

July 2024

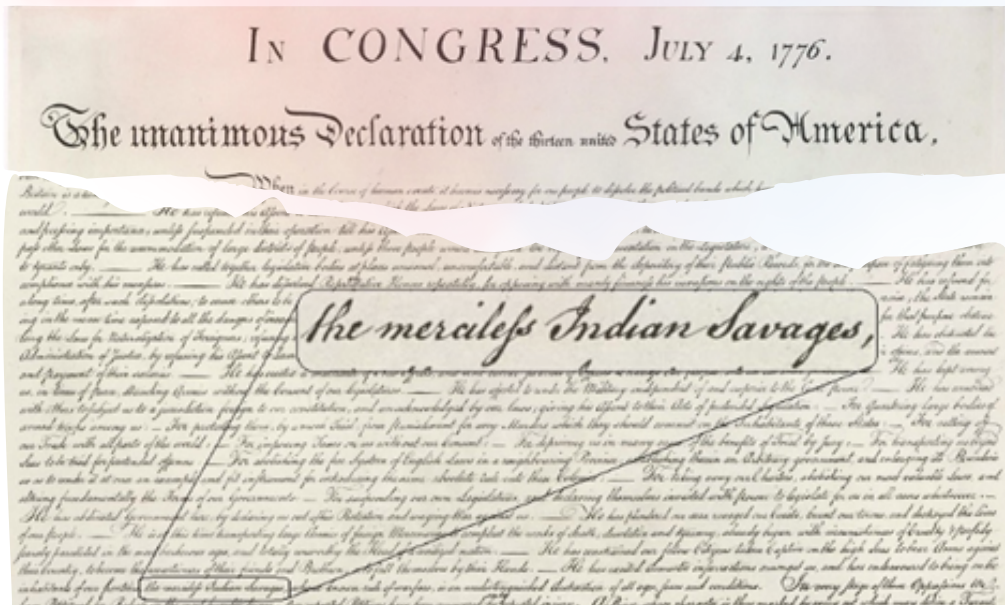
# The Tackle Box

MI AFS DEIJB Committee Newsletter



## Liberty and Justice for All: Independence Day and Indigenous Peoples

Two things can be true at the same time. While many people gather to celebrate Independence Day, not all Native Americans feel quite the same as the majority of white Americans. Some Native individuals still celebrate with hot dogs, potato salad, and all the traditions that come with the 4th of July holiday; however, for others, it's a reminder of a bleak history.



## Awareness Month and Days

- [Disability Pride Month](#)
  - [Breaking Barriers: Disability Pride Month Community Celebration July 26th at the Lansing Shuffle](#)
- [National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month](#)
- [Thurgood Marshall's Birthday - July 2nd](#)
- [International Non-Binary Peoples Day - July 14th](#)
- [International Nelson Mandela Day - July 18th](#)
- [International Self-Care Day - July 24th](#)
- [National Disability Independence Day](#) (commemorates the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act) - July 26th
- [International Day of Friendship - July 30th](#)

While we can, of course, celebrate the United States's founding as a country, it's important we reflect on the less-than-pretty parts of our history, too. We can be proud yet mourn the shortcomings of the leaders before us. Acknowledging those shortcomings begins to heal others who might not feel welcome here.

Here comes the uncomfortable part: In the Declaration of Independence, Native Americans are referred to as the "merciless Indian savages." In the 1880s, the US government developed the Religious Crimes Code, which forbade Native Americans from participating in religious ceremonies. For 50 years, Native Americans were not legally allowed to participate in any celebration related to their culture unless it was held in secret. This is somewhat ironic that the US was founded on the premise of religious freedom, though we prevented certain groups from doing their form of worship. How can you feel comfortable celebrating the country's independence when that independence wasn't really for you at the time?

We're fortunate that things have changed in recent years, and many tribes now have federal recognition and operate as sovereign nations. However, for centuries (and still in ways to this day), they were oppressed. Much of the government, though we still have work to do, has practiced elevating Indigenous voices. Yet still, it's not surprising that this holiday might be more difficult for some people.



At the same time, as mentioned in this [perspective](#), some Indigenous people still find ways to enjoy the holiday. Some see this as an opportunity to celebrate with their own local communities and in some cases within their tribe - coexisting in both worlds. As the author mentioned, he still enjoys the hot dogs and parades as much as any American does. So, while this holiday may be difficult for some Indigenous people, they may still find a way to find parts to celebrate through the difficulty. Two things can be true at the same time.

**Reference:**

[Indigenous Foundation website](#)

# Fishing for Futures

Contributed by: Michala Burke, Arika Reed, Janine Lajavic

This is the second part of this series from USFWS. Please see the May Tackle Box for more information.

