



July 2024 Recap!

By Hannah Fischer

The Grand Island Nature Alliance has been kept quite busy so far this year! We started off the year strong by conducting an educational program at the 2024 Bird's on Niagara (BON) Festival. The group tabled at the Grand Island Welcome Center on the Saturday of the festival, with bird books and stickers on display. We created a bird themed scavenger hunt and "Birido" for children. The highlight of the day was GINA's member, Diane Evans, putting on a "Birding Basics" presentation, walking viewers through how to identify birds by their behavior, markings, and other observations. She hosted two sessions, educating over 35 people!

In April, we hosted a Conservation Conversation which focused on conservation efforts on Grand Island. After participants readily shared why they love to live on the island and why they chose to reside here, the discussion turned to how we can

protect the qualities that we love and appreciate. Our member, Robbyn Drake, did an excellent job facilitating the conversation and introducing the attendees to our guests. We heard from Diane Evans on the GI Conservation Advisory Board, Sarah Costlow of the WNY Land Conservancy, and Citizen Coalition for Wildlife and the Environment. The discussion prompted many thoughts on how to keep our island full of natural qualities and recreational opportunities! Sarah Costlow shared how to get involved with conservation easements and Dave Reilly and Nicole Gerber of Citizen Coalition for Wildlife and the Environment shared how this process worked for them with the Alt Preserve.

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Who are we?

Grand Island Nature Alliance is a collection of passionate community members who volunteer their time and expertise to promote, protect, and restore the Grand Island natural environment through education, partnership, and engagement with our community.

We are currently accepting new volunteers for upcoming events!

[Click Here](#) to sign up and get involved!

Upcoming Events

Summer

- July 27, 2024 : Paddles Up Tabling Event
- July 14, 10 am - 4: Grand Island Garden Walk Table Event
- July 8 @ 6PM: Kayaking Eco-Tour

Fall - dates TBA

- Tree ID Walks
- Birding Events
- Foraging Walks
- Chalk West River



Black-Eyed Susan is a common and easy to grow native on Grand Island.

Summer is a great time to get more acquainted with the native plants growing all over Grand Island. How many can you spot today?





Callery Pear trees are currently on the approved tree list for residential plantings on Grand Island.

Learning to identify the Callery Pear is the first step to combating its spread.

INVASIVE SPECIES HIGHLIGHT:

Callery (Bradford) Pear

By Sonia Merkel

The charming early spring blooms of the Callery (*Pyrus calleryana*) and Bradford Pears are a common sight in residential and commercial properties on Grand Island and around the country. Currently an approved tree for residential development on Grand Island, the Callery, and Bradford cultivars are common sites in new residential areas around town. Admired for their pristine white petals, these trees have long been celebrated since their introduction in the 1960s. They captured developers' hearts with easy cultivation, rapid growth, and striking aesthetic appeal. However, beneath their lovely petals lies a troubling reality.

Callery Pears originated in Asia, and were introduced in the 1960's. A member of the rose family, the Callery has sharp thorns which most people did not like, resulting in horticulturalists creating the cultivar, Bradford. While these trees can not self pollinate, they will cross pollinate with other species of pear trees in a pollinator area - around 300 feet. Its seeds are dispersed far and wide by birds, leading to its colonization of farm and meadow land.

The Bradford Pear's impact goes beyond its rapid spread. Unlike native vegetation, it fails to support a diverse array of soft-bodied insects crucial for the survival of local bird populations. It creates ecological deserts, depriving bird parents of the necessary food sources to feed their young. Its aggressive growth out competes indigenous species, further destabilizing the delicate balance of the ecosystem.

As communities grapple with the invasive menace, the task of managing the Callery Pear is a challenge. Effective control requires a comprehensive strategy involving pruning, targeted herbicidal treatments, and vigilance to prevent its unchecked spread. Without concerted efforts and substantial resources, the advance of the Callery Pear could threaten more meadow, farmland, and native habitats in the future.



- Small Trees with teardrop shaped, rippled leaves.



- Small clusters of pear like fruit in the fall



- Foul smelling white flowers in the early spring



The beautiful, native, Service Berry produces a fruit similar to a blueberry.

What can you do?

If you have them on your property, start the process of removal! Callery Pear | [WNY PRISM](#)

Petition the local town government to remove the Callery and Bradford Pear from the approved vegetation list for developers.

Get in touch with local extension offices to learn more about the identification and removal of invasive species.

Plant Native! The Serviceberry, Flowering Dogwood, and Black Cherry offer beautiful flowers and will help support local wildlife.

If something is not eating your plants, then your garden is not part of the ecosystem.

