

UPDATED JULY 2024



Contents

- 2 Properties – North
- 3 Properties – Central
- 4 Properties – South
- 5 Dr. Bruce Jones Preserve
- 6 Wildlife Sanctuary
- 7 Island / Ferry Woods & New Ferry Trail
- 8 GINLC John C. Jackson Resouce Center
- 9 Parkway Woods
 - Centerfold -
- 10 MAP of GI Natural
- 11 Areas & Trails
- 12 Sunrise Park
- 13 Centennial Farm
- 14 Meridian Woods
- 15 Airport Natural Area
- 16 Gibraltar Bay Unit
- 17 Grosse Ile Open Space & GINLC
- 18 State of Michigan Islands
- 19 Detroit River Int'l Wildlife Refuge on Grosse Ile
- 20 Contact Info & Rules

A GUIDE TO THE

Natural Areas of Grosse Ile

*Prepared by the Grosse Ile Open Space / Greenways Committee
and Grosse Ile Nature & Land Conservancy*

Grosse Ile residents are blessed to live in an area surrounded by an abundance of Michigan's natural heritage treasures. These natural areas include marshes, woodlands, meadows, and trails which have been protected to remain in their natural state, free from

development. As a result, the small town, semi-rural natural ambiance of our community is maintained. The total protected area includes 600 acres of Grosse Ile Open Space (all on the main island), the GINLC's 175 acres on the main island (including 130 acres of marshlands and five

easements), 365 acres of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) islands, and 80 acres owned by Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge (DRIWR). Grosse Ile also offers 8.5 miles of bike paths to support recreation and carbon-free transportation.



*We hope you enjoy the natural areas, walking the trails, and viewing the marshes.
Please respect the privacy of adjacent residents, confine your visits to daylight
hours, take nothing but pictures, and leave nothing but footprints.*

Open Space, Township, and GINLC Properties North Section (Hennepin Point to Church Road)



Open Space	GINLC
1. Bertha Park – a 1.1-acre park at the northeast corner of Meridian and Annette Ave.	A. Hennepin Marsh Preserve -- 121 acre shallow water wetland bordering the Detroit River/Trenton Channel. Viewing access available through Hennepin Marsh Gateway Preserve, on Meridian between Annette and Paulina.
2. Marion Park – approximately 7 acres bordered by Paulina and Voigt Avenues on the north and south. Noteworthy: 24 and 26-inch diameter black walnut trees and 38 and 48-inch diameter honey locust trees.	B. Hennepin Marsh Gateway – 1.5 acre site undergoing a multi-year restoration by replacing invasive species with native plants to improve wildlife habitat. A short hiking trail with a boardwalk over wetland continues to a wildlife observation platform overlooking the Hennepin Marsh.
3. Thorofare Road, west of the Wildlife Sanctuary – 3-acre site slopes down from the higher Wildlife Sanctuary and is bordered to the east by Thorofare Rd. Noteworthy: 45-inch diameter Bur Oak near the southwest corner.	C. Bruce Jones Preserve – situated at the southwest corner of Meridian and Bridge Roads, consisting of 5.9 upland acres and 9.9 acres of off-shore property with many varied habitats and connecting trails. (See page 5)
4. Grosse Ile Woods – a partially protected, heavily forested area west of the Wildlife Sanctuary (52 acres of Open Space land and 11.3 acres owned by GINLC).	D. Grosse Ile Woods Preserve – 63 lots comprising 11.3 acres of excellent wildlife habitat donated by several families or purchased from the Michigan Land Bank, near Horsemill and Thorofare.
5. Horsemill Greenway – 5-acre greenway fronts Horsemill Rd and Horsemill Open Space to the south.	E. Thorofare Canal (Kobiljak) Preserve – 0.73-acre upland property near the intersection of Thorofare and Byromar. It adjoins the Thorofare Canal.
6. Horsemill Open Space – 31-acre rectangular site is bordered by Horsemill, Meridian, and Thorofare Rds. The site was once farmland; it now has brush and small trees.	F. Finazzo Easement – privately owned 0.85-acre site by Parke Lane and Horsemill is under a conservation easement. It contains wooded wetland habitat.
7. Korneffel Woods – 38-acre property was purchased in 2004. Located south of Bridge Rd. Bordered by Meridian on the west and the eastern boundary is approximately 300 feet east of Parke Ln. It is heavily forested.	G. Crysler Easement – 1-acre parcel, under conservation easement with GINLC, containing wooded wetland habitat, adjacent to Finazzo Easement near Parke Ln and Horsemill.
8. The Wildlife Sanctuary – 12-acre property is bordered by roads on 3 sides, Horsemill (south), Thorofare (west) and Morkland (north). The east side slopes down to the Thorofare Canal. It has been under the stewardship of the Grosse Ile Garden Club since 1943. There is a trail entrance on the north side of Horsemill Rd. (See page 6)	H. William Heinrich Preserve was purchased in 2022. Located at the SE corner of Parke Ln and Wendell Ct. Totalling 1.8 acres, it is a visually beautiful wooded parcel containing a large variety of mature native trees including Pignut and Shagbark Hickories, White and Red Oak, and Black Walnut.
9. East of the Wildlife Sanctuary – 37-acre site, bordered by Thorofare Canal, Horsemill Rd, Parke Ln and private property. Trail entrance north of Horsemill.	Special Note: Hennepin Point is privately owned by BASF Corporation. The 225-acre site at the northernmost end of Grosse Ile was formerly used by BASF's predecessor companies as a repository for byproducts from chemical manufacturing. The site has been revegetated by BASF Corp. The site is not open to the public but will remain as a natural area for use by wildlife and researchers.
10. Parke Lane Open Space – 10-acre property is bordered by Parke Ln on the east, Wood Dr on the south, HCL Jackson on the west and Horsemill on the north. There is a trail into the site on Parke Ln.	
11. Wendell Court – 12-acre property on the west side of Parke Ln near Wendell Ct. Purchased in 2003 with Open Space funds and contributions from adjacent neighbors.	

Open Space, Township, and GINLC Properties Central Section (Church Road to Bellevue Road)



