



SIGNS

At least one LTC logo sign, which is approximately 35" x 46" on 10' posts, is usually placed at a key location on each preserve, easily visible from access roads and parking areas. Other signs used on preserves include interpretive signs, trail markers, trail maps, and preserve rules signs.

TRAILS AND THE TRAIL STEWARD PROGRAM

The Conservancy has formal trail systems on twenty-three of its preserves. These preserves have a parking area, trail maps, directional blazes or arrows, and the trails are consistently maintained by staff and volunteers. Another ten preserves have informal trails, which typically are old logging or agricultural roads. The informal trails are not regularly maintained, and aren't marked with maps or other signs. Separate from the Preserve Monitoring program, LTC has Trail Steward program to help us manage the trails. A Trail Steward visits a selected trail regularly throughout the year to check the trail and actively performs maintenance as needed. Please ask for more information if you are interested in being a Trail Steward.

OTHER STEWARDSHIP VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Special work days, such as trail building, cleanup of new preserves, tree planting, and other preserve tasks take place throughout the year, but especially between April and October. If you are interested in helping us out on these projects please let us know and we will put you on our Project Volunteer list. We will send you email updates to let you know about these events. We also post them on our website and in our quarterly newsletter.

For more information, please contact:

Little Traverse Conservancy
3264 Powell Road
Harbor Springs, MI 49740
(231) 347-0991
www.landtrust.org

Stewardship staff:

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LITTLE TRAVERSE CONSERVANCY'S

Volunteer Preserve Monitor Program

VOLUNTEER PRESERVE MONITORS ARE vital to Little Traverse Conservancy's stewardship program. With 134 preserves totaling more than 11,000 acres (as of early 2009), staff cannot get to all the preserves on a regular basis. Information from monitors helps us know where to focus our attention and how to prioritize our work. Preserve monitoring reports, once they are reviewed by stewardship staff, are kept as part of the preserve's permanent file. Over time, these reports create an excellent cumulative picture of the preserve through the years, which helps us to make future management decisions. The reports are also essential for LTC to achieve and maintain national accredited status from the Land Trust Alliance.



Jean and Al Moberly,
Wendy O'Neil Memorial Preserve

The PRESERVE MONITOR'S RESPONSIBILITIES

Ideally, a preserve monitor lives near his or her preserve and visits it regularly. At a minimum, we ask that monitors visit their preserve and then submit a monitoring report to us twice a year, once in the spring and once in the fall. The monitor should note the condition of the preserve's parking area, signs, markers, structures, natural features, and anything unusual, and look for any violations of our rules. In addition to monitoring and reporting, it is a great help to us if you perform basic maintenance tasks as needed, such as cleaning up dumped garbage or litter, or removing fallen twigs or limbs from the trails. We encourage monitors to contact us anytime by phone or email if a preserve needs immediate attention or structural repair, or if violations of our rules or other urgent issues come up.

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THE REPORTING PROCESS AND RECORD KEEPING

We send out reminders (either by regular mail or email) twice a year, in April and September. Reports are typically expected to be returned within 4 weeks. The preserve monitoring report form is available on our website at www.landtrust.org. If you don't have internet access, we can mail you a paper copy of the report form. Reports are reviewed, staff follows up on any immediate concerns or comments, and the report is stored in the permanent preserve file.

VIOLATIONS

Monitors are not required to confront violators, and in fact we prefer that you don't. In the event that you observe inappropriate activity occurring on a preserve, please note as much information as possible including: descriptions of person(s) or vehicle, license plate numbers, date and time, and then notify the Conservancy as soon as possible. If it is a serious or emergency situation, please call 911, or the Report All Poaching hotline (800-292-7800), and then call us.

NEWSLETTER AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

When you sign up as a monitor, you'll receive maps of your preserve. Someone from the stewardship staff will also visit the preserve with you in order to point out the boundaries and to answer any questions about the property. A Volunteer Steward Newsletter is sent to all monitors and trail stewards every spring. This newsletter provides updates on preserve projects and maintenance activities, program changes, new monitors, volunteer profiles, and other information. If a special project is planned for your preserve, we will let you know about it ahead of time. Email is the most efficient communication method for us, so please make sure to keep us updated if your email address changes.

PRESERVE MANAGEMENT

Little Traverse Conservancy Stewardship staff, overseen by the Executive Director and Stewardship Committee of the Board, carry out the planning and day-to-day responsibilities of managing nature preserves, including: preparing management plans; marking boundaries; ordering and installing signs; planning and developing trails; and performing various maintenance activities. In general, LTC's management style calls for minimal intervention on preserves. However, some preserve management activities include: maintenance of field or meadow habitats by mowing or haying; maintenance of scenic views; timber management (primarily harvesting or thinning of pine plantations); habitat restoration, especially for disturbed areas such as former building sites; erosion control projects; and invasive species monitoring and control.



MANAGEMENT PLANS

A management plan is created for each preserve owned by the Little Traverse Conservancy. Overall management of a preserve – which takes into account its size, habitats, sensitivity, neighboring land use, and suitability for recreational or educational activities – is determined on a case-by-case basis. Monitors are welcome to request a copy of the management plan for their preserve.

RULES FOR PUBLIC USE

All preserves are open to the public for uses such as hiking, snowshoeing, skiing, fishing, birdwatching, berry picking, mushroom hunting, photography, and other similar, low-impact activities. Dogs are permitted and, according to state law, must be on a leash. Hunting is permitted on some preserves where deemed appropriate. Individuals wanting to hunt on a particular preserve must obtain written permission from the Conservancy.

The following activities are NOT allowed at any preserve: camping, removal of plants, dumping, fires, overnight use, snowmobiling, or off-road vehicle use.

The Andreae Preserve, located on the Pigeon River and six miles east of Indian River, has a six-room cabin that is available for community groups (such as scout groups, churches, or outdoor clubs) for overnight use. There is no charge. Reservations are required by calling 231-347-0991.

BOUNDARIES

Marked boundaries facilitate monitoring and help prevent encroachments onto preserves. They also inform preserve users to prevent their trespassing onto neighboring private properties. We only mark boundaries when we have professional survey monuments (either new or old) to go by. For that reason, and also due to the high cost of surveys and staff time required to mark boundaries, quite a few of our boundaries remain unmarked. We continue to work towards the goal of marking all our preserves, and with the improved accuracy of Global Positioning System (GPS) units we can get a close estimate of the line, even if we don't have a professional survey. Let us know if you'd like us to visit your preserve with you to look for the boundaries, or if you'd like to borrow a GPS unit.

The following may be used alone or in combination to mark boundaries: 3" round aluminum markers, 4"x4" square aluminum tags, 5' tall metal t-posts, and tree paint are used along the lines. At the corners, 4' tall bright orange Carsonite (composite plastic) survey markers or 4"x4" wooden posts with boundary tags are used.