

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 controlled fire (conducted by city staff and trained volunteers). This area is also home to witch-hazel, three species of hickory, and American hazelnuts.

The mesic forest includes American basswood, hornbeam, and non-native 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 two to three feet tall and is also found here.

## **Wildlife**

Argo is home to dozens of bird species, many mammals, and some amphibians and reptiles. Argo Pond is one of the few places in the city where bullfrogs live, and there are at least 5 species of turtles that live in the pond and dig their nests along its banks. Turtles can often be seen from the boardwalk at the north end of

Argo, there are good views of logs in the water below. Watch for painted turtles with their yellow and red markings, and softshell turtles with flat shells and pointed noses." 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 the uncommon harvester butterfly. The harvester caterpillar is the only carnivorous caterpillar in the United States, feeding on woolly aphids that live on alder trees.

## **Preservation Efforts**

Natural Area Preservation (NAP) staff and volunteers work to protect and restore this natural area to keep it 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 swamp milkweed (fuchsia umbrella-shaped flowers) in the wet meadow, and the sweet scented water lily (white with delicate petals) on Argo Pond. In the fall, goldenrods and asters bloom throughout 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 southern Michigan, nest beneath the M-14 bridge. These small birds have an orange rump and red cheeks and throat. Turtles nest in this park and bask along the shoreline. The small pond at the south end of the park is home to painted turtles and green frogs, and American toads breed there in the spring.

## **Invasive Plants**

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, treated with herbicides 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.

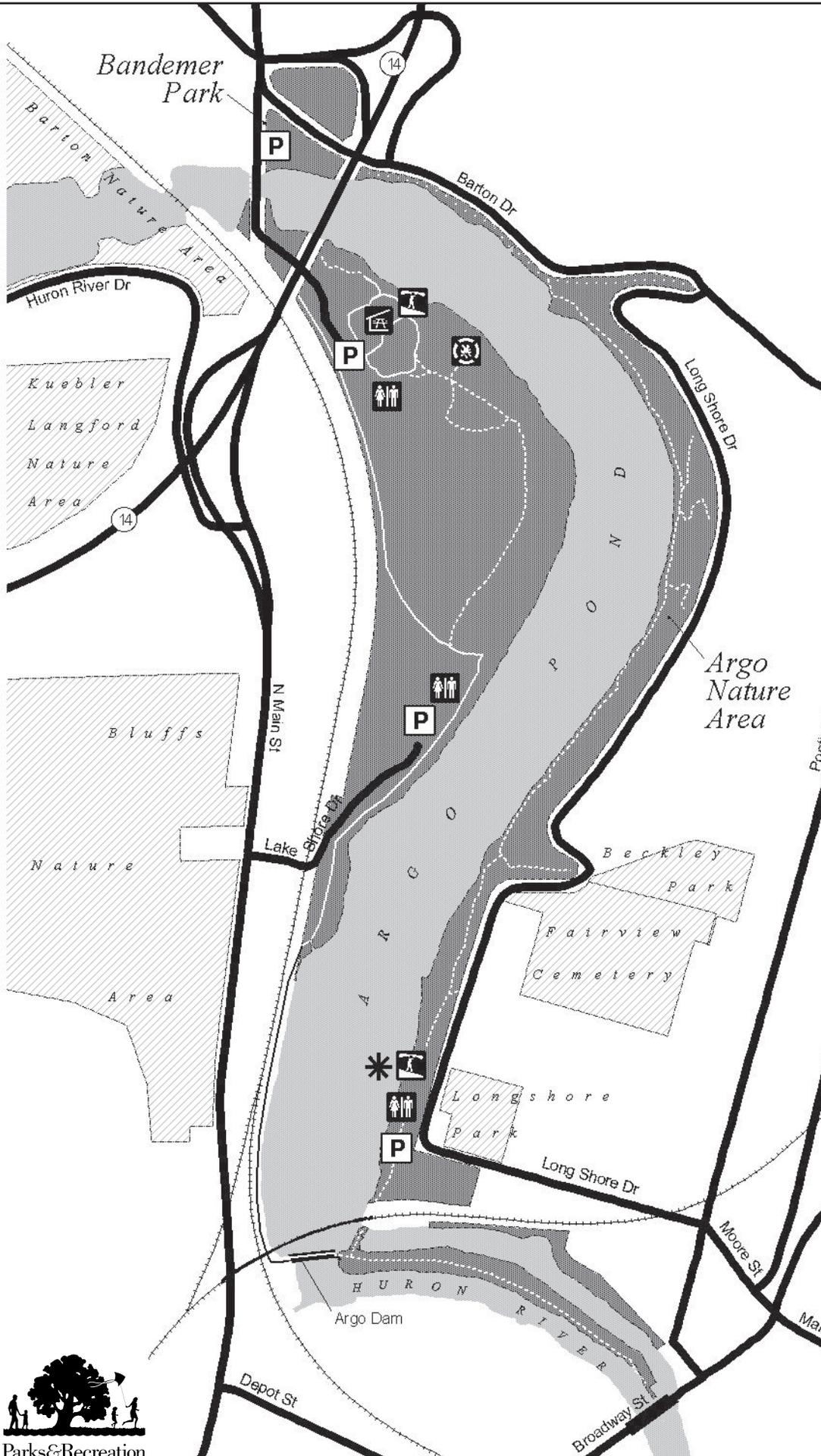
If you would like to be involved in restoration efforts at Bandemer and Argo, please contact Natural Area Preservation at [NAP@a2gov.org](mailto:NAP@a2gov.org) or call 734.794.6627. The NAP office is located at 3875 E. Huron River Dr, Ann Arbor, MI 48104.

For more information call  
Ann Arbor parks, 734.794.6230 or  
visit [www.a2gov.org/Parks](http://www.a2gov.org/Parks)

# 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 734.794.6230.



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