

2024/25 Michigan Nature Association

# Year in Review

People • Land • Legacy







*Bumblebee Leaving Beebalm  
Photo by William Rowan  
Overall Winner of 2024 Photo Contest*



# You Make the Difference



Dear Friends,

I am proud to share the Michigan Nature Association's remarkable progress in our ongoing efforts to protect Michigan's natural heritage. Over this past year, thanks to your steadfast support, we achieved major milestones in land protection, stewardship, and scientific innovation.

## Expanding MNA's Protected Lands to 17,500 Acres

MNA acquired more than 400 acres of critical habitat across Michigan. These successful projects bring our total protected areas to more than 17,500 acres. With your continued support, MNA's sanctuaries will provide essential refuge for rare, threatened, and endangered species and help safeguard Michigan's unique biodiversity for generations to come.

## Restoring Critical Habitat across Michigan

Our stewardship team, with the help of dedicated volunteers and partners, advanced restoration efforts across our sanctuaries. A key highlight was our continued work on an eastern massasauga rattlesnake (EMR) recovery grant from the US Fish & Wildlife Service. Beyond the EMR grant, we completed numerous other stewardship projects, from prescribed burns to habitat restoration, each essential to maintaining the health and resilience of vulnerable natural communities.

## Innovating on Vernal Pool Conservation with Support from NASA

This year, our leadership in vernal pool conservation was recognized with the award of an exciting grant NASA, a major milestone in our effort to expand our science-based partnerships. Working with Michigan Technological University and others, this project leverages advanced satellite and LiDAR technology to map and monitor vernal pools across the Great Lakes. The data and insights generated will dramatically improve our ability to protect these essential, yet vulnerable and often overlooked, habitats.

## Your Support Makes it All Possible

The achievements of the past year are a testament to the passion, generosity, and vision of our donors, members, volunteers, and partners. Thank you for your commitment to Michigan's natural legacy.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "X. Smith".



Cover Photo: Keweenaw Sunset  
Photo by Dan Burton  
2024 Photo Contest Winner







---

# Protecting Michigan's Natural Treasures

**Completed the First Easement Acquisition at Little Cedar Lake, a Top Cisco Conservation Priority.** A once common fish, cisco conservation in Michigan has been recognized as a major priority in the State Wildlife Action Plan. They require cold, deep, and well-oxygenated lakes with exceptional water quality to survive. Such lakes are rare in Michigan - fewer than 200 of the state's 11,000 inland lakes support cisco populations. As part of a \$655,000 freshwater protection grant awarded by EGLE, MNA is working with private landowners to protect lakeshore habitat along Little Cedar Lake, among the highest cisco priorities in the state, and we accepted the first generous donation of a conservation easement as part of this ambitious project.

**Acquired 268 Acres along the Paw Paw River and Wolf Lake.** MNA received a generous donation of 268 acres of high quality habitat, valued at \$1.2 million, adjacent to both the MDNR's 153-acre Wolf Lake Fish Hatchery and a 400 acre protected area owned by Almena Township. Together, these three protected areas conserve more than 820 acres in the biodiverse Paw Paw corridor of southwest Michigan.

**Expanded the Swamp Lakes Moose Refuge Nature Sanctuary to 360 Acres.** MNA purchased 80 acres of high quality forest land adjacent to Swamp Lakes with funding from a USFWS North American Wetlands Conservation Act grant. MNA's sanctuary fits into a larger landscape-scale complex of public and private protected areas with high biodiversity, including land owned by The Nature Conservancy and MDNR.

**Protected Additional Coastal Wetlands along Northern Lake Michigan's Epoufette Bay.** A federal North American Wetlands Conservation Grant funded the acquisition of high conservation value coastal wetlands along the shores of Epoufette Bay. The bay is located just west of the scenic Cut River Bridge along the Niagra Escarpment, a geological ridge stretching 650 miles that is a Great Lakes major biodiversity hot spot.

**Increased Coastal Protection along Lake Huron's Les Cheneaux Island's.** MNA received a generous donation of a conservation easement protecting an additional 615 linear feet of Great Lakes shoreline at Beavertail Point Plant Preserve. The easement protects rare natural communities, including sand beach, limestone cobble shore, conifer swamp, and northern mesic forest in an area famed for its connection to the legendary Aldo Leopold.



