



The Connector

VOL. 1 SPRING 2020

A newsletter connecting community members of all ages and ability levels to the wonders of nature.



From the Director



Welcome to our first newsletter, ever. I am so incredibly grateful that you have come this far into exploring Greystone Nature Preserve. I hope you will find it interesting and perhaps pick up what motivates us here at Greystone; finding the awe in Nature, appreciating the interconnection of all life, and developing a sense of stewardship for the earth.

The mission of Greystone Nature Preserve is twofold: first to preserve 72 acres of natural habitat on the Lake Erie escarpment. Toward this goal we have planted many native trees and removed harmful invasives. Our trails are varied and open dawn to dusk. The second mission is to provide experiential environmental education to community members of all ages and ability levels. We also encourage the immersion in Nature through festivals, nature programming and public outreach.

This newsletter has been generated by the enthusiasm and skills of our five current SUNY Fredonia interns. They have created this Spring 2020 edition from a sense of caring about the future of our planet. It is dedicated to them with appreciation for their unfolding ability to think outside the box and become fully engaged in an internship.

*Sours
Diane*

-Diane Clark, Director of Greystone Nature Preserve

Experiential Education

We aim to spend 90 minutes outside, allowing students to be led by their own curiosity and wonder. During this time, we help students be aware of the natural world surrounding them.

Medicinal Plant Trail

On our medicinal plant trail you will find species traditionally used for supporting digestion and women's health (black cohosh), fighting infection and toning our mucous membranes (goldenseal), astringent herbs (witch hazel and wild geranium), joint supporters (Solomon's Seal) and much more.

Hikes and Guided Walks

The focus of our walks is always changing. Some of our past hikes included the Blue Bird Club annual hike, Bat Night Watch Walk, Winter Weather hikes, and Native Plant hikes.

Meet the Interns



Katie Lenda

I am currently a junior public relations major at SUNY Fredonia. This spring semester, I have been improving my public relations skills through my internship with Greystone Nature Preserve. From a PR standpoint, Greystone aims to promote a deeper appreciation for nature through advocacy and education. To get this message across to the public, I have written for the Observer Today and now the newsletter, wrote scripts for television appearances, contributed to writing a grant, and helped to plan the Earth Day Expo that was unfortunately canceled due to COVID-19 precautions. Outside of my internship I am the public relations chair for Fredonia's PRSSA chapter, and a staff writer for The Leader.



Adam Mills

I am a senior marketing major and the Creative Content Manager of Greystone Nature Preserve. There has been a learned passion for the environment while being an intern at Greystone. My responsibilities while being involved here consist of developing the new edition of "The Connector" and collaborating with each person to finalize this newsletter. My passion for the environment was mostly driven by the adventurous tendencies I have for going out and discovering the wonders of nature. Diane and I have connected on a very influential basis of how we can keep all of our supporters informed on what is going on at Greystone.



Rachel Isbell

I will be graduating from SUNY Fredonia this August in Environmental Science with a minor in applied music. I love what I've been able to accomplish at this university as well as the small amount I've done for Greystone. I'll be observing different species of birds, and caterpillars who use the land for their home; and I'll be planting a new wildflower garden. So far I was able to move some holly hock from the fresh produce garden to the circle around the medicine stone. From a young age I've loved planting and connecting with the miraculous earth that's all around us. I'm looking forward to all I can learn from this experience!

Alexandre Richards

Although the COVID-19 pandemic has limited in-person guidance as a result of social-distancing, my internship with Greystone Nature Preserve has been filled with experiential learning. There is something great about being given a task and learning through trial and error as it makes you appreciate the process much more than just the final result. The work that I have done with Greystone includes, learning about the cultural and botanical aspects of different invasive species such as the European Honeysuckle, Multiflora Rose, and Garlic Mustard, as well as the proper extraction methodology for removing these invasives. Out of all these projects I have learned so much and am excited to continue to learn more throughout the remaining weeks.



Alexandria Nieves

I am the social media outreach person. Everything that is posted on Instagram and Twitter are things I am writing up weekly. I post interesting facts about nature, wildlife, etc on Facebook. I work on the modernization of the website by adding the new events and new photos by associating with Sandi. With the assistance of Diane, I have created advertisements, scripts, and articles to get more people aware of the benefits of nature.

