

Welcome to the Haehnle Sanctuary nature trail. Along this trail you will find a number of wildlife communities. The trail begins at the display below the benches (see the aerial map in the kiosk). Numbered wooden posts along the 1.5-mile trail mark points of interest that are mentioned in this brochure.

1. PRAIRIE RESTORATION—Prior to European settlement, much of the land in southern lower Michigan (37% in Jackson County) consisted of oak savannas. These were prairie communities composed of oaks scattered in seas of grasses, often taller than a horse and rider, and stunning arrays of wildflowers. Settlers converted many of these grasslands to farm fields. In 2000 the Haehnle Sanctuary Committee initiated a major restoration project, the planting of native grasses and wildflowers at three sites, one of which is in front of you. While appealing in their own right, these restored prairies will attract grassland insects and birds and other wildlife that have declined because of loss of this kind of habitat.



2. ROCK PILE—The land in this area has many rocks of all sizes, carried here by the last glacier 10,000 years ago. When the glacier melted, the rocks settled out on the land. Before this land could be tilled, farmers gathered these rocks and piled them in the center or at the edge of the field. Now this rock pile is a wonderful habitat for snakes and small rodents, which can take refuge in the rocks at night and during long winter months.

3. BLUEBIRD NEST BOXES—The nest boxes in this field attract Eastern Bluebirds and

Tree Swallows. Nest boxes were placed in pairs, one for bluebirds and the other for swallows. By pairing the nest boxes, we take advantage of the aggressive nature of swallows, which will protect both its and the bluebirds' nesting place. Neither swallows nor bluebirds care if the other nests nearby.

4. DIKE TRAIL—This portion of the trail passes along a shrubby wetland on the left that connects Eagle Lake and Mud Lake Marsh. In the spring and summer listen for the *wichity-wichity-wichity* song of the Common Yellowthroat (see figure) or the *sweet-sweet-sweet-I'm-so-sweet* song of the Yellow Warbler. Spring peepers, chorus frogs, and green frogs are common.



5. BOGUS LAKE FEN - In front of you is a large fen, one of the rarest types of wetlands in Michigan. Fens receive both surface and subsurface water, are alkaline, and have both surface and subsurface outflows. The center of the fen is a sedge meadow zone containing shrubby cinquefoil, various sedges, grasses and wildflowers. Unfortunately, only 11 acres of sedge meadow remained in 2015. The remaining 45 acres was invaded by glossy buckthorn, which is not native to the U.S. We are working with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to restore this important habitat. (See nearby sign and kiosk.)

6. EAGLE LAKE AND BOB WHITING OBSERVATION DECK—Eagle Lake is one of Michigan's many kettle lakes. As the last glacier receded, blocks of ice broke off and left ice pits or kettle holes after they melted. Today, this lake attracts waterfowl, herons, egrets, and the occasional Osprey at different times of the year. If you explore around the edges, you may also see frogs and turtles, although you may only see their eyes poking above the surface of the water.

7. OAK-HICKORY WOODS—This remnant woods is an oak-hickory community, which is typically found on comparatively dry, well-drained soils. It is biologically diverse.

Although dominated by oaks and hickories, black cherry, walnut, sassafras, flowering dogwood, and spicebush are common. Numerous kinds of birds, such as crows, woodpeckers, cardinals, flycatchers, vireos, and chickadees nest here. Songbirds seek these woods for food during spring and fall migration and fill the woods with their songs and calls. Nuts from oaks and hickories provide abundant, high-energy food for mammals as well.



8. FALLEN TREE—When 'giants' fall in the woods, they create new habitat around them. Sunlight now penetrates the forest canopy allowing shade-intolerant, understory trees, shrubs, and herbaceous plants to sprout. They provide food, shelter, and nesting places for birds and other wildlife. These in turn feed prey animals such as hawks, owls, and weasels. Many animals use these fallen trees: chipmunks and squirrels use it as a dining table, skunks hide in its hollowed out core, and salamanders dwell in decaying material where the tree rests on the ground.

9. SPICEBUSH—The understory shrub in the grove around you is a spicebush. Its



spreading, upright branches have yellow, clustered flowers in the spring and bright red fruit in the fall. Tea can be made from the leaves and bark, and the fruit, when dried and ground, is a substitute for allspice. The apparent bird dropping found on the leaves of the spicebush is actu-

ally the caterpillar of the beautiful Spicebush Swallowtail butterfly.

