

WILD WETLANDS:

The Secret Life of Bogs

Sojourn through the bog and see all that there is to see!

But don't take my word for it – for the full experience, check out your local bogs at West Lake Nature Preserve and Bishop's Bog after viewing this exhibition.



LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Portage, Michigan occupies the ancestral lands of the Anishinaabeg – Three Fires Confederacy of Ojibwe, Odawa, and Potawatomi peoples. This exhibition intends to honor all indigenous individuals and communities, particularly those who live in Michigan today, and acknowledge their part in the history and future of Portage.

Climate Change: WILD BENEFITS

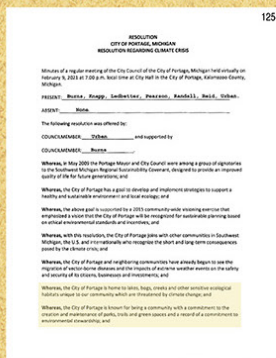
Bogs are made up of mats of sphagnum moss, which looks and feels like a large sponge. The moss holds water & CO₂. The healthier the bog, the more water and carbon it holds.

All around the world, folks are looking for ways to sequester carbon in the fight against climate change. Our bogs do that, quite naturally. Healthy wetlands can prevent flooding and drought.

On the other hand, the process of ditching, dredging or disturbing bogs leads to a release of carbon dioxide, a practice that worsens climate change.



The City of Portage is home to lakes, bogs, and creeks unique to our community that are threatened by climate change.



The City of Portage commits to taking action and implementing policies, projects, and procedures that promote environmental sustainability that will slow down and reverse the impacts of climate change.

It is illegal to pick plants or collect animals in any Portage Park.

Climate Change: THE CARBON CYCLE



Wetlands cleanse the earth. In fact, they are carbon sinks that absorb CO₂, and they are unparalleled in filtering out human waste, material from rotten carcasses, chemicals, and other pollutants. They recharge underground aquifers and sustain regional water resources, buffering the excesses of drought and flood. In aggregate, the watery parts of the earth stabilize its climate."

– Annie Proulx, *New York Times*

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WILD FOODS: Culture of Gratitude

RETURNING THE GIFT

An excerpt adapted from scientist and author,
Dr. Robin Wall Kimmerer's "Braiding Sweetgrass."
Kimmerer is a member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation

"The berries are always present at our ceremonies. They join us in a wooden bowl. One big bowl and one big spoon, which are passed around the circle so that each person can taste the sweetness, remember the gifts, and say thank you. The gifts of the earth are to be shared, but gifts are not limitless. The generosity of the earth is not an invitation to take it all. Every bowl has a bottom. When it's empty, it's empty. And there is but one spoon, the same size for everyone."



"How do we refill the empty bowl? Is gratitude alone enough? Berries teach us otherwise. When berries offer their sweetness to the birds and bears the transaction does not end there. Something beyond gratitude is asked of us. The berries trust that we will uphold our end of the bargain and disperse their seed to new places to grow, which is good for berries. They remind us all that flourishing is mutual. We need the berries and the berries need us. Their gifts multiply by our care for them, and dwindle from our neglect. We are bound in a covenant of reciprocity, a pact of mutual responsibility to sustain those who sustain us. And so the empty bowl is filled."

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WILD PLANTS

**CARNIVOROUS
PLANTS**
GROW IN BOGS
WHICH ARE *Acidic*

Pitcher plants
use vivid colors + scents to attract
their prey.

This layer is
slippery & moist

BUGS BEWARE

enzyme
soup

LAYERS OF PEAT BENEATH OUR FEET

LACK NITROGEN. CARNIVOROUS PLANTS EVOLVED TO GET NITROGEN BY CONSUMING INSECTS AND SOMETIMES SMALL ANIMALS. USING DIFFERENT METHODS, CARNIVOROUS PLANTS MAKE TRICKY PREDATORS, TRAPPING THEIR PREY WITH *scent*, *bright colors*, *sticky surfaces* & DIGESTING WITH ENZYME SOUP.

