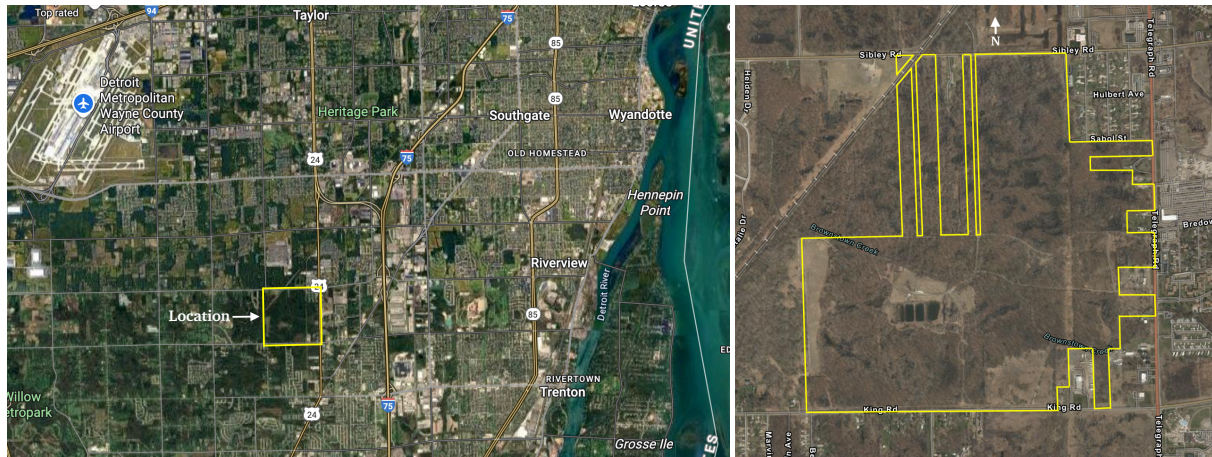
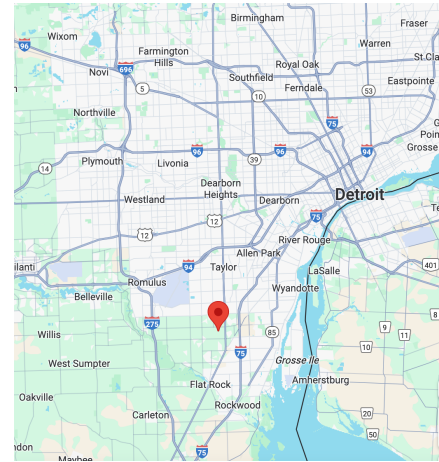


FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Where is the Sibley Prairie?

The Sibley Prairie complex is in Brownstown Township, Wayne County, Michigan. Prairie remnants are scattered over several square miles, but the largest remaining portions are in a 2-square mile area bordered by Telegraph Road (on the East), Inkster Road (W), Sibley Road (N) and King Road (S). The 440-acre property under option is in Section 8—the square mile west of Telegraph Road between Sibley Road and King Road.



What makes Sibley Prairie so special?

The Michigan Natural Features Inventory has identified the Sibley Prairie as the highest-quality lakeplain prairie remnant in the state (of 53 surveyed). It boasts a Floristic Quality Index of 69.95 (on a scale of 1–100, with anything over 40 being considered exceptional). Seven legally protected species are recorded from or very near the Sibley Prairie property, including the state-endangered American bumble bee and the state-threatened tall green milkweed, Sullivan's milkweed, short-fruited rush, Vasey's rush, Duke's skipper butterfly, and leafhopper, *Flexamia reflexa*. Likewise, 16 special concern species are recorded, including hairy angelica, three-awned grass, gray birch, gentian-leaved St. John's-wort, large path rush, conobea, northern appressed clubmoss, cross-leaved milkwort, tall nut rush, Clinton's bulrush, Blanding's turtle, elegant spike-rush leafhopper, pickerel frog, blazing-star borer, and regal fern borer.

What is a lakeplain prairie?

Lakeplain prairie is a rare type of tallgrass prairie that developed on the level, clay-rich lakebeds left behind by the receding waters of the great glacial lakes, including ancestral Lake Erie. These prairies are shaped by:

- Poorly drained clay soils that alternate between being seasonally flooded and extremely dry
- Fire regimes that historically kept trees and shrubs from taking over
- Specialized plants adapted to these challenging, fluctuating conditions

Because of these factors, lakeplain prairies support a unique mix of grasses, wildflowers, and wetland species—many of which occur *nowhere else* in Michigan and are rare across the entire Great Lakes region.

How rare are lakeplain prairies?

Lakeplain prairie is considered **globally rare** and **critically imperiled**. In Michigan, more than 99% of the original lakeplain prairie has been destroyed by farming, industry, and development. Only small, scattered remnants survive. High-quality examples—like the Sibley Prairie complex—are extraordinarily rare and represent some of the best remaining lakeplain prairie anywhere in the world. Lakeplain prairie is one of Michigan's rarest natural communities, and high-quality remnants rank among the most endangered ecosystems in North America.