**17,500 acres**  
owned and protected





*Prescribed Burn in Oakland County  
Photo by Fauna Creative*



# Being Good Stewards of the Land

Acquiring nature sanctuaries is only the first step needed to protect habitat for rare, threatened and endangered species; imperiled natural communities; and unique geologic features. Ongoing stewardship maintains the important conservation values of these places over time and enables visitor access to our popular sanctuaries. It is because of the dedication of our sanctuary Stewards, interns, and hundreds of volunteers that we are able to manage over 175 nature sanctuaries across our large state. Some of last year's stewardship highlights include:

**Restored Lakeplain Prairie, Michigan's Rarest Natural Community, Along Saginaw Bay.** MNA's Saginaw Wetlands Nature Sanctuary is home to one of the last remaining lakeplain prairies in the Great Lakes region, a globally rare and critically imperiled community type having lost 99% historic footprint. This past year marked the completion of a 41-acre restoration project funded by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Wildlife Habitat Grant Program and the USFWS Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program.

**Improved Habitat for the Red-Headed Woodpecker in West Michigan.** A landscape-scale restoration grant led by the American Bird Conservancy and funded by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Wildlife Habitat Grant Program enabled MNA to restore oak pine barren habitat for the red-headed woodpecker and other rare species at MNA's 245-acre Newaygo Barrens Conservation Area. MNA volunteers and staff completed 464 hours of work as part of the project.

**Removed Invasive Species at Prairie Fens Across Southern Michigan.** Due to the lost diversity of landscapes across lower Michigan, the unique qualities of prairie fen ecosystems position them to play a critical role in the future of rare species with declining populations. In 2024, MNA staff, seasonal workers, and volunteers improved approximately 60 acres of prairie fen habitat on our Oakland County sanctuaries through invasive species management, shrub removal, and prescribed fire.

**Led a 'Learn to Burn' Class in West Michigan.** Over 40 people attended a training led by MNA staff to learn about the importance of prescribed fire at an event hosted by the Newaygo County Environmental Coalition.

**2,000+**

hours contributed by MNA  
volunteers & stewards

**186**

Sanctuaries Monitored  
(100%)

**122**

Stewardship Workdays &  
Guided Hikes





*Surveying at Wolf Lake Nature Sanctuary  
Photo by Abby Pointer*



---

# Advancing Our Science

MNA's sanctuary system serves as a living laboratory and benchmark for what conservation in Michigan can achieve. MNA's new science program is focused on building a broad research network across the state and region to advance conservation. Throughout 2024, researchers from Michigan State University, Grand Valley State University, Central Michigan University, and beyond used MNA sanctuaries across the state to collaborate, collecting data for dozens of research projects that will help us better understand Michigan nature.

**Led a Public/ Private Partnership on Endangered Species Recovery.** MNA collaborated with researchers, state and local partners on the fourth year of a 5-year US Fish & Wildlife Service Endangered Species Recovery Challenge Grant to assess the status of the federally threatened eastern massasauga rattlesnake, results of the project have included a landscape genetic analysis of 42 massasauga populations; detailed, long-term habitat, demographic, and disease assessments of 2 focal populations; and 150 acres of habitat restoration.

**Played a Key Role in Efforts Save the Poweshiek Skipperling from Extinction.** MNA is a key member of an international public/private partnership funded by US Fish and Wildlife Service. Partners are working to reverse the collapse in Poweshiek populations. Butterflies that were bred in captivity and released at an MNA sanctuary were surveyed last year and showed early signs of breeding in the wild. This is a huge step forward.

**Awarded NASA Funding to Advance Regional Vernal Pool Mapping.** Vernal pools play outsized roles in forested ecosystems, yet there is limited information on their distribution and status across the Great Lakes region. In 2024, MNA and partners were awarded a \$900,000 grant from NASA to develop and implement a strategic, effective, and sustainable framework for identifying and monitoring vernal pools in the region by pairing advanced remote sensing mapping methodologies with community science field verification.

**Piloted Ecological Integrity Assessments at MNA Sanctuaries.** MNA's science and conservation staff field tested a new science-based tool that will allow MNA to track progress of our conservation efforts over time. This is a major step toward a more systematic evaluation of our on-the-ground progress over time at our sanctuaries.

# 32

**research projects  
with partners**







*Herbarium Collection Field Day with the Girl Scouts of SE Michigan  
Photo by Abby Pointer*



---

# Community Engagement

MNA works with with a variety of passionate and engaged community groups who care deeply about the well-being of their place. MNA also works to connect children with to Michigan nature through our education mini-grant program in an effort to educate the next generation of conservation leaders who will continue to protect Michigan's rich natural heritage.

**Worked with 30 K-12 Schools to Connect 1,521 Students to Nature.** In 2024, MNA assisted 30 classrooms in visiting state parks, local nature centers, and MNA nature sanctuaries across the state of Michigan. These field trip mini-grants are intended to assist K-12 teachers in developing educational and hands-on field trips to provide students with meaningful experience with Michigan's nature.

**Piloted a Partnership with the Girl Scouts of Southeast Michigan.** MNA piloted a new patch focused on conservation career exploration. Through a series of field days, high school aged scouts helped MNA survey for rare species, learned about the importance of managing habitat for endangered plants and animals, and practiced field skills in preparation for an outdoor career.