Greystone Receives First Ever Award for Excellence in Internships

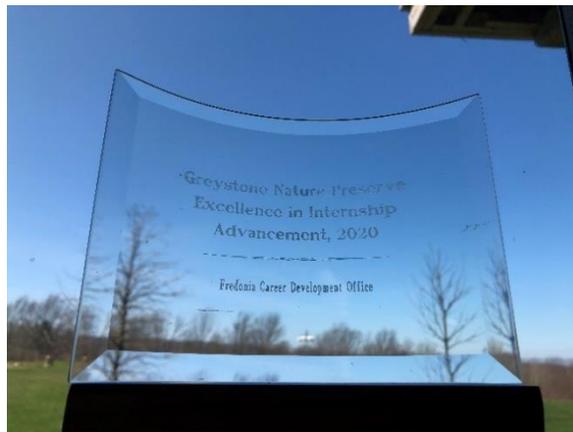
By Adam Mills

On March 4th, Greystone Nature Preserve was honored by the Career Development Office of SUNY Fredonia with the “Excellence in Internship Advancement Award”. This prestigious award was bestowed during the 10-year anniversary celebration of the Career Development Office. It is the first award of its kind granted by SUNY Fredonia. Greystone Nature Preserve was delighted to be the first recipient of this award.



Jennifer Wilkins, director of the CDO, cited Greystone as being an outstanding vehicle for providing students with advancements toward their graduation and giving them a multitude of ancillary skills and learnings, which enrich their lives. Diane Clark, Executive Director of GNP stated, “We are honored to receive this award and grateful for each intern. We strive to make every internship a unique educational experience while fostering lifelong learning.”

Sandra Emke, shown above, assistant director of GNP, accepted the award. In the photo above she is displaying the award at the Job and Intern Expo held in the Williams Center.



Greystone goes beyond the scope of the average college curriculum by taking a personal and professional pride in guiding each intern to develop abilities in their chosen fields. Some of the dozens of interns over the last ten years have had the opportunity to use mediums such as broadcasting on television and radio, along with writing newspaper articles. Interns have also utilized their promotional capabilities to develop a website, social media, and video productions to advertise Greystone. They have also designed environmental events, including marketing and promoting, designing children’s crafts, assembling musical entertainment, creating workshops and educational presentations. A wide variety of office skills including mapping out protocols, to filing and organizing were utilized.

Outdoor internships focused on teaching experiential environmental education classes. Trail design and maintenance, eradicating invasive species, nurturing trees and planting beneficial native trees and shrubs have been rewarding internships. Utilizing GPS, various groves of trees were located and mapped. Pond and creek studies, including chemical analysis were documented. Organic gardens were planted and nurtured by interns who started from sprouting seeds, then preserved the harvest through canning, freezing, pickling and drying.

Many aspects of sustainable living are incorporated into the learning aspects of every internship. There are no limitations on what interns can contribute to Greystone while enriching their own lives. Any student who is interested in learning about nature has the potential to have an outstanding and successful internship. Internships can be 1 to 3 credits; 40 hours are required for each credit.

**“Look deep into nature, and then
you will understand everything better”
-Albert Einstein**

Interns Are
Always
Welcome

Volunteers Are
Always Needed

Donations Are
Gratefully
Accepted



Nature as a Classroom

By Rachel Isbell

At Greystone Nature Preserve, the boundaries of the classroom are unlimited. In this respect, I have extended my studies and interest in Environmental Science to include experiential involvement focused on pollinators.

I am involved in the preparation for the cultivation of a new butterfly garden at Greystone. In collaboration with Regina Paul*, I am planting a new wildflower garden that will provide food and a resting place for the endangered monarch butterfly, as well as other pollinators. Alongside the wildflowers that provide nectar for butterflies, an abundance of milkweed will continue to be incorporated into the design, creating a sweeping field of sustenance for every stage of the monarch's survival. The Preserve has seen a bloom in monarch activity in the past few years as a result of planting prolific fields of milkweed, the only food source for the caterpillars that become the beautiful monarch butterfly.