Open Space	GINLC
	I. Ryder Preserve – 0.24-acre site near Blauvelt and Lafayette with nice oak tree specimens.
12. Lowrie Greenway – 0.5-acre greenway located east of Meridian Rd and northwest of Lowrie Rd.	J. The Marborough Chicory Area Preserves – a collection of lots totaling nearly 4 acres, donated by many families, some purchased from the Michigan Land Bank. These properties are adjacent or near Thorofare Canal and feature wetlands and mixed-vegetation habitat, and impressive native tree specimens.
13. Manor Woods – approximately 11-acre triangular shaped parcel is wedged between Meridian Rd, the Thorofare Canal and Waterman Dr.	K. D'Avanzo Preserve – 4 lots totaling 0.62-acres of mixed habitat bordering the waterway near Halley Crescent & Hickory Circle.
14. Stout Woods – 10-acre heavily wooded site.	L. Taylor Preserve – 0.53 acre sedge marsh adjacent to D'Avanzo Preserve near Halley Crescent and Hickory Circle.
15. Island / Ferry Woods and Trail - 74-acre property between Island Blvd and Ferry Rd and Thorofare Canal and E. River Rd. Includes the New Ferry Trail connecting Island and Gage with Ferry Rd. (See page 7)	M. Cleaver Preserve – 0.25-acre lot of upland habitat bordering marshland near Blauvelt & Lafayette.
16. Bike Path Park – 2-acre parcel located at the northeast intersection of the Thorofare Canal and Meridian Rd.	N. Parkway Preserve – 0.17-acre heavily wooded parcel near Blauvelt & Lafayette.
17.	O. Gray's Drive Conservation Easement 2.9 acre wooded wetland habitat owned by GI Township, under conservation easement to the GINLC.
18. Macomb Overlook – Observation deck on E. River Rd and Macomb provides viewing access of the Detroit River.	P. John C. Jackson Resource Center – The GINLC headquarters at 8801 Macomb St serves as a demonstration site for sustainability, inside and out, with heat pump technology, LED lighting, native plant landscaping, and more. Public environmental educational programs are held there and in the natural areas of Grosse Ile. (See page 8)
19. Parkway Woods and Trail - 32-acre property between Meridian and Parke Lane, from behind the stores and Post Office on Macomb to Grosse Ile Parkway. A loop trail goes west from the parking lot, another heads south to GI Parkway, and a third is planned to go east to connect to the John C. Jackson Resource Center, home of the GINLC. (See page 9)	State of Michigan (See page 18 for more info.) Stony Island – 249-acre island (includes bottom-lands) owned by the State of Michigan and managed by the Michigan Dept. of Natural Resources Wildlife Division.
20. Sunrise Park – 0.5-acre site located on the Detroit River at the end of Grosse Ile Parkway, owned by Grosse Ile Township and stewarded by GINLC. Features a wooden stairway, kayak ramp, picnic tables, 2 retaining walls funded by the GINLC, and native plantings installed by GINLC volunteers. Dedicated to GINLC founder and conservationist Dr. Bruce Jones. (See page 12)	

Open Space, Township, and GINLC Properties

South Section (Bellevue Rd south to Celeron Island)

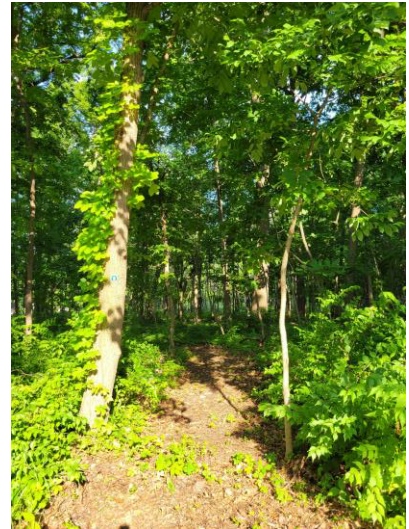


Open Space	GINLC
21. Recreation Area Trail – 14-acre parcel north of the soccer fields and west of Meridian Rd. There is a trail access from west of the soccer fields that exits south of Meridian School on Meridian Rd.	Q. Coleman Preserve – two lots comprising 0.48 acres of wooded wetland habitat near Coleman and Brook Circle.
22. Loma Circle / Frenchman's Creek – 15-acre property that slopes down to a marsh and Frenchman's Creek, the western border. Loma Circle East extends across the northwest corner of the property.	R. Finazzo Preserve – 1.4 acre upland site by Meridian and Rucker, adjacent to Open Space property. Finazzo Preserve is sometimes referred to as Meridian Trailhead as it facilitates access to the Open Space trails in the Meridian woods. There is an informational kiosk and two GINLC displays that were constructed as part of Eagle Scout service projects.
23. Intrepid Pond – a natural pond containing fish, frogs and other wildlife, owned by Grosse Ile Township.	S. Emily's Way Preserve (Darany Property) -- 0.42 acre wooded wetland habitat with seasonally wet swale. Borders Open Space property near Rucker and E. River Rd.
24. Groh Road Open Space – 7-acre property crosses both sides of Frenchman's Creek on the north side of Groh Rd.	U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Detroit River Int'l Wildlife Refuge (See page 19 for more info.) Gibraltar Bay Unit – Site includes a pond and a variety of habitats including the Gibraltar Bay. Noteworthy: Migratory bird stopover site, with photo blind. No hunting or fishing. (See page 16) Sugar Island – 29-acre island purchased by the Refuge in 2011. Public access is limited to the western beach from Memorial Day to Labor Day, and licensed seasonal hunting. Calf Island – 11-acre island included in the Refuge in 2002, with licensed seasonal hunting access only.
25. Centennial Farm Open Space – 37-acre parcel west of the Centennial Farm. A trail goes from the farm into the woods and connects to Manchester Rd. Noteworthy: 40-inch diameter red oak tree. (See page 13)	
26. Meridian Woods and Trails – 183 contiguous acres between Meridian and E. River Rd, with trail access on both roads. Meridian Woods abuts private homes on Rucker, Manchester and E. River Rd. Noteworthy: a 45-inch diameter bur oak and several red oak trees with diameters ranging from 30 to 50 inches. (See page 14)	
27. Oldani Marsh – Large marshland owned by Grosse Ile Township. Excellent wildlife habitat and wildlife viewing.	
28. Elba Mar Meadows – 12-acre parcel on E. River Rd. across from Gibraltar Bay Unit.	
29. Airport Natural Area – Property owned by GI Township Airport, stewarded by GINLC, adjacent to the DRIWR Gibraltar Bay Unit on E. River Rd. (See page 15)	Acknowledgements: This 2024 update of the Guide to the Natural Areas of Grosse Ile is based on the 2019, 2015, 2009, and 2004 updates, and its earliest edition (date unknown) by the GI Open Space Committee and chairman Cliff St. Pierre, and map by the Charles E. Raines Co. Updated text, graphics, photos, and edits by Roberta Urbani, Greg Roginski, Bill Stevenson, Paul Gloor, John Leon, Ray Geist, Chris Moore, Brian Pawlik, Jane Fijal, DNR, and USFWS, with assistance from GI Twp staff Margie Gape, and Allegra Printing staff. Funding for this edition is provided by the Open Space Program and the GINLC.
State of Michigan (See page 18 for more info.) Celeron Island – 125 acres (includes bottom-lands) on four closely connected islands owned by the State of Michigan and managed by the DNR's Wildlife Division. Noteworthy: American Lotus beds.	