**Engaged Community Scientists and Vernal Pool Partners.** As a co-founder of the Michigan Vernal Pools Partnership and as it's managing partner, MNA promoted the Vernal Pool Patrol, a community science program that trains volunteers to map and monitor vernal pools, across the year through active social media engagement, several vernal pool exploration events with local communities, and the organization of the Michigan Vernal Pools Partnership Annual Meeting, which drew over 300 virtual attendees.

**Supported Professional Development for K-12 Teachers Across the Great Lakes Region.** In 2024, MNA partnered with NOAA's Sea Grant program & MSU Extension to provide vernal pool materials and support to teachers who worked to develop vernal pool lesson plans as part of Sea Grant's 'Teaching Great Lakes Literacy Program'. These materials will be available by the end of 2025.





# A Statewide Impact

For over 70 years, MNA members, donors, and volunteers have built an unparalleled statewide network of nature sanctuaries. Today, there is at least one MNA nature sanctuary in 58 of Michigan's 83 counties.

## **Alcona County**

McAlvay Memorial

## **Alger County**

Handford Memorial  
Twin Waterfalls

## **Allegan County**

Allegan Valley  
Wade Memorial

## **Alpena County**

Colby  
Peter Memorial  
Gull Island  
Grass Island  
Bird Island  
Morris Bay

## **Antrim County**

Cedar River  
Green River

## **Baraga County**

Baraga Old Growth  
Lightfoot Bay

## **Barry County**

Thornapple River  
Thornapple Lake  
Little Cedar Lake

## **Benzie County**

Donald E. Hart

## **Berrien County**

Four Macomb County  
Ladies  
Pepperidge Dunes  
Trillium Ravine  
Beck Memorial

## **Branch County**

Kope Kon

## **Calhoun County**

Campbell Memorial  
Pennfield Bog  
Fish Lake Bog  
Flowering Dogwood

## **Cass County**

Dowagiac Woods  
Ruley-Shurte Woods  
Radebaugh Memorial  
Wilding

## **Chippewa County**

Pat Grogan  
Munuscong Lake  
Lake Superior  
Lake Huron Sand Dunes  
Zeerip Memorial  
Soo Muskeg  
Schafer Family  
at Roach Point  
Carlton Lake Wetlands  
Harvey's Rocks  
Carey Memorial  
Rocky Point Wetlands  
Vermilion Point

## **Clinton County**

A Looking Glass

## **Clare County**

Alta Warren Parsons  
Memorial

## **Delta County**

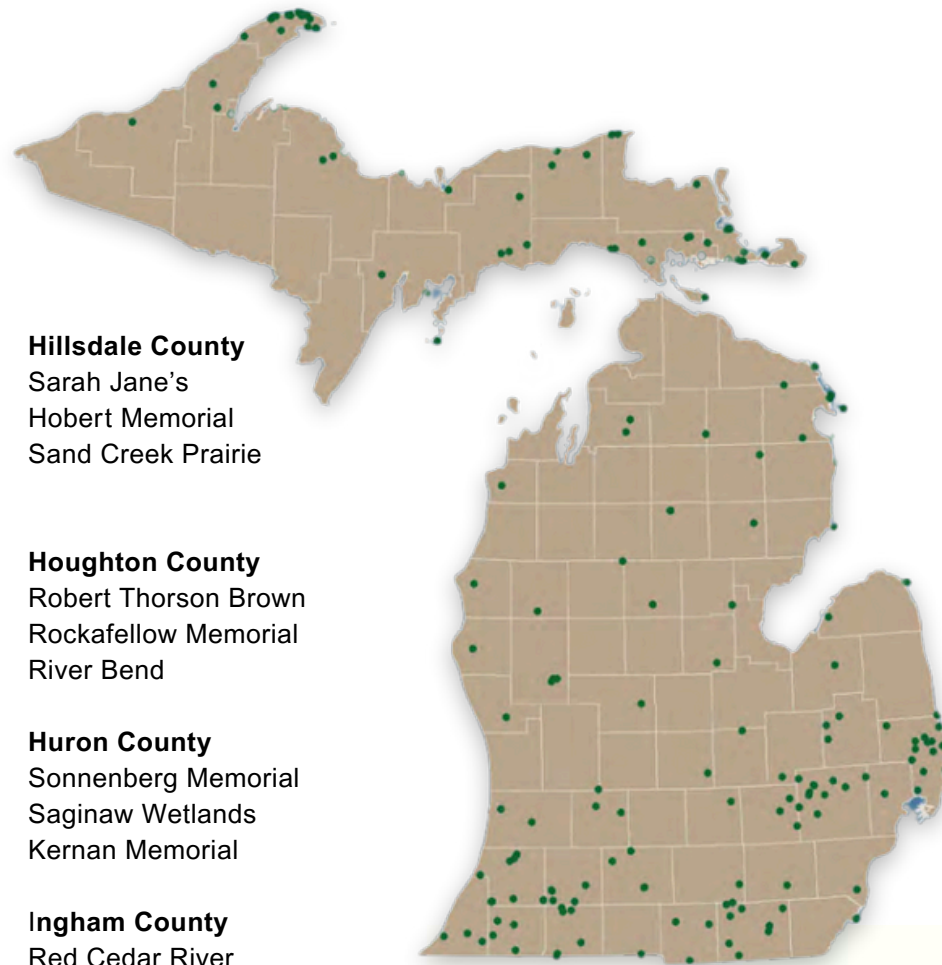
Martin Bay  
Three Wilderness Islands  
Bertha K Daudendiek

