

# Michigan Nature Association Black Creek Nature Sanctuary



## Sanctuary at a Glance:

**Location:** Keweenaw County

**Size:** 242 acres

**History:** Acquired in three separate transactions in 1991, 1992, and 2003.

## 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 180 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](http://www.michigannature.org)

## Join the Conversation:

 [facebook.com/michigannature](https://facebook.com/michigannature)

 [twitter.com/michigannature](https://twitter.com/michigannature)

 [instagram.com/michigannature](https://instagram.com/michigannature)



Photo: Peter Pietila

Located in Keweenaw County, Black Creek Nature Sanctuary has been owned by MNA since 1991, when the first 121 acres were acquired through a donation from Ruth Sablich. Sablich encouraged many of her Calumet High School classmates to donate as well, and an additional 120 acres were acquired in 1992 with the help of these donations. In 2003, Robert Verville donated an additional parcel, including 200 feet of Lake Superior shoreline.

The 242-acre sanctuary trail begins in a flat, sandy backdune landscape supporting an abundant mix of blueberry, trailing arbutus, bearberry, and lichens anchored to the surrounding rock, bark, and soil. The trail continues through northern wildflowers, such as rattlesnake plantain, baneberry and sarsaparilla, which are nestled under a canopy of white birch, balsam fir, sugar maple, and northern white cedar. The trail also passes by active beaver ponds surrounded by speckled alder and through a stands of conifers and hardwoods in varying stages of succession. Wolves, black bears, and moose have been spotted in the sanctuary.

Lake Superior's large waves contribute to the ever-changing size and shape of the lagoon where Black Creek and Hills Creek converge. Along the shoreline of Hills Creek, visitors can find old stamp sand deposits remaining from the copper mining era, as well as black non-magnetic basalt sand and rocks of all sizes.

With its beautiful shoreline and meandering creeks, Black Creek Nature Sanctuary provides a scenic getaway for visitors and offers a true taste of the Keweenaw Peninsula.

# Black Creek Nature Sanctuary | Michigan Nature Association

## Protecting Critical Habitat

Hills Creek and Black Creek provide crucial habitat at the sanctuary. Along the trail, hikers will see the two cold water streams converge and form a lagoon before flowing into Lake Superior. The lagoon is an ever-changing feature at the mercy of the violent weather and erosive forces along Lake Superior's shoreline. The creeks are home to several species of fish and provide critical habitat for surrounding wildlife, such as beavers.



Photo: Peter Pietila

## Lake Superior Shoreline

Protecting more than 1,500 feet of Lake Superior shoreline is arguably the most notable feature of Black Creek Nature Sanctuary. Ruth Sablich, concerned with the diminishing area of public beaches on Superior, was determined to protect such an important and beautiful part of the Upper Peninsula; she raised donations to purchase this sanctuary, then donated it to MNA. Severe weather contributes to the changing shoreline, with waves from Lake Superior reaching up to 18 feet tall during the most powerful storms.



Photo: Peter Pietila

## Planning Your Visit:

Black Creek Nature Sanctuary contains 2.85 miles of trail along two creeks, providing almost 5 miles of hiking, there and back. Trail difficulty is moderate, with gently sloping terrain.

## Getting There:

From Calumet, take M-203 west and turn right (north) onto Tamarack Waterworks Rd. Turn slight right (northeast) onto Cedar Bay Rd. Follow that until it ends. There is parking available on the east side of Cedar Bay Rd. Less than 1/4 mile south of where Cedar Bay Rd. ends, a footpath begins. Look for the sanctuary sign and trailhead.



Trail Map