



*Little Traverse Conservancy's*  
**Nature Preserves  
& Natural Areas**

**35TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION**



THIS GUIDE TO THE CONSERVANCY'S NATURE PRESERVES IS dedicated to the vision and perseverance of those who founded this organization 35 years ago in 1972: John Fischer, David Irish, Edward Koza, Earl Larson, Seberon Litzenburger, Frank Pierce, and John Tanton.

This guide is also dedicated to you, our members and supporters who make it possible for us to protect the natural integrity and scenic beauty of the North. Its maps and photographs will help you to discover and explore our largest, most popular preserves as well as some of the small, neighborhood natural areas that dot the North Country. Use this guide to enjoy the natural beauty that our founders and all of our trustees, staff, and volunteers have worked hard to protect for you.



“There’s twice as much protected land out there...”

In addition to the nature preserves and natural areas that are featured in this book, there are more than 14,500 acres of private land protected through Little Traverse Conservancy with conservation easements. Though a conservation easement doesn’t make the land available to the public, it is a legally binding document that ensures the perpetual protection of scenic and natural resources such as beautiful roadside views, important wildlife habitat, scenic and productive farm land and other resources. So, as you journey around northern Michigan, please know that along with our more than 10,500 acres of nature preserve, more than twice as many acres in private lands are protected with conservation easements. Those private, easement-protected properties are an important part of the Conservancy’s program of ensuring that we preserve northern Michigan’s natural, scenic, and working landscapes.

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## LIST OF PRESERVES

The first section of this guide highlights preserves featured because of their accessibility. The last section lists the remaining nature preserves by county. All Conservancy-owned nature preserves are open to the public. Please see *Preserve Guidelines* on page 5.

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**Note:** A handful of the above properties were acquired by other entities with Conservancy assistance. Their ownership is described in the title or shown in parentheses.

## This book may be out of date — and that's a good thing!

Publishing the preserve guide portion of this book is a risky business at Little Traverse Conservancy because as soon as we print it, our generous donors provide us with yet another wonderful nature preserve and the book becomes just a little bit obsolete. It's a happy problem for us to have. Though we wish we could keep our printed preserve guide up to date, we want to be careful with our printing budget and your donated dollars. Please check our web site at [www.landtrust.org](http://www.landtrust.org) for the very latest information on our nature preserves.



## Let's G.O.! (Get Outside)

Thousands of school-aged children visit Little Traverse Conservancy nature preserves with environmental education staff for programs tied to Michigan's state curriculum. Thanks to Conservancy donors, these programs are offered at no charge.



## We're into land protection for the long haul.

Once a property is protected as a nature preserve, our real work has just begun. Hundreds of volunteers assist us with the care and oversight of preserves throughout our five-county service area. From clearing trails to annual monitoring, volunteers devote thousands of hours to these lands.

# PRESERVE GUIDELINES

LITTLE TRAVERSE CONSERVANCY works hard to balance the public uses offered on our preserves with protection of their natural integrity and scenic beauty for future generations. Recreational, educational, and scientific use of the preserves is encouraged, as long as it does not interfere with our primary goals of preservation and protection. We welcome you to explore and enjoy our beautiful preserves, keeping in mind that you are a temporary visitor to the homes of many plants and animals.

**Please enjoy** hiking, birdwatching, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, fishing, and similar low-impact activities. Many of the properties include water frontage and one could easily canoe or kayak these, but please note that none of these properties include boat launch facilities for larger vessels.

**Please refrain from** camping, fires, dumping or littering, removal of vegetation, off-road vehicles, and snowmobiling.

## **Please remember:**

- Hunting is allowed only on designated preserves and with written permission only. Contact the office at 231.347.0991 for more information.
- State law requires that all dogs must be on a leash while visiting preserves.

Please help us keep our preserves in good condition. Contact the Conservancy office at 231.347.0991 if you notice any inappropriate activity on a preserve or if trails, parking areas, or signs need attention. Preserves and trails require a good deal of management and maintenance and we greatly appreciate the assistance of the many individuals who help monitor and provide stewardship for them.

Public parks are generally established to handle more intensive use than our preserves and are maintained by the state and local governments across the North. Those parks which have been established with help from the Conservancy are identified in this guide. Please refer to the rules and regulations of the appropriate authorities when visiting these properties.



