

CARL A. GERSTACKER NATURE PRESERVE AT DUDLEY BAY

A Spectacular Lakeshore

**LOCATION:**

Eastern Upper Peninsula

**TRAIL LENGTH:**

2.6 miles, in total



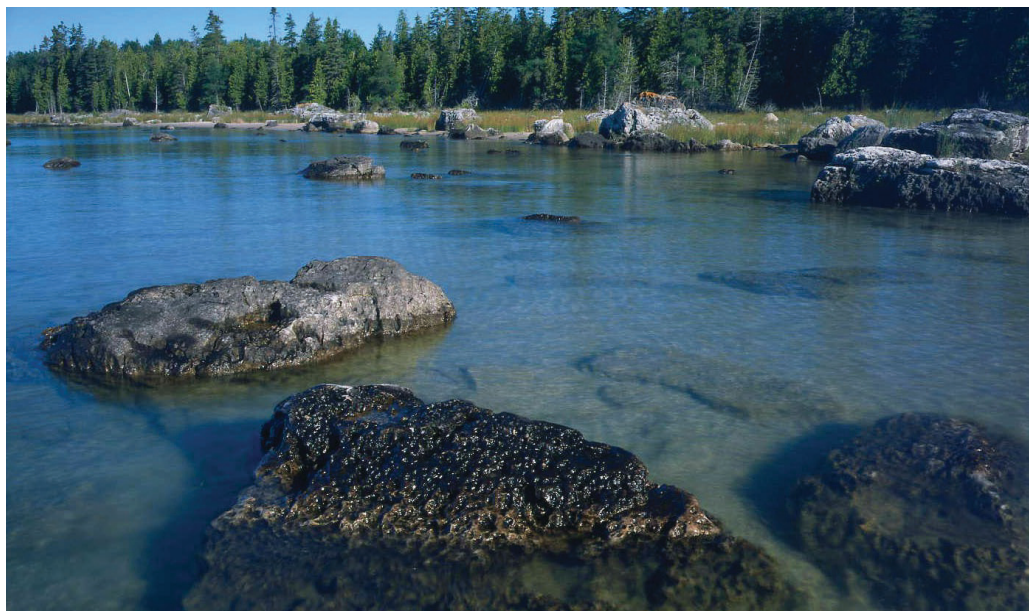
SIZE: 1,615 acres



DIFFICULTY: Easy

**AUDIO TOUR AVAILABLE:**

Get the insider's view of this preserve with a free self-guided tour on the TravelStorys app! To learn more, visit nature.org/miexplore.



Enjoy five miles of Lake Huron shoreline at the Gerstacker Preserve, with its distinctive limestone features. © Ron Leonetti

Journey through layers of nature's history. On the beach at the Carl A. Gerstacker Nature Preserve at Dudley Bay, the waters of Lake Huron lap against exposed slabs of limestone bedrock, hundreds of millions of years old.

Just a short distance inland, a rare habitat called alvar emerges (photo, right), where thin patches of soil developed over millennia to support only the sturdiest mosses, lichens, grasses and perhaps a few stunted trees. Here, unique creatures make their home, from the tawny crescent-spot butterfly to a variety of land snails that depend on the limestone to maintain their calcium-rich shells.

Hike deeper into the forest, and you will discover layers here as well. Above a carpet of ferns and flowering plants, shrubs like prickly gooseberry find pockets of sunlight. Rising still higher, the forest canopy features trees such as sugar maple, yellow birch and white pine—often the tallest of its neighbors.

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) has worked closely with the local community to conserve this special place. In fact, together with the Little Traverse Conservancy, the Les Cheneaux Community Foundation and communities along the coast, TNC has helped protected more than 5,000 acres in the Les Cheneaux Islands area.



*The Gerstacker Preserve was established in 1993. It was named in honor of former Dow chair **Carl A. Gerstacker** in 1996, a founding member of TNC's Michigan chapter Board of Trustees, thanks to grants from the **Dow Chemical Company Foundation**, **Herbert H. & Grace A. Dow Foundation** and **Rollin M. Gerstacker Foundation**.*