Grosse Ile Trails

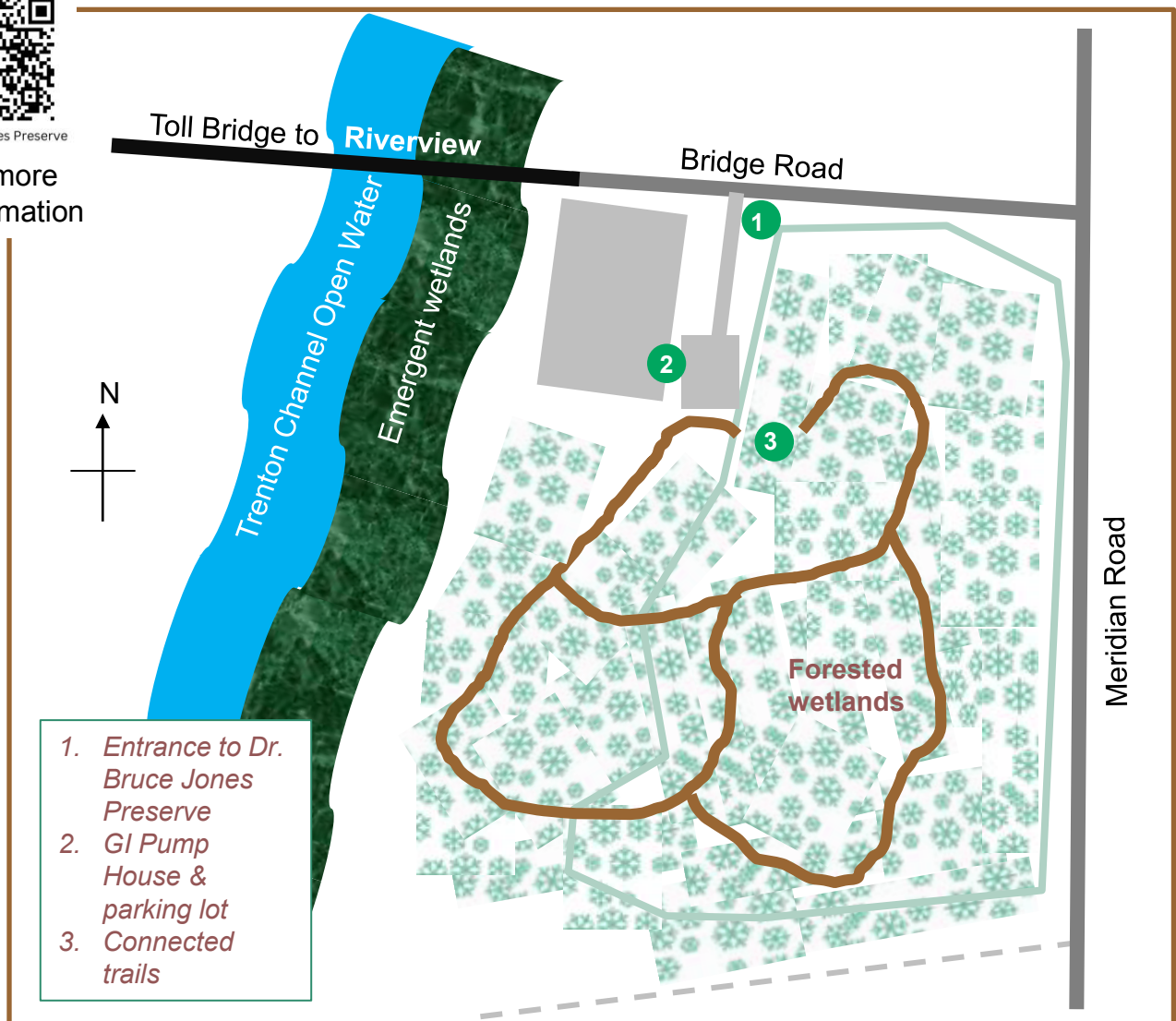
Dr. Bruce Jones Preserve

Named after GINLC founder and former president, Dr. Bruce Jones, this property was purchased in early 2022. The preserve consists of 5.9 upland acres and 9.9 acres of off-shore property on the Detroit River. It is highly valuable ecologically because of the many varied habitats that exist there, including some off-shore islands, marsh areas and vernal ponds. It provides valuable habitat for a variety of amphibians, birds, fish, mammals, and reptiles. There are also many large native tree specimens (some over 200 years old) on the property including Red Oak, White Oak, Swamp White Oak, Shagbark Hickory, Hackberry, Ironwood, and Eastern Cottonwood. Limited parking is available at the Grosse Ile Township Pump House at 9331 Bridge Road.



Dr. Bruce Jones Preserve

For more
information



Grosse Ile Trails

Wildlife Sanctuary

The Wildlife Sanctuary was donated to the Township in 1943 by Marie Smith the Grosse Ile Garden Club President. In 2010 the Wildlife Sanctuary became a part of the Greenways Open Space Program and is now stewarded by the Garden Club and the Open Space Committee.

Major upgrades and extensions to the 350-yard long trail began in 2013 with the Grosse Ile Garden Club purchasing and installing a Memorial Bench in honor of Marie Smith. In 2015 the Committee designated the trail an Education Trail. The Open Space Committee is working with educators, the Garden Club and the Grosse Ile Nature and Land Conservancy to provide our residents an environmental history of this unique area.

The Wildlife Sanctuary is accessible by the Horsemill Greenway Bike Path.



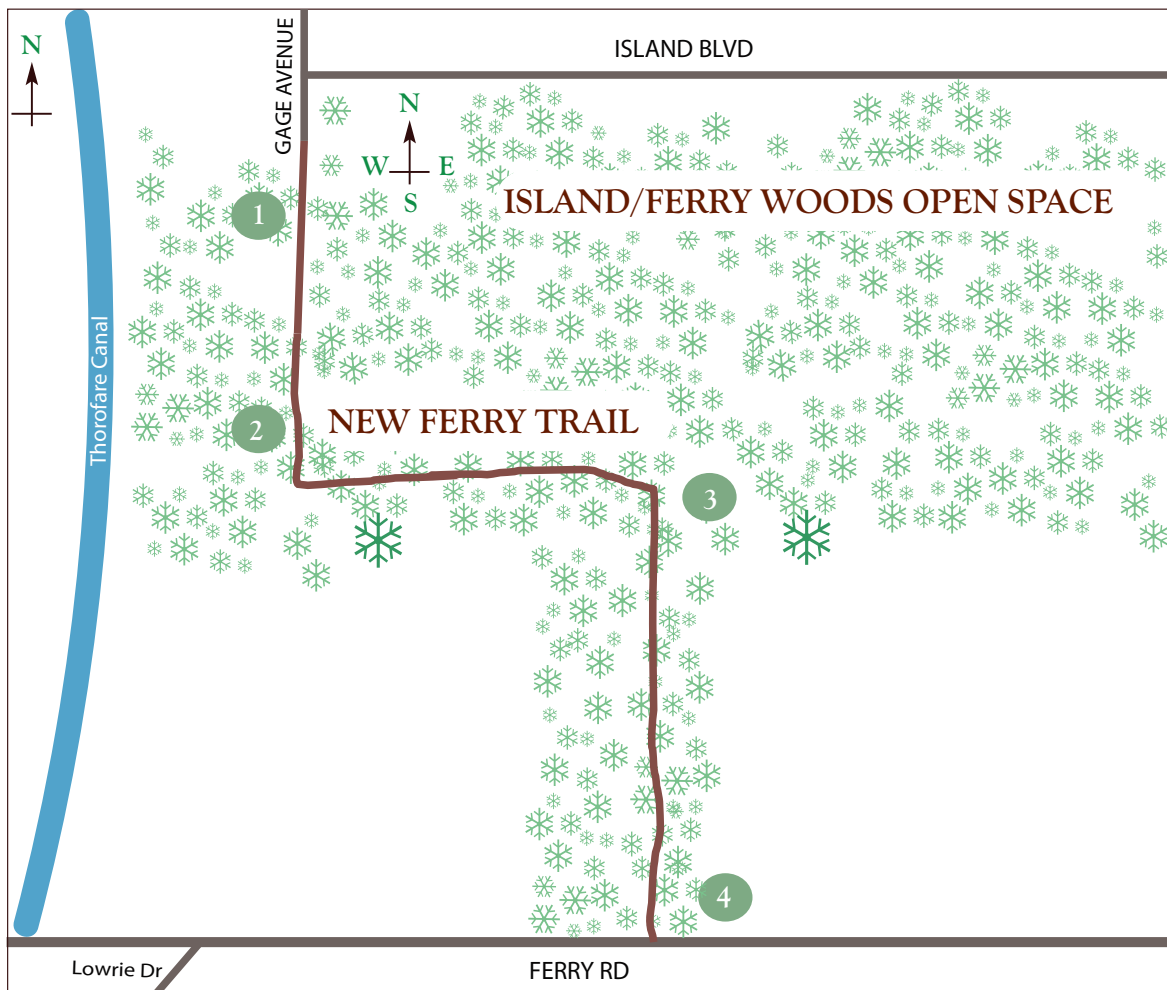
1. Sanctuary sign at Horsemill and Thorofare
2. Trail entrance on Horsemill
3. Trail entrance on Morkland
4. Walking Trail
5. Thorofare Canal overlook
6. Trail Spur to Thorofare



