



LAND

People have thrived on Michigan's two great peninsulas for thousands of years. From highlands to fens to farmlands, the abundance of these lands continues to shape our lives, and the future of Michigan.

Place is transcendent—far more than a name on a map. In Michigan and around the world, the well-being of people is tied to the well-being of the land we live on.

THESE ROOTS GO DEEP

The story of The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and our work with land is one of both continuity and change. Since our founding in 1951, we have directly protected over 125 million acres around the world—but our commitment to science, innovation and learning means our impact extends even further.

Today, TNC works shoulder-to-shoulder with natural resource managers, farmers, foresters and landowners at all scales to safeguard entire natural systems. Together, we demonstrate how science-based tools and practices can chart a more sustainable course for the lands we all depend on.

OUR MICHIGAN LEGACY

TNC has protected close to 400,000 acres in Michigan, and we currently own and manage over 55,000 acres across the state. These efforts help ensure the future of some of Michigan's most vital lands and waters, and their many benefits to people and wildlife. They also provide a strong foundation for the research and solutions that we share with our partners to collaboratively address the significant challenges that people and nature face today.

COVER: Alvar grassland at TNC's Maxton Plains Preserve. © Chris Cantway/TNC; RIGHT: A dragonfly found at TNC's Ross Coastal Plain Marsh Preserve. © Jason Whalen/Big Foot Media



GOALS

- Protect and restore Michigan's lands and waters, using science as our foundation.
- Ensure the living legacy of Michigan's unique and irreplaceable biodiversity.
- Collaborate with local communities and regional partners to align and accelerate lasting conservation solutions.
- Encourage Michiganders to act in support of conservation.



OUR STRATEGIES

PROTECTION

TNC's approach to land protection includes acquisition, conservation easements, innovative financing solutions, policy advocacy and more. These strategies allow us to achieve meaningful protection of Michigan lands, and support the wildlife and people that benefit from the clean air and water and other services that healthy lands provide.

RESTORATION

TNC is a leader in natural areas restoration and management. On TNC and partner-owned lands, we restore forest diversity and health, conduct controlled burns in fire-dependent landscapes, remove invasive plants, restore the hydrology of wetlands and more. These science-based techniques maintain the ecological integrity and significance of Michigan's habitats.

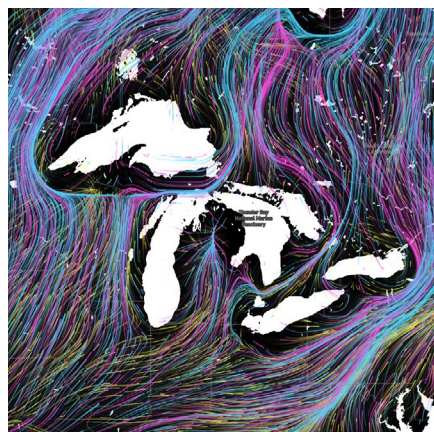
COLLABORATION

Our conservation impact is magnified when we work together. TNC works with state, tribal and federal agencies, local land trusts and others working in conservation in Michigan, to enhance our shared capacity for tangible, lasting results. For example, TNC frequently assists partners with the purchase of lands that will become local or state parks, and shares tools such as our resilient connected network map (maps.tnc.org/resilientland) to help partners plan their efforts.

CONNECTION

TNC's protected lands provide people with valuable opportunities to connect with nature. We maintain our preserves and reserves to achieve the right balance of use so that natural systems flourish, and people can have meaningful experiences in the outdoors. We strive to provide access to nature both in person and virtually, to enhance awareness of the importance of conservation and inspire people to take action to protect Michigan's lands themselves.