Bicycling



Canoeing or  
Kayaking



Hiking and  
Snowshoeing



Horseback Riding



Hunting (by written  
permission only)



Parking Area



Scenic view/  
birdwatching



Skiing (ungroomed  
unless noted)



Swimming beach



Marked  
Trails Signs and maps  
mark trails



Trails  
Not  
Marked No signs or maps

MAP OF  
**EMMET COUNTY PRESERVES**



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# Fochtman Nature Preserve



Todd Parker

**Size:** 243 acres

**Frontage:** More than  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile on Round Lake as well as a stream that forms the headwaters of the Inland Waterway. The preserve runs along  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile of US-31 near Conway.

**Land Description:** A mix of wetlands, uplands, and shoreline, this property provides a natural buffer in a highly developing region near town.

**Trails:** Rustic parking is available in two locations (see map below). No developed trails, but the North Country Trail crosses along the south shore of Round Lake. In addition, an old two-track road enters the property from the east from US-31.

The Fochtman Preserve was purchased at a significant bargain sale from the Fochtman family in 2001. The land was one of the largest blocks of undeveloped land remaining between Petoskey and Harbor Springs. Its purchase was made possible with funds raised for the Conservancy's Harbor Springs Greenbelt Program.



## Directions to Hiawatha Trail parking:

From Petoskey, drive north 2.6 miles on US-31 to M-119. Turn left on M-119 and go .8 mile and turn right on Hiawatha Trail. Travel approximately 1.2 miles and park on the left at the pull-off next to the lake.

## Directions to US-31 (Conway) parking:

From Petoskey, drive north on US-31 approximately 5.8 miles. Rustic parking is available on the left, across from the intersection of US-31 and Graham Road. Enter the preserve on the two-track road and park. Please do not drive any further into the preserve.



# Goodhart Farms Nature Preserve

**Size:** 595 acres

**Land Description:** The Goodhart Farms property is a mix of meadows, hay fields, and maple, beech, and ash forest. Old orchards and pine plantations are found on the property, and the rolling terrain offers views of Lake Michigan.

**Trails:** Three parking areas are available (see map). Trails are complete east of Lone Rock Road and are ideal for hiking, horseback riding, showshoeing, and cross country skiing. Please do not enter the hay fields but instead travel along the edges of the field/forest margin.

In 1994, Ed and Maureen Mayne purchased the farm from the estate of John Hannah, former president of Michigan State University. Hannah had been purchasing and piecing together smaller farms since the 1950s, using the land for his own cattle herd and for agricultural experiments through the University. Upon their purchase, the Maynes restored the soil for raising premium, high quality hay for race horses in the southern states. In late 2002, Ed and Maureen donated the Goodhart Farms property and associated buildings and equipment to Little Traverse Conservancy (the buildings and equipment have since been sold). It was the single largest donation ever given to the organization.



Randy McCune



**Directions:** From Harbor Springs, take State Road north 9 miles to Robinson Road. Turn left on Robinson and travel 3½ miles to the beginning of the preserve at the Hannah Road intersection. Summer parking is off of Hannah, Lone Rock, and Church Roads. Winter parking is off of Robinson Road.



## EMMET COUNTY'S The Headlands

**Size:** 600 acres

**Frontage:** 2½ miles on the Straits of Mackinac

**Land Description:** The largest and least disturbed forest tract in the Mackinaw City vicinity.

**Trails & Facilities:** A paved road takes you to the facilities and the trailhead. Nearly 4½ miles of trails for cross-country skiing, hiking, birdwatching, mountain biking, and picnicking are all available at the Headlands. The property also includes two facilities for public rental. Contact Emmet County at 231.347.6536 for details or visit [www.emmet.mi.us/parkrec/headlands.htm](http://www.emmet.mi.us/parkrec/headlands.htm).



Flanked by the Straits of Mackinac, the Headlands property is indeed a special piece of land. Thanks to a lack of major disturbance over the years, the land has remained relatively intact, providing for a great deal of plant and wildlife variety. The property is a very important resting stop and staging area for raptors and neotropical birds migrating across the Straits. It is also home to the endangered Dwarf Lake Iris and is thought to be habitat for the threatened Lake Huron Tansy and Pitcher's Thistle.

In 1996, the Conservancy assisted Emmet County in acquiring the Headlands with a grant from the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund.

**Directions:** From Mackinaw City, take Central Avenue west for 2 miles to its end. Turn south (left) and go 1/3 mile to the entrance road on the right.



