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# Laurel Voran LLC

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*Michigan monkey-flower preservation, native restoration & horticultural services*

## MICHIGAN MONKEY-FLOWER PRESERVATION at OLD SETTLERS' PARK: 2021



Seep near steps, cleared of watercress, awaiting Monkey flower divisions in spring 2021.

### **STATUS UPDATE:**

Our endangered plant, Michigan monkey flower, continues to thrive along the shoreline at Old Settlers' park thanks to our continued active management plan.

Monkey flower colonies continue to expand as we manage the spread of more aggressive, competing vegetation.

Last season we were able to clear out a new seep, pictured above. We plan to transplant monkey flower into it this coming season.

The interpretive sign at overlook is holding up very well, still in excellent condition after 4 years. Visitors continue to show interest in the Monkey flower, often enquiring further.



Michigan monkey flower in full bloom

#### **WHAT IS MICHIGAN MONKEY FLOWER?**

- An endangered species, known to grow only in the Grand Traverse region and straits of Mackinac. Only approximately 17 populations remain. It is listed on both state and federal endangered species lists. It is endemic to this region, growing best in the unique environment such as is found along portions of the Big Glen Lake shoreline.
- Scientific name: *Mimulus michiganensis* (synonym: *Erythranthe michiganensis*)
- Semi-aquatic, herbaceous, perennial.
- Ideal habitat: mucky soil of stream edges, alkaline environment (pH 7.66 - 8.21) and cold ( 47 - 62 °F ) flowing water.
- Habit: Stems to approx. 15", trailing horizontally, rooting in at each leaf node to form low mats of plant colonies.
- Flowers: Bright yellow, shaped similar to snapdragons, heaviest bloom from mid -June thru late July
- Several scholarly professional references site the colonies at Glen Lake as some of the largest and healthiest populations. The vigor our our population is due to the fact that we have the perfect environment for it and are actively caring for it, keeping competitors at bay.
- Threats: development, encroaching species, changes in hydrology.

## **PROPOSAL FOR 2021**

Continuation of *Mimulus michiganensis* (Michigan monkey flower) preservation at Old Settlers' Park: Maintain current populations and establish a new colony by transplanting divisions into an area prepared last season.

## **PROPOSED PROJECT FUNDING AND BUDGET FOR 2021:**

Continued unique partnership between county, neighbors, a lake association and a local business:

\$1,440.00 contributed by neighbors and Laurel Voran LLC. (\$480 each entity)

\$1000 contributed by Glen Lake Association

\$960.00 contributed by Leelanau county

## **WORK PERFORMED:**

- Manage competing plants:
  - Jewel weed, watercress, Canada thistle, mint, various grasses.
- These plants would choke out the monkey flower if left untended. Each one is best removed at a different time during the growing season. Removing them opens up spaces into which the monkey-flower colonies can expand. Over time we have shifted the balance between competitors and monkey-flower. Except for Canadian thistle, we do not intend to eradicate any of the competitors, but rather maintain a more healthy balance between them and the monkey-flower.
- Seasonal cutbacks of surrounding area, enhancing view from popular viewing platform
- Haul debris off site
- Maintain valid Endangered Species Permit required by DNR to work with the monkey flower
- Answer questions from visitors regarding monkey flower
- Monitor for damage/disease and respond appropriately

Without our help, the monkey flower would be quickly lost, overwhelmed by more rapidly growing vegetation. With our help this rare plant has made a great recovery at Old Settlers' park and continues to expand. It is important that we continue to protect it and its environment, keeping this ecosystem intact and allowing future generations to learn about and admire this unique plant.

Thank you for considering continued support of this important project.

Laurel Voran

3.11.21