

Dicken Woods Nature Area  
Field Guide

Updated 2015

The Friends of Dicken Woods Steering Committee

*DickenWoods.org*

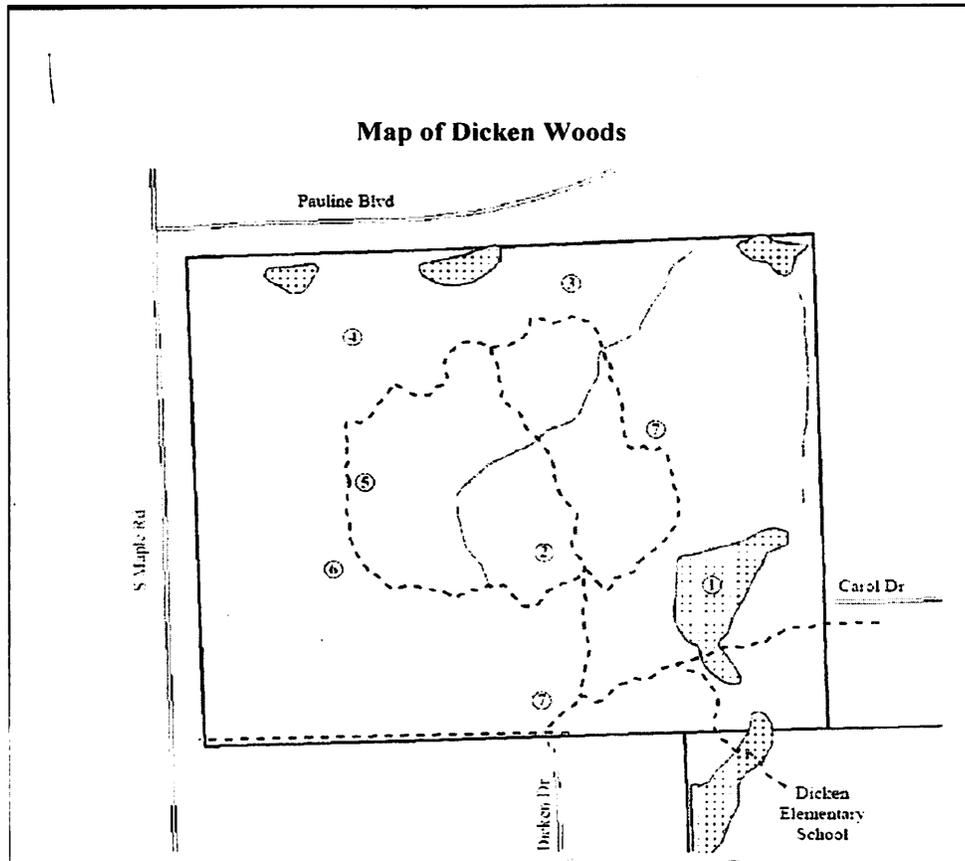
## **Table of Contents**

History of Dicken Woods	3
Map	4
Points of Interest	5-6
Mammals Seen in Dicken Woods	7
Native Plants Originally Found in Dicken Woods	8
Common Non-Native Plants	9
Native Plants Introduced by Volunteers	10
Native Trees and Shrubs easily found	11
Birds that Can Be Seen	12
Migrating Birds	13
Butterflies	14
Proper Behavior	15
Leash Law	16

***The history of Dicken Woods...***

This ten-acre natural area consists of woodlands and wetlands. The property was purchased by the city early in 2004, after a group of neighbors known as the Friends of Dicken Woods came together to save it from development. The headwaters of Allen's Creek and the creek shed of Mallet's Creek lie within this area. These are both important environmental entities within the city.

Once the property became part of the Ann Arbor city park system, stewardship and restoration became the focus of the Friends of Dicken Woods. Their goals are to preserve, protect and improve the land and to instill an environmental ethic among those who use it.



**Interpretive Trail**

- 1 Vernal Pond
- 2 Shrub Thicket
- 3 Oak-Hickory Woods
- 4 Walnut-Cottonwood Woods
- 5 Old Apple Orchard
- 6 Wet Meadow
- 7 Old Field Communities

*Points of Interest...*

**1 Seasonal Pond**

This area holds water from spring rains and the run off of melting snow. It does not have its own water source. It lasts well into the summer and is a spring stopover for migrating birds and home to nesting mallards. Frogs and toads breed here in the spring.

**2 Shrub Thicket**

The central area was once an open and disturbed site used for farming. Evidence remains of an irrigation system and many strawberry plants can be found. The area is now thick with woody species. Buckthorn and honeysuckle, two invasive plants, are being removed. Oaks are being planted and will mingle with the dogwood, hawthorn, and fruit trees.

