

NATURAL AREAS GUIDE



Leelanau
CONSERVANCY

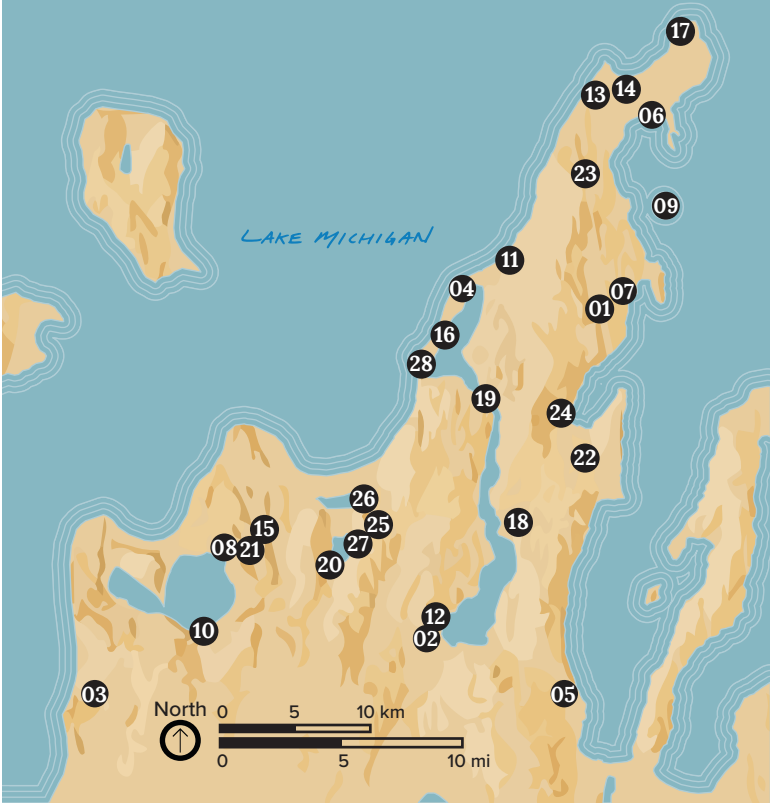
Natural Areas Access Guide

Natural Area Name	Birding	Fishing	Trails	Hunting	Mtn. Bike	Univ. Access	Water Access	Water Views	Restrooms
01. Belanger Creek Preserve	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
02. Cedar River Preserve	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
03. Chippewa Run Natural Area	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
04. Clay Cliffs Natural Area	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
05. DeYoung Natural Area	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
06. Finton Natural Area	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
07. Frazier-Freeland Preserve	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
08. Glen Lake Ridgeline Preserve	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
09. Gull Island Preserve	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
10. Hatlem Creek Preserve	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
11. Houdek Dunes Natural Area	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
12. Ingraham Preserve	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
13. Jeff Lamont Preserve	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
14. Kehl Lake Natural Area	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
15. Krumwiede Forest Reserve	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
16. Leland Village Green	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
17. Lighthouse West Natural Area	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
18. Mebert Creek & Greeno Preserves	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
19. Narrows Natural Area	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
20. Palmer Woods Forest Reserve	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
21. Pat's Preserve at Lime Lake	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
22. Phyl's Forest Preserve	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
23. Soper Natural Area	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
24. Stites Natural Area	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
25. Sugar Loaf Scenic Area	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
26. Swanson Preserve	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
27. Teichner Preserve	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
28. Whaleback Natural Area	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●



The Leelanau Peninsula

Welcome to Leelanau—a slice of northern Michigan paradise with more than 100 miles of Lake Michigan shoreline, more than 30 inland lakes, and five offshore islands.





Cedar River Preserve



Leelanau
CONSERVANCY

Who we are.

We are the Leelanau Conservancy, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization founded in 1988. Our mission is to conserve the land, water, and scenic character of Leelanau County.

Since 1988, we have preserved over 4,000 acres and created 31 Natural Areas and Preserves for wildlife protection and responsible, human-powered recreation with more than 60 miles of hiking, mountain biking, snowshoeing, and cross-country ski trails.

We have also worked to preserve over 230 cherished private properties with more than 14,000 acres including sensitive wetlands, working farms, and scenic vistas through our Conservation Easement program.



We acknowledge.

We acknowledge the waters and lands the Leelanau Conservancy cares for and owns are located on the ancestral, traditional, and contemporary lands of the Anishinaabeg—the Three Fires Confederacy of the Ojibwe, Ottawa, and Potawatomi peoples. Since time immemorial, the Anishinaabeg have lived, worked, honored, and respected these lands. We further acknowledge that the land known today as Leelanau County is comprised of lands acquired under the 1836 and 1855 treaties between the United States and the Ottawa and Chippewa Nation of Indians.

Our recognition of the full history of the land we cherish and work to protect is an expression of gratitude and appreciation to those on whose ancestral lands we reside. We give thanks to the generous care with which the Anishinaabeg, and those of the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians, have given and continue to give to this land and our Leelanau community.

Miigwech (Thank you).



DeYoung Natural Area

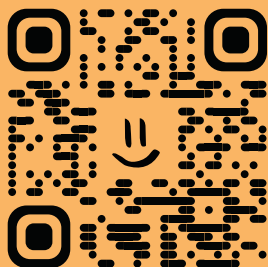


For everyone, forever.

At the Leelanau Conservancy, we believe the outdoors is for everyone. We recognize and celebrate that the well-being of nature and people cannot be separated. Our mission to conserve the lands and waters of Leelanau County can only be realized through a steadfast commitment to being just and accessible in conservation, stewardship, and in our relationships and business practices. The Conservancy commits to including, supporting, valuing, and welcoming everyone with whom we work and serve. By involving everyone in conservation, we can help shape a fuller, more vibrant future for Leelanau.

LC

For a digital version of this guide, scan the QR code below.



Know Before You Go

Be a good steward by following Leave No Trace principles. Stay on marked trails, keep dogs leashed, and pick up after them. Respect private property and observe wildlife from a distance.

Fires, camping, and other ecologically damaging activities are prohibited. Limited hunting occurs on select properties; hunters must obtain a permit at leelanauconservancy.org/hunting-information. Use caution during hunting season.

Please park only in designated areas so snow removal can occur safely. Michigan law also prohibits parking on roadways, and public travel on seasonal roads between November and April. Winter access, parking, and trail conditions vary.

LEGEND

-  Natural Area Boundary
-  Public Land
-  Hiking / XC Ski Trail
-  Biking Trail
-  Universal Access Trail
-  Local Roads
-  State Highway
-  Stream / River
-  Numbered Intersections
-  Fragile Dune
-  Wetland
-  Parking / Trailhead
-  Fishing Pier
-  Observation Area
-  Water Access

Natural Areas

We hope you enjoy this brief introduction to some of our favorite lands and waters around the Leelanau Peninsula.

Each Natural Area on the following pages is numbered to align with its location on the Leelanau Peninsula map on page 2.

Some Preserves do not have a trail system and are managed to protect fragile plants, animals, or landscapes. These are best experienced on guided hikes with our volunteer docents.

We define water access as suitable for swimming or paddling. All hiking trails are open to xc-skiing or snowshoeing in the winter, as conditions allow.

01

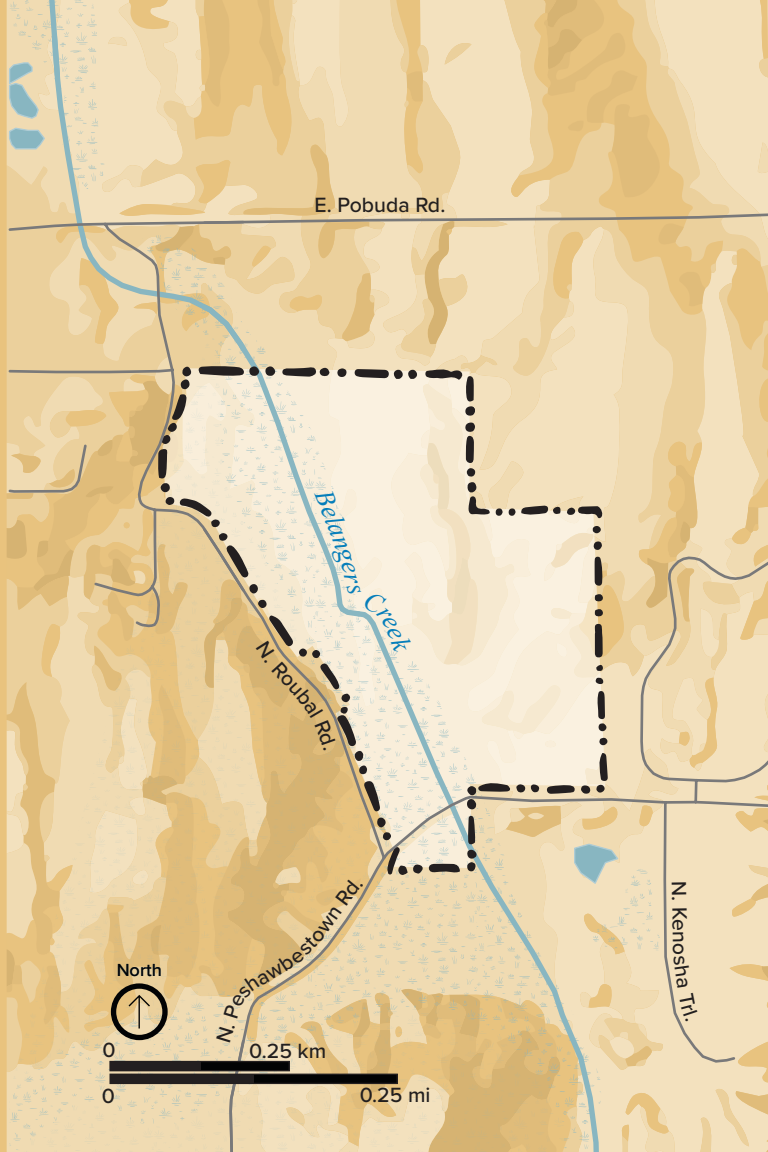
45.0349, -85.6241

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|----------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| ● Birding | ○ Fishing | ○ Trails |
| ● Hunting | ○ Mountain Bike | ○ Universal Access |
| ○ Water Access | ○ Water Views | ○ Restrooms |

Belanger Creek Preserve

FEATURES: Trails: no trail system; challenging and ecologically sensitive terrain that is best seen on a guided hike. Birds: indigo bunting, barred owl, eagles. Plants: 170 species, including 30 wildflowers like gold thread, yellow lady's slipper, marsh marigold. Trees: hemlock, cedar, white pine, yellow birch, aspen, ironwood.

DESCRIPTION: Protected in 1992, this 68-acre Preserve in Suttons Bay consists of rich conifer swamp with giant cedars, an old farming field, Monarch butterfly habitat, a beech-sugar maple-hemlock forest, six seeps and eleven springs that feed into trout-filled Belangers Creek.



