

Join us Tuesday February 23rd for SOLAR's monthly meeting

Our guest speaker will be **Jennifer Braatz**,
Park Ranger with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
She will introduce us to the **Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge**.

SOLAR's general membership meetings are open to everyone. This is a great place to hear about upcoming activities and classes, meet members, catch up with friends, and get more involved in our club. You're welcome to RSVP but it's not required. Program: Jennifer Braatz, Park Ranger with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, will introduce us to the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge.

The first of its kind in North America, the DRIWR conserves nearly 6,000 acres of unique habitat on the lower Detroit River and western shore of Lake Erie, including islands, coastal wetlands, marshes, shoals, and waterfront lands along 48 miles of shoreline.

Refuge lands include Humbug Marsh, the last mile of undeveloped shoreline along the U.S. mainland of the Detroit River and contain critical habitat for many rare fish and wildlife species. The habitats of the DRIWR support 300 species of birds, including 30 species of waterfowl, 23 species of raptors, and 31 species of shorebirds, plus 117 kinds of fish...all within an urban area of six million people.



**Don't miss out on the upcoming
SOLAR 40th Anniversary
Weekend Camp Out and Dinner
June 10-12, 2016 at Proud Lake**
See page 9 for details

Photo Contest Winners *From the January SOLAR Meeting*

Many SOLARites participated in the annual SOLAR photo contest in January's monthly meeting. Our special category this year was water. Thank you to all who participated.



Mike Hubbard
Winner of the Best Overall
and special category: Water

Photo Contest Winners *From the January SOLAR Meeting*



Jeff Grossklaus
Photo Contest Winner for Scenery,
Black and White, and Action



Photo Contest Winners *From the January SOLAR Meeting*



Mike Hobig
Photo Contest Winner
for Animals

Rosemarie Attilio
Photo Contest Winner
for People
and Digitally Enhanced



Photo Contest Winners *From the January SOLAR Meeting*



Cindy Taylor
Photo Contest Winner
for Humor



Mark Carson
Photo Contest Winner
for Plants and Flowers



Your Adventure Awaits, Continued *by Kim Bartell*

During the November 2015 meeting Ati Tislerics moderated a program called “Choose Your Own Adventure 2016”. He provided a wonderful recap of this program in the Dec-Jan issue of the SOLAR Ray.

As a follow up to this program and summary, I wanted to provide some additional information on the next steps for planning an activity. The hardest part of planning an activity can be getting started so here are some “next steps” if you have an idea and want to get the ball rolling!

- Do you want more participants before you finalize the details? Do you want advice from people who have experience with the activity or destination you're considering? Send a message to the Yahoo group (solaroutdoors@yahoogroups.com) or attend a monthly meeting and discuss your idea with other members!
- Finalize the date and location for the activity.
- Lay out a trip plan/itinerary including any qualifications, background, or experience required of the participants.
- Decide whether you want to run the activity through SOLAR.

Advantages:

- **Publicity:** Your activity will go on the club calendar, website, Meetup site, and you'll get time at SOLAR meetings to announce it and recruit participants.
- **\$\$\$:** Finances can go through SOLAR rather than your personal bank account. SOLAR can front money for lodging, permits, etc., and participants can pay through SOLAR's Meetup site. Because this puts the club at some financial risk, you'll need to prepare a budget that satisfies the Activities Chairperson that the activity is unlikely to lose money.



Assuming you're running the activity through SOLAR:

- Determine cost per participant (member and non-member). The costs can include permits, campsite fees, lodging fees, etc. The final price per participant should include less obvious items such as Meetup fees and something to help defray SOLAR overhead. The Activities Chairperson can help you determine a final price.
- Decide a minimum and maximum number of participants for the activity.
- Create a description for the activity, to be posted on Meetup. It can also be published in the SOLAR Ray, or you can prepare something more elaborate for the Ray. You may also want to prepare a flyer to hand out at meetings.
- Email the details of the activity to the Activities Chairperson. Please include: date, location, description, prerequisites, minimum/maximum number of participants, and costs associated with the activity. The Activities Chairperson will post the event on SOLAR's website, calendars, and on Meetup, and give you a couple minutes to announce it at upcoming general meetings.

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Your Adventure Awaits, Continued *by Kim Bartell*

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- It is encouraged to email the Activities Chairperson at least two months in advance of an activity so the event can be announced at two SOLAR meetings and included on the calendar. Outings such as local hikes can be announced any time.