The monarch population has decreased by 90% in the last twenty years and continues to significantly decline. In 2014, a petition was presented to add the monarch butterfly to the Endangered Species List, and a decision will be made in December of this year.

I will track and record monarch activity, noting increases made possible through advanced planting. Last year at GNP there were 13 monarch butterflies recorded in one day. This year, I will continue to observe the trend of monarch butterflies and along with the new gardens. Hopefully through the tracking process, we will see an increase in numbers.

Also, I will be researching the pond in the front of the Preserve. Water samples will be taken and measured for the oxygen levels and other components. A survey of the animals that visit regularly will be utilized. Through analysis of water samples, the microorganisms that inhabit the pond will be ascertained, studied and compiled in a database. This small ecosystem, including the animals that visit, will be better understood as to how it functions in its specific environment. It will similarly show the children who visit, that even such a small space has its own amazing world.



Experiential Learning Projects

By Alex Richard

I am excited to continue my internship with Greystone Nature Preserve, although due to the COVID-19 pandemic, social distancing measures limit the in-person guidance I can receive from Diane and Bill. I had learned a lot from them. My first visit to Greystone (which took place before the virus reached Fredonia) acted as an introductory experience where I learned how things operated. I worked closely with Diane learning about how she built her seed bank from the plants of Greystone Nature Preserve. She recycled envelopes from junk mail she involuntarily received. Her reasoning being that the paper dries out the seeds by absorbing any excess moisture left within or around them, which is necessary for preservation. I also drove around the property with Bill identifying locations where invasive species such as the European honeysuckle, garlic mustard, and multiflora rose were present. This was a great experience for seeing all the property and getting a better sense for how to layout the maps I am working on.



Alex collecting GPS data



Bill Moran pointing out invasive honeysuckles

My second visit to Greystone Nature Preserve was much more planned out, as I knew I couldn't work closely with Diane and Bill for safety reasons. I began the day by walking around the Literary Grove, which is a grove containing trees planted in tribute to environmental writers. I then began collecting GPS data of the specific locations where individual trees were, while also taking note of the tree species and environmental writer it was planted for. Following the GPS data collection, I cautiously worked with Bill and Serena (a volunteer) in identifying and removing invasive honeysuckle dispersed within various hedges around the property.

To safely conduct this work, we practiced social distancing by maintaining at least 6-feet apart. This was relatively easy as we each had our own tools and could individually pull honeysuckle in different areas around the property. The removal process began by identifying the invasive non-native honeysuckle among the other vegetation, as it was one of the early bloomers and had easily identifiable yellow buds. We then used shovels to dig up the root systems, making sure to keep the roots intact to ensure that it could not recover and continue spreading. Honeysuckle bushes that were too large to remove were tagged for later removal. These larger root systems will be extracted more easily using heavy machinery. Throughout this process, I collected GPS data for the areas affected by European honeysuckle and plan to use this information

when creating a map of the spread of invasive plant species at Greystone Nature Preserve.

In the next few weeks, I plan to identify and remove the two other invasive species which will be included in the invasive species map (Garlic Mustard and Multiflora Rose), as these bloom a bit later and will be easily identifiable.

Goal

Preserving 72 acres of habitat

Mission

To nurture native flora and fauna

Philosophy

In Nature is the preservation of the world

Forest Bathing

By Katie Lenda

The term “forest bathing” may be new to some but it has been a popular activity in Japan for years. Forest bathing, or shinrin-yoku in Japanese, is the practice of going out into nature, and allowing all the benefits of it to soak into your mind, body and soul. Spending time in nature benefits our physical and mental health and it is crucial during this time to be mindful of our overall health. Therefore, taking time out of your day to “forest bath,” is an excellent way to relieve anxiety during this stressful time. It is encouraged to go outside during this time while still maintaining social distancing.



Going outside is beneficial to our physical wellbeing for numerous reasons. Nature boosts the immune system, lowers blood pressure, increases energy levels and can improve sleep. It is important we do our best to stay healthy no matter what the circumstances; going out for a walk or a hike is an easy and fun way to do so.

