

# *MERES Notes*

*The Muskegon Environmental Research & Education Society*

## Special points of Interest:

- Fire
- Environmental Hall of Fame
- Teachers
- Bird Banding
- MLNP Video
- Education Center
- Habitat
- Fred Wilder
- Eagle Projects

## Fire at Fred Wilder Observation Deck



In the early morning of the day after Halloween, the Fred Wilder Observation Deck was destroyed by fire. It apparently burned for some time before a woman walking her dog saw it and called the fire department. It appears that the fire was started by vandals, as there was abso-

lutely nothing there to start a fire.

The fire not only destroyed the tower, but the shed under it was destroyed as well. Fortunately our lawn tractor was not in there. There was a gas powered hedge trimmer, a weed cutter, a trailer, a generator and numerous tools.

A reward up to \$5,000 has been posted for information leading to the arrest of those responsible. So far, no leads.

## Michigan Environmental Hall of Fame

After doing some research in the State, it was decided to form the Michigan Environmental Hall of Fame. There are so many people in the State that have devoted energy to the environment for many years. There are specific projects that have stood out as they have worked to clean up the environment. And, there are schools that have long term projects that educated the public about environmental issues.

MERES is going to bring recognition to these people and projects with the induction into the first Michigan Environmental Hall of Fame on May 12. The ceremony will be held at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Museum.

## The Board

Steve Coverly, President  
Jim Tobleck

Dave Walley  
Ann McLaughlin

Mike Hayes  
Ron Brown

Karen Hicks  
Leischen Krause

Paul Kitchka

## Looking For “Teachers”

Are you retired and looking for something positive to do with some of your time? We are looking for volunteers to help with the educational program at the Nature Preserve. Each spring hundreds of students from the area visit the Nature Preserve as part of the educational program run by Alyssa Merten of the Muskegon Conservation District and she could use some help. We will give you some training, and it is very rewarding experience working with the kids.

Retired science teachers are very welcome, but you don't have to be a teacher at all. If you would like to participate, in a very rewarding experience, drop a note to Ron Brown at, [Voyager123@Juno.com](mailto:Voyager123@Juno.com)

## Bird Banding

For the past several years, Brian Johnson has been conducting migratory bird research at the Nature Preserve. He uses the Outdoor Classroom as his base of operations. He has given us a final report on some of his activities this year.

“So far this season, I have banded 677 birds (798 total captures) of 53 species. Due to the paucity of neotropical migrants, our overall total was lower than those of previous years but, a nice push of temperate migrants in October is raising the numbers to par. A capture of two Chipping Sparrows brings the cumulative banding diversity to 81 species. As for herps, only one Box Turtle has been captured and marked this year. No new species have been added to the list. Regarding mammals, squirrel and rabbit populations are booming.”



## On You Tube

We have a 6 minute video about the Nature Preserve on You Tube. Search the Muskegon Lake Nature Preserve. It covers the first 12 years of development, from a dump to a Nature Preserve.

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## Education Center Fund Raising

We are embarking on a fund raising effort to raise \$750,000. This will cover the purchase of the land and build an Education Center. The Education Center will be built on the land currently where people park their cars. The parking does not go away, but we will own the land. As it is now, we are able to use the land in front of the Preserve through the generosity of the owner. We need to purchase the land before his generosity runs out.

The Education Center will be an excellent complement to the environmental laboratory of the Nature Preserve. It will have a classroom, laboratory, wildlife exhibit area and be the home to the Michigan Environmental Hall of Fame.

We have raised over \$50,000 so far, but have a long ways to go. Anyone wishing to invest in this for the community may send their contribution to the MERES Building Fund at the Community Foundation for Muskegon County, 425 W. Western Ave., Suite 200, Muskegon, MI 49440.

## Habitat Restoration

Restoring the habitat on the Preserve is an ongoing process. With so many plants that are not native to Michigan, the process got a big boost from the Community Foundation of Muskegon County with a grant of \$2,000. Several trees were planted around the Preserve. Also, with Brian Johnson's help, we are removing much of the bittersweet. There is also an effort underway to remove the vines from the many trees around the Preserve to save them from destruction



## Fred Wilder

As you were driving along Seaway Drive near Mona Lake, you may have noticed a large, yellow colored billboard. In **BIG** letters was the name of Fred Wilder, yes, our Fred. He was honored by the Michigan United Conservation Clubs with the Past President's Award for his role in supporting various environmental activities. Congratulations!!

For those of you who know Fred, he recently had a hip replacement. He is now home from the hospital and is doing fine. We expect to have him back this spring!

## Eagle Scout Project

Stephen Kowalski, working on his Eagle Scout project in Troop 1051, constructed two benches along the Al Bell Trail. This included building two places along the trail to place the benches. Stephen had to get volunteers from his troop to help him on a Saturday this summer. They were able to get the job done, and there are now two benches for walkers on the wetland trail to sit and rest or simply look at the surrounding area.



Last year Michael Wally planted several trees as part of his Eagle Project. Both Stephen and Michael are now Eagle Scouts. We are proud

to have played a part in their efforts.

## Your contribution

MERES is dependent on you, we get NO government help. You can send whatever you like to: Thanks!

Muskegon Environmental Education & Research Society

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[www.muskegonlakenaturepreserve.org](http://www.muskegonlakenaturepreserve.org)

Member of the Muskegon Area Chamber of Commerce