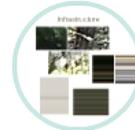
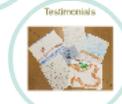
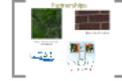




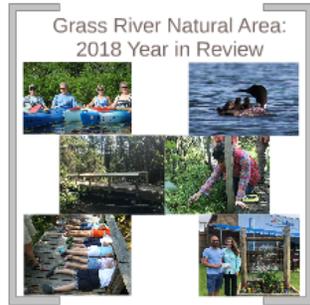
Major Lessons
 - We are not alone in our efforts.
 - We are not alone in our challenges.
 - We are not alone in our solutions.
 - We are not alone in our success.
 - We are not alone in our future.
THANK YOU



What is our community saying?
 - We are not alone in our efforts.
 - We are not alone in our challenges.
 - We are not alone in our solutions.
 - We are not alone in our success.
 - We are not alone in our future.



CONTRIBUTORS
 - We are not alone in our efforts.
 - We are not alone in our challenges.
 - We are not alone in our solutions.
 - We are not alone in our success.
 - We are not alone in our future.



**YOURS TO EXPLORE.
 YOURS TO PROTECT.**

Grass River Natural Area: 2018 Year in Review





To manage the Grass River Natural Area, conserve and protect its watershed and provide opportunities that increase knowledge, appreciation and community-wide stewardship of the natural environment.



Bets
Communica

Our Team



Sheila Fox
Office Manager & Bookkeeper



Brian Thelen
Land & Facilities Steward



Betsy Willis
Communication Coordinator



James Dake
Education Director



Jenn Wright
Executive Director

Not pictured - Many part-time and seasonal staff

HIGHLIGHTS & STATS

Completed the \$410,000 fundraising campaign and the construction for Phase I of the Boardwalk Reconstruction Project.

21% increase in private contributions compared to 2017.

1747 volunteer hours logged with a value totaling \$44,426.

Successfully monitored ½ of the GRNA Parcels using an Arc GIS monitoring strategy.

18% increase in funds raised from fundraising events.

Completed the Perception Pathway interpretive trail with installation of 10 new braille signs and a rubber coated cable – *project supported by grants from the Bellaire Lions & Lioness Clubs, GT Regional Community Foundation, Great Lakes Energy, and Michigan Braille Association.*

7% increase in overall program participation compared to 2017 and 17% increase over 2016.

Designed, fabricated and installed new GR Center indoor exhibits

Accrued 10,000 participant contact hours.

1300 people reached at 16 different outreach events around the region.

Completed an Invasive Species Management plan for Grass River in response to the Michigan Natural Features Inventory which was conducted in 2017.

Conducted a nation-wide search for a new Executive Director who joined Grass River in June 2018.

Began distributing the second printing (1200) of the Field Guide to Northwest Michigan. Education Director, James Dake, conducted talks all over the state, increasing our constituent base.

Selected as the first organization in Antrim County to participate in the *Pour for More* fundraiser.

Worked with SEEDS in Traverse City to design and build benches which are now placed along the new section of boardwalk - *project supported by Dole Family Foundation.*

Antrim County commissioners committed to year 2 of funding at \$67,000/year (2017-2019) for Grass River Road Improvement Project.



Strategic Goals

1. Steward natural resources and facilities with best practices
2. Expand awareness and position GRNA as a premier resource
3. Build financial stability
4. Enhance visitor experiences through education and programs
5. Provide for sound administration of GRNA

What does success look like?



What is our community saying?

In addition to having a 5/5 star rating on Facebook (78 reviews) and a 4.5/5 star rating on Trip Advisor (75 reviews), here are some praise from our users:

"I have been here several times (fortunately it's just down the road a bit!)

The trails are always nice, the people in the center are very friendly and helpful.

Plus they have excellent programs as well as Art classes from time to time.

