

Bandemer Park and Argo Nature Area lie in northern Ann Arbor, on opposite sides of the Huron River. Originally a public beach in the 1930s and 1940s, Argo is one of the oldest parks in Ann Arbor. Bandemer is named for Ted and Mary Bandemer, who made a donation to purchase the northern end of the park.

The part of the river that these parks border is called Argo Pond as it is dammed at the southern end. This section of the Huron forms a tight bend known as an "oxbow."

ARGO

Natural Communities

In Argo you can explore dry forest, mesic forest, and emergent marsh habitats. The dry forest at the northern end of the park is characterized by large black oaks whose thick bark protects them from prescribed fires (conducted by city staff). This area is also home to witch-hazel, two species of hickory, and American hazelnuts.

The mesic forest includes American basswood, hornbeam, and crack willow. Restoration efforts have contributed to the return of an abundance of wildflowers. Green dragon (which reaches four feet in height) is an uncommon wildflower found in Argo. It has a distinctive spiked flower branching from its stem. The purple Monkey-flower grows 2-3 feet tall and is also found here.

Wildlife

In addition to supporting many mammal species, Argo is one of the few places in Ann Arbor where bullfrogs reside. Several turtle species are also found here living in the river. Soft-shelled turtles are easily identified by their very flat shell and long nose. Snapping and painted turtles both have dark shells, however the painted turtle has red markings along the edge of its shell. Soft-

shelled turtles prefer to remain in the water or bask but the other two will travel overland.

The park is also home to two uncommon species of butterfly: the harvester and Leonard's skipper. Leonard's skipper is a small butterfly with brown to brick-red wings, which can be spotted in open areas.

Preservation Efforts

NAP takes certain precautions to protect this park and keep it as beautiful and healthy as possible. Argo's location on the outer curve of the river puts it at risk from erosion. Volunteers work hard to maintain the dirt path along Argo Pond and protect it from erosion. It is a lovely location for a stroll, offering a clear view of the river.

BANDEMER

Natural Communities

Bandemer has a variety of habitats which vary in soil moisture, from dry prairie by the railroad tracks to wet meadow along Argo Pond. From a canoe you can view the Michigan lily (orange with brown spots and curling petals) in the wet meadow, and the sweet scented water lily (white with delicate petals) on Argo Pond. The small purple gerardia can also be seen in the park.

Wildlife

Several species of butterflies live here and can be seen basking in sunny areas. Like Argo, Bandemer is home to the small flashy orange harvester butterfly, whose carnivorous caterpillars feast on the aphids that live on alder trees. Other butterfly species living here include various skippers, swallowtails, and the morning cloak. Hibernating species like the morning cloak can be seen as early as January on warm days.

Cliff Swallows, a bird species uncommon to south-

ern Michigan, nest beneath the M-14 bridge. These small birds have an orange rump and red cheeks and throat. Some reptile species, such as American toads, spring peepers, and Eastern garter snakes are also common here.

Foreign Invasives

To maintain ecological diversity and balance, species native to Bandemer and Argo must be protected. Both parks have problems with non-native, invasive plants. These plants, such as buckthorn and honeysuckle, are taking over the native ecosystems.

To limit the spread of invasives, the plants are physically removed and prescribed burns are performed. Burns are beneficial here because the native plants in these ecosystems have adapted to fire and often benefit from it. Many invasives have not evolved this adaptation and prescribed burns often discourage their growth.

If you would like to be involved in restoration efforts at Bandemer and Argo, please contact Natural Area Preservation at (734) 794-6627.

For more information, contact
Ann Arbor Parks at (734) 794-6230 or visit
www.a2gov.org/Parks

Bandemer Park & Argo Nature Area

LEGEND

	Dirt Trails
	Boardwalk
	Paved Trails
	Paved Trails
	Boat Launch
	Canoe Livery & Boat Launch
	Fire Circle*
	Parking
	Picnic Shelter
	Restroom
	Park Boundaries
	Railroads

*By permit/reservation only.
Please call 734-994-2780
for more information.

