

Michigan Nature Association

Lawrence and Mary Bell Wade Memorial Nature Sanctuary



Sanctuary at a Glance:

Location: Allegan County

Size: 72 acres

History: Bequeathed in 1980 by Lawrence Wade

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

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Photo: Matt Schultz

Located three miles east of the resort area of Saugatuck, the Lawrence A. and Mary Bell Wade Memorial Nature Sanctuary sits atop a high bluff overlooking wetlands that lead to the shores of Silver Lake. This 72-acre sanctuary was bequeathed to the MNA by Lawrence A. Wade in 1980, a well-known Holland citizen who passed away in 1979. He was a brother of one of the first MNA members in Macomb County in the 1950s, when the association was still known as the Macomb Nature Association.

Wade Memorial is a fine example of a mesic-northern compound mix of deciduous trees with scattered hemlocks. The trails consist of a bisected rectangular loop, creating two square-shaped trails that total about one mile. The trails are flat and easy to navigate—visitors can get a closer look at Silver Lake by taking an unmarked trail down a 30 foot bank to the shores. The sanctuary is well-suited to the study of both terrestrial and aquatic plants. Flowering dogwood and trillium can be found in the wooded areas during the spring, while pickerelweed and burweed inhabit the shore and lake.

Waterfowl and other birds are a common sight throughout the sanctuary. Wood ducks, hawks, owls, and woodpeckers all inhabit the canopy and shoreline of Wade Memorial. Along with birds, various species of frogs and turtles also call the sanctuary home. Visitors are welcomed by an assortment of plant life, including skunk cabbage, marsh marigold, jack-in-the-pulpit, hepatica, blue flag iris, trailing arbutus, and dogwood, among others.

The beautiful lake views and varied plant life make Wade Memorial Nature Sanctuary a destination for visitors looking to experience nature.

The wood duck at Wade Memorial

The wood duck (*Aix sponsa*) is one of several species of waterfowl that call the shores of Silver Lake home. These striking ducks use habitat around forested shallow lakes and ponds for breeding grounds, where they nest in tree cavities near or above water. Unlike other ducks, the wood duck is equipped with sharp claws used for perching in trees and is the only duck in North America capable of producing two broods in one season. After they hatch, the ducklings jump out of the nest and head to water, surviving jumps up to several hundred feet.

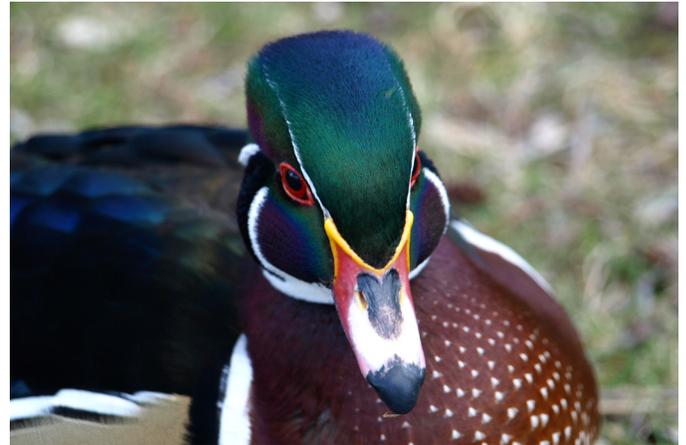


Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

Mesic northern forests

The mesic northern forest exhibited at Wade Memorial typically occurs north of the climatic tension zone and is dominated by northern hardwoods, like the sugar maple, American beech, and conifers such as hemlock and white pine. It is supported by slightly acidic sandy soil and depends on natural wind disturbances for regeneration of shade-tolerant canopy species. Due to the long intervals between large-scale disturbances, mesic northern forests tend to be multi-generational, with old-growth tracts lasting several centuries if left undisturbed.



Photo: Matt Schultz

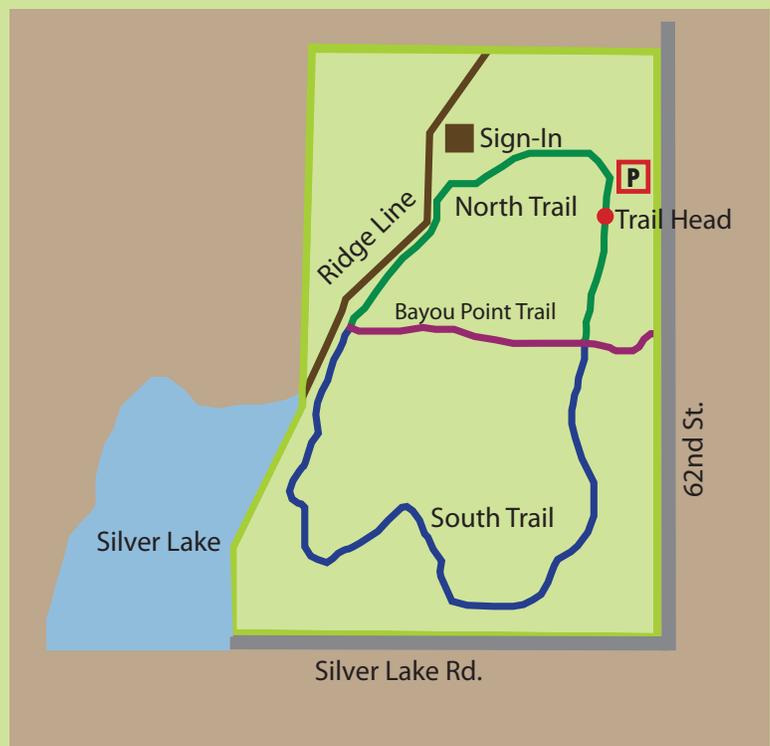
Planning Your Visit:

Growing more than three feet tall, the native pickerelweed grows in areas of slow-moving water like bogs, marshes, and small streams. The plant is easily identifiable in the summer, when it blooms a spike of small lavender-purple flowers. Deer and other animals feed on the pickerelweed, and the summer blooms attract bumblebees and butterflies to its nectar and pollen.

How To Get There

The sanctuary is located in Allegan County, off 62nd Street. It is 3 miles east of Saugatuck.

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



Sanctuary Map