Grosse Ile Trails

Island/Ferry Woods and the New Ferry Trail

Island/Ferry Woods Open Space is located between Island Boulevard, and Ferry Road and between the Thorofare Canal and private properties on E. River Road. The New Ferry Trail connects Island Boulevard and Ferry Road via two north/south sections that are linked by an east/west trail that runs through the Woods. The New Ferry Trail replaces an unofficial trail that continued from the Open Space onto private property which has since been developed.



1. North trail entrance at Gage Avenue from Island Blvd
2. Trail turns

3. Trail turns
4. Entrance at Ferry Road

Grosse Ile Trails

GINLC John C. Jackson Resource Center

The GINLC John C Jackson Resource Center opened in April 2024. Situated in the center of town at 8801 Macomb Street, it is a sustainability demonstration site and a community environmental education center. The GINLC renovated an existing building to meet its needs for office spaces, meeting rooms, and training facilities, as well as storage areas for documents, supplies, and equipment repair.



The GINLC Resource Center features these **Sustainable Practices**:

Transitioning Away from Fossil Fuels: Using heat pump technology to regulate the building's temperature and supply hot water. There is LED lighting throughout the building.

Protecting Avian Life, One Window at a Time: Affixing anti-collision decals (inobtrusive dots, not hawk silhouettes) on the most vulnerable windows helps countless birds avoid fatal accidents.

Embracing Native and Naturalistic Landscaping: Opting for native plants creates habitat for pollinators and minimizes the need for excessive watering, weeding, and fertilization.

Effective Storm Water Management: Replacing 2,600 ft² of impervious asphalt with vibrant greenery and directing rainwater from the roof into rain gardens mitigates stormwater runoff.

Looking Ahead: Plans include adding a native tree nursery, composting facilities, pavilion, walking trail to Open Space, and solar panels.



More information about the Resource Center.



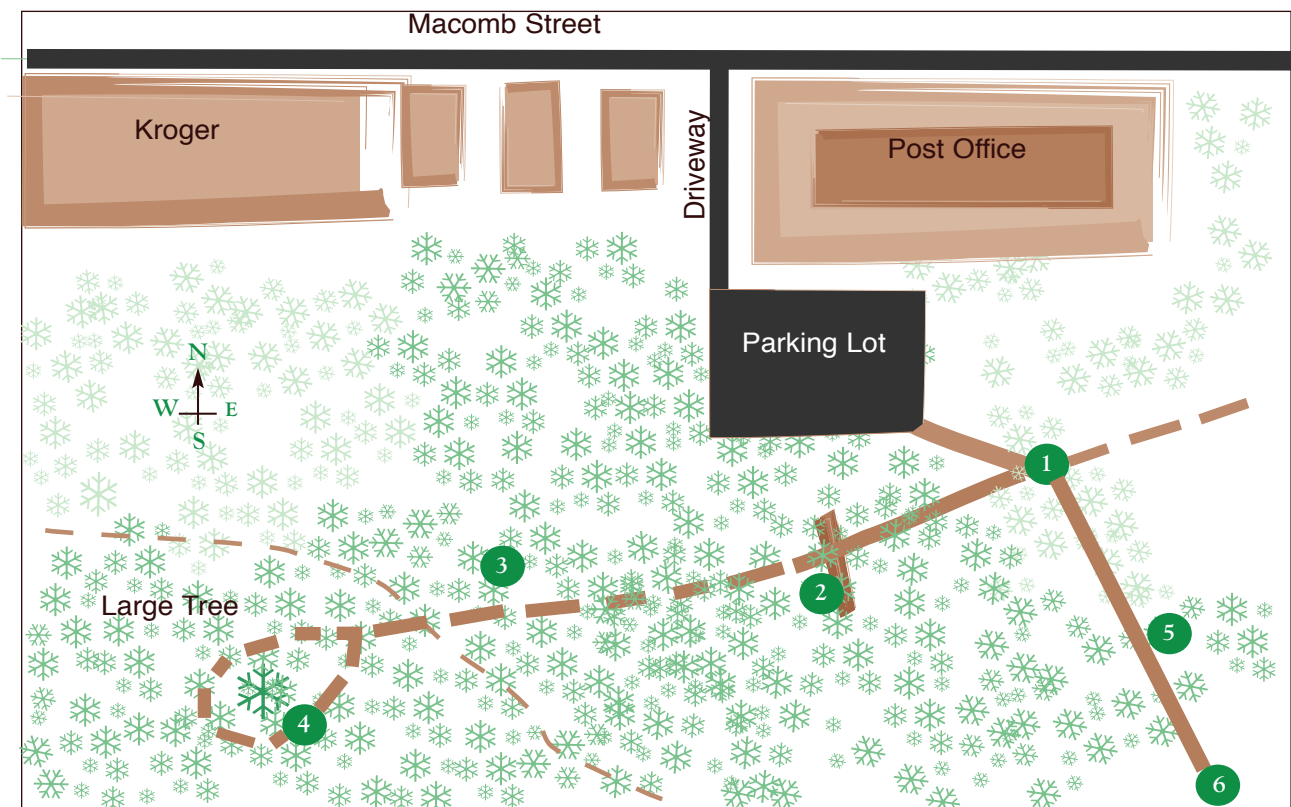
More information about the gardens.

