

Michigan Nature Association Trillium Ravine Nature Sanctuary



Sanctuary at a Glance:

Location: Berrien County

Size: 14.92 acres

History: Donated to MNA by Ross and Upton partnership on February 15, 1983.

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: Alan L. Jones

Located in Berrien County, Trillium Ravine Prairie Nature Sanctuary boasts extraordinary beauty throughout the year. This mature, mixed deciduous forest set along a deep glacial ravine is complete with beautiful spring ephemeral flowers.

The Michigan Nature Association acquired Trillium Ravine Nature Sanctuary on February 15, 1983 from a donation by the Malcolm S. Ross and Robert C. Upton partnership. The men originally intended to include the property in a subdivision they were building, but Erich Bruegmann noticed the sanctuary's beautiful ravine while driving one day and brought it to MNA's attention.

A ravine is characterized as a deep narrow valley, usually formed by running water. The sloping sides of the ravine carry spring run-off and heavy rains to the St. Joseph River.

The sloping sides of the ravine are covered in a variety of hardwoods and beautiful spring flowers. Beech and sugar maple are among the predominate hardwoods found here. Jack-in-the-pulpit, wild ginger and yellow trout lily are some of the wildflowers around the ravine.

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Many Species of Trillium

The sanctuary is named after the prairie trillium and toadshade. Both are threatened species in Michigan and are protected by state law. The ranges of these species of trillium barely extend into southern Michigan, making them unusual in the state. Both species are considered “toad trilliums” because their leaves are mottled like toad skin. Their flowers with maroon petals and green sepals sit directly on the leaves without a flower stalk.

The species are differentiated by their leaves. Toadshade’s leaf has no stalk, while prairie trillium’s leaf has a short stalk.

Statewide, MNA sanctuaries contain seven native Michigan trilliums including prairie trillium and toadshade. The others are common white trillium (*Trillium grandiflorum*), red trillium (*Trillium erectum*), drooping trillium (*Trillium flexipes*), painted trillium (*Trillium undulatum*) and nodding trillium (*Trillium cernuum*).



Photo: Aaron Strouse



Photo: MNA Archives

Planning Your Visit:

The sanctuary is a quiet, beautiful place any time of year. The wildflowers bloom in the spring.

How To Get There

Trillium Ravine is located four miles northwest of Niles on the west side of Riverside Road, off Walton Road in Niles Township.



Sanctuary Map