10. **WOODPECKERS**—This small woods provides habitat for six different woodpeckers. Downy and Red-bellied Woodpeckers and Northern Flicker are fairly common year round. Hairy Woodpecker is uncommon. All four excavate nesting or roosting cavities in dead trees that they enter by round holes the size of their bodies. Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers, seen during spring and fall migration, make rows of little round holes to draw sap and attract stuck insects. The large and striking Pileated Woodpecker makes an occasional appearance. They search for carpenter ants, which they extricate by chiseling 1- to 2-inch long chunks out of the tree. You can locate any of these woodpeckers by listening for their calls and drumming.

11. **AUTUMN OLIVE**—This multi-stemmed shrub was introduced by the DNR in the 1960's to provide cover for wildlife. Unfortunately, like many non-native plants, it is a prolific, invasive plant that can rapidly shade out all competition and become the dominant vegetation. For this reason it is now on the 'banned list' in Michigan. Many autumn olive plants had to be removed from the field behind you before we could seed the area with native grasses and wildflowers.

12. **WOODLAND EDGE**—This busy zone, where the field blends with the taller forest, supports a community of birds and mammals that depends on both forest and opening. For example, Indigo Buntings and Song Sparrows glean seeds from the grasses in the field but nest in the protective cover of the shrubs at the edge. Many birds and mammals, such as white-tailed deer, pause at the edge to 'get the lay of the land' before entering the field.

13. **GRASSLAND PLANTING**—This is the second prairie restoration project on this trail. See station 1.

14. **FLOWERING DOGWOODS**—You are standing in a small grove of flowering dogwoods. Their showy white flowers in early spring and red fruit and scarlet autumn foliage make it one of the most beautiful of the understory trees in the North American hardwood forest.



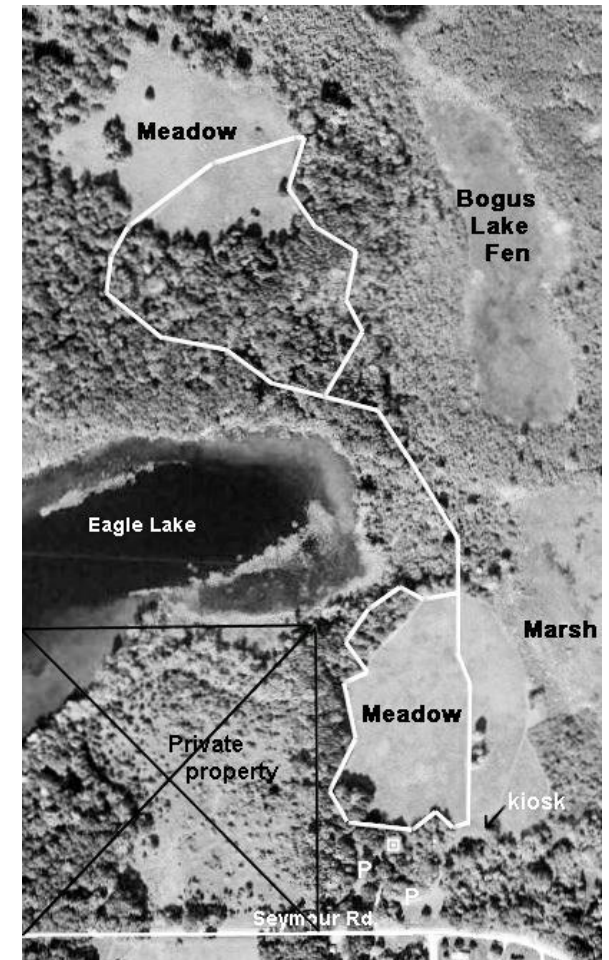
15. **POISON IVY**—The vine clinging to the tree in front of you by its fibrous, hair-like rootlets is poison ivy. While the oil from any part of this plant is toxic for most humans, the white berries seen in the fall and winter are a favorite food of wildlife, none of which show ill effects from eating the berries. More than sixty species of birds feed on this fruit when other foods are scarce. They include Black-capped Chickadee and Northern Flicker, two species that are known to inhabit these woods.

16. **VERNAL POND**—In the distance is a special kind of pond, a vernal pond, which fills up in spring and dries up during summer. Such ponds become the seasonal breeding and feeding grounds of many woodland species. Because of their shallow depth and warm temperatures, they are rich in algae, fungi, bacteria, insects, and annual plants. They cannot support fish, so the eggs of many amphibians, notably wood frog and spotted salamander thrive here. Snakes, foxes, and raccoons feed along the edge and birds come here to feed and drink. In spring listen for wood frogs and spring peepers calling for mates.

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Nature Trail

A Guide for a Walk at Phyllis Haehnle Memorial Sanctuary



Use the Quick Code on the posts to view this brochure and learn more about what you are seeing.

www.haehlnesanctuary.org