

Flat Naturalist – Fox Trail/Multi-Purpose Trail



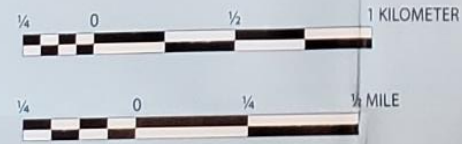
Hi, my name is Ray Bierbower and I will be the flat naturalist for your self guided walk on the Fox/Multi-purpose trail. Follow along with the instructions and take a selfie at the end with my "Flat Naturalist" and post it to our Facebook page! I am glad you can join me for a walk on the Fox trail today!



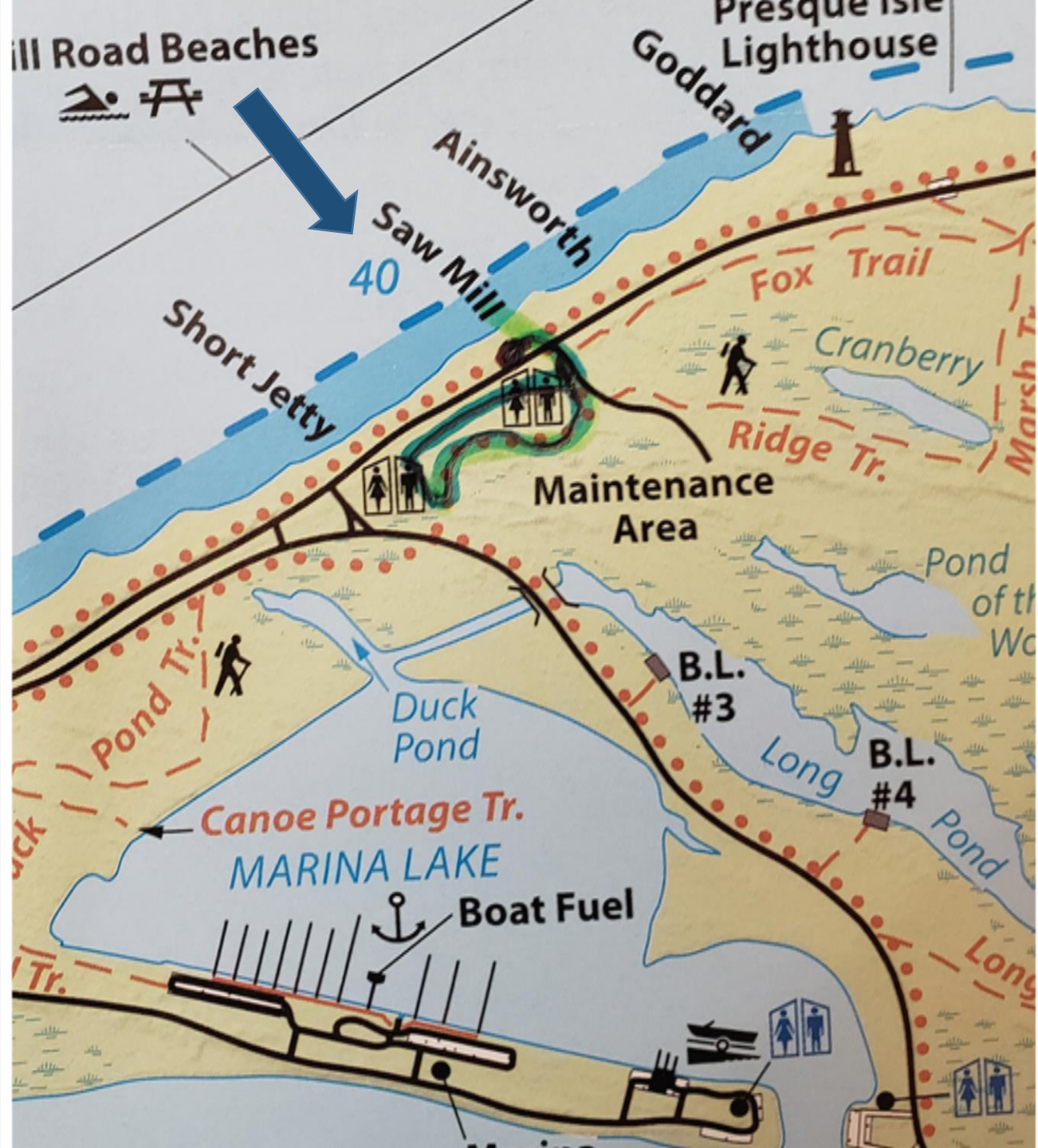
#DiscoverPIFlatNaturalist

PRESQUE ISLE STATE PARK

- Office
Symbol Means ADA Accessible
Phone
Aid
Preventive Center
Rooms
Floor Foot Shower
Picnic Area
Picnic Pavilion/Picnic Area
Ground
Concession & Beachhouse
Sh (Guarded Areas)
Launch
na
Landing
Taxi Stop
mer Only)
ng Pier
house
way Road



GULL POINT NATURAL AREA
CLOSED to all public use
from APRIL 1 through
NOVEMBER 30 except on
designated trail to
observation tower.



