

The plants:

There are 455 plant species in the Preserve. Some unfortunately are invasive species that don't provide food for the native insects who in turn provide food for the birds and animals that have lived here for hundreds of years. For that reason the Management Council of the Preserve hires the Wildtype ecological service to remove the invasives and to replant or give space to the native species that will provide the nourishment for a balanced ecosystem like one that used to exist here. Preserves require management to control invasives that threaten the balanced ecosystem.

The animals:

It is easy to spot the white-tailed deer which are abundant here, unfortunately, they browse on the native plants. These plants are needed by the more rare inhabitants, like the turtles, minks and owls which need peace and space to survive.

The Preserve is also a favorite destination for birders, since many migrating birds pass through in the spring and fall. We also have some resident bluebirds in the prairie and some warblers and other summer residents.

This brochure is provided by the Asylum Lake Preservation Association (ALPA).

Please recycle when finished or pass it on to a friend.



What is ALPA?

ALPA is the community volunteer group that supports the Preserve by informing its members, advocating, and scheduling work days and projects in the Preserve.

The Preserve is overseen by a management council composed of representatives from WMU and from neighborhood associations and environmental groups.

To join ALPA send your name, mailing address and email with a check to ALPA c/o Judy Huxmann, 3432 Barnard Ave Kalamazoo (suggest donation \$10).

To Keep up with the efforts that are being made to maintain and protect the Preserve, check out:

our Facebook page at [asylum lake preserve](#) and these websites:

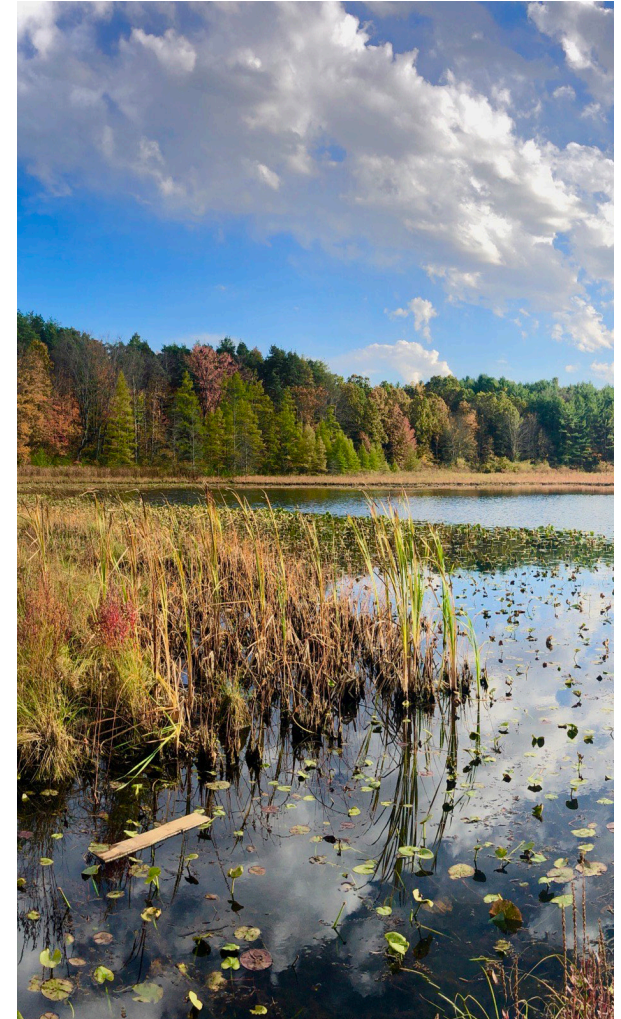
www.asylumlakepreservationassociation.org,
<https://wmich.edu/asylumlake\our>

Who to contact

John Kreuzer, ALPA President,
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Duane R Hampton, Management Council
Chairman
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The Asylum Lake Preserve



What is a Preserve?

Look inside to find out more about this Kalamazoo treasure.

A preserve is not a park

Unlike a park, it is claimed by the plants and animals that live here in this varied landscape: forest, lake, savanna and prairie. We are visitors here in the home of animals and plants, not often found in this urban area,. Tread lightly and leave no trace.



