

# Fishing Guide

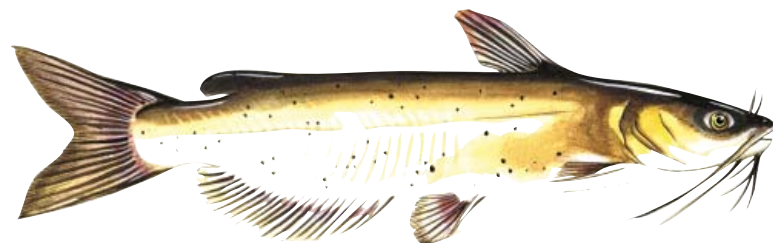
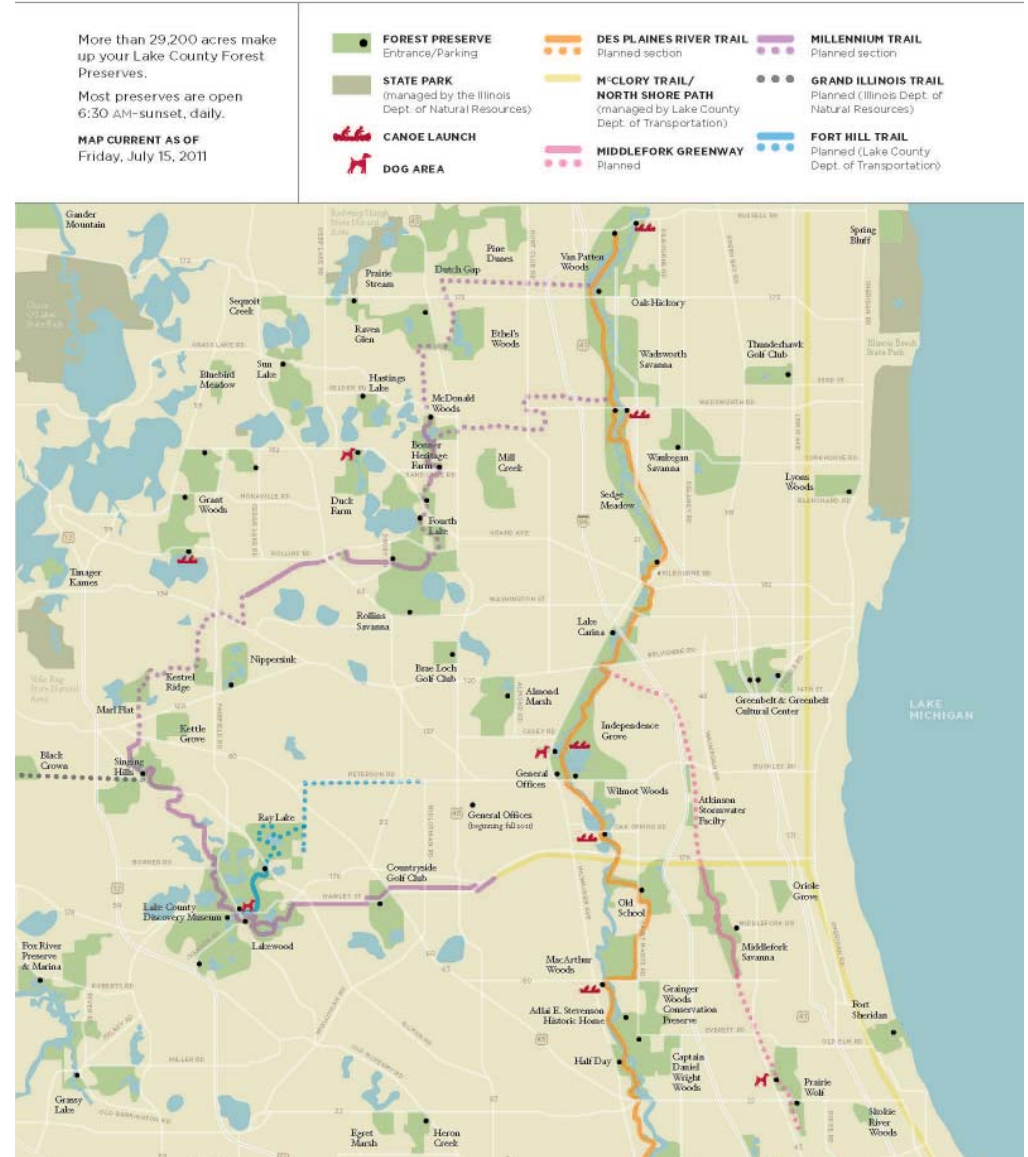


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## Your Lake County Forest Preserves



## Origins

Lake County owes its abundance of lakes to the last ice age when the Wisconsin glacier advanced and retreated across the landscape some 16,000 to 18,000 years ago. Glaciers gouged and carved the landscape, and large masses of ice left behind created depressions that form some of our present day lakes. In addition, some lakes and ponds in the preserves are man-made, former quarries or borrow pits, or dammed streams.

## Licenses

All anglers over the age of 16 must have a valid Illinois fishing license. Anglers fishing for rainbow trout in Banana Lake at Lakewood Forest Preserve must also have an inland trout stamp. Fees from these licenses provide funds to manage and stock many of these lakes and ponds annually. Purchase them at Independence Grove Forest Preserve near Libertyville, many sporting goods stores, or online at [www.DNR.state.il.us](http://www.DNR.state.il.us).



## Bait

Live bait is permitted. However, seining or trapping baitfish, shellfish or other aquatic organisms is not permitted in any Forest Preserve waterway. Please do not release unused lived bait into Forest Preserve waterways where non-native species will cause problems for existing fish populations. Worms and tackle are sold only at Independence Grove.

