

Lake Erie Islands Chapter

Black Swamp Conservancy

Spring 2005



LEIC-BSC First Conservation Agreement

PO Box 461
Put-in-Bay, Ohio
43456
419-285-5811
leic_bsc@cros.net

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Please make checks
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Lake Erie Islands Chapter
Black Swamp Conservancy

- ◆ \$25 Friend
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- ◆ \$100 Contributor
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All donations are

tax deductible

Thank You!

The Lake Erie Islands Chapter of the Black Swamp Conservancy secured their first conservation agreement to protect habitat for the federally threatened and state endangered Lake Erie water snake just before the end of 2004. The agreement is on private shoreline property on Kelleys Island. The property owner has realized a significant income tax deduction as a result of the donation of the agreement on less than an acre of shoreline. This deduction can be spread out over a number of years if desired. They will be managing the property the same as they have been and there will be no public access. The LEIC-BSC reserves the right to monitor the agreement property annually. Grant funds from the Wildlife Diversity Fund, managed by the ODNR Division of Wildlife, paid for the survey, appraisal, and legal fees associated with setting up the agreement. The property owners said that setting up the agreement was easy and that they learned a lot about their land in the process.

We have additional funds available in 2005 to pay for expenses associated with setting up these voluntarily donated Conservation Agreements to protect habitat for the Lake Erie water snake on a portion of your lake front or other property within 69 meters of the shore. There can be significant income tax deductions generated from the donation of a conservation agreement and there is no public ac-

cess-just the contentment of knowing that you have protected valuable habitat for the Lake Erie water snake as well as the other plants and animals that need shoreline habitat. Property protected through conservation agreements will help reach the goals of protected acreage for each island as set by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife's Recovery Plan for the Lake Erie water snake. Please contact us if you need more information on this program.

Christmas Potluck

The LEIC-BSC Christmas Potluck was held at the South Bass Island Lighthouse on December 16, 2004. The lighthouse was decorated beautifully for the holiday. Guests enjoyed



a candle light tour of the lighthouse as well as delicious potluck dishes! Betty and Don McIlrath, Corky McIlrath, Nick and Lynn James, Betty James, and Carol and Andy Ferguson joined our members and board members for the potluck. Thanks to our hosts Matt Thomas and Kristin Stanford for a wonderful evening!

Audubon Christmas Bird Count

The annual Christmas Bird Count was held on December 19, 2004. Those who braved our first real cold snap of the season or watched their feeders that day included Kathy Staley, Lisa Brohl, Joey Wulkowicz, Pat Hosko, Mary Carr, Bob Glauser, John Dodge, Norma Wasson, Marsha Parker, Susan Harrington, Sue Amrine, John Ladd, Annie Parker, Matt Thomas, and Kristin Stanford. Thanks to Joey Wulkowicz who prepared a delicious soup lunch complete with homemade bread, pie, and watermelon pickles for the frozen counters. The lake was rough that day and the next day the Bay was frozen over. On South Bass only 38 species were recorded for the day with 3,442 individual birds. The majority of these birds were gulls-ring-billed, herring and Bonaparte gulls were having a feeding frenzy at the Village Docks. The last day of open water!

The David's and Manderbach's on Middle Bass counted 12 species with our only Bald Eagle for the Bass Islands. Other counts held that day as part of the Lake Erie Islands Count Circle were on Kelleys Island and Pelee Island. All together 67 species and 94,561 individual birds were counted that day with all the islands totaled. Although there were conspicuously fewer land birds, there were some nice surprises on Kelleys with a black scoter, long-tailed duck, northern goshawk, and barred owl. Our count here on South Bass yielded the only tufted titmouse-a regular visitor to Bob Glauser's feeder. South Bass also had the only count week great blue heron, spied by Lisa Brohl sitting on an ice shelf by the Boardwalk a few days after the count and a great horned owl heard by Joey Wulkowicz the day before the count. Mary Carr's always productive feeder added a winter wren, Carolina wren, and red-winged blackbird to our list for the count week. Thanks to all who participated this year and hope to see all of you out again next year! Contact Count Recorder Lisa Brohl (419-285-5811) if you want to be called to participate next year.

