Edition # 35 May 2026

NEWAYGO COUNTY
ENVIRONMENTAL COALITION

NCEC NEWS

The Environmental Resource Hub for Newaygo County

In This Newsletter

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The Newaygo County Environmental Coalition aims to foster an educated, active, and collaborative community dedicated to protecting, respecting, and promoting a sustainable natural world.

May NCEC and Ally Events

Late Spring In-the-Field Training

Saturday 5/2
1 pm - 4 pm

Hungerford Recreation Area Manistee National Forrest

This event is for those who have already taken the online 2026 MI Vernal Pool Patrol course.

This hands-on training with NCEC will show you how to recognize potential sites, map, survey, and record data that help MNFI study and work to protect these small, seasonal wetlands that support amphibians, insects, and other wildlife.

This field training is for volunteers who have participated in or watched the recorded Michigan Vernal Pool Patrol Virtual Training Series (Either this year or in the past) or are planning to take the online course and want hands-on training.

By registering, you'll learn:

- How to safely collect and document vernal pool data
- Ways your observations support local habitat protection in Newaygo County
- Next steps to stay involved with the Vernal Pool Patrol
- Connect with Other MI VP Patrollers

Be prepared for all weather conditions! Bring rain gear, warm layers, and waterproof footwear (knee-high boots or waders). Due to the length of this event, we recommend bringing a water bottle and a snack. All necessary monitoring supplies will be provided, but feel free to bring your own as well.

This will involve some moderately difficult walking (on and off-trail). The walk in is about .5 miles, maybe less. The trail can get muddy. Appropriate footwear for the forest floor is needed.

Hands-on training provided by Jim Dunn, GVSU retired biology professor and board member of NCEC, and Katie Clark, MI Vernal Pool Patrol of Newaygo Region Coordinator, Rowan O'Mara, Healthy Habitats Coordinator for NCEC, and Tim Duffy, MI VPP of Newaygo Region team member and 2025 Wood Frog Award Winner.

During this field training, Vernal Pool Patrol volunteers will gain experience completing the monitoring protocol (e.g., taking pool measurements, collecting pool samples, identifying invertebrates with a microscope, and using the Survey123 app and data sheets to ensure data are collected accurately). This time can also be used to connect and meet with other Vernal Pool Patrol volunteers in your area
Tickets for this IN-THE-FIELD group monitoring & protocol training are limited to 20 participants. This training is provided by the Newaygo County Environmental Coalition local program coordinator, Katie Clark, who focuses on monitoring pools within Newaygo County. Please register if you plan to monitor vernal pools in Newaygo County or areas nearby. Those monitoring with NCEC's MI Vernal Pool Patrol of Newaygo Region will be given priority. Space is limited to minimize impact on the pool monitored during the training. We appreciate your understanding..

Directions: Take Exit 142 off of US131 (19 Mile Rd Exit. Road name changes to 13 Mile Rd in Newaygo County) and go West just less than 4 miles to Cedar Rd. Go South 1 mile, and we'll meet here: 43.728499, -85.607652 (12 Mile Rd & Cedar Rd) We'll then go east a short distance on FS5461 to the parking area.