## Catch-and-Release—tips for proper technique

Catch-and-release fishing is an important part of maintaining good populations and is mandatory at Independence Grove and Nippersink Forest Preserves. At the other preserves, we highly encourage you to release bass or other predator fish. These predator fish help to keep panfish populations in balance.

- Land a fish as soon as possible. Exhausting a fish lowers its chance of survival.
- When possible, do not use a net. Nets remove a fish's protective slime.
- Always wet hands before handling fish. This protects the protective slime.
- Use barbless hooks for easier hook removal.
- Keep fish in the water while removing the hook.
- Handle toothless fish by gripping the lower jaw.
- Handle fish with teeth behind the gill covers.
- Never grab a fish directly on the gill covers.
- Never grip a fish around the abdomen.
- Never grip a fish by depressing the eyes.
- If a fish swallows the hook do not attempt to remove it. Cut the line as close to the hook as possible and return the fish to the water.
- Gently place the fish in the water upon release; never throw a fish back.

## Boat Rentals

Fishing boats are available for rent at Independence Grove. Boating is not permitted at other lakes and ponds except for Sterling Lake at Van Patten Woods (see page 25). Float tubes, belly boats and wading are not permitted.

## Hours

Fishing hours at most preserves are 6:30 a.m. to sunset. At the Independence Grove Marina, daily service runs Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day. Weekend service runs mid-April through Memorial Day and again Labor Day until mid-October. Marina hours are 6:30 a.m. to one hour before sunset. Call 847-968-3499 or visit [www.IndependenceGrove.org](http://www.IndependenceGrove.org) for further information.

## Ice Fishing

Ice fishing shelters must be removed at the end of each day, only two poles are allowed, and holes must be drilled six inches or smaller. A uniform 4.5-inch layer of ice is required. Ice fishing is permitted in the south bay at Independence Grove, on Banana Lake at Lakewood, and on Sterling Lake at Van Patten Woods. For the latest ice conditions, call the Winter Sports Hotline at 847-968-3235 or check our website at [www.LCFPD.org](http://www.LCFPD.org).

## Cast No Trash

Please deposit all litter, including fishing line, in trash receptacles. Most sites offer recycling and fishing line collection tubes. Forest Preserve staff has seen birds and other wildlife entangled in old fishing line. Please help us avoid this.

## Wheelchair Access

Many forest preserves offer wheelchair access for fishing. See individual preserve maps on the following pages for details.

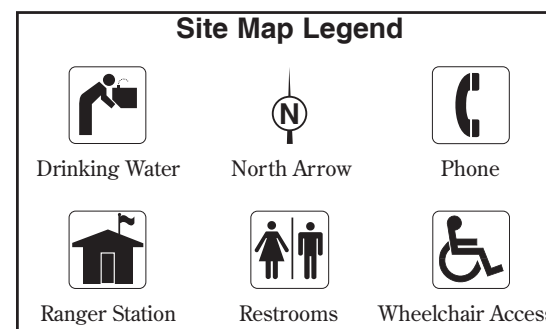
## Fishing in your Lake County Forest Preserves

The Lake County Forest Preserve District works with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) to manage a number of lakes and ponds that provide quality fishing.

State of Illinois fishing regulations, including site specific regulations, apply at all sites in addition to the following limits. Additional information is available online at [www.DNR.state.il.us/fish](http://www.DNR.state.il.us/fish).

Species	Minimum Length	Creel Limit
Bluegill/sunfish	n/a	n/a
Channel catfish	n/a	n/a
Crappie	n/a	n/a
Largemouth bass	n/a	6 per day
Muskellunge	36 inches	1 per day
Northern pike	24 inches	3 per day
Rainbow trout	10 inches	5 per day
Smallmouth bass	n/a	3 per day
Walleye	14 inches	6 per day

*Note: Only line fishing is allowed in Forest Preserve waterways. Anglers may use a maximum of two poles. Independence Grove and Nippersink Forest Preserves have a mandatory catch-and-release fishing program. This program makes it recreational for anglers and beneficial for nature. Anglers are encouraged to use barbless, non-stainless steel hooks at all forest preserves. See page 4 for proper technique.*



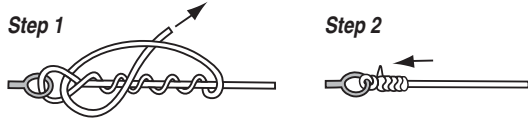


# Basic Fishing Knots

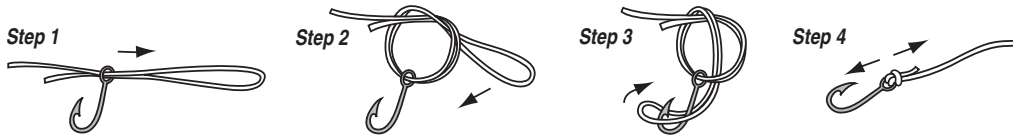
Use fishing knots to properly tie your line to your hook, lure and other tackle. The knots below are those most commonly used by anglers. Each knot has a specific purpose. When creating your knot, consider the following:

- The “tag end” (a.k.a. “working end”) is the end of the line used to tie the knot.
- The “standing end” is the line that comes from your reel.
- Leave about 12 inches of the “tag end” of line to tie knots properly.
- You want the strongest knot possible to avoid losing fish.
- Simple overhand knots actually weaken your line.
- Practice tying until you can create each knot easily and correctly.
- Use saliva to wet knots as you pull them tight. This prevents damage to the line, helps pull the knot tight and prevents it from slipping.
- Once tied, trim knots closely. A good, tight knot will not come loose, and close trimming prevents the knot from catching snags or weeds.
- Do not burn the tag end. Heat damages the line and knot.

