

# Michigan Nature Association Spitler Shore Nature Sanctuary



## Sanctuary at a Glance:

**Location:** Presque Isle

**Size:** 50.8 acres

**History:** Donated to MNA in December 2017 by Mr. Gerald Spitler

## 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 175 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: Floyd Selves

In December 2017, MNA acquired a remarkable nature sanctuary along the shore of Lake Huron's "Shipwreck Alley." Located in Presque Isle County, the nearly 51-acre sanctuary is especially exciting because, in addition to outstanding conservation values and scenic beauty, it also has noteworthy and educational attributes. Mr. Gerald Spitler, who donated the property, desired that the property be conserved in its natural state and remain open for public access with a trail system.

Spitler Shore is located just west of South Albany Point which juts into Lake Huron. The Lake Huron bottomlands immediately offshore are part of the 4,300-square mile Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary that protects one of America's best-preserved and nationally significant collections of shipwrecks. Nearly 100 shipwrecks have been discovered within this Marine Sanctuary. The 202-foot wreck of The Albany lies within 1,200 feet of the shore of the sanctuary. According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA), on November 26, 1853, the steamer Albany, carrying 200 passengers, provisions and supplies sank here. All of the crew was rescued the following morning.

The sanctuary is predominantly composed of mesic northern forest, with rich conifer swamp in the northwest portion of the sanctuary. The forest contains a few glacial beach ridges. The cobble lakeshore and sand/gravel beach includes over 1,500 linear feet of Lake Huron shoreline.

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## Shoreline Significance

As the name suggests, the shoreline is a notable geologic feature at Spitler Shore. Most of the shoreline contains a series of lateral seeps along the treeline which feed groundwater into a small tiered wetland complex which creates a fen-like coastal shoreline community containing a diversity of plants which would be classified as calciphiles, thriving in lime rich soil. Calciphiles observed here include pitcher plant, arrow grass, grass of parnassus, and fringed gentian. A small island, approximately one acre in size, lies about 1,200 feet from the shore.



Photo: Jack Flakne

## Community Partnerships

Spitler Shore is home to such a variety of plant and animal life that it makes a perfect place for educators to visit to conduct research, and educate the next generation of conservationists. In particular, the MSU Extension 4H and Michigan SEA Grant programs hold summer camps and educational trips to the property with a 'home base' at Camp Chickagami, which borders the sanctuary to the north.

Students of all ages have the opportunity to learn more about this fascinating part of Lake Huron and Northeast Lower Michigan by visiting Spitler Shore.



Photo: Michigan Natural Features Inventory

## Planning Your Visit:

Spring is the best time to view the many wildflowers that grow along the shore.

In the fall, migratory birds can be seen making their way to their overwintering grounds.

## How To Get There

The sanctuary is located in Presque Isle County, approximately one mile northeast of the town of Presque Isle. Follow Kauffman Road to the east side of Lake Esau and there is parking available along the side of the road

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



Sanctuary Map