02

8813 S. Lake Shore Drive, Cedar

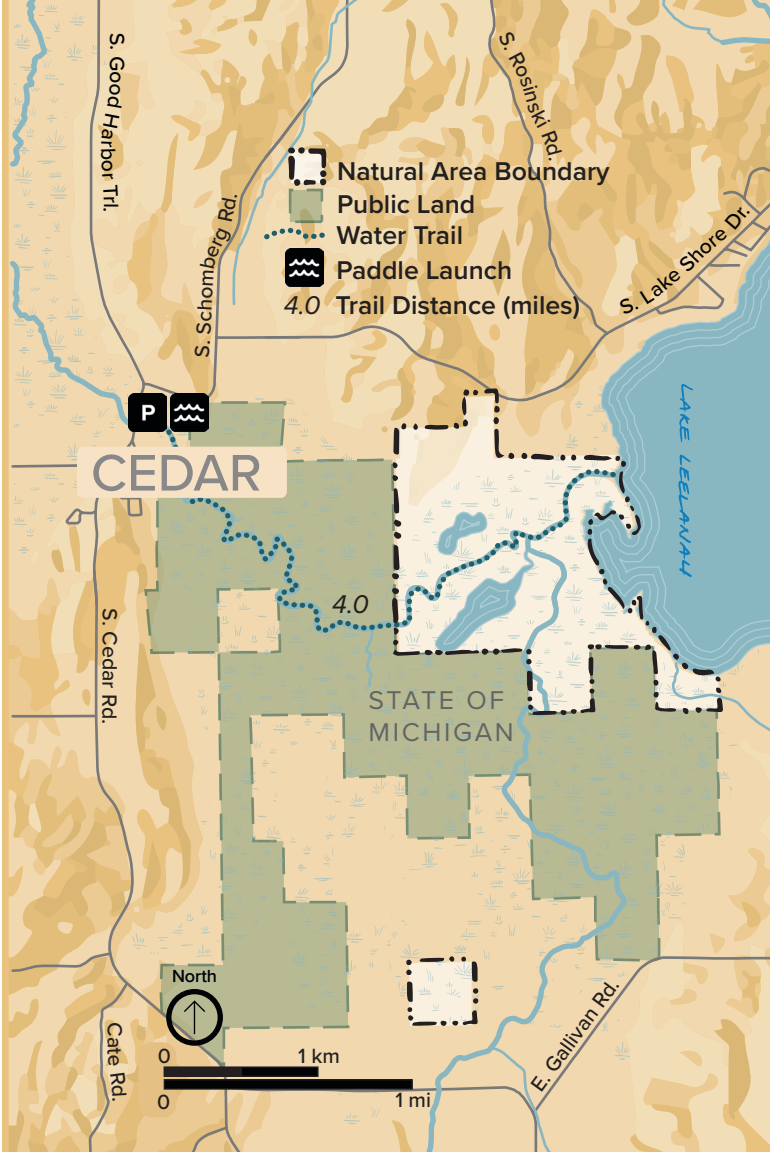
44.8502, -85.7926

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| ● Birding | ● Fishing | ○ Trails |
| ● Hunting | ○ Mountain Bike | ○ Universal Access |
| ● Water Access | ● Water Views | ○ Restrooms |

Cedar River Preserve

FEATURES: Trails: best viewed by water. For foot trails, visit Ingraham Preserve at Cedar River (Natural Area 12). Birds: swamp sparrow, sandhill crane, loon, osprey, kingfisher, trumpeter swan. Plants: blue flag iris, pitcher plant, sundew, bog lady's tresses. Trees: white cedar, yellow birch, balsam fir, black ash, tamarack.

DESCRIPTION: Protected in 1990, this 587-acre undisturbed wetland complex in the Solon Swamp is a wildlife haven; Victoria Creek is a peaceful place to paddle. The entire waterway, from the mouth of Lake Leelanau to the Village of Cedar, is open to the public.



03

11300 S. Leelanau Highway, Empire

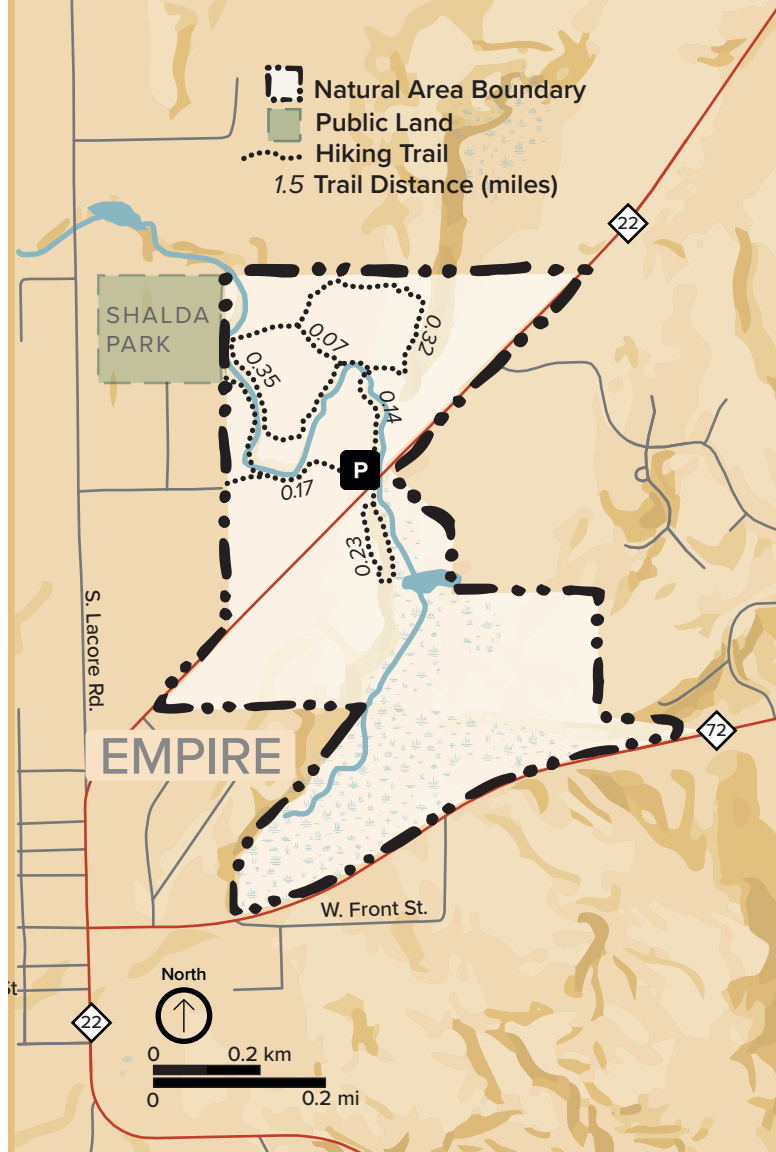
44.8186, -86.0519

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| ● Birding | ○ Fishing | ● Trails |
| ○ Hunting | ○ Mountain Bike | ○ Universal Access |
| ○ Water Access | ● Water Views | ○ Restrooms |

Chippewa Run Natural Area

FEATURES: Trails: a 1.5-mile trail system on rolling terrain. Birds: meadowlark, red-winged blackbird, green heron. Plants: blue flag iris, cardinal flower, water lilies. Trees: dogwood, black cherry, ash, maple, poplar (and a historic apple orchard). Wildlife: Beaver pond and trout stream with reptiles and amphibians.

DESCRIPTION: Preserved in 2000, this 134-acre Natural Area has a history of Anishinaabek settlements along the creek, and is a birding paradise where dozens of species visit or live, including green herons that nest in the pine tree grove planted in 1953.

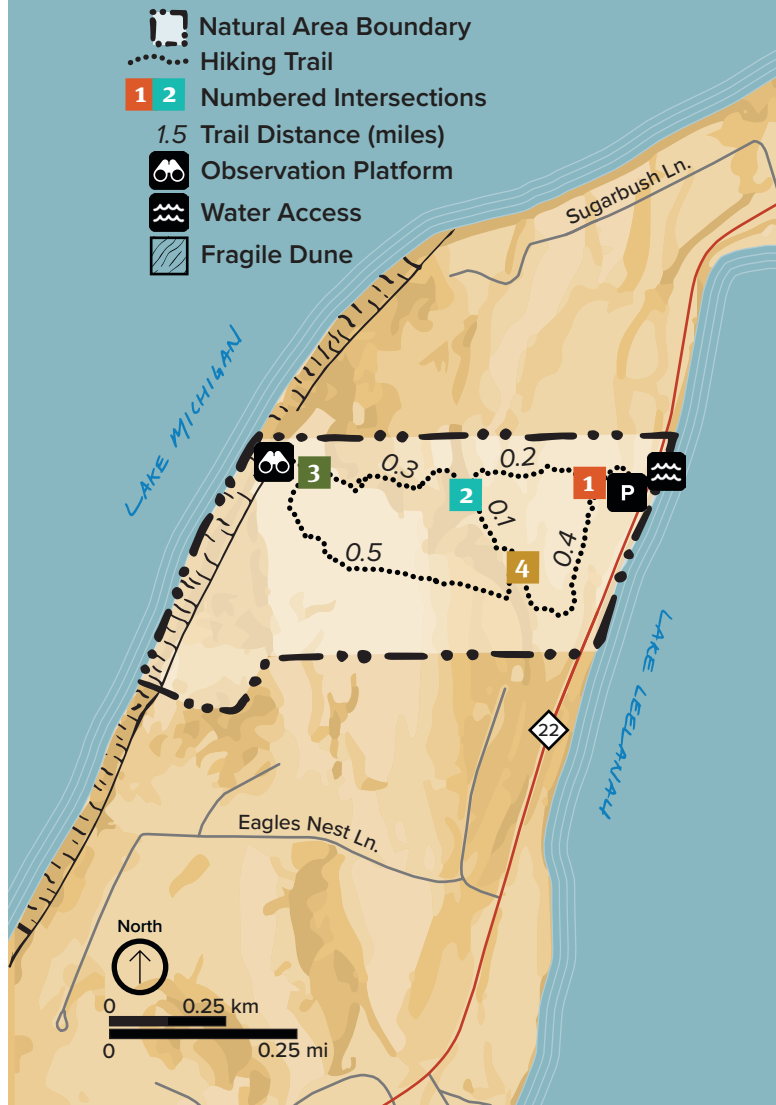


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| ● Birding | ● Fishing | ● Trails |
| ● Hunting | ○ Mountain Bike | ○ Universal Access |
| ● Water Access | ● Water Views | ○ Restrooms |

Clay Cliffs Natural Area

FEATURES: Trails: a 1.5-mile trail system comprised of a 0.75-mile loop on flat terrain, and a 0.8-mile “field and forest” loop on hillier terrain. Birds: raptors, nesting eagles, shoreline birds. Plants: prolific spring wildflowers like trillium, Dutchman’s breeches, spring beauty, Jack-in-the-pulpit, yellow trout lily.

DESCRIPTION: This 104.5-acre Preserve—created in 2013 in partnership with Leland Township—protects 1,700 feet of shoreline along Lake Michigan and Lake Leelanau. Enjoy panoramic views from a bluff-top viewing platform that rises 200 feet above Lake Michigan. Note: The only water access is on the Lake Leelanau side of the property.



