



TRAIL FEATURES

1. Native Plant Nursery: Seeds grown and harvested from these plots of native plants will be used to repopulate the native prairie at Grand River Fen Preserve.

2. Prairie Restoration: We planted this area with more than 100 native plant species. In the future, native oak trees will be planted in clusters to simulate a native oak savanna (see No. 8).

3. Fallow Farm Field: This field will be restored to a native prairie.

4. Prairie Fen Overlook: This is one of two fen overlooks at this preserve. Located at the bottom of the slope, the fen is fed by cold groundwater rich in calcium and magnesium carbonates. This water flows through the soil and reaches the surface in the form of seeps and springs.

5. Intermittent Wetland: These wetlands have seasonally variable water levels that can also change from year to year. They play a pivotal role in harboring a large array of reptiles and birds. Intermittent wetlands are a rare natural community, especially in southern Michigan.

6. Prairie Fen Overlook: From here, you have a clear view of a large fen. A prairie fen is dependent on fire for some prairie plants' seeds to open and grow. We have fire specialists who periodically burn this area.

7. Southern Fork of the Grand River: The southern fork starts at two ponds located in the southern portion of the preserve. It flows downstream to this spot before converging with the eastern fork just to the north.

8. Oak Savanna Restoration: Most of southern Michigan used to be oak savanna habitat, so named because the oak trees grew in clusters, allowing grasses to dominate the areas in between. Now, these savannas are rare. We are working here to restore this ecosystem, opening up the tree canopy, to achieve approximately 12 trees per acre. We are also planting clusters of oak trees in open spaces populated with native grasses and shrubs.

9. Eastern Fork of the Grand River: The eastern fork starts at Braxee Lake and flows downstream to this spot before converging with the southern fork. A prairie fen sits on both sides of the river banks. From this point, please proceed back along the trail; walking in the fen is prohibited to protect sensitive habitat.