Questions? Click here to email Katie Clark

Registration for 5/2 Field Training

Muskegon Lake Nature Fest

Thursday, 5/21

5 pm - 9:30 pm

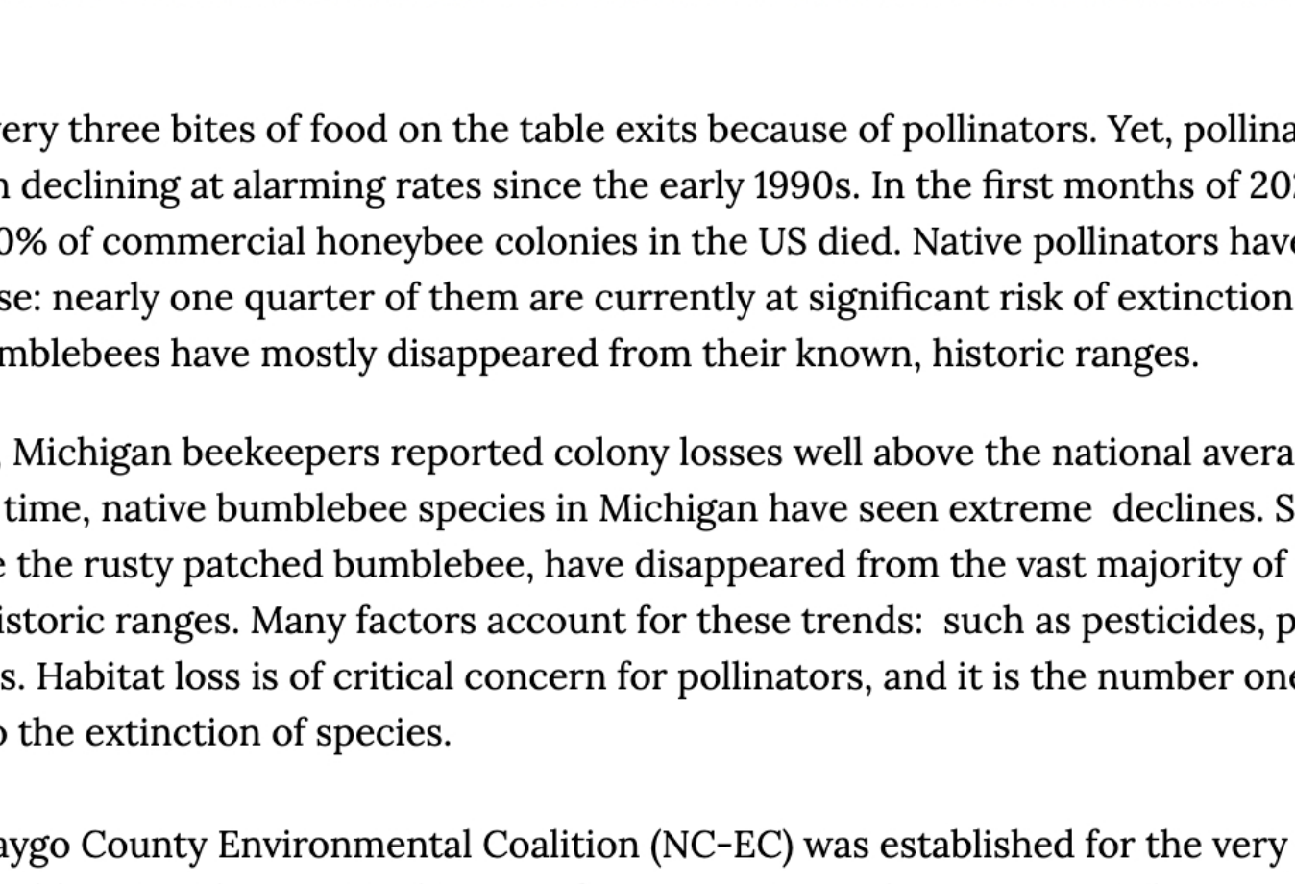
2529 Lake Ave, North Muskegon

A family-friendly event! Get outside and celebrate our living world with others in the community!