A little 'gem' in Antrim County!" - *Facebook User*

"Words cannot do justice to the complete immersion that takes place between human and pure natural tranquility. You have to experience it for yourself...you OWE it to yourself, trust me! It's serene bordering on surreal! Been coming here since I was a small boy and not a day goes by that I don't miss it when I am away!" - *Facebook User*

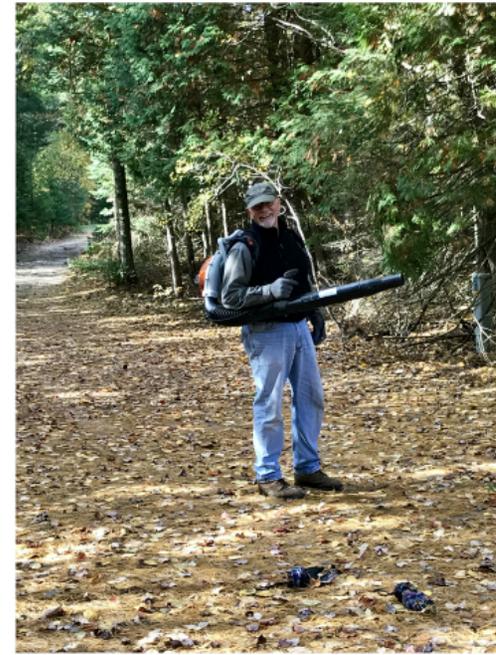
"Grass River Natural Area is a beautiful place, with kind and knowledgeable naturalists. I've enjoyed walking the pathways for many years, and it is now a favorite spot for my kids. The programming is always top notch. We have recently particularly loved nature story hour and Winter Camp. Thank you for all you do. Nice work on the new boardwalks, too!" - *Facebook User*

"Love visiting. Such relaxing stay every time. Northern Michigan beauty at its finest. Take the time to find this hidden gem." – *Trip Advisor*

"Every program I have attended has been fun, well planned, and very educational. My whole family just attended the Maple Syrup demonstration and we are already tapping trees in our yard! I love Grass River and I am thankful it is so close to home." – *local resident*

"I spent an hour cross country skiing and another hour hiking on the snowshoe trails enjoying the sunshine and great outdoors. The cross country trails were well tracked and clear of trees. We use the trails year round and enjoyed the classes we have participated in." – *local resident*

Volunteers & Outreach

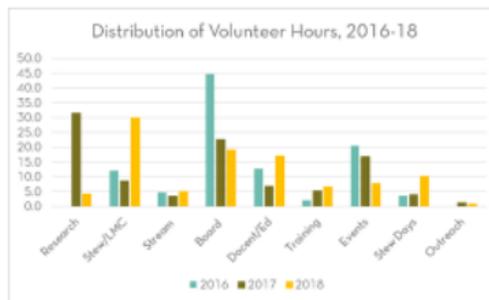


COMMUNITY OUTREACH



- Reached 1300 people
- 16 community events
- Setbacks & highlights

VOLUNTEER PROGRAM



2018 HIGHLIGHTS

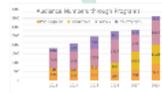
WHAT'S IN STORE FOR 2019?



Education

Statistics

- 2019 exceeded visitors to GR Center in 2017 by nearly 1500 representing the 9th consecutive year of growth.
- 2018 program participation surpasses 2017: 5500 vs. 5100
- Most students for spring field trips in past 6+ years
- Provide opportunities for longer and extended experiences to have a greater impact.
2013 = 1.5-1.8 2018 = 2.5-3
- 39% increase in program revenue over 2017



- Meet the **need for environmental education** in Northern Michigan
- Potential to become an **authority and resource center** for the region

Programs

Kayak Programs



2016 - 17 people, 42 hours on the river, \$510
 2017 - 16 people, 40 hours on the river, \$555
 2018 - 35 people, 89 hours on the river, \$875

Summer Camp

Year	# of camps	# of participants	# of hours	Revenue
2016	42	17	42	\$510
2017	40	16	40	\$555
2018	89	35	89	\$875

