



GRAND TRAVERSE
REGIONAL
LAND
CONSERVANCY

Field Guide

Winter Fun!



Love the land. *Pass it on.*



BUILD A SNOWMAN (OR GO SLED) AT PELIZZARI NATURAL AREA

This beloved natural area at the base of Old Mission Peninsula is a perfect winter wonderland. Families frequently sled on the hills toward the back of the property, and what could be more fun than building the perfect snowman to greet the hikers and snowshoers who enjoy the wandering trails here?

Pelizzari is only a short drive for most, and the lot is plowed for easy access. Please remember to be respectful of wildlife and keep dogs on a leash. If you have time, be sure to visit the old hemlock grove in the southeast corner of the natural area. These stately behemoths provide a nice pop of green all through the winter months.



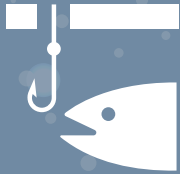
SOAK IN THE VIEW FROM OLD BALDY

Arcadia Dunes: The C.S. Mott Nature Preserve is known for many things, but perhaps its most endearing feature is the view overlooking Lake Michigan from its signature perched dune known as Old Baldy. If you've never seen the view during the winter, well...you've just got to get up there. The rush from the dazzling view combined with cold, fresh air sweeping across the lake is something to experience.

Depending on the amount of snow, you may need snowshoes to make the trek. The Universal Access (UA) Overlook Trail at Arcadia Dunes departs from the same parking lot as the Baldy Trail, and is also an option in times of lighter snowfall.

Visit our website for directions and more property information: [GTRLC.ORG](https://www.gtrlc.org)





ICE FISH FERN LAKE

First, the requisite disclaimers. If you aren't completely sure the ice is safe, DON'T go on it. Test thickness with a spud (found in most outdoor stores), wear ice safety picks (also found in most outdoor stores) and always go with a buddy. Avoid venturing out on late-season ice altogether, as even thicker ice can be unsafe late in the season. And don't forget to buy a fishing license! Now, on to the good stuff.

Fern Lake is a 24-acre lake completely contained within the Timbers Recreation Area in Long Lake Township. It's stunningly gorgeous in all months, but especially so during winter when its tree-lined shore is shrouded in snow. And because it's filled with hungry panfish like bluegill and perch, it's a great spot for a family outing.



GO FATBIKING AT GLACIAL HILLS

You've probably seen those bikes with the oversized tires that look more like inner tubes than typical bike tires. Well, have you ever tried riding one in the snow?

The Glacial Hills Pathway and Natural Area, near Bellaire, offers more than 30 miles of trail and has long been popular in the summer with mountain bikers. It's now getting nearly as popular in the winter as fatbikers flock to its gorgeous, rolling hills for unique and enjoyable rides in the coldest months of the year.

Rentals are available in the Bellaire area. The best part? Portions of the Glacial Hills trails are groomed for fat biking (others for skiing, and others left snowy for snowshoers) all winter long! For a map of groomed areas, visit our partners at glacialhillstrails.org.

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GO BIRDING (YES, EVEN IN WINTER!)

The cold depths of winter might not seem like the best time to spot our feathered friends, but if you know where to look, you'll have plenty to observe. Grab a bird book and head to any nicely forested preserve or natural area in search of chickadees, juncos, tufted titmice, brown creepers and other classic winter birds.

Just about the only bright side of the ravages of emerald ash borer and beech bark disease in certain sections of Misty Acres, Arcadia Dunes and Fruithaven is that the dead snags and stumps attract many species of woodpeckers and nuthatch. If Arcadia Marsh is ice-free (even partially), it can be a great spot to see waterfowl and certain shorebirds.



ENJOY A MOMENT OF REFLECTION AT SEVEN BRIDGES

In a time when everything's frozen, from the lakes and fields to your fingers and toes, the bubbling, rushing water of one of GTRLC's most enchanting projects has a warmth all its own.

The Rapid River is braided here as it spills through a forest of cedar, which also gives you a nice splash of green during these gray and white times. There are few more beautiful or peaceful places to immerse yourself in nature's splendor, and there always seems to be some type of wildlife activity here, even in the coldest of months.

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BLAZE A NEW SNOWSHOE OR SKI TRAIL

Think you've explored all the great outdoor spots in our region? We're betting you missed a few. Head to www.gtrlc.org and explore our Preserves & Trails page. There are more than a dozen options for those interested in these time-tested winter endeavors, including some you may never know existed. Be aware that not all lots are plowed, and many trails are completely ungroomed all winter long. If you have any questions, call us at (231) 929-7911 before you head out.



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

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