collection at Blandford.



Blandford would not be able to rehabilitate wildlife or give unreleasable wildlife a home without the support of donations from people like you.

Thank you!

Volunteer Activities, by Peta Yeiter



Harry is one of our new volunteers. Harry not only has a passion to be outdoors and helping nonprofits, but he is an artist as well! Harry created a lovely mosaic of our new logo (upper left photo), which we proudly display in our lobby in the turtle pond area. In the upper right photo you can see Harry (purple shirt, black pants) collecting rocks for placement in the splash pool as they are passed through the assembly line. Harry was working with a class from Blandford School to add more rock to our stream bank erosion project.

Joe and Marcus are seasoned volunteers and work on our larger long-term projects. Here they are seen rebuilding the outdoor cage that will be the new home for our Merlin. We hope to eventually modify all the outdoor cages with better roof structures to withstand the fall leaves and winter snow pack.



Are you ready to volunteer?

We have short-term and long-term opportunities, indoor and outdoor tasks. We have Monday through Saturday options. Here are just a few ideas:

- Help with Homestead Holiday festival
- Operate our general store
- Help install Nature Playscape items
- Trail guiding
- Trail maintenance
- Wood splitting
- Wood duck nest box maintenance
- Clean/prune garden areas
- Trail sign removal

Feel free to call or email me with questions. I can be reached at 616-735-6240 x 11 or peta@blandfordnaturecenter.org.



1715 Hillburn Avenue NW
Grand Rapids, MI 49504
616-735-6240
blandfordnaturecenter.org

HOURS

Monday – Friday
9 am to 5 pm

Saturday
Noon to 5pm

Closed Sundays and Holidays

Trails open every day,
dawn till dusk

MISSION

Changing lives through fun
and engaging learning
experiences in the natural
world.

NONPROFIT ORG
US POSTAGE
PAID
GRAND RAPIDS, MI
PERMIT NO. 793

Blandford renovations underway thanks to Idema Foundation

Thanks to a grant from the Bill and Bea Idema Foundation, we have completed most of the renovation work to the visitor center lobby and exterior. The floor was painted and sealed, then fresh animal tracks were added by volunteer Joan Steuken. The exterior was pressure washed and painted tan/chocolate to replace the grey/dark grey paint that was peeling.

We had a new energy-efficient furnace installed in the general store, which should reduce our electricity bill immensely! We just received the new seating for guests to enjoy in the Discovery Room while they watch the wildlife and birds outside the window. Additional improvements are still in the works.

Please come in and check out the improvements we're making thanks to generous funding of the Idema Foundation.



The newly painted and waxed lobby floor, with critter tracks throughout. We also added a display corner to showcase items for sale in our General Store.