



Field Guide

Nature Nearby

Traverse City



Love the land. *Pass it on.*

FEATURED PROPERTIES

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NATURAL AREA**
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ACTIVITY ICONS



biking



birding



fishing



hiking/
snowshoe



hunting



kayaking/
canoeing



skiing



swimming



trail
running



scenic
vista



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DEEPWATER POINT NATURAL AREA



TRAIL MILEAGE: 0.7 mile

Small but mighty, Deepwater Point is a local favorite. Rugged Lake Michigan shoreline paired with towering pines create a nice mixture of natural features not commonly available in the immediate vicinity of Traverse City. Head here during a strong south wind and listen to the waves tumble along the undeveloped shoreline as you wander through the woods.

This is also a great spot to watch the sun slowly sink and settle behind Old Mission Peninsula.

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photo by: Heather Higham

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HICKORY MEADOWS NATURAL AREA



TRAIL MILEAGE: 2.5

Located in and just outside the west end of Traverse City, this property features more than two miles of trail and has long been popular with local neighborhood residents. Open fields surrounded by hardwood and pines make for an excellent spot for hiking, snowshoeing, cross country skiing and much more. If nothing else, simply enjoy the unencumbered open spaces.

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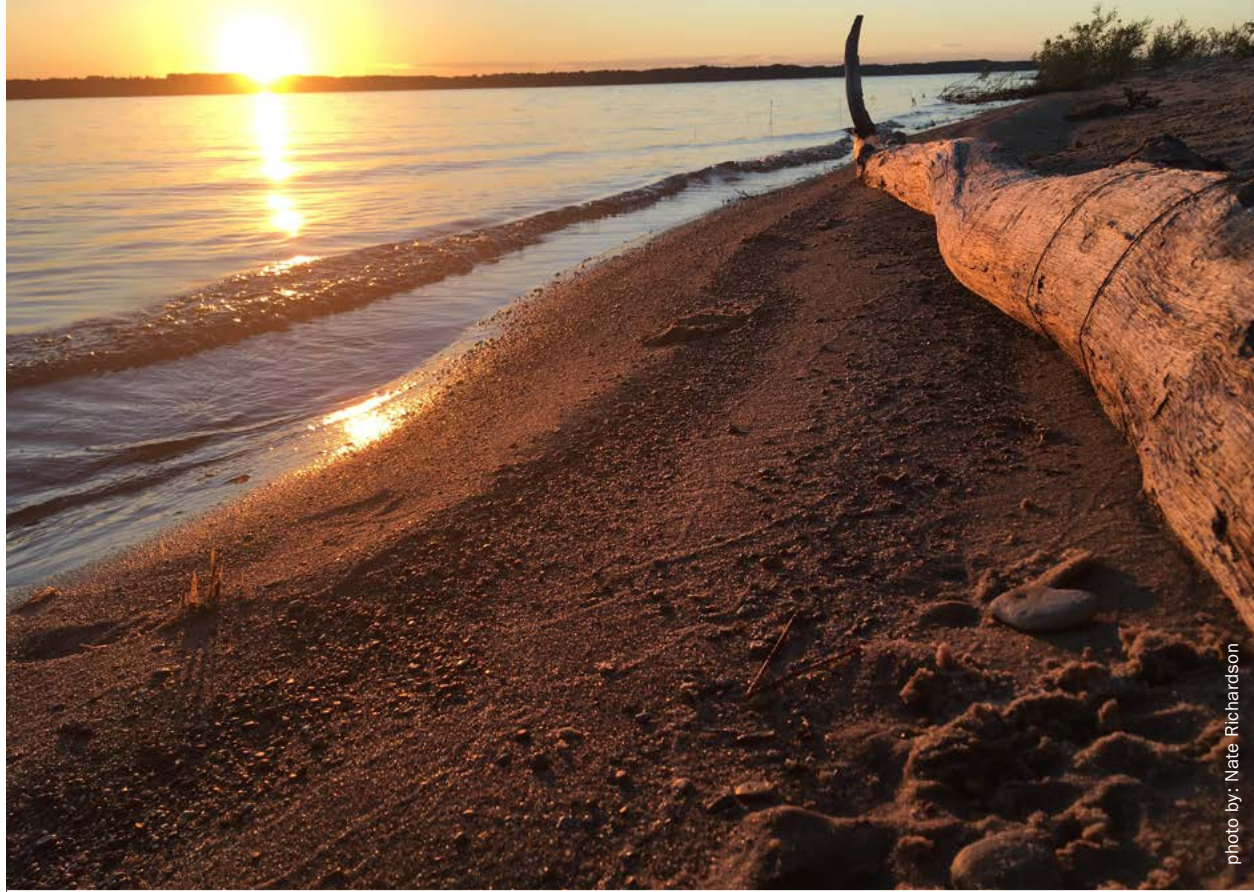


