

Elmer P. and Irene Jasper Woods Memorial Nature Sanctuary



Sanctuary at a Glance:

Location: St. Clair County

Size: 49 acres

History: The sanctuary was purchased in 1977.

About MNA:

The Michigan Nature Association is a nonprofit conservation organization working to protect Michigan's rare, threatened and endangered species by protecting the lands and waters they need to survive.

Established in 1952, MNA's members, donors, and volunteers have built a remarkable network of more than 170 nature sanctuaries across the state – the largest network of natural areas established and maintained by a nonprofit conservation organization in Michigan.



Michigan Nature Association

2310 Science Parkway, Suite 100
Okemos, MI 48864
(866) 223-2231
www.michigannature.org

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Photo: Natalie Kent

Prior to MNA acquisition, this area was locally called Schenck Woods. The Detroit Audubon Society owns three parcels on either side of the sanctuary totaling 172.5 acres, named the St. Clair Woods Nature Sanctuary.

In 1982, the MNA tract was renamed Jasper Woods as a memorial to Elmer and Irene Jasper, two founding MNA members who served as officers during the organization's early years. Elmer was born in Casco Township, not far from the sanctuary.

Jasper Woods is a cool, northern forest consisting principally of hemlock, white pine, maple, oak, cherry, and birches. The forest's most prominent feature is the groves of hemlock on the southern portion of the sanctuary.

The area's lake-moderated climate creates cold pockets on the north-facing slopes, while its acidic, humus-rich soil supports species that rarely thrive this far south.

Species of Note

Red, white and painted trillium all occur in Jasper Woods, each blooming at slightly different times of the season and in different habitats. Red trillium is earliest and can be found in the forest's rich wet deciduous woods. It typically blooms in early May, depending upon spring weather conditions. White trillium begins to bloom a few days later and appears in drier woodlands, especially

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on the west side of the sand trail that ends at a private gate. Painted trillium appears latest, from mid- to late May.

In addition to trillium, Jasper Woods is home to various species of shrubs, flowering plants and ferns. Shrubs growing in the sanctuary include northern arrowhead, chokeberry, Michigan Holly, and maple-leaved viburnum.

Some of the sanctuary's early flowering plants include wood anemone, blue cohosh, and saprophytes such as pinesap and Indian pipes. Multiple species of ferns grow in Jasper Woods.

Jasper Woods is an excellent place for bird watching and provides habitat for many species of nesting birds, including the wood duck, rose-breasted grosbeak, ruby-throated hummingbird and black-throated green warbler.

Jasper Woods has no official trail, but visitors are free to explore the sanctuary at their leisure. The neighboring St. Clair Woods Nature Sanctuary has a 1.5-mile loop trail that passes through several distinct habitats.

For more information about this sanctuary, visit the MNA website at www.michigannature.org.



Photo: Al Menk



Photo: John Sholdan

Planning Your Visit:

Trillium are scattered throughout Jasper Woods and bloom from early to late May.

The sanctuary is also excellent for bird watching. Visitors can spot a variety of nesting birds, including least flycatcher, scarlet tanager, warbling vireo, and mourning warbler.

How to Get There:

Located in St. Clair County near Kimball.

Take the Taylor Rd exit off I-69 south until Taylor Road/Dunlap Road turns into a sand road at Griswold Road. Follow the sand road to the sanctuary sign and parking area.



Sanctuary Map