Begin

Begin by parking across from the sign that says Saw Mill Beach. Please only park where there are no “No Parking” signs. Walk down the road to the left of the bathroom building. You will pass a greenhouse on your right- keep walking until you find the paved entrance to the Multi-purpose trail on the right. Look for the ★ post.

Read the next slide at the ★ .



Snags

While walking along this entire trail, take note of all of the standing dead trees. Standing dead trees, called snags, provide birds and mammals with shelter to raise young and raptors with unobstructed vantage points.

Only some bird species are capable of making their own nest cavities in trees. The pileated woodpecker is a famous example. Many animal species depend upon previously-excavated or natural tree holes for their nests. The insulation of a tree trunk home allows wildlife to survive high summer and low winter temperature extremes. Tree cavities and loose bark are used by many animals to store food supplies, while insects living inside the dead wood eat thousands of forest pests, which can harm living tree. Woodpeckers and creepers feast on the wood eating insects and provide “sawdust” for ants to process. Deer eat the lichen growing on the trunks.

Continue on the multipurpose trail. Round the corner of the trail in to the woods. Pass a gravel trail on your left and stay on the paved multipurpose trail.

Look for the



marker on the left and KEEP GOING!



Pileated Woodpecker

After roughly a 2 minute walk, find another
on your left side.



Great Horned Owl

There has been a pair of nesting Great Horned Owls in this area for about the last 3 years. While staying on the trail begin looking to the left for a broken off snag into the woods.

This is the site of a nesting Great Horned Owl. Two to three eggs are laid at the end of Jan. through Feb. They hatch in about 33 days with a layer of fluffy down to stay warm. While still in the nest, the mother owl will tear food into small pieces and feed it to the owlets. A favorite food of the GHO are skunks! They cannot smell and it makes a hearty meal. At 7 weeks, young owls are already capable of short flights.

By late October and November, urged by the adults, young owls leave their natal territory and venture off to start their own lives!

Continue on until you see a wooden sign on the right before the road that says Fox Trail. This portion of Fox trail is not on the park map. Follow this trail until you come to a downed tree across the trail.

Look for the  post.



Black Cherry Trees

There are an abundance of Black Cherry trees in this area. While you are walking notice all of the trees that have bark that looks like burnt potato chips.

This species is valuable for lumber and often used for fine furniture, cabinets and interior finishing.

The tart fruit of the black cherry is an important source of nutrition for many animals, including songbirds, ruffed grouse, pheasants, raccoon, black bear, red fox, deer rabbit and squirrels consume the fruit.

The sweet smelling inner bark of the black cherry tree is used to make black cherry syrup, often an ingredient in commercial cough medicines. Early pioneers who used the extract as a remedy to flavor rum referred to the tree as rum cherry. Although the fruit is too bitter for snacking, black cherry syrup is used to make flavorful jams, jellies, liqueurs and wines.

The bark, leaves and twigs are poisonous to livestock, although deer can eat them without harm. Wilted leaves are more poisonous than fresh leaves.

Are you remembering to look for snags? Now take note of all of the black cherry trees along the path.

Walk on until you see the  on the right side of the trail near a bush.

Greenbrier

Along your walk you may have noticed lots of green vines in the woods. This is Greenbrier. They are evergreen to partially deciduous plants, produce strong tendrils at joints to aid in support, and are armored with stiff thorns along the vines. Greenbriers are perennial vines and capable of growing under low light conditions, which allows for rapid growth beneath shrubs to become well established. Besides their berries providing an important food for birds and other animals during the winter, greenbrier plants also provide shelter for many other animals. The thorny thickets can effectively protect small animals from larger predators who cannot enter the prickly tangle. Deer and other herbivorous mammals will eat the foliage, as will some invertebrates such as Lepidoptera (butterflies and moths), which also often drink nectar from the flowers.

Walk on and look for Flat Ray. Flat Ray will be on the left before the greenhouse. Take a selfie with Flat Ray and post it to #DiscoverPIFlatNaturalist on Twitter or Facebook. You will now walk past the greenhouse along the left that leads you back down to the road.

Turn left to return to your car.

Thank-you for joining me!