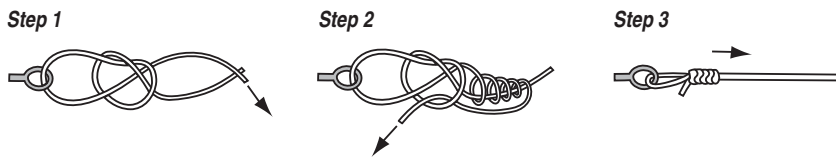
**Improved Clinch Knot** - Used to tie fishing line to a hook or lure for lines up to 20-pound test. The secret is making five turns of the tag end around the standing end before putting the tag end back through the formed loop. The final tuck of the line back through the loop makes this knot very strong.



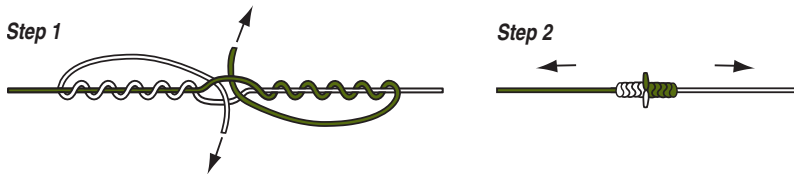
**Palomar Knot** - Used to tie fishing line to a hook or lure for lines up to and over 20-pound test. This takes more line to tie and can tangle because it is doubled first, but it is a favorite of many anglers because it is easy and can be tied in the dark.



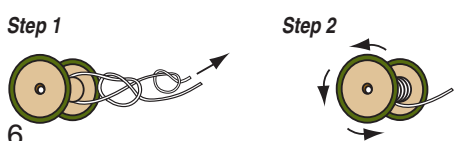
**Non-Slip Loop Knot** - Used with larger lines where a tight knot can affect the hook or lure movement. This knot creates a fixed loop so the hook can move freely.



**Blood Knot** - Used to join two lines of similar diameter. The secret is making five turns of line with each tag end around the overlapped standing end. *Tip:* Make one series of turns, tuck the tag end between the two lines and repeat with second line.



**Arbor Knot** - Used to attach line to your reel. This knot does not need to be strong. Run line around the spool, make overhand knot around standing line, clip and pull.



Buffalo Creek Forest Preserve

# Buffalo Creek Reservoir

34 acres

max depth: 7 feet

Designed and built as a flood control reservoir in 1986, the lake is not managed or stocked for fishing. Careful and creative design of the reservoir has created a natural-looking wetland.

## Directions

Located in Buffalo Grove on the southern border of Lake County. At corner of Lake-Cook and Arlington Heights Roads, go north on Arlington Heights Road ½ mile to Checker Road. Turn west on Checker Road to preserve entrance. From parking lot, take the trail west.



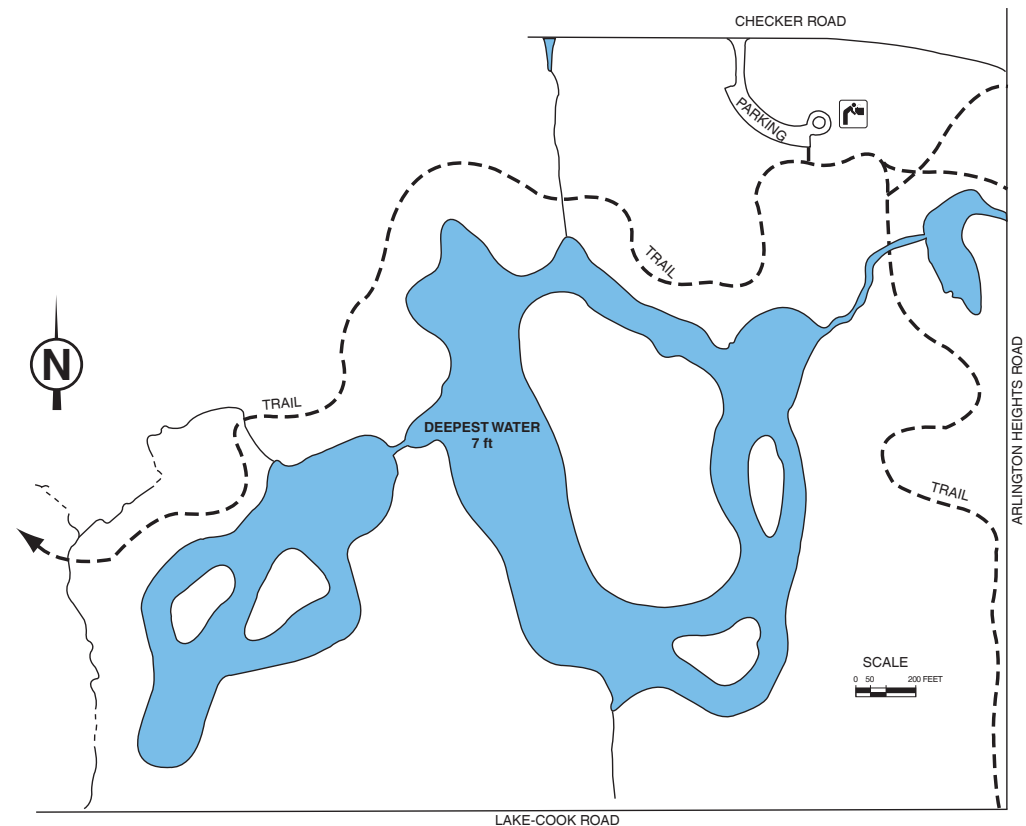
bluegill/sunfish



largemouth bass



northern pike



## Wright Woods Pond

3 acres

max depth: 12 feet

This man-made pond was created in 1964. An outlet at the south end flows into the Des Plaines River. In 1992 the pond was reshaped and deepened. It was then restocked with largemouth bass, bluegill and channel catfish.

