

A close-up photograph of a person's hands holding a large clump of dark, rich soil. The soil is teeming with life, including several earthworms and a dense network of roots. The person is wearing a green long-sleeved shirt. The background is a soft-focus green field.

# Field Notes *from* Michigan

For Members of The Nature Conservancy in Michigan

Spring 2024 Newsletter

The Nature  
Conservancy 

## INSIDE:

A DECADE-LONG PROJECT  
TO RESTORE HIGH-PRIORITY  
COASTAL WETLANDS

ISSUING CARBON CREDITS TO  
COMBAT CLIMATE CHANGE

# Together We Can

From tackling carbon emissions to conserving the world's freshwater to protecting lands for a healthier, sustainable planet, The Nature Conservancy's 2030 Goals are bold and imperative. After all, big challenges don't scare us.



We know from experience that with time, tenacity and teamwork, we are capable of great achievements—like the recent completion of the 12-year Erie Marsh habitat restoration project, one of the largest remaining coastal wetlands in southeastern Michigan, which you can read about on page 4.

But we won't succeed alone. As I think about the role we need to play in Michigan and across the Midwest to address the climate and biodiversity crises, I am inspired by our collaborations with partners and communities, which create opportunities for meaningful impact.

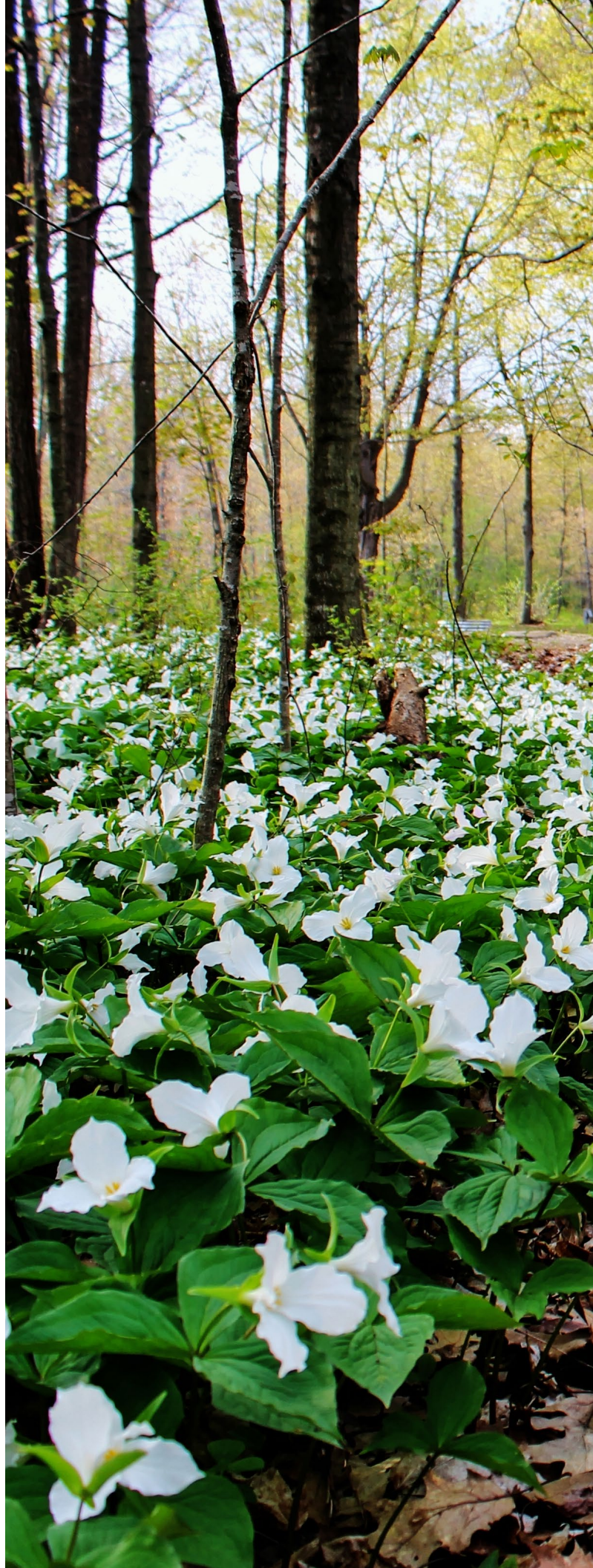
For instance, in this issue, read about our partnerships with the farmers who are redefining agriculture with innovative, sustainable practices to improve crop yields while protecting our watersheds (page 8). Learn more about how we're supporting the work of the people in the Keweenaw Peninsula, who are crafting a long-term, community-led stewardship plan for the spectacular Keweenaw Heartlands (page 6). Discover our recent milestones in forest protection, including our new Michigamme Highlands carbon credit program (page 10).

You have shown me what's possible when people come together. Let's continue to shape a future where people act to sustain the healthy, resilient land and waters we all depend on—a land of Great Lakes, great rivers and great communities. *Together, we find a way.*

Yours in Conservation,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Helen Taylor".