Marked  
Trails



EMMET COUNTY  
**Elmer Johnston Nature Preserve**

**Size:** 220 acres

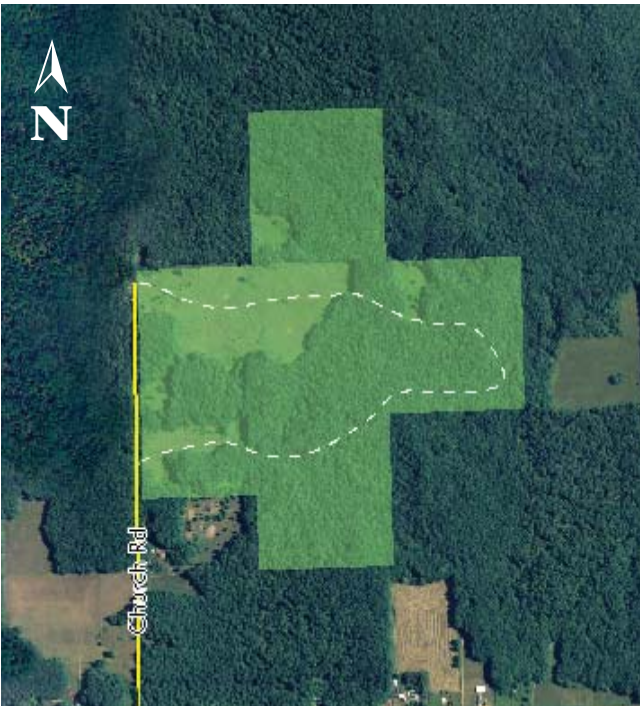
**Land**

**Description:**  
A mix of meadowlands and a rolling hardwood forest dominated by beech, sugar maple, and red oak.

**Trails:** A small parking area exists and old logging trails provide hiking opportunities.



Once tilled farmland and more recently used for pasture, the hilltops offer magnificent views of Lake Michigan and Beaver Island. Mrs. Elmer Johnston donated the property in memory of her husband in 1982.



**Directions:** From Harbor Springs, take State Road 9 miles to Robinson Road. Turn left on Robinson and travel 4 miles to Church Road. Take a right on Church and travel ½ mile to the Johnston Preserve on the right.



Trails  
Not  
Marked

# Allan and Virginia McCune Nature Preserve

**Size:** 168 acres

**Frontage:** 3,400 feet on Minnehaha Creek

**Land Description:**

Dominated by hardwood forest, the property includes red pine plantations, meadow, creek, and a cedar swamp.

**Trails:** A small parking area leads to the trailhead. A trail system offers roughly three miles of moderate hiking.



Phoenix Photographic Studio

This beautiful property was donated to the Little Traverse Conservancy in 1984 by Allan and Virginia McCune of Petoskey. Old two-tracks wind their way through the preserve as remnants of past logging days. The spring-fed Minnehaha Creek, which provides fish habitat, flows through the preserve on its way to Crooked Lake. The trails were dedicated to Allan Purchis whose family homesteaded the land. A replacement footbridge was constructed in 1997 across the east branch of the creek with funds from the Petoskey-Harbor Springs Area Community Foundation in memory of Ellen Pray Bondy.

**Directions:**

From Petoskey, take Mitchell Road 7 miles east to Maxwell Road. Turn right and go  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile to the parking area on the right side of the road.



## Naas, Mauger, Raunecker Preserve & Leslie Preserve

**Size:** 45 acres combined

**Land Description:** A mixed conifer-deciduous forest and cedar swamp. Located between Second and Fourth streets, these adjacent preserves are just a few blocks west of downtown Harbor Springs.

**Trails:** A boardwalked trail connects local roads for neighborhood pathways.

The Naas, Mauger, and Raunecker Preserve was donated in the late 1980s by the Naas and Mauger families in memory of Richard H. and Lydia Naas Raunecker. The original Leslie Preserve was donated by Mr. and Mrs. Gaylord Leslie in 1981. A small addition to the Leslie Preserve was donated anonymously in 2005.



**Directions:** From Main Street in downtown Harbor Springs, travel west past Holy Childhood Church until the road dead ends on Traverse Street. Take a right and travel 4 blocks to Fourth Street. Turn left. The preserve entrance is about 1/4 mile on the left.



# Oden Island Nature Preserve



**Size:** 50 acres

**Frontage:** One mile on Crooked Lake

**Land Description:** This preserve is composed of large old-growth trees and fragile wetlands.

**Trails:** Parking is found at the trailhead. Approximately one mile of foot trails skirt the island's eastern perimeter. Look for two benches along the way for enjoying lakeside views.

A successful fundraising effort in 2000 resulted in the Conservancy's purchase of this large, undeveloped waterfront property. The purchase closed the door on a controversial 34-unit subdivision proposed for the site. Now the preserve helps maintain the water quality of Crooked Lake which lies near the upper portion of the Inland Waterway, a 40-mile navigable

waterway that boaters can take all the way into Lake Huron at Cheboygan.

