



# Belle Isle Park Advisory Committee

## Meeting Minutes

Date: August 17, 2023

Time: 6:00 p.m.

Location: Virtual

**Meeting began at 6:01 p.m.  
No quorum established**

### **Roll Call**

Present for BIPAC

Attending remotely:

Michele Hodges; Grosse Pointe Park, Michigan

Michael Curis; Detroit, Michigan

Sommer Woods; Detroit, Michigan

Bud Denker;

Unexcused

Lonnie Peek

DNR Staff Present

Tom Bissett

Karis Floyd

Amanda Treadwell

Lt. Todd Szyska

Nicole Hill

Cynthia Boggerty-Craft

Others Present

Ayo Thomas, Belle Isle Conservancy

Maria Adams-Lawton, Healthy Kidz Inc.

Amy Greene, Nature Center Director, Detroit Zoological Society

Chair Hodges opened the meeting with a welcome and took the opportunity to note that they are having attendance issues and they need to ensure that their colleagues are taking their role seriously and actively participating in these meetings. She will work in partnership with the DNR teammates to make sure they can accomplish in-person meetings.

Chair Hodges took a moment to honor Shani Penn, a long-time member of the Belle Isle Conservancy board of directors, and dedicated public servant, who tragically passed away on Tuesday. The group took a moment of silence to honor Shani.

### Youth Engagement – Summer Youth Program

Nicole Hill, Youth Engagement Coordinator, provided highlights of the Summer Youth Employment Program, including the requirements associated with selecting participation, the primary focuses of the program, typical work projects, experiences and skills obtained, and outcomes of the program. In 2022, 39 youth matriculated to college, 41 were hired after the program, 6 matriculated to skilled trades schools or advanced training programs, 43 youth returned to high school. There are 15 youth agencies across Michigan that serve 235 youth. Maria Adams-Lawton, Healthy Kidz Inc., added that the program has enriched kids' lives with the projects they do and experiences they obtain; the children would not experience these things if they did not have this program. Maria spoke about the positive advantages the youth have with having a park like Belle Isle in the city of Detroit and the benefits of the DNR and Summer Youth Program partnering every year.

Chair Hodges officially called the meeting to order with the addition of members Woods and Denker.

### **General Updates**

#### Park Update

Tom Bissett, Urban District Supervisor gave updates on the Scott Fountain and the MDOT road improvements. The earliest test date for the fountain is August 25 and if everything goes well, the fountain will be turned back on afterwards. Tom provided updates on the MDOT repaving, restriping and traffic patterns.

Michael Curis expressed his concern with angle parking along a busy road, particularly when someone is trying to back out. Tom replied that the MDOT engineers decided this based on safety, consistency, and public input. This is

not a result of the traffic study, but it is hoped the study will shed some light on some of the concerns.

Chair Hodges would like Tom to advance these concerns to MDOT and the study consultant. There were no further questions or comments.

Karis Floyd, Park Manager, opened by thanking the Summer Youth Employment coordinators and said Nicole and Maria are two of the most dedicated women he has ever worked with, and the park is proud to work with them. He continued with stating they have been busy with big crowds, cleaning and trash removal. The shelters are rented through Labor Day weekend. With the Casino and Flynn closed, he is pleased that people are being creative and holding events throughout the island. They were able to hire a cleaning company who comes in at night to clean. They hired two new park rangers and a new general office assistant. He is happy to report that this year's Metro Youth Day was one of the busier years and it was good to see the sponsor support back with additional volunteers as well. Summer workers will go back to school; there was a good crew this year who accomplished a lot of work and he is proud of them.

Infrastructure Update – Amanda Treadwell, Urban Area Field Planner

Amanda gave updates on highlighted projects including the Athletic Complex handball courts, the aquarium, and the multimodal mobility study (report attached).

Law Update – Lt. Todd Szyska

Lt. Szyska discussed some of the challenges the officers have faced with the public and the new traffic changes, including the parking lineage which has caused some confusing with park users. He reminds people that the roads on the island are state lines and under MDOT and that they have no control over it. It will take some time to get used to the new plans.