Helen Taylor  
State Director





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COVER: A Saginaw Bay farmer shows his farm's rich soil health. © Fauna Creative

LEFT: Trilliums line a wooded path in the spring. © ehrlif/Shutterstock

# RESTORING THE WONDERS OF Erie Marsh

When The Nature Conservancy acquired Erie Marsh in 1978, its connection to Lake Erie had been severed for years. Over time, the wetlands suffered and the diversity of waterfowl and migratory birds declined.

**But then, in 2011, TNC launched a major restoration project to improve the health of the wetlands and reconnect them to Lake Erie.**



MARSH WREN



AMERICAN LOTUS



OSPREY



GREEN-WINGED TEAL

Photos top to bottom, left to right: © Jason Whaler; © Duke Coonrad/TNC Photo Contest 2019; © Ron Leonetti; © Kim Long/TNC Photo Contest 2021; © Ken Salzman

Along the coast of the sparkling North Maumee Bay, there's a place where American lotus and swamp rose-mallow thrive. Here, majestic bald eagles make their homes alongside purple martins, trumpeter swans, ospreys and more. The waters abound with native invertebrates and fish, such as bluegill, largemouth bass and pumpkinseed. In the heart of the ecosystem, the Great Sulphur Spring flows with freshwater and microbial life.

This is [Erie Marsh](#)—one of the largest remaining coastal wetlands in southeastern Michigan. Now, after a 12-year, four-phase, 7.5 million dollar habitat restoration project led by The Nature Conservancy (TNC), which included repairing degraded levees and engineering a new water management system, the marsh is fully reconnected to North Maumee Bay for the first time in more than 60 years.

"This massive project is a great example of how much can be accomplished when different organizations, communities and people come together for conservation," said Kim Steinberger, the restoration project manager for TNC in Michigan. "The work we did here is informing similar types of projects all around the state, so it's a big part of the efforts to protect and improve the health of the Great Lakes basin overall. That's something I'm especially proud of."

Coastal wetlands are extremely diverse ecosystems that are found throughout the world in both freshwater and saltwater watersheds. They provide natural flood protection and erosion control, and they improve water quality by filtering out chemicals and sediment before they can be discharged into oceans and lakes. They also support local economies through recreational and tourism opportunities, and they enable the aquatic food web on which local fisheries rely.

But coastal wetlands are also severely threatened, losing habitat at disproportionately higher rates than other wetland types. Michigan alone has lost roughly half of its coastal wetland habitats over the past two centuries. This is largely due to a combination of human activity, such as urban and rural development, agriculture and forestry, which alter hydrological systems, and climate change, which affects

water level rise and storms. For example, rising water levels might naturally force coastal wetlands to migrate inland, but this migration can be blocked by human development, so the coastal wetland is instead converted into open water and lost.

Erie Marsh, which contains 11% of the remaining coastal wetlands in southeastern Michigan, had been degrading, too. But then, in 2011, TNC launched a major restoration project across 946 acres to reconnect the marsh to North Maumee Bay and Lake Erie.

We installed new infrastructure that allows us to manipulate water levels to maintain a wide variety of healthy wetland habitats and prevent invasive plants like phragmites from taking hold. In Erie Marsh, these wetland habitats include submergent (below water) and emergent (shallow water) marshes. A large, double-dike distribution canal is threaded between these different wetland sections. The water level within the canal is higher than the water level in the individual sections, which allows water to be distributed by gravity, as opposed to relying on electricity or fuel-powered pumps.

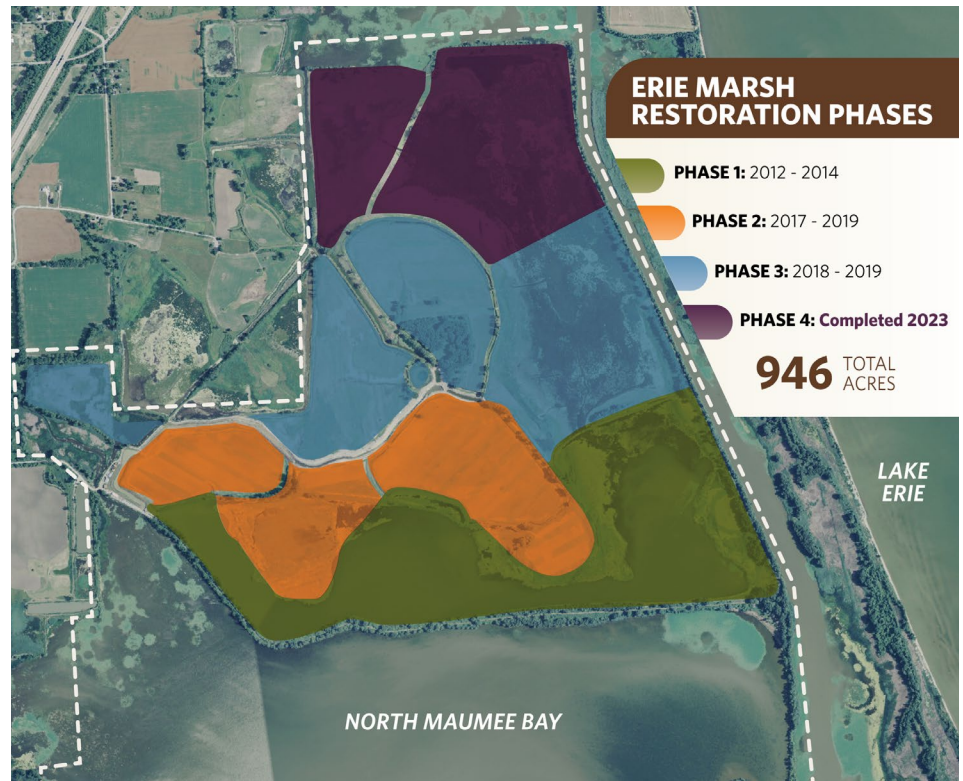
However, pumping is still occasionally required, so we purchased and installed a modern pump that replaced the 40-year-old diesel model. The new pump has a far greater flow capacity of 12,000 gallons per minute and pumps in both directions, which, along with the canal, allows us to