### Directions

Located in Lincolnshire in southeastern Lake County. At the corner of St. Mary's Road and Route 60, go south on St. Mary's Road for 1½ miles to preserve entrance. Pond is within sight of parking lot.



bluegill/sunfish



crappie



channel catfish



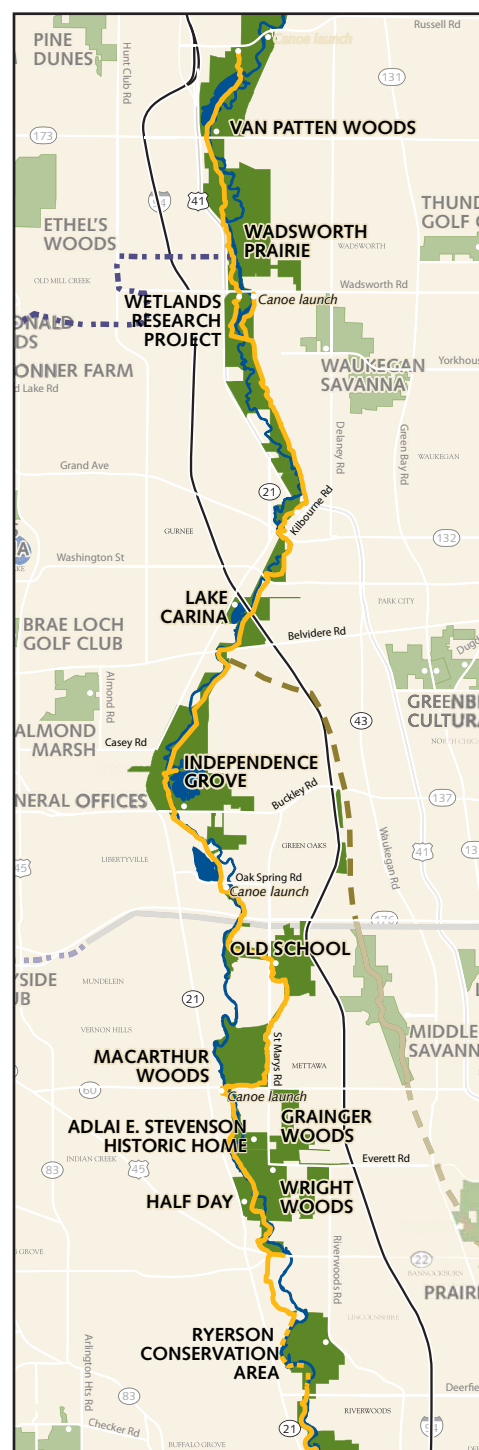
largemouth bass

## Des Plaines River Greenway

While not stocked or managed for fishing, the Des Plaines River contains many species and is a great spot for anglers. Parking and access to the river's edge is available at five Forest Preserve canoe launches:

- **Van Patten Woods Canoe Launch** on Russell Road, east of Route 41
- **Wadsworth Road Canoe Launch**, east of Route 41
- **Independence Grove Canoe Launch** in preserve, near North Bay Pavilion
- **Oak Spring Road Canoe Launch**, west of St. Mary's Road
- **Route 60 Canoe Launch**, east of Milwaukee Avenue (Route 21)

*Note: River fishing is not allowed at Ryerson Conservation Area, MacArthur Woods or Wadsworth Prairie.*



bluegill/sunfish



channel catfish



crappie



largemouth bass



northern pike

## Fox River

Fox River Preserve and Marina is open for shoreline fishing in designated areas only. Fishing is not allowed in the marina and dock area, or from the boat launch. The 169-slip marina offers 20, 25 and 30-foot slips, and includes a four-lane launch for boats and personal watercrafts. Indoor dry storage is also available. Larger slips provide electric and water access. For more information, call 847-381-0669.

### Directions

Located in the southwest corner of Lake County. The entrance and parking area are located on Roberts Road, west of Route 59.



