

# Protecting Natural Resources in the Paw Paw River Watershed



This brochure is the product of a joint effort to protect special natural features in the Paw Paw River Watershed by maintaining and restoring ecological communities and processes.

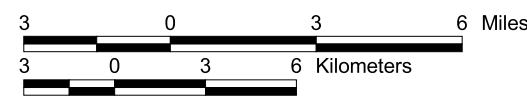
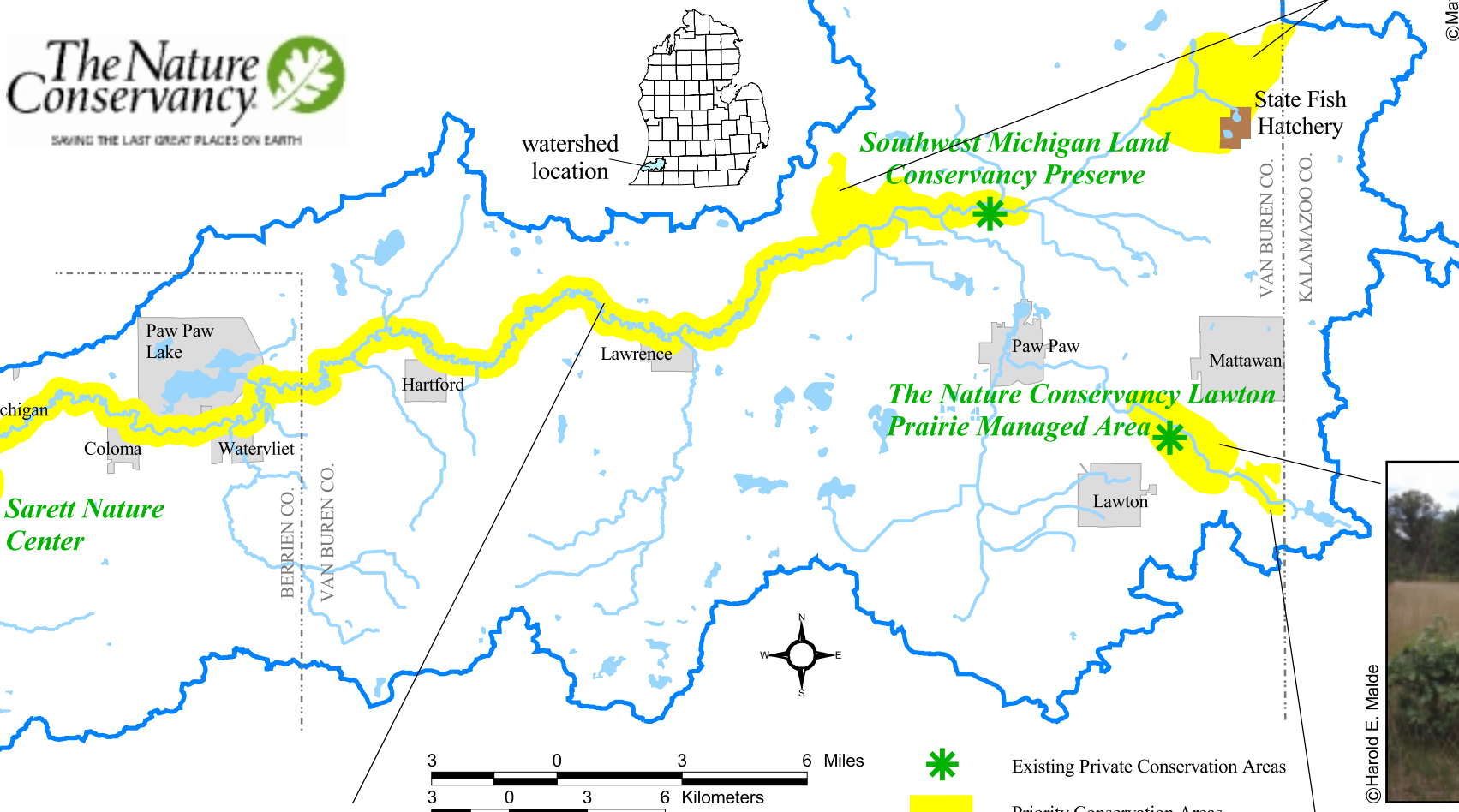
The watershed supports a large concentration of biodiversity and ranks as one of the most ecologically diverse areas remaining in southwest Michigan.

## Great Lakes Marsh

This emergent marsh along the lower Paw Paw is subject to water level fluctuations that create a diverse wetland that is important habitat for spawning fish and breeding and migrating birds.

**THREATS:** Invasive species and nutrient loading.

**CONSERVATION NEEDS:** Land acquisition and invasive species control.



Existing Private Conservation Areas  
 Priority Conservation Areas



## Wetland-Swamp Complex

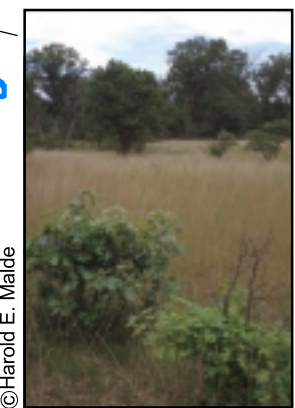
These complexes of forested and non-forested wetlands are the sources of several tributaries that control the flow of water into the river. A variety of wetland species of special concern in Michigan thrive here, including eastern masassauga, Blanding's turtle and numerous breeding birds.

**THREATS:** Changes in water flow due to agricultural drainage and road crossings; overbrowsing by deer.

**CONSERVATION NEEDS:** Land acquisition; install additional culverts to improve flow.

## Forest-Barrens Mosaic

Oak barrens, beech-maple forest and oak-hickory forest were historically widespread throughout southwest Michigan. Small remnants remain along the East Branch, where there are also ample opportunities for restoration of the upland mosaic.



**THREATS:** New residential development and excessive deer browsing.

**CONSERVATION NEEDS:** Land acquisition; restore historic oak barrens mosaic on old fields and degraded remnants.

## Mitchell's Satyr Butterfly



This federally endangered butterfly is found at a limited number of wetland sites in northern Indiana and southern Michigan. Four of these sites are located in this watershed.

**THREATS:** Fire suppression and subsequent encroachment by woody and invasive species; nutrient loading and polluted runoff.

**CONSERVATION NEEDS:** Land acquisition; prescribed fire and other invasives control measures.

## Prairie Fen



Prairie fens are unique post-glacial features that support a distinct array of wetland plants and animals. An exceptionally diverse and high quality example of this community is found at the headwaters of the East Branch.

**THREATS:** Changes in groundwater flow and nutrient loading; invasive species.

**CONSERVATION NEEDS:** Prescribed fire and other invasive species controls. Work with surrounding landowners and new developers to minimize changes to the hydrologic regime. Land acquisition.