

GRAND RIVER FEN PRESERVE

Headwaters of the Grand River

**LOCATION:**

South Michigan



SIZE: 627 acres

**TRAIL LENGTH:**

2.4-mile loop



DIFFICULTY: Easy

**BECOME A COMMUNITY SCIENTIST:**

Help us keep track of the species at our preserves by using iNaturalist to record your observations. Learn more at nature.org/miexplore.



Due to their unique hydrology and geology, fens like Grand River Fen act as refuges to many species threatened by climate change. © Jason Whalen

Come see where it all begins. Many rivers in Michigan are born in wetlands, and the Grand River Fen Preserve—established by The Nature Conservancy (TNC) in 1996—happens to be at the start of Michigan's longest river. The Grand River travels 260 miles on its journey to Lake Michigan, touching many lives along the way.

That's one reason why the protection of the Grand River Fen Preserve is so important—it filters this mighty river's headwaters, and helps keep it healthy for people and nature. It also provides a haven for southern Michigan's abundant natural beauty.

When you explore the trails of this preserve, observe how water shapes its landscape. The wetland here is an unusual type called a fen. Fed by calcium-rich groundwater, it is less acidic and has more nutrients than a bog. This supports a more diverse plant and animal community, including many rare and threatened species.

Shaded woodlands and sweet-smelling prairies also contribute to the variety of habitats on the Grand River Fen Preserve. Visit in the summer to catch them at their most colorful!



YOU SHOULD VISIT IF...

You love butterflies and moths! Grand River Fen Preserve is well-known to butterfly experts for the diversity of butterflies and moths that live here, including the Mitchell's satyr butterfly (pictured above). This preserve is home to one of the last remaining populations of this endangered species. More common butterflies you might spot on your visit include the red admiral, pearl crescent and great spangled fritillary. Moths are less showy but have their own unique beauty—the chickweed geometer moth even has yellow and pink wings.

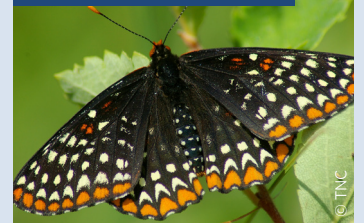
During your visit, you might spot unique wetland species like:

- Blanding's turtle
- Wood thrush
- Eastern massasauga rattlesnake
- American black duck
- Baltimore checkerspot
- Blazing star
- Pink lady-slipper

BLANDING'S TURTLE



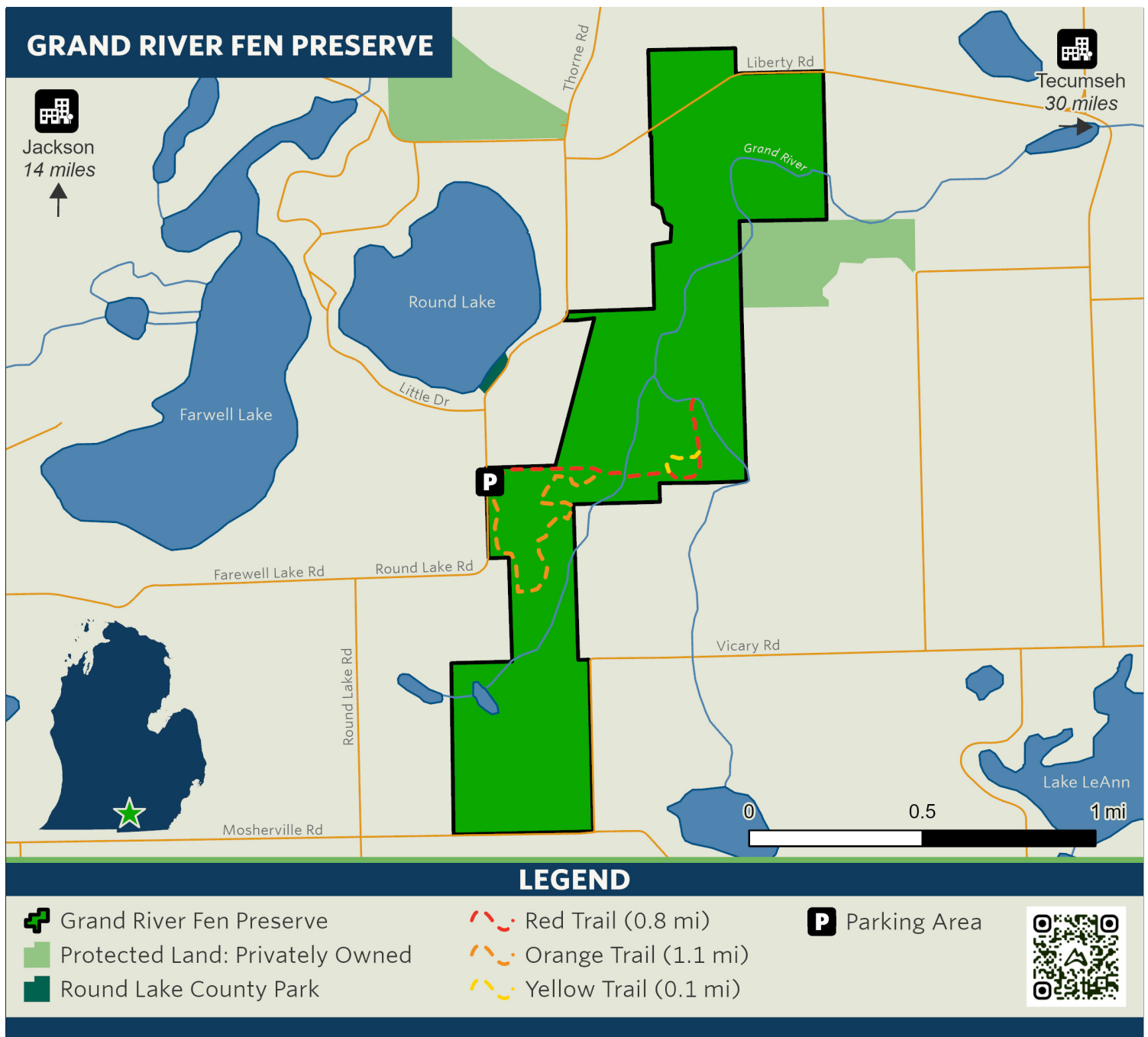
BALTIMORE CHECKERSPOT



BLAZING STAR



*THANK YOU to everyone who has helped protect and restore the Grand River Fen Preserve, including **the Carls Foundation, Consumers Energy Foundation, Jackson Community Foundation, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and John A. Woollam in memory of Mildred Hakes Woollam and many volunteers.***



HOW TO GET THERE

Directions from Jackson, MI: Head south on US-127 for 6.5 miles to Liberty Road, then turn west (right) on Liberty Road. Follow Liberty Road for approximately 5.5 miles until it ends at Round Lake Road, and turn south (left). Continue past the lake to the parking lot at 12489 Round Lake Road—look for the preserve sign to the east (left).

MAKE TODAY A NATURE DAY!

Nearby points of interest include:

- MacCready Nature Reserve, 7 mi
- Nan Weston Nature Preserve at Sharon Hollow, 25 mi: nature.org/miexplore
- Ives Road Fen Preserve, 35 mi: nature.org/miexplore
- Lodging, food and more: experiencejackson.com

TIPS FOR A GREAT VISIT

- Spring and summer are the best times to view wildflowers and butterflies.
- Dress for the conditions—hiking boots are recommended, as well as insect repellent in the summer.
- 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.
- No removal of plants or animals is allowed.
- 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!