## **Genesee County**

Dauner Martin  
White Cedar Swamps  
Zahrfeld Memorial

## **Gladwin County**

Briggs Cox Memorial



## **Hillsdale County**

Sarah Jane's  
Hobert Memorial  
Sand Creek Prairie

## **Houghton County**

Robert Thorson Brown  
Rockafellow Memorial  
River Bend

## **Huron County**

Sonnenberg Memorial  
Saginaw Wetlands  
Kernan Memorial

## **Ingham County**

Red Cedar River

## **Iosco County**

Frinks Pond

## **Jackson County**

Columbia  
Lefglen

## **Kalamazoo County**

Wilkie Memorial  
Flowerfield Creek  
Barton Lake  
Palmer Memorial  
Brewer Woods

## **Kent County**

Dolan

## **Keweenaw County**

Dean Webster Memorial  
Estivant Pines  
Upton Lake  
Keweenaw Shores I  
Keweenaw Shores II  
Klipfel Memorial  
Rooks Memorial  
Hylton Memorial



**Keweenaw County cont.**

Gunn Memorial  
Grinnell Memorial  
Eagle Harbor Red Pine  
Dunes  
Cy Clark Memorial  
Black Creek  
Redwyn's Dunes  
Gratiot Lake Overlook  
John Helstrom  
Mariner's Preserve at  
Silver River Falls  
Ruth Johnson Memorial

**Lake County**

Pere Marquette

**Lapeer County**

Petite Wetland  
Zucker Memorial

**Lenawee County**

Martin Beland Miller  
Robert Powell Memorial  
Willow Lake Prairie Slough  
Goose Creek Grasslands  
McCulley-Bastian  
Broehl Memorial 1  
Broehl Memorial 2  
Tiffin River

**Livingston County**

Bullard Lake Fen  
Lyle & Mary Rizor

Hudspeth Memorial  
H.E. Hardy Memorial

**Luce County**

Two Hearted River  
Swamp Lakes Moose  
Refuge  
Trout Lake

**Mackinac County**

Stratton Memorial  
Beaver Dam  
Fred Dye  
Scherer  
Epoufette Bay  
Bois Blanc Island  
Beavertail Point  
Michigan Meridian  
Hiawatha

**Macomb County**

Wilcox Warnes

**Marquette County**

Braastad  
Echo Lake  
Mystle Justeson Memorial

**Mason County**

Franklin & Brenda Holly

**Midland County**

Bullock Creek

**Monroe County**

Petersburg  
Swan Creek

**Montcalm County**

Krum Memorial

**Muskegon County**

Five Lakes Muskegon

**Newaygo County**

Brooks Oak Pine Barrens  
Karner Blue  
Newaygo Prairie

**Oakland County**

Lambs Fairbanks  
Clifford and Calla Burr  
Lakeville Swamp  
Timberland Swamp  
Yntema Wildlife Oasis  
Rose Center Wetlands  
Brandon Township  
Morgan Porritt  
Big Valley

**Oceana County**

Genevieve Casey

**Ogemaw County**

Lost Lake

**Ontonogan County**

Theodore Hunt Memorial

**Osceola County**

Osceola Woods

**Oscoda County**

Kenneth Luneack

**Ostego County**

Frost Pocket

**Presque Isle County**

Mystery Valley  
Spitler Shore

**Roscommon County**

Leatherleaf Jack Pine Bog  
Jackson Memorial

**Sanilac County**

Birch Creek

**Schoolcraft County**

Fox River  
Huntington Memorial  
Walker Memorial  
Cedar Lake  
Manistique Dune and Swale  
Fox River Wetlands

**Shiawassee County**

Shiawassee River

**St. Clair County**

Leonatti Memorial  
Louis G. Senghas  
Polovich Memorial  
Bertha A. Daubendiek  
Memorial  
Trillium Trail