The protection of this property was a wonderful example of a community coming together. A window of only three months was available to raise almost \$1 million for the purchase. The result was an outpouring of support from many individuals, a family foundation, and Littlefield Township.



**Directions:** From Petoskey, take US-31 north 3¼ miles to Pickerel Lake Road. Turn right and follow 4 miles until Pickerel turns into Channel Road. Follow Channel Road 1 mile to Oden Island Road and turn left. Once on the island, turn right on Leeward Drive and go to the end until you see the Conservancy logo sign.



Marked  
Trails

EMMET COUNTY  
**Round Lake Nature Preserve**

Phoenix Photographic Studio



**Size:** 58 Acres

**Frontage:** 2,500 feet Round Lake

**Land Description:** Vegetation includes mixed hardwoods and conifer forest, lowland cedar swamp, and marshlands along the lake.

**Trails:** Parking is next to the Conservancy office. Easy trails cover almost one mile and include a lake overlook. A brochure is available at the trailhead.

Land that is now the Round Lake Preserve was once used by Native Americans as part of the Inland Water Route. This waterway travels 40 miles through several lakes and streams, eventually emptying into Lake Huron in Cheboygan. The original 40-acre preserve was donated to the Little Traverse Conservancy by the Wrigley Offield Family in 1980 with additional acreage purchased in 1984-86 by the people of L'Arbre Croche. The vegetation includes mixed hardwoods and conifer forest, lowland cedar swamp, and marshlands along the lake.



**Directions:** From US-31 in Petoskey, take M-119 about 1½ miles north to Powell Road. Turn right on Powell and take the first driveway on the right, which is the entrance to the Little Traverse Conservancy office. The trailhead is directly off of the parking lot.



Marked  
Trails

## BEAR CREEK TOWNSHIP'S Spring Lake Park

**Size:** 22 acres

**Frontage:** All the Spring Lake frontage along M-119

**Land Description:** This park lies along Spring Lake and provides a natural oasis just outside of Petoskey.

### **Trails & Facilities:**

A paved parking lot is found directly off M-119. A gazebo, overlook, boardwalked trails, water and restroom facilities, picnic tables, and a fishing platform are available.

Spring Lake Park marks the beginning of the “Gateway to Harbor” corridor, a high priority land protection region for the Conservancy which stretches along M-119 between Petoskey and Harbor Springs. Located across from the Indian Hills Trading Post, the park is a favorite place for fishing, picnicking, and observing wildlife.

Approximately half the lake frontage was obtained by Bear Creek Township in 1988 with Conservancy help. A Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund grant, obtained by the Township and Conservancy in 1995, enabled the Township to purchase the remaining half of Spring Lake frontage on M-119. Aided by a donation of a quarter of the property’s appraised value from the property owners, the acquisition was completed using monies from special set-asides for transportation enhancement projects through a federal highway program. With the additional land obtained, the park now includes all the lake frontage along M-119. Another grant was received in the late 1990s by the township to develop the parking area, restrooms, and the interpretive trail.



**Directions:** From US-31 in Petoskey, take M-119 north less than ½ mile. The park is on the right.



Marked  
Trails

## STATE OF MICHIGAN'S Sturgeon Bay Dunes

**Size:** 750 acres

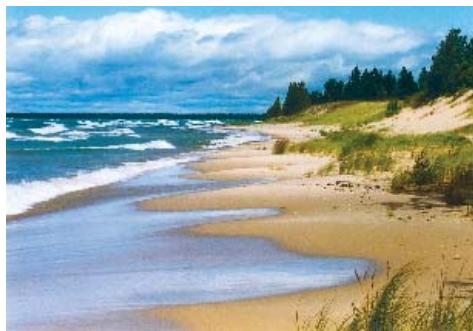
**Frontage:** 4,100 feet on Lake Michigan

**Land Description:** Unquestionably one of the most beloved public beaches in northwestern Lower Michigan.

**Trails & Facilities:** A township park is at the center of the property's length where pit toilets and parking are available. Roadside parking is available providing shoreline access. The North Country Trail runs through the back dunes of the park.

In 1991, Sand Products Corporation sold this one-of-a-kind property to the State of Michigan, adding significant and much desired acreage to Wilderness State Park. The property includes habitat for the endangered Piping Plover and three or possibly four threatened species of plants (Lake Huron Tansy, Pitcher's Thistle, Pumpell's Bromegrass and possibly Houghton's Goldenrod).

