

MICHIGAN Policy Priorities 2023

In 2023, TNC's priorities in Michigan include policy, investment and resource management decisions at the state and federal levels that ensure all residents can benefit from the conservation of Michigan's lands, waters and biodiversity.

At **The Nature Conservancy (TNC)**, we pride ourselves on our science-based, pragmatic approach to conservation—and science shows us that thriving communities and a healthy environment go hand-in-hand.

From the timber, farmlands and fisheries that help power Michigan's economy; to the forests that keep our air and water clean; to the wetlands that protect our coasts from floods and erosion—nature offers critical solutions to help our Great Lakes State find **resilience in a time of change**.

That's why TNC works with Michigan's leaders to advance **nature-based solutions** that benefit Michigan communities, lands, waters and wildlife. We also demonstrate the **impact and scalability** of investment in nature-based solutions through active conservation projects—for example, supporting "green" stormwater management practices in Detroit and helping to transform agricultural supply chains in the Saginaw Bay watershed.

From our advocacy to our projects in the field, TNC's work is defined by a **collaborative approach** that has been shaped by decades of learning. Our local expertise and global resources enable us to play a special role working side-by-side with partners, communities and decision-makers across Michigan—and we hope to continue that collaborative tradition with you.

In short, nature offers us a powerful set of tools—tools we can all get behind to support Michigan communities for many years to come. **When we work together with nature, everyone wins.**

Thank you,



Helen Taylor
State Director, Michigan



PRESERVE MICHIGAN'S LANDS AND BIODIVERSITY



BUILD CLIMATE RESILIENCE

Nature is our ally in abating the negative impacts of greenhouse gas emissions. However, changing climatic conditions and habitat loss threaten to undermine the many benefits that healthy, resilient lands and waters provide, including carbon sequestration and sustainable economies.

Through conservation, restoration and improved land management, TNC strives to help Michigan build environmental resilience and protect biodiversity, so that nature can help our communities thrive in a changing climate.

WHAT WE'RE DOING: TNC's "Resilient and Connected Lands" tool provides a roadmap of U.S. lands with the unique topographies, geologies and other characteristics that can help plants and animals adapt to climate impacts. **Learn more:** nature.org/naturalhighways

REDUCE GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

Nature can provide 30% of the reductions in greenhouse gas emissions we need to slow the rise in global temperatures, by sequestering carbon in trees, soils and other natural systems. Getting all the way to an economy-wide "net-zero" goal by 2050, however, will require many sectors working on complementary strategies.

In Michigan, TNC is encouraging industrial leaders to manage and reduce their emissions: by using more clean power, increasing energy efficiency, adopting new carbon management technologies and more. This will enable Michigan's industrial sector to both lower carbon emissions and sustain economic growth.

WHAT WE'RE DOING: TNC and the Michigan Manufacturers Association are following up on the success of our first series of practical climate sustainability seminars for Michigan businesses, with a second series planned in 2023. **Learn more:** mimfg.org/sustainability



RESTORE NATIVE FORESTS

Michigan's forests cover 20 million acres—roughly half of the state. The diversity, climate resilience and pest resilience of these forests depend on their restoration and sustainable management, which also benefits Michigan's economy.

On our working forest reserves, TNC demonstrates the sustainable management practices necessary to keep Michigan forests healthy. We also work to strengthen incentives and opportunities for others to implement these practices, and to help forests sequester and store more carbon.

WHAT WE'RE DOING: In 2022, TNC launched the Family Forest Carbon Program for Michigan forest owners, in partnership with the American Forest Federation, to make carbon market incentives for sustainable forestry practices more accessible for landowners with as few as 30 acres. **Learn more:** familyforestcarbon.org

INVEST IN CLEAN, RENEWABLE POWER

A [clean energy transition](#) depends on a rapid renewable energy buildout that safeguards nature and supports an equitable transition for communities.

To help achieve that, TNC is providing innovative strategies and tools grounded in leading science, partnerships, public policy and market-based approaches. We aim to support a renewable energy market that goes above and beyond "business as usual" for community, conservation and climate—here in Michigan and across the country.

