

Michigan Nature Association A Looking Glass Sanctuary



Sanctuary at a Glance:

Location: Clinton County

Size: 13.63 acres

History: Donated by the Fellowship for Today in 2006

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

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Photo: Keith Saylor

A Looking Glass Sanctuary is one of MNA's more recent acquisitions. The 13.63-acre sanctuary derives its name from the Looking Glass River, which flows along the east boundary of the sanctuary, and was deeded to MNA in 2006 by the Fellowship for Today Church in East Lansing.

The property was previously owned by Denise Wootton, a prominent member of the Fellowship. Historically, though, this stretch of river was part of a transportation and camp network used by Native Americans. Denise and her husband, Jim, bought 48 acres along the Looking Glass River in 1995. When Jim passed away in 2005, Denise sold two parcels of the property. The Fellowship bought the southernmost 13 acres, and for a time, its members considered maintaining the land as a sanctuary themselves. It was eventually decided that MNA was better suited to protecting the peaceful sanctuary in perpetuity.

A Looking Glass Sanctuary is mostly old-field, but also contains floodplain forest, wetland, and a dry-mesic southern forest. The sanctuary functions primarily as a floodplain and provides an area for flood waters when the Looking Glass River overtops the banks during periods of high flow. These flood cycles deposit sediment, nutrients, and pollutants in the floodplain, where they can then be absorbed by plants, which utilize the nutrients and neutralize the pollutants. The seasonally flooded vegetation also creates an excellent spawning habitat for fish species such as northern pike.

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Sandhill cranes at A Looking Glass Sanctuary

Sandhill cranes (*Grus canadensis*) breed in open marshes, bogs, wet grasslands, and meadows, which make the Looking Glass River Corridor a great location for these magnificent birds. Their nests are usually low mounds built out of dominant vegetation and typically located in wetlands. The birds typically migrate south for the winter and return to areas like A Looking Glass in spring.



Photo: Rick Baetsen

Floodplain forest

The floodplain forest of A Looking Glass Sanctuary provides many benefits to the surrounding area. A floodplain is low-land adjacent to a stream or river that floods periodically. Floodplains are an important habitat because they help maintain water quality; as water leaves the banks of the river and its flow slows down, nutrients, impurities, and sediment settle to the bottom. When flood waters recede, the flux of nutrients enhance new vegetative growth, and the impurities are neutralized by the plants.



Photo: Jeremy Emmi

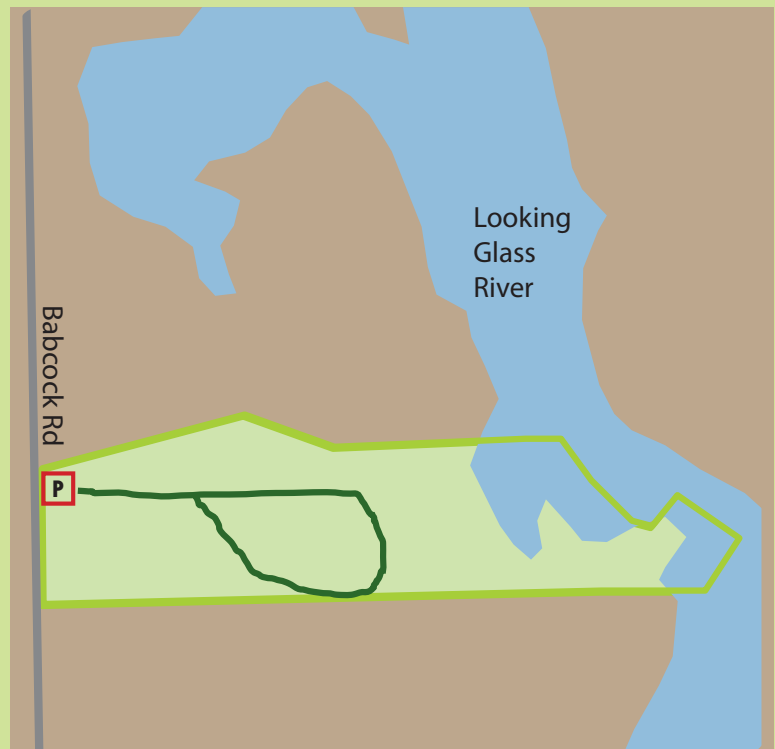
Planning Your Visit:

Traveling to A Looking Glass Sanctuary in the spring will allow visitors to see sandhill cranes, songbirds, turtles and ducks, among other wildlife.

How To Get There

The sanctuary is located in Clinton County, on Babcock Rd. in Victor Township.

For additional information, contact the MNA office at (866) 223-2231.



Sanctuary Map