

# UMBS Visitors' Guide to Indian Point & Chaboiganing Preserves<sup>1</sup>

Knute Nadelhoffer, Director, UM Biological Station, July 2019

Most of the lands in Michigan's northwestern Lower Peninsula and eastern Upper Peninsula were ceded from indigenous people to the US one year before Michigan became a state (Fig. 1). The University of Michigan Biological Station (UMBS, established in 1909) lies about 20 miles south of the Mackinac Straits between Douglas and Burt Lakes in a region known as The Inland Waterway (Fig. 2). This region was a trade route populated by indigenous peoples and the home to Ottawa and Chippewa nations (known collectively as Anishinaabek people with a shared language and culture) prior to European contact.



**Figure 1.** The 1836 Treaty of Washington ceded ~14M acres of Anishinaabek land (yellow) to the US Government in exchange for rights & compensation. Other lands in lower Michigan were ceded as the result of earlier treaties.

Source- <https://data.glifwc.org/ceded/reference.maps/Michigan1.Map29.png>

<sup>1</sup> As of July 3, 2019, the forested tract referred to as “Colonial Point” in Biological Station documents and maps is being changed to “Indian Point”.

The 1836 Treaty of Washington and earlier treaties resulting in land transfers from native peoples to what is now the state of Michigan granted usufructuary rights and compensation to the indigenous owners from whom the land was taken<sup>2</sup>. This treaty, unlike many others, did not lead to forcible removal of tribal members from northern Michigan. Descendants of tribal groups from which lands were appropriated by 19<sup>th</sup> century treaties continue to live, work, and contribute to the quality of life here in the heart of the Great Lakes region.



**Figure 2.** Northern Lower Michigan and the Inland Waterway. The red ellipse shows the location of the University of Michigan Biological Station which occupies much of the land between Douglas and Burt Lakes. Adapted from Howey MCL, Sullivan FB, Tallant J, Kopple RV, Palace MW (2016) Detecting Pre-contact Anthropogenic Microtopographic Features in a Forested Landscape with Lidar: A Case Study from the Upper Great Lakes Region, AD 1000-1600. PLOS ONE 11(9): e0162062. <http://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0162062>

The UMBS was established in 1909 on 1,400 acres of cut-over land obtained partly by gift and partly by purchase from Colonel and Mrs. Charles Bogardus. Other purchases and gifts of land through the present time have led to the acquisition of over 10,000 acres in Cheboygan

<sup>2</sup> University of Michigan President's Advisory Committee on University History. 2018. *Report and Recommendations on Possible Relationship between the Burt Lake "Burnout" and the University of Michigan Biological Station*.





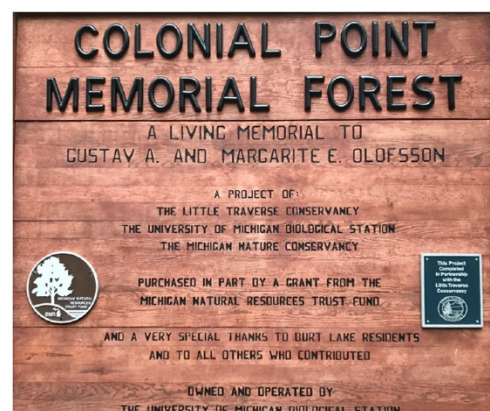
The Indian Point Reserve is one of only a handful of old-growth forest tracts in Michigan's Lower Peninsula. It was acquired by the University of Michigan in 1986 in a collaborative campaign with the Little Traverse Conservancy (LTC), the state of Michigan, and private donors, to prevent the large "old growth" trees from being clear cut. The resulting purchase of this land, along with LTC's adjacent Chaboiganing Preserve, served to prevent these aggregated parcels from commercial development (Fig 4).



**Figure 4.** Map of the UMBS Indian Point Reserve (gray, ~290 acres) and Little Traverse Conservancy Chaboiganing Nature Preserve (yellow, ~194 acres). Parking at the UMBS trailhead on the east end of Brutus Road is shown by "You are Here" at the north end of Lathers Road (now closed to vehicles, except for research and education purposes).

The UMBS maintains a small parking area with a commemorative sign at the north end of its Indian Point Reserve (Fig. 5).

**Figure 5.** Sign at the intersection of Brutus Road and Lathers Road commemorating the establishment of the Indian Point Reserve (formerly, the Colonial Point Reserve. Signage is being modified in 2019.) The location is indicated in Figure 4. There is also a trail map and parking for a small number of vehicles at the site. Trails are open to the public for non-motorized use.