YOU SHOULD VISIT IF...**You love Michigan's fresh water!**

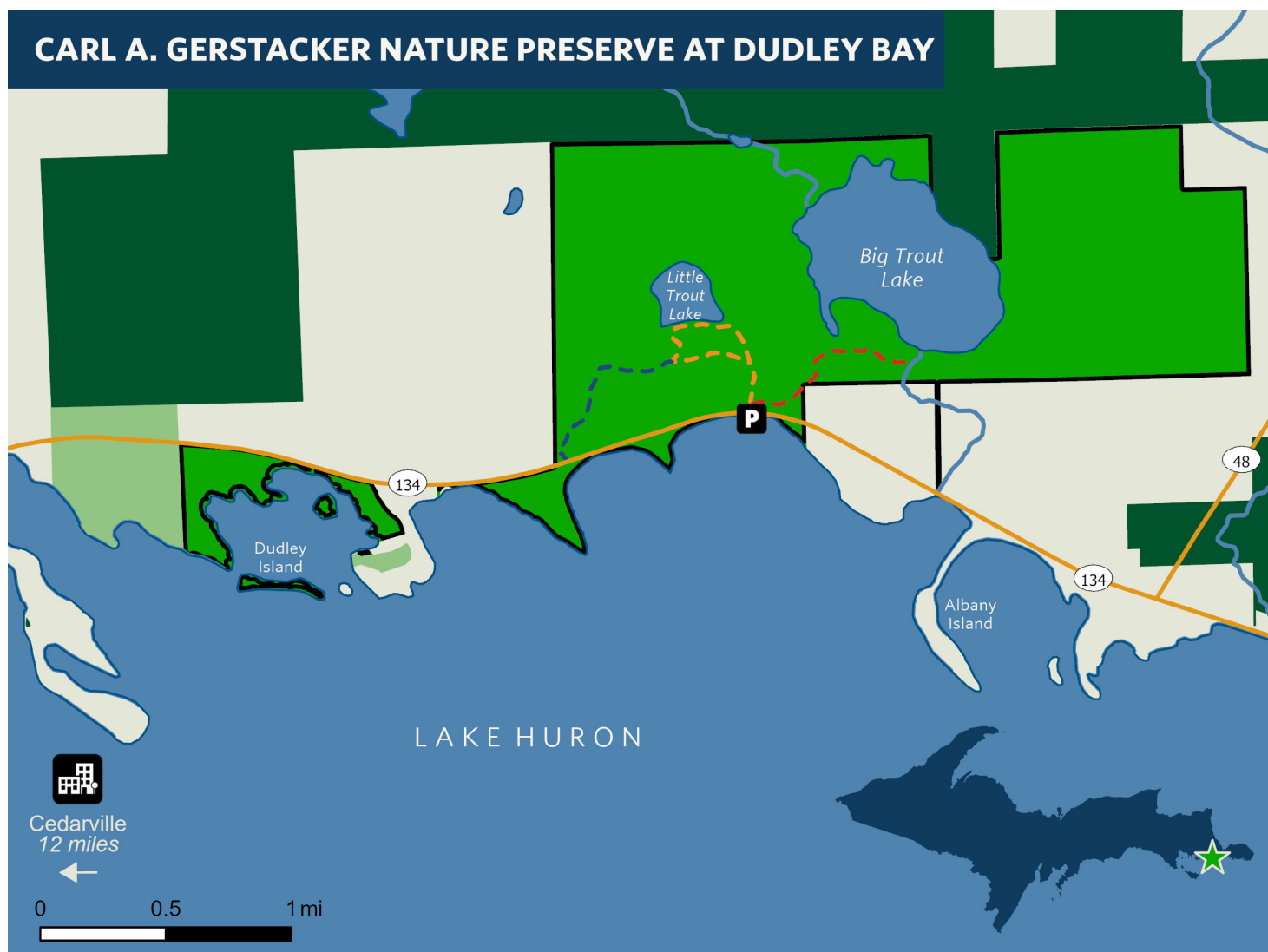
With miles of beautiful shoreline, two inland lakes, a wetland and two creeks, there is plenty here for the water enthusiast. At 560 acres, Big Trout Lake is the third largest inland lake in Chippewa County. Look for waterfowl on its open waters, or even moose wading along its shores. The Gerstacker Preserve's Lake Huron beach can also be a good place to look for migratory hawks and songbirds during the spring and fall.

Plants and wildlife to watch for include:

- Muskrat
- Common loon
- Belted kingfisher
- Northern parula
- Pinesap
- Dwarf lake iris
- Ram's-head lady's slipper
- Paper birch

BELTED KINGFISHER**PAPER BIRCH**

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LEGEND

- Carl A. Gerstacker Nature Preserve
- Protected Land: Privately Owned
- Sault Ste. Marie State Forest

- Little Trout Lake Loop- 1.1 mi
- Big Trout Trail- 0.8 mi
- Spur Trail- 0.7 mi

Parking Area



HOW TO GET THERE

Directions from Cedarville, Mich.: Head east on M-134 for 12.3 miles, until you see the preserve sign. The parking area is on the north (left) side of M-134. Two trail options are available from this parking area. Go right for a 1.6-mile out-and-back trail to Big Trout Lake. Go left for a 1.1-mile loop trail overlooking Little Trout Lake, or continue on the Spur Trail for an additional 1.4-mile out-and-back trek through forest and wetlands.

MAKE TODAY A NATURE DAY!

Nearby points of interest include:

- John Arthur Woollam Preserve, 6 mi: nature.org/miexplore
- Maxton Plains Preserve at Drummond Island, 32 mi (via ferry): nature.org/miexplore
- Aldo Leopold Nature Preserve, Little Traverse Conservancy, 15 mi (only accessible by boat): landtrust.org/explore
- Other natural areas near Les Cheneaux: lescheneaux.net/area-information
- Lodging, food and more: lescheneaux.net

TIPS FOR A GREAT VISIT

- The Gerstacker Preserve is open year-round for hiking, snowshoeing, backcountry skiing and bird and wildlife watching.
- Insect repellent and hiking shoes are recommended.
- If you visit during the deer hunting season (**early September to early January**), wear **bright colors and exercise caution**. All hunters must have a TNC permit and state license.
- Please leave pets at home.
- No camping or fires permitted.
- Please follow the rules posted at the preserve and online at nature.org/miexplore.

Thanks for your help protecting the land, water and wildlife of this special place!