Mr. Groen is noted as inventing the Filet-o-Fish sandwich for McDonald's in Cincinnati in 1961. By the time he retired he owned 43 McDonald's restaurants throughout Ohio, Kentucky, and Indiana. Mr. Groen told Ray Kroc, McDonald's founder, that they need to sell a fish sandwich on Fridays in the Catholic dominated Cincinnati area. Mr. Kroc told Mr. Groen he didn't want his franchise smelling like fish. In the spirit of competition they made a bet, Mr. Groen would sell his fish sandwich and Mr. Kroc would sell a Hula burger, a piece of pineapple with cheese on a bun., Mr. Groen outsold Mr. Kroc's Hula burger and the Filet-o-Fish has been on the menu ever since.

Mr. Groen loved and enjoyed this property for 22 years with his wife Edna. Sadly, Mr. Groen passed away at the age of 93, leaving the property he loved to Otsego County to be used as a nature preserve for the enjoyment of the community, especially its children.

The site was the location of the Johannesburg Manufacturing Company for which the town was named after. The preserve currently allows hiking, biking, equestrian uses cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. In the future, plans include adding a nature center facility along with nature classes, horseback riding, sleigh/wagon rides, as well as rebuilding some of the historic structures that existed on the property.

The old Echo Valley Resort Hotel

Remnants of sawmill lumberjack camp.

Louis M. Groen Nature Preserve Prohibited Activities
Use the preserve at your own risk

The following activities are prohibited on the property outside of County-sponsored activities/events:

- Alcoholic beverages
- Pets must be on a leash no longer than 6 feet
- Campfires
- Disturb or destroy any property or wildlife
- Enter any area marked "No Trespassing"
- Enter the property at any location other than the main entrance or outside of posted hours
- Fireworks or any device that may cause a fire
- Hunting or Fishing
- Glass containers
- Ice skating on lakes
- Littering – please use LEAVE NO TRACE PRINCIPLE (Take out what you bring in)
- Park any vehicle in a place other than a designated parking area
- Possess any firearm including bow and arrows, sling shots, bb/air guns, paint guns or any type of animal trap
- Remove any type of plant or vegetation from the property
- Remove artifacts or other items
- Ride a bike or horse on any trail that is not designated for the use
- Smoking
- Sound-amplifying devices
- Swimming, bathing or wading in the lakes

Please note that cell phone coverage is generally available except at lower elevations near the lake.

Louis M. Groen Nature Preserve

2043 Gingell Road, Johannesburg, Michigan
Enter at corner of Gingell Road and Waters Road
(989) 705-2181 www.otsegocountymi.gov

Hiking * Biking * Snowshoeing *
Cross-Country Skiing *
Equestrian

Equestrian Use Rules: Equestrian uses allowed on Sundays and Mondays during Daylight Savings - Biking will not be allowed on those days