As for all UMBS lands, collecting without permission and camping are not allowed.

The LTC's Chaboiganing Preserve (established 1993) is adjacent to and lies on the western boundary of the UMBS Indian Point Reserve (Fig. 6). A parking lot is available near the center of the Chaboiganing Preserve's northern boundary on Brutus Road. Chaboiganing Preserve lands consist mainly of second-growth forests and meadows, with some wetlands and a small amount of old-growth forest in the eastern section. Trails are well marked with numbered (1 through 12) locational signs. As with UMBS lands, public access is allowed, but motorized vehicles, camping, and collecting are prohibited.



**Figure 6.** Little Traverse Conservancy Chaboiganing Nature Preserve (green, ~190 acres) and UMBS Indian Point Reserve (yellow, ~294 acres) protected lands. The location of informational signs describing the Burt Lake Village Burnout near trail marker #12. Parking here is limited to the Chickagami Trail roadside curb at the “You are Here” label.

- Off-road parking is available at trail marker #1 adjacent the “P” on Brutus Road at the north end of the Reserve.
- The red cross shows the approximate location of Indian Cemetery (Figure 11).

Signage at the southern border of the Chaboiganing Reserve, accessible by trail or from Chickagami Trail Road, identifies the parcel, shows the approximate location of the 1900 Burt Lake Village Burnout, and provides historical information on the tragic burnout (Fig. 7). The Biological Station and the University of Michigan are planning to work with the Little Traverse Conservancy, the State of Michigan, the [Burt Lake Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians](#), and

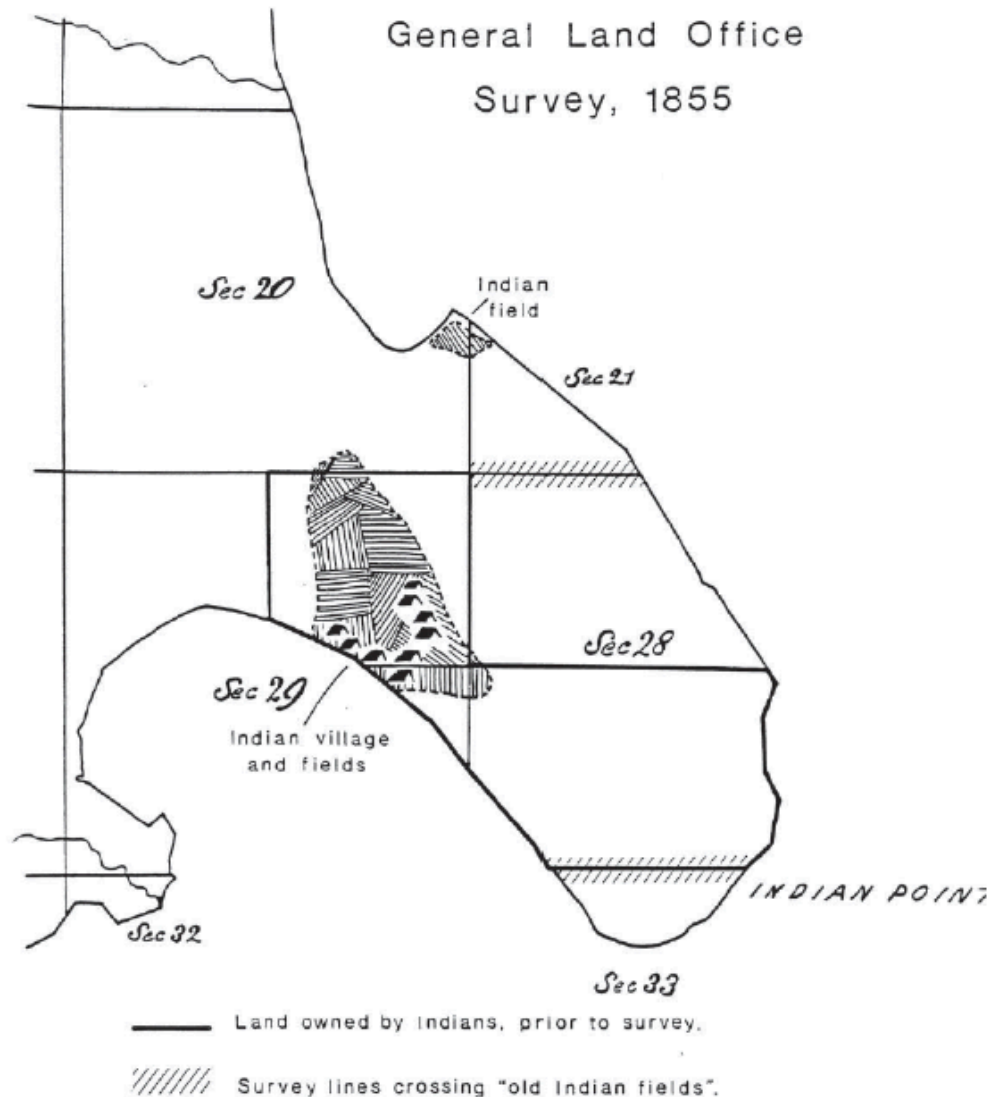
other stakeholders to upgrade the informational signs and to request that an official State of Michigan Historical Marker be erected near the former village site.



