

INSIDE:

**WHAT'S NEXT FOR THE
KEWEENAW PENINSULA**

**FAMILY FOREST OWNERS
FIGHT CLIMATE CHANGE**

Field Notes
from **Michigan**

For Members of The Nature Conservancy in Michigan

Spring 2023 Newsletter

The Nature
Conservancy



The Power of *Partnership*

The end of 2022 brought world leaders together at COP15, the United Nations Biodiversity Conference in Montreal. Here, [nations agreed](#) to 23 global conservation targets to achieve by 2030, including the protection of 30% of all land, freshwater and ocean resources—establishing an ambitious, durable Global Biodiversity Framework for a nature-positive world.



Helen Taylor

These are the kind of big ideas that TNC encourages as we collaborate with and support countries and corporations in acting on climate change and biodiversity loss. These big ideas are also reflected in TNC's work right here in Michigan—where we strive to ensure our beloved state's biodiversity and communities continue to thrive.

The protection of the Keweenaw Heartlands—more than 32,000 acres of irreplaceable, stunningly beautiful forestland—demonstrates the ambitious scale of TNC's contributions toward protecting 30% of the world's lands and waters. Along with projects like our fish restoration research, the Family Forest Carbon Program and the Saginaw Bay Monitoring Consortium, it also demonstrates what we all can achieve for Michigan and for our planet when our communities come together around conservation.

You can read about these exciting projects—and more—in the pages of this Spring 2023 edition of *Field Notes from Michigan*. And, if you would like to be a part of this important work, **we could really use your help!** Turn to page 5 to learn how to donate in support of the Keweenaw Heartlands project.

Thank you for your ongoing support for TNC. It will mean everything for our future generations.

Yours in Conservation,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Helen Taylor". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Helen Taylor
State Director

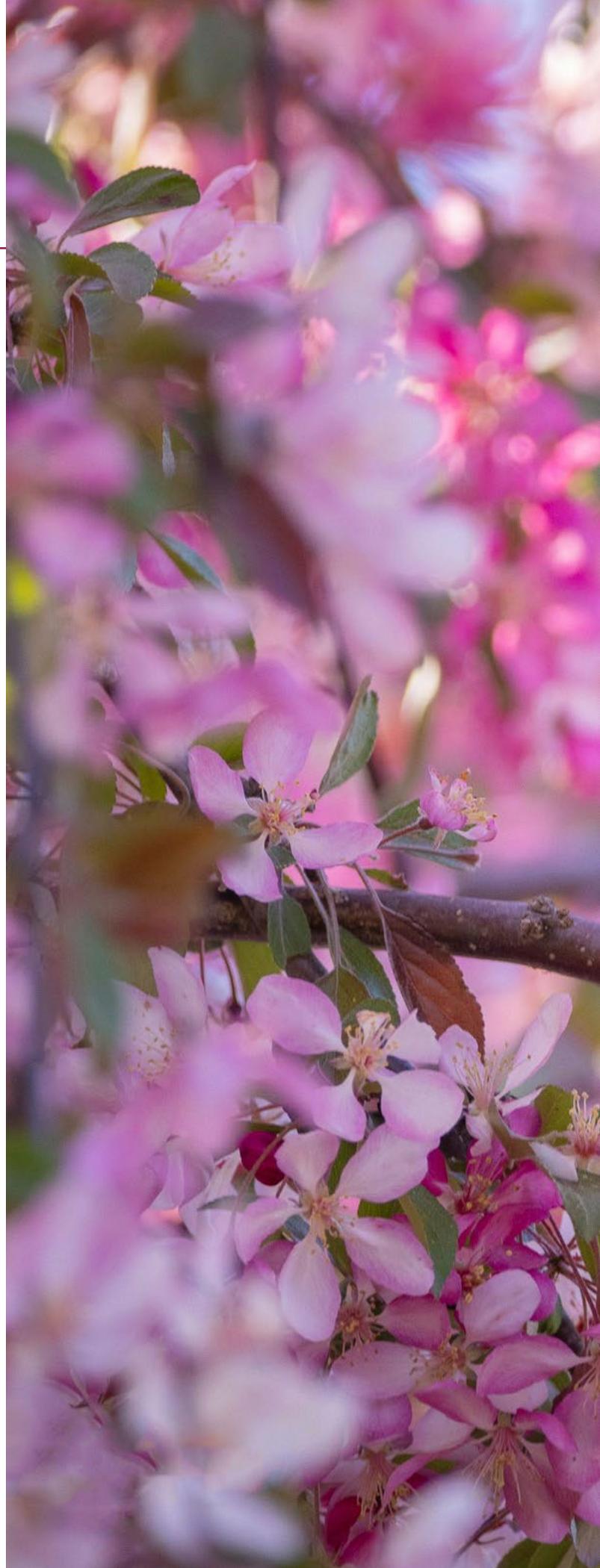




TABLE OF CONTENTS

THE FUTURE OF THE KEWEENAW.....	4
KIYI: THE STORY OF A FISH.....	6
A FAMILY (FOREST) MATTER....	8
WATCHING THE WATERS OF SAGINAW BAY.....	10
NEWS IN BRIEF.....	12
UPCOMING EVENTS.....	14
YOU'RE THE SCIENTIST!.....	15

COVER: Closeup of sandhill crane feathers.
© Tajinder Singh/TNC Photo Contest 2022

LEFT: A male cedar waxwing offers his mate
some fresh petals from a crab apple tree.
© Viseth Vic Moua/TNC Photo Contest 2021



THE FUTURE OF THE KEWEENAW

THE SPECTACULAR KEWEENAW PENINSULA, at the northern edge of Michigan, is cherished by residents and visitors alike. Ancient volcanic geology, Lake Superior coastlines and lush forests all contribute to this unique landscape, and the cultures, economies and quality of life of the communities that depend on it.

And there's no time like the present to protect this special legacy. In 2022, The Nature Conservancy [announced the protection of more than 32,500 acres of former timberlands in the Keweenaw Peninsula](#), known as the Keweenaw Heartlands. We completed the acquisition in two parts, purchasing 22,772 acres directly from The Rohatyn Group (TRG) in October and acquiring 9,769 acres in December from a conservation-minded buyer who had stepped in to help by purchasing the remainder.