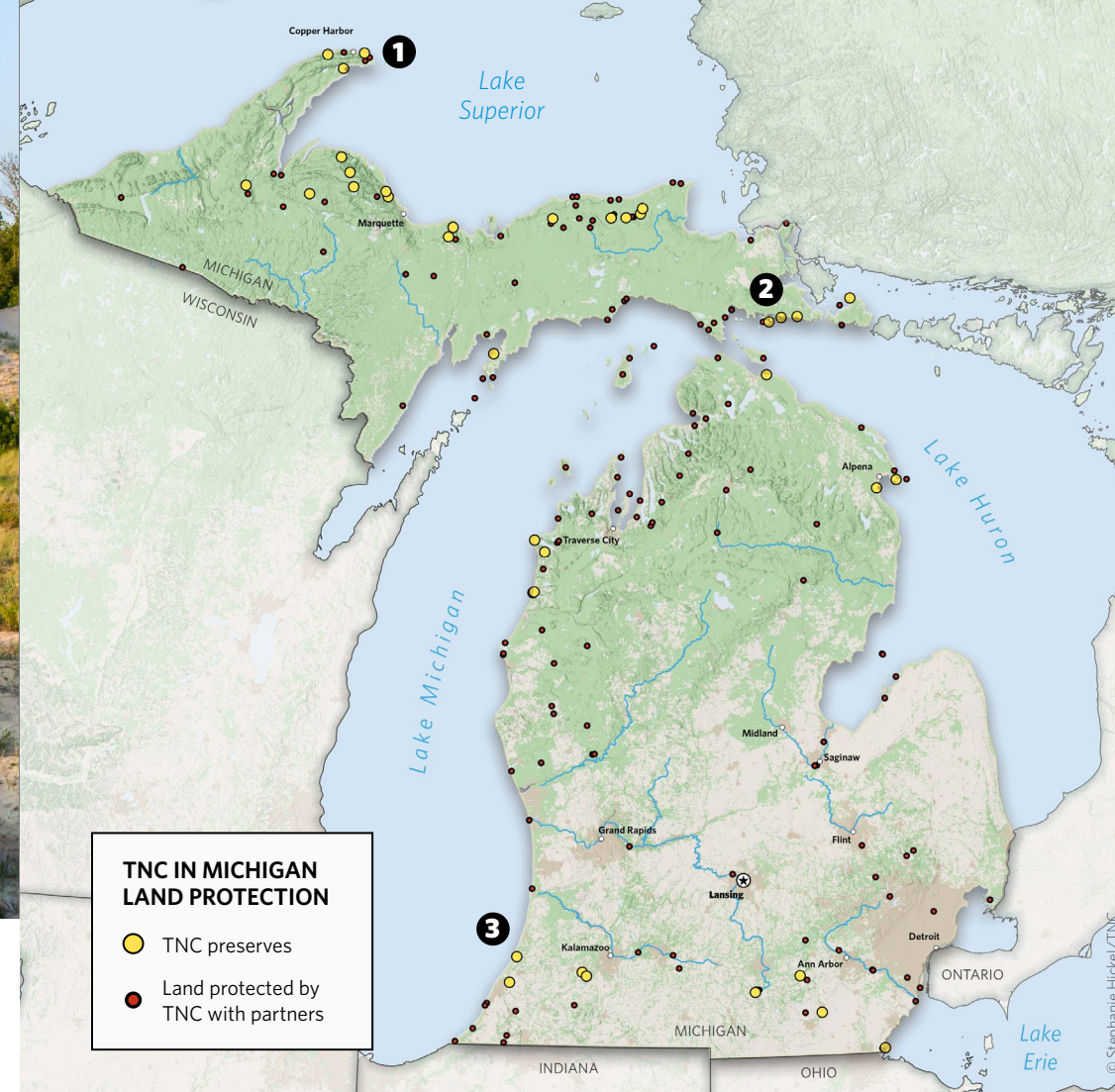
ABOVE: The setting sun lights up the dunes at Zetterberg Preserve at Point Betsie. © Jason Whalen/Big Foot Media



CONNECTING THE DOTS

A recent study led by TNC (nature.org/naturalhighways) has identified the most resilient places in the U.S.—the lands best equipped to adapt to the impacts of climate change and other challenges. This important effort is helping us prioritize our protection and restoration efforts in Michigan and across the country, to contribute to a resilient connected network of lands and waters.

ABOVE: A map of the paths mammals, birds and amphibians will likely need to take due to climate change. © Dan Majka/TNC



DEFINING LAND PROTECTION

Acquisition: TNC acquires land for ownership through purchases, donations or transfers from partners.