**Figure 7.** Chaboiganing Reserve signs at Trail Marker #12 in Figure 8. Location sign (top) and information signage (bottom) along Chicakagami Trail road describing the 1900 burnout of Burt Lake Village.



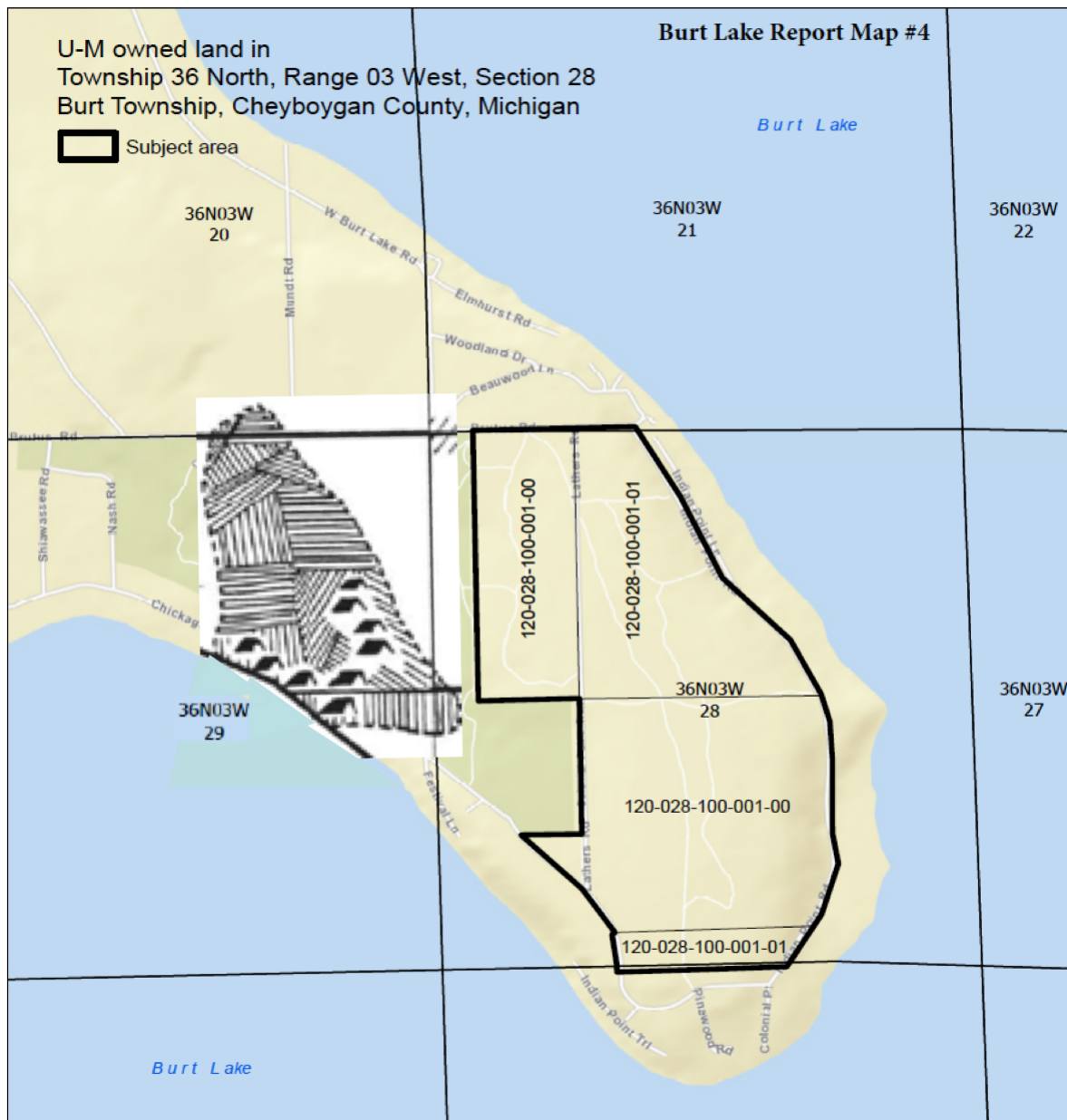
The location of the Burt Lake Village prior to the 1900 burnout is shown on a General Land Office Survey map of 1855 (Fig. 8). Hatched lines on the map show where Indian-owned lands crossed what is now UMBS Indian Point Reserve in Cheboygan County's Section 28.