Medicinal & Edible Herbs Program

Certified herbalist and ethno botanist Linda Green gave a great presentation on Monday March 7 at the Lake Erie Islands Historical Society. Linda has a B. A. in Natural Health Sciences and is a teacher of aromatherapy, reek, acupressure, polarity, yoga, and energetic nutrition. In the program sponsored by the LEIC-BSC, Linda talked about uses of common plants and herbs found around the area and brought examples of tinctures and mixtures she made to treat common maladies. Over 30 people were in attendance and received hand outs on the topic. Thanks again to the LEIHS for the use of their facilities, to Paula Ladd for the baked goods, and to Paul Genzmann for his support of our programs through the school. We hope to have Linda join us again this summer when we can be gathering plants outdoors!

LEIC-BSC Website

The LEIC-BSC has their own website now. Check it out at www.lakeerieislandsbsc.org Thanks to Lianne Genzmann, Rob Roy, John Ladd, and Kristin Stanford for their efforts in getting it up and running! Please let us know if you have any suggestions or comments on the site.

Animal and Snake Exhibit

Trevor Walsh, Education Coordinator and Natalie Cook, Outreach Coordinator from the Toledo Zoo- "Traveling Animal and Snake Exhibit" sponsored by the Lake Erie Islands Chapter-Black Swamp Conservancy will present a program at the Put-in-Bay Town Hall, on June 11, 2005 1:00-2:00PM.

Welcome to New Members!

Friends

Ann Benson
Dana Bower
Carol & Andy Ferguson
Valerie Mettler
Mr. & Mrs. Charles Pearson
Patricia Skinner

Supporters

Bruce & Kim Miles
John & Teddi Pertner
Contributors
Bob Krause
Karen & James White
Life
Captain Robert & Mary Carr

Birding South Bass Island May 9-12, 2005



The Lake Erie Islands Chapter of the Black Swamp Conservancy will host bird programs and activities for a week long Elderhostel program sponsored by the Lake Erie Islands Historical Society. The following events will also be open to the public and all are welcome to attend.

Monday, May 9 7:30AM Bird Walk with Dr. Brad Titchener, Island Resident and Birder Extraordinaire (meet at the LEIHS Museum, will carpool to site.)

Monday, May 9, 7:00PM *Birds of South Bass Islands*, Slide Talk with Dr. Brad Titchener (Put-in-Bay Town Hall.)

Tuesday, May 10, 7:30AM Bird Walk with Dr. Brad Titchener, (Meet at the LEIHS Museum)

Tuesday, May 10, 7:00PM "Spring Warbler ID," Slide Talk with Tom Bartlett, Master Bander for the USGS and certified bander/trainer for the North American Banding Council, (Put-in-Bay Town Hall.)

Wednesday, May 11, 7:30AM Bird Banding with Tom Bartlett, (meet at the LEIHS Museum to carpool to site.)

Wednesday, May 11, 3:30PM Mona Rutger from Back to the Wild, live animals and birds from the Wildlife Rehabilitation Center, (Put-in-Bay Town Hall.)

Wednesday, May 11, 7:00PM "Neotropical Birds: Ohio's Transglobal Wanderers," Slide talk by Jim McCormac, *Birds of Ohio* author, Ohio Ornithological Society president. (Put-in-Bay Town Hall.)

Tuesday, May 17, 7:00PM "Snakes of South Bass Island" by Kristin Stanford, the Snake Lady from Northern Illinois University (Put-in-Bay Town Hall.)

Wednesday, May 18, 7:00PM "Butterflies of the North Coast," by Lois TerVeen of the Erie Metro Parks (Put-in-Bay Town Hall)

EXHIBIT ON THE ROAD

The LEIC-BSC exhibit made appearances this spring at the Ohio Botanical Symposium in Columbus on April 1 and at the Lake Erie Wing Watch in Oak Harbor on April 9. We will also be manning the exhibit at the Miller Boat Line Open House on June 11 and at Founders Day on June 19 on South Bass Island to get the word out on our



Mary Warren of Migratory Bird Center

conservation programs. If anyone would like to volunteer an hour or so of their time at our booth on those

days in June, we would greatly appreciate it. Please call Lisa Brohl at 419-285-5811 if you can volunteer. Thanks to Debbie Woischke for her help in updating our exhibit.

BACK TO THE WILD IS BACK!