This past winter, women from the Alpena FWCO Detroit River Substation and DRIWR have stayed focused on spreading the word on careers in conservation and providing unique opportunities to underrepresented groups. As part of an outreach initiative called “Fishing for Futures,” the Alpena FWCO Detroit River Substation contacted Ecorse High School to gauge interest in having USFWS staff talk about career opportunities. The small city of Ecorse holds significance for the DRIWR. The DRIWR has worked with the City, its community members, and local organizations such as Friends of the Detroit River and the Ecorse Creek Committee, to remove litter from the Ecorse Creek as part of a larger effort to identify/implement ecological improvement projects within the Ecorse Creek Watershed. This City is also a focal point for DRIWR’s Community Engagement Plan with a vision to build a community that values nature as a trusted and safe resource for healthy living, recreation, and education for all. This small, intimate career talk included a presentation to 30+ students detailing work each office conducts, career opportunities, and upcoming outreach events they could attend. While at the event, students were able to browse each office’s tables highlighting program areas along with engaging activities. Some activities included distinguishing mussel shells versus substrate, getting the opportunity to see two juvenile Lake Sturgeon, learning about Great Lakes’ invasive fish and plant species, and observing real-life wildlife pelts and vertebrae.



If you were to do an internet search for Ecorse High School, you would see the minority student enrollment is 92% and 70% are economically disadvantaged students. When reflecting on the USFWS’ mission to develop initiatives to engage/recruit underrepresented groups, we ought to start small and at the local level engaging students within our own communities. Moreso, providing local opportunities makes obtaining a career like our own more tangible. In addition, increasing exposure to natural resource careers in their own backyards may resonate more with individuals. Going forward, the ‘Fishing for Futures’ outreach initiative looks to provide job shadowing opportunities and hands-on experience within Fisheries and the National Wildlife Refuge System for those individuals interested. With this program, individuals will have access to USFWS early-career professionals to serve as mentors as these individuals begin to think about their careers and make their way into the workforce. For more information about *Fishing for Futures*, *Day in the Life of a Fisheries Biologist* and *DRFYT* programs please reach out to Arika Reed ([arika\\_reed@fws.gov](mailto:arika_reed@fws.gov)).

# Ally Corner:

## SUPPORT DOESN'T STOP BECAUSE PRIDE IS OVER

Rainbow washing, like Pinkwashing, is the idea that individuals and companies demonstrate visible superficial support for the LGBTQIA+ community during Pride, but once June is over, their support disappears. Supporting LGBTQIA + individuals is more than wearing rainbows in June - it's a continual commitment to honoring your coworkers, friends, and family member's needs, as well as remaining committed to fighting for social change. Keep learning and listen with an open mind, which can be achieved by having candid conversations with LGBTQIA+ members, reading books, and visiting websites. During conversations ask respectful/polite questions when you don't understand and reassure them of your confidentiality if required. Even though it can be difficult, reflect internally, as this allows you to confront and address your own prejudices and harmful biases. This can be a long process, as many biases are based in social convention, but each step you take brings you another step closer to being a stronger ally. Speaking out against bigotry is equally vital, no matter which month of the year it is, as stereotypes and discrimination thrive in silence. Don't just leave it to LGBTQIA + individuals to fight every battle, social change takes time, diligence, and a commitment to real support from people outside of LGBTQIA + community. Be committed to celebrating, honoring, and standing with LGBTQIA+ coworkers, friends, and family members all year long.



## Featured Artists



Artists Creating Together (ACT) is an independent nonprofit organization that provides art and creative expression programming to people of all abilities. Since 1986, ACT has facilitated the celebration of art and culture in schools, hospitals, and their own facilities. This organization strives to provide accessible tools and instruments for their artists of diverse abilities. In the last five years, ACT has engaged with 700+ individuals in West Michigan during 1,000+ hours of service. Their programs range from arts education programs in early childhood special education in preschools, to arts in healing programs at hospitals, and many other collaborative events with local businesses and programs. In 2019 ACT introduced the Creative Cube, a 40-ft accessible race trailer that was reimaged into a mobile art studio that features art workstations and a performance stage to increase their outreach potential. To quote one of the 50+ ACT teaching artists, "ACT brings in the arts. Art transcends divisions and creativity knows no boundaries".



Joe Dejong - Pool Table



Malayna Rice - Happy



Quamarion Jones - The Beautiful Apples



Dylan Kutsche - Nemo

# ***Americans with Disabilities Act: The Overlooked Civil Right Struggle***

Do you enjoy working from a standing desk? How about reading close captions while watching sports in a busy pub or using iPhone features like Siri and FaceTime? What may seem like small conveniences to you are examples of the cut-curb effect, which is when nondisabled individuals benefit from hard-won accommodations designed for people with disabilities(1). Disability is a unifier, spanning gender and race, and includes physical, intellectual, psychiatric, and psychosocial incapacities (2). Historically, disabilities were viewed as something to be cured, or hidden, leading to civil rights violations, such as employer discrimination and even



