

ZETTERBERG PRESERVE AT POINT BETSIE

Sand, Sun and Surf



LOCATION:

West Michigan



SIZE: 180 acres



Due to the variable and fragile nature of dune ecosystems, there are no official trails through the preserve. Consider a hike along the beach or road.



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.



The Zetterberg Preserve can be viewed from the beach or from the south side of Point Betsie Road, where the preserve sign is located. Please do not walk on the dunes, as they are a fragile ecosystem susceptible to erosion. © Big Foot Media

It's the little things that count. In 2020, one of only 74 nesting pairs of endangered piping plovers in the entire Great Lakes settled at the Zetterberg Preserve at Point Betsie. As a result, tiny piping plover chicks were seen on these shores for the first time in decades.

The protection of places like The Nature Conservancy's (TNC's) Zetterberg Preserve is vital to ensure rare species like the piping plover, **Pitcher's thistle** and **Lake Huron locust** continue to find the habitat they need to grow and thrive. Here, shifting sand dunes are shaped by wind, ice and waves into a unique and diverse ecosystem. This ranges from the harsh conditions of the open dunes to sheltered pockets of forest and interdunal ponds that swell and shrink along with Lake Michigan's water levels.

This area is popular with beachgoers in the summer, when you can take a dip in Lake Michigan or watch the evening sun sink below the horizon. However, the dunes are also particularly lovely in winter.

The picturesque Point Betsie Lighthouse, adjacent to the preserve, has been in operation since 1858. The lighthouse and its associated museum, where you can find an exhibit on the Zetterberg Preserve, are open for tours from mid-May to mid-October—go to pointbetsie.org to learn more.



BEAUTIFUL BUT DANGEROUS

Be sure to check for this invasive species before you buy your wildflower seed mix!

Baby's breath—a familiar sight in flower bouquets—is a serious threat to Great Lakes dunes. It degrades and overtakes dune habitats, making it difficult for native species to thrive.

That's why TNC worked with the Michigan Dune Alliance over two decades to survey and treat 145 miles of shoreline for baby's breath, using shovels to break the plant's deep roots. The Zetterberg Preserve now needs only minimal removal of baby's breath each year.

YOU SHOULD VISIT IF...

You love Lake Michigan's iconic sunsets! Point Betsie is part of the largest freshwater dune system in the world, stretching nearly 300 miles along the western coast of Michigan. Like much of this famous shoreline, the beach here is a beautiful place to watch the sunset.

Point Betsie is also an important resting site for migratory birds and offers excellent birding opportunities during the spring and fall migrations.

Plants and animals you might spot on your visit include:

- Piping plover
- Killdeer
- Marram grass
- White cedar
- Hoary puccoon
- Creeping juniper

