

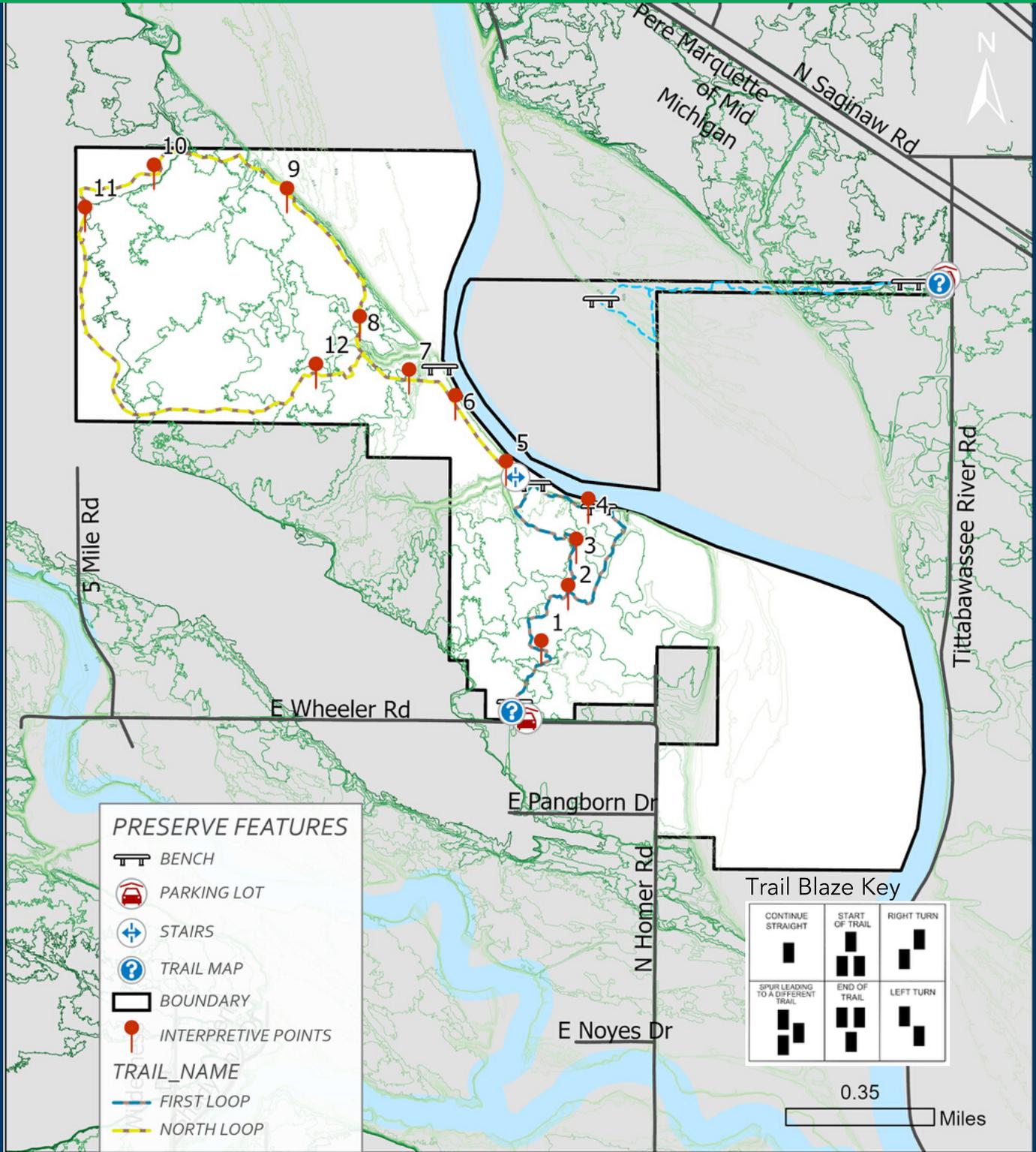
# RIVERVIEW NATURAL AREA

Self-Guided Interpretive Hike



# RIVERVIEW NATURAL AREA MAP

From the parking area is a mile-long trail loop that winds through the forest and farmland that is being restored. The trail continues along a highbank. The stairway is seasonally used and can be hazardous after flooding or in the winter. The trails beyond the stairway continues 2 miles through a meadow and loops through forested wetlands.



# 1

Vernal pools, like the ones around you, can be found throughout forested areas in Michigan. A vernal pool is a wetland habitat that is filled with water during some parts of the year and is dry during others. These wetlands play a crucial role in the biodiversity of an area.

The plants that grow in vernal pools are unique and have adapted to handle the periods of flooding and droughts. The pools are extremely important for many different organisms, including aquatic insects, small crustaceans, freshwater mollusks, and amphibians that use the water as their homes or breeding grounds.

