



Field Guide



Fall Color Hikes



photo by: John Robert Williams

Love the land. *Pass it on.*



FEATURED PROPERTIES

- | | | | |
|---|---------------------|---|---------------|
| 1 | Arcadia Dunes | 5 | Ransom Lake |
| 2 | Green Point Dunes | 6 | Maplehurst |
| 3 | Elberta Dunes South | 7 | Seven Bridges |
| 4 | Railroad Point | 8 | Glacial Hills |



You know what's better than a fall color drive? A fall color hike! GTRLC's preserves and natural areas are an excellent place to stretch your legs and absorb nature's dazzling color show. Included in this guide are just a few of our favorite spots for fall hikes across our service area. GTRLC's ongoing *Campaign for Generations* will only add to this list, as the proposed Torch River Nature Preserve, Upper Manistee Headwaters Preserve, Lower Woodcock Lake Preserve and other properties are sure to impress when the leaves start to turn.



For more information about the Conservancy visit: GTRLC.ORG



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ARCADIA DUNES:
THE C.S. MOTT NATURE PRESERVE

GTRLC’s largest nature preserve – and one of its most beloved – straddles the border between Benzie and Manistee counties along the M-22 corridor. It is one of several preserves and natural areas in the immediate area that are definitely worth a visit when the leaves turn.

The most spectacular color view will be near the top of Old Baldy (a large perched sand dune) looking north along the coast toward Frankfort and Green Point Dunes (see below). But don’t miss the new Overlook Trail at Arcadia Dunes, a universal access trail that takes people of all ages and abilities through the colorful forest out to a spectacular Lake Michigan overlook. Both trails start from the Baldy trailhead parking lot.

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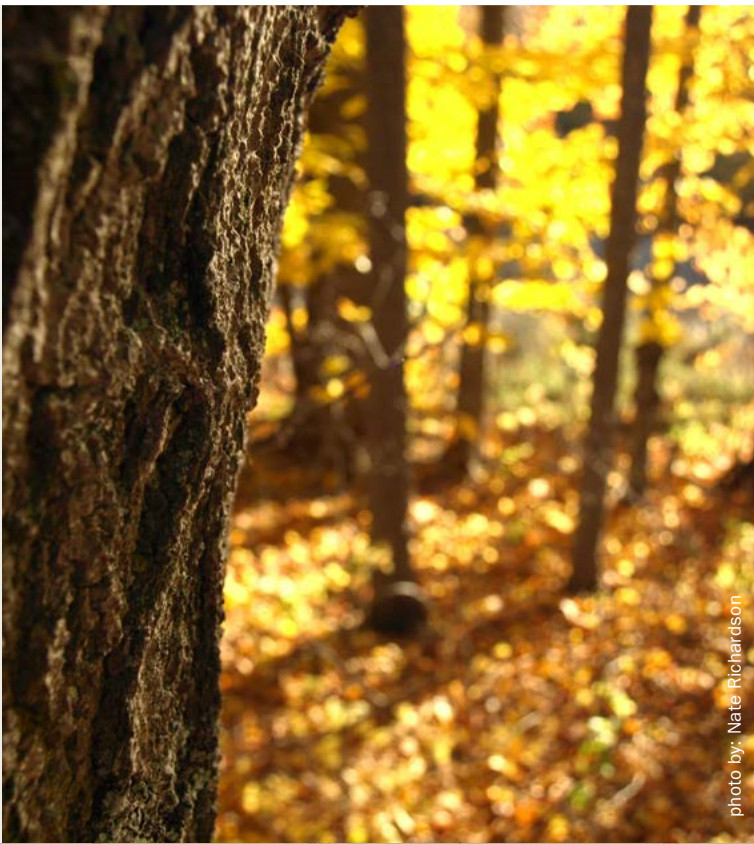


photo by: Nate Richardson

GREEN POINT DUNES
NATURE PRESERVE

Not far up the road from Arcadia Dunes is Green Point Dunes, its smaller but no less magnificent cousin that offers views that rival anything else in GTRLC’s portfolio.

Come here for what many in our office have affectionately called the “Sound of Music” view (it makes total sense if you swap coastal dunes for snow-capped mountains) from the first viewing platform. This platform is set back a bit from the water and looks along the tree-covered coast toward the splendor of Old Baldy down the road at Arcadia Dunes.

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photo by: Paula Dreeszen



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ELBERTA DUNES SOUTH NATURAL AREA

Just south of Frankfort sits Elberta Dunes, a natural area protected by GTRLC not long after protection of the neighboring Green Point Dunes and Arcadia Dunes. Like those sister properties, Elberta Dunes offers spectacular coastal views. What makes Elberta Dunes unique, however, is the view in the other direction.

The top of the trail at Elberta Dunes offers a stunning panorama of both Lake Michigan and the Bestie Valley below, making this a must-visit this time of year!