Belle Isle Conservancy Updates - Ayo Thomas, Belle Isle Conservancy

Ayo reminded everyone of the facility hours and if interested in updates to test GEM to 80888. She highlighted stakeholder updates, exhibits and events. In closing, Ayo acknowledged Shani Penn and her contributions and leadership to the island and herself. (Update attached)

## **Public Comment**

Suzanne Nash – Introduced herself as part of the Music on Belle Isle Group. Their mission is to restore the bandshell on the island. She asked about the Memorandum of Understanding and how to get it signed and who would be the best contact.

Blair Sawyers – Offered suggestions on what changes could be done to the road after Shelter 8, voiced concerns about the number of geese on the island, and also would like to see consistency with requiring a Recreation Passport on the island.

Chair Hodges offered her's and Ayo's contact information: [hodgesm@belleisleconservancy.org](mailto:hodgesm@belleisleconservancy.org), and [thomasa@belleisleconservancy.org](mailto:thomasa@belleisleconservancy.org).

Sommer Woods said yesterday was tough with the passing of Shani yesterday and gave acknowledgement to Shani and her family.

With no further business the meeting adjourned at 7:22 p.m.

Next regular meeting:  
September 21, 2023  
9:00 a.m.



# Belle Isle Park Infrastructure Updates

August 17, 2023



# Athletic Complex Handball Courts

## Progress Status - Repairs:

- DNR Contractor installing new fascia panels this week (8/16/2023).
- DNR Contractor installing new flashing over panels next week.
- WCI will begin preparation for painting and complete painting after repairs complete.



New fascia panels installed 8/16/2023

# Athletic Complex Handball Courts **Painting Color Schedule**



# Belle Isle Aquarium Update

## Upcoming Projects:

- Contracted: Sewer line replacement.
- Contracted: Boiler room roof structural repairs.
- Upcoming: Facility Plan for Aquarium, Conservatory and Greenhouses.
- New: Boiler line repairs (temporary)
- Future: New HVAC system for Aquarium