*Insisting they would not leave until seeing Administrator Harry L. Hopkins, 33 members of the League of the Physically Handicapped camped out last night in the W. P. A. offices. Coming here from New York by truck, they demanded jobs. Here they are pictured at their midnight lunch.*

forced institutionalization and sterilization (3). This view means that instead of understanding disability as a societal issue, it is commonly treated as an individual medical problem with no impact on social or political life (4). Contrary to this idea, disabilities are a source of shared identity and Disability Rights is a part of civil rights history - just as important as equality of race, ethnicity, sexuality, and gender. Improvements in disability rights have been gained through demonstrations led by disabled activists, including one of the earliest (League of the Physical Handicap sit-in, 1935) and longest (504 sit-in, 1977) nonviolent occupation protests (3). Although disabled American's pioneered some of the tactics employed during the Civil Rights Movement, history does not teach about Judith Heumann who stopped a New York City bus with her wheelchair because they refused her admittance or 8-year-old Jennifer Keelan-Chaffins who with many others climbed out of their wheelchairs and crawled up the US Capital steps to fight for the Americans with Disabilities Act (3,5). Through the efforts of these and other activists, the landmark civil right legislation Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was ratified in 1990, protecting disabled individuals from discrimination and granting them the same opportunities to participate in mainstream American life (1).



From left: Hale Zukas, Ron Washington, and Judy Heumann were leaders of the 28-day 405 sit-in that took place at the San Francisco Health, Education and Welfare building. Lynette Taylor provided American Sign Language interpretation.

While the ADA has led to improvements in the lives of over 42 million disabled Americans by protecting their civil rights and improving access to necessary accommodations, there is still progress to be made.

For example, Americans with disabilities are three times more likely to not go online, in our technology centered world this limits their access to information, communication and access to accommodations<sup>1</sup>.

Additionally, the outdated infrastructure in many communities

limits access to public transportation and buildings/spaces for individuals with certain physical limitations. Whether it be a new technology or a building, accessibility should not be an afterthought; rather, principles of universal and inclusive design should be used to guide the development from the start. Creating an equitable and inclusive society not only means ensuring that all races, genders, and sexes are represented but also ensuring that no matter a person's physical, intellectual, psychiatric, and/or psychosocial ability, there is space for them to live a fully engaged life.



Jennifer Keelan-Chaffins (white and red bandana) and others crawl up the US Capital steps in protest of discrimination faced by Americans with disabilities. The actions of the protesters in March of 1990 led to the passing of the American with Disabilities Act.

#### References

1. Sheridan, E. [The curb cut effect: How universal design makes things better for everyone](#). Medium (2021).
2. Disabilities recognized under the ADA. [Illinois Legal Aid Online](#) (2024).
3. NowThis Impact. [Commemorating 30 Years of the Americans with Disabilities Act](#). (2020).
4. Landmark, S. & Futral, F. [League of the Physically Handicapped](#). National Park Service: Home Of Franklin D Roosevelt National Historic Site (2024).
5. Heumann, J. [Our fight for disability rights -- and why we're not done yet](#). TED (2018).

Please share these resources about access to fishing in Michigan and the Midwest:

- [Michigan Department of Natural Resources - Accessible Fishing](#)
- [Pictured Rocks - Accessible Fishing Dock](#)
- [Michigan's Top Accessible Fishing Holes](#)
- [Experiencing the Great Outdoors in Michigan: An Accessible Resource Guide](#)
- [Free Fishing Licenses for Disabled Anglers by State](#)
- [No Limits Fishing Adventures, Inc.](#) - Provides special needs fishing adventures on the St. Clair River, Detroit River, and Lake St. Clair
- [Fishing Has No Boundaries](#) - Provides recreational fishing opportunities for all anglers with disabilities regardless of their age, race, gender, or disability
- [Michigan Operation Freedom Outdoors](#) - Provides outdoor recreation opportunities to wounded veterans and individuals with health challenges, coordinates a support network to facilitate recovery through connection with nature
- [Accessible Fishing Piers and Platforms Guidelines](#)

MIAFS Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Justice and Belonging Committee remains committed “to cultivating a chapter culture that ensures all members feel welcome and respected; recruits and retains members with underrepresented identities and backgrounds; and works with the Executive Committee to create and advocate for policies and procedures that promote diversity, equity, and inclusion at the chapter, regional, and international levels”.

As always, please contact us if you would like to become involved with the DEIJB committee or if you come across items that you would like to have shared. You can reach us at [miafsdeij@gmail.com](mailto:miafsdeij@gmail.com) (or you may contact us [anonymously](#)).

Warm Wishes -

Kyle Brumm (he/him), Dana Castle (she/her), Lydia Doerr (she/her), Tracy Galarowicz (she/her), Kynzie House (she/her), Maggie Haite (they/them), Taylor Skiles (she/her), Kathleen Quebedeaux (she/her)