



Southeast Michigan contains the headwaters for many of Michigan's most important waterways, including the River Raisin (above). © Matthew Bohan



The Great Lakes hold one fifth of the world's fresh surface water. The basin supports habitat for hundreds of rare plants, including the fringed gentian (above). © Chuck Pearson

The rivers of Southern Michigan contain water of global importance.

All of our water in Southern Michigan flows into the Great Lakes, the world's largest freshwater ecosystem.

More than 40 million people get their drinking water from the Great Lakes.

Restoring our forests, grasslands, and wetlands protects our lakes and the plants and animals whose survival depends on these special places.

Without your help, the places we know and love in Michigan will drastically change.

Now is the time and opportunity to protect the woods and waters that attracted us to the open spaces surrounding our homes.

Don't sit this one out

Act now.

**Contact a land steward
at The Nature Conservancy:
(517) 316-0300 or 1-800-321-1685**

What Can YOU Do?

Become a partner in conservation:

- Learn more about the importance of your land. Tell others what you've learned.
- Remove invasive species.
- Consider consulting a professional land steward to conduct a prescribed burn on your property to help restore its native vegetation.
- Volunteer for stewardship work days at conservation sites in your area. Learn more online at www.stewardshipnetwork.org
- Support your local conservation organization or watershed council.
- Consider a conservation easement to voluntarily and legally protect your property in perpetuity. Consult your tax advisor to learn how it may benefit you financially.
- Donate your land or include it in your estate planning.
- Learn more about planned giving options.



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Produced by

The Nature Conservancy

SAVING THE LAST GREAT PLACES ON EARTH

IN MICHIGAN
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Partnering to Protect Water & Preserve Life

*A Guide For Owners of
Ecologically Important Private Land
In Southeast Michigan*

*Provided by the partners of the
Southeast Michigan Headwaters Collaborative
and produced by*



SAVING THE LAST GREAT PLACES ON EARTH

a private landowner's perspective

Headwater streams and associated wetland systems in Southern Michigan provide an important link between terrestrial uplands and downstream rivers, coastal wetlands, and the Great Lakes. By protecting our waterways, we can better preserve life for wildlife and people. © TNC/Doug Pearalls

Be a Partner in Protecting Our Land & Water

The Nature Conservancy and its partners identified 13 priority areas in the Great Lakes basin near you, seven of which were identified as high priorities for immediate action. We are following up on that assessment by working to engage partners like you in planning and conservation.

The Nature Conservancy is a private, nonprofit conservation organization with more than 1 million members worldwide. Working together with people like you, businesses, and communities, we will have protected more than 360,000 acres in Michigan through our *Campaign for Conservation* and by utilizing a science-based, market-driven approach to conservation.

Working with partners like Michigan State University, The Stewardship Network, and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources' Landowner Incentive Program, we help to build stewardship clusters of committed professional and volunteer stewards who train others and promote better land stewardship practices. Several public and private organizations, including numerous watershed councils, are also active in this partnership.

Each of these groups have done conservation planning and implemented programs to increase awareness of the importance of the rivers in Southern Michigan and to monitor the health of these rivers through volunteer survey programs.

This new partnership initiative will provide technical and financial assistance to private landowners in this globally important region. To find out how you can be a partner in conservation, visit us online at:

<http://nature.org/michigan/rivers>

"After 20 years of working with The Nature Conservancy, I can easily recommend working with them to my neighbors, friends and family.

"All of us living in this special place should be doing something to help protect it — not just for us, but for the long-term, for those who will be here after us.

"A lot of people think that if you partner with the Conservancy that you're going to lose control of your property or some of your privacy. That couldn't be farther from the truth. They're a good neighbor.

"This is a good opportunity to help keep the land the way we like it and to give work to local people by providing jobs for people and getting some critical work done in the process. There would be no way for my wife and I to do all this work on our land on our own to help manage the invasives like buckthorn.

"The Nature Conservancy will work with you to figure out a management plan that best suits your individual needs. Our partnership has not been an inconvenience, but really a great benefit built on trust."

- Scott Weaver
Private landowner of 80 acres
Liberty, Michigan



The Ecological Importance of Southern Michigan

In Southeastern Michigan, the watersheds of 10 major rivers drain directly into, and influence the health of, the Great Lakes. Roughly 2 million people, or 20% of Michigan's population, live, and work in this area where landownership is overwhelmingly private.

The climate and glacial landforms of this region have given rise to a unique concentration of rare species and natural communities. Habitat destruction, invasive species, and alteration of historic fire regimes threaten these essential mosaics of uplands, wetlands, waterways, and the ecosystem services they provide to the people and wildlife who live in this area.

The Southeastern Michigan headwaters region is an area of diverse topography, soils, and hydrology. From the northern portion of this region flows the Flint, Shiawassee, Huron, Clinton, and Rouge Rivers, while the Raisin, Kalamazoo, Grand, and two St. Joseph Rivers (one flowing westward, one eastward) all begin in the southern portion. The steep or rolling landforms and coarse-textured soils here support an intricate mosaic of uplands and wetlands, and a high diversity of plant and animal species.

As a result, aquatic, terrestrial, and wetland ecosystems occur at relatively small sizes and in close proximity. The variety of water systems, forests, oak barrens, and prairies generate abundant terrestrial and aquatic biodiversity.