

## **For Immediate Release**

### ***Community Invited to Apple Island Celebration!***

**West Bloomfield, MI – April 8, 2019** – The West Bloomfield School District (WBSD) and the Greater West Bloomfield Historical Society (GWBHS) are partnering to celebrate the history of Apple Island and its listing in the National Register of Historic Places at a special celebration on June 7. The festivities will begin at 10 a.m. at Orchard Lake Community Church, Presbyterian, 5171 Commerce Road. The entire community is invited to take part in this celebration. An RSVP to [rsvp@wbhs.org](mailto:rsvp@wbhs.org) or (248)518-0871 is appreciated but not required.

The celebration will include a performance of *Apple Island Legend*, a musical tribute to the island composed by James Currow in 1997 on behalf of the Orchard Lake Middle School. The tribute will be performed by Genot “Winter Elk” Picor on wooden flute to honor the Native American history of the island. A special presentation will also entertain guests with information about the island’s history. The formal program will conclude by 11 a.m. All guests are invited to the reception following immediately the program.

In late 2018, the National Parks Services, a branch of the United States Department of the Interior, approved Apple Island as a historic site with archaeological significance with its listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The National Register is the nation’s official list of cultural resources worthy of preservation. A boulder monument with a commemorative plaque will be installed on Apple Island.

The 35-acre island was donated to West Bloomfield School District in 1970 by Brigadier General Frederick Strong and the late Marjorie Ward Strong to be used as a nature study area. Since the early 1980s, Greater West Bloomfield Historical Society docents have lead annual island tours for the WBSD second-grade students and the general public. The public Apple Island Tours for 2019 on June 8-9. For details see [www.gwbhs.org/apple-island-tours/](http://www.gwbhs.org/apple-island-tours/) .

Gina Gregory, GWBHS president, said, “Apple Island has so many interesting facets - geology, flora and fauna, along with its use by Native Americans, vacationers, and now as a West Bloomfield School District educational nature center. Greater West Bloomfield Historical Society is excited the island is now recognized nationally as having historical archaeological significance.”

Dr. Gerald Hill, WBSD superintendent, said, “Apple Island is a unique feature of our school district. We are proud that it is now nationally recognized and thank the

historical society for ensuring its inclusion in the National Register. We look forward to continuing our partnership with the Society to be good stewards of this special educational place.”

### **Additional Information about the Island**

The listing in the National Register of Historic Places does not place any legal restrictions on Apple Island, but it does allow for consideration in the planning for federal or federally-assisted projects, provides eligibility for federal tax benefits, qualifies properties for federal assistance for historic preservation, when funds are available, serves as a catalyst for economic development, and promotes heritage tourism.

Archaeological digs conducted on the island have uncovered many artifacts to support the application. In 1997, 2000, 2003, 2008, 2013, 2014, and 2017 archeological digs were conducted through American University Washington DC, Cranbrook Institute of Science, Madonna University, University of Detroit, and Western Michigan University. Dr. LouAnn Wurst, Professor of Industrial Heritage and Archaeology, Department of Social Sciences, Michigan Technological University authored the application on behalf of Greater West Bloomfield Historical Society.

For more information, contact Dan Durkin at [daniel.durkin@wbsd.org](mailto:daniel.durkin@wbsd.org) or visit [www.gwbhs.org](http://www.gwbhs.org).

# # #