More Information on Facebook

Making Space for the Pollinators

Written by: Randy Butters



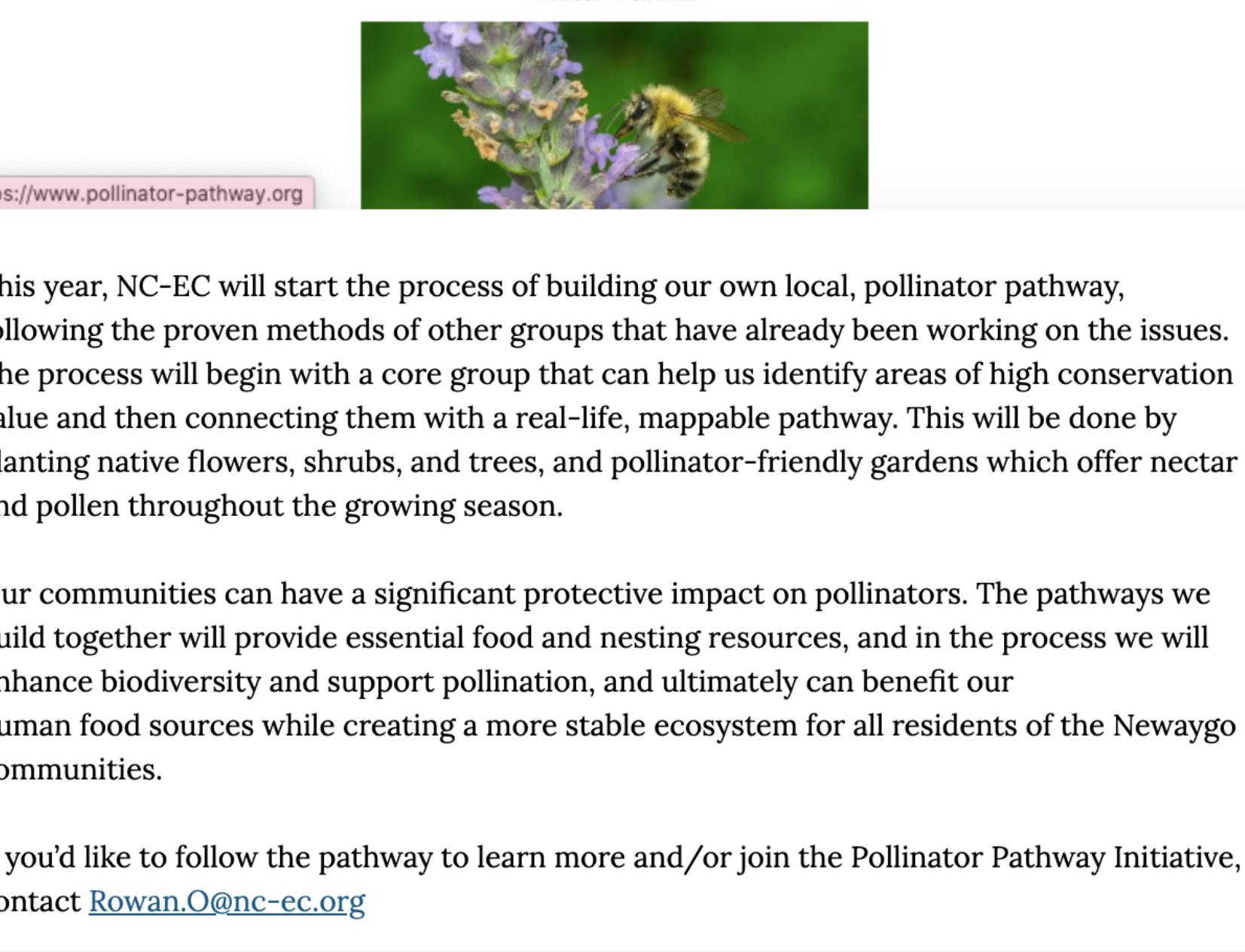
One of every three bites of food on the table exits because of pollinators. Yet, pollinators have been declining at alarming rates since the early 1990s. In the first months of 2025, around 60% of commercial honeybee colonies in the US died. Native pollinators have fared even worse: nearly one quarter of them are currently at significant risk of extinction. Many native bumblebees have mostly disappeared from their known, historic ranges.

Last year, Michigan beekeepers reported colony losses well above the national average. At the same time, native bumblebee species in Michigan have seen extreme declines. Some of them, like the rusty patched bumblebee, have disappeared from the vast majority of their known, historic ranges. Many factors account for these trends: such as pesticides, pests, and pathogens. Habitat loss is of critical concern for pollinators, and it is the number one threat leading to the extinction of species.

The Newaygo County Environmental Coalition (NC-EC) was established for the very purpose of locally addressing these critical issues of conservation and environment that are so important to the health, economy, and overall well-being or our communities.

This year, we will address the threats to pollinators here in our area. Specifically NC-EC will take on the issue of habitat fragmentation and loss. We will do this through a landscape-scale, strategic initiative, aimed at creating and preserving ecosystems that support pollinators, such as bees, butterflies, and other insects. We plan to create pathways connect habitats through a network of gardens, parks, and green spaces, allowing pollinators to safely travel and thrive.