Grosse Ile Trails

Parkway Woods

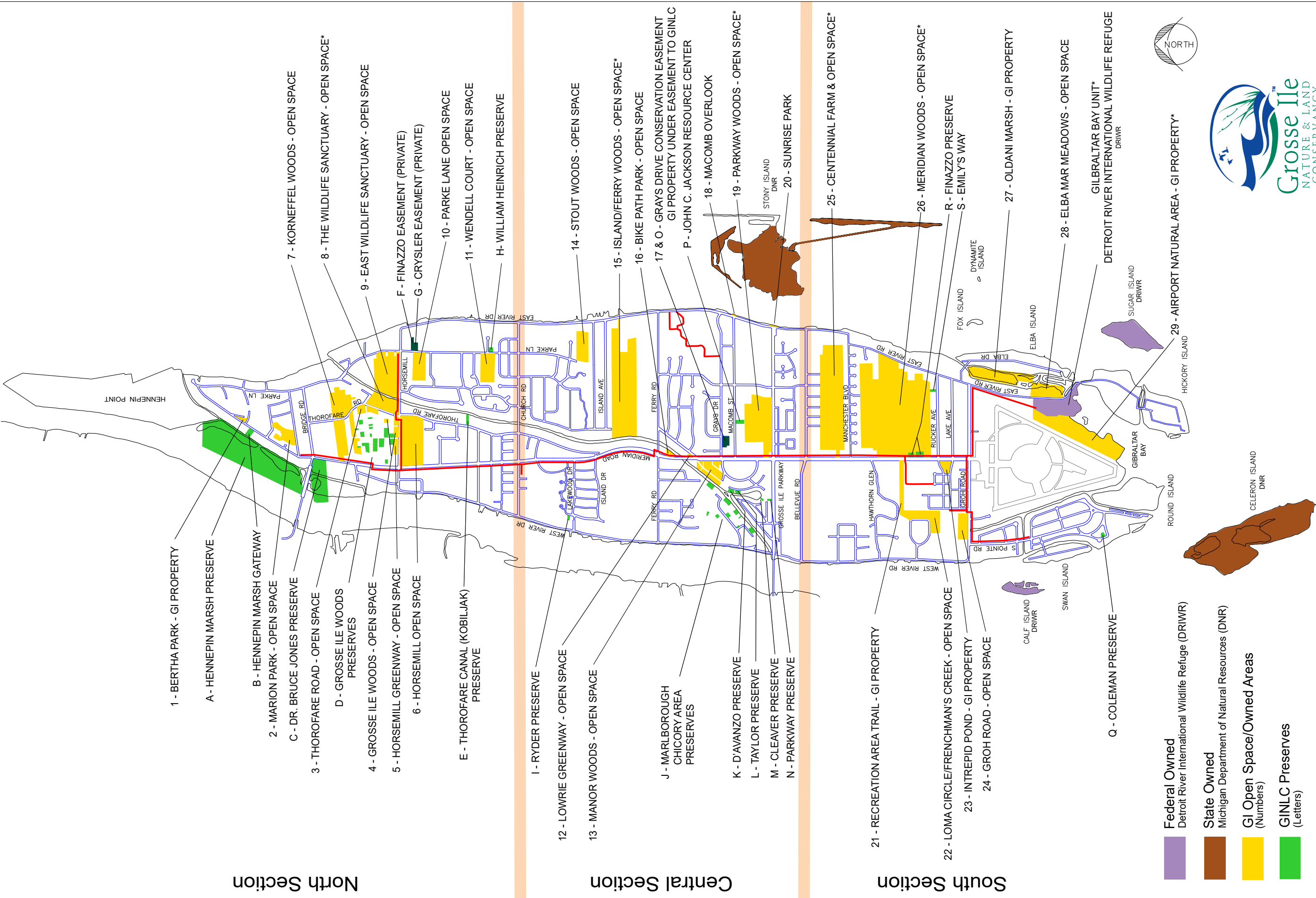
The Parkway Woods is a 32-acre Open Space area north of Grosse Ile Parkway, and directly behind the buildings on Meridian, Macomb, and Parke Lane. The Playscape at this site was removed due to deterioration.

The closed loop trail constructed by an Eagle Scout, and a spur connecting to GI Parkway, are currently overgrown. A trail going east to the GINLC Resource Center is planned. The area is heavily forested and contains deer runs across the trails.



- | | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| 1. Trails - West (overgrown) East (planned) | 4. Trail loop around large tree |
| 2. Culvert covering small creek | 5. Trail spur to GI Parkway |
| 3. Deer Run | 6. Trail entrance at GI Parkway |

GROSSE ILE TOWNSHIP NATURAL AREAS AND BIKE PATHS



Updated by the GINLC June 30, 2024

Township Properties Based on a March 26, 2013 Map by Charles E. Raines Company, updated April 3, 2024 by the Greenways/Open Space Commission

* Official Trails (See separate pages)

Grosse Ile Trails

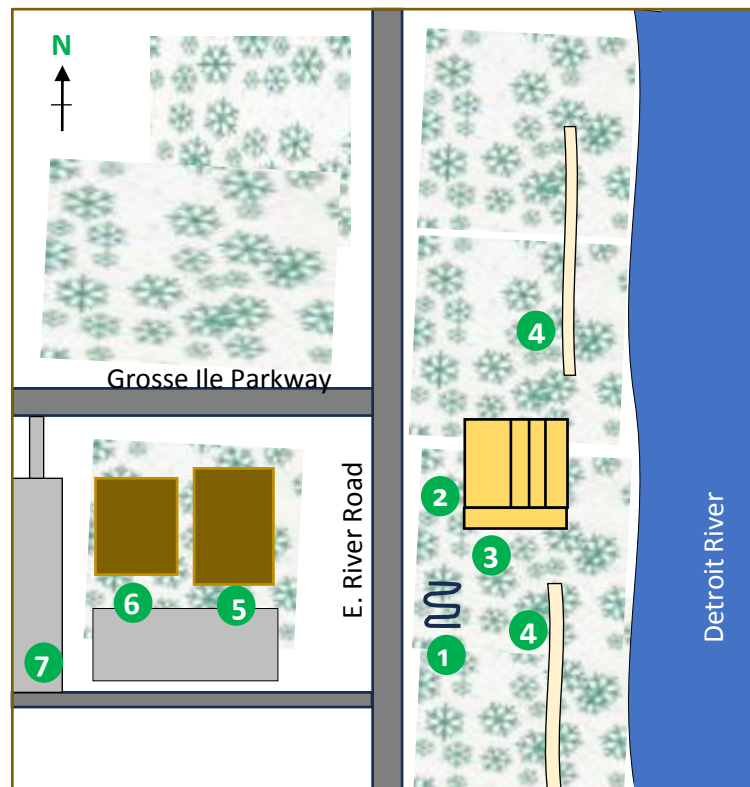
Sunrise Park

Sunrise Park is a half-acre site located on the Detroit River at the end of Grosse Ile Parkway, owned by Grosse Ile Township. It features a wooden stairway, kayak ramp, picnic tables, two retaining walls funded by the GINLC, and native plantings installed by GINLC volunteers. Improvements to the park were funded by generous GINLC donor John Jackson.



There is a bicycle rack at street level, and temporary parking to drop off kayaks and canoes. There is no parking on E. River Road. Parking is available behind the Custom House.

