

## Beaver Island

The University owns 43.5 acres of land on the sandy eastern shore of Beaver Island, which is located in Peaine Township, Charlevoix County, Michigan. Since 1966, this property has been home to the Central Michigan University Biological Station. There is also a second parcel of CMU property on the southwest side of the island containing 230 acres, known as Miller's Marsh.

Beaver Island is located in Lake Michigan about 32 miles northwest of Charlevoix. It is approximately 13 miles long and 6 ½ miles wide, with an area of about 55 square miles. It boasts seven inland lakes, and abundant cedar swamps, upland and lowland coniferous forests, beech-maple climax forests, sand dunes, and marshes. Most of the island is uninhabited and untouched by human development, making it an ideal place for the biological field station where both aquatic and terrestrial biology research and study can take place.

Through the CMU Biological Station, study can be made of relatively undisturbed ecosystems including wetlands, second growth forests, fields in varying states of succession and a section of Lake Michigan shoreline. Areas of study include botany, biology, ecology and other natural sciences. Plentiful nature trails are available for students and the public alike.

Besides the Matt and Ellie Hohn Conference Center, there are buildings housing research labs, classrooms, a cafeteria, and a library at the Station. For students, there is a campground with toilets and hot water showers, as well as dormitory housing. For faculty and visiting researchers, rustic but comfortable duplex housing units are available. A Director's House is also located at the Station. *University Building Evaluation records place a total value on the Biological Station (43.5 acres, structures, and fixed assets) at nearly 2.5 million dollars as of June 30, 1998. Miller's Marsh was purchased in March of 1999 at a price of \$158,000.*

### Restrictions

It appears from old correspondence that the University (then Central Michigan College of Education) received the 45 acre parcel where the Biological Station is now in 1942 through a transfer from the Michigan Dept. of Conservation. This was accomplished through a legislatively established program allowing the Conservation Dept. to make transfers of state-owned land to public educational institutions. Correspondence from the Department states that this land is to be used "for college purposes" and "for school purposes;" otherwise title reverts to the state. I was unable to locate a copy of the actual deed to the University for this land, so I cannot confirm that this restriction is recorded in the state's land records, but I strongly suspect that it is.

Additionally, at its October 1965 meeting, the CMU Board of Trustees decreed:

It was the consensus of opinion that we hold the Beaver Island facility for the use of Central Michigan University rather than renting it to other institutions.

The conveyance documents for the Miller's Marsh parcel contain no use restrictions or retention requirements covering this 230-acres of land, nor is there correspondence in the file making any such assurances to any party.