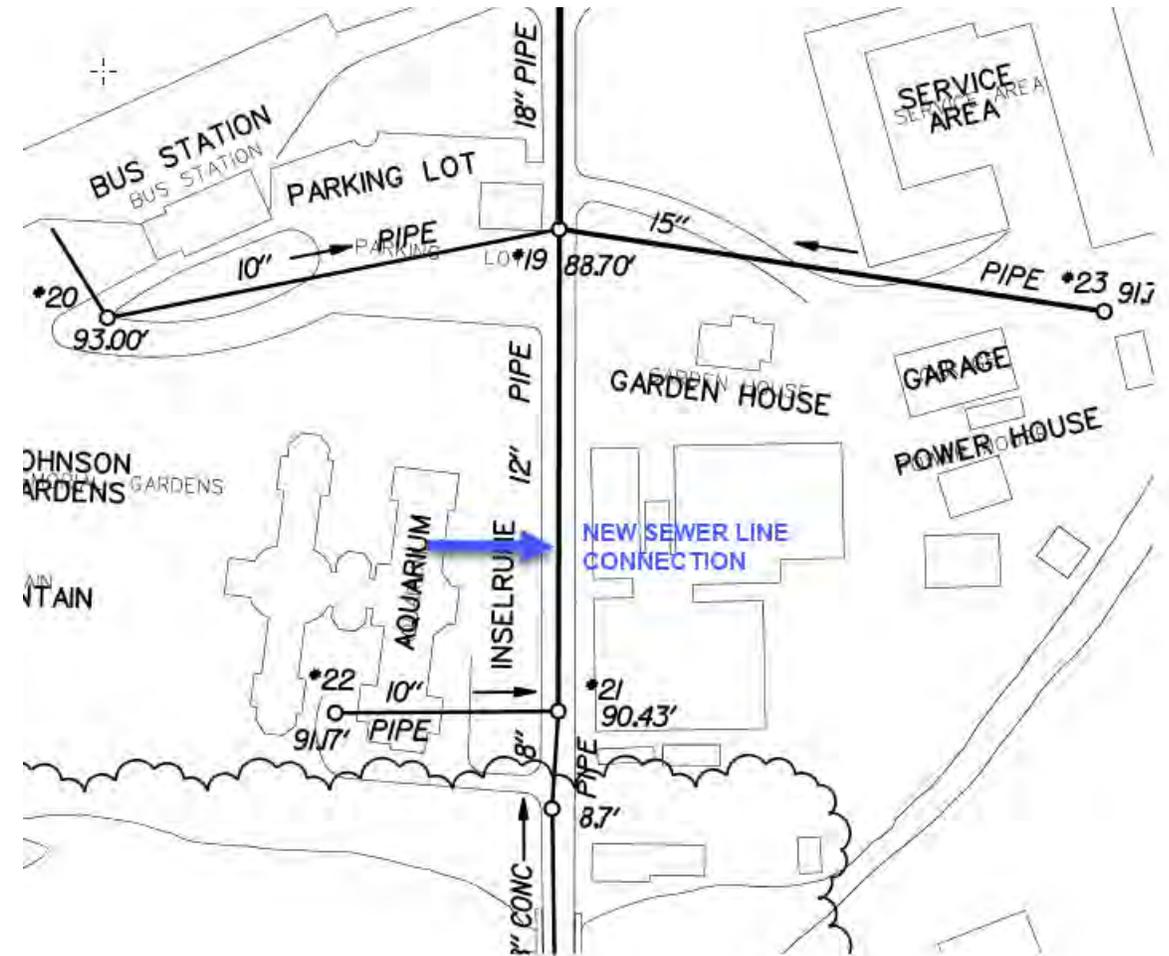
Belle Isle Aquarium Gallery

# Belle Isle Aquarium Update

## Sewer line replacement:

New sewer line to serve bathrooms

- Under contract



Providing new replacement sewer line from aquarium