Mona Rutger with **Back to the Wild**, a wildlife rehabilitation center in Castalia Ohio, will be at the Put-in-Bay Town Hall on Wednesday, May 11 at 3:30PM. The program is **open to all** and is sponsored jointly by the Put-in-Bay Recreation Committee and the LEIC-BSC. Mona brings live birds and animals from her rehab center including a bald eagle, owls, hawks, and reptiles. Join us for a great program!



Nature Crafts and an Ice Cream Social will follow immediately after the program in the DeRivera Park sponsored by the Put-in-Bay Recreation Committee.



Speaking Bird

For a beginning birdwatcher (or “birder”), learning the songs of birds can be overwhelming. I remember the first time I listened to a tape of bird songs. I thought, “You’ve GOT to be kidding! People actually learn these, AND remember how to tell them apart? You’ve REALLY got to be kidding!” But I had gotten hooked on the visual beauty of birds, and knew that learning their songs was an inevitable part of the identification process. What, I wondered, had I gotten myself into?!

It doesn’t help that birds mostly sing for a short part of the year - in spring and into summer. Also, many birds are migrants, just passing through without spending a lot of time here. For most birds then, the window of opportunity to learn their song is very small. To further complicate matters, birds don’t sing the same thing all the time. Birds not only sing songs, which are used to attract a mate and to defend territory, but they also have calls or chip notes. These are used to keep in contact with each other, as an alarm, and for begging. And, of course, unlike those nice wildflowers that stay put, birds move around. They can hide behind leaves or just plain leave the scene. Just when you think you’ve got it figured out but need one more look or listen to confirm your ID, well, there it goes!

However, all is not lost. As with learning so many other things, there are a few helpful hints to make it easier to absorb this fascinating form of communication. First, realize there is no way to learn every song the first year. Start out by learning the songs and calls of the most common birds, the ones you hear most often around your house. You probably already know more than you think! (I bet most people could identify the songs of the robin, cardinal, mourning dove, chickadee, blue jay, red-winged blackbird, crow, great horned owl, mallard and Canada goose.) Then each year concentrate on learning a few more while refreshing what you’ve already learned.

Bird song tapes or CDs are a great refresher but not really the best way to learn songs. I found the easiest way to learn a bird’s song was to watch the bird while it sang. That way you associate the bird (and its field marks) with its song, and “live” is much better than “Memorex”. Then go home and listen to the tape or CD while looking at the bird’s pic-

ture in a book to reinforce what you learned in the field. This is also a good way to review during the winter when the birds aren’t around or aren’t singing.

If possible, hook up with a more experienced birder in the field. I find I can often learn more quickly when someone is pointing things out to me. Instead of trying to make mental notes about a bird’s appearance and what I heard it singing, if someone who knows about that bird can give me a quick tip (“Notice how the Veery’s song tends to spiral down at the end? The Swainson’s song sounds very similar but spirals up at the end.”), it can save a lot of time and guessing! Even when birding alone, I’ve found other birders I run into to be quite friendly, ready to share helpful information and eager to point things out to me.

One other interesting tool to help learn and remember bird songs is called “mnemonics”. This is basically translating bird songs into English! Take for example, our state bird, the cardinal. I swear I’ve heard cardinals sing everything from “pretty, pretty, pretty, birdie, birdie, birdie” to “cheer, cheer, cheer”, and even “cheeseburger, cheeseburger, cheeseburger”, though someone else said it sounds like, “breaker, breaker, breaker”! Following this article is a list of a few popular mnemonic translations. Some are very helpful in learning bird songs, and others, well, they seem like a real stretch!

A few birds make it really easy to learn their songs because they sing their names. Examples in-



clude the killdeer, whip-poor-will, (northern) bobwhite, (eastern) phoebe and (eastern wood) pewee. The gray catbird sounds like a cat meowing, hence its name, and the diminutive saw-whet owl is said to sound like a saw-whet, hence its name.

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Some bird's songs are easy to learn because they are just so unusual. The song, if you want to call it that, of the American bittern sounds like water being poured out of a jug. Another secretive marsh bird, the Virginia rail, can sometimes be lured into view by imitating its song, which is easily done by clicking two stones together. The beautiful scarlet tanager has been described as sounding like a robin with a sore throat. And speaking of robins, all the thrushes have a flute-like quality to their songs.