What other attributes make this particular property important to protect?

There are a number of reasons why this land should be protected:

Exceptional size and quality: At 440 acres, this is one of the largest remaining natural properties in southeast Michigan, with a rich mosaic of forest, wetland, and prairie habitats.

Top conservation priority: This property is among the most important conservation opportunities in the entire state. It lies within the boundaries of the only State Wildlife Area in Wayne County, and securing its protection has long been a goal of the DNR. The land is also a critical piece of a larger, globally rare ecosystem spanning southeast Michigan and northwest Ohio—an area The Nature Conservancy has described as one of “The Last Great Places.”

Public access and recreation: Acquisition of this property would expand the protected public lands within the Sibley Prairie area to over 500 acres, creating new opportunities for hiking, hunting, birdwatching, nature study, and environmental education.

Climate resilience and water protection: Preserving this natural land will serve as green infrastructure we desperately need. It will help mitigate the effects of climate change, protect water quality, and reduce flood risks, a growing concern in southeast Michigan.

Equity and access: There is a lack of green space in urbanized southeast Michigan—and nowhere is that deficit greater than in Wayne County, Michigan's most populous county. Protecting new recreational opportunities will help ensure that residents have access to nature, supporting health, equity, and quality of life. This is a one-time opportunity to deliver lasting public benefit where it's needed most.

Why are donations being made to Michigan Land Conservancy and not to the Save Sibley Prairie Coalition?

The Save Sibley Prairie Coalition is not an incorporated group, but an association of groups working together. There have been some preliminary discussions about forming a separate organization but, until then, the Michigan Land Conservancy is serving as the custodian of the funds collected—since the Conservancy has experience in land acquisitions and paid the \$1 million to secure the option to purchase this land. The Michigan Land Conservancy is recognized by the IRS as a 501(c)3 charitable organization and all donations are tax deductible. For more information, visit: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100064605496928>

I would like to make a larger contribution but I'm not ready to do so. Can I make a pledge?

Absolutely! Pledges would be greatly appreciated as it will help us track our fundraising needs. Pledges over \$1,000 are encouraged. To plan for our closing on the purchase, pledges will need to be received by September 30, 2026. To make a pledge, please contact Jack Smiley at jackrsmiley@gmail.com.

What happens if the full \$6 million isn't raised by December 2026?

In the unlikely event we are unable to close on this property, all funds raised would be used to purchase other prairie habitat--preferably very near to this property within the Sibley Prairie complex. Several other properties are available, but the one under option is by far the largest, most ecologically significant, and most desirable. Because of its size, location and zoning, it is also the most expensive.

The decision to secure an option on this property was made only after careful analysis of available funding opportunities. The Michigan Land Conservancy has already invested \$1 million to obtain the purchase option, which will be applied to the purchase price at closing. We do have some backup plans in case we don't reach the full \$6 million by the end of next year. A primary one would be to finance any balance. We have a national conservation group willing to do so, if needed, which would allow for additional time to complete fundraising. The members of the Save Sibley Prairie Coalition are fully committed to ensuring the success of this project and the permanent protection of this extraordinary landscape.

What happens if you exceed your \$6 million goal?

We will be overjoyed! In the event that we raise more than \$6 million, additional funds would be used to restore the property (e.g. by removing invasive species, re-introducing fire, etc.). We would also make some improvements which will facilitate public visitation. If excess funds were sufficient, we would also look to acquire additional prairie habitat within the Sibley Prairie complex. Feel free to donate more than \$6 million.

Who will ultimately own the Sibley Prairie property?

The ultimate ownership of the Sibley Prairie property has not yet been determined and will depend largely on the sources of funding. If a Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund grant is secured, the property would be conveyed to the grant applicant—most likely Wayne County Parks, Brownstown Township, or the Michigan DNR. If the project is funded without Trust Fund support, ownership would be transferred to a conservation organization best equipped to steward the land and maintain it for public enjoyment. We are also exploring the possibility of establishing a dedicated organization whose sole mission would be to care for this property and acquire additional lands within the Sibley Prairie complex. In all cases, the Save Sibley Prairie Coalition is committed to ensuring that this extraordinary natural treasure is protected for generations to come.

What are the fees associated with making an online donation?

No fees are required. Credit card companies charge a processing fee that reduces the amount that we receive. Givebutter also charges us a fee to use their platform. You may choose to cover these fees to ensure the full donation goes to Sibley Prairie.

Where can I send a check?

To avoid these fees, and to maximize the amount going to save Sibley Prairie, we encourage checks for larger donations.

Checks made payable to **Michigan Land Conservancy** may be mailed to:

Michigan Land Conservancy
10325 Cherry Hill Rd
Superior Township, MI 48198

Note: Before you send in a check, please click the “Donate” button and indicate that your donation will be made by check. Include your contact info and email address—that will speed our ability to process your donation once we receive it. If you mail a check without entering your information through the “Donate” button, please include a note with your email address so that we may acknowledge your donation by email, allowing us to save on postage costs. Thank you!