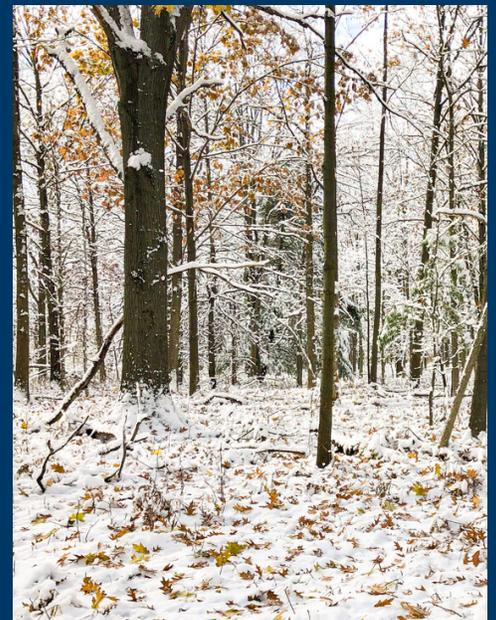


Witch Hazel are shrubs or small trees that can be found on the preserve. The leaves are wavy along their edges and turn yellow in the fall. The bark of the shrub is smooth and has a gray or brown coloration. The plants have unique, yellow flowers that bloom late in the year. The plants are well known for their various medicinal uses such as reducing inflammation and itching, soothing minor burns, and fading bruises.

# 2

# 3

Riverview Natural Area is a deciduous forest which refers to trees with broad green leaves that change color before dropping in the fall. Since Michigan experiences all four seasons, trees have adapted to withstand the freezing temperatures by going dormant during the winter months. The common deciduous trees that you will come across are oaks, maples, and ash.



# 4

Here you will see what this preserve was named after, the beautiful view of the Tittabawassee river. The Tittabawassee flows from Gladwin County through Midland and Saginaw Counties where it joins the Saginaw River and ends in the Saginaw Bay. The river is a habitat for many fish species including bass, pike, walleye, and catfish. Across the river you can see Forestview Natural Area, a 70-acre preserve own by the conservancy and open to the public!

# 5

Along this section of trail there has been recent beaver activity! Look for bite marks on the base of tree trunks, or their signature spikey stump as pictured. The wood is used to build their home which is called a lodge, often built on the shoreline or in the center of the water.



Beavers are large rodents with paddle-shaped tails to help swim and slap mud to build their homes. Beavers are known to cause water to back up and pool. These ponds and wetlands not only help protect their lodges, but also create habitats that are useful for many other species, for this they are considered keystone species.



# 6

There are some species of birds that are only found near water, on your hike, keep your eyes open for these birds. Rivers are a great food source for birds. This is one of the reasons why lots of birds will choose to spent their time near water.

Common river corridor birds at Riverview include ducks, herons, cranes, as well as others. A family of bald eagles resides near this section of the river, you can often see juveniles learning how to hunt!



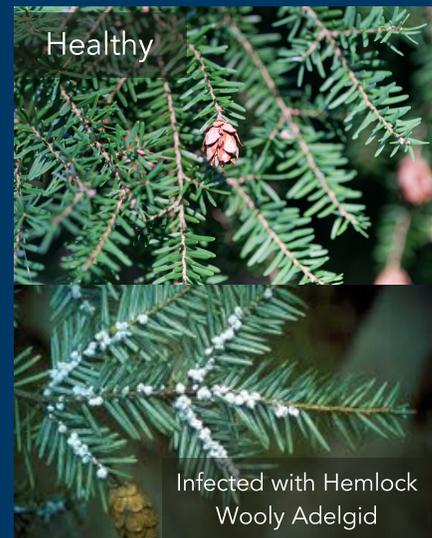


This meadow has been maintained as an opening to support pollinators and birds. The left side of this field is a secondary growth forest of white pines that will be thinned to ensure proper growth and diversity of trees.

7

Eastern hemlocks like the one you see before you, are characterized by their reddish bark, small flat needles, and small cones.

They are currently at risk from the hemlock wooly adelgid which appears like white fuzz on the needles. These bugs feed on the sap leaving behind a white waxy substance that slowly kills branches and eventually the whole tree.



Coyotes have been spotted in these woods by hikers, trail cameras, by paw prints and scat. They are an adaptive predator and can live in urban and rural places; they mostly eat small mammals.

They are most active during sunrise and sunset hours and should be viewed at a distance, but can be scared off with loud noises and clapping.



8

9

# 10

At this section of the forest you can look in the distance at the white pines and see the branches don't stop until about 5 feet off the ground. This is from deer browse! White tailed deer are prominent throughout Michigan and utilized coniferous trees in the winter and early spring as a food sources.



Off in the distance you can see a shrubby opening, this area is considered a Bog. Bogs are a unique habitat consisting of saturated soils called peat; a mixture of decomposing material which creates a habitat low of oxygen and acidic. Bogs are great for carnivorous pitcher plants, orchids, cranberries and blueberries.

# 11

# 12

Muscle wood can be found throughout the preserve. They are in the birch family, sometimes called blue beech, but most notable for the ribbed muscle appearance of the trunk.



## THANKS FOR VISITING RIVERVIEW NATURAL AREA

**For more information visit [littleforks.org](http://littleforks.org)**

Numbered Posts were installed by Egan Anthony and Troop 785 of Coleman, MI.



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