**Ray Memorial**

McGaw Memorial  
Jasper Woods Memorial  
Brennan Memorial  
Edna Newnan  
Alice Moore Woods  
St. Clair Lakeplain Forest

**St. Joseph County**

Prairie Banks  
White Pigeon River  
Sauk Indian Trail  
Chen Memorial  
Prairie Rhode Savanna  
Hildegard Wintergerst

**Tuscola County**

Wood Duck Doman

**Van Buren County**

Phillips Family Memorial  
Black River  
Butternut Creek  
Barvicks Sand Dunes  
Bankson Lake Bog  
Great Bear Swamp  
Wolf Lake

**Washtenaw County**

Joan Rodman Memorial

**Wayne County**

Evans Memorial





2024 Prairie Fringed Orchid Count  
Photo by Ayden Ehgotz



# Thank You to Our Supporters

We are so grateful to the thousands of individuals and families who believe in and support MNA. Their commitment results in the accomplishments described in this Year in Review, as well as so many more over our 70-year history. MNA's inspiring story, long history, and incredible track record of success are remarkable and only possible because of our donors and volunteers—we thank them all for their inspiring contributions to conservation in Michigan through their support of MNA. MNA is very appreciative of the contributions by each and every member, donor, and volunteer. We have made every attempt to be accurate in our donor list, which includes donations made in the fiscal year between October 1, 2023 and September 30, 2024; any name not included was done so unintentionally and we apologize for the omission.



Buttonbush (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*).  
Photo by Abby Pointer

## **\$10,000 and up**

Melvin Czechowski  
Ann Hancock  
James Hewitt  
Maura Jung  
Kaye Kreutzfeldt  
Nancy Maze

## **\$1,000 to \$9,999**

Christiane Anderson  
Doris Applebaum  
David Baur  
John Bradtke  
Gerald and Rose Burke  
Kristi Chapman  
Joseph Cobe  
Robert DeLap  
Donald Diehl  
Darcy Dye  
Frank G. and Gertrude Dunlap  
Foundation  
Frank Moore  
Paul Gambka  
Tyler Glenn  
Aubrey Golden  
Rex Guelde

Robert Herbst  
Heather Hewett  
Alan Jones  
Janet Joslyn  
Stephen Kelley  
Keweenaw Community  
Foundation  
Scott Klus  
Diane Krause  
Douglas LaBar  
Mary Leys  
Bruce Loughry  
Scott MacLean  
Main Manufacturing Products  
Philip & Sarah Rosenberg  
Family Trust  
Michael Philip  
Ronald Priest  
James Rossman  
Sandra Ruddick  
Christine Samida  
John Schlansker  
Lynn Schram  
Donald Stearns  
Nancy Steiner  
Martin Tatuch  
Linda Woodworth  
Guerin Wilkinson  
Roger and Rebecca Tuuk





*American White Pelicans by William Rowan  
2024 Annual Photo Contest Winner*



## Thank You to Our Supporters

Wendy Umbriac  
Ruth Vail  
Robert Van Eck  
Margaret Welsch  
Chris Wise  
David Wood  
Stanley Zasuwa  
Cathleen Zepelin  
Robert Ziel

### **\$500 - \$999**

Angela Aldrich  
Ameriprise Financial  
Audubon Society of Kalamazoo  
Lawrence and Christine Baer  
Kim Beal  
Rosemary Bell  
Linda Belote  
Greg Bodker  
Carol Branch  
Capital Area Audubon  
Marilou Capo  
May Chen  
Community Foundation for  
Southeast Michigan  
William DePriest  
Anne Doran  
Douglas Felt  
Leo Flynn  
Susan Frazier  
Richard Glosenger

Judith Graham  
Steve Hale  
Robert Kachman  
Audrie Kirk  
Kenneth Kirton  
Daniel LaBar  
Janet Landry  
Alan Machek  
Jeanne Marsh  
Susan Miller  
P Mitchell  
Patrick Muldoon  
Merry Ossenheimer  
Charles Pearson  
Deborah Remer  
Ruth Sablich  
Mary Saylor  
Michael Sevilla  
David Sharpe  
Antonette St. Pierre  
Gerard Szydlowski  
Thomas Valli  
Joyce Van Ochten  
Walter Zarnoch  
Ray Ziarno

### **\$100 to \$499**

Academic Internal Medicine  
Associates  
Julie Anderson  
Louise Anderson

Daniel Angell  
Diane Arnold  
James Barnes  
Fran Barnwell  
Hugh and Mary Lou Battley  
Pat Beechem  
Steve Begnoche  
Danny Bennett  
Vicki Berglund  
James Bergman  
Catherine Blake  
Mary Borkowski  
Stacy Bosch  
William Bradford  
Clara Bratton  
Kurt Brauer