And just when you think you're starting to get the hang of it, well, beware of the mimics! Mockingbirds are aptly named. I have sat and listened to a mockingbird rattle off song after song. The fun part is trying to identify which bird it is mocking as it goes through its repertoire. Also, starlings are very good at mimicking other birds. I once swore I kept hearing a killdeer but by the time I would get to the door to look, it was always gone. This went on for several days until finally, the truth came out when I saw a starling, sitting on a wire just outside my door, singing like a killdeer! I've also heard them mimic blue jays, red-tailed hawks and eastern meadowlarks, among others. (This is another good reason to watch the bird while it sings!)

Although it can be very frustrating at times, learning the songs of birds can also be very rewarding. It adds another dimension to the experience of watching and identifying birds. If a bird is too high up in a tree to see well enough through your binoculars, you can often confirm a tentative identification if you can hear it singing. And by following these few easy tips, you can impress your friends by pointing to a singing tree full of leaves and saying, "Hear that? It's a flock of cedar waxwings!"

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Some mnemonic translations:

barred owl - "who cooks for you, who cooks for you all"

great horned owl - "who, who, who"

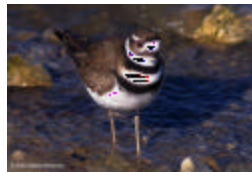
eastern towhee - "drink your tea", "chewink"

white-throated sparrow - "poor sam, peabody, peabody, peabody"

American goldfinch - "potato chip, potato chip, potato chip" (when in flight)

yellow warbler - "sweet, sweet, sweet, so sweet"

chestnut-sided warbler - "pleased, pleased, pleased to meetcha"



eastern meadowlark - "hello, spring is here"

white-eyed vireo - "pick up the beer check"

yellow vireo - "hello, how are you?"

red-eyed vireo - "here I am, over here, look up here"

Carolina wren - "tea kettle, tea kettle, tea kettle"

tufted titmouse - "peter, peter, peter"

ovenbird - "teacher, teacher, teacher"

common yellowthroat - "witchity, witchity, witchity"

Acadian flycatcher - "squeeze it"

willow flycatcher - "fitzbeu"

least flycatcher - "chebek"

2005 At The Bay Nature & Environmental Adventure Camps

Have you ever held a garter snake, caught a dragonfly, reeled in a yellow perch or taken a ride on board the Bio-Lab? These are all experiences children enjoyed during the Lake Erie Islands Chapter of the Black Swamp Conservancy's (LEIC-BSC) nature camp programs in 2003 and 2004. The LEIC along with the Lake Erie Islands Historical Society will again be sponsoring Nature Camp at the Bay this summer. This year we are excited to announce that we have received an Ohio Environmental Education Fund Grant from the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency to help offset some of the expenses and to expand our program. The Ohio State University Stone Laboratory and the Lake Erie Islands State Parks will also be collaborators this year. Special thanks to Dr. Carmen Trisler, Valerie Mettler, Carol Ferguson, and Lisa Brohl for their help in writing the grant. We will have two different camps divided by age. Because of the popularity of the camp for the younger children, we are offering a morning and afternoon session of the same camp to offer enough space for everyone. We are limiting participation to 20 children in each of these sessions. The dates and times are as follows:

Environmental Adventure Camp

Ages 9 and up

July 25-28, 2005 10:00AM-3:00PM

Nature Camp at the Bay

Ages 6 to 8

July 18-21, 2005 10:00AM-12:00PM

July 18-21, 2005 1:00PM- 3:00PM

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Highlights of this year's Nature Camp will include a visit to the Butterfly House, fishing, water festival, and nature crafts. For the Environmental Adventure Camp, there will be a trip on the BioLab, fossil hunting on Kelley's Island, and kayaking. To register, use the form in this newsletter or call Lisa Brohl at 419-285-5811. Forms are also available at the Lake Erie Islands Historical Society. The cost for the Nature Camp program is \$20.00/child/week. Family rates are available. Final camp schedules will be sent with registration confirmation letters.

Middle Bass Nature Camp

The LEIC-BSC is also providing the instructors for the Middle Bass Nature Camp sponsored by the Middle Bass Board of Education for Middle Bass residents. The camp will be held June 27-30, with an AM session for 6-8 year olds and a PM session for ages 9 and older. Registration forms are being mailed to property owners or can be obtained from Camp Registrar Carol Richardson at 419-285-2223.