1. *Bike Rack*
2. *Overlook and stairs to river level*
3. *Kayak ramp*
4. *Retaining walls*
5. *GI Historical Museum*
6. *The Old Custom House*
7. *Gravel Parking Lot*

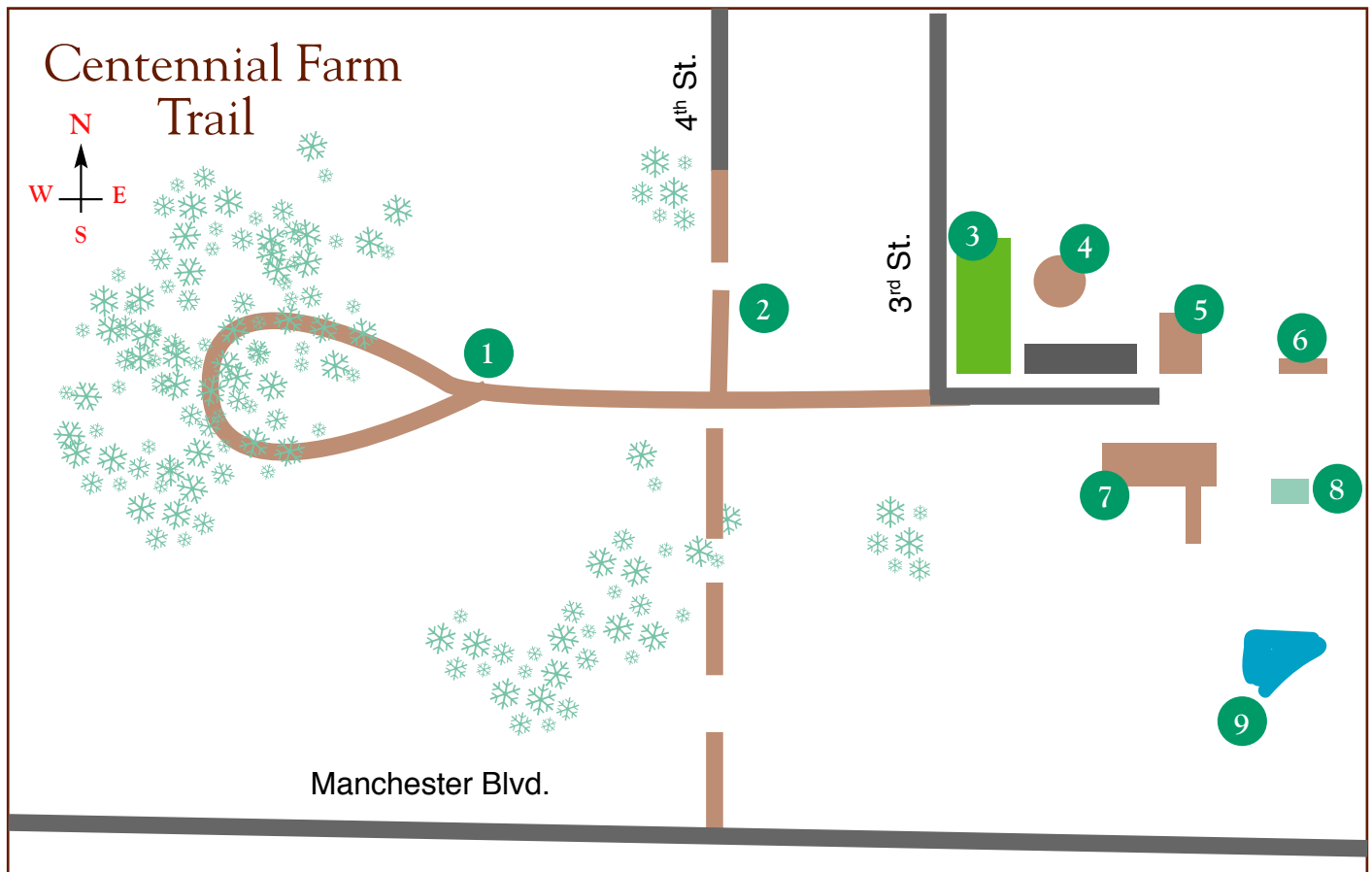


Grosse Ile Trails

Centennial Farm Trail

This trail is located on the west side of the Centennial Farm within a mixture of open areas and heavily wooded areas. Two overgrown natural spurs are located to exits on 4th Street and Manchester.

It is ideal for those who are visiting the Centennial Farm recreation facilities and wish to take a stroll through the natural area of the Centennial Farm Open Space.

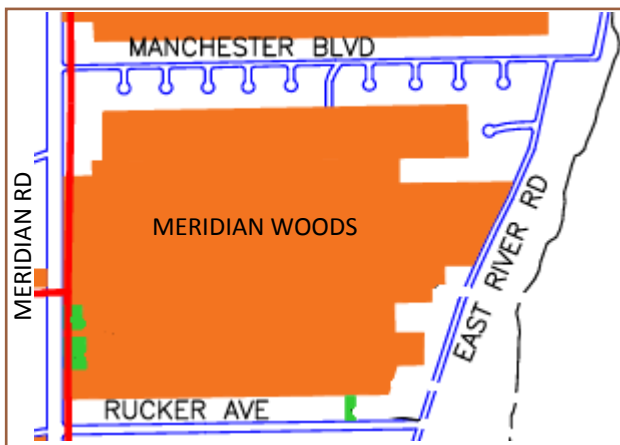


- | | |
|---|-------------------------|
| 1. Main Loop Trail | 6. GI Animal Shelter |
| 2. Overgrown spurs to 4th St and Manchester Blvd. | 7. Luton Riding Academy |
| 3. Dog Park | 8. Children's Garden |
| 4. Playground and Butterfly garden | 9. Centennial Farm Pond |
| 5. Centennial Farm Recreation Bldg. | |

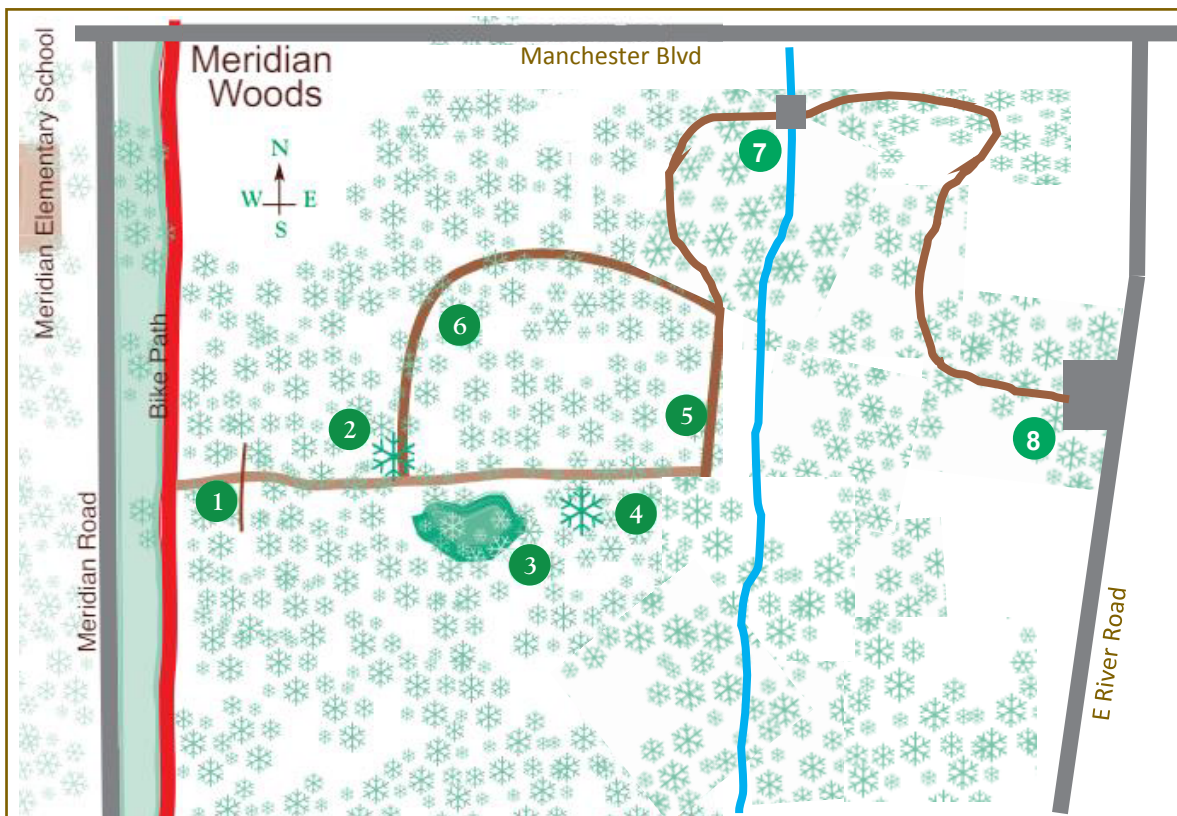
Grosse Ile Trails

Meridian Woods

Grosse Ile's largest woodland includes 183 acres from Meridian to E River Road (W to E) and from Manchester to Rucker (N to S, excluding homes and three GINLC preserves). Trail entrances are on Meridian and E River Road.



