

Michigan Nature Association

Franklin F. and Brenda L. Holly Nature Sanctuary



Sanctuary at a Glance:

Location: Mason County

Size: 80 acres

History: Donated to MNA in
December 2018 by Franklin Holly

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 185 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: Robb Johnston

The Franklin F. and Brenda L. Holly Nature Sanctuary was donated to MNA in December 2018.

The property served as a family retreat for the Holly family for decades for Frank, his sister Brenda and their parents before them. There is a shrub dominated wetland in the southwestern corner which is predominantly composed of buttonbush and alder. There is a hardwood swamp around the fringes of the wetland and the uplands are primarily composed of northern mesic and dry-mesic forest with a few small sandy ridges reminiscent of pine-barrens. The onsite wetlands are part of a much larger wetland complex which extends to the west and the southwest.

The canopy at Holly Nature Sanctuary is a diverse patchwork consisting of a variety of tree species. However, there is one species in particular that warrants special consideration: the Eastern hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis*). These tall, impressive conifers can take 200 years to reach maturity and live as long as 800 years in total, reaching heights of 150 feet. Unlike many tree species, Eastern hemlock can thrive in heavily shaded areas, a trait that is on full display in the sanctuary's northwest corner. Here, you will find a range of other shade-loving organisms including fungi and parasitic wildflowers on the forest floor. These trees provide food and shelter for a wide variety of birds and mammals and are a crucial part of the habitat at Holly Nature Sanctuary. For this reason, MNA is diligently monitoring hemlock populations on the property for signs of an invasive insect: the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid (or HWA). This destructive forest pest has led to a widespread, rapid decline in populations of Eastern hemlock throughout its range.

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Fungi

The Franklin F. and Brenda L. Holly Nature Sanctuary is host to an incredible diversity of fungi. Although fungi are often overshadowed by the more charismatic plants and animals, the quiet, thoughtful observer will delight in the variety of forms and colors offered by this seemingly humble kingdom. Throughout the growing season you'll be able to see many different types of mushrooms popping up from the ground or growing on decaying plant matter. These fruiting bodies are responsible for dispersing spores and allow fungi to reproduce, and hint at the vast, spreading networks of fungi mycelium below the soil surface. The complex relationships between the mycelium and plants and trees add another layer to the incredible richness and biodiversity at this woodland sanctuary.



Photo: Robb Johnston

Community Partnerships

MNA is committed to a robust outreach program in Mason County to promote the Franklin F. and Brenda L. Holly Nature Sanctuary as a destination for environmental and place-based education. By partnering with community organizations, schools, and individuals, MNA is actively pursuing opportunities to provide meaningful outdoor education experiences.



Photo: Robb Johnston

Planning Your Visit:

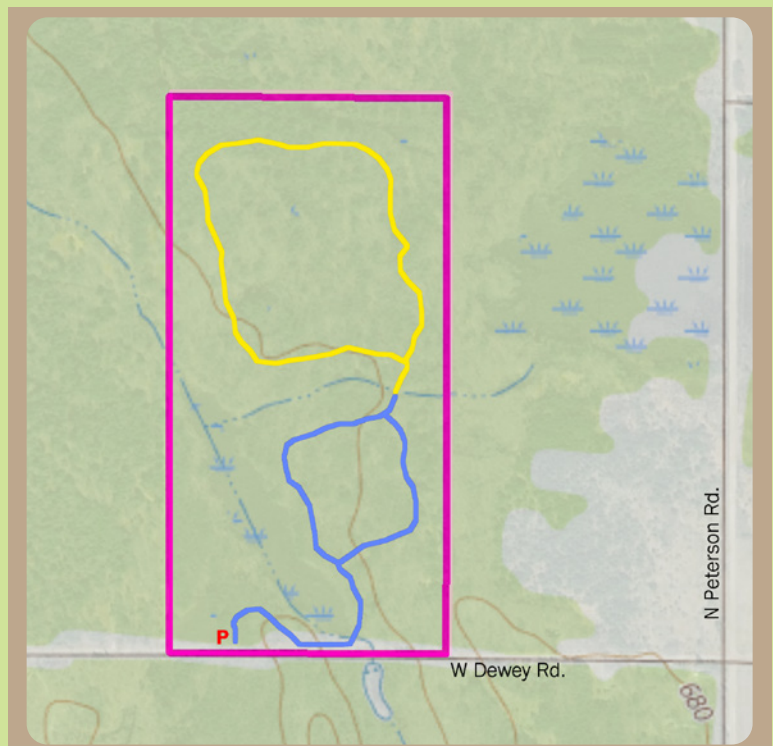
Spring and fall are the best times to visit this sanctuary, which is full of a diversity of plants and other wildlife.

The sanctuary is closed to visitors during firearm hunting season - please obey posted signs.

How To Get There

The sanctuary is located roughly 8 miles northeast of Ludington. It is accessed via West Dewey Road, and parking is available along the shoulder of the road.

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



Sanctuary Map