bluegill/sunfish



crappie



channel catfish



largemouth bass



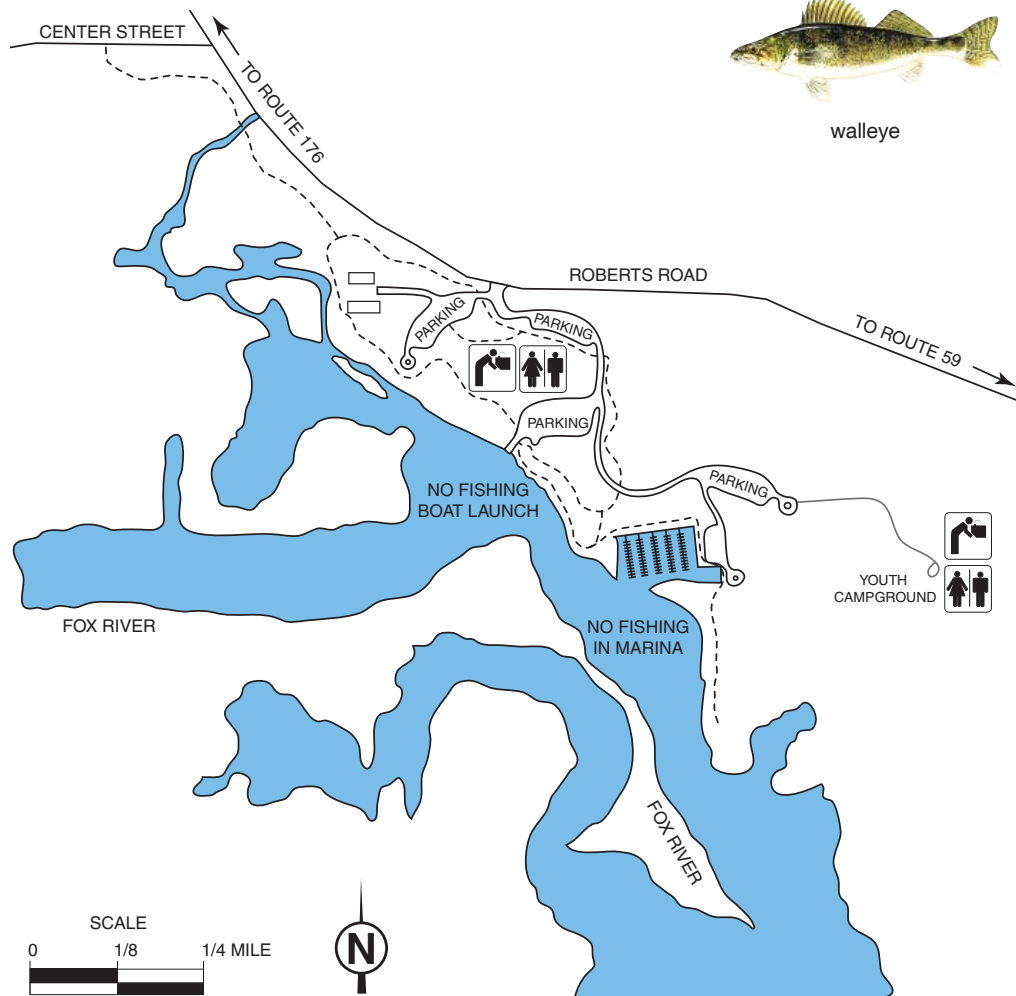
northern pike



smallmouth bass



walleye



## Rubber Duck Pond

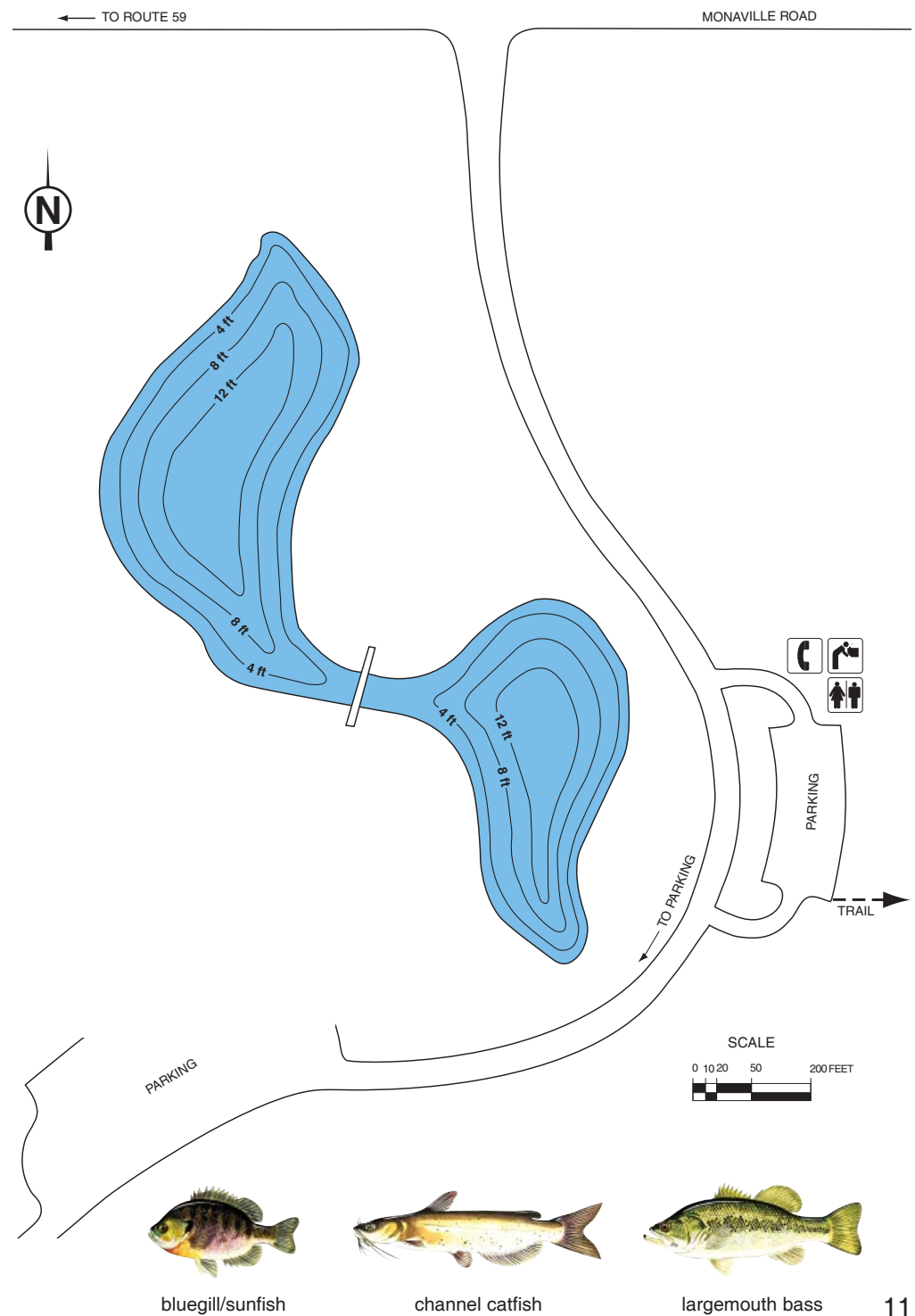
2 acres

max depth: 12 feet

Rubber Duck Pond was excavated in 1987. Turn this map on its side to see how the pond got its name.