# Belle Isle Aquarium Update

## Boiler room roof structural repairs

- Under contract



Structural issue apparent in roof dip

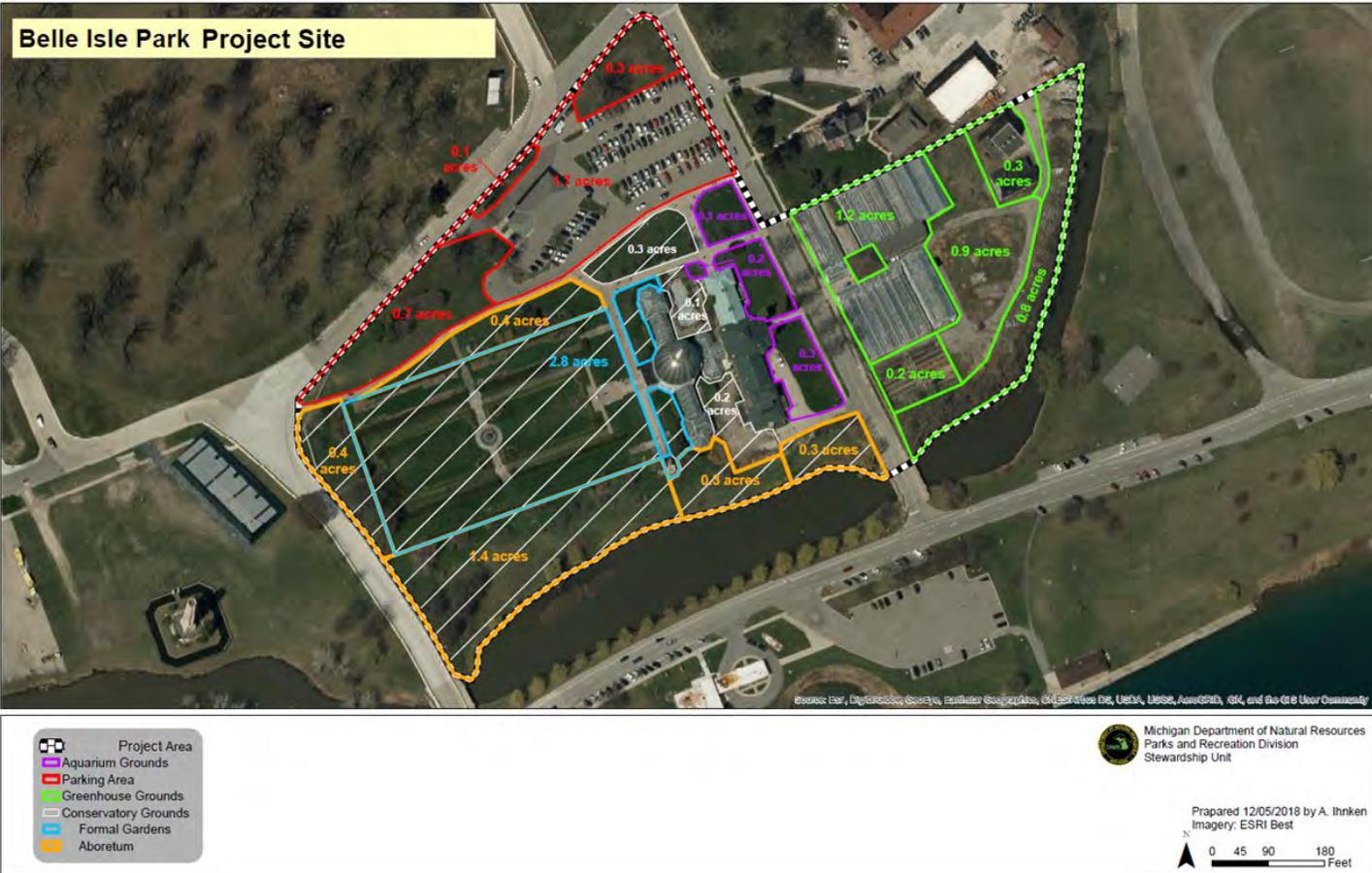


Roof is under- supported and needs replacement and reinforcement to stabilize roof.

