

## Mother's Day Weekend Plant and Wildflower Tour near South Haven

*Treat your mother to Mother*

*Nature on Saturday, May 12*

at Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy's (SWMLC) recently acquired Black River Preserve just southeast of South Haven. The Van Buren Conservation District (VBCD) in collaboration with the Two Rivers Coalition (TRC) and SWMLC will offer a walk highlighting the native and



unique flora at the Preserve from 9:30- 11 am. For anyone interested in seeing the preserve from the Black River, an optional paddle will be offered afterward from 11:30 – 1 pm.

The Preserve features 120 acres of meadow, steeply rolling forest and wetlands in addition to one mile of river frontage and additional frontage along three tributary streams. The site was acquired in 2011 by SWMLC and will undergo a focused restoration effort in the coming years to improve habitat on site for wildlife and water quality. Currently, the site has a robust species list and could support many additional native species once work is implemented to eradicate exotic invasive plant species. "Our first steps have been toward restoration of the ecology of the site," stated Nate Fuller, SWMLC's Director of Conservation and Stewardship. "We are in the process of identifying resources to improve its value as a local resource for passive recreation." As it exists currently, the site contains some existing trails but does not yet contain an off-street parking lot or trailhead signage.

VBCD will lead an easy walk through part of the Preserve, located just west of the 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue Bridge, 1.1 miles east of CR 689 and .5 miles west of 68<sup>th</sup> Street. Tour leaders will highlight certain native plant species that can be obtained at the VBCD Native Plant Palooza, May 19, to attract wildlife to your own backyards. To participate in the Black River Paddle, bring a kayak or canoe, life jacket and paddle. There will be a limited number of loaner and rental boats available, which must be reserved in advance. **Please RSVP** for the walk and/or paddle by Thursday, May 10<sup>th</sup> at (269) 324-1600. Directions and additional information can be accessed at [www.vanburencd.org](http://www.vanburencd.org).