independently manage the different habitat sections.

We also constructed a fish passage structure to maintain a constant hydrological connection between the marsh and the bay. Gates along the passage can be closed in the event of a major weather-related event, which can help to minimize flood risk.

Now, thanks to the rejuvenated marsh, populations of waterfowl, shorebirds and songbirds are continuing to grow, and the waters are once again teeming with stocks of white bass, bowfin, longnose gar, freshwater drum and other native aquatic life. We've also added approximately 9.5 miles of trails for visitors to experience more of the preserve. In springtime, enjoy the wonders of thousands of migratory birds, who descend on this preserve to rest and refuel during their return from winter habitat.

**THANK YOU** to everyone who has helped protect and restore the Erie Marsh Preserve, including the DTE Energy Foundation, Ducks Unlimited, EGLE, Erie Shooting and Fishing Club, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, NOAA, the USFWS–Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge, the Walters Family Foundation, Carol and Peter Walters and the many other individual donors whose generosity helped carry us across the finish line.





# Empowering *Community Stewardship* in the Keweenaw Heartlands

In the heart of the Keweenaw Peninsula—a region of ancient volcanic rocks, lush forests and thriving wetlands—a new future for conservation is being built by, and for, the community. Brought together by a unique partnership between The Nature Conservancy (TNC), the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) and the Keweenaw community, a local planning committee is designing an unprecedented governance and management structure for community-led conservation.

This pioneering structure could serve as a model for other rural and forested communities looking to manage and steward their own lands and waters. It could also benefit other nonprofits looking to support community-led conservation efforts, and it could inspire state agencies seeking alternatives to traditional state ownership and management. Above all, it could serve as a successful example for how community-led conservation can protect nature while sustaining quality of life.

“We’ve been working closely with Keweenaw community leaders and residents over the past two years to help develop their goals for the governance model,” said Julia Petersen, TNC’s project manager for the Keweenaw Peninsula. “This model of local forest governance will have broader implications far beyond the Keweenaw. We’re inspired by the community’s commitment,

and we think it will help serve and inspire other communities looking to effectively govern and manage their own forests.”

A 17-member planning committee, which included local residents and interested parties, initiated the development of the community-led conservation model. The committee’s recommendations are based on the information gained through the development of the long-term management plan, known as the [\*Blueprint for the Keweenaw Heartlands\*](#).

The Blueprint defines the community’s values and desired outcomes for the stewardship and governance of the forest, and it outlines the process for transitioning the ownership of the land to the new governance model. In addition, it describes the community-based work that is needed to promote prosperity in the region—for people and nature.

“The protection of the Keweenaw Heartlands is a big success for both conservation and people,” Julia said. “We’re so honored to work with the Keweenaw community to ensure that these biodiverse and resilient ecosystems remain intact, healthy, productive and open to the public.”



# The Keweenaw Project: Past and Future

The Keweenaw Heartlands are part of one of the most unfragmented, climate-resilient forested and freshwater areas of the central United States. This region has globally significant opportunities for nature-based carbon solutions, and it has supported the cultures and well-being of all the people who have called it home.

TNC first became engaged with the Keweenaw Heartlands Project in 2021, when 32,500 acres of the forest were put up for sale. Recognizing the importance of this land, TNC hired RES Associates, LLC, a consulting firm, to survey local residents, engage community thought leaders and host public meetings to better understand the perspectives of interested parties.

In 2022, with the support of local partners, Keweenaw community leaders and the State of Michigan, TNC purchased the Keweenaw Heartlands. TNC's acquisition nearly doubled the Keweenaw Peninsula's protected lands and prevented the Heartlands from being fragmented, sold into private parcels or developed.

In addition, following the successful acquisition of the land, we initiated the Keweenaw Heartlands Ecological and Cultural Inventory Project (which you read about in our [previous newsletter](#)). The inventory project, which is ongoing, gathers information on timber and carbon resources, natural features and infrastructure assets, as well as the historical and cultural uses of the lands and waters. The values shared during the survey process and the information gained from the inventory project are embedded in the Blueprint, which will serve the local community as they adapt a comprehensive management plan for future stewardship.