Conservation Easement: A legally binding agreement that commits a property to certain conservation practices or outcomes, while allowing the landowner to retain ownership. As the easement holder, TNC monitors future uses of the land to ensure compliance.

Preserve: Protected land that has been set aside in perpetuity for the primary purpose of conservation. A preserve may also offer opportunities for scientific research and low-impact recreation.

Reserve: "Working land" that acts as a learning laboratory. On our forest reserves in the Upper Peninsula, TNC studies land management practices that accelerate restoration and increase resilience, and demonstrates those practices to others.

TNC PRESERVES

Today, TNC has over 35 preserves and reserves in Michigan, including those highlighted above. These are TNC-owned lands that have been protected for people and nature in perpetuity.

1 Keweenaw Peninsula

One of the northernmost points in Michigan, the Keweenaw Peninsula is renowned for its rocky Lake Superior beaches and lush forests of balsam fir, cedar, spruce and birch. From the Mary MacDonald Preserve at Horseshoe Harbor (photo, right, top) and Bete Grise Wetlands Preserve—with nearly six miles of Lake Superior shoreline between them—to the heights of the Helmut and Candis Stern Preserve at Mt. Baldy, TNC has helped protect numerous standout places in this priority conservation area.

2 Les Cheneaux Islands—Northern Lake Huron

Coastal Lake Huron preserves like the John Arthur Woollam Preserve and the Carl A. Gerstacker Nature Preserve protect forest and wetlands that provide habitat to migratory birds on their journeys north and south across the Great Lakes, and safeguard rare plant and animal species, such as Houghton's goldenrod. Here, visitors can experience the beauty of a stunning Great Lakes shoreline, and listen for the haunting cry of the loon.

3 Western Michigan

Michigan's iconic coastal dunes and marshes—a feature of several TNC preserves, including the Zetterberg Preserve at Pt. Betsie—are home to rare plant species as well as numerous reptiles and amphibians (photo, right, bottom). The Ross Coastal Plain Marsh Preserve also contains some of the area's last remaining northern hardwood forest, which is known for its vivid fall colors.

Audio tours featuring a selection of TNC preserves can be found at nature.org/miexplore.



TO CONSERVE THE LANDS AND WATERS ON WHICH ALL LIFE DEPENDS

From policy to partnership, from Upper to Lower, TNC protects the thing that matters most: **our home.**



In 2020, TNC and many partners achieved a major policy victory when Michiganders voted YES on a ballot proposal that ensured funding for our state's water, wildlife and parks through the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund. This fund has supported many protected places in Michigan, including the Saugatuck Harbor Natural Area and the new Saginaw River Headwaters Recreation Area—preserves and parks that TNC helped establish. © Michael DL Jordan/dlp



In 2018, TNC acquired 1,400 acres and four miles of shoreline on the North Point Peninsula, surrounded by Lake Huron's Thunder Bay Marine Sanctuary. By holding this special property until we could transfer it to a local nonprofit group, we secured protection for habitat that shelters thousands of migratory birds every year, as well as rare species like the dwarf lake iris. © Joshua Mayer/Flickr



On forest reserves like our Wilderness Lakes Reserve, TNC shows how the right practices can not only promote forest health and biodiversity, but also help reduce the greenhouse gases that lead to a warming climate. Established by TNC in 2017, this reserve was later expanded to over 10,000 protected acres of spectacular forestland, high-quality wetlands and glacial lakes. © Dietrich Ludwig



In southern Michigan, TNC has protected over 1,500 acres of savannas and rare fens—a type of wetland—that filter the headwaters of major rivers like the Grand River. Restoration efforts include thousands of volunteer hours spent removing invasive species such as glossy buckthorn and the use of controlled fire, which allows this habitat to regenerate. © Jason Whalen/Big Foot Media



GLOBAL CONNECTION

TNC's decades of work to protect the world's great places and biodiversity have illuminated the fundamental connection between people and nature: We share many of the same challenges, and investments in nature are also an investment in our future as a species. Our awareness of this connection, and the science that supports it, underpin our continued work to conserve lands around the world.

LEFT: TNC science informed Mongolia's extraordinary goal to protect 30% of the country, which includes some of the largest and most ecologically important grasslands on the planet. © Nick Hall



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