05

East Cherry Bend Road, Traverse City

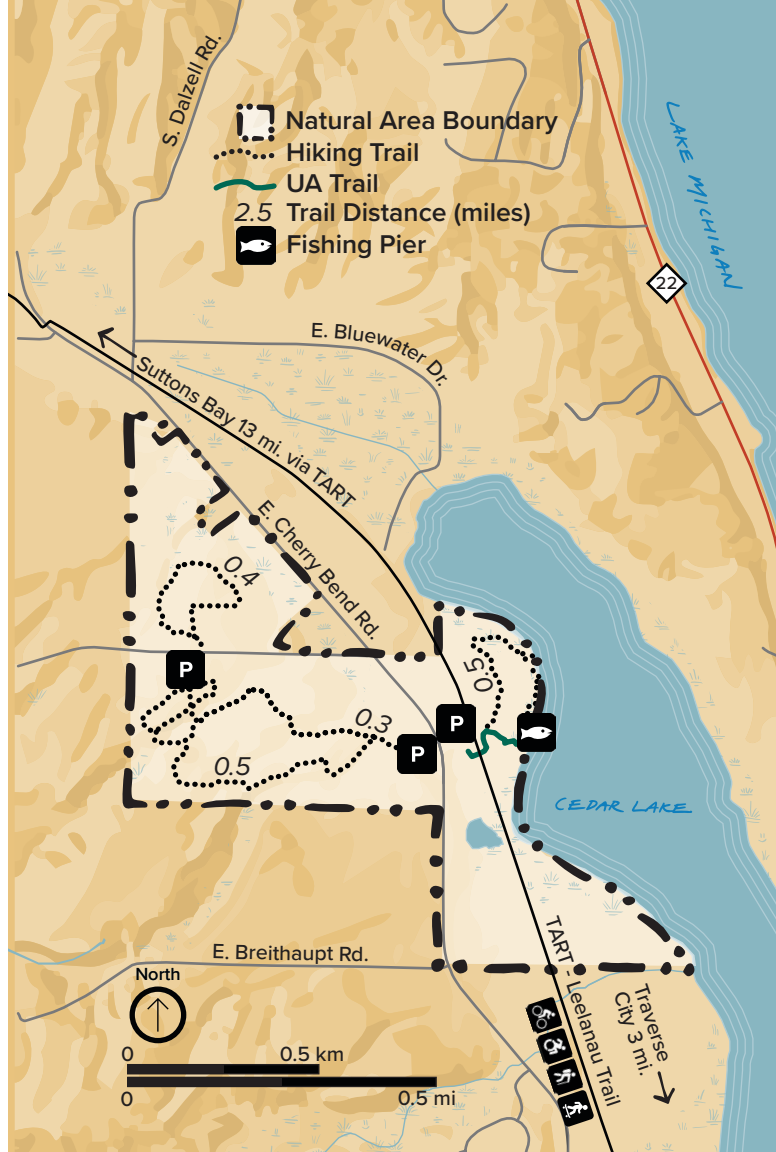
44.8096, -85.6534

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| ● Birding | ● Fishing | ● Trails |
| ● Hunting | ○ Mountain Bike | ● Universal Access |
| ● Water Access | ● Water Views | ● Restrooms |

DeYoung Natural Area

FEATURES: Trails: three distinct trailheads: Cedar Lake, Farmstead and Upland, and Strang Road. There is a portable toilet at the Cedar Lake Trailhead. A 2.5-mile trail system around a historic farmstead, with a 0.2-mile universal access trail to a Cedar Lake fishing pier/viewing platform. Birds: woodpecker, warbler, oriole, meadow lark, green heron.

DESCRIPTION: Preserved in 2006 in partnership with Elmwood Township, this 191-acre property combines a historic 1855 farmstead with a mile of shoreline on Cedar Lake. This natural area, which also consists of cedar swamp and a forested stream valley, is bisected by the Leelanau TART trail.



06

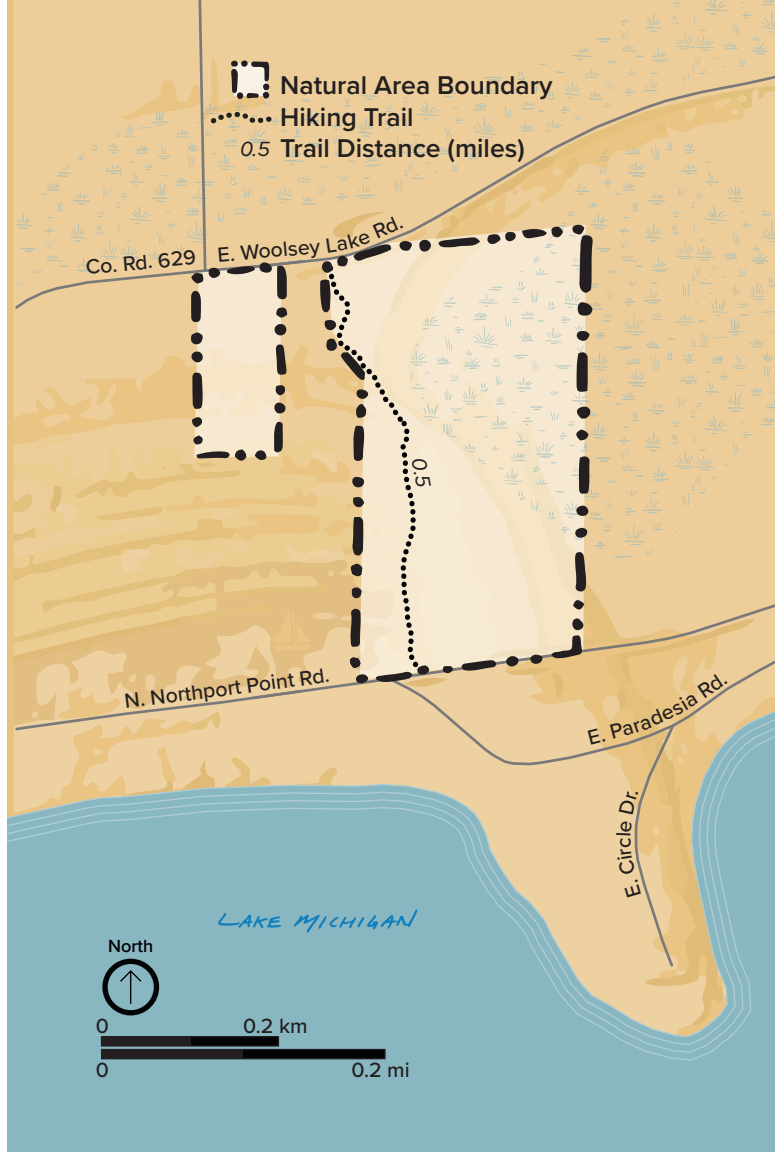
13220 E. Woolsey Lake Road, Northport
45.1574, -85.5807

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| ● Birding | ○ Fishing | ● Trails |
| ● Hunting | ○ Mountain Bike | ○ Universal Access |
| ○ Water Access | ○ Water Views | ○ Restrooms |

Finton Natural Area

FEATURES: Trails: a 0.5-mile trail on flat terrain, great for those with limited mobility. Birds: An array of migratory songbirds. Plants: Trillium and other spring ephemerals. Trees: Cedar, white birch, maple and beech forest; beautiful fall color.

DESCRIPTION: Preserved in 2000 thanks to a donation from Max and Mary Finton, this 35-acre property is part of a critical wildlife corridor that spans the tip of the peninsula. See boulders deposited by retreating glaciers, and raised ridges along the ground that indicate historic Lake Michigan water levels.



07

45.0465, -85.6020

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| ● Birding | ○ Fishing | ○ Trails |
| ● Hunting | ○ Mountain Bike | ○ Universal Access |
| ○ Water Access | ○ Water Views | ○ Restrooms |

Frazier-Freeland Preserve

FEATURES: Trails: no trail system; dense thicket that's largely inaccessible; ecologically sensitive terrain best seen on a guided hike. Wildlife: numerous bird species, white-tailed deer and other fauna call this area home.

DESCRIPTION: Originally protected in 2001 with an 80-acre addition in 2023, this 93-acre Preserve protects the wetlands and water of Weaver Creek, which flows into Grand Traverse Bay near Omena. This property is near several private lands protected by conservation easements, adding to a wildlife corridor.



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| ● Birding | ○ Fishing | ○ Trails |
| ○ Hunting | ○ Mountain Bike | ○ Universal Access |
| ○ Water Access | ● Water Views | ○ Restrooms |

Glen Lake Ridgeline Preserve

FEATURES: An unmanaged social trail that originates from Miller Hill Road within Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore meanders through the forest to the edge of the ridge where there are seasonal views of the lakes below.

DESCRIPTION: The land is adjacent to Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore and is situated along a steep, forested bluff that provides an amazing scenic panorama with views over Glen Lakes, Fisher Lake, and Sleeping Bear Bay.



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| ● Birding | ○ Fishing | ○ Trails |
| ● Hunting | ○ Mountain Bike | ○ Universal Access |
| ● Water Access | ● Water Views | ○ Restrooms |

Gull Island Preserve

FEATURES: Trails: no trail system—this sanctuary is home to a fragile ecosystem and is best left undisturbed. Limited access is allowed, and visiting is highly discouraged during shorebird nesting season (March-July). Birds: herring gull, ring-billed gull, blue-winged teal, cormorant, Caspian tern, red-breasted merganser.

DESCRIPTION: Preserved in 1995, this 7-acre island off the coast of Northport is a sanctuary for thousands of herring gulls, whose populations have declined in the last 25 years. Gulls nest on the island from April to June, mate for life, and will abandon their nests at the slightest disturbance.



