

Michigan Natural Areas Frequently Asked Questions:

What is a land conservancy?

A "land conservancy" is any organization dedicated to the conservation of wildlife and their habitats. Therefore, land conservancies include nature centers, land trusts, nature conservancies, botanical gardens, Audubon Societies and nature associations. Some U.S. states have official conservancies, but may also have less defined institutes set up. Many land conservancies in Michigan are privately operated organizations intending to preserve lands volunteered by their owners. The following is the definition of "conservancy" according to the [Little Traverse Conservancy](#): "A land trust of conservancy is a non-profit organization which seeks to protect land. Land trusts work closely with landowners, helping to ensure that scenic areas, wetlands, critical wildlife habitats, and other significant natural areas are protected for now and future generations." [The Nature Conservancy](#) is the largest private, non-profit system of sanctuaries in the world. Its Michigan chapter protects almost 73,000 acres of the state's natural land.

What is a nature center?

Nature Centers are Non-profit and either privately funded or locally funded by taxes. They have three uses: research, recreation, and education. Home-schooled students, retired people and college students often volunteer to work at nature centers. Nature centers offer significant experiences to those interested in animal care or environmental education. Most centers are open to the public and restrictions include smoking, hunting, and any alteration to the land like digging or removing plants, animals, or other resources.

Michigan's State Parks

The visitor's enjoyment is the primary goal of Michigan's state parks. The parks are natural areas to relax, explore, and enjoy the outdoor serenity. Attractive features may include bicycling, canoeing, fishing, hiking, hunting, ATV trails, picnic areas, swimming, and scenic views. You can locate a state park in your area by visiting the [Michigan Department of Natural Resource's](#) web site.

What is the Audubon Society?

The [National Audubon Society](#) states: "Audubon's mission is to conserve and restore natural ecosystems, focusing on birds, other wildlife, and their habitats for the benefit of humanity and the earth's biological diversity." Audubon is a network that promotes bird populations and evokes conservation experiences on millions of people of all ages. Although Michigan has many Audubon Society subchapters, the two Audubon Society chapters in Michigan are the Detroit Audubon Society and the Michigan Audubon Society, located in Royal Oak and Lansing respectively. A list of the Audubon subchapters in Michigan can be found at the [National Audubon Society Website](#). The Audubon Society offers a variety of educational opportunities, including environmental education programs, camps, workshops, tours and trips. The [Michigan Audubon Society's Audubon sanctuaries, nature centers, and affiliates](#) offer amusement to those who enjoy bird watching.