

LLOYD & MABEL JOHNSON

Nature Preserve

Just five miles from downtown Ann Arbor, Lloyd and Mabel Johnson Preserve is an ideal spot for a quick family outing, or maybe even a stroll to unwind on your way home from work. The preserve is next to Pittsfield Charter Township's Lillie Park, with an interconnected trail system for easy access to both areas. These 51 acres feature hardwood forest, buttonbush swamp, and farm fields that are being converted to prairie habitat.

Preserve History

Prior to European settlement, the land was covered by oak-hickory forest, some of which can be seen in the eastern woodland. The western portion of the preserve was consistently cultivated as farmland from 1940 to 2016.

The Lloyd and Mabel Johnson Foundation donated this property to Legacy in 2007. On your walk, notice the large oak and hickory trees marked with blue circles. These were designated as "keepers" for the housing development that was the land's planned fate before it was preserved by Legacy.

Marguerite Smith and her son Adam Smith, both Legacy volunteers, hike the Harie Smith Memorial Boardwalk.



Staff Photo

Who We Are

Legacy Land Conservancy is a nonprofit conservation organization that works with private landowners and local organizations to preserve forests, prairies, wetlands, and farmland in Washtenaw and Jackson counties. Founded in 1971 as the state's first local land trust, Legacy leverages the support of donors and volunteers to protect the beautiful places and unique character of southern Michigan.

Get Involved

- Lend us your energy and expertise! Volunteer opportunities abound: photo-monitoring, outdoor work, office support, and more.
- Subscribe to our e-newsletter.
- Make a donation.
- Attend a Legacy event.

Volunteers are essential to Legacy's work. These Eastern Michigan University students cleared invasive plants at Johnson Preserve



Allene Smith



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Contact Us



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Hike Highlights

□ – Project GROW Community Garden

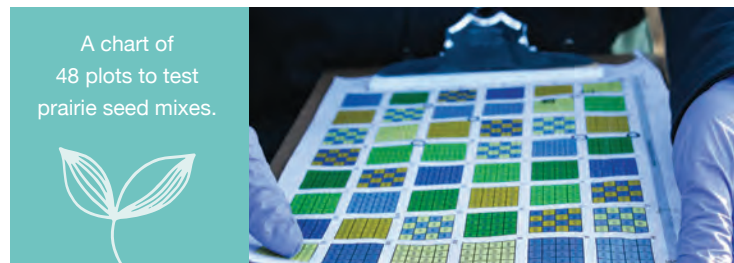
Johnson Preserve is a Project Grow Community Garden site, serving as a place for Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti community members to grow their own fresh, organic food.

❖ – Native Prairie Planting

In 2016 Legacy received funding through the Conservation Reserve Program to turn the Preserve’s agricultural fields into prairies. Watch for changes as we plant and tend these fields in a new way.

△ – Prairie Research

Legacy is partnering with Eastern Michigan University professor Emily Grman to derive even more benefit from our prairie restoration project. Grman and her classes are systematically studying 48 plots to determine the optimum seed mixture for restoring prairie ecosystems in southern Michigan.



A chart of 48 plots to test prairie seed mixes.



● – Wetland Life

In the northeast corner of the preserve (encircled by the main trail loop) you’ll find a healthy population of buttonbush (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*). Look for the distinctive round, red “buttons” to identify this shrub. Buttonbush is slow-growing, so the size of these plants is a testament to the relatively undisturbed character of this part of the preserve.

During warmer months, look for crayfish burrows in the wetland areas of the preserve. Crayfish build grayish mounds of mud with a hole at the top—like mini volcanoes—in which they live and breed. You may also see examples of the preserve’s thriving amphibian population. Lift (and carefully replace) logs to look for a blue spotted salamander (*Ambystoma laterale*), or scan tree bark for a gray tree frog (*Hyla versicolor*) as you loop around the wetland.

Getting Here

Lloyd and Mabel Johnson Preserve is on the east side of Platt Road, south of Ellsworth Road. Parking is near a cell tower, just north of 4595 Platt Road (south of Lillie Park South).

Visit legacylandconservancy.org for visitor guidelines and accessibility information.



Staff Photo

Buttonbush