### Directions

Located in Fox Lake in northwestern Lake County. At corner of Route 59 and Monaville Road, go east on Monaville Road to preserve entrance. Pond is within sight of first parking lot.



bluegill/sunfish



channel catfish



largemouth bass

## Dugdale Lake

6 acres

max depth: 16 feet

Built to its final shape in 1984, Dugdale Lake offers great shoreline fishing.

### Directions

Located in Waukegan in northeastern Lake County. At corner of Green Bay Road (Route 131) and 14th Street, go east on 14th Street to Dugdale Road. Go north on Dugdale to preserve entrance. From parking lot, take trail southwest.



bluegill/sunfish



channel catfish



largemouth bass



## Pulaski Lake

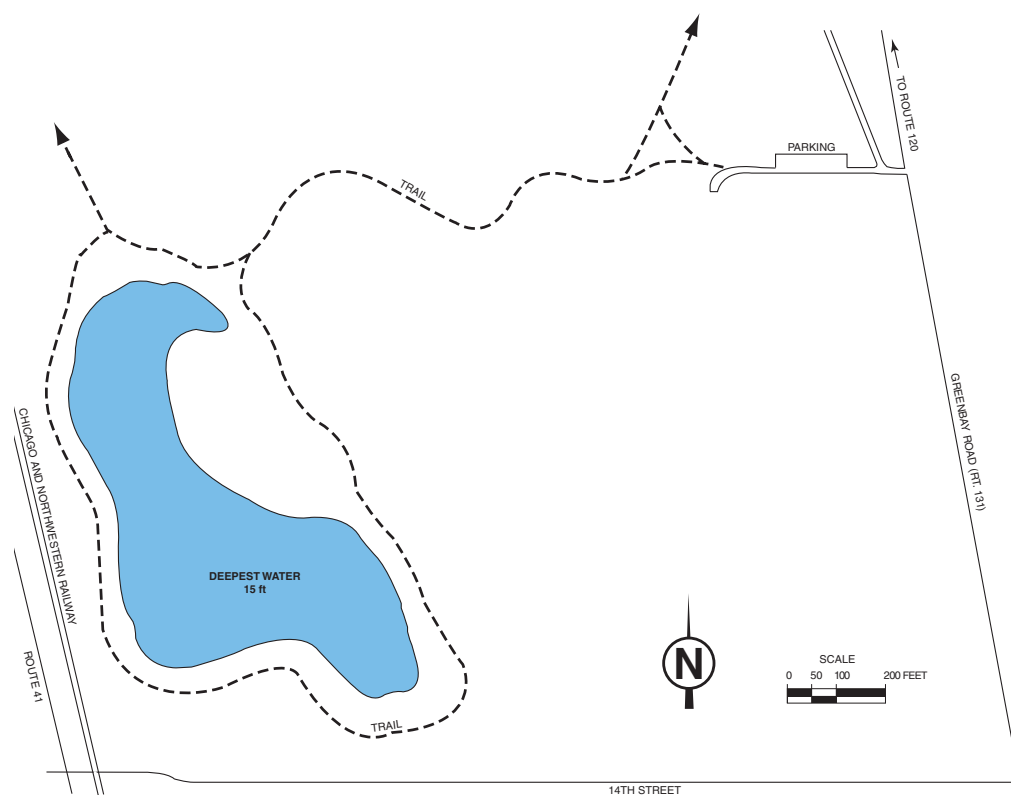
6 acres

max depth: 15 feet

Built as a borrow pit for the 14<sup>th</sup> Street overpass in 1976, occasional flooding of the adjacent Skokie River has allowed fish like carp and catfish access to Pulaski Lake.

### Directions

Located in Waukegan in northeastern Lake County. At corner of Belvidere Road (Route 120) and Green Bay Road (Route 131), go south on Green Bay Road to preserve entrance. At first fork in preserve road stay left to reach parking lot. Take trail west from parking lot about 1/2 mile, staying left at fork in trail.