10

5175 MacFarlane Road, Glen Arbor

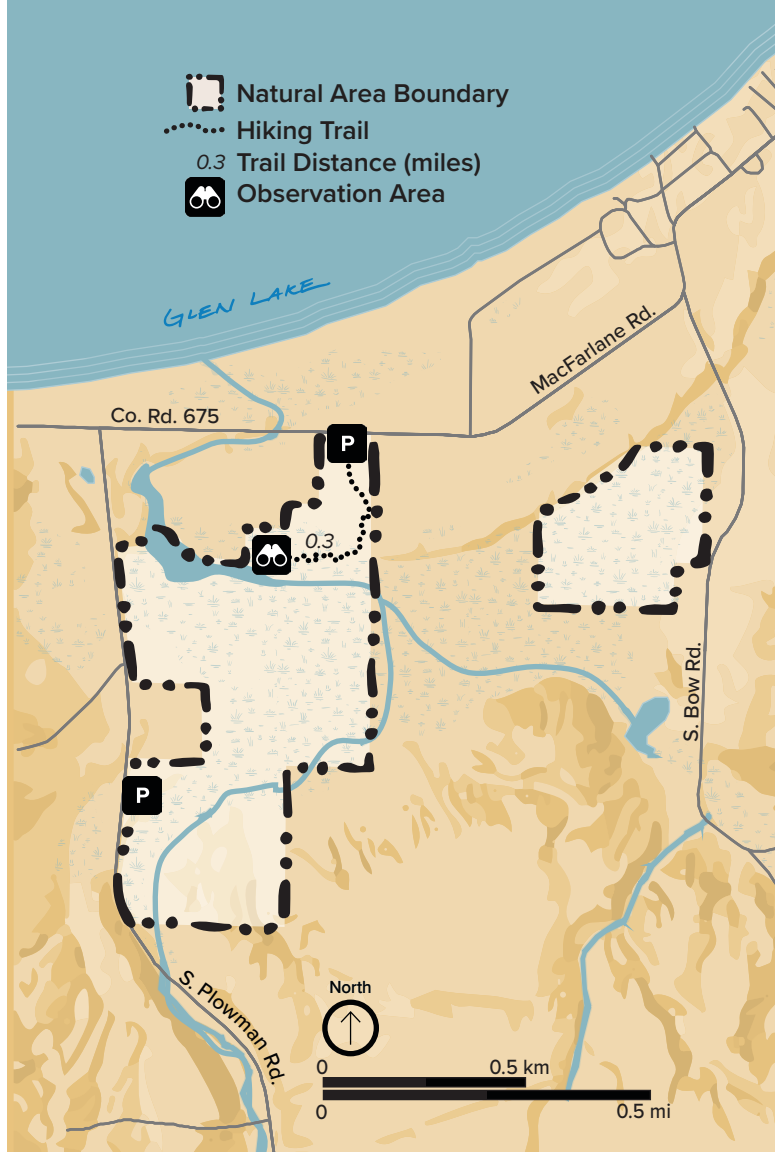
44.8434, -85.9577

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| ● Birding | ○ Fishing | ● Trails |
| ● Hunting | ○ Mountain Bike | ○ Universal Access |
| ○ Water Access | ● Water Views | ○ Restrooms |

Hatlem Creek Preserve

FEATURES: Two access points: one off of Plowman Road with no formal trail system, and a 0.3-mile trail off of MacFarlane Road. Birds: red-shouldered hawk, wood thrush. Plants: Michigan monkey flower, Canada anemone, Jack-in-the-pulpit, star flower, cardinal flower, variety of ferns. Trees: Maple, yellow birch, white and black ash, ironwood, balsam poplar.

DESCRIPTION: Protected in 2011, this 154-acre ecological gem is home to Hatlem Creek, the prime tributary flowing into Glen Lake, as well as a rare bubbling marl spring. The protected creek frontage and surrounding wetlands are essential to the health of the Glen Lake watershed.

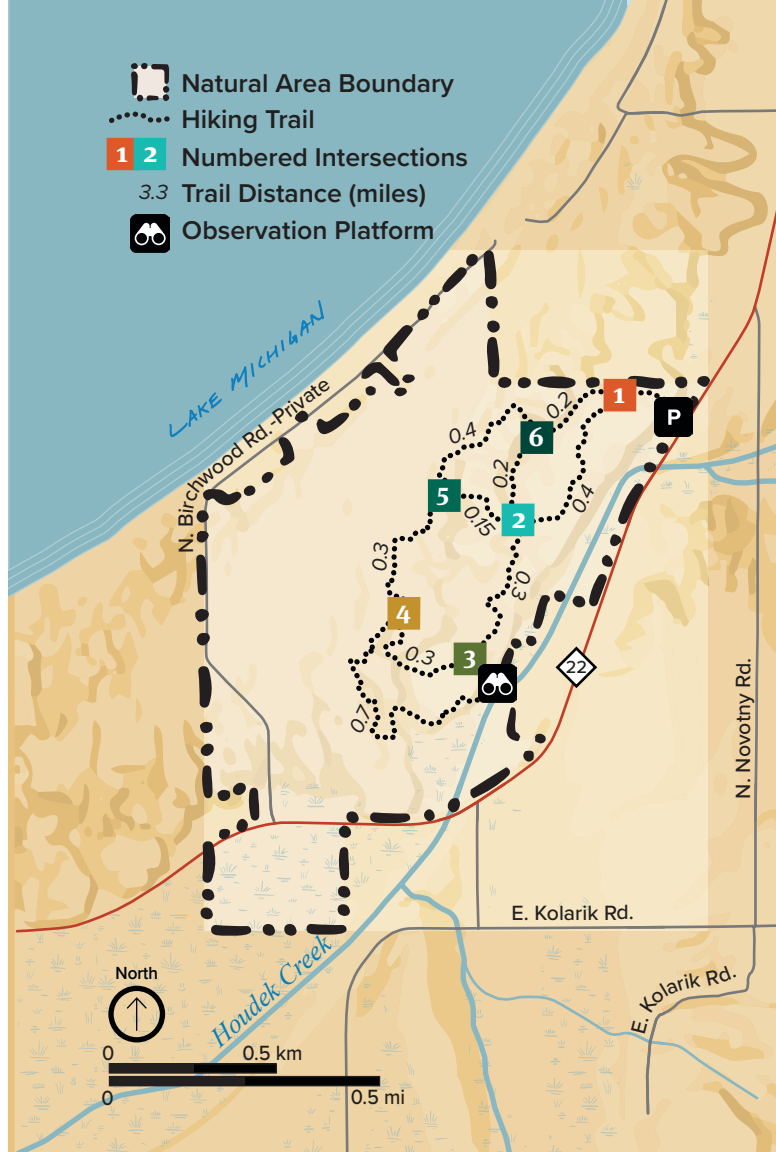


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| ● Birding | ○ Fishing | ● Trails |
| ● Hunting | ○ Mountain Bike | ○ Universal Access |
| ○ Water Access | ● Water Views | ○ Restrooms |

Houdek Dunes Natural Area

FEATURES: Trails: a 3.3-mile trail system ranging from flat terrain to more challenging hiking; an initial stair climb, slopes and sandy trails. Birds: blackburnian warbler, scarlet tanager, Baltimore oriole, brown thrasher. Plants: spring wildflowers like pink lady's slipper. Trees: mature white birch, aspen, striped maple, tamarack; stunning fall display.

DESCRIPTION: Preserved in 1998, this 370-acre natural area is a living example of dune succession. Here you'll find forested stabilized dunes, shifting dunes, and blowout dunes—green islands in a sea of sand. This property also protects much of Houdek Creek, the largest tributary flowing into Lake Leelanau.



12

8813 S. Lake Shore Drive, Cedar

44.8512, -85.7642

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| ● Birding | ○ Fishing | ● Trails |
| ● Hunting | ○ Mountain Bike | ○ Universal Access |
| ○ Water Access | ● Water Views | ○ Restrooms |

Ingraham Preserve

FEATURES: Trails: the 1.3-mile Ridgeline Trail offers a steady, challenging climb up a large moraine that rises 150 feet, providing panoramic views of the Solon Swamp, the Cedar River, and South Lake Leelanau. Birds: sandhill crane. Plants: moonwort, white snakeroot, beech-drop, Cleland's evening-primrose. Trees: sugar maple, black cherry, white pine, ironwood.

DESCRIPTION: The Bart and Gail Ingraham Preserve, an 80-acre expansion of the Cedar River Preserve, gives you dry-land access and a new perspective of the wetland and river system. While hiking the Ridgeline Trail, keep an eye out for a vernal pool within a large kettle hole.



13

11155 E. Christmas Cove Road, Northport

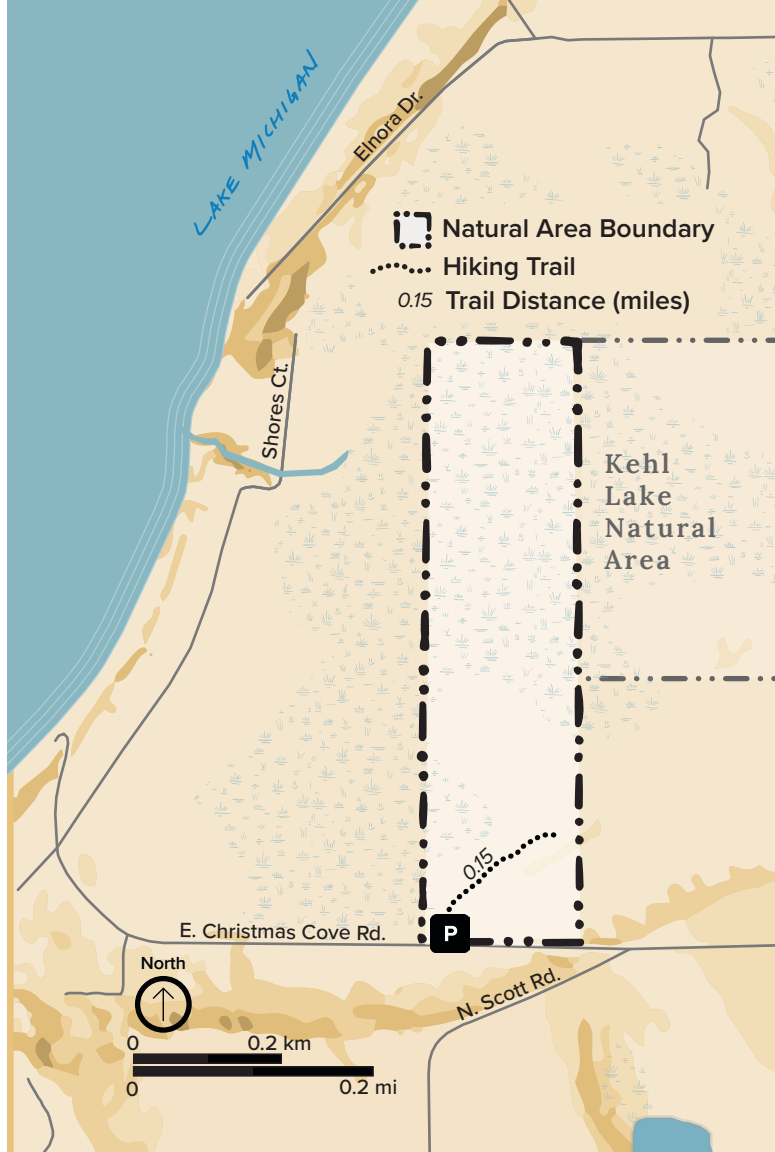
45.1667, -85.6254

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| ○ Hunting | ○ Mountain Bike | ○ Universal Access |
| ○ Water Access | ○ Water Views | ○ Restrooms |

Jeff Lamont Preserve

FEATURES: Trails: a short 0.15-mile trail on flat terrain; great for those with limited mobility. Trees: tunnel of maple, hemlock and beech. Birds: scarlet tanager, black-throated blue warbler. Plants: ferns, pink lady's slipper, and other wildflowers.

DESCRIPTION: Preserved in 2008 in memory of Jeff Lamont, this 40-acre forested wetland at the tip of the peninsula features a magical path through a tunnel of trees, as well as a dense wetland thicket with ferns and 6-foot-tall cattails that provide important wildlife habitat.

