

# Michigan Nature Association Fred Dye Nature Sanctuary



## Sanctuary at a Glance:

**Location:** Mackinac County

**Size:** 35.9 acres

**History:** The initial parcel was acquired in 1970. In 2003, 6.4 acres were added by an anonymous donor.

## 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](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: Keith Saylor

Originally named the Purple Coneflower Plant Preserve, Fred Dye Nature Sanctuary was acquired in 1970. In 2003, an anonymous donor purchased an additional 6.4 acres adjacent to the sanctuary and requested the sanctuary be renamed in honor of Fred Dye. Fred served on the MNA board for several years and was an active volunteer.

The 36-acre sanctuary has no trails, but is easily navigable due to its openness. The prairie seems somewhat out of place in the Upper Peninsula, and it is suspected to be a result of human activity. The town of Kenneth once existed at the site of the sanctuary, with the old foundations of the general store and saloon resting within its boundaries.

The dolomite bedrock and karst features scattered throughout the sanctuary contribute to the grass-dominated, open habitat. The shallow, exposed bedrock and thin soils make it difficult for hardwood forests to fully develop. The karst features found in the sanctuary today may eventually turn into caves or sinkholes after centuries because of the eroding bedrock.

Many bird species can be found year-round at Fred Dye. The sanctuary supports both breeding and migratory birds. Ruby-throated hummingbirds can be seen around the wildflowers, while spruce grouse dusting in the sand and bohemian waxwings are seen in fall.

The diversity of plant species at Fred Dye result in different sets of wildflowers blooming through all points of the growing season. In the spring, visitors are welcomed by striped coral-root orchid, round-lobed hepatica, and wild columbine.

# Fred Dye Nature Sanctuary | Michigan Nature Association

In summer, pale purple coneflower, prairie cinquefoil, and toad flax are in bloom. The fall brings leathery grape fern, pale spike lobelia, and fringed gentian.

## The Pale Purple Coneflower

Originally a prairie species found in the open spaces of the Tall Grass Prairie region, the existence of the pale purple coneflower (*Echinacea pallida*) at the sanctuary is a curious one. The most likely possibility is when the people of Kenneth imported hay bales for their horses from out west, the seeds of the flower were in the hay. Most prairie plants are known to send taproots deep into the soil, but as a species often found in dry prairies on exposed dolomite, the pale purple coneflower has survived well in the thin soils found here.

## Karst Geology

Though known primarily for its prairie habitat, Fred Dye Nature Sanctuary also showcases Karst geology. Karst geology is identified by such features as sinkholes, caverns, and underground streams and rivers. These features are created when water erodes the soluble bedrock (usually limestone or dolomite), forming cracks which deepen and expand. Lichen, moss, and algae are known to thrive on these rocks, which are covered in a thin layer of soil.



Photo: Keith Saylor

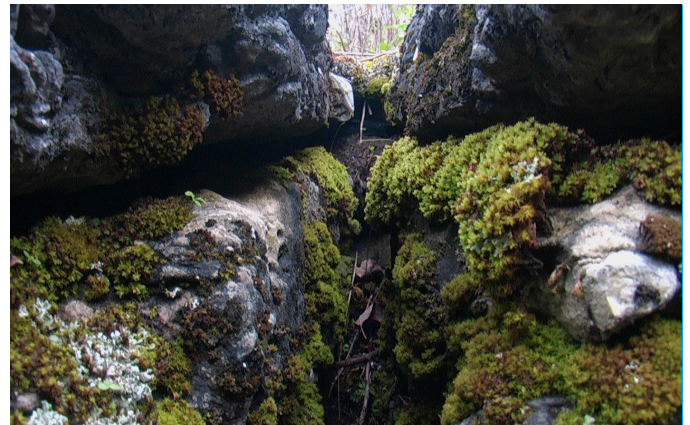


Photo: Keith Saylor

## Planning Your Visit:

Fred Dye Nature Sanctuary is known for its bird species, many of which can be spotted year-round. Visitors can see many breeding and migratory birds in the summer, as they thrive in the sanctuary's prairie habitat.

Different sets of wildflowers bloom in spring, summer, and fall. Though, summer is the best time to see the sanctuary's distinguishing feature: the pale purple coneflower.

## Driving Directions:

Located near Kenneth and Moran, Michigan.

Take M-123 about 8.5 miles northeast of Moran and look for the sanctuary sign on the southwest side of M-123.



Sanctuary Map