

# The Lake Lansing Park North Black Trail : Connecting Our Worlds



## The 120 Acre Acquisition

Through the hard work of community volunteers and support from generous donors, the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund, Meridian Township Land Preservation Advisory Board, and Ingham County Parks, Lake Lansing Park North added 120 acres of valuable natural resource to the community. It connects adjacent natural areas allowing continuity for wildlife and preserves the area's natural splendor for generations to come.

The new Black Trail connects the original 440 acres of Lake Lansing Park North with the newly acquired 120 acres, providing an additional mile of trail for the enjoyment of hikers, runners, nature enthusiasts, and cross-country skiers.



Ribbon Cutting Ceremony  
Photo Courtesy of Deb Bavary

## Southern Dry Forest

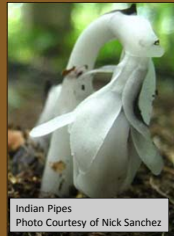
The Black Trail winds through a peninsula of southern dry forest. Characterized by relatively open conditions and sandy to loamy sand soils, this part of the park is thought by local experts to be the most representative of pre-European settlement conditions compared to other upland vegetation communities within the park. The large oaks and hickories provide mast (nuts) for a variety of wildlife as well as a home for cavity nesters.



Dry Southern Forest  
Photo Courtesy of Nick Sanchez



Squawroot  
Photo Courtesy of Nick Sanchez



Indian Pipes  
Photo Courtesy of Nick Sanchez

## Southern Hardwood Swamp

This wetland between the trail and Lake Lansing is dominated by lowland hardwoods such as red maple, silver maple, American elm, eastern cottonwood, and green ash. The water level fluctuates seasonally, with water usually present in the winter and spring. The lowland hardwoods are vulnerable to wind throw due to relatively shallow roots. This pillows, cradles, caused by the upturned roots provide a range of moisture conditions that support a great variety of plant species. Decomposing fallen trees also create nurse logs, fostering the growth of mosses, ferns, and young trees, while also providing valuable amphibian habitat.



Southern Hardwood Swamp  
Photo Courtesy of Nick Sanchez



Southern Hardwood Swamp  
Photo Courtesy of Nick Sanchez



Google Maps



Photo Courtesy of Nick Sanchez

## Consumers Energy Utility Right-of-Way

The maintenance of a tree-free buffer around utility lines protects the lines from damage. An unintended result of the 150' wide swath of land is the creation of new plant and wildlife habitat. The term "edge effect" was originally described by "the father of wildlife management" Aldo Leopold, when two types of habitat occur in close proximity. This can be advantageous for some species due to their requirements for more than one vegetation type. For example a white-tailed deer or turkey can forage in grasslands while having quick access to cover from predators. The availability of grassland plants, oak woodlands, and nearby conifer plantations provide a diversity of forage and structural conditions. The maintenance of the right-of-way mimics one effect of wildfire in a prairie plant community, the 5-10 year mowing scheme prevents the establishment of woody plant species and keeps light conditions open. See if you can discover some of the prairie and wet meadow flowers that thrive in the right-of-way today



Open Grown Black Oak  
Photo Courtesy of Leslie Kuhn



Native Phragmites  
Photo Courtesy of Leslie Kuhn



Photo Courtesy of www.collectioncanada.gc.ca



Photo Courtesy of www.collectioncanada.gc.ca

## The Grand Trunk Railway

The rail easement adjacent to Lake Lansing Park North was sold for \$418.75 to the Chicago and Northeastern Railroad Co. in 1878. The Grand Trunk Railway was in place, becoming part of the Canadian National Railway CO. Historically owned by the Canadian government, the railway offered freight as well as passenger service and promoted rail travel throughout Canada. They even owned hotels! Today, as a privately owned freight railway, CN operates the largest rail network in Canada and the only transcontinental network in North America. With approximately 20,600 miles of track, CN serves close to 75% of the U.S. and all major Canadian markets and employs 22,000 people. CN supports a considerable portion of Canada's economy, shipping automobiles, industrial chemicals, coal, fuels, and lumber, as well as other materials and natural resources. Did you know that modern trains can move a ton of freight almost 450 miles on a gallon of fuel?



Photo Courtesy of www.cn.ca



Photo Courtesy of www.dnr.wi.gov

## The Railroad Comes to Haslett

In the late 1800's, Lake Lansing became a resort destination for travelers, spiritualist, and well to do families such as R.E. Olds. In 1911, Michigan United Railway opened an electric rail line between Lansing and Owosso, parallel to the Grand Trunk line. Together these trains followed provided access to markets for local farmers selling livestock and produce. Decades of grazing, hardwood timber harvesting, Christmas tree and orchard operations, and even a car racetrack shaped the landscape of the park. Hone your detective skills and look for signs of these past activities on your outing today!



Photo Courtesy of www.collectioncanada.gc.ca

## Sources of Information:

Michigan Natural Features Inventory: <http://mnfi.anr.msu.edu>  
Library and Archives Canada: [www.collectionscanada.gc.ca](http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca)  
LLPOA History of Lake Lansing: [www.lakelansing.org/history.php](http://www.lakelansing.org/history.php)