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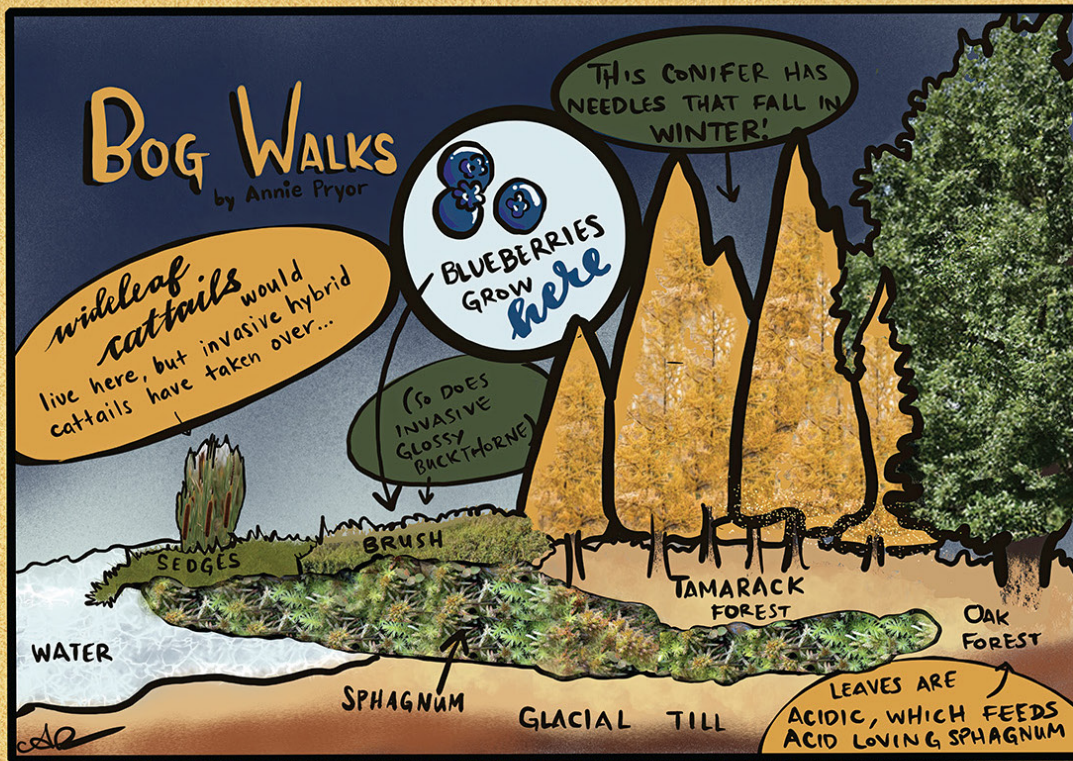
WILD PLANTS



Unique plants and animals that grow in bogs face obliteration at an alarming rate for many reasons: loss of habitat, changes in hydrology, and invasive species. The crisis of invasive species in Bishop's Bog directly relates to declining bog health and the Sugarloaf Ditch, as the ditch allows runoff from private properties, roads, and parking lots. This runoff introduces nutrients to the bog, which invasive species like glossy buckthorn thrive on. This takes the competitive advantage away from specialized bog plants and favors invasive species growth. To get involved, check out volunteer programs & invasive species management initiatives with Portage Parks & Recreation.

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WILD WETLANDS



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WHERE THE WILD BOGS ARE

Portage

EXPLORE OUR NATURAL HERITAGE IN YOUR OWN BACKYARD!

Visit Portage's own bogs and wetlands, where you can find a wide variety of unusual flora and fauna.



WEST LAKE NATURE PRESERVE

SOUTH WESTNEDGE PARK

ELIASON NATURE RESERVE

BISHOP'S BOG PRESERVE

SCHRIER PARK



Purple Pitcher Plant



Eastern Meadowlark

BISHOP'S BOG PRESERVE



WEST LAKE NATURE PRESERVE



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WILD ANIMALS

Bogs, fens and swamps serve as "pit stops" for migratory birds. Just like you need to stop at the gas station for snacks, fuel, and food – so do many birds. They often choose wetlands as their safe havens.