In the early 2000s, Seattle area artist Sarah Bergman created a discipline-spanning project called Pollinator Pathways. Her 2007 published work, Pollinator Pathway Toolkit, has served as proven model for success. By 2017, a group called pollinator-pathway.org began what has become a nationwide organization inspiring, educating and supporting people and communities to restore and connect habitat for native pollinators and other wildlife.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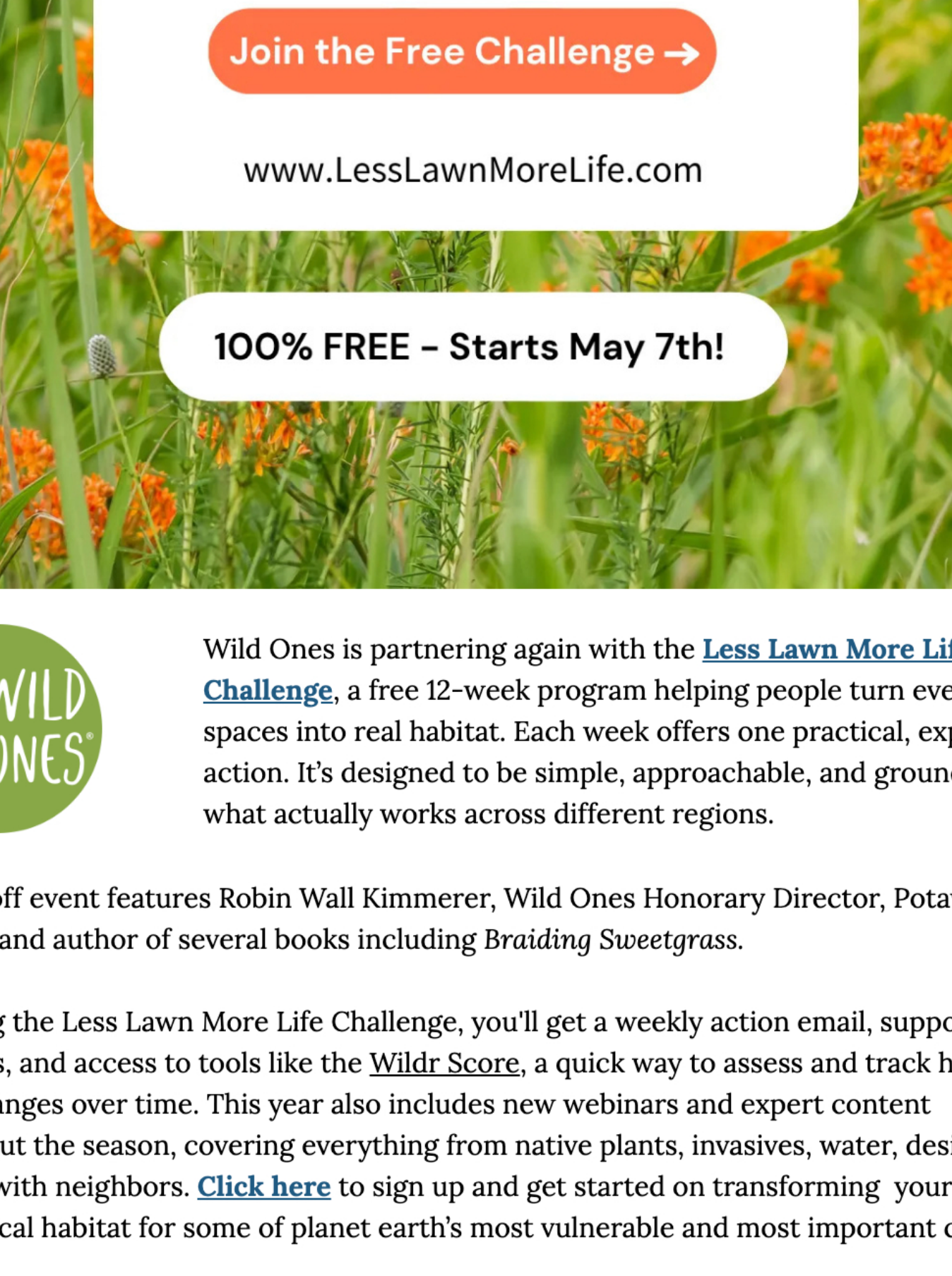
To inspire, educate and support people and communities working together to restore and connect habitat for native pollinators and other wildlife
Winter Webinar
https://www.pollinator-pathway.org

This year, NC-EC will start the process of building our own local, pollinator pathway, following the proven methods of other groups that have already been working on the issues. The process will begin with a core group that can help us identify areas of high conservation value and then connecting them with a real-life, mappable pathway. This will be done by planting native flowers, shrubs, and trees, and pollinator-friendly gardens which offer nectar and pollen throughout the growing season.