1. *Trail entrance*
2. *Large maple tree with some poison ivy*
3. *Low spot - you may see some frogs*
4. *Large Tree*
5. *Path runs at creek bed*
6. *Path makes a loop back to original trail*
7. *Bridge*
8. *Trail head from E River Rd*



Grosse Ile Trails

Airport Natural Area

The Airport Natural Area (ANA) is accessed through the Gibraltar Bay Unit of the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge by car, bike, or on foot. The property is owned by GI Township and stewarded by GINLC volunteers, who removed tons of debris from this former Dept. of Defense Air Naval Base. The GINLC holds many environmental educational programs at this site. Beavers and muskrats have lodges in the lagoon.

1. Entrance
2. Bike Path to Groh Rd
3. ANA entry gate and trail
4. Sedge Marsh and Overlook
5. Loop trail and Lagoon Overlook
6. Gate, open only for GINLC events
7. Lagoon and Beaver lodge



Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge

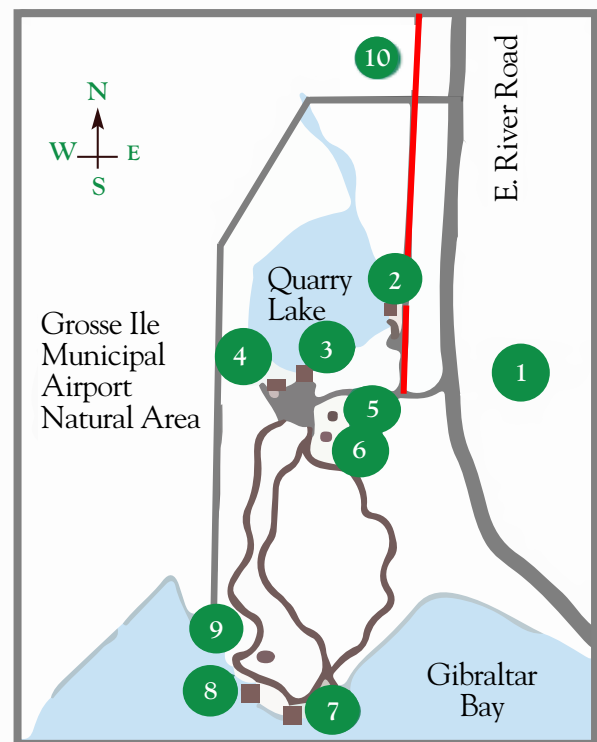
Gibraltar Bay Unit and Trails

The Gibraltar Bay Unit of the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge is accessed from E River Road and is adjacent to the Grosse Ile Township Airport. Formerly a Nike missile site, the Dept. of Defense turned it over to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and it is now owned by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. The GINLC and Refuge staff offer nature programs on a semi-regular basis.

This site has 1.4 miles of trails and more amenities than other natural areas on Grosse Ile. Aquatic emergent species include American Lotus and wild celery. This bay is important for bass, pike, and long-nose gar. Beaver activity is evident on the trail north of the Spotting Scope.



1. Entrance to GBU
2. Photo Blind
3. Quarry Lake Observation Deck
4. Shed, Portable, Toilet, Entrance to Airport Natural Area
5. Information Kiosk
6. Doggies Poop Bag Dispenser
7. Gibraltar Bay Observation Deck
8. Spotting Scope
9. Rock of Gibraltar Bay (glacial rock)
10. Bike Path from Groh Rd to GBU



Grosse Ile Open Space Program and Grosse Ile Nature & Land Conservancy

The fact that Grosse Ile abounds with nature is no accident; it is the result of foresight, planning, commitment, and effort on the part of Grosse Ile residents, elected officials, local, state and federal agency professionals, and community volunteers. There are two organizations on Grosse Ile that are dedicated to preserving the natural character of our island community – the Grosse Ile Open Space / Greenways Committee which reports to the elected Township board and implements the Open Space Program via millages assessed to property owners, and the Grosse Ile Nature & Land Conservancy, a private, non-profit organization. The members of these two organizations are volunteers and are not compensated for their services.

Open Space Program

In the early 1990s many residents and Township Board members realized that continued uncontrolled development of Grosse Ile would jeopardize the natural character of the community and over-extend the capacity of its infrastructure. To correct this potential problem, in 1994 the Township Board established an Open Space Program to purchase vacant lots and deed restrict them to ensure they remained in their natural state. They also established a committee to oversee the lands, maintain them, and provide analyses and information to the Township Board as required. Two millages were approved by the voters, one to purchase land to be protected, and one to maintain the lands. To date, 600 acres have been protected through purchase or donation. At the present time, both millages have been allowed to expire, with \$20,000 remaining in the acquisition account and \$159,000 remaining in the maintenance account. Ongoing trail maintenance is essential and there are additional acres of privately owned vacant land that are suitable for protection.

The Open Space Committee consists of 7 volunteers appointed by the Township Board for a period of 3 years, with representation from the Board, Recreation Committee, GINLC, and high school students. Current projects include improving the condition of the existing trails, public service projects such as Dump the Junk / Find A Treasure, and providing recommendations to the Township Board regarding property procurement. The Committee meets on the first Tuesday of the month (excluding July, Aug, and Dec). The meetings are publicized via the township meeting portal. <https://www.grosseile.com/>. Public comment is welcome.

Grosse Ile Nature & Land Conservancy

The Conservancy is a private non-profit 501(c)(3) organization. Established in 1993, its mission is “to promote for public benefit the preservation, stewardship and understanding of the natural resources in the Township of Grosse Ile and surrounding area.” The GINLC currently has 159 acres in preserves and five easements comprising 16 acres, for a total of 175 protected acres. Funding for procuring GINLC lands is solely from donations from private individuals, foundations, and grants. The Conservancy does not use any Township funds. In addition, the GINLC stewards many acres owned by the Township

The GINLC is led by a board of directors elected by members at its annual meeting. Monthly board meetings are held at the John C. Jackson Resource Center on Macomb St. The Conservancy offers a variety of environmental educational programs throughout the year on Grosse Ile. Check out the GINLC website, www.ginlc.org.



