

Community Forests: A path to prosperity and connection

PORTMAN NATURE PRESERVE / LIME LAKE COMMUNITY FOREST

NOTABLE BENEFITS



RECREATION



FOREST-BASED SERVICES

ACRES: 189

YEAR ESTABLISHED: 2017

OWNERSHIP: Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy

MANAGEMENT: Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy

COMMUNITY SERVED: Antwerp and Almena Townships, Michigan

POPULATION: 17,378

TOTAL ACQUISITION COST: \$2,200,000

FUNDING BREAKDOWN:



Community Forest and Open Space Conservation Program

Cost Share

U.S. FOREST SERVICE



The Portman Nature Preserve is a 189-acre community forest in Antwerp and Almena, Michigan. The land was protected with a broad coalition of partners and funders, of which the U.S. Forest Service Community Forest and Open Space Conservation Program (CFP) was a modest part. The acquisition was protected with assistance from Enbridge Energy, in partnership with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and The Conservation Fund, with a mix of funding from the USFWS's Endangered Species Program (Section 6), CFP, The Carls Foundation, The Burdick-Thorne Foundation, The H. P. and Genevieve Connable Fund, Nancy Malcomson Connable Fund, Gerald and Julie Portman, and over 350 individual and organizational donors from the community. It is owned and managed by a local land trust.

The CFP investment in the Portman Nature Preserve provides value to the local community by providing important and much needed access to outdoor natural areas, bolstering water quality, and providing habitat for a variety of game and non-game species.

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For a comprehensive review of the community and economic benefits provided by this forest and others, go to the full report at www.tpl.org/economic-benefits-community-forests



Enabling recreation: The community forest is an essential recreational asset in two communities with limited access to public outdoor areas. Portman Nature Preserve has nearly 2 miles of trails and boardwalks that provide opportunities for users to walk, hike, bird watch, snowshoe, trail run, and hunt. The property is also part of the Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy’s Hike Our Preserves program, encouraging children and families to get fit outside. Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy (SWMLC) is also planning to develop a universal access trail in the near future to ensure all people can enjoy the preserve.

Protecting drinking water: Portman Nature Preserve boasts three lakes, with 3,000 feet of frontage on two natural lakes and one mile of frontage on a 30-acre lake fomed by a water control structure. Local groundwater recharge from nearby gravel hills is essential for maintaining groundwater and surface water quality. The lands also contain headwater tributaries to the Paw Paw River, the protection of which ensures clean and plentiful water for residents in the Paw Paw watershed. The protection of this property further improves groundwater recharge

capacity, especially as the land trust works with partners to remove invasive exotic plants. The wetlands on the property also provide floodwater storage.

Providing habitat: The water, wetland, and forested upland areas of the property make the Portman Nature Preserve prime habitat for a number of species, including rare, threatened and endangered species, such as the federally-listed Mitchell’s satyr butterfly and the Eastern Massasauga rattlesnake. The SWMLC is also working with partners to promote habitat for local game species, such as trout, waterfowl, wild turkey, woodcock, and white-tailed deer. The land trust is managing the forest sustainably and is exploring the potential to harvest black locust trees, which are invasive and of interest to a local builder.



This project was completed in partnership with the U.S. Forest Service and would not have been possible without generous support from the U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities and the U.S. Forest Service.

The Trust for Public Land creates parks and protects land for people, ensuring healthy, livable communities for generations to come.

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