

Meeting of the Great Lakes Panel on Aquatic Nuisance Species

Traverse City, MI

Field Trip Itinerary

Wednesday, May 4, 2016

Site Descriptions

Platte River Point

Coming soon!

Zetterberg Preserve

Michigan is home to the largest freshwater dune system in the world, encompassing 275,000 acres of perched, parabolic, and linear dunes throughout the Eastern Lake Michigan shoreline. The Nature Conservancy's Zetterberg Preserve at Point Betsie typifies the parabolic dune type, a mosaic of shifting sand dunes, interdunal wetlands, boreal forest, and sandy and gravel beaches. This preserve also provides critical habitat for rare species, including federally-threatened Pitcher's thistle, and has been identified as a potential nesting site for the Great Lakes-endangered piping plover. However, this preserve also demonstrates how vulnerable our Eastern Lake Michigan dunes are to the threat of invasive species, specifically baby's-breath (*Gypsophila paniculata*), which has dominated the dune landscape in this region for decades. Fortunately, in 2007 The Nature Conservancy and our Michigan Dune Alliance partners began a strategic partnership to combat baby's-breath and other coastal invasives both in the Northwest Lower Michigan region and across the entire Eastern Lake Michigan landscape. Built through a cooperative coalition of conservation non-profits, state and federal agencies, and many other coastal stakeholders, the Michigan Dune Alliance is actively engaged in the sustainable conservation of dunes and associated ecosystems. The Zetterberg Preserve is the birthplace of this partnership's "site to system" approach, which over the past nine years has resulted in the survey of over 50,000 acres of coastal lands across 400 miles of shoreline, the removal of 85% of all known dunal baby's-breath populations, the identification of over 10,000 additional invasive plant populations, and a 75% reduction in their total distribution and density. Future efforts will include restoration activities on Northern Lake Michigan Islands, an evaluation of long-term financing mechanisms, and continued education and outreach regarding the beauty and value of these coastal systems.

Schedule

- 1:00 p.m. Board bus in front of Park Place Hotel
- 1:10 p.m. Depart Park Place Hotel for **Platte River Point**
- 1:55 p.m. Arrive at **Platte River Point**: Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore Presentation
- 3:15 p.m. Depart **Platte River Point** for **Zetterberg Preserve**
- 3:30 p.m. Arrive at **Zetterberg Preserve**: The Nature Conservancy Presentation
- 4:45 p.m. Depart Zetterberg Preserve
- 5:30 p.m. Arrive at Park Place Hotel