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We also made sure to get outside this spring! We hosted a Foraging Walk with Ellen Owens at Scenic Woods and experienced spring flowers popping through, trillium, trout lily, wild violets and toothwort. A few days later, we spent the morning planting trees with NY State Parks and the afternoon mulching at our West River Garden for Arbor Day. We can't wait to watch these trees and plants grow. We finished off the spring with a Native Plant Sale. Citizen Coalition for Wildlife and the Environment presented on the importance of native plants and many vendors from around the area sold a variety of natives with attendees.

We are looking to further our impacts this summer. Explore the World of Purple Martins will be occurring on June 10th and 17th at 1 PM and June 14th at 4:30 at Beaver Island. We will also have a Tree ID Walk with Joe Killian on June 24 from 9:00 am 11:00 am through Nike Base Park to learn about the different types of trees that call this park home. Our knowledgeable guide will help you identify various tree species and teach you interesting facts about each one. On July 8th, we have a kayak eco-tour planned at 6 pm. This event will be led by Paul Leuchner. Visit our website at <https://gi-naturealliance.org/events/> to register and learn more. Stay tuned for future events!



Visitors at the Spring Native Plant sale

Paddles Up! - July 27th, 2024

[Paddles Up Niagara](#) is a family friendly and safe way to experience the natural areas and unique habitats of the Niagara River. This marks the 18th year the event has taken place at Beaver Island State Park on Grand Island. Whether you are a novice or an experienced paddler, you will enjoy spending the morning with an enthusiastic paddling community. The event consists of eco-kayak and hiking tours, a large fun paddle, a learn-to-kayak session, and many tabling environmental organizations and vendors.

Participate in the tours and one of the largest paddling sessions in the northeast, then continue the celebration by visiting with the many exhibitors and vendors to learn more about our waterways and greenspaces. The Grand Island Nature Alliance will be there, so stop by and say hi!

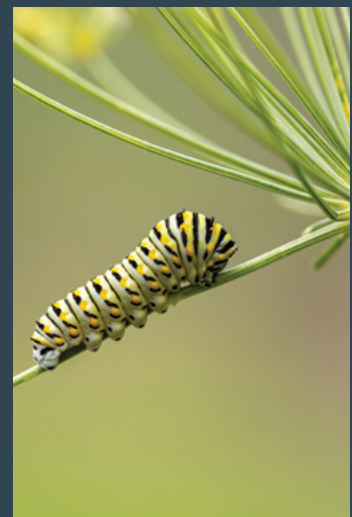


This year's highlights include a wooden canoe paddle carving by the Buffalo Maritime Center and several paddle-related prize drawings, including a dry bag, life vest, and paddle board!

Did you know....

Most people know monarchs love milkweed, but there are other butterfly caterpillars that have special needs as well! Swallowtail caterpillars love a variety of plants including Parsley, Coneflower, Joe Pye Weed and dill!

Dill makes a great addition to any garden, self seeds most years, and is fabulous to have on hand for salads, soups, and other summer treats. Just sprinkle some seeds in some sunny soil after danger of frost, and watch the sprouts emerge in 10 to 14 days.





Recreation: Grand Island, a kayakers dream!

Imagine floating on the sparkling Niagara River, propelled forward by your own paddling, breathing in clean air, getting exercise, and seeing all kind of birds—Bald Eagles, Great Blue Herons, Egrets, and terns—as you silently drift by. Now you can see why folks love kayaking—right here on Grand Island!

By Mari McNeil

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Kayaking doesn't require a ton of equipment (Kayak, paddle, life preserver), or athletic skill. And, here on the Island, we are lucky to have nine kayak launch sites, three of which are roller dock ramps (Beaver Island Marina, East River Marsh and Woods Creek), which are easier for beginners. Don't have a kayak? No worries. Blue Water Marina rents a variety of kayaks at a reasonable price, and offers group tours so you can try it out.

Concerned about the river current, and floating over the Falls? The Niagara River rolls along at a sedate 5-8 mph. Even so, starting out at the sheltered Beaver Island Lagoon at Beaver Island State Park is a good place for beginners to get comfortable with the current. Or, put in at Woods Creek at Buckhorn Island State Park and explore under the North GI Bridge, and you can go even further into the marshes around the Buckhorn Island point.

Don't want to go alone? Islander Bob Monaco has a Facebook group called Island Kayakers that meets up once a week for a group paddle during kayak season.

Once you acquire your "river legs," you might want to try paddling around the Island. Depending on who you talk to, the entire trip takes about 6 ½ hours for an experienced paddler. It is recommended that you start at the Fix Road landing going north (downstream,) then, into the current (upstream around Buckhorn), along to East River (the hardest part being in the

middle), then ending paddling the easier downstream as you pass Beaver Island, back to Fix.

On Grand Island, we're lucky enough to be surrounded by beautiful water, wildlife and nature—kayaking is a fun, healthy way to enjoy it up close!

