



Description of Property

The Preserve on the Lake Huron shoreline has coastal marshes, fens, old growth northern white cedar forests, karst features, and rare plants. El Cajon Bay becomes shallow during low water periods, causing large areas of exposed and fragile bottomlands. The two El Cajon sinkholes have subterranean stream outlets with a constant discharge of water into the eastern bay.

Birds and Animals

A variety of habitats provide excellent opportunities for year round bird watching. The site is recognized as an important migratory stop-over for warblers and other species. Birds found on the property include: snowy owl, bald eagles, sandhill cranes, egrets, osprey and swans. Mammals include: black bear, white-tailed deer, bobcats, weasels, river otter, squirrels, raccoons, opossum and skunks. There are numerous species of reptiles, amphibians and turtles.

Plants

Over 150 species of plants have been identified on the property. Globally imperiled coastal fen, state special concern (Indian Plantain), and federal threatened and globally rare (Dwarf Lake Iris) are present. The plants are too numerous to list.

Other notable plants:

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Pitcher Plant | Bunchberry |
| Sticky False Asphodel | Wood Lily |
| Canada Mayflower | Grass Pink |
| Yellow Lady's-slipper | Fringed Gentian |
| Indian Paintbrush | Twinflower |

DO NOT PICK

Geology

Karst geology features are prominent in and around El Cajon Bay. El Cajon Bay and its two sink holes were formed by collapse of the bedrock. Minerals deposited by precipitation of limestone and salts were buried 800 feet below the surface some 400 million years ago. Salts dissolved over the last 100,000 years creating voids or weak caverns deep in the bedrock. Collapse of the bedrock to the surface probably occurred after the last glacial retreat 10,000 years ago. The large circular sinkhole in the bay is the outlet of an underground stream that flows year-round. Earth cracks, limestone outcrops, swallow holes and alvar shorelines can be found on the lands around El Cajon Bay.

Nature Preserve Rules

- Day use only
- Please stay on the marked trails
- No camping or open fires
- No hunting or trapping
- Motor vehicles not allowed
- Pets should be under the control of owners
- **Take your garbage with you** - there are no garbage receptacles

Be Careful and Cautious!

The sinkhole area within El Cajon Bay has edges which are fragile and unstable. Therefore, if boating, canoeing, kayaking, fishing, near or on the surface above the sinkholes, EXTREME CAUTION should be taken.

Scuba diving the sinkholes is discouraged and allowed ONLY with prior approval from the Charter Township of Alpena, 989-356-0297.

Directions and Parking

From Downtown Alpena: Drive north on Second Ave, turn right onto Wessel Rd, then left onto Ford Rd, which becomes Misery Bay Rd. after passing through the LaFarge plant. Travel approximately 4 miles further to the Preserve entrance at 8142 Misery Bay Rd.

Parking is available

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Preserve located in Section 15 of T31N-R9E
Latitude: N 45°07.847'
Longitude: W 83° 32.226'

History of Preserve

Alpena Township acquired the property in 2004. The Nature Conservancy played a key role facilitating the property acquisition. Funding the acquisition was provided by Alpena Township, MI Karst Conservancy, Nature Conservancy, MI Natural Resources Trust Fund, the MI Coastal Management Program and private donations.

A Nature Preserve Management Plan was developed in 2008 with funds provided by Alpena Township, Community Foundation of NE Michigan, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), US Department of Commerce and the Michigan Coastal Management Program.

Stewards of the Alpena Nature Preserve

Volunteers may contact the Charter Township of Alpena office if they are interested in helping maintain the Preserve.

Charter Township of



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Alpena, MI 49707
Phone: (989) 356-0297
www.alpenatownship.com

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Charter Twp of Alpena Nature Preserve



Enjoy access to pristine
natural resources along
our quiet coast

Preserve Activities

Hiking and Nature Walks
Nature Photography
Bird Watching
Snowshoeing
XC Skiing

Located on Misery Bay, this 133-acre tract of land has 9,632 feet of Lake Huron shoreline with coastal marshes, fens and cobblestone beaches.

The Preserve has excellent examples of pristine northern ferns & fens and is a stronghold for the State's designated wildflower, the Dwarf Lake Iris, which blooms in late May. Please stay on the marked trails for the protection of these rare and endangered plant colonies and habitats.