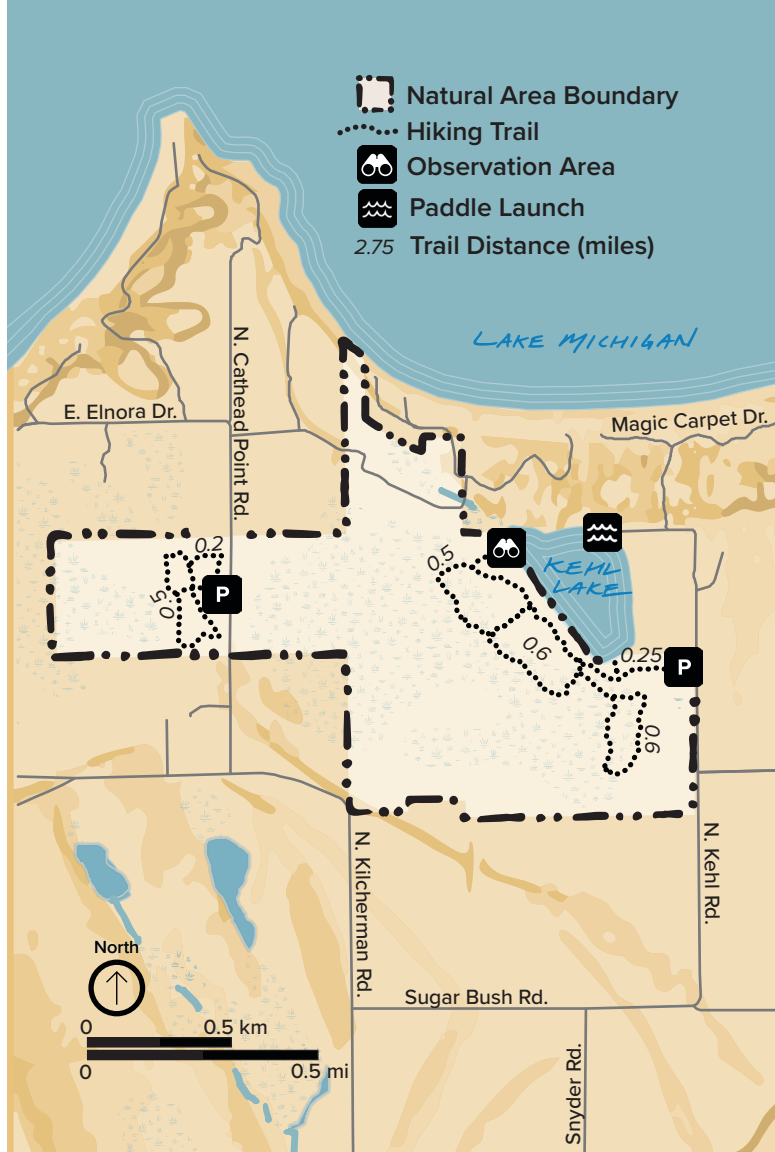


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| ● Birding | ● Fishing | ● Trails |
| ● Hunting | ○ Mountain Bike | ○ Universal Access |
| ● Water Access | ● Water Views | ○ Restrooms |

Kehl Lake Natural Area

FEATURES: Trails: Between the Original and West Trailheads exists a 2.75-mile trail system on flat to moderately sloped terrain. Birds: Blackburnian warbler, blue-headed vireo, bird-viewing platform along the marsh. Plants: cardinal flowers bordering the lake, ferns, spring ephemerals. Trees: old-growth white pines and 100-year-old hemlocks.

DESCRIPTION: Protected in 1992 with a recent addition, this 379-acre pristine Preserve has been designated as an Old-Growth Forest and consists of Kehl Lake shoreline, wetlands, and towering mixed forest. This area is part of an extensive wildlife corridor, as well as critical flyway for migrating birds.



15

5251 S. Wheeler Road, Maple City

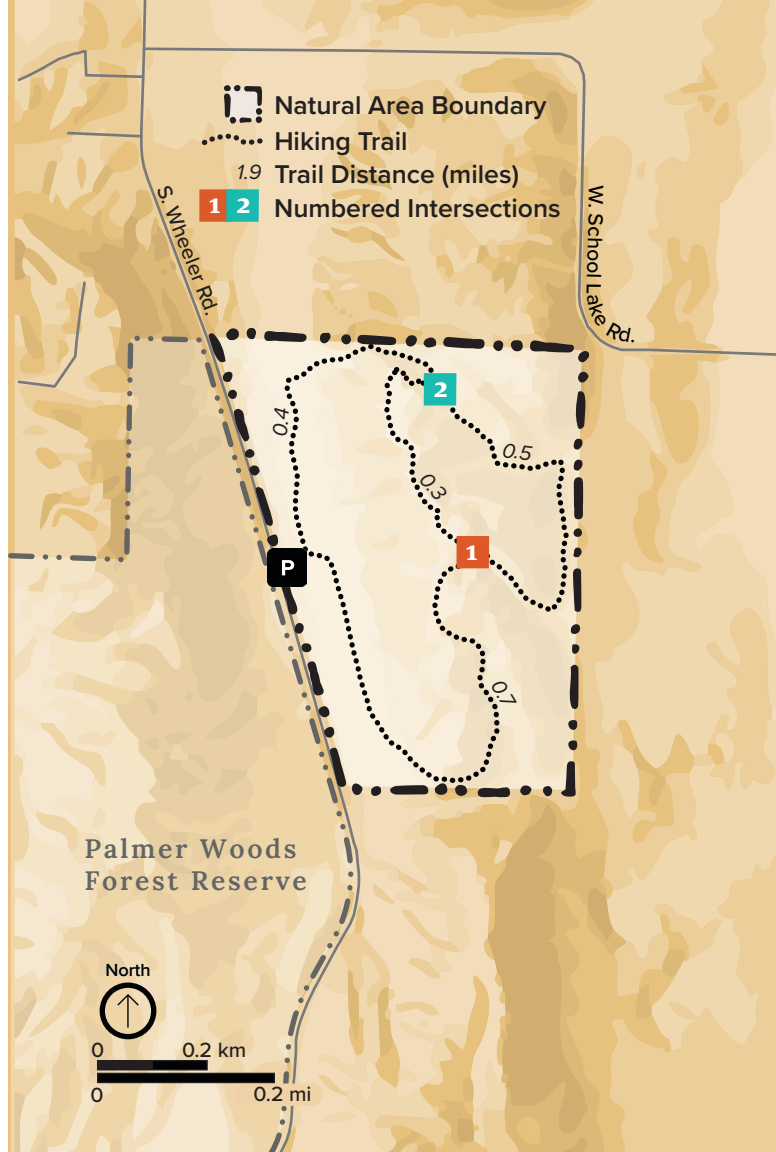
44.9047, -85.9104

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| ● Hunting | ○ Mountain Bike | ○ Universal Access |
| ○ Water Access | ○ Water Views | ○ Restrooms |

Krumwiede Forest Reserve

FEATURES: Trails: a 1.9-mile trail on mild to steep terrain (the trek down the north side is much steeper than the gentle south ascent). Birds: yellow-rumped warbler, bald eagle, black-throated green warbler, barred owl. Trees: high-quality working hardwood forest; sustainable forestry practices may be observed. Plants/Wildlife: wild raspberries, northern wet meadow, spring peepers, red-backed salamander.

DESCRIPTION: Preserved in 2007, this 110-acre forest reserve was formed by a glacial moraine, leaving behind a high ridge between two wooded, pastoral valleys. This property is a favorite for fall hiking beneath golden aspen, sugar maple, beech, hemlock, and red oak.



16

206 N. Main Street, Leland
45.0241, -85.7590

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| ● Birding | ○ Fishing | ○ Trails |
| ○ Hunting | ○ Mountain Bike | ● Universal Access |
| ○ Water Access | ○ Water Views | ○ Restrooms |

Leland Village Green

FEATURES: Trails: no trail system; a cobblestone walkway leads to a “Leelanau Preservers” tile wall. Plants: A shade garden with plants and flowers provided by the volunteers of Wildflower Rescue.

DESCRIPTION: The Village Green provides a lovely little oasis at the end of Leland’s shopping district. Take a moment to admire the gardens filled with prismatic wildflowers, rest on a bench, or have a picnic on the green.



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| ● Birding | ● Fishing | ● Trails |
| ○ Hunting | ○ Mountain Bike | ○ Universal Access |
| ● Water Access | ● Water Views | ○ Restrooms |

Lighthouse West Natural Area

FEATURES: Trails: a 1.2-mile trail system on flat terrain, plus an 800-foot rigorous trail and stairs down a steep bluff to Lake Michigan shoreline. Birds: more than 125 species including wood warbler, scarlet tanager, indigo bunting, raptors, waterfowl, bluebirds.

DESCRIPTION: Preserved in 2004, this 69-acre Natural Area at the tip of the peninsula, with its 642 feet of cobble shoreline, is the last stop for migrating birds to rest and feed before crossing to the Upper Peninsula. Together with the Leelanau State Park and some private conservation easements, over 2,000 feet of shoreline and over 600 acres form a critical wildlife corridor.

-  Natural Area Boundary
-  Public Land
-  Hiking Trail
-  Trail Distance (miles)
-  Numbered Intersections
-  Observation Area

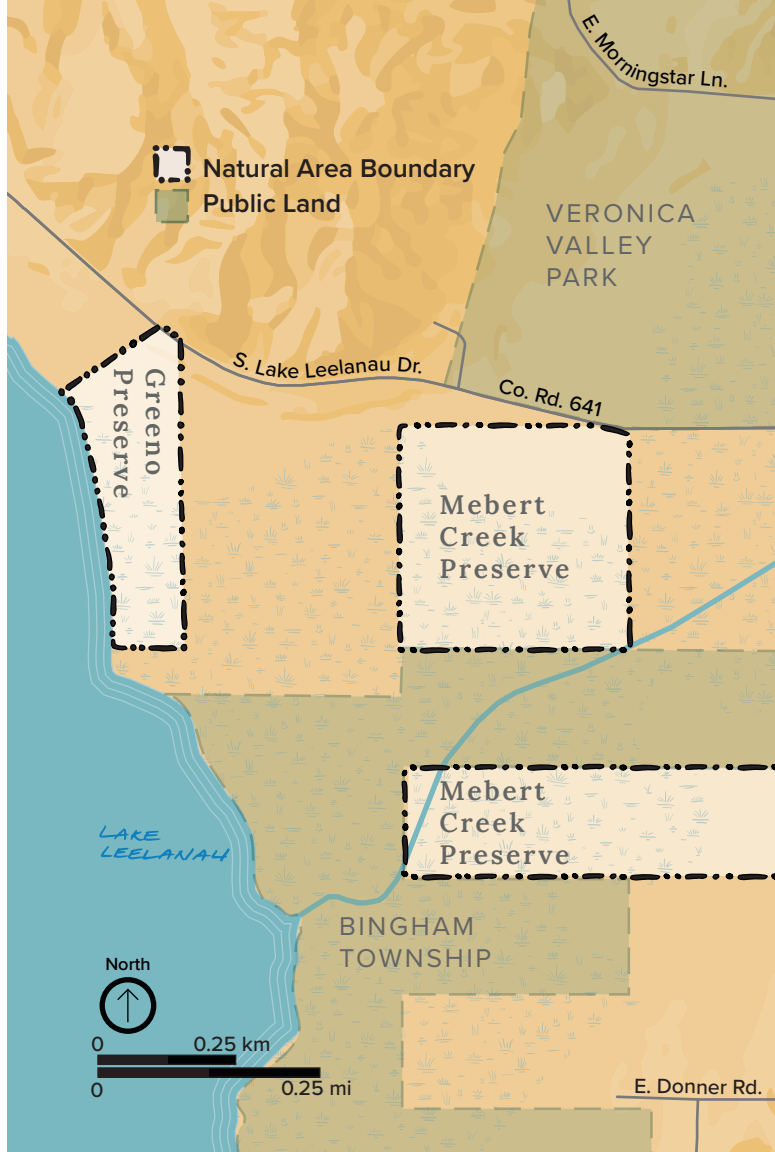


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| ● Hunting | ○ Mountain Bike | ○ Universal Access |
| ○ Water Access | ● Water Views | ○ Restrooms |

Mebert Creek & Greeno Preserves

FEATURES: Trails: no trail systems or parking areas; dense wetland is difficult to navigate. Best seen from the water or on a guided hike. Plants: ferns, wild rose, yellow lady's slipper. Wildlife: otter, bobcat. Trees: birch, ash, red maple, basswood, white pine, tamarack, cedar.

