



04737 Fuller Road, East Jordan, MI 49727  
(231) 536-3369 | [www.miravenhill.org](http://www.miravenhill.org)  
[info@miravenhill.org](mailto:info@miravenhill.org)

*Raven Hill Discovery Center, incorporated in 1991, is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt corporation.*

**Mission:** Raven Hill provides a place that enhances hands-on and lifelong learning for all ages by connecting science, history & the arts.

To: Friends and Family everywhere

From: Cheri and Raven Hill

Date: March 27, 2021

Re: Weekly Update

Greetings Everyone!

Soon after Raven Hill opened in 1992, an **Edge Trail** was established for visitors to explore the “edge” habitat between the woods and open fields. The half-mile walking pathway meandered around the large field north of the Schoolhouse.

In 2006, fifteen years ago, with financial support from the Charlevoix County Community Foundation, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and the Bay Harbor Foundation, Raven Hill re-purposed the **Edge Trail** as the **Taxonomic** or **Taxi Trail**. Trees were planted along the trail by their family evolution, starting with the primitive pines all the way to the more modern trees, like fruit trees.

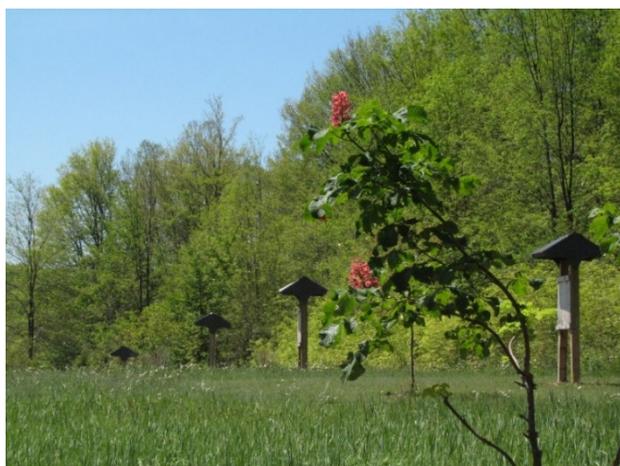
Shadowboxes were installed with signs to identify each of the 24 tree families and displays of how those trees were or are used. We collected authentic items and miniatures to illustrate food, medicinal, shelter, transportation and other uses.



These signs can be found at each end of the **Taxi Trail** and show a few traditional uses of wood, like ash for baseball bats and oak for furniture. Do you have a favorite wood?

The original **Taxi Trail** displays with the actual objects could not withstand the rigors of northern Michigan weather and were recently removed, leaving only the tree family name. The **Taxi Trail** shadowboxes will soon display new weatherproof, full-color panels, showcasing the name and uses of each tree family, as part of the planned **Connections Trail** project.

The **Connections Trail** and its 40 learning stations, along with the parallel & updated **Taxi Trail** will meet Raven Hill’s mission, enhance formal education and engage visitor learning with hands-on outdoor experiences. The **Taxi Trail** trees will be visible from the **Connections Trail** & accessible at the same time. With COVID guidelines in place, the hands-on aspect of Raven Hill will move to an open-air setting outdoors, while the inside will house new & favorite visual displays plus limited interactive exhibits.



Four shadowboxes are visible in the background. The tree in the foreground is a horse chestnut, one of the tree families featured on the **Taxi Trail**. It’s a beautiful walk on a sunny summer afternoon.



Birch trees are a familiar site here in northern Michigan. The bark, sap, wood, leaves and twigs were and are useful. The original birch family sign showed actual objects. Someday, those items will be repurposed in an indoor display at Raven Hill.

Raven Hill learned this week that the Charlevoix County Community Foundation Board of Trustees approved a grant to Raven Hill Discovery Center, during their Environment & Land Use grant cycle. The \$5,000 grant award is to help with the construction of Raven Hill's **Connections Trail**. Several of the stations will facilitate learning about and caring for the environment.

Earlier this year, the Baiardi Foundation also pledged \$5,000. We will hear soon about two other **Connections Trail** grant applications that have been submitted and have a fifth application due mid-April. The hard work has already begun for us here at the Center. We are extremely excited about this new outdoor hands-on exhibit. Thank you, Charlevoix County Community Foundation and Baiardi Foundation for partnering once again with Raven Hill to make our mission and vision become a reality for the benefit of Charlevoix and Emmet County residents, as well as the larger audience of visitors who come to experience the Center.

Page 3 of this update includes a new map showing the future **Connections Trail** as it parallels the existing **Taxi Trail**. Look for future updated maps of Raven Hill's Ancient World and Open Space areas!

Interested in helping? There's lots to do! We can use your assistance, if you: are handy with a hammer and drill; can operate a chain saw; like to paint; enjoy digging in the dirt to plant replacement trees; have artistic talents; or love to search for that perfect object to adorn a specific learning station.

This is easily a community project, so call Cheri at 231.675.6025 to volunteer in general or if you have specific skills we could use to advantage! Internationally acclaimed author Idowu Koyenikan said, "There is immense power when a group of people with similar interests gets together to work toward the same goals." So, lend a hand and help us get the **Connections Trail** up and running in time for summer visitors.

If you know someone who might like to receive weekly updates, please send their email addresses to [info@miravenhill.org](mailto:info@miravenhill.org). I will add their names to our list. If you are interested in previous updates, you can find them all on our website—[www.MiRavenHill.org](http://www.MiRavenHill.org)

Remember to do your part to beat this coronavirus and its variants. Get vaccinated, continue to wash your hands, wear your mask, socially distance & stay away from crowds. Take care of yourselves and each other. We look forward to seeing you at Raven Hill soon!

*Cheri*



It is easy to visualize what the new birch sign will look like along the **Taxi Trail**, IF you are a graphic artist (I am not!) and have the Photo Shop program on your computer!



(Left) During the COVID-19 pandemic, in April 2020, a giant hopscotch game with nearly 1,000 squares was created in Edinburgh, to be used while following social distancing rules. Our hopscotch court won't be anywhere near that large, but everyone will enjoy playing hopscotch and learning the history of the game at one of the learning stations along Raven Hill's new **Connections Trail**.

# Raven Hill DISCOVERY CENTER

WHERE SCIENCE, HISTORY AND ART CONNECT

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-  Main Museum
-  Parking Lot
-  Medicinal Gardens
-  Fiber Studio
-  Picnic Pavilion
-  Earth Tones Music Garden
-  Energy House
-  Jurassic Park
-  School House
-  Print Shop
-  Tree House
-  Evolving Technology (ET) Building
-  Connections Trail
-  Taxonomic (Taxi) Trail

## MAIN CAMPUS