**3 Oak-Hickory Community**

This section of the nature area is dominated by oak and hickory trees. It takes hundreds of years for hardwood forests to evolve and these trees evolved from a row of oak trees once planted along the property line. In some places the canopy opens, allowing enough sunlight through so that grasses and wildflowers grow. In the spring trout lily and spring beauty flowers can be found here.

**4 Walnut -Cottonwood Community**

Ash and elm trees have died in this area, but black walnut trees are seen on the higher ground where the soil is dryer and cottonwoods can be found in the poorly drained bottomland and stream beds. This is an example of a successional community where one species takes over as another dies out. The ashes died because of an emerald ash borer infestation. Raspberries grow under the walnut trees where ground chemicals formed from those trees exclude many other plants.

### **5 Old Apple Orchard**

A farm house was located in this area until around 1980. Cultivated flowers and apple trees from the old orchard can still be seen scattered throughout the area.

### **6 Wet Meadow**

Wet meadows are open sites with few trees or shrubs. This area is almost an acre in size. Wetlands provide habitat for diverse plant and animal communities, and are natural water treatment systems because they catch and hold rain water and run-off. This area remains wet well into the summer.

### **7 Old Field Communities**

These small but open sites are home to a mixture of wildflowers, grasses, and scattered shrubs. They are great places to look for birds and butterflies.

***Mammals seen in Dicken Woods...***

Brown Bat	Raccoon
Eastern Chipmunk	Striped Skunk
Cottontail Rabbit	Squirrels (Fox, Gray, Red)
Red Fox	White-tailed Deer
Opossum	Woodchuck (Groundhog)
Mice (Field, White-footed)	Woodland Vole

***Watch for these signs of animals -- but do not disturb!  
Look for...***

Nests  
Droppings  
Nibbled leaves  
Well-worn paths  
Clean bite marks on shrubs (rabbits)  
Jagged bite marks on shrubs (deer)  
Stripped bark  
Cracked nuts  
Food leftovers (berries, mushrooms, etc.)  
Piles of feathers  
Burrows  
Footprints

***Native plants originally found in Dicken Woods...***

A native plant is one that occurs naturally in a particular area, without human intervention. Native plants have co-evolved with the animals, fungi, and microbes of an area for many years, adapting to live together in balance.

Asters

Black Raspberries

Canadian Goldenrod

Christmas Fern

Common Milkweed

Jewel Weed

Poison Ivy

Sensitive Fern

Spring Beauties

Sumac

Thimbleweed

Trout Lily

Wild Violets

Vervain

Virginia Waterleaf

**Common non-native\* plants found in Dicken Woods...**

Alfalfa

Autumn Olive

Buckthorn

Chicory

Climbing Roses

Crown Vetch (Purple Vetch)

Dame's Rocket

Heal-All

Japanese Honeysuckle

Myrtle

Ox-eye Daisy

Oriental Bittersweet

Queen Anne's Lace

Strawberries

Common Orange Lily

Trumpetweed

Virginia Creeper

White Campion

\* Non-native plants have been introduced by humans to an area. Some non-natives are aggressive and invasive. They can outcompete native plants for resources and do not support native wildlife. In Dicken Woods, volunteers work to remove the most aggressive non-native plants.

***Native plants introduced by Friends of Dicken Woods Volunteers...***

Neighborhood volunteers continue to restore and improve the plant diversity of Dicken Woods. *Thousands of volunteer hours have resulted in the addition of over 60 oak trees, numerous other native trees and shrubs, and over 50 species of wildflower!*

Bee Balm	Michigan Lily
Beardtongue spp.	Milkweed spp.
Big Bluestem Grass	Monkey Flower
Black-Eye Susan	Mountain Mint
Bloodroot	New-England Aster
Blue-Eyed Grass	Nodding Wild Onion
Blue Lobelia	Obedient Plant
Boneset	Paw Paw Tree
Butterfly Bush Honeysuckle	Purple Coneflower
Button Bush	Rattlesnake Master
Cardinal Flower	Redbud Tree
Carex Sedge	Roadside Agrimony
Coreopsis spp.	Rose Mallow
Celandine Poppy	Royal Catchfly
Culver's Root	Rue Anemone
Dogbane	Serviceberry Tree
Elderberries	Smooth Aster
Evening Primrose	Solomon Seal
Golden Alexander	Spiderwort
Goldenrod spp.	Switch Grass
Vervain spp.	Tall Yellow Coneflower
Ironweed	Trillium
Jack-in-the-Pulpit	Virgin's Bower (Clematis)
Joe-Pye	Virginia Bluebell
Kalm's St. Johns Wort	White Snakeroot
Liatris	Wild Columbine
Marsh marigold	Wild Geranium
May Apple	Woodland Sunflower