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photo by: Nate Richardson

RAILROAD POINT NATURAL AREA

This favorite spot along Crystal Lake offers an wonderful display of wildflowers in the spring and a show-stopping array of fall colors as the temperatures begin to drop. The Mary Margaret Johnson trail at this natural area wanders through rich stands of deciduous trees, making for another excellent spot to soak up the colors.

Be sure to check out the view of the colors across Crystal Lake, both from the overlook on the west side of the promontory and from the top of the Charlie Kehr Memorial Trail Connector, a stairway that takes visitors down to the Betsie Valley Trail, which passes a short distance below.

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photo by: Jacqueline Southby



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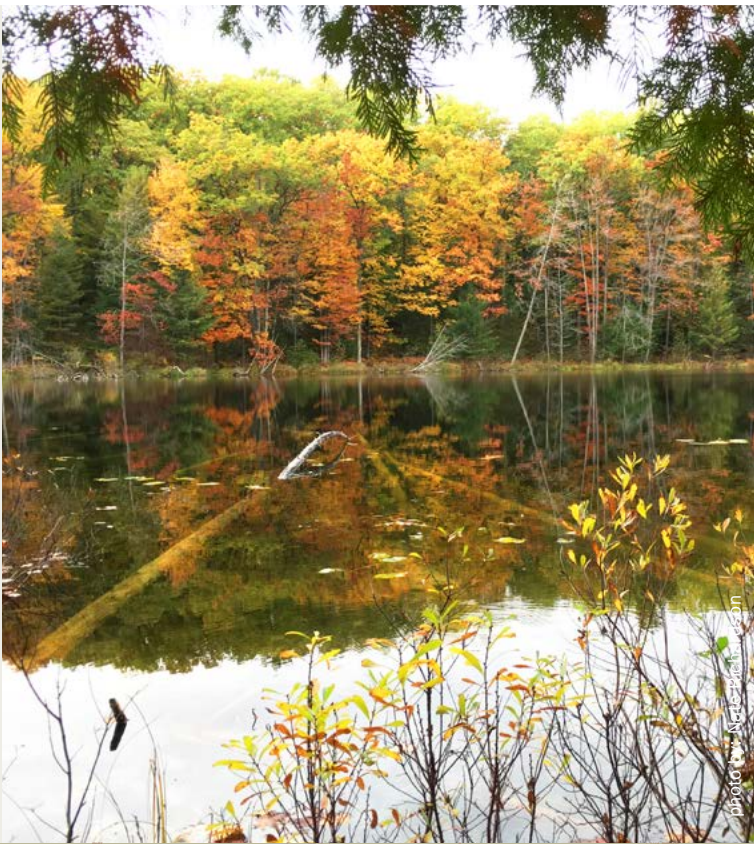
RANSOM LAKE
NATURAL AREA

This popular natural area offers something that makes fall colors even more dazzling, and that's a lake to reflect them.*

This 220-acre natural area is a favorite spot for locals in eastern Benzie and western Grand Traverse counties. Because it encompasses 3,500 feet of Ransom Creek frontage and all of Ransom Lake, there are no shortage of opportunities to explore the interface of water and color.

**Next year when it opens back up, be sure to check out the Timbers Recreation Area in Long Lake Township for another exquisite example of this phenomenon. Timbers is closed this fall for installation of a new universally accessible trail.*

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MAPLEHURST
NATURAL AREA

This newly-protected natural area offers another fantastic spot to check out fall color that surrounds a picturesque lake.

When the conditions are just right, Lake Maplehurst takes the blazing yellows, oranges and reds of the mature maple trees that line it and bounces them at you from a different angle. And you know what? It's a pretty gorgeous place to go even if the conditions aren't quite right. The trails along the lake and through the woods here are stunning.

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photo by: Barb Heilin



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SEVEN BRIDGES

Quite frankly, this spot is a must-see any time. One of the most beautiful properties in GTRLC’s portfolio, this is more of a place to visit than a true hike due to its very short trail. But what it lacks in length it makes up for in stunning and serene natural beauty, as the Rapid River spills through various forested channels.

While the area around the river is primarily cedar, there is also a healthy population of tamarack trees. These are the only coniferous trees to shed their needles in the way that deciduous trees shed their leaves. Before doing so they turn blazing yellow, offering a unique color show. Generally speaking, this happens after most deciduous trees have already shed most of their leaves.

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photo by: Nate Richardson

GLACIAL HILLS
PATHWAY AND NATURAL AREA

How about more than 30 miles of fall color trails? Ok, you don’t have to hike that far, but you could if you wanted to, as this natural area boasts an impressive number of lengthy trails that snake through a classic northern Michigan forest setting. Various spots throughout these trails cross hills and valleys, making it one of Antrim County’s best spots for color.

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photo by: John Robert Williams



For more information about the Conservancy visit: [GTRLC.ORG](https://www.gtrlc.org)





Don't just hike this fall season. Get out there and ride! Glacial Hills Pathway and Natural Area, Maplehurst Natural Area and Arcadia Dunes (via the Dry Hill and Camp trails) offer excellent mountain biking opportunities.

For more info visit the interactive map at:

www.gtrlc.org 



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