According to a study by The Environmental Protection Agency, the average American spends 93% of their time indoors. In a time when we are so disconnected from nature, it is important to take the time to be connected. This is ultimately what the overall idea of forest bathing is - to connect yourself to nature. You can practice forest bathing by simply going out into nature and by using your senses, absorb everything. Ask yourself what you see, what you hear, and what you smell. You can do this anywhere outside, even on Greystone's walking trails!

Leaving your phone, and any other devices behind is very important to have the best overall forest bathing experience. The idea is to limit as many distractions as possible, and technology is a major distraction to our lives. When we are in nature, we naturally feel inclined to photograph its beauty, however cameras are also not ideal to have when forest bathing. To fully absorb nature, it is not necessary to photograph the scenery - the scenery is meant to be ingrained in our minds.

The first step to successfully forest bath is to find a spot that is intriguing to you. If you enjoy the smell of pine, sit next to a pine tree. If you appreciate the feeling of soil in your hands, sit on the soil. Then, using your senses, all nature has to offer, this practice is very comparable to meditation.

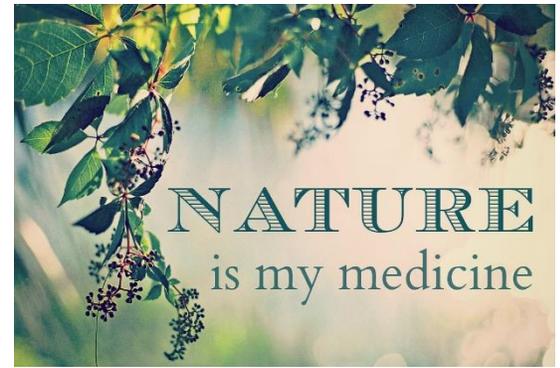
To some this concept may sound odd, but the long-term benefits promote mental clarity and an improvement of our physical health, which everyone can benefit from. If you have never taken the time to appreciate and absorb nature, Greystone highly encourages you to do so.

1. Turn off your devices to give yourself the best chance of relaxing, being mindful and enjoying a sensory forest-based experience.
2. Slow down. Move through the forest slowly so you can see and feel more.
3. Take long breaths deep into the abdomen. Extending the exhalation of air to twice the length of the inhalation sends a message to the body that it can relax.
4. Stop, stand or sit, smell what's around you, what can you smell?

How Nature Heals Us

By Alexandria Nieves

During this pandemic, I have not been able to be with my family and friends. I have used nature as my way of coping through it all. When I am taking a walk with my friend, I would usually do a video-call to my family so they could explore the wonderful outdoors with me. That would be the moment I would give them little facts that I have picked up during my quarantine time. While my family and I have had this time apart, I have been talking to my family who live in Florida and telling them how many times it has snowed in the span of my quarantine. They always seem to laugh since they do not have to deal with snow in the sunshine state.

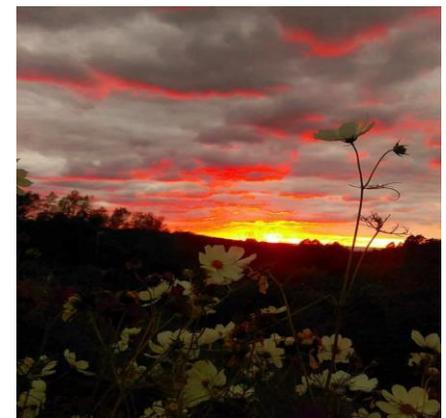


An article from the University of East Anglia stated, "Spending time in nature certainly makes us feel healthier, but until now the impact on our long-term wellbeing hasn't been fully understood. We gathered evidence from over 140 studies involving more than 290 million people to see whether nature really does provide a health boost." The article found that spending time in, or living close to, natural green spaces is associated with diverse and significant health benefits. It reduces the risk of type II diabetes, cardiovascular disease, premature



death, and preterm birth, and increases sleep duration. The number of people reporting their health as "excellent" increased by 30% and this improvement in health increased a positive state of mind, this relationship is mediated by the change in connection to nature. Knowing that nature can be that beneficial to anyone shows that Mother Nature does love us and wants to help us grow as people.