photo by: Nate Richardson

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MAPLE BAY NATURAL AREA



TRAIL MILEAGE: 0.8

The cat seems to have gotten out of the bag on this gem in recent years. A rolling field of sunflowers (depending on the season) and some peaceful forest paths are wonderful aspects of this large natural area, but the prime draw is definitely the half-mile stretch of beach along East Grand Traverse Bay (closer to a mile now if you include the recently protected Petobego State Game Area addition immediately to the north).

The rugged beauty of this undeveloped shoreline makes for a splendid place to soak up the sun or splash in the shimmering and restorative waters of the bay. There is a short hike from the parking area down to the beach. Veer left or right (you can't go wrong) and enjoy all this favorite natural area has to offer.

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Photo by: Mary VanValin

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PELIZZARI NATURAL AREA



TRAIL MILEAGE: 3.2

Pelizzari has long been a favorite of local residents looking to stretch their legs after a long day at work (or before). A crisscrossing network of trails that wind through open fields and gently rolling forest offers another chance to customize each and every hike you take here.

Be sure to visit the hemlock grove in the southeast corner of this natural area. The old-growth behemoths here rival those found anywhere in northern Michigan, and this particular pocket of Pelizzari is reminiscent of something you might find in the Pacific Northwest.

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PYATT LAKE: The Bill Carls Nature Preserve



TRAIL MILEAGE: 0.7

Walking the soft forest paths through this treasured preserve is at once a calming and awe-inspiring experience. The result of GTRLC's first major fundraising campaign 25 years ago, this preserve offers tons to see in a serene and secluded environment a short distance north of Traverse City on the Old Mission Peninsula.

The mosaic of habitat types at Pyatt Lake offers refuge to a wide variety of plant and animal species, so you never know what you'll run into here. Each spring, orchids and trillium carpet the ground in a sea of color. Migrating waterfowl use the lake a resting area, and warblers, winter wrens, woodpeckers and owls all flourish in the maturing forest, adding to the allure of this special place.

But you don't have to be a naturalist to enjoy this preserve. Just get out there and soak it all in.

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GEORGE AND ADA REFFITT NATURE PRESERVE



TRAIL MILEAGE: 1.7

Once you're on the trail here, the George & Ada Reffitt Nature Preserve seems much larger than its actual size. Meandering boardwalks and footpaths take visitors through a critical wetland complex along Mitchell Creek, a tributary of East Grand Traverse Bay. Through most of the hike on this 1.7-mile loop, you're surrounded by lush tree and plant growth.

Another highlight is this preserve's proximity to other prime recreational resources, including the TART trail, which passes nearby, and Traverse City State Park, which sits just to the north. Taken together, this is a fantastic spot to head to when you feel the itch to get outside.

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photo by: Dana Vannoy

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TIMBERS RECREATION AREA



TRAIL MILEAGE: 4.4

The beauty of Timbers (well, one of them, at least) is that you can visit 10 times and never do the same hike twice. The nearly 4.5 miles of trail here take you through beautiful northern forests packed with mature beech, hemlock and oak, and that's just for starters. The preserve contains the entirety of undeveloped, 24-acre Fern Lake (which is gorgeous to behold in any season, but you've got to check it out in the fall) along with 2,000 feet of frontage on Long Lake.

The hike down to Long Lake will take you about 10 minutes, and once there you can enjoy the peaceful view of its undeveloped islands (also protected by GTRLC). If you're feeling more energized, complete the entire 2-ish mile loop around Fern Lake. It's also possible to walk directly to Fern Lake in less than 10 minutes, just study the trail map at the kiosk in the parking lot when you arrive.

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*Protecting significant natural, scenic and farm lands, and advancing stewardship —
now and for future generations.*

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cover photo by: Jacob Bournay