"We have a long tradition in Keweenaw County of enjoying the outdoors, and losing access to these lands would have really hurt," Keweenaw County Board of Commissioners Chair Don Piche said in a press release. "By listening to our needs and concerns, TNC has helped us achieve a major milestone—securing the lands."

This momentous acquisition nearly doubled the Keweenaw Peninsula's protected lands, which provide habitat for many iconic species, from gray hawks and pine martens to the migratory raptors and songbirds that can be spotted here on their long annual journeys. The peninsula is part of the Great Lakes Northwoods that span

Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan—a TNC priority for biodiversity and climate resilience.

In fact, TNC has been supporting important conservation wins on the Keweenaw Peninsula for decades. This includes a collaboration with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) in the early 2000s, which protected more than 6,200 acres and five miles of the Montreal River. It also includes the protection of three TNC preserves: the [Mary Macdonald Preserve at Horseshoe Harbor](#), the [Helmut & Candis Stern Preserve at Mt. Baldy](#), and the [Bete Grise Wetlands Preserve](#)—all among our most popular preserves with visitors.

"This project opens the door to a future for the Keweenaw Peninsula where **conservation and community prosperity go hand-in-hand.**"

Now, we're building on that foundation in a big way. TNC is working with the State of Michigan and the local community to raise the necessary funds to pay back the loans that TNC secured for the acquisition of the Keweenaw Heartlands, and to plan for the property's long-term conservation success. After three to five years as short-term owners, TNC will transfer the Keweenaw Heartlands into public ownership.

Concurrently with pursuing the acquisition of the Keweenaw Heartlands, TNC hired the consulting firm Rural Economic Success (RES) to engage the community in setting a vision for the future of the Keweenaw Peninsula. Through interviews, stakeholder group sessions and public meetings, RES heard from more than **400 Keweenaw Peninsula residents**, and collected more than **1,800 responses** in an online survey.

The values shared during this process will be embedded in the plan for the long-term protection of the Keweenaw Heartlands. Along with the DNR, TNC is supporting a 17-person planning committee representing the community, including the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community, Michigan Tech University and the Keweenaw Economic Development Alliance, as well as local public entities, interest groups and more. Together, they are developing a governance and management structure for the Keweenaw Heartlands that aims to maintain and increase environmental health and sustain the community's quality of life, while also providing for continued recreational access and economic resilience.

TNC has also initiated an inventory project to inform the protection of the land's many natural and cultural features, another important value articulated during the planning process.

"We want to help the community achieve its priorities for the property," says Rich Tuzinsky, Director of Land

Protection for TNC. “The Keweenaw Heartlands will have a significant role to play in achieving the community’s vision of a future based on the balanced use and management of the peninsula’s rivers, lakes and forests, and the long tradition of outdoor recreation that they support.”

In fact, the wellbeing of the people of the Keweenaw Peninsula has always been closely tied to its natural resources. From cattails to sumac to sweet grass, there are many edible, medicinal and ceremonial plants used by the Anishinaabeg, the Indigenous peoples of the region. The peninsula is also known for its rich copper deposits—copper mining here can be traced back thousands of years to the ancient Old Copper Culture.

In parallel with the boom and bust of the industrial copper mining era in the 1800s to mid-1900s (the last industrial mine on the peninsula closed in 1997), the forests of the Keweenaw Peninsula have supported a thriving timber industry for more than a century. Now the area has arrived at another inflection point in its history.

“The deep engagement of so many community members, representatives, businesses and organizations in this project opens the door to a future for the Keweenaw Peninsula where conservation and community prosperity go hand-in-hand,” says Rich. “Together, we’re making the most of this opportunity.”

➔ Learn more about the Keweenaw Heartlands and sign up for project updates: keweenawcommunityfoundation.org/keweenaw-heartlands-project

THE KEWEENAW PENINSULA: BENEFITS OF CONSERVATION

- Permanently protected forests and wetlands that support iconic wildlife and rare plants.
- Healthy, diverse forests that sequester and store more carbon—an important natural climate solution.
- Protection for headwaters of one of the world’s largest freshwater systems—the Great Lakes.
- Outdoor recreation and sustainable forest products jobs that are vital to the local economy.
- Continued public access and recreational opportunities for many different groups, from hunters to skiers to mountain bikers.
- Sustained quality of life for Keweenaw residents, including the prevention of overdevelopment.
- An inclusive approach to conservation that could provide a model for other communities pursuing a resilient, nature-based future.

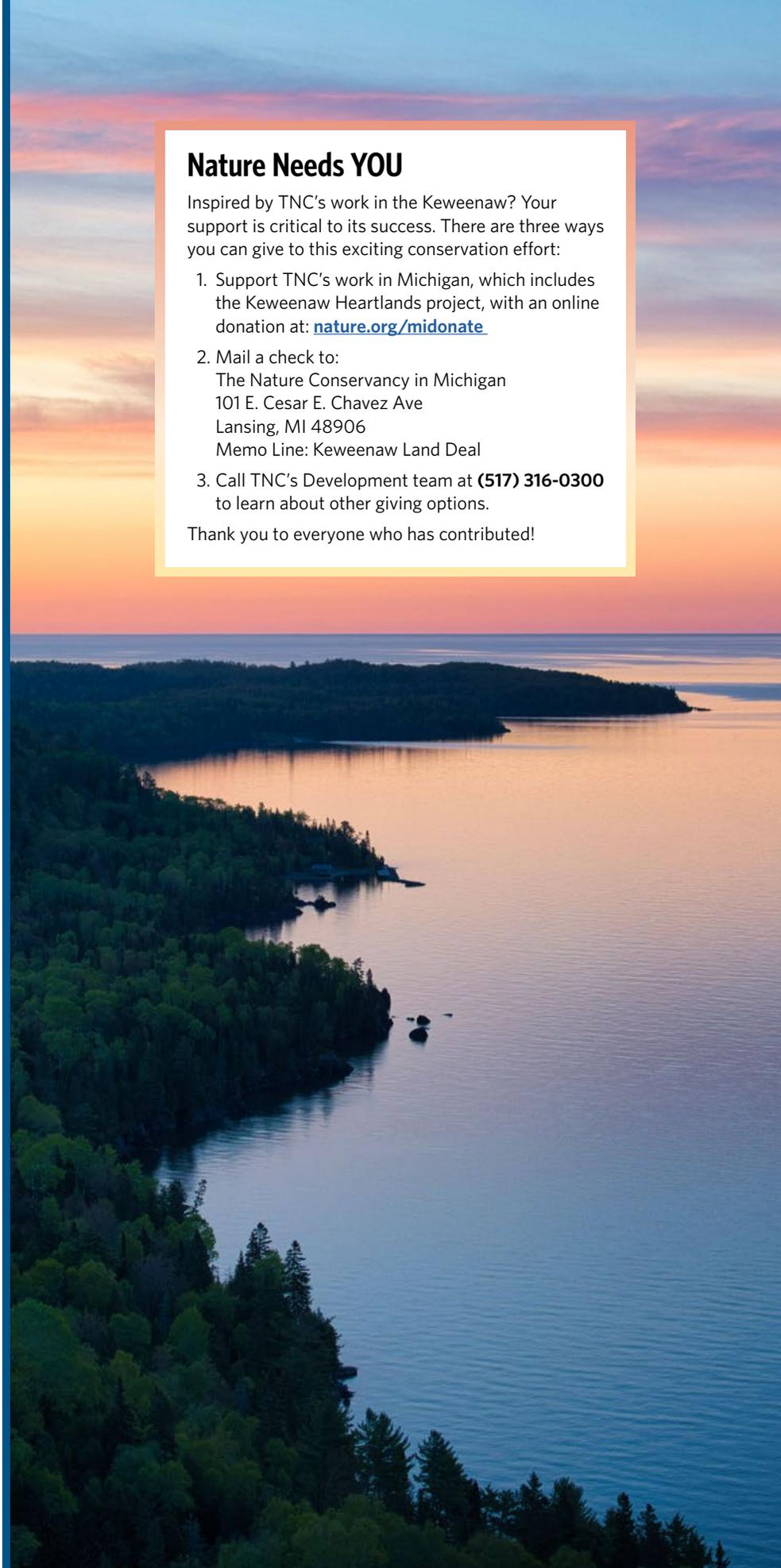
PAGE 4: View from the top of Brockway Mountain. © TNC;
RIGHT: Sunrise over Bete Grise on the Keweenaw Peninsula.
© Drew Chylek/TNC Photo Contest 2022