DESCRIPTION: This complex of protected lands includes two Conservancy Preserves—Mebert Creek (80 acres) and Greeno Preserve (21 acres)—within 257 acres of preserved land and shoreline. This tapestry of wetland habitat is an undisturbed haven for rare and threatened plants, and plays a critical role in protecting Lake Leelanau's water quality.



19

44.9873, -85.7150

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| ● Birding | ● Fishing | ○ Trails |
| ○ Hunting | ○ Mountain Bike | ○ Universal Access |
| ○ Water Access | ● Water Views | ○ Restrooms |

Narrows Natural Area

FEATURES: Trails: no trail system; best viewed from the water. Birds: wetland birds. Plants: More than 120 plant species.

DESCRIPTION: Protected in 2001, this iconic 71-acre wetland that joins North and South Lake Leelanau is a beloved county landmark, seen from the bridge on M-204 and by boaters who cruise the channel. It's one of the finest remaining emergent wetland complexes on the lake, and includes 2,350 feet of protected shoreline.



20

6096 S. Wheeler Road, Maple City

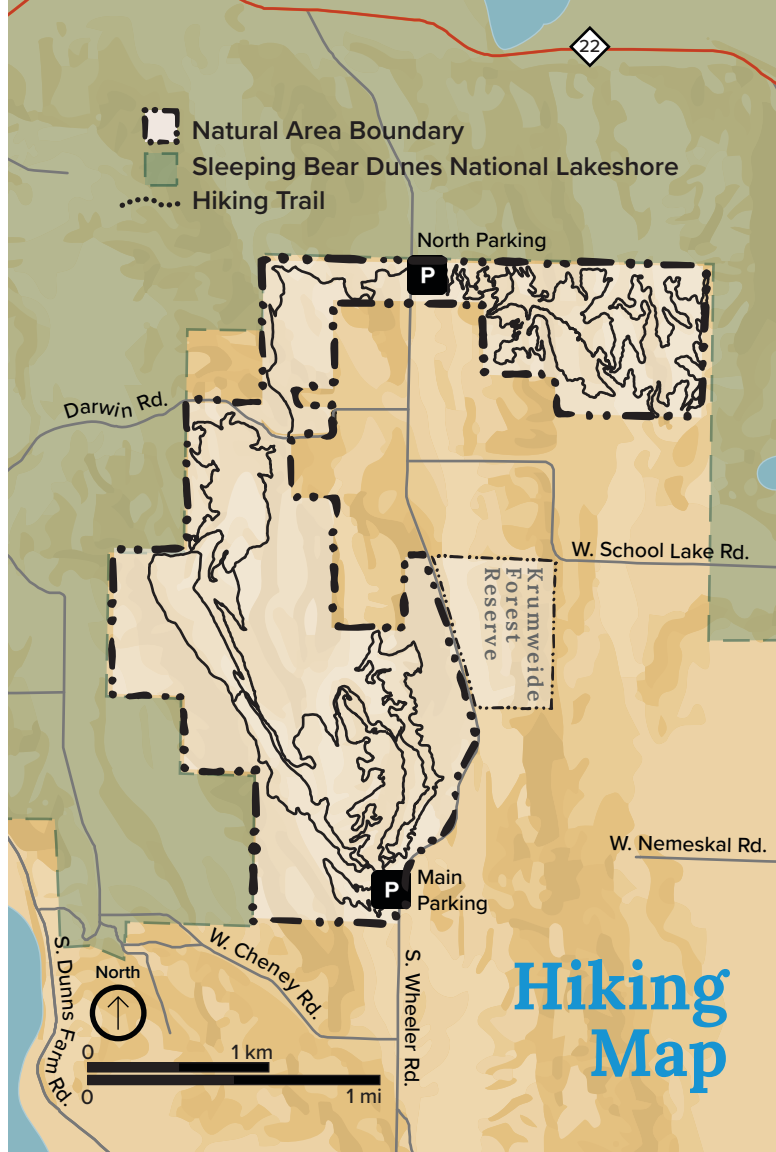
44.8927, -85.9151

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| ● Birding | ○ Fishing | ● Trails |
| ● Hunting | ● Mountain Bike | ● Universal Access |
| ○ Water Access | ○ Water Views | ● Restrooms |

Palmer Woods Forest Reserve

FEATURES: Trails: 15 miles of hiking trails through a glacially influenced landscape. Universally accessible picnic shelter, changing stations, restrooms at main parking area, and the Helen and Dan Palmer Fern Garden. Groomed xc-skiing. Trees: northern hardwoods, 34 species of trees in total. Wildlife: black bear, coyote, bobcat. Two deer exclosures totaling 35 acres. Excellent birding.

DESCRIPTION: Protected in 2016, this is the Conservancy's largest property at 1,155 acres—the contiguous hardwood forest here stretches over two miles north to south, and has been inducted into the Old-Growth Forest Network. Enjoy miles and miles of trails through rolling hills, perfect for year-round outdoor recreation. Plan ahead; no cell service.



20

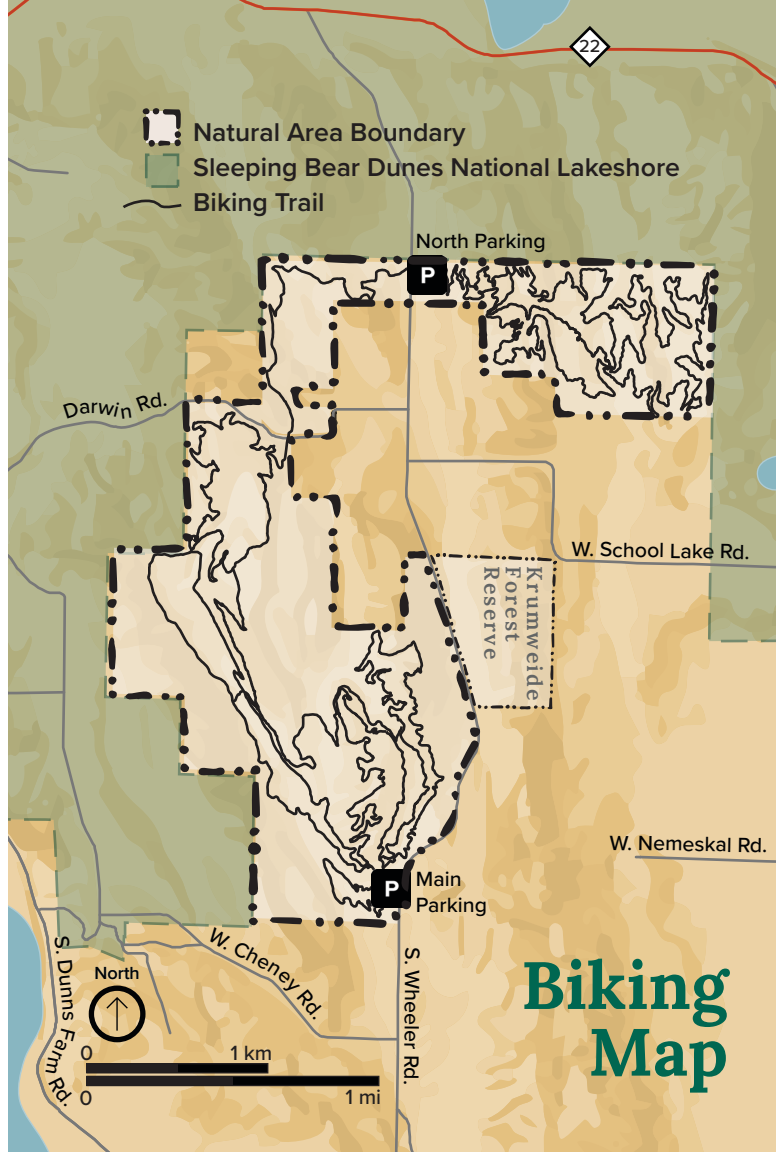
6096 S. Wheeler Road, Maple City

44.8927, -85.9151

- | | | |
|----------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| ● Birding | ○ Fishing | ● Trails |
| ● Hunting | ● Mountain Bike | ● Universal Access |
| ○ Water Access | ○ Water Views | ● Restrooms |

Palmer Woods Forest Reserve

FEATURES: Trails: over 27 miles of purpose-built mountain bike trails featuring mostly flow trails with some rock tech and dirt jump sections on intermediate and advanced trails. Palmer is a hub and loop system; most trails are directional loops that connect at hubs. A few two-way connector trails allow for riders to be creative with their route. Beginner and intermediate trails can be found at the main parking area. Trails from north parking are intermediate and advanced. On beginner and intermediate trails, “A” and “B” lines are available to allow for ride-around of features built from rock and earth.



- | | | |
|----------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| ● Birding | ● Fishing | ● Trails |
| ● Hunting | ○ Mountain Bike | ○ Universal Access |
| ○ Water Access | ● Water Views | ○ Restrooms |

Pat's Preserve at Lime Lake

FEATURES: Trails: a 0.25-mile boardwalk trail to Lime Lake. There is a bench at water's edge, but no place to launch a watercraft or swim. Wildlife: bear, bobcat, otter, beaver, coyote, brook trout, trumpeter swan. Plants: spicebush, showy lady's slipper, bog violet, water horsetail, naked miterwort, goldthread. Trees: towering white pine, cedar, hemlock, yellow birch, tamarack.

DESCRIPTION: Protected in 2020, Pat's Preserve spans 60 acres on the southwest shores of Lime Lake. This natural wonder safeguards over 1,000 feet of pristine shoreline. From the Preserve's crescent-shaped edge, Sugar Loaf can be seen across the water. To the northeast, you can see Teichner Preserve.