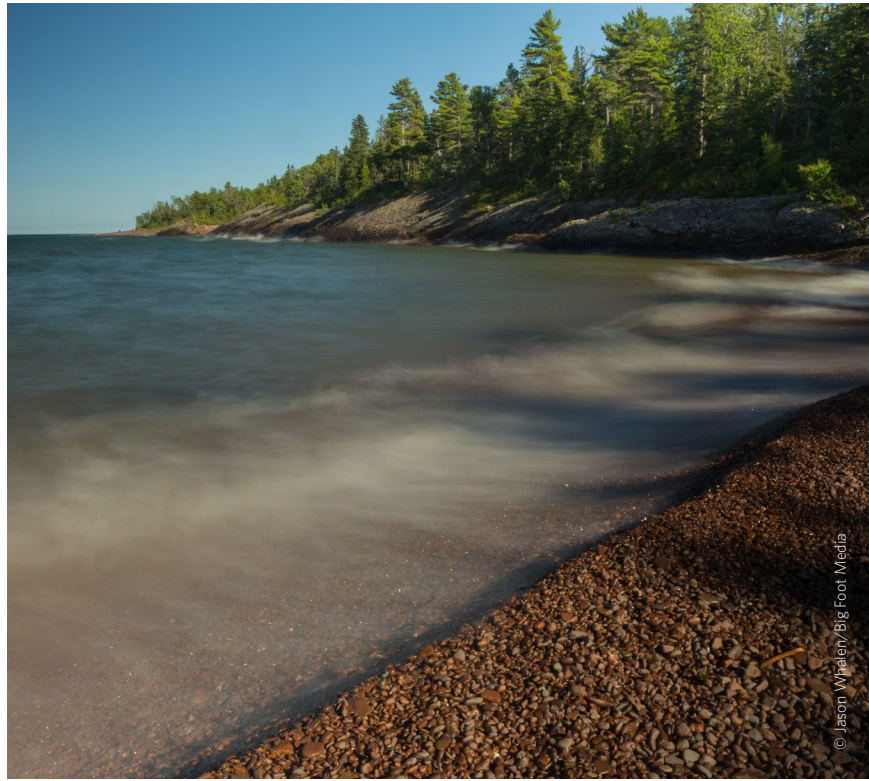
Currently, a new 27-member committee—which includes several members from the original planning committee—is advising TNC and the MDNR with preparing for the final phase of the project: transitioning the ownership, governance, management and stewardship of the land to public entities. Approximately 10,000 acres will be added to existing lands owned and managed by the MDNR, and the rest will be transferred to the new community ownership and management model.

This transition is expected to occur in 2025 and 2026. Until then, TNC will continue to manage the land and work with the local community to complete the Keweenaw Heartlands Project. Beyond that period, TNC will remain involved and invested in the region via our three Keweenaw preserves: the [Mary Macdonald Preserve at Horseshoe Harbor](#), the [Helmut and Candis Stern Preserve at Mt. Baldy](#) and the [Bete Grise Wetlands Preserve](#).

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## ➤ LEARN MORE

Visit our community portal at [bit.ly/keweenaw-project](https://bit.ly/keweenaw-project) to read the Blueprint and learn more about the project.



**PROTECTING THE KEWEENAW** | In 1982, member Mary Macdonald helped TNC establish our first preserve in the Keweenaw, with a gift of 500 acres of land. TNC has since expanded the Mary Macdonald Preserve to 1,200 acres.



**EXPLORE THE KEWEENAW** | There are volcanic rocks over a billion years old, cascading streams and iconic Lake Superior coastlines. There are lush boreal and oak-pine forests and thriving lakeside fens, bogs, marshes and wetlands, all of which serve as havens for Michigan's gray wolves, bobcats, black bears, pine martens and migratory songbirds. There are plants that grow almost nowhere else, including dozens of native orchid species and the thimbleberry, a locally beloved native wild berry that is found only in select locations in the northern Great Lakes and Rocky Mountains.

# Soil Health Heroes



All photos © Fauna Creative

## FARMERS PROTECTING THE SAGINAW BAY WATERSHED

For more than a decade, The Nature Conservancy (TNC) has been working with farmers in the Saginaw Bay watershed to improve long-term soil health and reduce harmful runoff. We provide technical, financial and social support to farmers who incorporate regenerative agriculture practices—such as reduced tillage, cover crops and nutrient management—into their operations.

By adapting innovative, sustainable practices, Saginaw Bay farmers are helping protect this 5.5-million-acre watershed, which supports roughly 20% of Michigan’s agricultural acres (a \$13 billion economy), supplies drinking water to nearby communities and provides important habitat for fish and migratory birds.

This past January, at the Great Lakes Crop Summit in Mt. Pleasant, TNC held our fourth biennial Soil Health Hero Awards. These awards honor the Saginaw Bay farmers who are going above and beyond for agri-environmental sustainability. Awardees are peer-nominated and selected by a committee representing agribusiness, conservation districts, academia and other sectors.

“Farmers are the leading conservation heroes, and kudos to The Nature Conservancy for their championing of these individuals,” said keynote speaker Mitchell Hora, founder and CEO of Continuum Ag and host of the popular podcast, *Field Work*. “Going forward, farmers will not only provide the world’s food, feed, fuel and fiber, but also be tasked to do it with an improved impact on water quality, biodiversity and carbon intensity. Exciting challenges lay ahead, and who better to lead the charge than the family farmer!”

