



Growing and Nurturing Community at **MAPLE BAY FARM**

November, 2024

Love the land. *Pass it on.*



Maple Bay Farm is located along the scenic US-31 corridor and sits on 11 acres protected and owned by the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy (GTRLC). Adjacent to the thriving and beautiful Maple Bay Natural Area—another conservation success overseen by GTRLC in partnership with Grand Traverse County—the farm has become a beloved space where agriculture, conservation and community intersect.

Recognizable by its historic, turn-of-the-century farmhouse and rustic outbuildings, including a root cellar, sugar shack and pole barn, Maple Bay Farm offers a place for community members to connect with the land and each other. The recently renovated farmhouse provides a welcoming space for education, stewardship and collaboration, drawing people

together in support of protected natural, scenic and farm lands. From volunteer-driven stewardship initiatives to educational opportunities, the farm invites the community to engage in activities that align with GTRLC's mission.

As the farm continues to grow as a nexus for community engagement, it offers expanding opportunities for people to learn about and participate in sustainable agriculture practices, land stewardship initiatives and other efforts that promote GTRLC's work and farming in the region. Today at Maple Bay Farm, we are committed to cultivating more than crops—we're growing and nurturing community.



CURRENT INITIATIVES

MAPLE BAY FARMHOUSE

Following a series of renovations, this turn-of-the-century farmhouse has become a key center for GTRLC's operations and engagement. The farmhouse was designed to showcase all aspects of GTRLC's mission, including the protection and vital link between natural, scenic and farm lands, and building community around a stewardship ethic. Overlooking rolling, protected farmland and a thriving natural area, the farmhouse embodies our region's agricultural heritage while offering a welcoming venue for gathering. Occasionally, this space is made available to nonprofits and other organizations for meetings, demonstrations, office space and workshops that align with GTRLC's goals.

VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

Volunteers are essential to the Conservancy's success, and at Maple Bay, our volunteers engage in a range of activities that advance GTRLC's mission. From removing invasive species and trail-building to composting and building soil health, their work fosters a strong sense of community while working toward a shared mission.

MAPLE SUGARING

Each spring, GTRLC's volunteers run a maple sugaring program, which includes a public event demonstrating tree tapping, sap collection, sap evaporation and syrup bottling processes and techniques. This annual celebration invites our community to learn about maple sugaring and connects people to a practice rooted in Michigan's agricultural and natural history.

POLLINATOR PLANTINGS

In collaboration with Grand Traverse County Parks and Recreation and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, GTRLC is improving the balance between recreational use, agriculture and conservation by creating 90 acres of native habitat. By restoring native wildflowers, grasses and shrubs in designated areas, these pollinator strips enhance natural ecosystems while supporting local agriculture. They serve as natural buffers that protect sensitive wetlands and recreation areas while providing habitat for pollinating insects and nesting grassland birds, which are experiencing a concerning decline.

VOLUNTEER ORGANIC GARDEN

At the heart of Maple Bay Farm, the organic garden showcases sustainable gardening practices that yield thousands of pounds of fresh produce each year. A group of dedicated volunteers, from seasoned gardeners to enthusiastic novices, actively maintain the garden, fostering a communal exchange of knowledge and skills. By demonstrating organic practices that restore biological processes, our volunteers contribute to local food systems, soil health and sustainability while inspiring others to consider organic growing methods..

FOOD DONATIONS

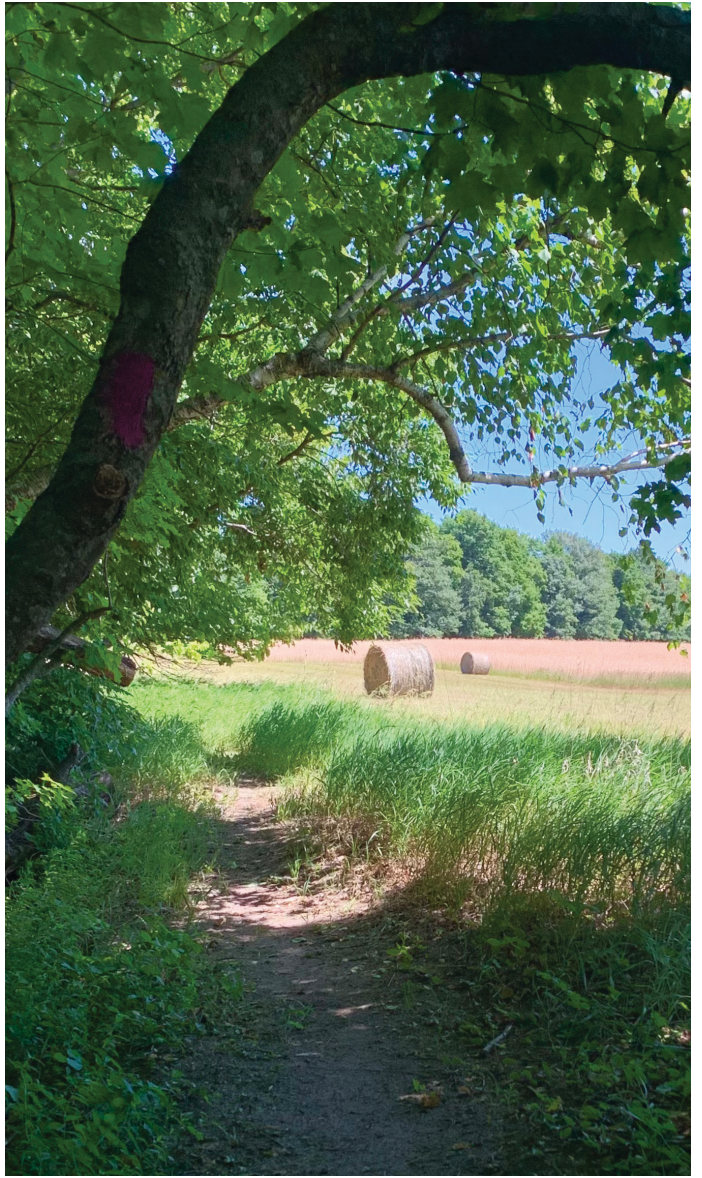
Nearly all of the garden's produce is donated to Food Rescue of Northwest Michigan, providing fresh, nutritious, locally-grown fruits and vegetables to our food-insecure neighbors. With a goal of producing approximately 10,000 meals per year, this partnership enhances our region's food security and serves as a valuable asset for our communities.

ACCESS TO NATURE

The Joe and Kathy Magliochetti Trail, completed in 2021, offers a scenic .65-mile route from the farm to the forested dunes of Maple Bay Natural Area, linking visitors to an additional two miles of trails through diverse habitats and Lake Michigan's breathtaking lakeshore. These trails invite visitors to experience the wonders of nature, enhancing our community's physical and mental health while supporting our region's economic prosperity and quality of life.

Photo descriptions clockwise from top left 1) A visitor checks sap buckets in the sugar bush 2) The Joe and Kathy Magliochetti trail 3) Maple Bay organic garden volunteers 4) GTRLC staff creating native pollinator habitat adjacent to agricultural fields..

Cover photo: Maple Bay's turn-of-the-century farmhouse and organic garden. Back cover photo: Maple Bay garden volunteer harvesting produce to be distributed region-wide by Food Rescue of Northwest Michigan.



To learn more visit: WWW.GTRLC.ORG

For Information about Volunteer Opportunities Contact:

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