# Belle Isle Aquarium Update

## Facility Plan for Aquarium, Conservatory and Greenhouses

- Upcoming RFP



# Belle Isle Aquarium Update

## New HVAC system for Aquarium

- New issue identified to DNR

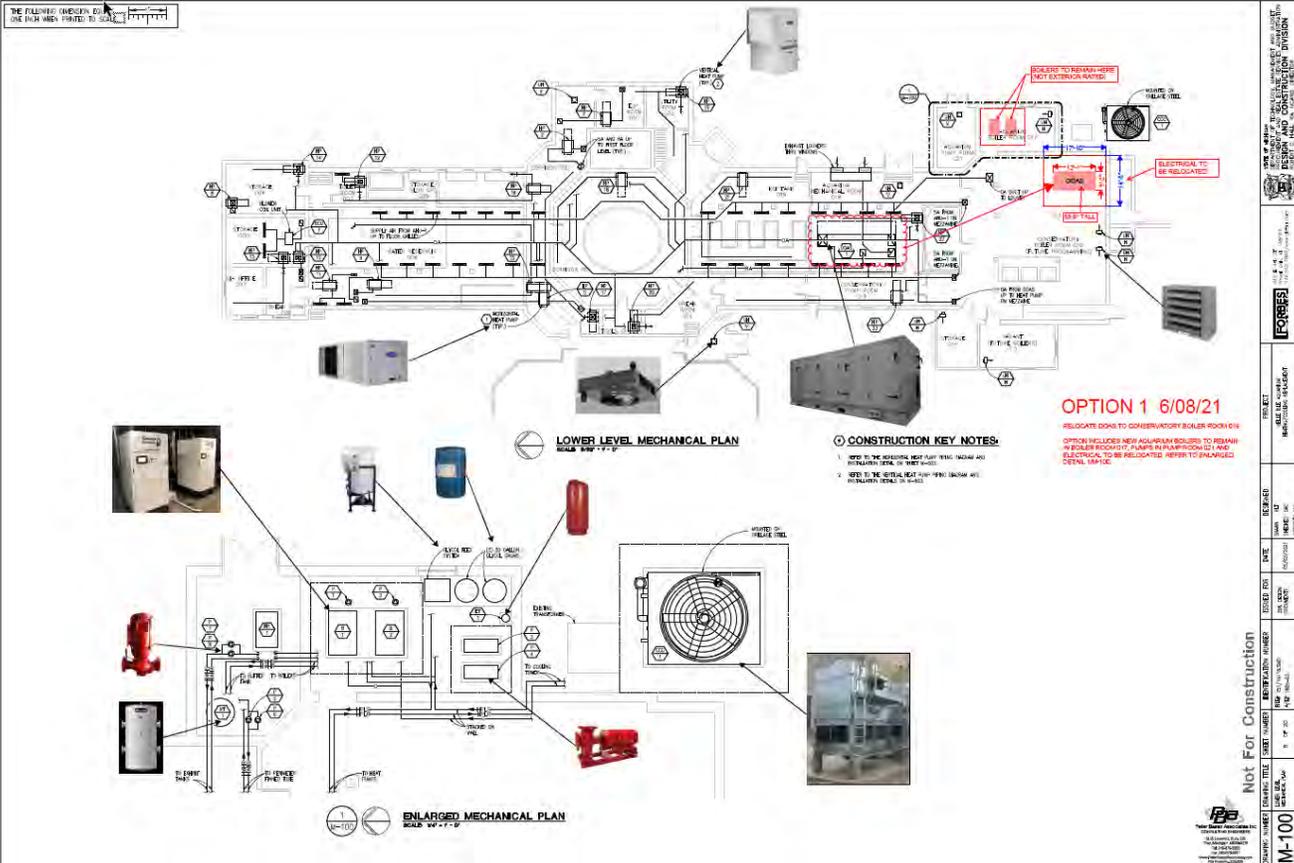


Boiler lines require repairs, and new valves on lines and radiators

# Belle Isle Aquarium Update

## Boiler line repairs (temporary repair)

- Restart planned for early 2024



HVAC system design dependent upon final basement programming

# Belle Isle Multimodal Mobility Study

## Collecting Feedback through August 18, 2023

- Please see Belle Isle Mobility website - **Belle Isle Park Multimodal Mobility Study (michigan.gov)**
- Video link - **Belle Isle Multimodal Mobility Study - Round 2 Stakeholder Engagement Meeting | June 6, 2023 - YouTube**
- Phone number to leave comments: **313-261-5059**
- Email to leave comments- **treadwella@michigan.gov**



Public Open House at Dossin, July 8, 2023



# August Update



Island Stakeholders & Belle Isle Conservancy Community Engagement

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August 17, 2023

BELLE ISLE PARK ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
BIC STAKEHOLDER & ENGAGEMENT UPDATE

Visit

# BELLE ISLE



## SPRING/SUMMER FACILITY HOURS

(holiday hours may apply)

### BELLE ISLE AQUARIUM

THUR-SUN | 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM

### BELLE ISLE NATURE CENTER

DAILY | 10:00 AM - 5:00 PM

### DOSSIN GREAT LAKES MUSEUM

WED-SAT | 10:00 AM - 5:00 PM | SUN | 1:00- 5:00 PM

\$5/PERSON OR \$20 FOR SIX ADULTS AND CHILDREN WITH THE SAME ADDRESS. UNDER 6, FREE

### LOUDOLF GARDEN

DAILY | 5:00 AM to 10:00 PM

### \*\*ANNA SCRIPS WHITCOMB CONSERVATORY

CLOSED FOR CONSTRUCTION THROUGH MAY 2024

### FOR BELLE ISLE UPDATES

TEXT GEM TO 80888

### BELLE ISLE PARK ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETINGS

MONTHLY ON THE FOURTH THURSDAY

ISLAND OPEN 5:00 AM to 10:00 PM DAILY

**TAKE THE #12 CONANT OR #9 JEFFERSON BUSES TO BELLE ISLE!**

**MICHIGAN RECREATION PASSPORT IS ONLY REQUIRED FOR VEHICLE ACCESS.**





# Island Stakeholder Updates

## Oudolf Garden (Friends of The Oudolf Garden)

Oudolf Garden Detroit is a Four Season Garden!

