



MAAS FAMILY NATURE PRESERVE

A Project of the Land Conservancy of West Michigan

LOCATION: Algoma Twp, Kent County

SIZE: 17 acres

The Maas Family Nature Preserve is open for public visitation with the following guidelines: foot travel only, no hunting, no pets, no camping or camp fires.

NATURAL FEATURES

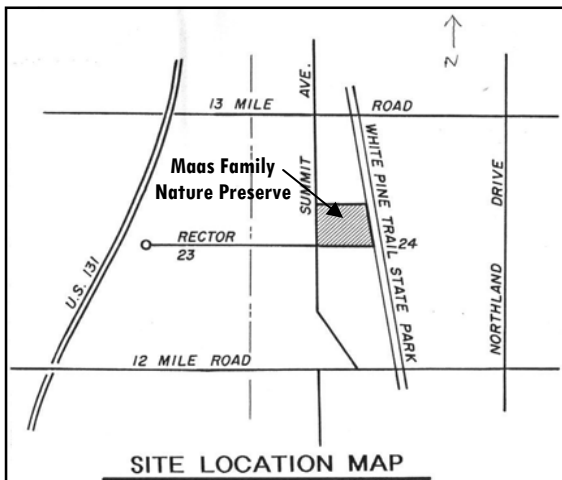
This undeveloped property lies on the west side of the White Pine Trail, just north of the Rogue River and the city of Rockford in Algoma Township. Although there is a small forested area and a shrubby wetland area in the southeast corner, most of the property is “savanna” habitat – an open, prairie-like field with scattered trees.



The federally endangered Karner blue butterfly. Photo: Linda Koning

In the springtime the view of the field from the adjacent White Pine Trail is beautiful, with a carpet of the native Michigan wildflower, wild lupine. The field of wild lupine is more than just a scenic amenity, though. The lupine creates crucial habitat for one of Kent County’s rarest native animal species: the Karner blue butterfly.

The Karner blue’s larvae are dependent on the wild lupine as their only food source. From the Midwest to the east coast, the loss of lupine-covered fields to development and incompatible uses and management practices has driven the butterfly’s populations to dangerously low levels. The Karner blue butterfly is now listed as “endangered” by the federal government and is protected by federal laws. The Maas Family Nature Preserve is the only protected Karner blue butterfly site in Kent County.



The Maas Family Nature Preserve is located along the White Pine Trail in Algoma Township. Photo: Danielle Fogel

HISTORY OF THE MAAS NATURE PRESERVE

In December 2005, the Leonard and Marjorie Maas family generously donated the 17-acre property to the Land Conservancy of West Michigan so that a nature preserve could be established. The Land Conservancy accepted this wonderful gift of land knowing that creating the nature preserve would only be a first step. The second, crucial step was raising the money needed to protect this unique habitat.

The Land Conservancy manages the preserve to protect its savanna habitat from threats, including bicycles and off-road vehicles, which cause erosion, crush vegetation, and kill the delicate Karner blue butterflies.

To protect the integrity of the nature preserve, the Land Conservancy relies on the support of a dedicated group of stewardship volunteers. Volunteers help with preserve clean-up, removal of invasive plants, and serve as the eyes and ears for the preserve. If you are interested in lending a helping hand, please contact Melanie Good at 616-451-9476.



Wild lupine fills the fields at the Maas Family Nature Preserve in the spring. Photo: Danielle Fogel