History

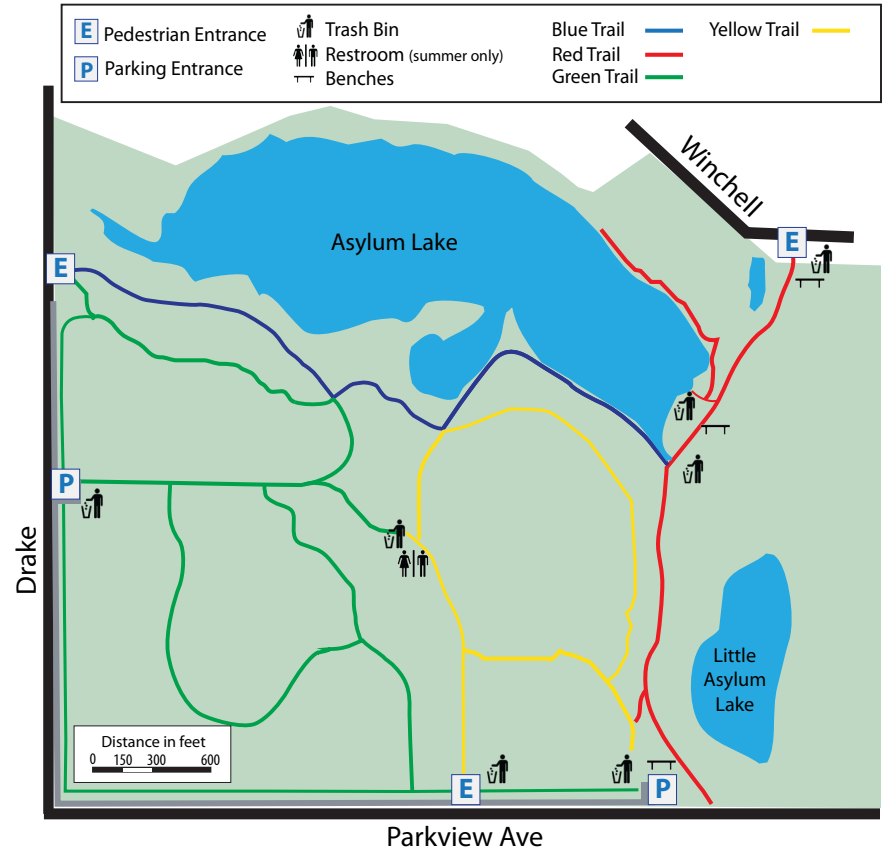
Throughout its nearly two hundred year history, this land has been a quiet oak savanna, has been cleared, settled, and farmed, been the site of the region's psychiatric hospital, and is now, finally, a nature refuge for the residents and neighbors of Kalamazoo.



All trails are easy - easy/moderate.

The **RED** trail offers a view of Little Asylum Lake and the stream that connects it to the larger lake at the spillway where you may encounter a deer stopping for a drink or a muskrat swimming by. There you may spot snakes among the rocks, and a beaver deceiver built to discourage the creatures from dam building, but beaver chiseling on the trees is evident.

The **BLUE** trail provides a continuous view of the lake, passing the original beaver lodge, the square concrete foundation from a lake shore building of the hospital and the current beaver lodge in the cove. Tall grasses and shore vegetation provide a stabilizing effect where land meets water and where swans, geese, ducks and turtles make their homes. In the spring you may see the cove roiling with breeding catfish. The deadfall in the woods replenishes soil, nourishes vegetation and provides a home for critters and critically important fungi and microorganisms.



The **GREEN** trail outlines and winds through the prairie. Prescribed burns of the prairie, oak savannah and low growth shrub help to keep invasive vegetation in check and natives a strong and flourishing foothold. Bluebird boxes are scattered through the prairie and in the spring, peering into the woodlands from the trail you will see blankets of myrtle, lily-of-the-valley, clumps of daffodils and narcissus planted years ago for landscaping that have gone wild. Also look for remnants of the namesake state hospital.

The **YELLOW** trail loops and winds through both meadow and woodland with towering white and red oaks, burr oaks, maples and an array of birdsong, chattering squirrels and chipmunks, illusive fox, opossum, skunk, deer and?. The man-made resident cottages and other buildings of the Asylum were located within the northern half of the preserve that has now been recovered by nature. In the winter, these remnants are visible from the yellow, blue and green trails and disappear in the spring.