

Tour slated for Covert Twp. dune property

By HP Staff | Posted: Sunday, July 2, 2017 6:00 am

COVERT — Preserve the Dunes will host a guided tour Saturday of the Ross Coastal Plain Marsh Preserve in Covert Township, the organization announced. The event will be 10 a.m. to noon.

“This is your chance to experience the preserve with an expert scientist who will be able to tell you why the area is unique and show you the rare plants and wildlife found there,” Marcy Hamilton, president of Preserve the Dunes, stated in a news release.

Nate Fuller, conservation and stewardship director with the Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy, will lead tour participants on a hike through the unique property. After the hike and tour, Preserve the Dunes will give away a framed print of a dune landscape by local artist Randall Higdon.

For the tour, attendees will meet at the preserve entrance along County Road 376 (44th Avenue) across from Dune Lake Campground. Attendees must dress for the weather, wear sturdy shoes or boots and bring bug spray and drinking water. The event is rain or shine. For questions, contact Marcy Hamilton at 925-1137, Ext. 1525.

The Nature Conservancy owns the Ross Coastal Plain Marsh Preserve.

According to the conservancy’s website, “the preserve contains one of the last large blocks of northern hardwood forest in Southwest Michigan. Ancient sand dunes from the shores of postglacial Lake Nipissing created a mosaic of botanical communities on this 1,449-acre preserve, the most outstanding being three coastal plain marshes.

“These wet meadows occur in sandy basins along the shores of small lakes and ponds and harbor plants and animals ordinarily found in marshes along the Atlantic and Gulf coasts. The diverse flora includes eight species that are either endangered or rare.”

Preserve the Dunes is people to take a new online survey about sand dunes. The survey takes 10 minutes and can be found at www.howyoudunesurvey.com. The survey will provide vital information about how residents and visitors use and value coastal dunes for recreation, relaxation, scenic enjoyment and more, the organization reported.

The survey is funded by the Michigan Office of the Great Lakes and was developed by researchers from Michigan State University.

Citizens of Van Buren and Berrien counties formed Preserve the Dunes in 1997, and now the nonprofit has 1,300 members. For more about Preserve the Dunes’ efforts, visit www.sosdunes.org.