Activities Chairperson:

Kim Bartell; solaractivities@solaroutdoors.org

General Tips to Keep in Mind

- You must be a current SOLAR member in order to promote an activity through SOLAR.
- If you're running the trip finances through SOLAR, all participant payments, reimbursements, etc. must be handled through the club.
- Payments for an activity can be made by cash, check (made out to SOLAR) or on SOLAR's Meetup page.
- SOLAR has a No Refunds policy. If paid participants cannot attend an activity, they may "sell their spots". You can keep a waiting list of people who wish to take the place of participants who need to cancel.
- When planning an activity, consider the skill set, if any, the participants will need in order to participate, and communicate this to potential participants.
- As the Activity Organizer, you can (and sometimes probably should!) deny participation to anyone you deem unsuitable for the activity (insufficient experience, fitness, poor fit for the group, etc.).

- For your protection, you are encouraged to have all participants sign the SOLAR Waiver (available from the Activities Chairperson and on SOLARoutdoors.org) before the activity starts. You're also encouraged to have safety procedures in place and communicate those procedures to all participants (e.g. bailout points, first aid equipment needs, shakedown trips, etc.).

- It is recommended that you charge a fee up front for activities that require a lot of planning. This helps ensure that people who sign up will show up.



The Historian Corner (A Blast from SOLAR past) *By Karen Haroutunian*

Did you know SOLAR had a pet? Well, maybe more like a foster pet. No mention of his/her name was made in this article from October 1979 SOLAR Ray

Our Barn Owl

The SOLAR Club has recently adopted for a year a barn owl at the Detroit zoo. There are nine species throughout the world that have all the heart shaped facial disk, legs longer than their tail and a built in comb on their toenail for grooming. Most species are white below with light cinnamon above; one species is black. The barn owl in Michigan is quite rare. In fact, groups are buying old barns in effort to preserve typical nesting sites to encourage breeding.

The Barn Owl hunts at night. Even though its eyes are large and aid in hunting, hearing is even more important. Its ears are arranged unevenly. This allows it to detect a moving mouse on the forest floor in complete darkness. Small mammals are their main diet. They do occasionally kill a bird or an amphibian. The six owls at the zoo are fed mice released in their cage. Owls eat their prey whole. Later they regurgitate the indigestible bones and fur in a compact pellet.

If you would like to have an enjoyable time outside, visit the Detroit Zoo and our adopted Barn Owl. Go through the new walk through bird house-but be careful when you look up.

Save the Date! SOLAR 40th Anniversary Campout • June 10-12, 2016

SOLAR is celebrating 40 years of outdoor leadership, adventure and recreation this year!

In honor of this grand occasion we are planning a weekend of fun and games on June 10-12, 2016.

We have reserved campsites at the Proud Lake State Recreation Area's modern campground, and will make them available to SOLAR members on a first-come, first-served basis.

A group of fun-loving SOLARites are working on all sorts of activities for the weekend, from paddling to trail running to games to eating, and much more! (You knew there'd be lots of eating at a SOLAR gathering, right?!)

Campsites will be available for \$60 for the weekend (2 nights). Each campsite is allowed up to 6 people in up to 2 tents. We encourage you to split a site with SOLAR friends.

To eliminate the need to cut your outdoor adventures short on Saturday to prepare for a potluck meal, we will have a catered BBQ dinner Saturday night! Those joining us for the day Saturday (not camping) are also welcome to join in the catered dinner. The dinner will cost \$10/person (13 and older). Ages 12 and under are free.

You can reserve a campsite and dinner plate online (<http://www.meetup.com/SOLAR-Outdoors>) or by cash/check at SOLAR's monthly meetings (<http://www.solaroutdoors.org/About/Meetings.aspx>).

Watch for updates on the 40th Anniversary Celebration plans in the Ray, on the Yahoo Group and at upcoming SOLAR meetings!

Don't miss this event! Celebrate the 40 years of adventures, classes, trips, friends and fun.

Some of the weekend activities will be a catered dinner, geocaching, hiking, a photo scavenger hunt, night hikes, paddling, and more!



Ralph A. MacMullan Conference Center weekend *by Bill Morse*

Nineteen members and friends of SOLAR journeyed to the Ralph A. MacMullan Conference Center for a weekend on the shore of Higgins Lake, February 5th-7th. Leaving Detroit on Friday, it looked like anything but a weekend for cross-country skiing and snow shoeing, with the ground devoid of snow for most of the drive. Then around West Branch, Michigan turned into a Winter Wonderland, with the late afternoon sun glistening off the snow-covered hills. It was an ideal weekend for us, with plenty of snow on the trails and bearable temperatures.

We all met at Fred's of Roscommon for dinner on Friday. Some of us had last seen others on last year's trip to the same locale, and some of us met for the first time. Saturday's meals and Sunday breakfast were provided by the MacMullan Center. They were quite accommodating, allowing several of us to take lunch to go on Saturday, rather than coming back at noon. They also let us have dinner a half hour later than their normal time, so we could be outside longer in the afternoon.