**Figure 8.** Survey map of Indian Point showing approximate location of village and fields. From Albert, D. & Minc, L. *"The Natural Ecology and Cultural History of the Colonial Point Red Oak Stands"* University of Michigan Biological Station Technical Report No. 14, 1987, 43 Figure 11. Original source is: GLO (General Land Office Surveys). 1855. Unpublished field notes by Harvey Mellen, for Cheboygan County, Mich. (Vol. 83). Microfilm copy on file with the Lands Division, Michigan Department of Natural Resources. Lansing, Michigan.

The Little Traverse Conservancy's land acquisition in Section 29 and establishment of the Chaboiganing Preserve prevented further fragmentation of the Burt Lake Village site (Fig. 9).





**Figure 9.** Burt Lake Village location shown as an overlay from the General Land Office Survey of 1855 (Fig. 8) on Map #4 of the U-M President's Advisory Committee on University History's *Report and Recommendations on Possible Relationship between the Burt Lake "Burnout" and the University of Michigan Biological Station* (May 2018). The village was located mainly in Section 29 on land that is now occupied by private cottages on the Burt Lake shoreline or preserved by the Little Traverse Conservancy as the Chaboiganing Preserve.

About ¼ mile northwest of the signs at trail marker #12 in Figure 6, shown as a red cross, is a cemetery in which ancestors of many Michigan Native Americans are buried (Fig. 10). Given its location near the west end of Burt Lake Village site, it is likely that most or all buried here were residents of the 1900 village burnout. It is a sacred and peaceful site, deserving of our respect and protection.



**Figure 10.** Names of those buried in Indian Cemetery on Chickagami Trail road. Location is south of the road and about 0.3 miles northwest of the Chaboiganing historic marker at trail post #12.



## Pre-European Contact History

Research conducted from 2005 through 2010 by Professors John O'Shea (U-M) and Meghan Howey (now at the University of New Hampshire), students enrolled in *Field Studies in Archeology* (a course active during spring term for 6 years), UMBS staff members, and partners from our surrounding communities provides information about people who lived on lands in northern lower Michigan and areas surround Burt and Douglas Lakes before contact by Europeans. Cache pits used mainly to store preserved food items are easily identifiable at ground level and also with remote sensing technology, such as LIDAR (Fig. 11).