Nature Needs YOU

Inspired by TNC’s work in the Keweenaw? Your support is critical to its success. There are three ways you can give to this exciting conservation effort:

1. Support TNC’s work in Michigan, which includes the Keweenaw Heartlands project, with an online donation at: nature.org/midonate.
2. Mail a check to:
The Nature Conservancy in Michigan
101 E. Cesar E. Chavez Ave
Lansing, MI 48906
Memo Line: Keweenaw Land Deal
3. Call TNC’s Development team at **(517) 316-0300** to learn about other giving options.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed!





KIYI

The Story of a Fish

DEEP IN THE COLD WATERS OF LAKE SUPERIOR LIVE THE KIYI (*Coregonus kiyi*). A silver fish with pink or purple-tinted scales along its back, they have large eyes and can reach up to 11 inches long. They are one of the smaller ciscoes, a group of fishes related to the better-known lake whitefish.

The kiyi were once as widespread as the whitefish, living throughout the Great Lakes region and contributing to a thriving commercial fishery. They were also one of several native fish species that play an important role in **keeping the Great Lakes food web healthy**, providing prey for larger species like the lake trout. However, the proliferation of invasive species such as alewife and sea lamprey, as well as historical overfishing, means kiyi can only be found in Lake Superior today.

The Nature Conservancy is working with the Sault Tribe of Chippewa Indians, the Little Traverse Bay Band of Odawa Indians and the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) to find and collect kiyi in Lake Superior during their spawning window, to answer an important question: Can we successfully raise kiyi in hatchery conditions, and if so, how?

Answering this question would open up the potential to **reintroduce this fish in the lower Great Lakes**, to restore more resilience and productivity to an increasingly fragile food web.

“In the last decade, we’ve seen declines in the invasive alewife and smelt that would prey on newly hatched kiyi,” says Matt Herbert, Senior Conservation Scientist for TNC. “It’s a window of opportunity for restoring some of these important native fish—which can help keep our Great Lakes fisheries resilient and healthy in the years to come.”

When TNC set out on this project, not much was known about the spawning habits of the kiyi. In fact, there are many unknowns about the life stages of this elusive fish. A few historical data points suggested that kiyi in



READ THE RESEARCH:

Vinson, M., M. Herbert, A. Ackiss, J. Dobosenski, L.M. Evrard, O. Gorman, J.D. Lyons, S.B. Phillips, D.L. Yule. 2022. Lake Superior Kiyi (*Coregonus kiyi*) reproductive biology. *Transactions of the American Fisheries Society* (In Press).

Available at:
doi.org/10.1002/tafs.10389

LEFT: WHS Fisheries boat at the dock in Munising, Michigan, during winter. © Fauna Creative

Lake Superior likely spawn in the winter, but there wasn't enough data to ensure we could readily find and collect spawning kiyi—not without confirming it ourselves.

Given the harsh winds and frozen conditions found on Lake Superior in the winter, finding and catching kiyi at that time was no easy task. TNC partnered with a commercial fisher, [WHS Fisheries](#) out of Munising (photo, above), to accomplish this important step. The crew was able to reach deeper waters and catch spawning kiyi in four out of the five winters spanning 2017 to 2021, dodging snowstorms and encroaching ice.

All told, they studied more than 1,400 kiyi. The data collected on these fish—catch location, length, sex, number of eggs per female and more—helped piece together a clearer picture of the kiyi's life cycle and behavior, especially when compared to historical observations in lakes Michigan, Ontario and Superior. This was more than enough to answer some important scientific questions.

“First of all, we confirmed a lot of our suspicions about when kiyi spawn, and at what depths we can collect them during the spawning period,” says Matt. “Going out mid-December through January, with nets set at least 100 meters deep, appears to be the best way to catch spawning kiyi and reduce bycatch of other species. Now, we know a lot of what we need to experimentally raise them in hatchery conditions—a step that will be crucial for any potential future restoration efforts.”

We have published the results for the first phase of research and are now working with the Sault Tribe, Little Traverse Bay Band and USGS to begin to spawn and experimentally raise kiyi in a tribal hatchery and USGS facilities. If successful, this would give fisheries management agencies the option to start re-establishing kiyi in the lower Great Lakes, **benefiting commercial and recreational fishing and supporting a healthier Great Lakes system.**

“Kiyi have significant potential as a species that can help strengthen the Great Lakes food web, by providing food for larger predators such as lake trout and improving nutrient flow throughout the water column,” says Matt. “In general, the more



Matt Herbert, Senior Conservation Scientist at TNC, leads our research on kiyi in Lake Superior. © Mary Louks/TNC

species diversity we have, the more productive a system is. The best way to support that diversity in the Great Lakes is by rebuilding the populations of native fish, like kiyi, that used to thrive here.”