***Native trees and shrubs easily found in Dicken Woods...***

American Basswood	Maples spp.
American Elm	Redbud
American Wild Plum	Red Cedar
Ash (Black, Green and White*)	Red Oak
Black Cherry	Serviceberry
Black Walnut	Smooth Sumac
Chokecherry	Tulip Tree
Cottonwood	Viburnum spp.
Dogwood spp.	White Oak
Hawthorn	White Pine
Hickory	White Spruce
American Hornbeam	Wild Crabapple

\*The **Emerald Ash Borer** has killed all of the large ash trees in Dicken Woods. This exotic beetle was first discovered in Michigan in 2002. Over 30 million ash trees in SE Michigan have died. But many small ash trees can still be found in the woods. They may or may not survive.

***Non-native trees and shrubs in Dicken Woods...***

The farmers that worked this land many years ago probably planted trees that are not native to this area. For example, you can find Scotch Pines and Apple trees. Some non-natives that have been introduced have become highly invasive, such as Buckthorn, Japanese Honeysuckle, Oriental Bittersweet, and Autumn Olive.

***Birds easily seen or heard in Dicken Woods...***

American Goldfinch

American Robin

Blue Jay

Black-capped Chickadee

Brown-headed Cowbird

Cedar Waxwing

Common Grackle

Gray Catbird

Flicker

Mallard Duck

Mourning Dove

Northern Cardinal

Red-bellied Woodpecker

Red-breasted Nuthatch

White-breasted Nuthatch

Tufted Titmouse

***Other birds that have been seen in Dicken Woods...***

In the spring and fall, many of these birds migrate and may be seen in the Woods as they stop to rest and eat. Dicken Woods Nature Preserve is an important refuge for many birds as they migrate through our area.

American Woodcock

Baltimore Oriole

Blackpoll Warbler

Carolina Wren

Common Yellowthroat

Eastern Phoebe

Eastern Wood-Pee wee

House Wren

Indigo Bunting

Nashville Warbler

Red-eyed Vireo

Rufous-sided Towhee

Ruby-crowned Kinglet

Song Sparrow

White-crowned Sparrow

White-throated Sparrow

***Butterflies that can be seen in Dicken Woods...***

**Spring**

Mourning Cloak

Spring Azure

**Summer**

American Painted Lady

Black Swallowtail

Cabbage White Butterfly

Comma

Great Spangled Fritillary

Pearl Crescent

Question Mark

Red Admiral

Red-spotted Purple

Summer Azure

Tiger Swallowtail

Viceroy

**Late Summer – Fall**

Monarch

## ***Proper behavior in the Woods...***

Dicken Woods Nature Area is a *nature preserve*. A nature preserve is different from a park or playground. The mission statement of the City of Ann Arbor Natural Area Preservation is “to protect and restore Ann Arbor’s natural areas and to foster an environmental ethic among its citizens”. To this end, we ask for your help in keeping Dicken Woods a healthy, natural area that is home to many native plants and animals.

## ***Please...***

- **stay on trails**

Why? Walking off established trails causes erosion, may damage fragile wildflowers and disturb nesting animals.

- **explore quietly**

Why? We are visitors in this “wild” place. Walk quietly so as not to disturb the animals that live here.

- **keep dogs on leash**

Why? Dogs exploring off trails can cause damage.

- **dispose of Scoop Bags properly**

Why? Even biodegradable bags take time to disintegrate and they can cause a health hazard. Please carry your bags home for disposal.

- **keep yard waste out of woods**

Why? Grass clippings and other yard waste may contain pesticides and spread invasive plants. Piles of yard waste may kill native plants.

- **leave nothing behind, take nothing away**

Why? This will help maintain the woods in healthy balance. Even a dead tree that you would like to remove provides food and shelter to many animals and is part of a natural decomposition cycle.

***Remember: In most cases, a healthy woods does not look very tidy!***

## ***Top 5 reasons to keep your dog on a leash in the Woods...***

Please follow *City of Ann Arbor Natural Area Preservation's* rule that your dog must be on a leash because...

1. Wildlife may not survive an encounter with a free-roaming dog. Even a friendly and obedient dog may innocently destroy the homes of ground-nesting birds or stress smaller animals.
2. Keeping your dog on designated trails helps prevent erosion and destruction of trailside plants.
3. Some park visitors feel scared or uncomfortable when they encounter free roaming dogs.
4. Dog feces are an unpleasant experience for all park visitors. With up to 100 dogs a day visiting some parks, the natural balance of the ecosystem is disrupted by the excess nutrients being added to the ecosystem.
5. It is the law. Fines begin at \$50 for first offenses.