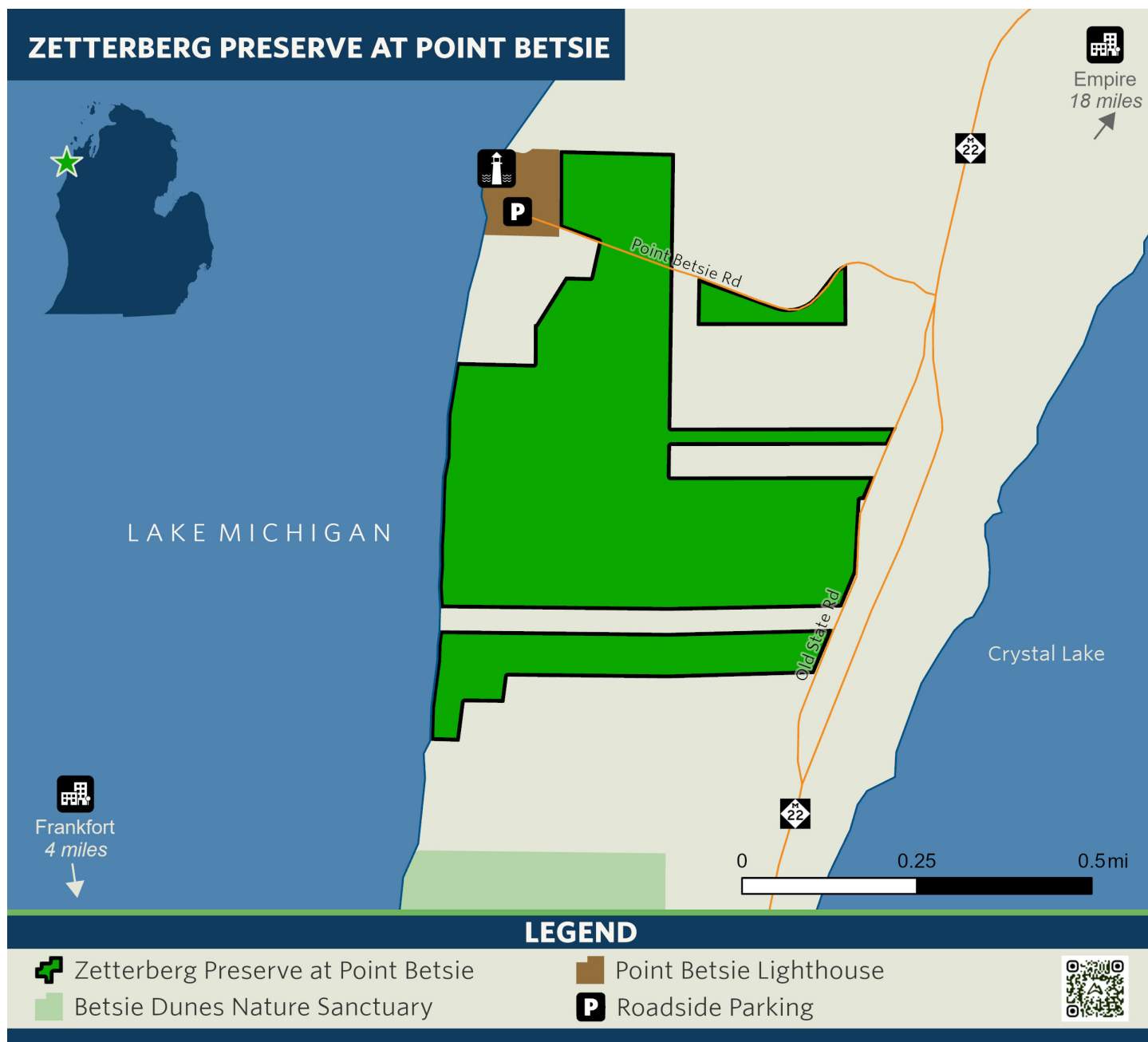
PIPING PLOVER



HOARY PUCCOON



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In 1988, **Steve and Connie Zetterberg** donated the original 71 acres of the Zetterberg Preserve at Point Betsie—property that had been cherished by their family for generations. Since receiving the Zetterbergs' gift, TNC has continued to add to the preserve, now totaling 180 acres. Thank you to the many partners and donors who have made this expansion possible.

HOW TO GET THERE

Directions from Frankfort, MI: Head north on M-22. At Point Betsie Road, turn west (left). Follow the road for 0.5 miles, past the wooden preserve sign on the south (left) side of the road. Parking is available at the end of the road.

MAKE TODAY A NATURE DAY!

Nearby points of interest include:

- Green Point Dunes Nature Preserve, 10 mi: gtrlc.org
- Arcadia Dunes: The C.S. Mott Nature Preserve, 14 mi: gtrlc.org
- Arcadia Marsh Nature Preserve, 17 mi: gtrlc.org
- Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, 24 mi: nps.gov/slbe
- Portage Point Woods Preserve, 25 mi: nature.org/miexplore
- Lodging, food and more: frankfort-elberta.com

TIPS FOR A GREAT VISIT

- There are no trails on the preserve, due to its variable and fragile landscape. We recommend enjoying the preserve from the beach or road, or checking out TNC's exhibit at the Point Betsie Lighthouse.
- Please be mindful of private property along the shoreline.
- Leashed dogs are welcome on the lighthouse grounds and beach.
- No camping or fires permitted.
- Please follow the rules posted at the preserve and online at nature.org/miexplore.

Thank you for protecting this special place!