

deer numbers would be down; what had me concerned was the dearth of buck

business, because you can't use a second-buck license in any Upper

I don't much like the one-buck rule in the U.P. I like to shoot a buck for the

SAVING MICHIGAN

Conservancy protects northwest part of state from development

By Jim DuFresne

Grand Rapids Press News Service

ELLSWORTH — We missed the St. Clair Lake-Six Mile Lake Natural Area cutoff the first time we drove past it. And the second and third time, as well.

It wasn't until our fourth try, crawling along the shoulder of Ellsworth Road at 10 mph, that we finally spotted the small sign, well off the road and half-hidden in the brush.

The only amenity at this 147-acre preserve is a trail: a wood chip path connected to a boardwalk which ends at an observation deck.

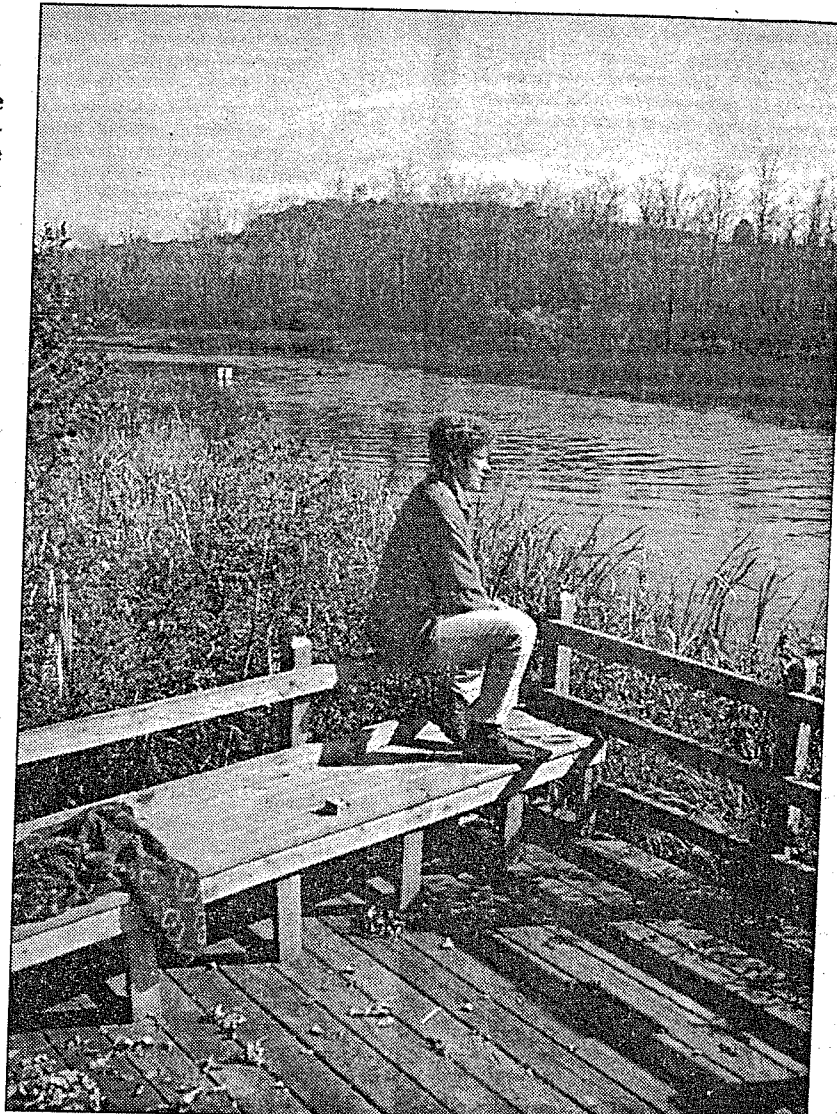
But, the view there was incredible.

Despite being in one of the fastest-growing regions of the state, there wasn't a condominium, strip mall or golf course in sight.

All we could see from the deck was a stretch of the Sinclair River, flowing lazily through a marshy meadow, and a blue heron fishing along the edge of it.

"We're pulling this land from under the axe of development," said JoAnn Beemon of Charlevoix, who is spearheading a local effort to purchase the entire shoreline of the river. "What it comes down to: Anything not protected will be developed."

Call them pocket preserves. The St. Clair Lake-Six Mile Lake Natural Area is just another small step by the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy (GTRLC) to slow the rapid development of northwest Michigan.



PRESS NEWS SERVICE PHOTO/JIM DUFRESNE

A quiet place: A visitor enjoys the view of the Sinclair River from an observation deck in the St. Clair Lake-Six Mile Lake Natural Area.

Quietly and without fanfare, the state's new conservancy has become one of the fastest-growing land trusts in Michigan. It has protected more than 100,000 acres and set up 16 reserves since being organized in 1991.

The acreage is spread across Benzie, Grand Traverse and Antrim counties. Its 13 miles of shoreline, stretches along Lake Michigan and Grand Traverse Bay, makes developers drool.

"The development (in northwest Michigan) is out of control," said AnneMarie GTRLC. "What we're trying to balance is a little. We need these open spaces they need (natural) places."

That's what area residents when Rotary Charities of Grand Traverse City conducted a life survey in 1990. According to the survey, the biggest threat was watching bulldozers rip up the Northwoods only to be replaced by shopping centers, 18-hole golf courses and subdivisions.

That prompted the chapter to pledge \$300,000 in start-up costs for a new land conservancy.

Five years later, GTRLC has full-time staff members who work closely with landowners, developers, citizen groups and other land conservancies to protect natural slices of northwest Michigan. The land is protected

Waterproof socks keep the wet out

By Howard Meyerson

Grand Rapids Press Outdoors Editor

snowshoeing or winter camping, but I have worn them inside waders both fishing and hunt-

able to eliminate all of the moisture you produce sweating under exertion.

Huron chin

By Bob Gwiddz

Grand Rapids Press News Service