

# BARRIER FREE TREEHOUSE AT FOR-MAR NATURE PRESERVE & ARBORETUM

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As children, most of us share a few similar dreams. We all dream about what we'll be when we get older and many of us dream about having a treehouse. Some of us are lucky enough to have a treehouse of our own, but for most of us it's just a dream. Now that dream is a reality for kids and adults alike with a custom built, public treehouse at For-Mar Nature Preserve & Arboretum!



A couple of years ago, a group of kids at a Wild Adventurers program at For-Mar were tasked with presenting a proposal to Genesee County Parks Director, Amy McMillan. Their goal was to prove to her that a treehouse was a worthy addition for For-Mar and that it wasn't just a cool thought that would lose its luster in a week like so many toys and fads do with kids. After truly impressing her, the Genesee County Parks Commission agreed to adding a treehouse and begun saving funds to make it possible. They also applied to Nelson Treehouse and Supply with a copy of the video from that presentation. Two years later, the Parks Commission had raised sufficient funds and had begun scouting locations for a treehouse when a serendipitous call from Treehouse Masters changed the plans.

Although a treehouse was in the plan, we had no idea that we would end up with a custom built treehouse from the "treehouse master" himself, Pete Nelson, but that's exactly what happened. The Parks Commission had a small, but mighty, set of requirements for the treehouse when Nelson Treehouse and Supply began making their plans. The plan was to add additional classroom space because the Visitor's Center space is operating at capacity and For-Mar's popularity continues to soar. That meant it needed to hold at least 30 kids plus instructors. It also needed to be barrier free, allowing even those in wheelchairs to experience the joys of being in the trees.

It was a tall order, but the crew at Nelson Treehouse and Supply came through with a beautiful AND functional design. It took a little over a month for them to turn that design into a reality, but now visitors of all ages and abilities coming out to For-Mar will have the opportunity to experience a treehouse overlooking the Kearsley Creek.



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Nestled back in black cherry, red oak, white oak, basswood and butternut hickory trees, the treehouse stands approximately 30 feet above the bed of the Kearsley Creek oxbow and can be accessed by either staircase or the ramp with grades to meet ADA requirements.

On the inside visitors will find tools and equipment for educational programming including some unique elements you won't find in a traditional class room. The treehouse has an additional level of excitement as it was designed to be the headquarters for The Preservers, the Nature's Superheroes that Genesee County Parks visitors have come to know and love. The treehouse build was featured on Animal Planet's show Treehouse Masters in January of 2017, season 8 episode 3. Highlights from the build can be found on [Animalplanet.com](http://Animalplanet.com).

In August of 2017 the For-Mar treehouse had its first birthday and throughout the first year over 55,000 people visited the treehouse. It has

become our most popular field trip location.

If you want to see all the special features of the treehouse, you can visit us at For-Mar and see it for yourself! The treehouse can be closed to the public due to field trips, birthday parties and special events.

Please watch the For-Mar Facebook page for updates on hours as well as programming.

To the trees!



Grounds Open 7 days a week 8am to sunset

Visitor's Center Open 7 days a week 9am to 5pm

**BARRIER FREE TREEHOUSE DOES NOT HAVE REGULAR OPEN HOURS. IT CAN BE OPENED IF STAFF ARE AVAILABLE DURING VISITOR CENTER OPEN HOURS.**

To have the treehouse opened please ask at the visitor center or call 810.789.8567 to talk to For-Mar Staff.

\*Please call ahead if you are planning a special trip to the treehouse. The treehouse can be closed to the public due to treehouse field trips and programs.

The treehouse is not heated and can also close due to inclement weather.

FOR-MAR NATURE PRESERVE & ARBORETUM  
2142 North Genesee Road  
Burton, MI, 48509



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