Mary Bremigan  
Ralph Bremigan  
John Brody  
Amy Brown  
Lawrence Brown  
Eleanor Brownell  
George Brueck  
Wendy Buchanan  
Anthony Burton  
Dan Burton  
Carolyn Bush  
Joanne Cantoni  
David Cartwright  
Douglas Clason  
Irma Ellery  
Lavern Elsholz  
Jan Elsmar  
Wayne Falda  
Sam Febba  
Douglas Felch  
Molly Cole



*Leatherleaf. Photo by Abby Pointer*





Beavertail Point in the Les Cheneaux Islands  
MNA Project Photo





Moose (*Alces alces*). Photo by Lauren Ross

## **\$100 to \$499 Cont.**

Maureen Conner  
Michael Cooper  
Linda Covey  
Susan Cox  
Sandra Crampton  
Mary Crockett  
David Crossett  
Anne Crotser  
Stephen Danis  
Peggy Dankert  
Beth Dannenberger  
Catherine Davis  
William Deephouse  
David DeGraaf  
Mike Devarenne  
Gregory DeWeerd  
Nancy Duffy  
Harry Eick  
Timothy Eiseman  
Belinda Fenby  
Jon Ferguson  
William Ferguson  
Janet Fisher  
Lynda Foley  
Robert Fountain  
Mark Fox

Carl Freeman  
Liz Gannon  
George Gearhart  
Malcolm Goodwin  
Judith Grantz  
Jeff Greene  
Thomas Gregory  
Victor Gregowski  
David & Carrie Grellmann  
Janette Haase  
Dennis Hall  
Chris Hamilton  
John Harris  
Jon Helmrich  
Jill Henemyer  
Elizabeth Hengstebeck  
Richard Hirr  
Gretchen Hirsch  
Stanley Hirt  
Neil Hodges  
Douglas Holem  
Richard Holzman  
Anne Honhart  
Patricia Huebner  
Keith Huth  
Mary Irons  
Mark Isken



## Thank You to Our Supporters

### **\$100 to \$499 Cont.**

Isle Royale Keweenaw Park  
Association  
Nora Iversen  
Jackson Audubon Society  
Robert Jackson  
Brian Jarsma  
David & Gretchen Jewison  
Kenneth Johnson  
Rachel Juris  
Janet Kahan  
William Kail  
Jacquelyn Kallunki  
Janet Kauffman  
Steven Keim  
Brian Kelley  
Jeffrey Kemm  
Charles Kenney  
Susan Kielb  
Elizabeth Kinney  
Justin Klenk  
Mary Knight  
Richard Korn  
Thomas Koschmieder  
Ann Koski  
Martha Kovich  
Ann Kraft

Community Rewards Kroger  
Stanley Kuchta  
Richard LaBarre  
Marian Laughlin  
Gregory Laurell  
Yu Man Lee  
Morgan Lees  
Bill Leonard  
David Lewandowski  
Mike Lewis  
David Lindberg  
Patricia Lindsay  
John Lloyd  
Margaret Loffelman  
Nancy Lowe  
Debra MacGregor  
John Martin  
Mary Ann Martin  
Russell Mattson  
Teresa Mayes  
JB McCombs  
Ira McDonald  
Paul McEwen  
Lila McMechan  
Barbara Mead  
Rebecca Mehall  
James Mertens  
Barbara Metting  
Charles and Carolyn Meyer

Larry Meyer  
Maureen Michael  
Jon Miller  
Tracy Miller  
Robert Moll  
Fred Monroy  
Dane Morri  
Glenn Muhr  
Wayne Murphy  
Larry Neitzert  
Sara Nelson  
Jill Neuville  
Larry Nooden  
Donna Nowak  
Oakland Audubon Society  
Jeannine Palms  
Alta Parsons  
Mark Atma  
Barbara Pepper  
Barbara Philips Michel  
James Pifer  
Joe Pitlanish  
Nick Posak  
Sarah Pregitzer  
Stephen Price  
David Putt  
Rada Radebaugh  
Carol Rall

Arlene Rampson  
Donald Reed  
Patricia Richardson  
David Richter  
Mark Roberts





## **\$100 to \$499 Cont.**

Lynne Robertson  
Michael Robold  
Rochester Garden Club  
Frances Rosen  
Louis Rosenbaum  
Peter Rothe  
Jim Rypkema  
Kate Safford  
Luis Saldivia  
Stephanie Schaffarzek  
Kary Scheiern  
Marcia Schlinger  
Judith Schmidt

Elizabeth Seagull  
Richard Sedlock  
Janice Selberg  
Janet Senneker  
Karlin Sevensma  
Kenneth Shaw  
Barbara Siepierski  
William Simpson  
Gary Siorek  
Virginia Sisson  
Anne Smith  
Colleen Smith  
James Smith  
Judith Smutek  
Antoinette Spears  
Joann Stang