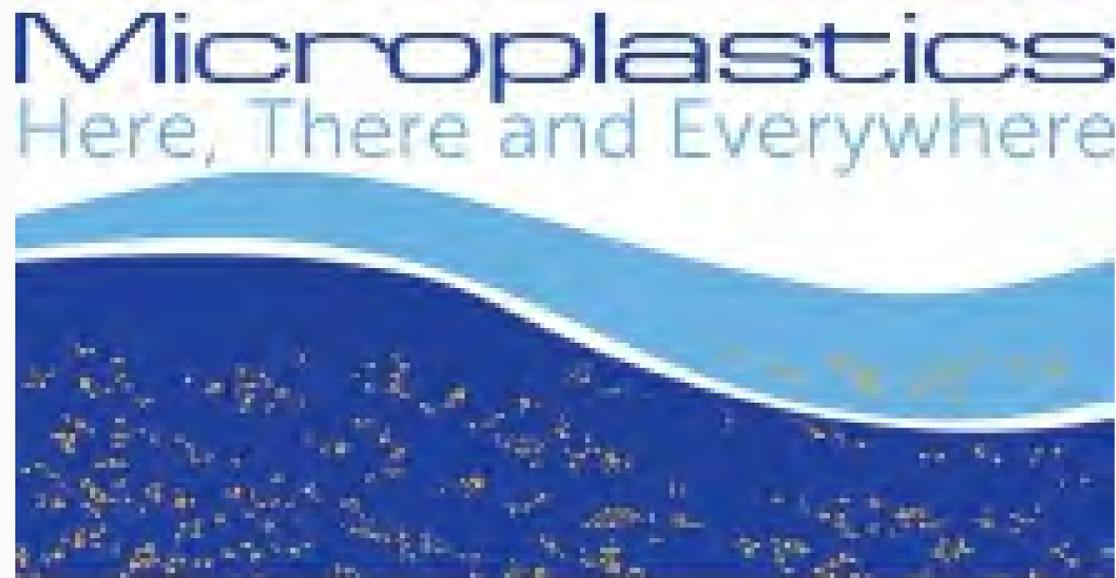
3 Acre Garden inspired by the energy of Detroit after receiving a “love letter from Detroit ” from The Garden Club of Michigan (GCM), Piet Oudolf designed this naturalistic public garden on Belle Isle filled with perennials, grasses, shrubs, and trees for their hardiness, durability, and ever-changing textures and colors for enjoyment in all four seasons. Visit any time the park is open (year-round from 5 a.m.- 10 p.m.) ( with the exception of special events ).

Guided Tours are available by appointment, Monday through Thursday, for groups of 25 or more individuals. ( Suggested \$5 donation.)

Directions: Oudolf Garden Detroit is easy to find on Google and Apple Maps. Parking is free, and picnic areas are available nearby. City bus service is also available to Belle Isle. Please check local schedules.

**BOARDWALK CONSTRUCTION TO BEGIN!**

Visit [oudolfgardendetroit.org](http://oudolfgardendetroit.org) for more info.



# Island Stakeholder Updates

## Dossin Great Lakes Museum (Detroit Historical Society)

Open Wed -Sat 10 :00 AM - 5:00 PM and Sun 1:00- 5:00 PM

Admission: Free Under 6, \$5 for adults and Children

\$20 for a single household (up to 6 parents and children)

For more information, visit [detroithistorical.org](http://detroithistorical.org).

**FREE ADMISSION DAY | OPEN from 1 - 5 p.m. with FREE ADMISSION on Monday, September 4 for Labor Day**

**CELEBRATE TEACHER APPRECIATION MONTH | Free Admission for Teachers! August 1 2023 (All day) to August 31 2023 (All day)**

Check out the Microplastics Here, There, Everywhere exhibit (through April 2024)

# DID YOU KNOW?



**There are 465 Bee Species  
in Michigan.**

**Celebrate National Bee Day on  
Belle Isle**



# Island Stakeholder Updates

## Belle Isle Nature Center (Detroit Zoo)

Open 10:00 AM - 5:00 PM Daily | Free Admission

- **CELEBRATE NATIONAL BEE DAY AT BELLE ISLE NATURE CENTER**
- **This Saturday | Aug. 19 | 11 a.m. – 4 p.m. | Bee Fest**

What can you expect at Bee Fest?