With their extraordinary achievements, the awardees show that the adoption of soil health practices can help maintain farm resilience to weather extremes, reduce erosion and protect the clean water systems on which we all depend.



**TNC'S SOIL HEALTH EFFORTS** include building out a comprehensive water quality monitoring network, supporting farmer peer networks and delivering conservation programming through key commodity supply chains, such as sugar, beets, wheat and dairy.



LEARN MORE about how TNC and farmers are working together at [www.soilsavings.com](http://www.soilsavings.com).



# 2023 SOIL HEALTH HERO AWARDEES

## CONSERVATION EXCELLENCE AGRIBUSINESS AWARD



Sarah Michalek, *Michigan Milk Producers Association*

Sarah has dedicated more than a decade to forging a more sustainable future for the dairy sector. As sustainability supervisor at the Michigan Milk Producers Association (MMPA), she has overseen a multitude of initiatives to reduce the carbon footprint of the dairy supply chain, managed on-farm sustainability programs and collaborated with the Farmer Sustainability Advisory Committee at MMPA to inform positive change in the industry.

*"Sustainability has always been top of mind for MMPA member farms, which is evident in the many multi-generational farms that make up our membership. At MMPA, I'm fortunate to work with a team that's passionate about providing opportunities for our members to continuously improve their operations through efficiency gains and advancing technologies that will benefit the farms' next generation."*

## CONSERVATION NEWCOMER AWARD



Caleb and Cody Symons, *Symons Farm, Chesaning, Mich.*

Brothers Caleb and Cody Symons started their farming career as conservation-minded as possible. They practice controlled traffic farming (which uses the same routes to reduce the environmental impact of machinery), and they developed a nutrient management plan for their farm as part of a grant-funded soil sampling program for the Saginaw Bay watershed. Due to their innovative efforts, their 550-acre farm is already verified by the Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program, and they hold multiple Environmental Quality Incentives Program contracts.

*"Sustainability practices, conservation—improving those aspects of our operation are going to help us down the road. Anything for us to produce more and use less or protect the environment—we're very open to that."*

## CONSERVATION INNOVATION AWARD



James Weber, *Weber Dairy, Vassar, Mich.*

James is a leader in the adoption of regenerative agriculture practices on dairy farms. For his herd of 250 milking cows, he uses a recycled manure solids (RMS) system, or composted manure, for a large portion of the bedding. He also installed approximately 20 acres of a native harvestable buffer along surface waters—a practice that allows nutrients to be cycled sustainably. He's currently working with his local National Resources Conservation Service office on a comprehensive nutrient management plan.

*"I'm not the last person who's going to be farming this land, [and] I'm not the only person who's impacted by the decisions that I make out here. That resonates with me, and it drives me to do better."*

## CONSERVATION LEGACY AWARD



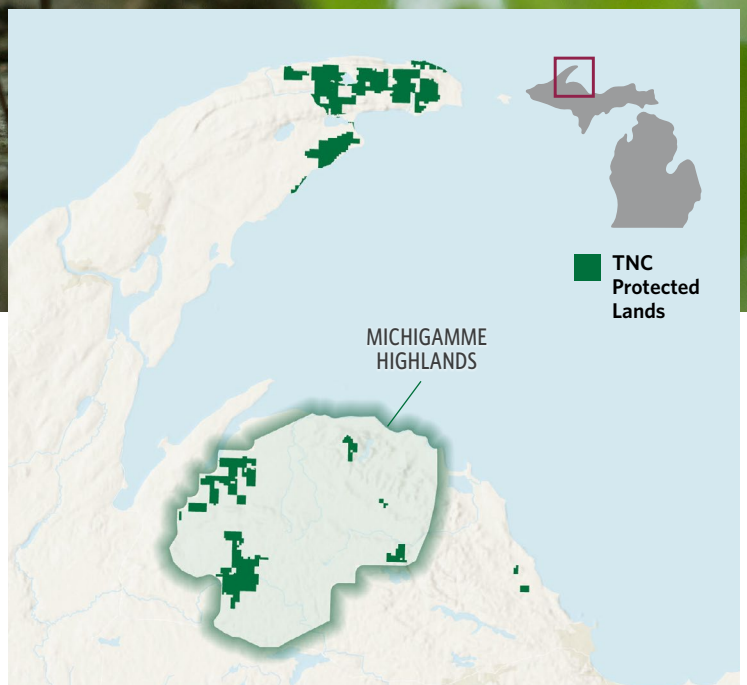
Wayne Bierlein, *WMW Bierlein Farms, Reese, Mich.*

Wayne has long been a leader for agricultural conservation practices. He initiated the switch to a true no-till system about eight years ago, and he has been fully no-till on his entire 1,500 acres for the past five years. His farm is known for experimenting with cover crops, sometimes using seven or more types of seeds in a "cocktail blend," which has increased soil health dramatically. He also started a farmer-led watershed group to further collaboration on sustainable farming efforts.