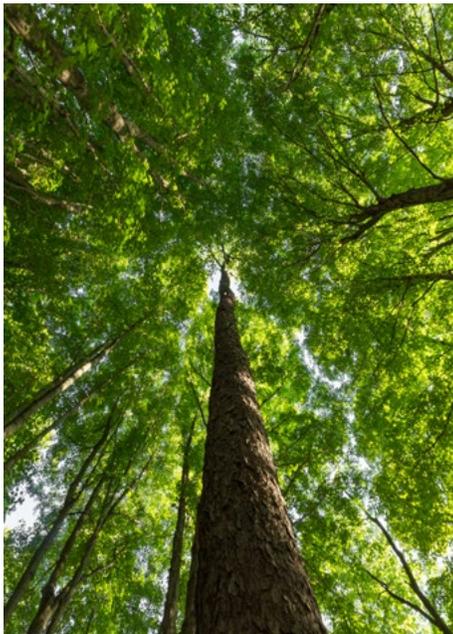
To move into the next stage of this research and begin raising them in hatcheries, we need another successful catch of spawning kiyi. Unfortunately, both of the last two winters had sustained high winds that prevented the fisher from getting out to deeper waters to collect kiyi at the right time.

“It’s a setback, but not an insurmountable one,” says Matt. “We’ll try again next year. We’re also looking at potentially trying to collect larval kiyi after they hatch in June. Eventually, we want to test the feasibility of raising kiyi in hatcheries year-round, so that spawning fish wouldn’t need to be caught every year. Then, all it would take is a few mild, windless days.”

PAGE 6: A WHS Fisheries crew member holds a kiyi caught during a survey. The kiyi is one of eight similar *Coregonus* species, known collectively as ciscoes, that have historically been found throughout the Great Lakes. Of those, at least three are known to be extinct. © Fauna Creative



© Mike Wilkinson



Globally, we can reduce current carbon emissions by up to 37% just by using natural climate solutions—actions in conservation, restoration and improved land management that increase carbon storage or avoid greenhouse gas emissions—and forests are our greatest asset. Improving forest management and avoiding forest conversion is critical to help minimize the impacts of climate change.
© Jason Whalen/Big Foot Media

BEING THE CARETAKER OF 30 ACRES of Michigan woodlands can be a dream come true for those of us who love the northern forests. It is also an opportunity to help this vital ecosystem thrive—to be a part of its conservation for people and nature, for generations to come.

Now, more family forest owners can get help keeping their forests healthy and join in the fight against climate change, through the **Family Forest Carbon Program (FFCP)**. FFCP, a partnership between The Nature Conservancy and the American Forest Foundation (AFF), provides family forest owners with annual payments in exchange for using forest management practices that increase carbon storage and sequestration.

“TNC science shows us that nature can have a big role to play in the solutions our planet needs to reduce the impacts of climate change,” says Emily Clegg, Director of Land and Water Management for TNC. “This is especially true for forests, which sequester and store carbon that would otherwise end up in the atmosphere as a harmful greenhouse gas.”

FFCP is currently open to owners of 30+ acres of forest in nine U.S. states, including Michigan. Participants commit to using **specific forest management practices in a 20-year contract**.

“Traditional carbon projects typically take place on ownerships of 3,000 acres of forestland or more,” Emily says. “Most family-owned forests fall short of this threshold of financial viability. That’s a huge missed opportunity for conservation, because family-owned forests make up more than 38% of U.S. forests. FFCP opens the door for many more folks to get involved in climate-smart forest management.”

Already active in Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Maryland, Vermont, New York and Massachusetts, FFCP has now been expanded to a pilot program in the Northwoods of Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota. In its pilot phase, this Northwoods program will focus on maple/beech/birch and aspen forest types across a total of approximately 8,000 acres. AFF will administer the program, providing resources and technical support to

participants, while TNC is contributing to the technical and scientific foundation for the program's success in the Midwest.

"Participants in the program are required to have forest management plans in place and meet certain standards for any potential harvests while enrolled," Emily explains. "But they don't have to do it all themselves. FFCP connects them with consulting foresters to write those plans and verify that the standards are met."

In addition to the low threshold for forested property size, another difference this program has from traditional carbon programs is that the annual payments participants receive are based on the actual practices they implement—which is called "**payment-for-practice**"—rather than carbon credits generated. There are two potential practices that FFCP participants can use, depending on the forest type:

1. **Growing Mature Forests:** A practice that supports long-term maple/hardwood forest productivity by growing forests longer and with less harvesting than would occur in a business-as-usual scenario. This helps the forest develop larger diameter trees and produce higher quality wood.
2. **Promoting Diverse Forests:** A practice that increases the number of living trees retained during coppice or clearcut harvests in aspen forests. This promotes edge habitat needed for many wildlife and bird species, and retains more older and larger trees in managed stands that would typically contain trees of similar age and size.

These practices have been shown to store and sequester additional carbon from the atmosphere beyond typical forest management scenarios for the area, while supporting wildlife habitat, forest health, water quality and recreation. They were also designed specifically for the forest types found in the Northwoods.

FFCP is using the USDA Forest Service's National Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) database to model and measure the benefits of these practices. This is a national database with detailed forest information from hundreds of thousands of forest plots across the region. FFCP compares the outcomes on randomly selected plots enrolled in the program (the "treatment" plots) to those on corresponding FIA plots (the "control" plots). In this way, FFCP ensures that any differences in carbon



In forests enrolled in FFCP, sustainable harvests may occur as part of a forest management plan, especially where harvests improve the overall health and resiliency of the forest. © Hannah Letinich

storage and sequestration can be attributed to participation in the program.

The carbon credits generated and verified by this program are then sold, generating funding that continues to support the management of enrolled forestlands and pay for the costs of the program.

"This is an exciting start to engaging and paying private family forest owners to pursue the many benefits of healthy forests," Emily says. "We're hoping to grow the program over the coming years so that as many as 95,000 acres of Michigan forests—or even more—are enrolled by 2030."