- Beekeeper talks
- Biodiversity presentations from Oakland University
- Pollinator-friendly arts and crafts
- Beeswax candle making
- Honey tastings
- Bee-friendly gardening tips
- Local vendors
- And much more!

[belleislenaturecenter.detroitzoo.org](http://belleislenaturecenter.detroitzoo.org) for more info.



# Island Stakeholder Highlight

## Belle Isle Nature Center (Detroit Zoo)

### Code: Grow with Detroit Public Library Foundation

Integrates Agriculture, Nutrition, and Physical Computing.

Students explore the fundamentals of gardening while learning about nutrition and using programming to enhance their overall gardening experience.

(Program was open to Detroit Youth ages 7-17)

[belleislenaturecenter.detroitzoo.org](http://belleislenaturecenter.detroitzoo.org) for more info.

# Island Stakeholder Updates

## Belle Isle Nature Center (Detroit Zoo)

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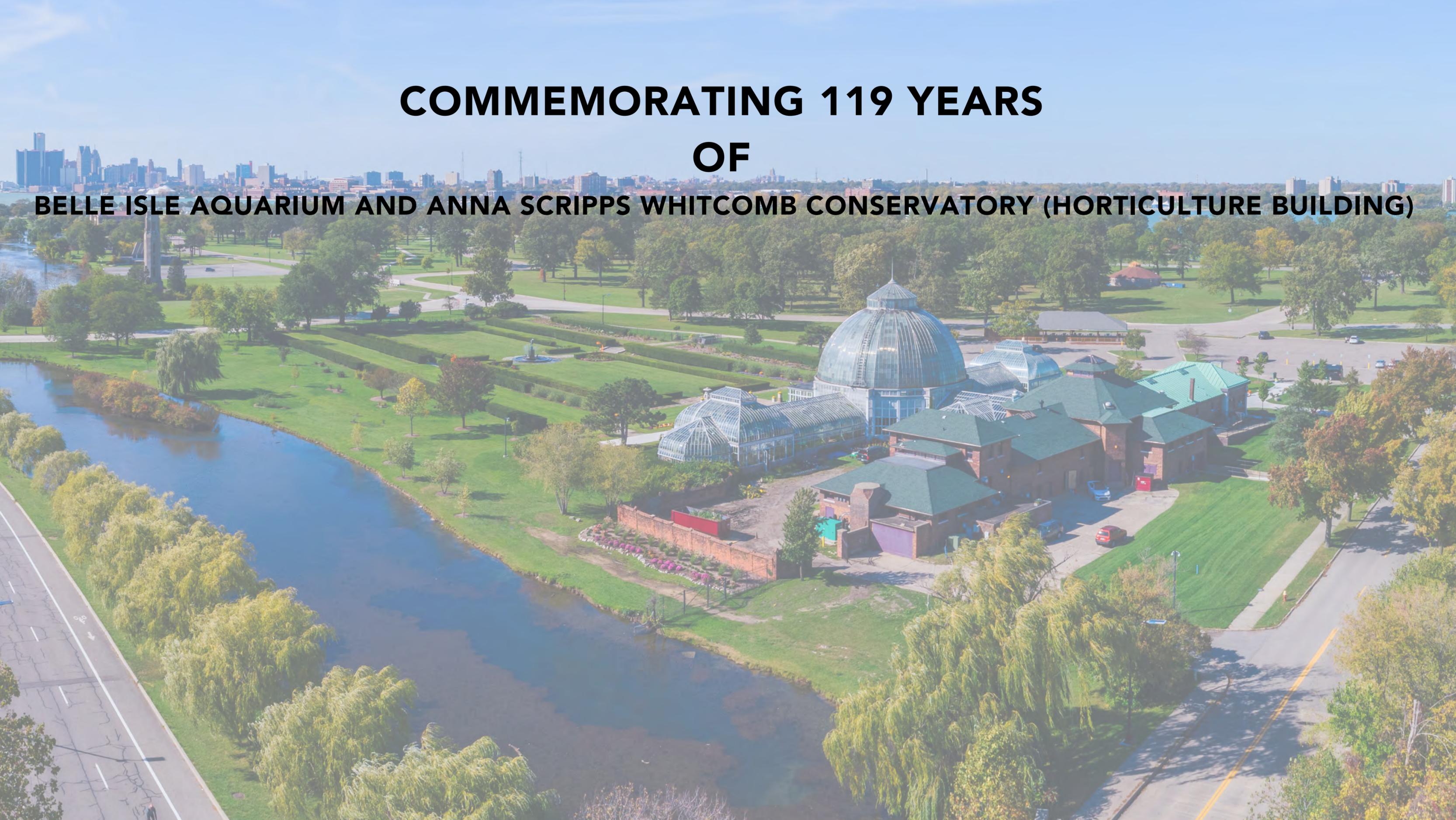
BATS ON BELLE ISLE | AUGUST 31 | 7:30-9: PM | Learn about the 9 species of bats that call Michigan home, and then take a guided hike to explore our only flighted mammals up close. (Register via Eventbrite)