Investing for the Future

A portion of our LEIC-BSC mission statement indicates a responsibility for a sustained effort to preserve and protect habitat. We feel this to be essential in maintaining the quality of life, making the Lake Erie Islands such a great place to live. Currently we are pursuing opportunities to acquire funds necessary for this endeavor. One of the current opportunities, The Clean Ohio Conservation Fund, has \$2.2 million available to be spent in our District 5, and the Grantors are requesting proposals to be submitted by June 3rd of this year. We are now in the process of determining our best options, and will be preparing requests. Currently among these are three properties on South Bass, and one on North Bass Island. Two of the South Bass sites offer birding opportunities and one of the two in addition presenting beautiful wildflower displays. The third South Bass property is the Alaskan Birdhouse Museum and would be a wonderful museum resource for our community. This 2.5 acre facility offers great potential as a wildlife museum, as natural history center, has great birding and wildflower assets, and would be a wonderful site for our highly successful Nature Camp.

All these grand possibilities come with a price however. The grants will require matching funds from our community and friends. There will have to be a sustained commitment of talents, time, and money from our members and friends and benefactors if we are to be successful in this endeavor. Keep in mind that our parent organization the Black Swamp Conservancy is a 501 (c)3 non profit so that the donation could be deductible. We all have talents to share. If you are akin to our mission and goals, and would like to become involved in this process, please contact a committee person. If you would like to help or have any ideas concerning land acquisitions, fund raising, environmental issues etc, again please contact a committee person. We would welcome your participation.

2005 Summer Schedule

Saturday, June 11 –1:00PM Trevor Walsh, Education Coordinator and Natalie Cook, Outreach Coordinator from the Toledo Zoo-"Traveling Animal and Snake Exhibit" at the Put-in-Bay Town Hall

Tuesday, July 26-4:30-5:30 PM Meet at the Butterfly House on South Bass for a Butterfly Walk or Tour with Dr. Dave Horn of the Ohio State University. At 7:30PM, Dr. Horn will present a slide show titled "Butterflies of the Lake Erie Islands" at the Lake Erie Islands Historical Society.

Tuesday, August 9 7:30 PM Marlene Kromer, "The Nature Conservancy's Role in Ohio Conservation" She will also discuss their work in the Lake Erie Basin. at the Lake Erie Islands Historical Society.

Bald Eagles on the Islands

The Ohio Division of Wildlife announced that the Bald Eagle nest on Middle Bass has failed this year. Last year the pair successfully fledged one bird. On the Division's flyover on March 6, the birds appeared to be on the nest. On their flyover on April 12, neither bird was on the nest and no evidence of young or eggs were present. They are looking for clues as to what may have happened. The Division is looking for volunteer Eagle watchers who could monitor the nest in any future nesting attempts. If interested, please contact Mark Shieldcastle at 419-898-3770. A pair have nested on Kelley's Island and although they got a late start are still on the nest.

Dutchman's Breeches

Spring is finally bursting forth with all of its renewing powers and winter is now a waning memory. One of the best ways to break out of any lingering cabin fever is to wander through the woods and see which wildflowers are making their appearance. Which one is your favorite? Large-flowered trillium, blue phlox, spring beauty, purple cress, hepatica, bloodroot, mayapple? All are beautiful spring wildflowers, but none, to me, quite compares with Dutchman's breeches. It is my favorite spring wildflower, probably my favorite wildflower period. It earned this status with me a very long time ago. When I was a child growing up on South Bass, the April woods were completely covered with them in places. This profusion was almost overwhelming in a way. No other wildflower bloomed in such abundance. They were simply endless, countless, infinite. (Hmm, infinite...)

Dutchman's breeches ("DBs" for short) are in the Fumitory (*Fumariaceae*) family of plants which also includes squirrel corn, bleeding hearts and rock harlequin. This family is sometimes included as a subfamily within the Poppy family (*Papaveraceae*) as they are closely related. The scientific name for DBs is *Dicentra cucullaria*. *Dicentra*, the generic (genus) name, is from the Greek "di", meaning "two", and "kentron", meaning "a spur"; hence, "two-spurred". *Cucullaria*, the specific (species) name, means "hood-like". "Two-spurred hood-like" does seem to aptly describe the creamy white flowers of upside-down-looking pantaloons. Other common names include white hearts, eardrops (because they look like ladies' earrings), soldier's cap, butterfly banners and even staggerweed.