Our group included veteran skiers and novices. Seven of us participated in a lesson on Saturday morning at the nearby Cross Country Ski Headquarters. The trails at Headquarters, as well as at North Higgins Lake State Park, were popular with the group through the weekend. A few ventured to other nearby locations for skiing. Some participants rented skis at Headquarters, and decided midway through the rental period that they wanted to also try snow shoeing. They were allowed to switch their equipment at no extra charge, which I thought was cool. I benefitted from my SOLAR membership, as I enjoyed using a pair of the club's snowshoes.

Evenings were spent playing Yahtzee and other games. Sunday came too soon and it was time to head south, but not before I did one last round of skiing and shoeing. Great people and great times. It was a fabulous weekend!



Upcoming Events: Day of Winter Fun at Proud Lake and Quiet Water Symposium

Saturday, February 27, 2016 12:00 PM

Proud Lake Recreation Area

3500 Wixom Rd, Commerce Twp, MI

We've done this in recent years and we're doing it again. Join fellow SOLARites and other outdoor enthusiasts at Proud Lake's River Hawk Annex for an extended time of fun. Expect hiking and possibly other activities, weather permitting, during the afternoon and evening. Bring food for a late afternoon/early evening potluck, and bring your cards and games for indoor fun. Your Recreation Passport will let you in the park. A small donation (\$3) is requested to offset the cost to rent the annex. Bring your friends!

Alcohol is permitted in the Annex. Dogs are allowed if they're outside, on a six-foot leash and under control, but they're not allowed inside the Annex (sorry).

THE SCHEDULE: Expect hikes, and maybe other activities, during the day. This should become better defined when we get closer to the date. See below for what should be an exciting evening 'hike under the lights'. We tend to stay at the Annex till about 9:30, and have to leave the park by 10 PM.

It's an informal time. Come when you can! Spend as much time inside or outside as you like. Bring a dish to pass for dinner, and serving utensils. Bring your own plates/cups/utensils and beverage, and please take them home with you. GRILL: There is an outdoor fire ring grill that you can use. You're advised to bring what you need (matches, charcoal).

EVENING HIKE: In addition to what we're doing, The Friends of Proud Lake group is having a guided candlelite Night Hike. This hike will go from 7-9 PM and we're invited. Dress warmly and bring a flashlight; The Annex will be a warming station as well as the initial meeting point before setting off on the "Marsh Trail". There will be a winter bonfire available outside of the Annex, and modern bathrooms located inside the Annex. Cookies and refreshments provided. Open to the Public, all ages welcome. Suggested donation of \$5/person (this is for the Friends).

Quiet Water Symposium Saturday, March 5, 2016 9:00 AM
[MSU Pavilion](#) 4301 Farm Lane, East Lansing, MI

· The 21st Annual Quiet Water Symposium brings an exciting line-up of speakers to the 2016 show.

- Kevin Callan, Algonquin Canoe Routes
- John & LaNae Abnet, Kayak the Heartland Paddle Expedition
- Jim DuFresne, Michigan's Top 10 Backpacking Treks
- Dale Waldo, Canoeing the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers
- Mark Walton, Paddling Lake Superior in Kruger Canoes, Pictured Rocks and the Keweenaw Peninsula

Over 100 exhibitors took part in the Quiet Water Symposium last year, representing [outdoor clubs](#), [watershed groups](#), [outfitters](#), [boat builders](#), [trails supporters](#), [fishing groups](#), [cycling organizations](#), [hiking clubs](#) and [nature centers](#).

This year, Allen Deming and Mackinaw Watercraft has built an exquisite wood strip canoe for a very special raffle at the 2016 Quiet Water Symposium.

SOLAR will have a booth at the symposium - stop by and say hi!

Show admission for adults is \$10.00, students (with ID) \$5.00 and children under 12 are free.

The Quiet Water Symposium is brought to you by volunteers from the Quiet Water Society, a non-profit Lansing based organization. The Society uses proceeds from the event to support a grant program that helps to fund environmental and conservation efforts in the Great Lakes area.

Visit <http://www.quietwatersymposium.org/> to learn more.

Upcoming Events: South Manitou Island Backpacking

Memorial Day Weekend, May 27-30, 2016

Kid Friendly - No Dogs

Did you take the beginning backpack class last fall and you are looking to practice your new found skills, or just want to get out after the winter? Come join SOLAR as we backpack South Manitou Island. You must have taken the backpack class or be proficient at backpacking to participate in this event.