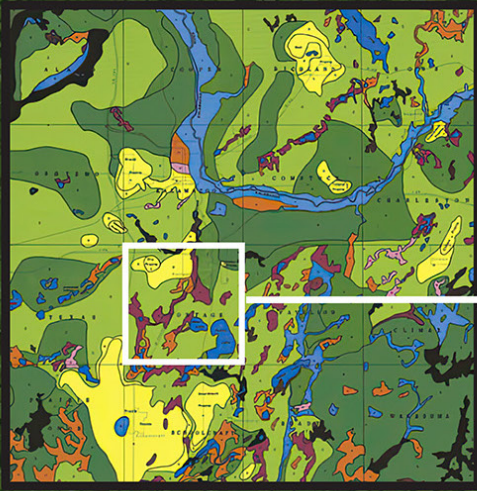
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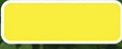






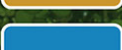
WILD PLACES

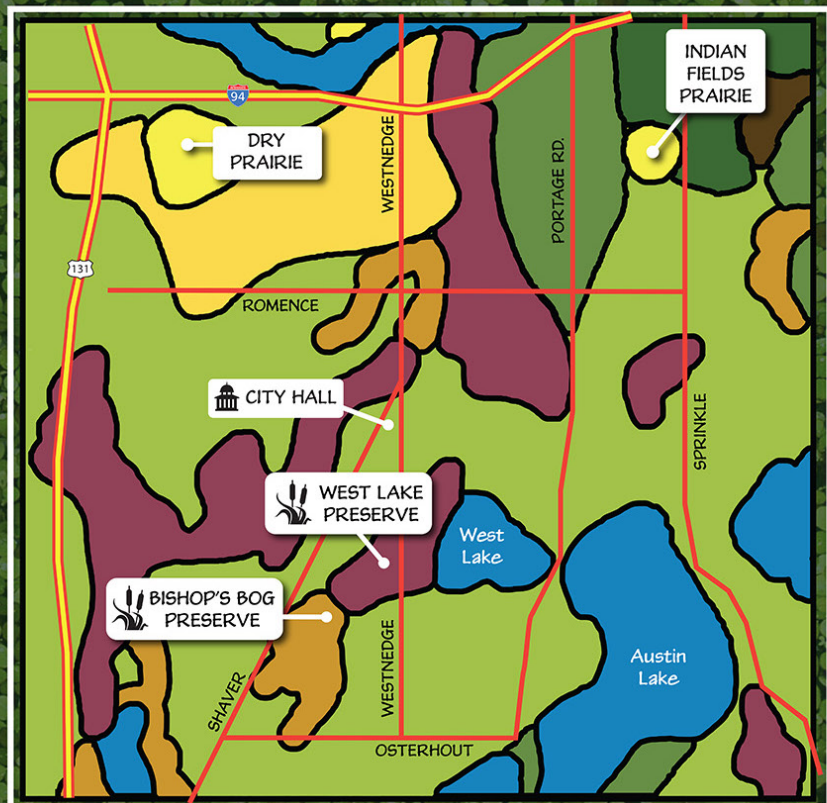
Ever wondered what Portage looked like over 200 years ago?
Check out this map from Western Michigan University.

Here you can see that Southwest Michigan was an interconnected network of rivers, streams, wetlands and forest.

Today, this landscape has been altered irrevocably. In the early 1800's, plank roads were built, rivers dammed, wetlands dredged to make way for industrialization and European method of agriculture, like celery farming.



-  Prairie
-  Bur Oak Opening
-  Oak Forest
-  Beech-Sugar Maple Forest
-  Oak Savanna
-  Marsh
-  Tamarack Swamp
-  Water



— Today's roads superimposed
— for orientation.