WHAT WE'RE DOING: TNC's conservation-informed tools, including [Site Renewables Right](#) and [Power of Place](#), help renewable energy developers select sites for utility-scale wind and solar installations that avoid detrimental impacts to nature and communities. **Learn more:** nature.org/choosingcleanenergy

PROTECT MICHIGAN'S GREAT LAKES & FRESH WATER



SAFEGUARD GREAT LAKES FISHERIES

Michigan boasts the longest shoreline of any Great Lakes state—the longest freshwater shoreline in the world. Our connection to the Great Lakes is strong, and our good stewardship is vital to this globally significant resource.

TNC works tirelessly to understand the threats facing Great Lakes ecosystems, and to pursue restoration solutions that protect native fish species and their roles in thriving coastal communities. We align our efforts with partners across the Great Lakes—preventing invasive species from taking hold, protecting coastal systems against degradation and more.

WHAT WE'RE DOING: While iconic native species such as lake whitefish still swim in Great Lakes waters, their numbers are dwindling. TNC is working with state and Tribal partners to better understand the causes and develop solutions. **Learn more:** nature.org/michiganfisheries

INVEST IN WATER INFRASTRUCTURE

All Michiganders should have accessible, affordable and clean drinking water. Our ability to provide clean drinking water depends on investments in necessary upgrades to infrastructure, and in the sustainable management of freshwater resources.

TNC works with partners across Michigan to support this vision and ensure communities can maintain and deliver safe, affordable water services. For example, by supporting county health departments' efforts to address failing private septic systems, we aim to help reduce the risk of contamination to nearby water sources.

WHAT WE'RE DOING: As a member of the Coalition for a Strong and Prosperous Michigan, TNC is one of 60+ organizations representing the business community, local elected leaders and statewide associations that are advocating for investments in water infrastructure, economic development priorities and more. **Learn more:** miroadmap.com



PROMOTE REGENERATIVE AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES

Farmers are stewards of the productive soils that provide food for the world. By protecting the health of these soils, Michigan farmers not only contribute to long-term farm productivity, but also protect rivers, streams and lakes from harmful nutrient runoff and erosion, and improve soil carbon retention.

For more than a decade, TNC has been partnering with Saginaw Bay watershed farmers to expand the use of soil health practices such as cover crops, no-till and precision nutrient application methods. This includes offering incentives programs, learning opportunities and more.

WHAT WE'RE DOING: TNC supports several farmer-led watershed groups in the Saginaw Bay area. These self-governed groups highlight the growing leadership of regional farmers in addressing local water quality and soil health issues. **Learn more:** soilsavings.com





© Michael Heiler/TNC Photo Contest 2021


BOARD OF TRUSTEES


- David W. Barfield, *Chair*
- Terry A. Barclay, *Vice-Chair*
- Robert L. Anthony, *Treasurer*
- Gerard M. Anderson
- Linda H. Apsey
- Essel W. Bailey Jr.
- Jocelyn K. Coley
- Thomas B. Cook
- Mary F. Draves
- John M. Erb
- Paul C. Hillegonds
- Katrina J. Lewandowski
- Charles A. Lippstreu
- James M. Nicholson
- Stephen R. Polk
- Philip H. Power
- John M. Ranke
- David M. Rice
- Lloyd A. Semple
- Vivian Day Stroh
- Robert R. Tisch
- Gretchen R. Valade
- Barbara Van Dusen
- Peter S. Walters
- William A. Zehnder

**SIGN UP FOR NATURE NEWS:
POLICY EDITION!**

Email dbasgall@tnc.org to be added to the mailing list for TNC’s Michigan policy e-newsletter.

   Follow us on social media: [@TNCMichigan](https://www.instagram.com/TNCMichigan).

 Learn more at our website: [nature.org/michigan](https://www.nature.org/michigan).

 Sign up for our free general e-newsletter: [nature.org/naturenews](https://www.nature.org/naturenews).

CONTACT US:



Madhu Anderson, *Director of Government Relations*

- *Federal lead*
- Email: madhu.anderson@tnc.org
- Phone: (517) 316-2251



Rich Bowman, *Director of Policy*

- *State lead*
- Email: rich_bowman@tnc.org
- Phone: (517) 316-2267



101 E. César E. Chávez Ave.
Lansing, MI 48906
(517) 316-0300 | michigan@tnc.org