Reminder to check out the many hikes and nature adventure programs occurring regularly at the Nature Center.

[belleislenaturecenter.detroitzoo.org](http://belleislenaturecenter.detroitzoo.org) for more info.

# COMMEMORATING 119 YEARS OF

**BELLE ISLE AQUARIUM AND ANNA SCRIPPS WHITCOMB CONSERVATORY (HORTICULTURE BUILDING)**





Sound Bath hosted by Amplify Outside and BLOOM Transformation Center



SUNDAY  
AUGUST 20, 2023  
9:00 AM

**BELLE ISLE CONSERVANCY // SUMMER 2023 CALENDAR**

**Apr - Sept**

**Keep Belle Isle Beautiful Public Clean Up Season**

Second Friday - Belle Isle Beach | Third Saturday - Belle Isle Aquarium

**Jun 9 - 18**

**World Ocean Day Exhibition at Belle Isle Aquarium**

Belle Isle Aquarium

**Jun 15 - Aug 31 | 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM**

**Belle Isle Aquarium Summer Thursdays -- Presented by Huntington Bank**

**Jun 15 - Aug 31 (Thursdays | 6:00 PM)**

**Yoga In The Parks w/ Detroit Parks Coalition and Yoganic Flow**

Belle Isle Aquarium

**Jun 23 - Sept 2 | Fri & Sat | 10:30 AM & 11:30 AM**

**Belle Isle Aquarium Outdoor Aquatic Science Investigation Session (OASIS)**

**Jul 21 (Wall-E) & Aug 11 (Puss in Boots: The Last Wish) | 6:30 PM**

**Movies Under The Stars w/ Communities First**

Belle Isle Athletic Fields

**Jul 22 | Noon - 4:00 PM**

**Community Fun Day w/ Detroit Parks Coalition Freedom Arts Festival**

Belle Isle Aquarium

**Jul 30 & Aug 20 | 9:00 AM**

**Sound Bath with Amplify Outside and BLOOM Transformation Center**

Belle Isle Aquarium

**Aug 18**

**BIA & ASWC 119th Anniversary of Opening Day**

**Sept 16**

**International Coastal Clean Up Day**



Scan here for the digital calendar or visit [belleisleconservancy.org/summercalendar](https://belleisleconservancy.org/summercalendar)



**FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA!**  
**@BELLEISLEAQUARIUM**





## Belle Isle Conservancy Impact Reporting



[Watch the 2023 Annual Belle Isle Update to Detroit City Council Here](#)



Ten-Year Impact Report Now Available

Belle Isle Aquarium Hours  
10:00 AM-4:00 PM Thursday -Sunday

Visit [www.belleisleconservancy.org](http://www.belleisleconservancy.org) for more information.

