Hike Chikaming Township's Harbert Road Preserve and Jens Jensen Preserve
Saturday, June 24, 10:00am
Estimated Hiking Time: 1 ½ to 2 hours
Hike Leaders: Arthur Anderson
Hiking Distance: 2.2 miles (outer loop)
Location: south of Harbert Road, just east of I-94
Physical difficulty: Easy

Join us for a leisurely two mile hike through the 88-acre Harbert Road Preserve, an obscure Chikaming Township park (located south of Harbert Road) just east of the I-94 overpass. We will be discussing some of the glacial and pro-glacial events that gave this land its unique features as we meander through five distinct natural communities. The preserve has two ponds and several wetlands that attract wood ducks, mallards, and blue and green herons.

A little heads up, wetland trails can be extra damp so wear shoes that you won't mind getting wet or a little muddy, especially if it rains within a day or two of the hike. And this is bug season, so dress appropriately and bring your favorite bug spray, also plenty of water and sun protection.

After completed this short hike, we will take a rest stop at a local coffee shop in nearby Sawyer, and those who would need more exercise, can caravan to Jens Jensen Preserve about two miles total. (Or those who have satisfied their wanderlust, can shop bustling downtown Sawyer.) The Jens Jensen Preserve is a 23-acre tract of woodland located off Parkway Drive west of Red Arrow Highway and south of Holloway Drive in Sawyer. The nature preserve contains a high quality hardwood forest featuring towering oak, maple, beech and tulip along with some seasonal wetlands. It is also part of an open space corridor stretching from Warren Dunes State Park to Cherry Beach Road, including Pepperidge Dunes, to which it is directly adjacent. These corridors provide uninterrupted canopy for migratory bird flyways, allowing natural habitat for the birds to rest and feed during their journeys up and down the lakeshore in the spring and fall. (From the Chikaming Open Lands website.)

Acquisition of Jens Jensen Preserve was funded in part by members of the surrounding community, including members of the Prairie Club who came together to raise more than $130,000 in less than four months. The remainder of the purchase price was provided by Chikaming Open Lands, using funds previously raised for land acquisitions from a combination of individual donors and The Pokagon Fund of southwest Michigan.
The nature preserve is named for Jens Jensen, a landscape architect working in the Midwest at the turn of the century. Jensen revered and celebrated the area's indigenous scenery by creating the Prairie style of landscape architecture and leading a movement to conserve natural areas. He was also a founding member of the Prairie Club.
The property features an extensive, well-maintained trail network suitable for hiking, bird watching or cross-country skiing. From Red Arrow Highway, go west on Parkway Drive, located just north of Sawyer Highlands Church. Parking is along the roadside. Leashed dogs are welcome. Please stay on marked trails.

Bring Directions from Chicago: Take I-80/I-94 East through Indiana into Michigan. Take Exit 12, at Sawyer Michigan and go east about half mile through the town to Flynn Road and turn right (south) and go about one mile to Harbert Road. Turn right again (going west) and go another half mile to the Preserve which is along I-94, a bit south of where you exited. The preserve will be on your left on the south side of Harbert Road. If you reach the overpass of the Interstate you have gone too far.

When you exit at Sawyer you may want to stop at the T&A truck stop for a comfort break as there are no facilities at the trailhead. After the hike we will return to Sawyer for coffee and a pit stop.

Also traffic on east bound I-80 can be difficult on Saturday morning, you may want to exit at I-65 north and go to US-12 east past the National Lakeshore into Michigan City and to New Buffalo and get back on the interstate.

For more information please call Art Anderson 269-586-4315, e-mail: arthurhanderson@aol.com