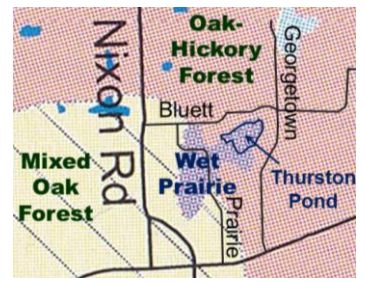
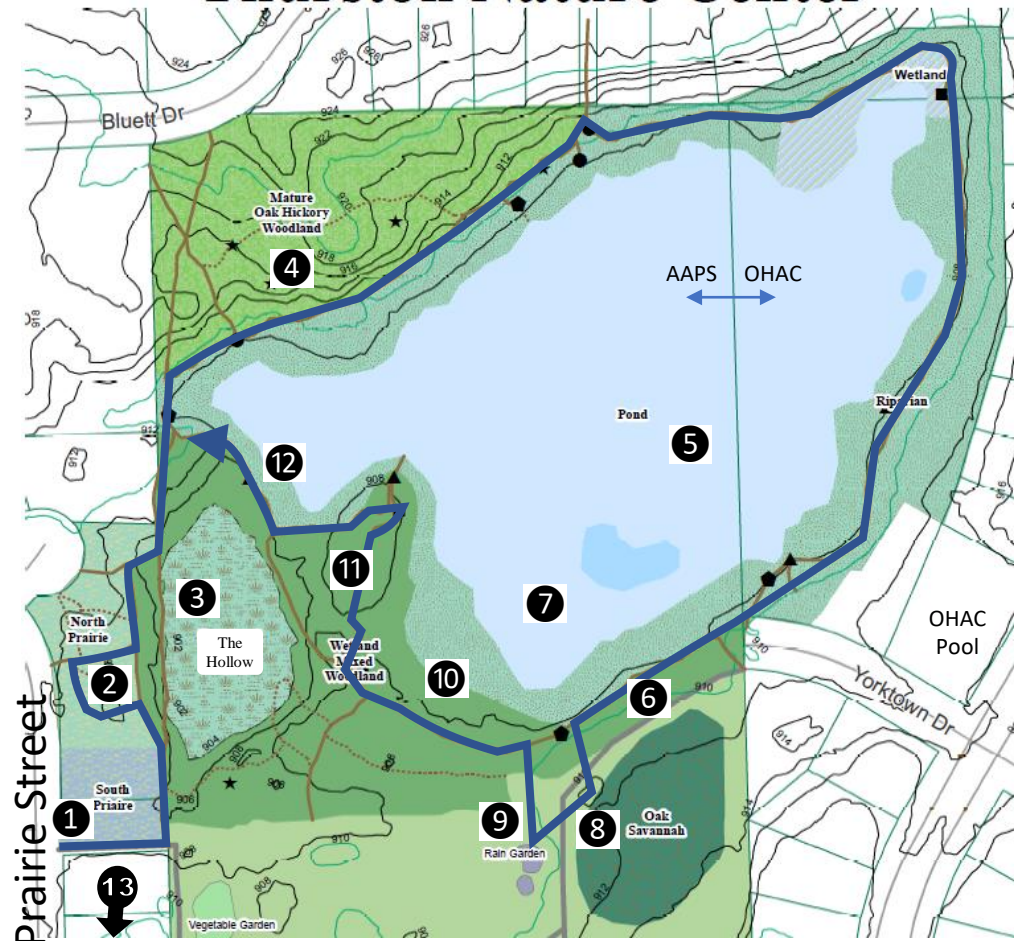


Thurston Nature Center



↑ Historic Plant Cover

Background

- 18 acres total, 7 acre pond.
- Pond formed with berm to make retention pond when area was built up in 1960's. Headwaters of Miller Creek.
- MI-DNR dedicated TNC as a Conservation Education Reserve in 1968.
- Owned by AA Public Schools & Orchard Hills Athletic Club.
- TNC Committee reports to Thurston Elementary PTO.
- Small group of volunteers.
- Projects supported by donations and grants.
- 144 bird species since 2012.

Habitats and Points of Interest Along Walking Route (Start at intersection of Prairie and Renfrew Streets)

1. Thurston (South) Prairie: Tall-grass prairie planted in 1988 (Thurston students, led by Bob Grese). Expanded in 1993.
2. North Prairie: Cleared of invasives and replanted with native forbs, grasses, shrubs, trees in 2011 (Troop 4 Eagle Scout Project led by David Vallem – 88 people, 926 hours). Contains many ashes regrowing from stumps.
3. The Hollow: Part of historic Wet Prairie, now divided from Thurston Pond by berm. Cleared of invasives in 2015, first burned in 2018. Originally planned as site for Clague Middle School.
4. Oak/Hickory Woods: Historical remnant. Invaded by buckthorn & honeysuckle, so forbs are mostly spring ephemerals, and no oak/hickory regeneration. Began controlled burns starting in 2016, as well as cutting and daubing. Sowed some native grass and forb seeds after Fall 2017 burn. Rain gardens uphill from path built 2018-19.
5. Thurston Pond: Shallow pond (<5'). Attracts Canada geese, mallards, great blue herons, great egrets, kingfishers, hooded mergansers, among many other species. Has painted and snapping turtles, and occasionally a muskrat.
6. Area contains numerous pines. Cleared of invasives (goats in 2020), replaced primarily by native grasses in 2021.
7. Nesting Island/Deep Pool: Island built in 2015 with sediment removed to create deeper pool to its west.
8. Oak Savannah: Bur, Chinkapin, White, and Swamp White Oaks planted 2009. Replacing turf grass with short grass prairie started in 2015 (two Troop 1 Eagle Scout Projects led by Denis Sorrel and Max Bonevich, WAM grants).
9. Butterfly/Hummingbird Rain Garden: Built in 2014 (Catie Wytychak, Master Rain Garden Project). Trellis and plants added in 2016 to attract hummingbirds. Expanded in 2020 (Cathleen Adams, Master Rain Garden Project).
10. Pond Outlet: Rebuilt in 2015, adding new channel, sediment basin & water level control. Goes to Miller Creek.
11. Peninsula: Eastern edge cleared and wetland forb seeds added "as available." North and central portions are candidates to be burned in future to control invasives.
12. Berm: Rebuilt and raised in 2015 due to frequent washouts.
13. (In front of Thurston School) Heron Rain Garden: Planted in 2016 (Jennifer Knight, Master Rain Garden Project). (North of parking lot) Turtle Rain Garden: Planted in 2008 (Thurston students, led by Margaret Weiss).