22

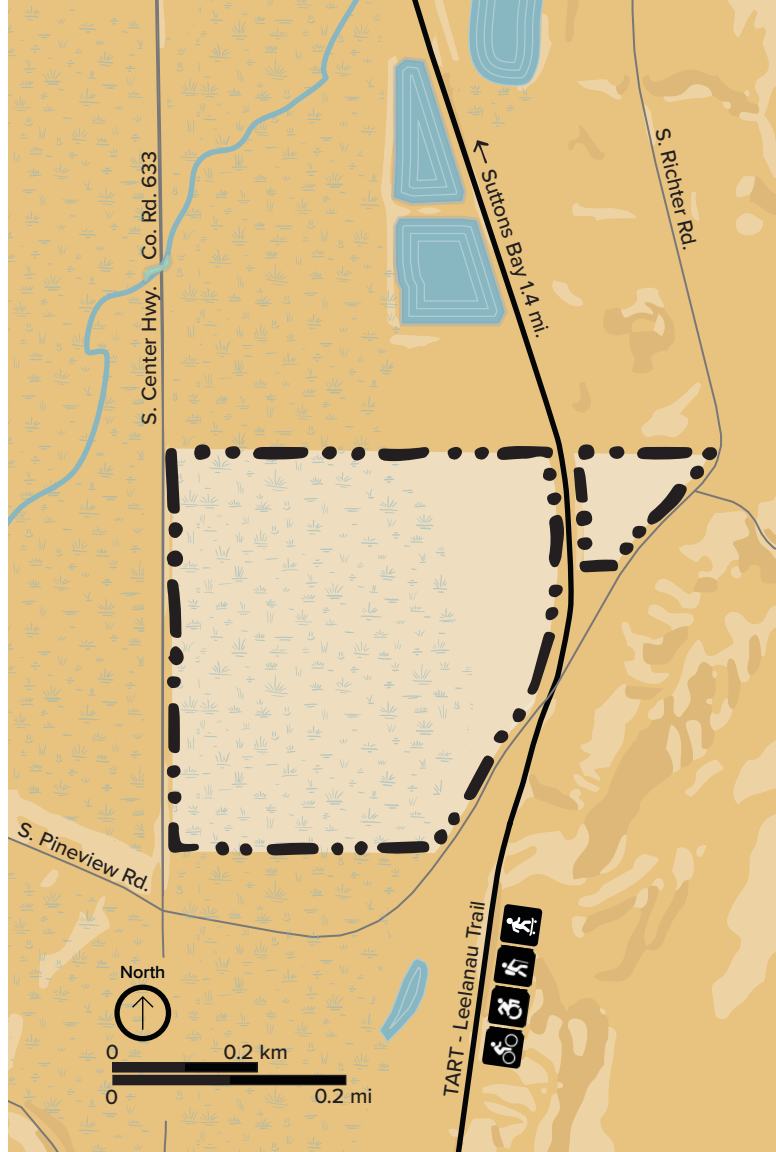
44.9523, -85.6464

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| ● Birding | ○ Fishing | ● Trails |
| ○ Hunting | ○ Mountain Bike | ○ Universal Access |
| ○ Water Access | ○ Water Views | ○ Restrooms |

Phyl's Forest Preserve

FEATURES: Trails: short trail to come. Access via the Leelanau Trail; a 0.2-mile section spans the eastern side of the Preserve. Closest parking at the Leelanau Trail parking lot on 4th Street, Suttons Bay. Wildlife: watch for frog and turtle crossings! Plants: marsh marigold, cardinal flower, beech-drop, fringed polygala, wood fern. Trees: eastern hemlock, yellow birch, northern white cedar.

DESCRIPTION: Preserved in 2025, this 67-acre property is named in honor of Phyllis Stites. Protecting this high-quality forested wetland boosts the health of the entire Leo Creek watershed.



23

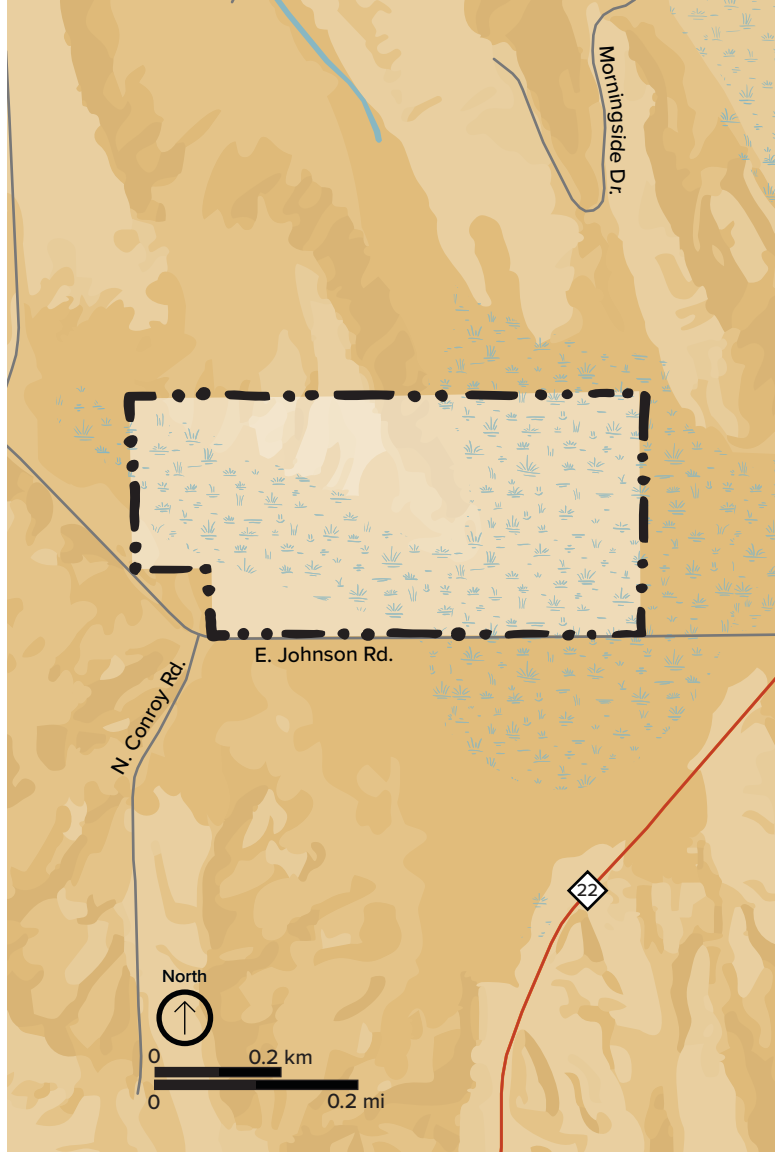
45.1229, -85.6329

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| ● Birding | ○ Fishing | ○ Trails |
| ● Hunting | ○ Mountain Bike | ○ Universal Access |
| ○ Water Access | ○ Water Views | ○ Restrooms |

Soper Natural Area

FEATURES: Trails: no trail system—this property is home to a fragile ecosystem and is best left undisturbed. Limited access is allowed due to careful wildflower management. Plants: wildflowers like twinflower, toothwort, trailing arbutus. Trees: red maple, birch, willow, blistery-barked balsam fir.

DESCRIPTION: Edna Soper donated 42 acres in honor of her late husband James to ensure the survival of lady's slippers on this land, and in 2008, 38 acres were added. The Conservancy is actively managing this property to help restore the showy lady's slipper population, which declined dramatically in the 1990s due to deer browse.

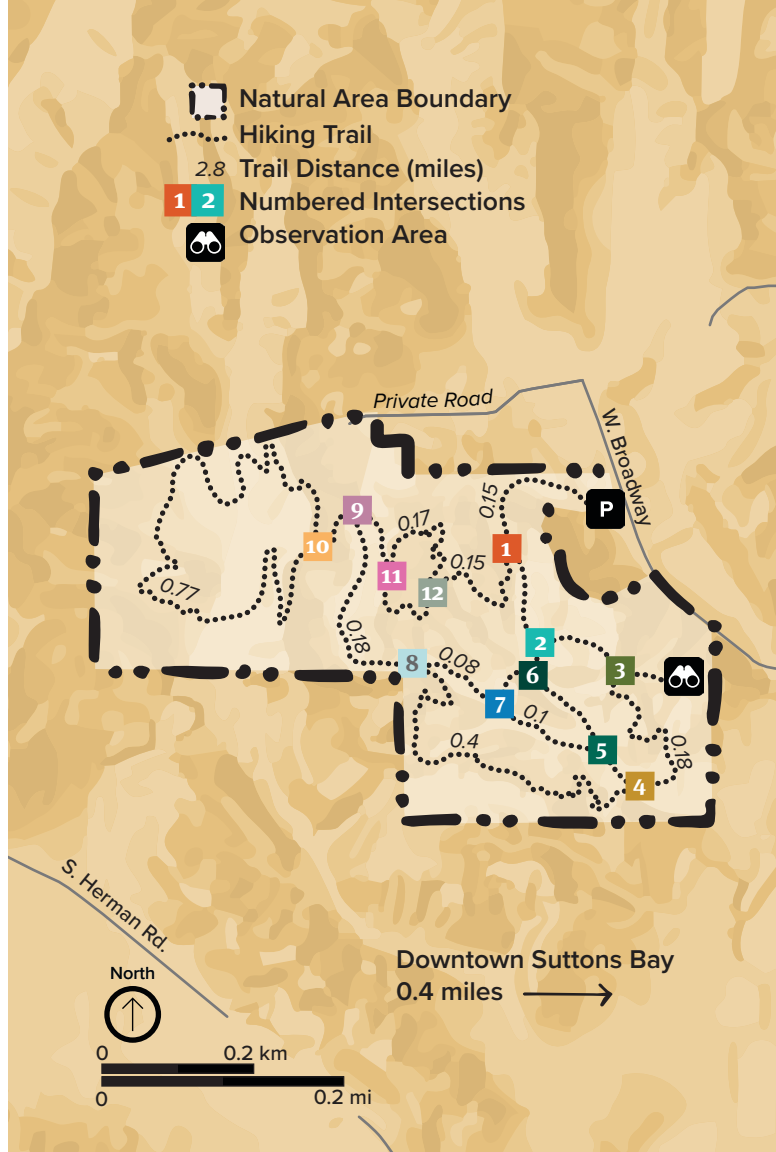


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|----------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| ● Birding | ○ Fishing | ● Trails |
| ○ Hunting | ○ Mountain Bike | ○ Universal Access |
| ○ Water Access | ○ Water Views | ○ Restrooms |

Stites Natural Area

FEATURES: Trails: a 2.8-mile out-and-back trail system with an initial steep incline up a two-track. Plants: wildflowers including trillium and yellow and pink lady's slipper. Wildlife: grouse, woodcock, turkey, deer, bobcat (and bear tracks spotted). Trees: Midwest crab apple, American hazelnut, white oak.

DESCRIPTION: Preserved in 2019, the 70-acre David and Phyllis Stites Natural Area offers ridgeline views, majestic hardwoods and fabulous fall color displays. The long, narrow winding ridgelines here are the result of glacial deposits of sand and gravel; deep valleys have been carved out by melting streams.