If you happen to be a forest owner yourself, we encourage you to look into participating in FFCP. Right now, eligibility in Michigan is limited to certain counties in the western Upper Peninsula, but will expand to include additional areas.

"It's an opportunity to make a positive impact on the forests you maintain, Michigan's wildlife and even climate," says Emily. "It's an investment in your legacy for future generations."

➤ For more information, visit: familyforestcarbon.org

TERMS TO KNOW:

To be an effective conservation tool, carbon credits must be based on meaningful and credible carbon sequestration and storage. This means that they:

- Show "**additionality**," or additional carbon sequestration or storage above the regional average that can be directly attributed to a program's intervention.
- Reduce **leakage**, which is when a reduction in emissions at one project site is counteracted by increased emissions at another site.
- Demonstrate **permanence**—long-term storage rather than carbon reductions only during the life of the project.
- Are **verified** by a third party according to a peer-reviewed standard and methodology.

➤ Learn about the FFCP methodology: familyforestcarbon.org/our-approach/advancing-credibility

Watching the Waters of Saginaw Bay

WATER IS ESSENTIAL TO LIFE. It is also a dynamic resource, shaped by the lands it flows through and how people use those lands. As streams become rivers, and rivers flow to lakes and oceans, they carry runoff from the surrounding lands that impacts the health of the entire system.

The blue waters of Saginaw Bay are no exception to this rule. That's why The Nature Conservancy and partners launched a new initiative in 2018—the Saginaw Bay Monitoring Consortium (SBMC). Over the past five years, we have worked together to plan and establish a comprehensive monitoring system and tools that will help us all understand just how water quality is changing throughout the Saginaw Bay watershed—over time and at scale.

“We know that water quality in Saginaw Bay is degraded, including elevated levels of nutrients—phosphorus and nitrogen,” says Dr. Doug Pearsall, Senior Conservation Scientist for TNC. “But before now, efforts to monitor trends in water quality over time have not been coordinated or long-term. We and our partners knew that if we're going to make the right decisions about land management in the watershed, we need more robust, comprehensive data.”

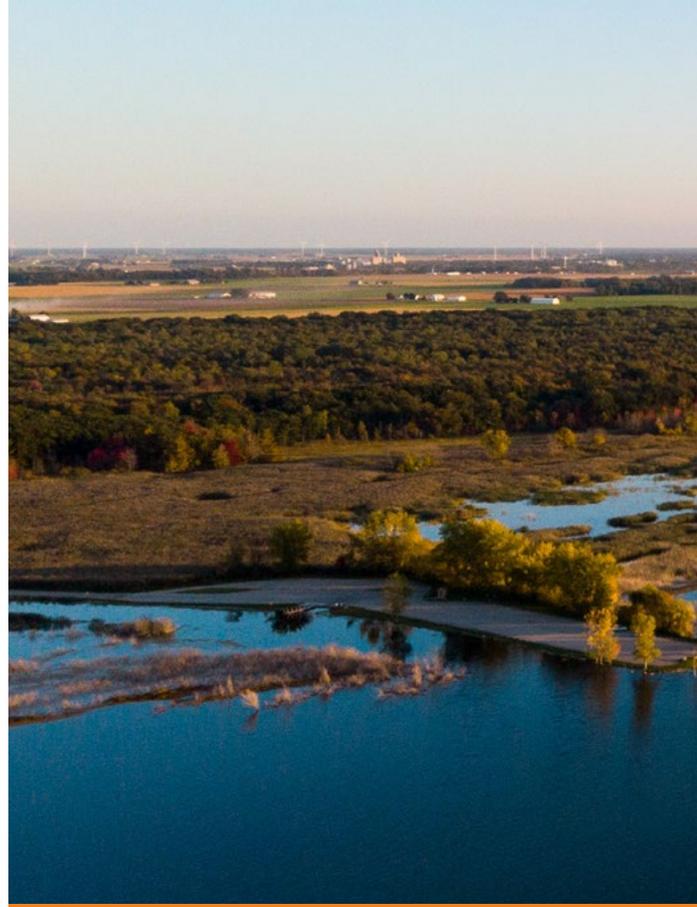
The Saginaw Bay watershed is the largest watershed in Michigan—spanning 5.5 million acres and 22 counties, and fed by more than 7,000 miles of rivers and streams, including the Saginaw River and its major tributaries the Cass, Shiawassee and Tittabawassee rivers. It is also the third largest agricultural watershed in the U.S. Great Lakes.

As in agricultural watersheds across the country, common row crop practices release an excess of nutrients and sediment into this watershed's streams and rivers. This runoff threatens the health of aquatic habitat and Great Lakes fisheries and contributes to harmful algal blooms and unhealthy beach conditions in Saginaw Bay.

More data on water quality isn't just important to addressing current challenges like these, but also making the right decisions in the future. “A detailed, location-specific understanding of water quality throughout the watershed is helpful to anyone making decisions about resource management in the area, including drinking water, fisheries management and recreation,” says Doug.

And that's where the SBMC comes in. This initiative, funded by the EPA and private foundation grants, is modeled, in part, on the decades-long monitoring of western Lake Erie tributaries by the National Center for Water Quality Research at Heidelberg University (ncwqr.org).

“Now that we've raised the necessary funding and established a shared plan, our partners are excited to move forward with a new monitoring system,” says Doug. U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) has begun installing 11 new stream gages at strategic points throughout the watershed, in addition to seven existing gages. Saginaw Valley State University will also be using these stream gage locations to take weekly water samples. Combined with 10 monitoring sites in the bay itself—five of which are newly enabled by funding to NOAA—these 18 tributary



monitoring stations will provide a comprehensive network of data collection points.

Going forward, TNC will continue to convene the SBMC, while SBMC partners coordinate monitoring efforts. TNC will also contribute by developing an online dashboard, helping to make the consortium's information and data publicly available.