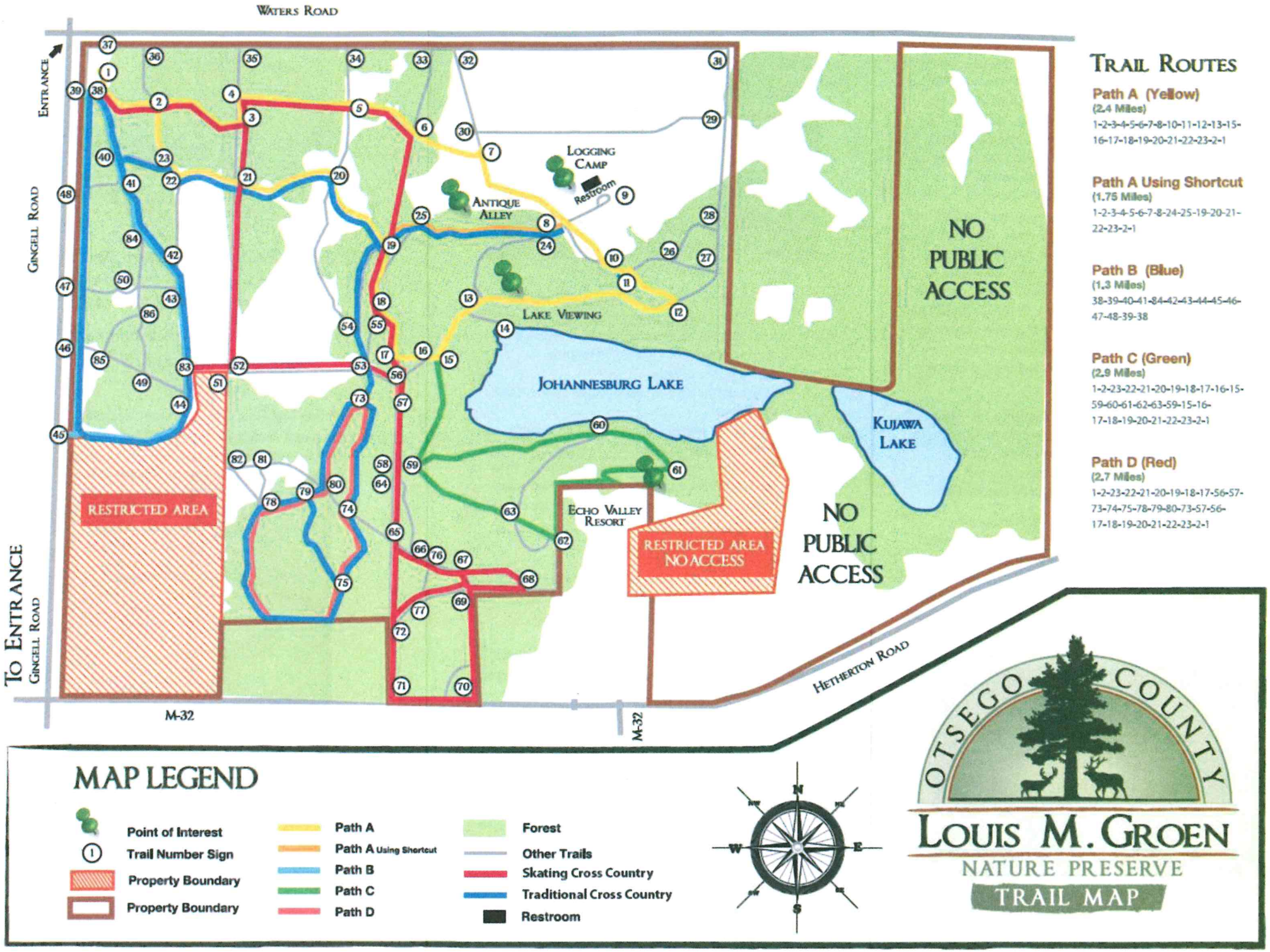
Winter Activities

Hours of Operation

During Eastern Standard Time (Winter)
M: Noon-6pm; Tues & Wed: Closed
Thr & Fri: 11am-6pm; Sat & Sun: 8am-6pm

During Eastern Daylight Savings Time (Summer)
M thru F: 2pm-8pm
Sat: 10am-8pm; Sun: 10am-6pm

Closed: New Year's Day, Thanksgiving; Christmas Eve Day; Christmas Day



Trail Routes

Path A (Yellow)
(2.4 Miles)
1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-10-11-12-13-15-16-17-18-19-20-21-22-23-2-1

Path A Using Shortcut
(1.75 Miles)
1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-24-25-19-20-21-22-23-2-1

Path B (Blue)
(1.3 Miles)
38-39-40-41-84-42-43-44-45-46-47-48-39-38

Path C (Green)
(2.9 Miles)
1-2-23-22-21-20-19-18-17-16-15-59-60-61-62-63-59-15-16-17-18-19-20-21-22-23-2-1

Path D (Red)
(2.7 Miles)
1-2-23-22-21-20-19-18-17-56-57-73-74-75-78-79-80-73-57-56-17-18-19-20-21-22-23-2-1

Map Legend

- Point of Interest
- Trail Number Sign
- Property Boundary
- Property Boundary
- Path A
- Path A Using Shortcut
- Path B
- Path C
- Path D
- Forest
- Other Trails
- Skating Cross Country
- Traditional Cross Country
- Restroom

Otsego County
Louis M. Groen
Nature Preserve
Trail Map