The force behind the acquisition was a grassroots effort mobilized in the 1970s largely by Kathy Bricker (who served as the first chair of Little Traverse Conservancy) and Conservancy co-founder John Tanton. Their group proposed expansion of the boundaries of Wilderness State Park to include the land, and worked with a number of people to document the area's ecological importance and recreational potential. Others involved in the protection of the dunes included: The Nature Conservancy-Michigan chapter, Petoskey Regional Audubon Society, Michigan and Petoskey Garden Clubs, Trout Unlimited, Save Our Bay, Ducks Unlimited, and countless other individuals.



**Directions:** From Cross Village, follow M-119 north along the coast approximately 5 miles until it dead ends at Sturgeon Bay Trail. Turn left and you will soon be at public shoreline.



## Stutsmanville Bog Nature Preserve

**Size:** 65 acres

**Land Description:** One of the best examples of a fen or peatland in northern Michigan.

**Trails:** A parking lot as well as a ¼ mile trail which leads to a bog overlook and interpretive signs.



In 1999, the Conservancy purchased a large portion of the beautiful Stutsmanville Bog, an area that has been the subject of many ecological studies. The acquisition was made possible, in part, by a bargain sale from the sellers and with funds from the family of Julia Wells Terry.

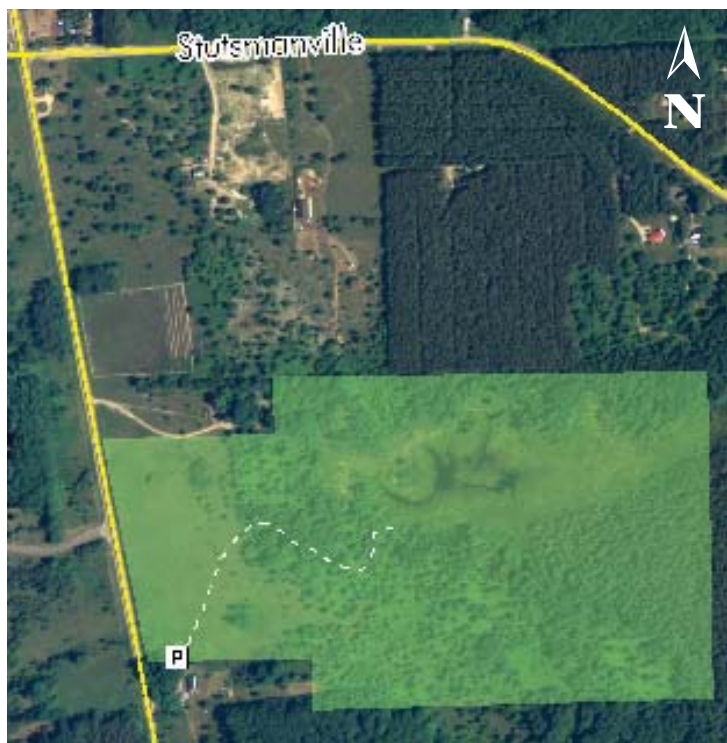
A bog is a unique type of wetland dominated by organic soil known as peat. Bogs are also known for unusual plants such as the carnivorous pitcher plant and sundew which receive their nutrients by entrapping and digesting insects! Wetlands are extremely important for filtering water that flows through them. Please be sensitive to the fragile nature of this ecosystem when visiting. Even sporadic foot traffic off the trails can permanently damage the vegetation.

### Directions:

From Harbor Springs, take State Road north approximately 5 miles. Look for the preserve sign on the right-hand side of the road. A parking lot holds a few cars.



Marked  
Trails



WEST TRAVERSE TOWNSHIP'S  
**Thorne Swift Nature Preserve**



**Size:** 30 Acres

**Frontage:** 300 feet on Lake Michigan

**Land Description:** A mix of upland dunes and lowland cedar swamp along with Great Lakes shoreline.

**Trails & Facilities:** A large parking lot lies adjacent to the Elizabeth Kennedy Nature Center. A total of 1½ miles of trail, dune observation platform, pond observation platform, gazebo, amphitheatre, and seasonal guided programs all make this an excellent family destination.

In 1981, Elizabeth Kennedy donated the Thorne Swift property to Little Traverse Conservancy. The Conservancy agreed to lease the property to West Traverse Township for management so that township residents and others could enjoy the natural features of the property.

The preserve and nature center are open daily 10 am to ½ hour after sunset from Memorial Day to Labor Day. Parking fee is \$3 for non-township residents (no charge for Conservancy members). Call 231.526.6401 for current program information.



**Directions:** From Harbor Springs, take M-119 northwest 3.8 miles to Lower Shore Drive. Follow Lower Shore Drive for ½ mile. The preserve sign is on the left.