Les Stiner  
Mark Stoddard  
Nancy Stoll  
Elly Sullivan  
Frank Surma  
Matt Swanson  
Neal Swanson  
Shereen Tabrizi  
Bradley Taylor  
Joel Thompson  
William Thurston  
Rosemary Tinetti  
Janice Titiev  
Robert Tomasik  
Edward Trancik

Edward Trowbridge  
Cynthia Uhrie  
Judith Smutek  
Charlene Vanacker  
Steve Vander Wall  
Susan Waltz  
Susan Ward  
Albert Washburne  
Celeste Watts  
Jamie Watts  
Annette Weiser  
Geoff Weller  
Catherine Whitney  
William Wichers  
Ronald Wurst  
David Young







Canada Warbler by Cassandra Hill  
2024 Annual Photo Contest Winner



# Save Michigan's Natural Heritage and Leave a Lasting Legacy

## Make a Planned Gift to MNA:

- Include a bequest to MNA in your will or estate plan
- Secure dependable lifetime income by investing in a charitable gift annuity from MNA
- Donate stocks, bonds, or other securities directly to MNA
- Name MNA as a beneficiary on investment accounts or life insurance
- Donate conservation or non-conservation real estate or other property to MNA

***Tax Identification Number: 38-6093404***

*To learn more about how you can join our Guardians of the Future and leave a planned gif to MNA please email Executive Director Garret Johnson at [gjohnson@michigannature.org](mailto:gjohnson@michigannature.org).*



*Prairie Fringed Orchid (Platanthera praeclara).  
Photo by Ayden Ehgatz*





*Yellow Lake Reflection by Nathan Miller  
2024 Annual Photo Contest Winner*



# Guardians of the Future

*By including MNA in their estate plans, such as a will, trust, or other planned gift, these dedicated people have joined a special group – our Guardians of the Future – who sustain MNA's work and leave a lasting legacy for many generations to come.*

Delrae Abbott  
Susan Abentrod  
Alec Allen  
Howard Anderson  
Doris Applebaum  
James Apsey  
John Assenmacher  
Robert Ayotte  
Lawrence and  
Christine Baer  
Steve Benkert  
Elizabeth Bishop  
Greg Bodker  
Patricia Boettger  
Mary Borkowski  
Carl Bouton  
Jim Bricker  
Jack Carso  
William Cooke  
Roger Cooney

Betty Debus  
Dorothy Engelman  
William Ferguson  
Dorothy Fisher  
Richard Foster  
Stephen Fox  
Caryl Freeman  
Jeffrey Ganley  
Myra Gibson  
Barbara Haman  
John Hand  
Fay Hansen  
Gretchen Hirsch  
Neil Hodges  
Brenda Holly  
Franklin Holly  
Richard Holzman  
Shannon Horne  
Nora Iversen  
Abdeen Jabara

Rama Jinka  
Sharon Johnson  
Ronald Joseph  
Janet Joslyn  
Bill Kingsley  
Kaye Kreutzfeldt  
Bruce Loughry  
Linda Luneack  
Ralph Markel  
JB McCombs  
Donn Miller  
Betty Muller  
James Munro  
Ernest Nassar  
Jill Neuville  
Anne Pancella  
Jim Pifer  
Gary Pomeroy  
Don Reed  
Deborah Remer

Sarah Ritter  
Michael Robold  
Laurie Rosenberg  
Stephen Ross  
Ruth Sablich  
Judith Schmidt  
Susan Schmitz  
Mark Sellers  
Ruth Sercombe  
Amanda Slawter  
Elly Sullivan  
Gerard Szydlowski  
Scott Thomasma  
Edward Trowbridge  
Stewart Vining  
Brian Wake  
John Zachel  
Cathleen Zepelin  
Ray Ziarno





*Great Lakes Marsh Boardwalk by Laurie Jacobson  
2024 Annual Photo Contest Winner*



# Use Your IRA to Create a Lasting Legacy

## A Tax-Saving Way to Protect Michigan Nature

You can help protect Michigan's irreplaceable natural heritage and save on taxes by supporting MNA through your IRA.

### Special Opportunity for Those 70½ Years Old and Older

- You can give any amount (up to a maximum of \$108,000) this year directly from your IRA to a qualified charity such as MNA without paying income taxes on that money.
- Gifts of any value, up to \$108,000, are eligible for this benefit.
- This giving option is commonly called the **IRA charitable rollover** or **qualified charitable distribution (QCD)**.

