

Grass River Natural Area 2018 Volunteer of the Year



We are proud to announce that our 2018 Volunteer of the Year award goes to...(drum roll, please)...Phil Jarvi! For those of you who know Phil, this does not come as much of a surprise. He is a Grass River supporter through and through and doesn't just talk the talk, but also walks the walk.

Phil first got introduced to Grass River through a Record Eagle article in 2005 where he read about GRNA looking for botanizers. He was interested in learning more about the natural world and plant identification so he signed up to help with volunteer-led weekly Wildflower Walks. These walks still continue to this day and you can still find Phil walking along and helping visitors to identify wildflowers along our boardwalk trails. In addition to helping lead these Wildflower Walks Phil also helps at our semi-annual stream monitoring events, monitors butterfly populations along the Rail Trail, helps in our native gardens and works as a docent at the front desk of the nature center.

Phil is no stranger to volunteering through. His earliest volunteer memory was when he was in Cub Scouts and they helped clean up a park to get it ready for a baseball diamond. In his teen years, he then volunteered to help his mom prepare for Girl Scout camp through the summers of high school and college. More recently Phil has served on committees for Ducks Unlimited, started the Grand Traverse chapter of Wild Ones, and has volunteered at the Grand Traverse Conservation District as well as Trout Unlimited.

When asked what makes GRNA distinctive from volunteering at other organizations he said "the people—staff, other volunteers, visitors. It is the best camaraderie I've had since college." Adding to that that he also has a deep appreciation for the land, the water and the natural features that Grass River offers. He said that he realized how special and unique Grass River was the first time he ever visited and he hasn't looked back since.

Thank you, Phil, for all that you have contributed to Grass River Natural Area and our mission. We are so fortunate to have volunteers like and wouldn't be who we are today with out you.