*"As farmers, we're stewards of the land. We want to pass that on to whoever picks this up—that they maintain what we've given them in soil health and nature to keep the legacy of this land going and hopefully make it continue to prosper."*



# Carbon Sales for a Sustainable Future



**MICHIGAMME HIGHLANDS** | This region of Michigan's Upper Peninsula features some of the most scenic landscapes in the Midwest and is highly valued for its ecological significance. This area, totaling more than 230,000 acres, boasts vast and wild forests, a wide range of wildlife, stunning glacial lakes and unique geological features. TNC's goal is to protect and link lands in this region—creating a resilient, connected network.

➤ **LEARN MORE** about TNC's work in the Great Lakes Northwoods at [www.nature.org/northwoods](http://www.nature.org/northwoods).

As one of the largest remaining unbroken swaths of hardwood forest in North America, the Michigamme Highlands has great potential for mitigating climate change through the use of natural climate solutions. Natural climate solutions use conservation, restoration and sustainable management practices to improve the ability of ecosystems to absorb and store carbon from the atmosphere. These practices can aid forest biodiversity and health, promote clean air and water and help economies and communities thrive.

To empower and expand The Nature Conservancy's (TNC) natural climate solutions work, TNC created the Michigamme Highlands carbon credit program. Carbon credit programs are important tools that can help us address the climate crisis. Specifically, carbon offset markets, in combination with other strategies, have the potential to meaningfully mitigate the impact of greenhouse gas emissions while providing co-benefits to people and nature.

A carbon credit represents one metric ton of reduced, prevented or removed greenhouse gas (typically carbon) through projects such as TNC's work in the Michigamme Highlands. As such, companies that have taken significant actions to reduce their greenhouse gas footprint can purchase carbon credits to help offset their current, unavoidable emissions. Research conducted by the Forest Trends' Ecosystem Marketplace found companies participating in these voluntary carbon markets reduce their own emissions quicker than their peers and have clearer targets to address climate change.

TNC believes that offsets should be used only as a supplement to a company's decarbonization actions—they cannot replace the company's efforts to reduce their emissions and improve energy efficiency. As such, we only issue carbon credits to companies that have already taken all feasible steps to reduce their emissions. Credits are available to companies in Michigan, throughout the Midwest, across the country and around the world that meet TNC's requirements and wish to reduce their climate impact.



TNC's Michigamme Highlands carbon project spans approximately 13,660 acres across a portion of our [Wilderness Lakes Reserve](#) and the [Slate River Forest Reserve](#) and is expected to yield approximately 860,000 credits over the next 20 years. Late last year, ACR (a carbon registry and crediting program) issued our first verified carbon offset credits from the project for sale in the voluntary carbon market.

"The revenue raised from these carbon sales will help us maintain our management of the Michigamme Highlands and expand our conservation efforts throughout the Northwoods region," said Rich Tuzinsky, director of land protection for TNC in Michigan. "With these funds, we can protect more land while helping these forests thrive as renewable, resilient and productive sources of sustainably produced timber."

In addition, a portion of the funds will support energy efficiency and home repair programs for underserved communities in Southeast Michigan. This will help ensure that the financial gains from environmental resiliency and adaptation projects are reinvested into the communities experiencing the severest impacts of climate change.

## SETTING CARBON STANDARDS

TNC's Michigamme Highlands carbon project aligns with the Integrity Council for the Voluntary Carbon Market's 10 Core Carbon Principles, a global benchmark for high-integrity carbon credits that set rigorous thresholds on disclosure and sustainable development. By adhering to the requirements, this project ensures the credits issued are contributing to measurable, durable climate impact.

The project also supports several of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals including Good Health and Well-Being, Clean Water and Sanitation, Decent Work and Economic Growth, Climate Action and Life on Land. The project is listed on the ACR as ACR647.

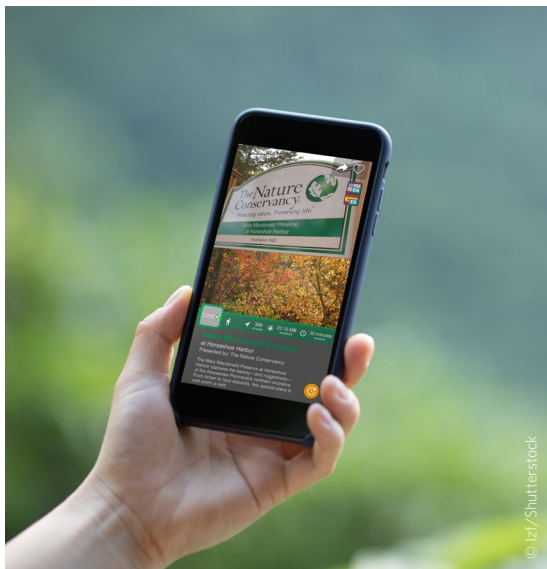


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# Nature Near *You*

At The Nature Conservancy (TNC), we're celebrating springtime by highlighting some of the new (or evolving) projects on our preserves. After all, there's no better way to celebrate this season of renewal than by getting outside!

➤ VISIT [www.nature.org/miexplore](http://www.nature.org/miexplore) to learn more about the places and activities in this article and find a preserve near you.