State of Michigan-owned Islands on Grosse Ile

The State of Michigan owns two islands within Grosse Ile Township – Celeron Island and Stony Island. They are managed by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

Celeron is the southern-most island within Grosse Ile Township. It contains 125 acres (including bottom-lands). Technically, Celeron Island is composed of four closely connected islands. The Island is named after Sieur de Celeron, once Commandant of Detroit. Celeron and Stony Islands are part of the “Conservation Crescent” embracing the southern end of Grosse Ile and represent valuable wildlife habitat and great biological diversity.

Stony Island is an approximately 249-acre island (including bottom-lands) about a quarter mile east of the center of Grosse Ile. Originally, Stony Island was used by the Native American Potawatomi tribe for hunting and fishing. It was deeded to the Macomb family of Grosse Ile in 1781 and became part of a railroad/ferry river crossing between Canada and the U.S. during the late 1800s. During the 1930s, the island was used as a center of operations to create the Livingstone Channel, and then later as a base for dredging the shipping channel. The island’s odd shape and stony composition came from millions of cubic yards of sediment dredged from out of the middle of the river to provide a deep shipping channel for large freighters. A small residential community existed on the island during this time. Those homes no longer exist, however, abandoned machine shops and several sunken non-motorized barges remain. The island was purchased by the State of Michigan in 1997 with Michigan Natural Resource Trust Fund dollars.

Stony and Celeron Islands are seeing a resurgence of fish and wildlife, thanks to Great Lakes Restoration Initiative funding from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the EPA. From 2013 through 2018, the Friends of the Detroit River, in partnership with the DNR and the Detroit River Public Advisory Council, oversaw the planning and implementation of projects to re-establish spawning and nursery habitat for commercial, sport, and forage fish species, revitalize coastal wetlands, and protect terrestrial resources within the watershed. Projects included the construction of several thousand linear feet of habitat shoals and habitat structures for mudpuppies, turtles, and fish, including rock piles, basking logs and woody debris bundles.

Stony Island



Friends of the Detroit River

Celeron Island



Friends of the Detroit River

The Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge on Grosse Ile

The Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge (DRIWR) was established by Congress in 2001. A part of the US Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS), the Refuge is a combination of lands owned by the federal government and those owned by, and cooperatively managed with, other partners. Together, the Refuge manages just over 6,200 acres and consists of unique habitats, including islands, coastal wetlands, marshes, shoals, and waterfront lands within an authorized boundary extending along 48 miles of Detroit River shoreline from Detroit to Ohio. A Visitor Center, fishing pier, and trails are located at the Refuge Gateway in Trenton. Grosse Ile is located within the authorized boundary and includes three Refuge units, the Gibraltar Bay Unit, Sugar Island, and Calf Island.

Gibraltar Bay Unit (GBU) (See page 16)

The GBU has an interesting history. Stone quarried from the site was used to build many homes on E. River Road. Between 1955 and 1963, the site was home to 30 anti-aircraft Nike Ajax missiles, 12 launchers, and two radar towers. The U.S. Department of Defense turned the 40.5 acre site over to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, which partnered with the GINLC to restore the habitat and provide public access. In 2001 the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service took possession of the site from the EPA. The GBU has several trails and is open dawn-to-dusk year-round.

Sugar Island

From the 1880s to the 1940s, Sugar Island was a popular amusement park, replete with a roller coaster and dancehall. It fell into disrepair and became an overgrown, neglected, privately-owned party venue until it was purchased in April 2012 by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service with federal Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) funding for inclusion in the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge. The western beach is open to the public from Memorial Day to Labor Day for day use by boating access. There are no restrooms. Alcohol, camping, and campfires are prohibited. The rest of the island is closed except to licensed hunters in season. Research and environmental education are allowed on the island under special-use permits. For more information about how to obtain a special use permit, call 734-365-0219 or email detroitriver@fws.gov. Sugar Island is threatened with significant erosion and a GLRI-funded erosion plan is underway.

Calf Island

A naturally formed island in the lower Trenton Channel, the 11-acre Calf Island provides important stopover habitat for migratory songbirds. Each end of the island is flanked by high-quality wild celery beds important for fish and waterfowl. With the exception of hunting in season, public-use activity on the island is prohibited at this time. Calf Island was included in the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge in 2002.

Sugar Island



Calf Island



Contact Information and Rules of Conduct for Grosse Ile Natural Areas

GI OPEN SPACE & TOWNSHIP LANDS

EMERGENCY: 911
GI Police 734-676-7100
to report violations of
use.

Grosse Ile Natural Areas are accessible to the public during daylight hours for passive recreational use (walking, bird-watching, nature photography, etc). Do not disturb or remove any plants or animals, except for invasive species during volunteer work sessions.

Encroachment by neighbors for storage or “backyard extension” is illegal. Also illegal – dumping yard waste, construction debris, unwanted furniture, etc. The Open Space Committee schedules two Dump The Junk/Find A Treasure events every year to assist residents. Encroachment and dumping are punishable by civil fines.

Visitors in Natural Areas should take all garbage with them, including food wrappers, beverage containers, cigarette butts, vape supplies, dog poop, etc. There should be no balloon releases – in a Natural Area, at home, or anywhere. Balloons kill wildlife!

Visitors must respect the privacy of adjacent residents.

GROSSE ILE NATURE & LAND CONSERVANCY

EMERGENCY: 911
GI Police 734-676-7100
GINLC email at
info@ginlc.org

DETROIT RIVER INTER- NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE LANDS ON GI

EMERGENCY: 911
GI Police 734-67-7100
REFUGE CONTACT:
734-365-0219 and
detroitriver@fws.gov
REPORT ALL POACHING
(RAP) LINE: 1-800-292-
7800

Gibraltar Bay Unit is accessible during daylight hours. Sugar Island West Beach is accessible during daylight hours from Memorial Day to Labor Day. Sugar and Calf Islands are accessible during hunting seasons for licensed hunters.

MICHIGAN DEPT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

EMERGENCY: 911
GI Police 734-676-7100
DNR RAP Line 1-800-
292-7800.
For DNR island
questions contact the
Poointe Mouillee State
Game Area HQ at
734-379-9692.

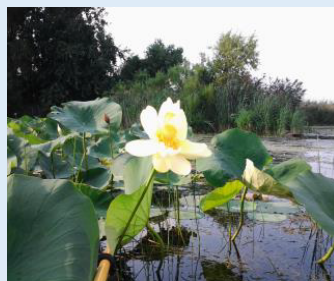
Stony and Celeron Islands are part of the Pointe Mouillee State Game Area and are managed by the Wildlife Division out of the Pointe Mouillee Headquarters. All PMGA rules apply, enforced by DNR Law Division Conservation Officers. They are open to hunting and trapping. There is no camping, no alcohol, and no use or occupancy from 11pm to 4am. See the game area map for further rules and regulations. Maps are available online at www.mchigan.gov/dnr.

Visiting Grosse Ile’s Natural Areas – Four Seasons of Wonder

During a visit to one of Grosse Ile’s natural areas, or even by stepping outside, a Grosse Ile resident or visitor is sure to encounter a natural specimen of interest and beauty, from animals and plants, to rocks deposited by Ice Age glaciers.



*The Old Bridge in
Meridian Woods*



*American Lotus in
Gibraltar Bay*



*Autumn sun on prairie
grasses at the GBU*



*ANA - Coyote walks by
a beaver-gnawed tree*

Photos: John Leon