bluegill/sunfish



crappie



channel catfish



largemouth bass



## Half Day Pond

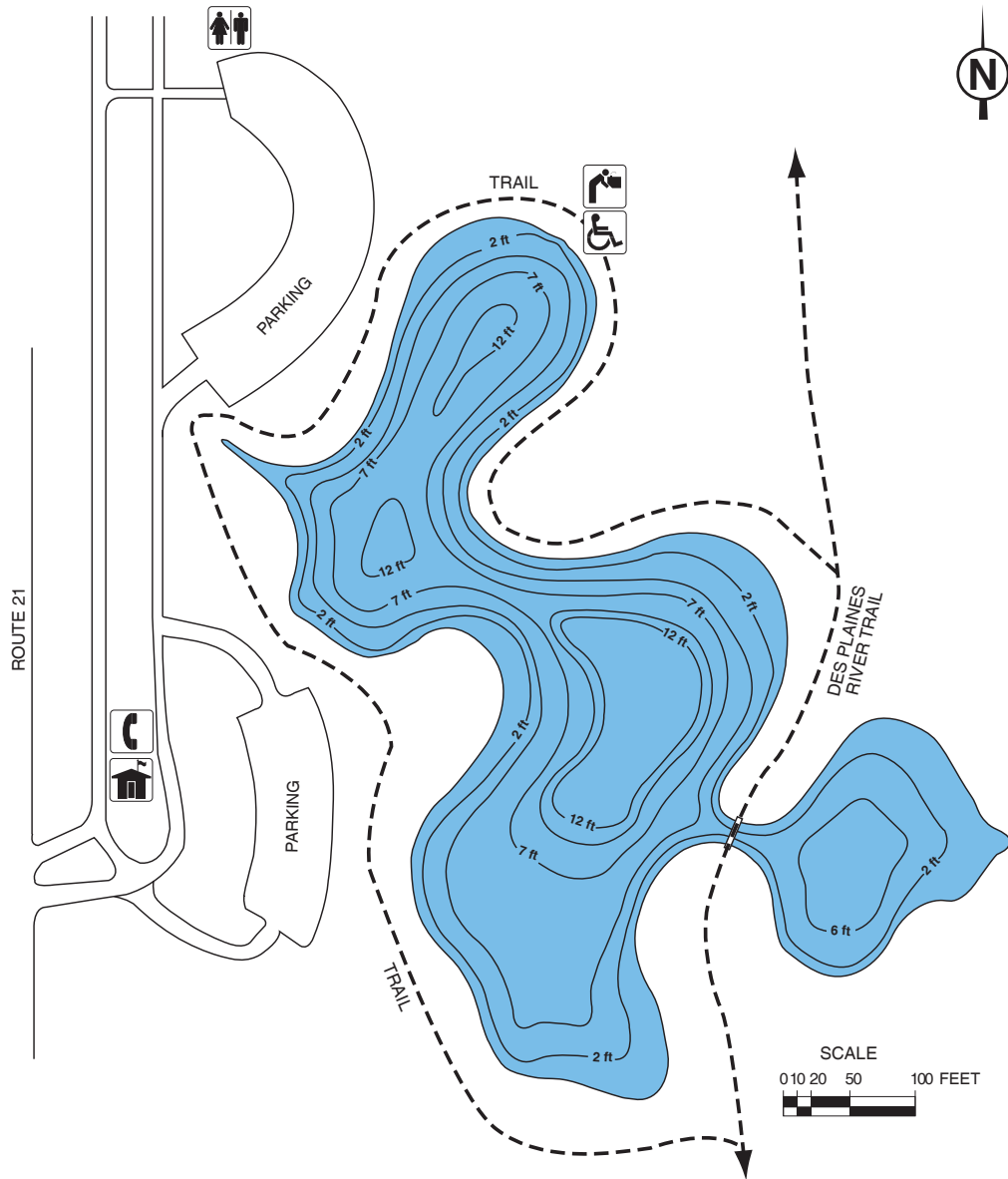
3 acres

max depth: 12 feet

Named after the Potawatomi Chief Aptakistic, whose name means half day, this pond was built in 1989.

### Directions

Located in Vernon Hills in southeastern Lake County. At corner of Milwaukee Avenue (Route 21) and Townline Road (Route 60), go south two miles on Milwaukee Avenue to the preserve entrance. Follow signs to Shelter A parking lot. The pond is within sight of the parking lot.



bluegill/sunfish



channel catfish



largemouth bass

## Hastings Lake

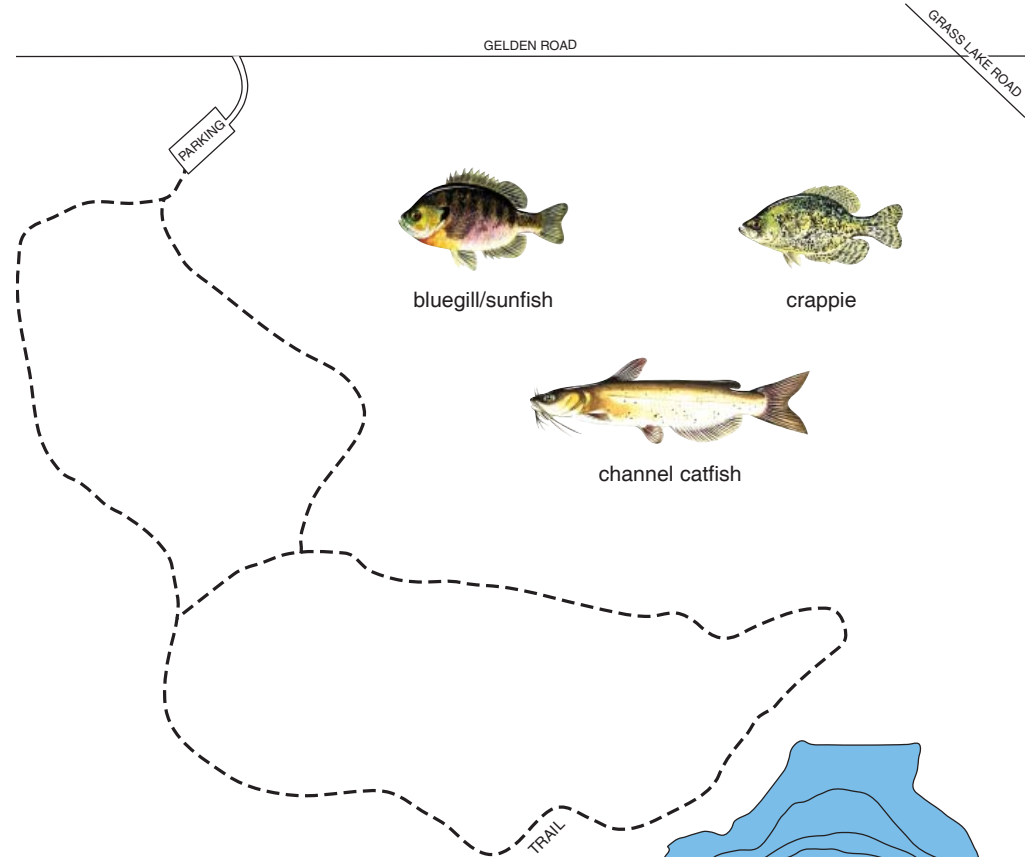
74 acres

max depth: 25 feet

Hastings Lake features 12,000 feet of shoreline and many species for good fishing.