Outreach



Interpretation



Panel 1



Panel 2



Panel 3



Panel 4



Panel 5

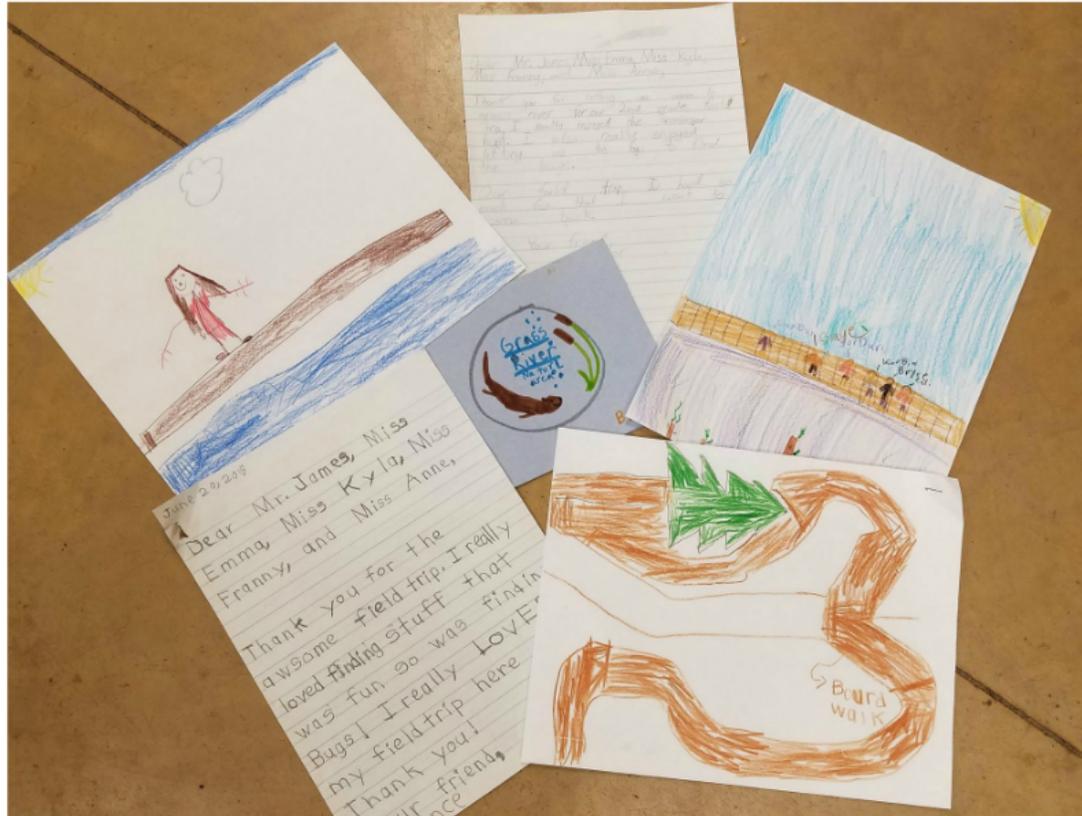


Funding support from:
GL Energy = \$400
Elk Rapids Lions = \$1000
Paddle Antrim = \$650
Furnishing Fund = \$6200
\$3,455 remaining to add additional
signage and interpretation

Infrastructure



Testimonials



Progress: Capacity & Building Our Foundation!

Board Capacity

Vision

- Increase revenue
- Grow community support
- Build volunteer base
- Create effective ambassadors

Fund Development Goals

- Grant revenue
- Event fundraising
- Challenge grant
- Earned income

Planning



Donor Relations

- Donor retention rates
- Increase donor base
- Data driven strategies



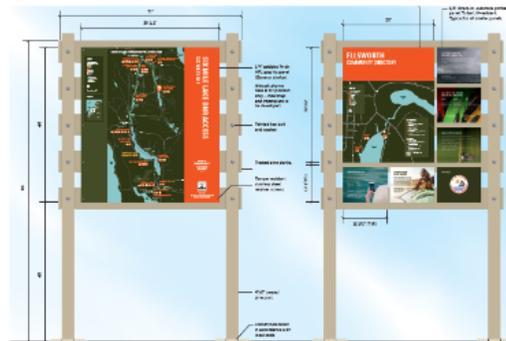
Partnerships



Three Lakes & Clam Lake Associations



Rubber Duck Festival



Major Lessons

We love what we do!

Outdoor engagement leads to
behavioral change

Strategic planning is essential to attaining long-
term goals

One-on-one relationships with donors

Positive experiences lead to more...

Volunteer experience

People deeply value our parks and
natural areas

THANK YOU

GRASS RIVER
NATURAL AREA



1969 – 2019

Questions?