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## LISTEN TO THIS

Join us for a journey through floodplain forests, wetlands, bluffs and marshes—right from the palm of your hand. Our guided audio tours include stories, fun facts, history lessons and natural sounds to deepen your connection to nature. You can access the tours from the comfort of your home or from your phone as you hike. All tours are available in English and select tours are available in Spanish. If you're accessing it from a mobile device, make sure you follow the instructions to download the tour before you head to the trail.

### AUDIO TOURS ARE AVAILABLE FOR:

- [Carl A. Gerstacker Nature Preserve at Dudley Bay](#)
- [Echo Lake Nature Preserve](#)
- [Helmut and Candis Stern Preserve at Mt. Baldy](#) (Spanish language available)
- [Mary Macdonald Preserve at Horseshoe Harbor](#) (Spanish language available)
- [Nan Weston Nature Preserve at Sharon Hollow](#)
- [Ross Coastal Plain Marsh Preserve](#)
- [McMahon Lake Preserve](#) (Spanish language available)



## THERE'S TREASURE IN THEM THAR GEOCACHES!

Arr' it's time for a treasure hunt, Matey! Using a smartphone or Global Positioning System (GPS), see if you can find geocaches hidden at some of our preserves. These hidden containers are filled with fun, interesting treasures. Geocaching is a great way to get the whole family outside to explore the natural world and teach kids navigation skills.

To protect sensitive habitats and maintain a fun and safe activity, geocaching is a strictly regulated activity at TNC. Anyone wishing to place a geocache within our preserves must complete a permit application first.

### APPROVED GEOCACHES CAN BE FOUND AT:

- Ross Coastal Plain Marsh Preserve
- Paw Paw Prairie Fen Preserve



## iNATURALIST HELPS YOU iSPY THE WONDERS OF NATURE

What plants and animals thrive in our preserves? It's hard to keep track! With iNaturalist, you can connect with other naturalists and community scientists who enjoy exploring the outdoors. Download the app or visit [inaturalist.org](https://www.inaturalist.org) to add your nature photos and observations, meet other nature enthusiasts and learn about the natural world.

When you record a species at a TNC nature preserve in Michigan, your finding will appear in our TNC Michigan Preserves & Reserves project within the iNaturalist system. Last year, 163 observers made 1,249 observations of 611 species on TNC preserves and reserves. Thank you to all the participants who helped us increase community awareness of local biodiversity and encouraged the exploration of nature!



## TURNING UP THE HEAT

For the past several years, we've been working to maintain and improve fire-dependent ecosystems that are found at our southern fens and savanna preserves. This work includes removing and preventing the spread of invasive species and reintroducing fire to this unique landscape. Our team regularly participates in fire management trainings to ensure utmost safety when practicing controlled burns.

Fire has always been a natural source of regeneration for Michigan landscapes. As an important natural disturbance, it helps clear out old detritus to make way for new growth, returns nutrients to the soil, discourages invasive species and maintains the integrity of rare ecosystems, like prairie fens and oak savannas. By safely returning fire to this ecosystem, as well as several of our other southeastern Michigan properties, we hope to improve the quality of our prairie fens and oak savannas so that native grasses and wildflowers, as well as endangered species like the Mitchell's satyr butterfly and the eastern massasauga rattlesnake, may thrive.



## FORGING NEW PATHS

After a powerful storm known as a "microburst" laid waste to many of the trees in the northern part of the [Ross Coastal Plain Marsh Preserve](#) a few years ago, we've been working to restore the habitat and reroute the old trails. These new routes are now open! In addition, in the southern part of the preserve, you can see signs of forest restoration in action, such as the removal of patches of former red pine plantation and the planting of climate-resilient native trees. This will help maintain the health and biodiversity of the forest under new climate pressures.

As a coastal plain marsh—a rare habitat that's unique to the Great Lakes—the Ross Preserve is a birder's paradise in springtime. It also features wet meadows, sand dunes, wooded inland dunes, small lakes and northern hardwood forest. While you're here, look for rare plants, like the globe-fruited seedbox and netted nutrush. You're also likely to spot fauna such as the eastern box turtle, Blanchard's cricket frog, red fox, great horned owl, belted kingfisher and cerulean warbler.

# Upcoming Events

## 2024 ALDO LEOPOLD FESTIVAL

May 29 – June 2 | Les Cheneaux Islands

TNC is a proud sponsor of the 2024 Aldo Leopold Festival, which celebrates the wonders of nature and the importance of conservation. Along with foraging workshops, wildflower tours, paddling excursions and more, the festival is offering activities at three TNC preserves:

- **Tour** at Maxton Plains Preserve  
Wednesday, May 29 | 8:40am – 1:00pm
- **Birding** at John Arthur Woollam Preserve  
Thursday, May 30 | 7:30am – 10:30am
- **TNC guided hike** at Carl A. Gerstacker Nature Preserve  
Saturday, June 1 | 2:00pm – 5:00pm

Review the full schedule and register for events:  
[aldoleopoldfestival.org/event-schedule](https://aldoleopoldfestival.org/event-schedule)



## HIKE WITH A TNC NATURALIST

Escape into nature and learn about the unique ecology and history of TNC's preserves with one of our knowledgeable staff members.