DBs are a spring ephemeral which means they bloom early (April on the islands) and don't last very long. Once the leaves come out on the trees, the sun is shaded out from the woods floor and the shade-intolerant spring wildflowers disappear. DBs are very delicate, and they certainly don't last long in a vase. From three to eight of the little heart-shaped flowers dangle from a single slender stalk above the finely divided, lacy leaves which are on separate stems. DBs grow from a small bulb and can reach about ten inches tall. They have a sweet, distinct scent, and as the flowers age they sometimes take on a tinge of pink. Bumblebees are their pollinators, and ants disperse the seeds, which are formed in a capsule.

A rich, moist, sometimes rocky woods is where you'll find them. On South Bass, one of the best displays is along Put-in-Bay Road just past Maple Leaf Cemetery. They are also sprinkled through the woods along the West Shore.

In the United States, DB's can be found in the eastern and midwestern states, except in the far south, and a disjunct population is located in the far northwest. They also range into eastern Canada.

As with other members of this family, all parts of the plant are poisonous to both animals and humans because of the presence of isoquinoline alkaloids. However, toxicity is low and fatality is rare. Trembling, heavy salivating, vomiting, labored breathing, running with the head held high, staggering (evidently the source of one of its common names) and convulsions are some symptoms exhibited in livestock that have eaten this plant. It isn't very palatable and is usually only eaten if nothing else is available. In spite of this, DBs have been used in folk medicine to treat skin conditions and as a blood purifier.

While all this information is interesting and appealing to the intellect, none of it compares to the memories this plant impressed upon me as a child. Those recollections consist of all the sensory experiences I had – the sight of such abundance as I would approach the woods; the texture, the unusual shape, the smell of the flowers as I would get down to their level; the green of the leaves and their paper-thin



delicacy; the cool hollowness of the stems in my hand and the sound of their snapping as I would pick a fistful to take home. Adding to this was the coolness in the air, the sound of birds overhead in the canopy, fallen branches to step over to get into the patch, other blossoms causing a momentary distraction of intention, the earthy smell of the woods, the sense this world was all mine and would last forever, the sense that these flowers were infinite. Hmm, infinite...

Such a scene is hardly everlasting. Maybe in my memories, but certainly not in reality. The rural nature of the island is being lost and it isn't as much fun to come back to visit when each year there are fewer Dutchman's breeches. "Progress", as some call it, continues to march onward. But what about the Dutchman's breeches? What about the large-flowered trillium, blue phlox, spring beauty, purple cress, hepatica and bloodroot? We simply can't afford to lose these precious treasures!

My hope, and support, lies with the Lake Erie Islands Chapter of the Black Swamp Conservancy. There are some parcels of land up for sale on South Bass, some with woods and grand patches of DBs and other wildflowers. The LEIC-BSC hopes to apply for grant money to purchase at least one of these parcels. If all goes well, maybe then I'll be assured that DBs will remain on the island, if not in infinite numbers, at least into the future ... infinitely.

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Lake Erie Chapter
Black Swamp Conservancy
PO Box 461
Put-in-Bay, Ohio, 43456

Please Return To: Lisa Brohl, PO Box 155, Put-in-Bay, Ohio 43456

Questions? 419-285-5811

Registration Form for Nature Camp at the Bay 2005

Child's Name _____ Birth Date _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Circle Preferred Session:

July 18-21 (Age 6-8) Morning (10:00AM-12:00PM) Afternoon (1:00-3:00PM)

July 25-28 (Age 9 +) 10:00AM-3:00PM

Emergency Contact _____

Family Doctor _____

Does your child have any allergies or require any special medication?

Permission Form

My (son/daughter) _____ has my permission to participate fully in the Nature Camp at the Bay 2005 sponsored by the Lake Erie Islands Chapter of the Black Swamp Conservancy and the Lake Erie Islands Historical Society to be held on July 18-21 or July 25-28, 2005. I understand that all reasonable care will be taken for my child's safety but in the event of an accident I assume responsibility for all medical expenses. I authorize emergency medical treatment if none of the above named emergency contact persons can be reached at the time of an emergency.

Signature of Parent/Guardian _____

Date _____