### Why Consider This Gift?

- Your gift may satisfy all or part of your required minimum distribution (RMD).
- You pay no income taxes on the transfer, and it does not generate taxable income, helping you even if you do not itemize your deductions.
- A lower annual income level may help decrease your Medicare premiums and reduce the amount of Social Security that is subject to tax.

### How to Get Started

Work with your IRA administrator to arrange your gift or reach out to MNA discuss your plans and how your legacy will benefit Michigan's environment.



*Blanding's Turtle (Emydoidea blandingii). Photo by Abby Pointer*

***Always talk to your financial or legal advisor before making decisions about your retirement accounts***





*Keweenaw Sunset*  
*Photo by Fauna Creative*



# Legacy



## Ken Ross

1937-2024

In 2024, MNA was sad to hear about the passing of our former super-volunteer, Dr. Ken Ross. Originally from Red Beach, Maine, Ken was a long-time resident of Lenawee County and a professor of political science at Adrian College for 30 years until his retiring as Professor Emeritus in 1997.

During his time in Michigan, Ken founded the Environmental Council of Lenawee (ECOL) County, Michigan, published two volumes of Alaska environmental history, and devoted countless hours as a land-preservation volunteer for Lenawee County's Bicentennial Woods as well as Michigan Nature Association sanctuaries.

Ken is fondly remembered by MNA staff, who got to know him well during the time spent car-pooling to and from sanctuaries across southern Michigan over the years. In 2012, Ken was one of the first people to receive the Mason and Melvin Shafer Distinguished Service Award for extraordinary service to MNA. His absence as a volunteer was keenly felt when he moved back to Maine in 2020.

Upon returning to his roots in Maine and until his passing in 2024, Ken played a key role in several environmental campaigns around his beloved Cobscook Bay, including opposition to the Pennamaquan Dam, helping to found Friends of Cobscook Bay, and opposition to a proposed metallic mineral mine in Pembroke. He was the primary plaintiff resulting in the 2019 Maine Supreme Court decision; giving shore landowners the right to protect rockweed on their shores from commercial harvest, and in 2021 was a founding member of the Maine Rockweed Coalition.



Sherri Laier, Ken Ross, Eugene Lidster, and Don Reed at Goose Creek Grasslands



# About Us

## Our Mission

The purpose of MNA is to acquire, protect, and maintain natural areas that contain examples of Michigan's endangered and threatened flora, fauna, and other components of the natural environment, including habitat for fish, wildlife, and plants of the state of Michigan and to carry on a program of natural history study and conservation education. We envision a future where Michigan's rare, threatened, and endangered species, and imperiled natural communities thrive, and where they are valued by people and communities that embrace and benefit from Michigan's natural heritage.



Volunteer Crew for 2024 Eastern Massasauga Rattlesnake Bioblitz

## Board of Trustees

Kurt Brauer  
*President*

Aubrey Golden  
*Vice President*

Margaret Welsch  
*Secretary/Treasurer*

Ruth Vail  
*Trustee-at-Large*

Garret Johnson  
*Executive Director*

David Cartwright

Yu Man Lee

Maureen McNulty Saxton

Brandon Schroeder

## Staff

Leadership  
Garret Johnson  
*Executive Director*

Science  
Andrew Myers  
*Conservation Scientist*

Haley Beckman  
*GIS Specialist*

Conservation  
Andrew Bacon  
*Conservation Director*

Ayden Ehgots  
*Conservation Coordinator, E.L.P.*

Stuart Goldman  
*Conservation Coordinator, W.L.P.*

Bill Atkinson  
*Conservation Coordinator, Thumb*

Nancy Leonard  
*Conservation Coordinator, Keweenaw*

Natalie Kent-Norkowski  
*Land Protection Technician*


Community Engagement  
Abby Pointer  
*Community Engagement Coordinator*

Grants & Operations  
Brenda Graham  
*Grants and Operations Coordinator*



All uncredited photography is taken from the MNA archives. Please direct questions about this publication to [michigannature@michigannature.org](mailto:michigannature@michigannature.org) (866) 223-2231.  
© 2025. Except where used with permission, entire contents copyright 2025 Michigan Nature Association.





**“The work MNA has done  
is simply irreplaceable...  
MNA is protecting the  
soul of Michigan.”**

Dave Dempsey  
award-winning author of  
*Ruin and Recovery: Michigan's  
Rise as a Conservation Leader*

*Au Sable River by Paul Mrozek*  
2024 Annual Photo Contest, 1st Place Landscapes





## Michigan Nature Association

2310 Science Parkway, Suite 100  
Okemos, MI 48864  
[www.michigannature.org](http://www.michigannature.org)

NON-PROFIT  
ORG US  
POSTAGE PAID  
LANSING, MI  
PERMIT #689



*Indian Groundnut (Apios americana)*  
Photo by Ayden Ehgotz