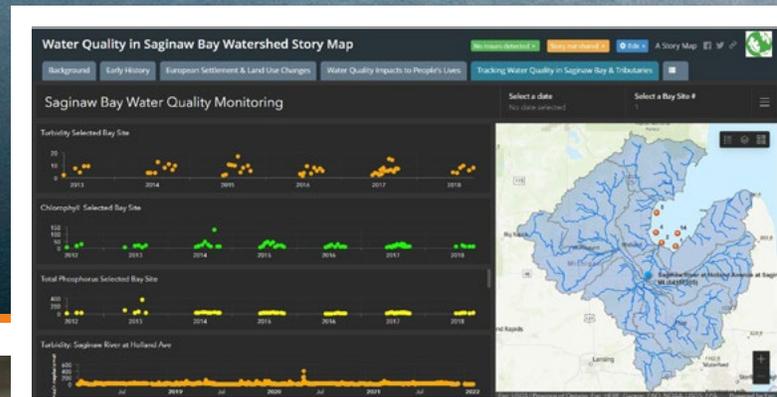
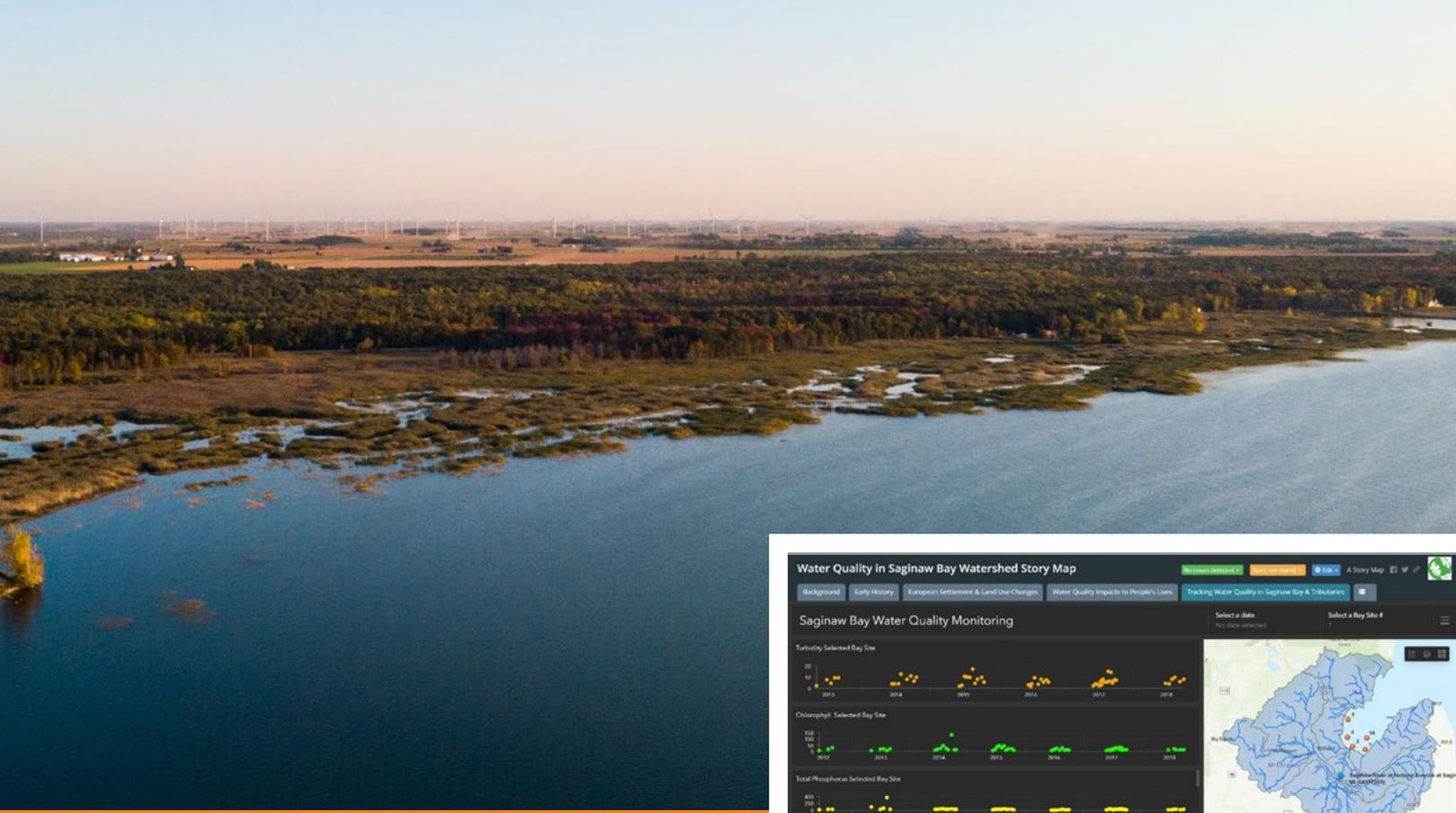
In particular, the SBMC aims to help inform:

- Actions to reduce significant environmental damage in the [Saginaw River and Bay “Area of Concern”](#) (AOC) as defined by the Environmental Protection Agency.¹
- Targets for nutrient level reductions in Saginaw Bay, under [Annex 4](#) of the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement.
- Watershed restoration and management decision-making by watershed groups and municipal stormwater managers.

“By making this information available to all, we can help a diverse range of interested groups, from conservation organizations to policymakers, measure progress and set meaningful goals for nutrient and sediment runoff reductions,” says Doug.

It's also deeply important to TNC's conservation work in the Saginaw Bay watershed. Here, TNC and many partners are working to encourage the use of on-farm conservation practices that reduce nutrient runoff and protect water quality.

“The farmers, agribusiness professionals and conservation practitioners that we work with in the Saginaw Bay watershed have repeatedly identified the lack of local data as a limiting factor when it comes to deciding how to manage farmlands in the Saginaw Bay watershed,”



Doug explains. “Connecting these groups with relevant information is vital to supporting a permanent shift to the on-farm conservation practices that will support thriving farms and clean water in the watershed.”

TNC will also use this data as we work to engage new farmers in soil health practices. This includes supporting farmer-led watershed groups, including a newly formed group in the lower Shiawassee River watershed, that take a leadership role in ensuring healthy lands and waters in their local area. It also includes assessing the effectiveness of our soil health and water quality programs over time, and adapting our approach for greater impact.

“There’s a lot of potential in this monitoring network for improved information flow and decision-making around Saginaw Bay’s natural resources, and we’re glad to be a part of it,” says Doug. “Ideally, it’s an approach that could be replicated in other areas of the Great Lakes experiencing similar water quality challenges.”

¹AOC is an official EPA designation for places that have a certain number of beneficial use impairments (as identified by the International Joint Commission), such as algal blooms and beach closings.

