

Michigan Nature Association Dauner Martin Nature Sanctuary



Sanctuary at a Glance:

Location: Genesee County

Size: 155 acres

History: Donated in 1998 by Robert and Marion Martin

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

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Photo: MNA Archives

Located in the city of Fenton, Dauner Martin Nature Sanctuary is the perfect getaway for those looking to conveniently get into the outdoors. One of just five MNA nature sanctuaries located in a city, this 155-acre piece of land was originally purchased by Phillip Dauner in 1863 to grow hops for his local brewery. The property was passed down to his great grandchildren Robert and Marion Martin, who donated it to the MNA in 1998 to ensure its protection forever. Today, the sanctuary offers nearly 4.5 miles of trails for visitors to experience its varied natural terrain. Updated in 2010, the extensive trail system is diamond-marked for easy navigation and has several boardwalks over wetter areas.

Much of the sanctuary consists of large pine groves interwoven among hardwood forests. After inheriting the land from his great grandfather Phillip, Robert Dauner spent years planting the pine stands in an effort to restore the natural habitat. Visitors can enjoy these plantations, along with 40 other native tree species along the sanctuary's eight different trails. Oak, elm, ash, and cherry trees are just a few of Dauner Martin's hardwoods that attract various bird species like the blue-winged warbler. Below the majestic trees, guests can enjoy plant life such as the tall sunflower and highbush cranberry—native plant species that are thriving amidst a variety of several invasive species.

Visitors will be taken by the beauty and solitude of Dauner Martin Nature Sanctuary and its stark contrast to the nearby urban areas.

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Blue-winged warblers at Dauner Martin

Although its name comes from its blue-grey wings, the blue-winged warblers (*Vermivora cyanoptera*) can be spotted more easily by the bright yellow plumage that covers nearly the entire body of the males. Feeding on different types of insects and spiders, these small birds nest on the ground or in low-lying bushes, where the more dull-colored females lay between four and seven eggs. The warblers are migrant species, and travel to Central America during the winter.



Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

Ash tree over 200 years old

Despite recently succumbing to the emerald ash borer, the 200-year-old ash tree is a tribute to the longstanding protection the sanctuary has received despite surrounding urban development. It was one of the largest white ash trees in the state of Michigan and provided shade for nearly 70 feet in diameter, with a circumference of nearly 13 feet. Many of its branches were larger than the trunks of surrounding trees.

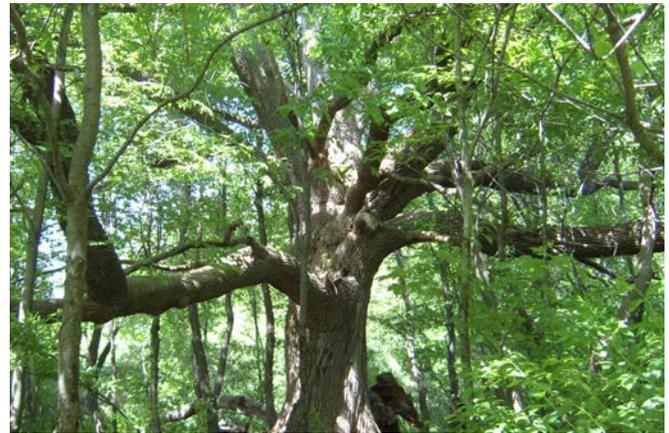


Photo: Sherri Laier

Special Notes

Dauner Martin is one of just a few MNA sanctuaries where dog walking is allowed. For the safety and security of fellow hikers, other dogs, and wildlife, please keep your dog leashed at all times on sanctuary property.

There is a short wheelchair-accessible trail leading from the Dauner Rd. trailhead.

Sanctuary Map

Planning Your Visit:

The boardwalks installed throughout the trail system at Dauner Martin are for both the convenience of visitors and the protection of the habitat found within the sanctuary. Forested wetlands experience fluctuating water levels during the year, usually seeing increases in water level in winter and spring followed by lower levels in summer and fall seasons. Fluctuating water levels facilitate seed germination and reduce competition from many woody plants.

How To Get There

The sanctuary is located in Genessee County, between Leroy and Dauner Roads. The sanctuary has two parking areas: the paved road on N. Leroy Street near VG's, north of Dauner Road, and on Dauner Road 0.4 miles east of N. Leroy.

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