The cost of the trip is \$15 for 3 nights of camping, \$20 for non SOLAR members. You will need to call and book your own ferry, Manitou Island Transit (231) 256-9061. I am not sure what the rates are but last year it was \$40 for adults and \$20 for kids. Plus there is a National Park fee of \$10 and there may be a small parking fee.

South Manitou Island is part of Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore. We will be hiking about .5 miles to the Bay Campground where I have 2 group campsites reserved for SOLAR. These sites are equipped with a fire ring, outhouse and water pump, but no picnic tables. You should be prepared to carry all of your gear in as they do not allow any kind of wheeled devices. Be advised that there is NO food service on the island or any place to purchase supplies. Also, be prepared to hang your food from the killer CHIPMUNKS!!!! A backpack stove is also necessary as well as a rain tarp in case it does rain (this is Michigan). Please try to double up in tents as each site will only accommodate 10 tents and up to 20 people.

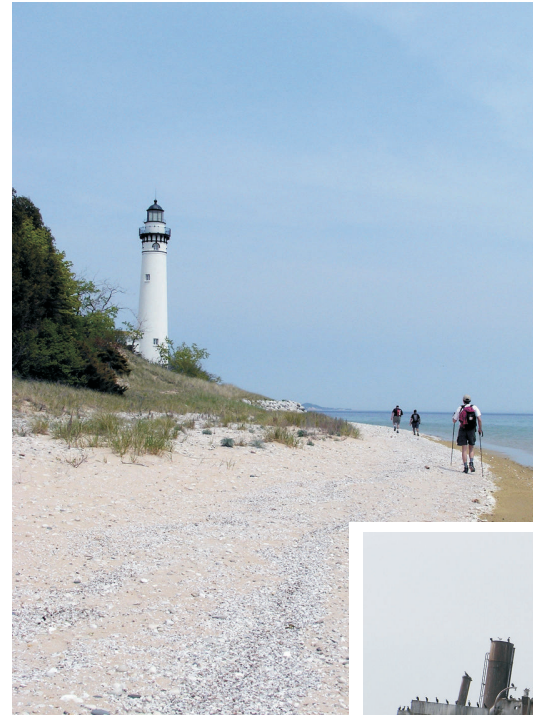
There are a lot of interesting day hikes available on the island: you can tour the 1871 lighthouse, wander around the old farmsteads, orchards and cemetery, visit the old growth cedars, view the shipwreck of the Francisco Morazan which ran aground in 1960, climb the sand dunes, or just play on the beach.

There is a variety of wildlife on the island including fox, coyote, squirrel, chipmunk and 4 species of bats.

Remember that you will be responsible for your own food and gear (stoves, water filters, tents, first aid, bear bag, etc)

PLEASE COME PREPARED!!!!

Sound like fun? Contact Leslie Cordova at (248) 421-2080 or lesliegene@aol.com to sign up.



SOLAR CALENDAR www.solaroutdoors.org

ACTIVITIES

Feb 19-21	Fri-Sun	<u>Hartwick Pines</u> Ski and Snowshoe (Full)	Grayling, MI	Leslie Cordova	lesliegene@aol.com
Feb 25-28	Thu-Sun	Snowshoe and Backpack Weekend Trip	Where there is snow! (U.P. or upper lower MI)	Heidi <u>Tietjen</u>	h_tietjen@yahoo.com
Feb 27	Sat	Day of Winter Fun at Proud Lake	Proud Lake State Park, Wixom, MI	Bill Morse	billc095@yahoo.com
Feb 28	Sun	Fight for Air Stair Climb for the American Lung Association	Detroit Renaissance Center	Mary Donahue	mldonahue824@gmail.com
March 5	Sat	Quiet Water Symposium	MSU Pavilion, East Lansing, MI	Bill Morse	billc095@yahoo.com
Apr 2-3, 16-17, May 7-8, 21-22, June 4-5, 25-26, July 9-10, 23-24	Sat-Sun	North Country Trail Hikes	TBD	Mike <u>Hobig</u>	mhobig@ford.com
May 27-30	Fri-Mon	South Manitou Island Backpack	South Manitou Island, MI	Leslie Cordova	lesliegene@aol.com
June 10-12	Fri-Sun	40 th Anniversary Campout Weekend	Proud Lake State Park, Wixom, MI	Karen <u>Haroutunian</u>	solarhistorian@solaroutdoors.org

SOLAR MEETINGS

SOLAR holds monthly meetings on the **LAST** Tuesday of the month at 7:00 pm.

Meetings are held at:

St. Paul's Presbyterian Church • 27475 Five Mile Road, Livonia, MI 48154