ABOVE: Agricultural land meets the Lake Huron coast in the Saginaw Bay watershed. © Fauna Creative

COORDINATING TEAM PARTNERS

- U.S. Geological Survey
- Michigan Department of Agriculture & Rural Development
- Saginaw Valley State University
- Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
- Central Michigan University
- Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy
- The Nature Conservancy
- LimnoTech

TNC staff have produced a beta (unpublished) version of a dashboard that will help partners track progress and have been working with the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe to incorporate historical information that reflects the Tribe’s long presence in the area. © TNC



The Saginaw Bay watershed is home to more than 90 fish species and is a critical path for migrating songbirds and waterfowl traveling along the Mississippi Flyway. © Fauna Creative

News in Brief



© Randy Hannan



© i am adventure/Shutterstock

Manufacturing Workshops Share Best Practices

In January, The Nature Conservancy kicked off our second workshop series for manufacturing audiences in partnership with the [Michigan Manufacturers Association](#) (MMA). Building on a webinar series in 2022, these in-person workshops were hosted by three Michigan corporations—Steelcase, Consumers Energy and Hemlock Semiconductor—at their facilities. Each session provided an average of 25 representatives from small and medium-sized manufacturers across Michigan with a chance to ask questions, share advice and equip themselves with **tools to help their companies become cleaner and greener**. Topics included:

- Sustainability Certifications | hosted by Steelcase
- Managing the Clean Energy Transition | hosted by Consumers Energy
- Building a Sustainability Plan | hosted by Hemlock Semiconductor

These opportunities to share and learn practical insights are important to help Michigan companies lower their carbon footprints and anticipate how they can be part of Michigan's clean energy future, while ensuring that future is sustainable for both people and nature.

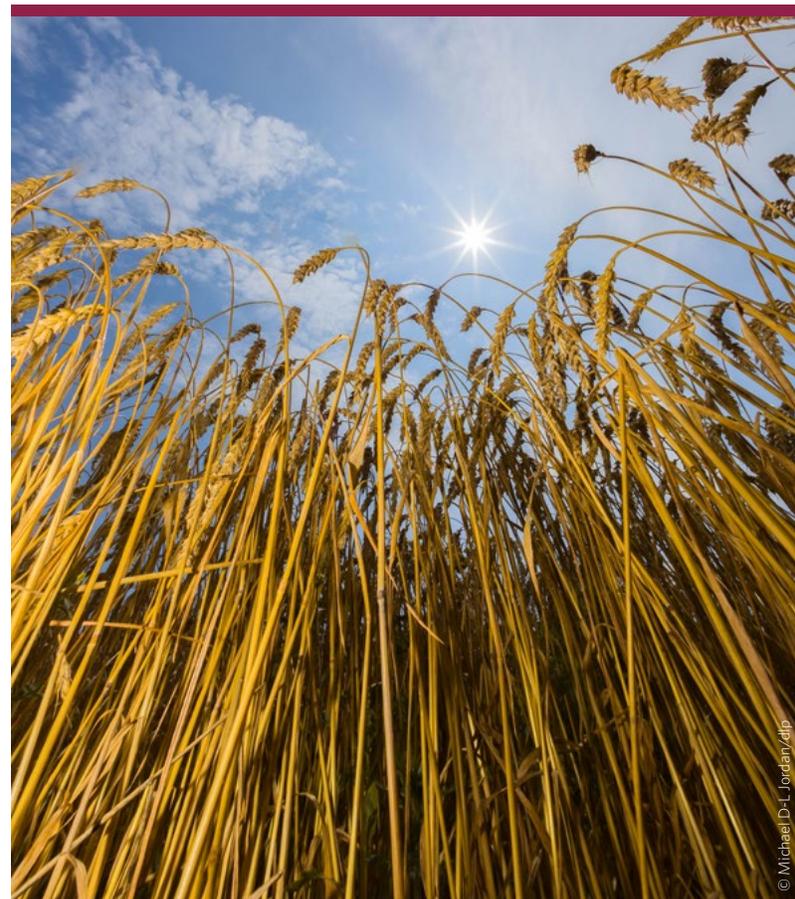
➤ Learn more about workshops: mimfg.org/sustainability

2023 Policy Priorities Guide TNC's Advocacy

Tackling the climate and biodiversity crises is a massive undertaking, and the right policies are critical to the impact TNC seeks to achieve. Currently, TNC is pursuing a number of policy priorities in Michigan, discussing topics with policymakers that include:

- [State appropriations for the capitalization of the State Park Endowment Fund](#): A one-time deposit of \$500 million into the State Park Endowment Fund would fully fund it in perpetuity and ensure we can protect public lands and maintain our best-in-class outdoor recreation facilities for decades to come.
- **A statewide water assistance program**: All Michiganders should have access to clean, safe and affordable drinking water. An ongoing mechanism to fund water assistance programs for low-income households is important to equitably managing the infrastructure that also protects our freshwater resources.

➤ Learn about more of TNC's policy priorities in Michigan: nature.org/michiganpolicy



© Michael D-L Jordan/djp

Sustainable Wheat Program Wraps Up Year One

In partnership with Star of the West Milling Company, TNC is piloting a new performance-based conservation program for Saginaw Bay-area wheat farmers that provides “**nature-based bonuses**” for wheat grown using sustainable practices. This Sustainable Option Wheat program sets sustainable production standards, and participants who successfully meet those standards receive the bonus when they bring their grain to market.

In 2022, the kickoff year for Sustainable Option Wheat, the new program proved so popular with farmers that it took TNC’s team just two weeks to fill all the available spots. More than 930 acres were enrolled in all, producing more than 86,000 bushels of sustainably grown wheat. With another 3,000 acres enrolled this year, that harvest could triple!

In the coming years, we hope that Sustainable Option Wheat could provide a “blueprint” for producing and marketing sustainably raised crops that other grain processors (and commodities) could follow.

➤ Learn more about TNC’s soil health programs: soilsavings.com



© Fauna Creative

America the Beautiful: For the Future

Science tells us that 30% of the world’s lands and waters must be protected to avert the dual crises of climate change and biodiversity loss. At the UN Biodiversity Conference COP15 in December, international representatives adopted the [Global Biodiversity Framework](#), which includes a target of conserving 30% of the planet by 2030—also known as “30x30.” Currently, approximately 20% of Michigan’s lands and waters are considered protected according to traditional definitions, although that increases to 25-30% with the inclusion of private lands that benefit from conservation practices.

