

Nature centers

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from whom Facchinetti inherited the 10-acres. Hand-crafted plaques with the names as well as the birth and death dates of both Facchinetti's and LaMarra's families line the path, which was built on Sept. 11, 2001.

"We were frantic and didn't know what to do with ourselves," LaMarra said. "We had the idea for it the day before, and we spent the whole day out there and built it on 9-11. There's also a tribute to 9-11."

LaMarra said Memory Lane is open to the public, and new plaques can be put up with a small donation to Nature House.

"Memory Lane is open to anyone who wants to remember someone," LaMarra said.

Serendipity Lane also features a picnic area and an Adopt-a-Tree program. There are eight gardens on the property, as well as a small pond, though devoid of wildlife.

"We've had fish in there, and the raccoons eat 'em," Facchinetti said. "Oh, do they ever have a party out there."

Visitors to Nature House also have the option of building animal dens on the property. Several Boy and Girl Scout troops have joined in on the architecture of these dens, each one posted with a sign dedicated to the specific troop.

Facchinetti and LaMarra sell hand-crafted items in their garage, which doubles as a gift shop. Visitors can purchase birdbaths and houses, trolls, potpourri and more.

Business hours run along the lines of 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. seven days a week, but Facchinetti and LaMarra say check the garage to be sure.

"If the garage door is open, so are we," LaMarra said.

For information on other "off-the beaten path" nature preserves, check out upcoming issues of the Summer Guide.

Antrim Creek Natural Area (152 acres) From Traverse City, take U.S. 31 north to Eastport. Approximately one mile north of Eastport, turn left (west) on Old Dixie Hwy. Follow Old Dixie Hwy. for approximately four miles. Look for the Antrim City Cemetery on the east side of the road. Just north of the cemetery, turn left on Rex Beach Rd. (a narrow dirt road). Follow Rex Beach Rd. through the center of the Natural Area down to the beach. No formal trail system exists.

Bauer Nature Preserve (235 acres)/**Pamela L. Polaczyk Preserve** (Five acres) To reach Bauer Nature Preserve from Traverse City, take US 31 N. to Eastport and turn right (east) on M-88. Follow M-88 to Central Lake and then turn east on 624. Continue on 624 approximately five miles. Less than one-half mile past Six Mile Lake Rd., turn left on Wilson Rd. (a dirt road). The preserve is at the end of Wilson Rd. From Bellaire, head north on 620 for approximately five miles. Turn east on 624 (Old State Rd.) and go approximately three miles. Features a large parking area and a loop trail, approximately one mile long, located to the right of the kiosk. To the left of the kiosk, Polaczyk Preserve features a quarter-mile, wood-chipped path, which leads to a viewing platform on the Dingman River.

Bullhead Lake Natural Area (28 acres) From Traverse City, take

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Front St. west (becomes North Long Lake Rd.). Follow North Long Lake Rd. around the north end of the lake, to Edgewood Ave. (just past Gilbert Park Beach) and turn left. Go one-quarter mile and the preserve is on your right. There is a short trail system.

Carter Strong Bird Sanctuary (Six acres) From Traverse City, head south on US 31. At 14th St. turn right (west) on Silver Lake Rd. Follow Silver Lake Rd. and turn right on Secor Rd. (follow the signs to Boones Long Lake Inn). Secor turns into S. Long Lake Rd. and runs southwest along the lake. Continue around the lake about two miles. Turn right onto West Long Lake Rd., go approximately one mile, and watch for the preserve sign on the right side of the road. There is no formal parking area and no trails exist.

Cosner Nature Preserve (131 acres) Located approximately one hour from Traverse City and 20 minutes from Charlevoix. To get there from Traverse City, take US 31 N. to Atwood. In Atwood, turn right (east) on C-48. Follow C-48, then C-65 to Ellsworth. In Ellsworth, take C-48 east to East Jordan. In East Jordan, take M-66 south for three miles. The preserve is located across from the Wagbo Peace Center (one-quarter mile south of the Antrim/Charlevoix county line). Look for a kiosk and large parking area on the east side of M-66. This preserve has a .8 mile loop trail. A second loop is currently under construction.

Deepwater Point Natural Area (15 acres) From Traverse City, take US 31 N. to Acme. Just north of Acme, turn left (west) on Shore Rd. The preserve is on the left-hand side, kitty corner from Bertha Vos Elementary School. A short trail leads down to the water.

Golden Days Loon Preserve (16 acres) Located on the northernmost shore of the North Arm of Lake Bellaire. By boat: The closest public boat launch is the MDNR's Noteware Landing. The launch site is located about two miles south of Bellaire. From M-88, turn west on North Lakes Rd. and follow it to the end, staying to the right. By car: From Bellaire, take Bellaire Hwy. (County Rd. 620) two miles west. Look for the old two-track on your left and park here. You can also view the loon nest on the property from the DNR access site, which forms the eastern boundary.

Kewadin Wetlands Nature Preserve (41 acres) The best way to view this preserve is by boat. It is located along the northernmost shore of Elk Lake just south of Kewadin, not far from the Milton Township Park boat launch. To get to Milton Township Park from the Elk Rapids, take a right on Cairn Hwy. (Ames Rd.), which will take you around the tip of Elk Lake to Kewadin. Cairn Hwy. then turns into Cherry Ave. The Milton Township Park is located off of Cherry Ave. in Kewadin.

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