25

Anticipated Opening: Summer 2026

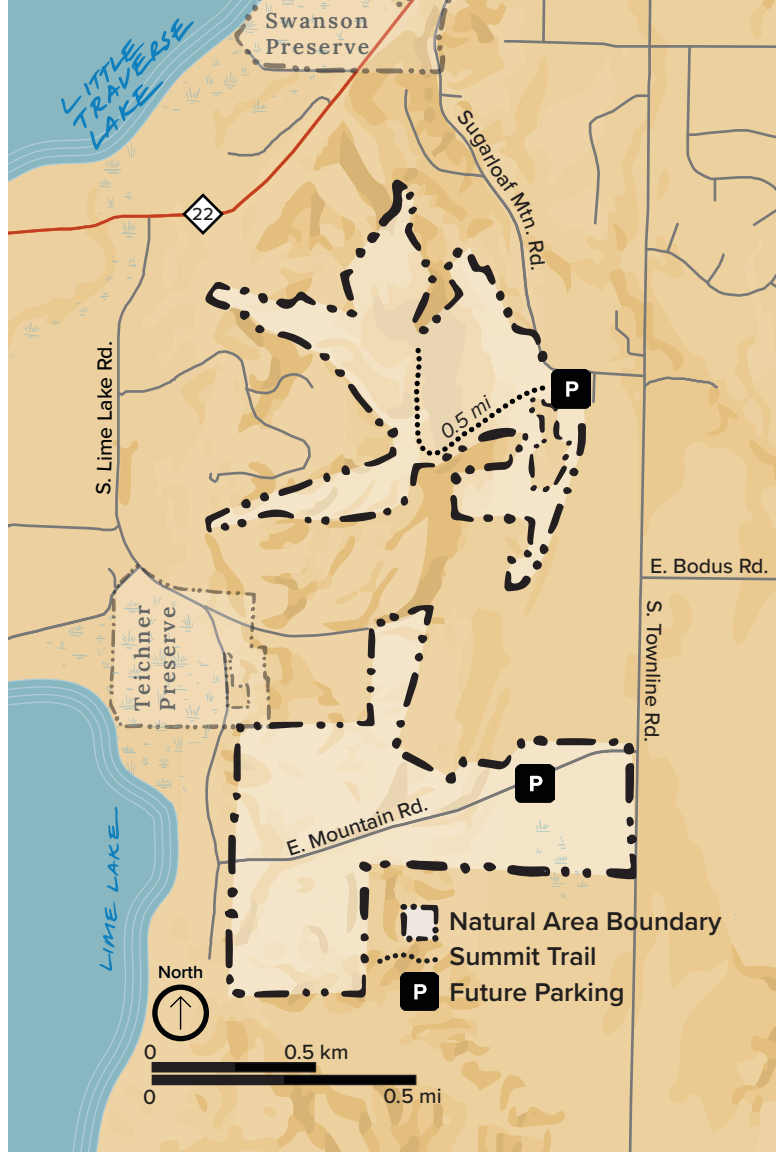
44.9119, -85.8157

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|----------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| ● Birding | ○ Fishing | ● Trails |
| ○ Hunting | ● Mountain Bike | ● Universal Access |
| ○ Water Access | ● Water Views | ● Restrooms |

Sugar Loaf Scenic Area

FEATURES: Trails: our vision includes a trail network for hiking, biking, snowshoeing, cross-country and backcountry skiing, as well as an accessible, all-abilities trail.

DESCRIPTION: While the first phase of this project is anticipated to open in Summer 2026, it will take years to fully build out the Conservancy's recreation vision and ecological restoration plan for this site. We're looking forward to welcoming folks back to this beloved landmark, eventually offering unmatched views from a summit pavilion, and family-friendly amenities like a sledding hill and nature play area. Ecological restoration will protect native species, reduce erosion, and improve water quality in the Good Harbor Bay Watershed.



26

3952 S. Manitou Trail, Cedar
44.9209, -85.8238

- | | | |
|----------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| ● Birding | ● Fishing | ● Trails |
| ● Hunting | ○ Mountain Bike | ○ Universal Access |
| ○ Water Access | ● Water Views | ○ Restrooms |

Swanson Preserve

FEATURES: Trails: a 0.4-mile trail winds through cedar forest and over two groundwater streams and down to the lake. Wildlife: river otters along the wooded shoreline, marsh birds, abundant waterfowl. Plants: 207 species, including rare ferns, showy and yellow lady's slipper, and the rare cut-leaved water parsnip. Trees: towering white pine, cedar swamp.

DESCRIPTION: Protected in 2010, this 83-acre ecologically diverse Preserve includes 2,000 feet of Little Traverse Lake shoreline and two distinct wetland communities. The adjacent 13-acre farmstead, known as "Sonny's Farm," is now a privately-owned conservation easement.



27

5234 S. Lime Lake Road, Cedar
44.9034, -85.8284

- | | | |
|----------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| ● Birding | ● Fishing | ● Trails |
| ● Hunting | ○ Mountain Bike | ○ Universal Access |
| ○ Water Access | ● Water Views | ○ Restrooms |

Teichner Preserve

FEATURES: Trails: a short boardwalk crosses over wetlands, leading to a wooded, flat trail along the shore of Lime Lake. Plants: wild rose, white pussytoes, blue flag iris, cardinal flower; fern species include rattlesnake, interrupted, maidenhair. Trees: black and white ash, red and sugar maple, cottonwood, balsam fir, hemlock, elm, tamarack.

DESCRIPTION: Created in 1996 when Martha Teichner donated beloved family lands to honor her parents, Hans and Miriam. This 46-acre Preserve includes 200 feet of natural shoreline on Lime Lake, framed by mature cedars.



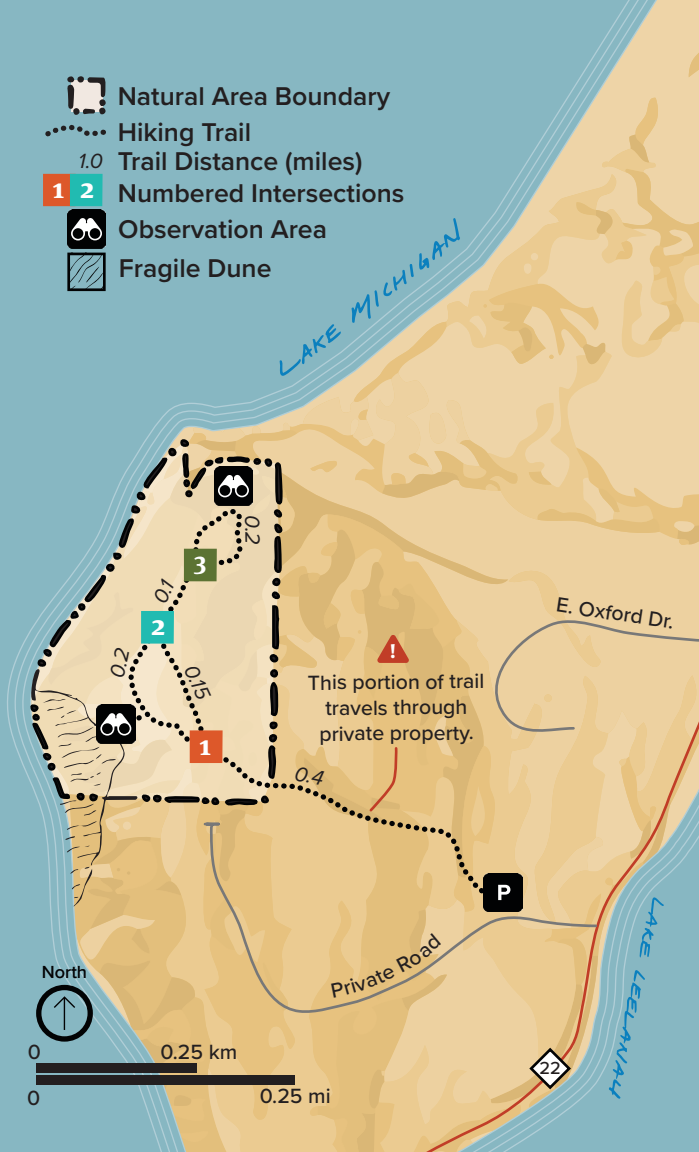
- | | | |
|----------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| ● Birding | ○ Fishing | ● Trails |
| ○ Hunting | ○ Mountain Bike | ○ Universal Access |
| ○ Water Access | ● Water Views | ○ Restrooms |

Whaleback Natural Area

FEATURES: Trails: a challenging hike with an uphill access trail to a flat 3/4-mile hilltop loop. Benches along the uphill trail. Birds: scarlet tanager, black-throated blue warbler, American redstart. Plants: thimbleberry patch, spring wildflowers like Jack-in-the-pulpit. Trees: massive oak trees and mature hemlocks create a cathedral-like canopy that shelters bald eagles.

DESCRIPTION: Preserved in 1996, this 10,000-year-old glacial wonder near Leland is an iconic landmark. Whaleback's fragile bluff rises 300 feet and can be seen from many vantage points in the county. A viewing platform offers fantastic views of the Manitou Passage—especially at sunset. Forty acres of land and over 1,200 feet of shoreline are protected here.

-  Natural Area Boundary
-  Hiking Trail
-  Trail Distance (miles)
-  Numbered Intersections
-  Observation Area
-  Fragile Dune



Notes

Notes

Notes

Doodles

Doodles

Doodles

Get out there.

Not sure where to start? A great way to learn more about the history and ecology of these hidden gems is to attend a guided hike, paddle or ski led by our experienced docents and staff.

More information on locations and timing can be found at **leelanauconservancy.org/events**.

Check back often; events are generally added a month in advance.

Get involved.

All of these amazing Natural Areas are made possible through the generous support of people like you.

Make a Gift

Your gift of any size makes a difference, whether it's a cash donation, gift of stock, or planned gift.

Volunteer

Caring for Leelanau takes effort. You can be a part of the Conservancy's work by contributing your talents so future generations can enjoy our lands and waters.

Visit **leelanauconservancy.org** to make a gift or get involved today.

Our team.

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I've been here.

Want to keep track of your adventures? Our Natural Areas with trails are a great place to start. Use this list to check them off as you go.

Natural Area Name	Visited?	Date of First Visit
02. Cedar River Preserve	☐	
03. Chippewa Run Natural Area	☐	
04. Clay Cliffs Natural Area	☐	
05. DeYoung Natural Area	☐	
06. Finton Natural Area	☐	
10. Hatlem Creek Preserve	☐	
11. Houdek Dunes Natural Area	☐	
12. Ingraham Preserve	☐	
13. Jeff Lamont Preserve	☐	
14. Kehl Lake Natural Area	☐	
15. Krumwiede Forest Reserve	☐	
16. Leland Village Green	☐	
17. Lighthouse West Natural Area	☐	
19. Narrows Natural Area	☐	
20. Palmer Woods Forest Reserve	☐	
21. Pat's Preserve at Lime Lake	☐	
22. Phyl's Forest	☐	
24. Stites Natural Area	☐	
25. Sugar Loaf Scenic Area	☐	
26. Swanson Preserve	☐	
27. Teichner Preserve	☐	
28. Whaleback Natural Area	☐	

Explore.
Respect.
Protect.

We believe that nature
should be **free** for all,
and that's why this
guidebook is, too.



Leelanau
CONSERVANCY