I started doing yoga outside to get the fresh air and hear the birds early in the morning as I do my meditation. One other thing that I do is take a midnight stroll because I know everyone is inside and I am able to breathe in the fresh air from the trees and hear the cold night breeze as it hits me. Author Laura Fernanda Berrera-Hernández talked with Psychology Today; Berrera-Hernández said, "Parents and teachers should promote children to have more significant contact or exposure to nature, because our results indicate that exposure to nature is related to the connection with it, and in turn, with sustainable behaviors and happiness."



While we are being told to go outside and explore, we can learn what nature has given us. Knowing that nature will be around is always a blessing because we need nature to survive. Nature has been more beneficial to us; more than we anticipated. Nature is useful with reducing anxiety, depression, and several other mental issues. I walk through nature as a way to get through all my issues, including my stress, through this pandemic. All we have to do is go out and discover what nature has to offer.

**If you haven't done it yet, go outside! Breathe in some of the fresh air!
Explore everything around you because it may help you through these trying times.**

Interview with the Director of Greystone Nature Preserve

Interviewed by Adam Mills

Diane Clark is the founder and Director of GNP. She has devoted her life to all that pertains to preserving the environment, along with the 72 acres of land that makes up Greystone.

What is your favorite activity to do outside at the Nature Preserve?

What I love best is teaching experiential environmental education. But right now I would have to say forest bathing (shinrin yoku). That is the practice of going into the forest and absorbing all the good vibes.

Based on your experience with interns, what have been the most mutually rewarding qualities of working with them?

BECOMING. The concept that these young people are getting ready to step out into the world and are still developing skills, interests, techniques and passions. This is inspirational to me.

AWE Our mutual sense of wonder as we discover anything from new tomatoes, to caterpillars to new advertising techniques.

APPRECIATION. Sharing the vast amount of unique experiences each internship offers

STEWARDSHIP. When both of us feel we have done something that is beyond ourselves; like serving the earth or developing the educational program.

How can people contribute to the world during these trying times?

By letting the spirits of our better nature be more evident. Loving family more dearly, getting closer to friends, and recognizing that nature is, after all, in charge. We can come to treasure our beautiful planet. We can become champions of clean air and water

How might we stick together even though we are physically separated?

The telephone is always there. Zoom, YouTube, Facebook videos are being used extensively to help people stay connected.

What advice would you give to people who are having a rough time adjusting to the different lifestyle of staying at home?

I have always liked the phrase 'Your home is where your heart is'. I would advise people to follow their heart song. Become creative: write, paint, etc. Become closer to those near your heart using technical support. Tackle those undeveloped achievements and projects.

Stay Connected

- We may be apart, but we are not alone
- Try New Things

Stay Positive

- Retain Optimism
- Interact with Nature

Stay Healthy

- Practice Safety
- Exercise your body and soul

Adam Mills – Editor of The Connector and Content Marketing Manager

Working with the staff and interns of Greystone Nature Preserve has been the most eye-opening experience. Immense amounts of positivity have been spread through the works of making this edition of The Connector.

Being able to keep the community aware about the recent developments in the Greystone family has been the main goal for the first edition of The Connector. Although we have not been able to meet in person, we have all stayed connected in order to collaborate on projects like this newsletter. I believe that we all have learned the possibilities of using technology in order to further-develop our skills in communication. This newsletter is the perfect example of how it is possible to learn new ways of working together much like society's pivotal change into quarantine. I have learned to adapt through this time much like the rest of society.

I would like to thank Diane Clark for being there to talk to no matter the subject. Diane has provided so much beautiful input not only for this edition but also for helping the environment and acting within the community to bring people together. Her attitude and beliefs ensue a powerful impact on everyone she meets. Her abilities as a role model bring so many positive outlooks on life and nature.

2020 Board of Directors

Sandra Emke, President

Jessica Townsend, Secretary

Jen Raines, Treasurer

William Moran, Land Manager

*Keith Wesolowski, Legal Consultant
Wesolowski Law Group, P.C.*

Contact Greystone:

8531 Bear Lake Rd.
Fredonia, NY 14063
716-679-6603
clarkmoran@gmail.com

Kay Barlow

Mary Gross

Regina Paul

Jonathan Townsend

Jeremy Woolson