- **Echo Lake Nature Preserve** | Marquette  
Saturday, July 20 | 10:00am – 1:00pm
- **Mary Macdonald Preserve** | Copper Harbor  
Saturday, August 24 | 10:00am – 1:00pm

Register for hikes and view more upcoming events:  
[nature.org/mievents](https://nature.org/mievents)



## LET'S CONNECT

Don't miss an event notice; subscribe online at [nature.org/naturenews](https://nature.org/naturenews) to receive special invitations and timely alerts. Can't make it to one of our events in person? Connect with TNC online, including audio tours, lectures, virtual field trips and more, at [nature.org/miexplore](https://nature.org/miexplore).

# Spring Activity Guide

It's spring and the world is coming back to life! From puddles to pedals, these activities will help your entire family enjoy the beauty of the season.



1

## Make Flower Prints

Collect flowers on nature walks, take them home and trim away the stem. Fold a piece of paper in half and place the flower inside the folded paper. Gently tap the paper with a hammer or place a book on top of the folded paper and press down. Peel the paper back to see your colorful creation!

Turn your flower print into a greeting card and send a note about spring to a loved one!

Use the free smartphone app Seek by iNaturalist to identify your flower. Is it native to where you live?

## Play a Game of Poohsticks

Just like Winnie-the-Pooh and Christopher Robin, you can make a game using sticks, leaves and a stream. Take a walk near a bridge, choose leaves or twigs to be your Pooh stick, and drop them over the side. Then head to the opposite side of the bridge to see whose stick makes it across first!

Do you know the name of the stream? Look it up on Google Maps!



3

## Rainy Day Play

April showers bring May flowers—and puddles! Pull on your rain boots—or not!—to enjoy splashing in the water. Can you see yourself or anything else reflected in the water? Pay close attention to what animals are out and about. Do you spot any earthworms? How about robins?

Want to get your hands dirty? Bring an empty container on your walk and make a mud pie! What color is the mud? Can you describe how it feels?



4

## Sole Discovery

Take off your shoes and explore nature through your toes! Can you pick up a rock or twig with your toes? Feel different surfaces with your bare feet. What does the dirt feel like? How about the grass, gravel (ouch!) or mud? How do they feel different?

How many different description words can you use?

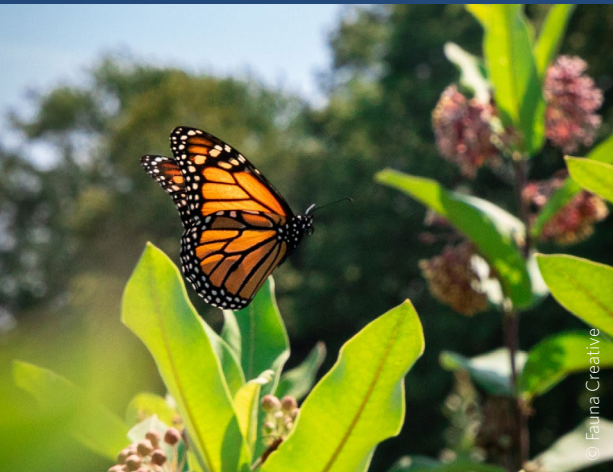
## Brown Baggin' Nature

A paper bag can bring all sorts of creative play into your time in nature! Try drawing pictures of five things to discover on the outside of the bag, and then go on a scavenger hunt to find them. Or make a nature puppet by gluing items you find in nature (pebbles for eyes, leaf for nose) on the bag.

Give your nature puppet a name—and assign it a superpower!

# Give the Gift of a Lifetime

To make a gift of any kind to The Nature Conservancy is an act of generosity. To make a long-term gift—one derived from the work of a lifetime—is to make a commitment beyond measure.



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The Legacy Club is a group of TNC supporters who have made a lasting commitment to conservation by making a life-income gift with TNC or by naming TNC as a beneficiary in their estate plans. The Legacy Club is a way for us to recognize this profound contribution to The Nature Conservancy's future.

## Create Your Conservation Legacy

For more than half a century, thousands of bequests and planned gifts have provided vital support for the lands and waters you care about. Today you can help continue this tradition by making a lasting commitment to the Conservancy. When you join the Legacy Club, you help ensure that the conservation work we pioneer today will continue long into the future.

## Legacy Club Benefits

- Nature Conservancy magazine, our award-winning quarterly publication;
- The semi-annual newsletter, Legacy;
- TNC's annual report;
- Trip invitations offering participants a unique and up-close look at our work;
- Invitations to special events; and
- Exclusive discounts and offers.

## How to Join The Legacy Club

Membership is voluntary and without obligation. You can become a member of the Legacy Club by naming the Conservancy in your will or estate plan or by making a life-income gift or donating real estate to fund your gift.

To learn more about the Legacy Club, or if you are a Legacy Club member and have a question, please contact Paul Beczkiewicz at **517-316-2269** or [pbeczkiewicz@tnc.org](mailto:pbeczkiewicz@tnc.org).

Or visit [nature.org/legacyclub](https://nature.org/legacyclub).