Our communities can have a significant protective impact on pollinators. The pathways we build together will provide essential food and nesting resources, and in the process we will enhance biodiversity and support pollination, and ultimately can benefit our human food sources while creating a more stable ecosystem for all residents of the Newaygo communities.

If you'd like to follow the pathway to learn more and/or join the Pollinator Pathway Initiative, contact Rowan.O@nc-ec.org

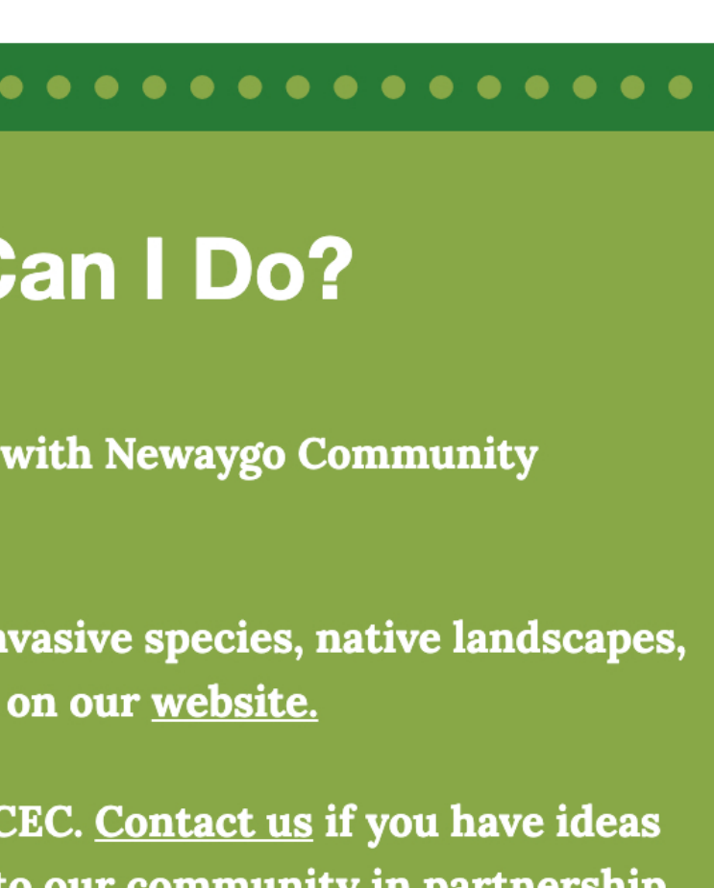
FREE 12 Week Challenge to Transform Your Lawn + Webinar with Robin Wall Kimmerer


LESS LAWN
MORE LIFE
The challenge that turns your yard into a thriving habitat — is BACK!
Join the Free Challenge →
www.LessLawnMoreLife.com
100% FREE - Starts May 7th!

Wild Ones is partnering again with the Less Lawn More Life Challenge, a free 12-week program helping people turn everyday spaces into real habitat. Each week offers one practical, expert-led action. It's designed to be simple, approachable, and grounded in what actually works across different regions.

The kickoff event features Robin Wall Kimmerer, Wild Ones Honorary Director, Potawatomi botanist, and author of several books including *Braiding Sweetgrass*.

By joining the Less Lawn More Life Challenge, you'll get a weekly action email, supporting resources, and access to tools like the Wildr Score, a quick way to assess and track how your space changes over time. This year also includes new webinars and expert content throughout the season, covering everything from native plants, invasives, water, design, and working with neighbors. **Click here** to sign up and get started on transforming your yard into critical habitat for some of planet earth's most vulnerable and most important creatures.



What Else Can I Do?

1. Share our website, posts, and E-news with Newaygo Community members and Organizations.

2. Join a Team! NCEC has teams about invasive species, native landscapes, ad restoration opportunities. More info on our website.

3. Bring your skills and knowledge to NCEC. Contact us if you have ideas of skills or offerings you'd like to bring to our community in partnership with NCEC.

4. If you work with another local organization doing similar work to protect our environment, your organization can become an NCEC Ally. It's free, and your organization can apply here.

5. Click here to Donate!

Your Support Makes A Difference

NCEC is a small but mighty 501c3 non-profit organization! We depend on your tax deductible donations to continue our work, and to help us grow with our Newaygo County Environment needs.

Donate

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