To help inform further conservation investments in Michigan, TNC is working with partners, including the Michigan DNR and Ducks Unlimited, to develop informational resources and tools that can support strategic decision-making toward 30x30 goals, as part of the U.S.’s national [America the Beautiful](#) initiative. These tools include a website with interactive data viewer and data portal, as well as a report that identifies potential pathways for achieving the 30% conservation goal.

This effort will help TNC and others take a comprehensive look across Michigan to make the conservation decisions that help the landscape best adapt to a changing climate and provide the services that people rely on.

➤ Learn more about 30x30: nature.org/30x30



LET'S CONNECT

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.

Upcoming Events

Join us at one of our fun and informative spring events! Don't miss an event notice; subscribe online at nature.org/naturenews to receive special invitations and timely alerts.

© Matt Williams



© Dietrich Ludwig

NORTH POINT CELEBRATION

June 10 | Alpena, MI

Pristine beaches. Rare species. Sunken ships. Join TNC, Huron Pines, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the Friends of Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary to celebrate the grand opening of North Point Nature Preserve, on the scenic shores of Lake Huron. Learn about the vast treasures of this preserve, including the unique partnerships that helped protect it, its historical and ecological features, and recreation and education opportunities. Find more details at nature.org/mievents.



© Jason Whalen/Big Foot Media

#10TRAILCHALLENGE

Throughout July | Southwest Michigan

Chikaming Open Lands, a nonprofit land conservancy in southwest Michigan, is hosting the annual #10TrailChallenge again this July. Participants are challenged to visit as many participating trails as possible and use temporary “selfie-stations” to document their visits on social media—and TNC’s [Ross Coastal Plain Marsh Preserve](https://nature.org/ross-coastal-plain-marsh-preserve) is on the list! Explore the recently updated and expanded trail system, featuring unique dune habitats and marshes. Be sure to snap a selfie at the photo station and tag Chikaming Open Lands to win prizes! Start exploring at chikamingopenlands.org.

YOU'RE THE SCIENTIST!

JOIN TNC ON INATURALIST

At The Nature Conservancy, we frequently receive inquiries about how folks can help us with our conservation work. One great way to get involved is by helping us gather the information we need to be the best possible stewards of our protected lands!

By recording data on the plants, animals and fungi thriving on TNC preserves, you can help our experienced land stewards and scientists monitor the recovery of native habitats, take action to protect rare and threatened species, detect potential invasive species early and more.

It's simple: just visit one of our preserves or reserves, and snap a photo (or three) of some of the species you come across. Then, upload your finds to iNaturalist—a global platform where naturalists like you can connect and share observations. Not sure what you've found? The community will help you identify it!

From bugs to birds, there's so much to discover. Let's celebrate the world around us, and get exploring!



© Michael D-L Jordan/dlp

GET STARTED

Join TNC on iNaturalist! Go to inaturalist.org to learn more, create an account and download the (optional) app. Then, share the species you discover as you explore one of TNC's preserves in Michigan.

Explore our project page: inaturalist.org/projects/tnc-michigan-preserves-and-reserves

Follow our profile: inaturalist.org/people/tncmichigan

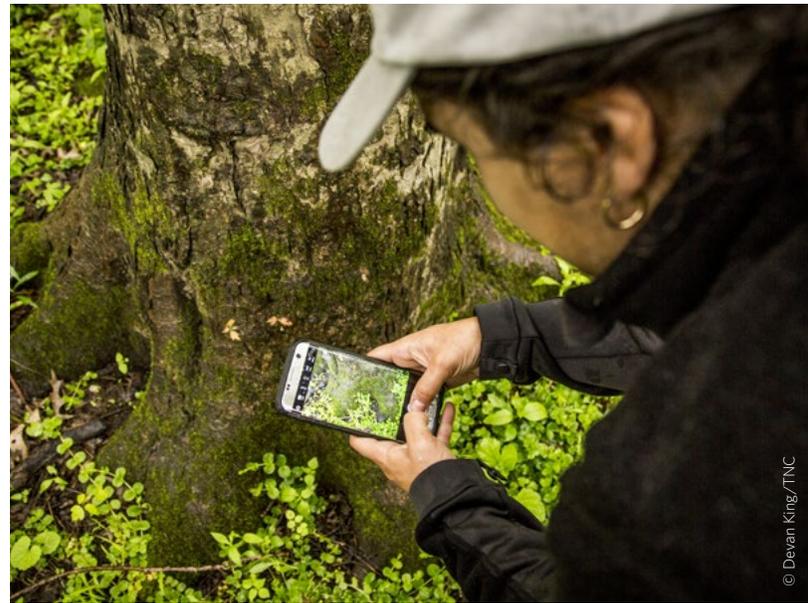
HOW TO MAKE AN OBSERVATION

1. Sign into your iNaturalist account online and click "Upload" or tap the "Observe" button in the app (available for iOS and Android devices) to start a new observation.
2. Record what you saw—the more specific, the better! If you're not sure, provide your evidence (see step 3) and let the community help you identify what you found.
3. Upload photos or sound recordings to help the community improve or confirm the identification of the species you found! Help them out by taking multiple photos from different angles, if possible.
4. Record where you were and when.
5. Submit your observation! Every observation made on our preserves is automatically added to the TNC Michigan Preserves and Reserves project.

For more instructions and helpful tips, go to inaturalist.org/pages/getting+started.

WHERE TO GO

Go to nature.org/miexplore to find a TNC preserve near you, and learn about other ways you can engage with the places you've helped TNC protect forever.



© Devan King/TNC



© Devan King/TNC



The Nature Conservancy
 101 E. César E. Chávez Ave.
 Lansing, MI 48906
 (517) 316-0300

NON-PROFIT ORG.
 U.S. POSTAGE
 PAID
 PERMIT NO. 488
 LANSING, MI

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.



© Sherril Yezbick-Taylor/TNC Photo Contest 2022

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.

Or visit us online at nature.org/legacyclub.



Follow us on social media
[@TNCMichigan](https://www.facebook.com/TNCMichigan).



Sign up for our e-newsletter
 at nature.org/naturenews.



Donate to our work at
nature.org/midonate.



Speak up for nature at
nature.org/actnow.



Visit our website to learn more
 at nature.org/michigan.

Membership Care: **Phone:** (800) 628-6860 **Email:** member@tnc.org