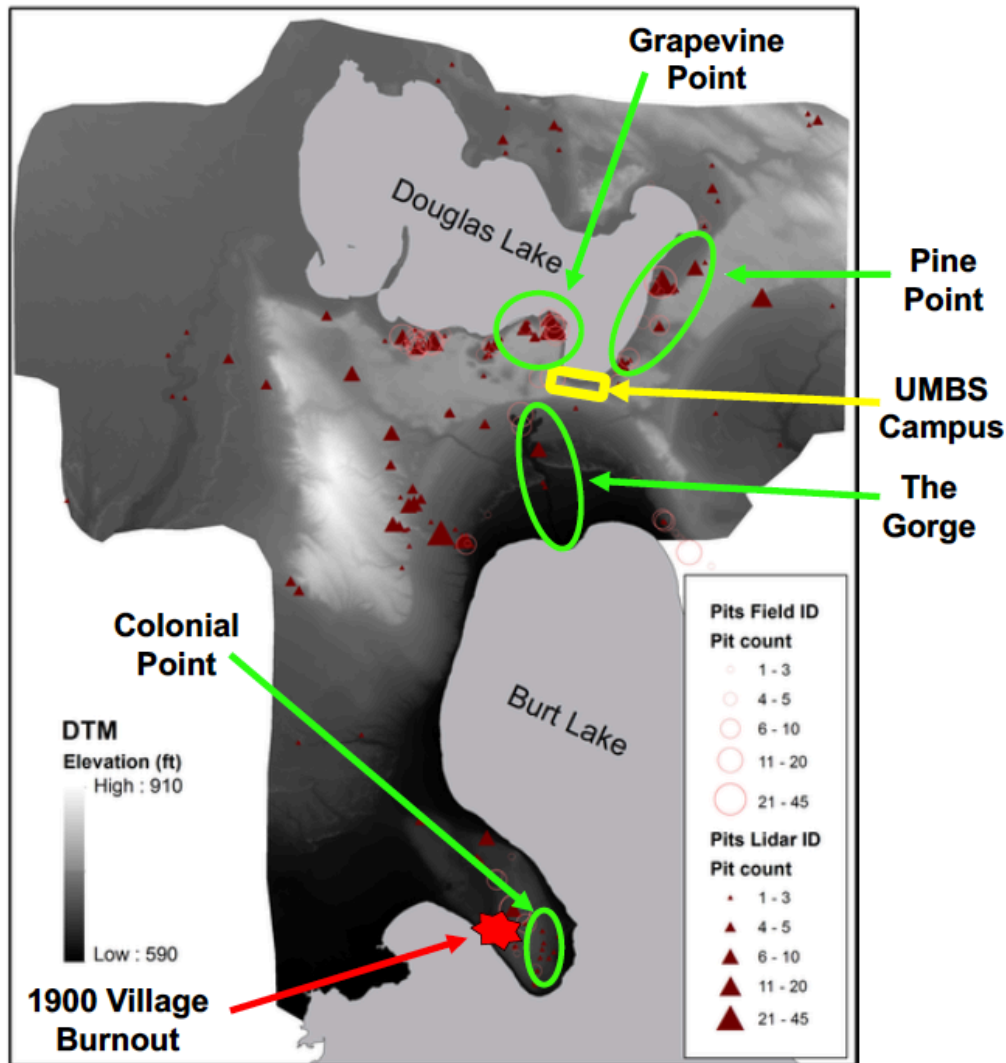


**Figure 11.** UMBS Cache Pits: ca AD 1000-1600: A) Aerial LIDAR image B) Modern ground surface C) side view. From Howey MCL, Sullivan FB, Tallant J, Kopple RV, Palace MW (2016) Detecting Pre-contact Anthropogenic Microtopographic Features in a Forested Landscape with Lidar: A Case Study from the Upper Great Lakes Region, AD 1000-1600. PLOS ONE 11(9): e0162062. <http://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0162062>

Remote sensing and field-based observations have revealed large numbers of cache pit clusters, most of which are on UMBS, LTC, and state forest lands near Burt and Douglas Lakes. Cache pits and other archeological artifacts (e.g. pottery sherds, fire-cracked rocks) discovered during surveys in the early 2000s were used by researchers involved with this course to identify villages and sites occupied between approximately 1000 and 1600 C.E. (Fig. 12).

Procedures and methods used in this research were discussed with representatives of local tribal groups and representatives Great Lakes inter-tribal groups in meetings during which we agreed to adhere to the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) and compliance regulations. We and our course instructors also worked with our Native American neighbors to invite participation and visits, and to provide educational materials. As the primary focus of the field research was on occupied (not burial) sites and as excavations did not exceed one meter in depth, no human remains were found. This was consistent with the goal of the course's research, which was designed to avoid searches for burial sites. All materials recovered from the research are curated in the UM Museum of Anthropological Archaeology. They can be loaned to educational institutions (including local schools), according to curatorial standards. A limited number of artifacts, mainly pottery fragments, stone and metal tools, and animal remains, are on display in the UMBS dining hall.





**Figure 12.** Cache pit clusters shown together with lidar identified cache pit clusters. Scale bar is omitted to reduce locational detail that could be used in inappropriate access to sensitive archaeological features. From Howey MCL, Sullivan FB, Tallant J, Kopple RV, Palace MW (2016) Detecting Pre-contact Anthropogenic Microtopographic Features in a Forested Landscape with Lidar: A Case Study from the Upper Great Lakes Region, AD 1000-1600. PLOS ONE 11(9): e0162062. <http://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0162062>

In closing, we ask visitors to respect the integrity of the land that was home to indigenous people before our state and university were established by acknowledging their gifts to us. We respect all who have lived on and passed from this place on Earth and the descendants of those whose lands were ceded. This requires that our programs of research, education and outreach focus on the connections of all people to other living things and to our land, water, and air. Our efforts can be guided by these words, from Great Binding Law 28 of the Constitution of the Five [Iroquois] Nations<sup>3</sup>– *“Look and listen for the welfare of the whole people and have always in view not only the present but also the coming generations, even those whose faces are yet beneath the surface of the ground- the unborn of the future Nation”*.

<sup>3</sup> Parker, A. C., 1916. The Constitution of the Five Nations. Albany, N.Y.: University of the State of New York.