### Directions

Located in northern Lake County, between Lindenhurst and Lake Villa. A parking area with trail access is located on Gelden Road, just west of Grass Lake Road.



bluegill/sunfish



crappie



channel catfish



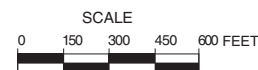
largemouth bass



northern pike



yellow perch





# The Lake at Independence Grove

115 acres

max depth: 49 feet

We've transformed a sterile gravel quarry with steep sides into a rich aquatic ecosystem with gently graded slopes and underwater islands. There is good fishing here, especially for bass. Your luck will increase when you fish from a boat, available for rent at the Marina. Bait, tackle, and concessions are also for sale. At the Marina, daily service runs Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day. Weekend service runs mid-April through Memorial Day and again Labor Day until mid-October. Marina hours are 6:30 a.m. to one hour before sunset. Call 847-968-3499 or visit the website at [www.IndependenceGrove.org](http://www.IndependenceGrove.org) for further information.

*Note: Catch-and-release fishing is mandatory. This program makes it recreational for anglers and beneficial for nature. Anglers are encouraged to use barbless, non-stainless steel hooks. See page 4 for proper techniques. Dogs, horses and other pets are not permitted here. A parking fee applies for non-residents.*

## Directions

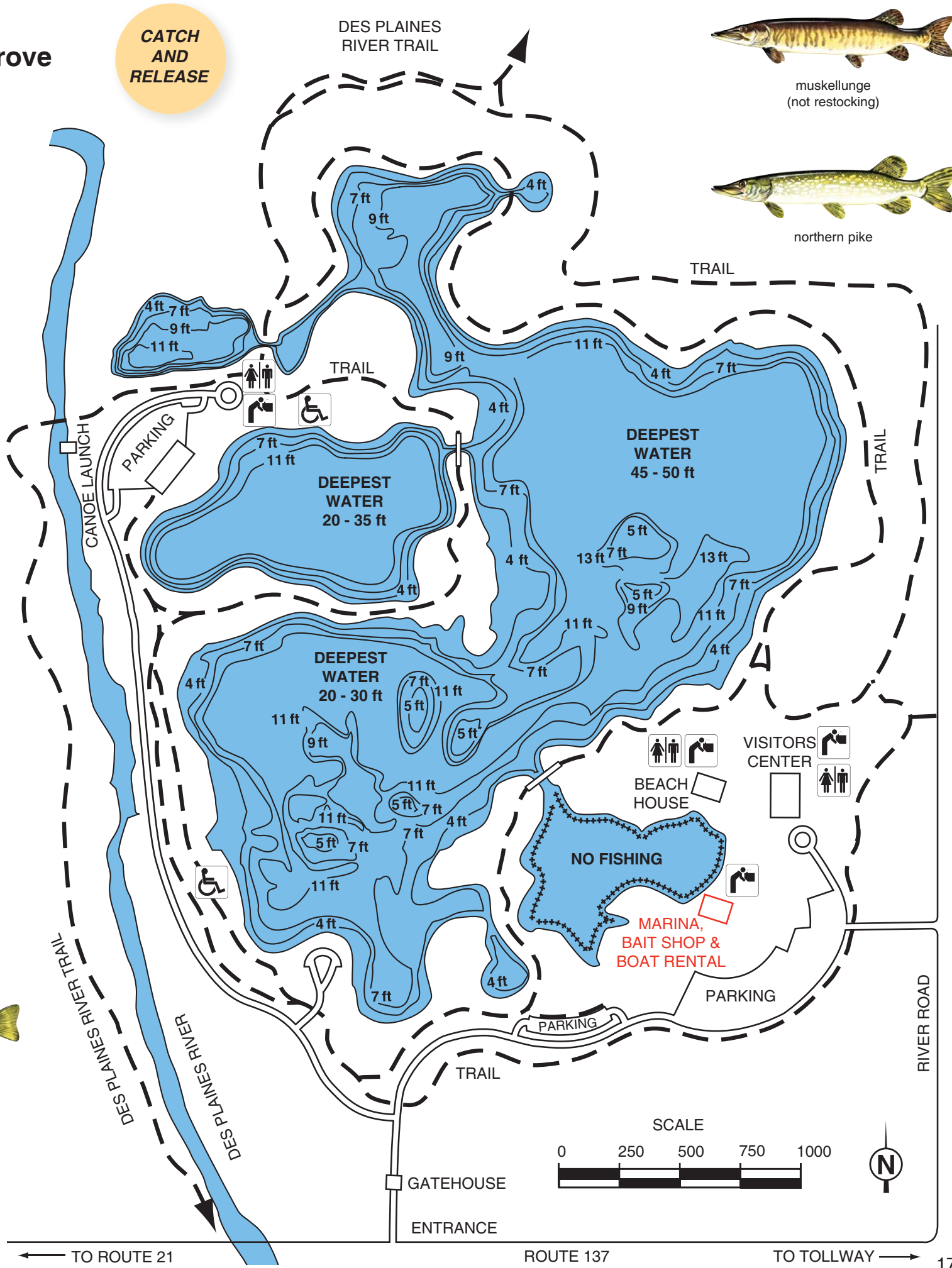
Located in central Lake County near Libertyville. At corner of Buckley Road (Route 137) and Milwaukee Avenue (Route 21), go east on Buckley Road to preserve entrance. Lake is within sight of parking lots.



muskellunge  
(not restocking)



northern pike



bluegill/sunfish



crappie



channel catfish



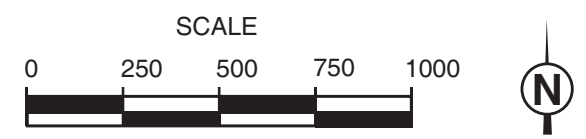
largemouth bass



walleye



yellow perch



## Lake Carina

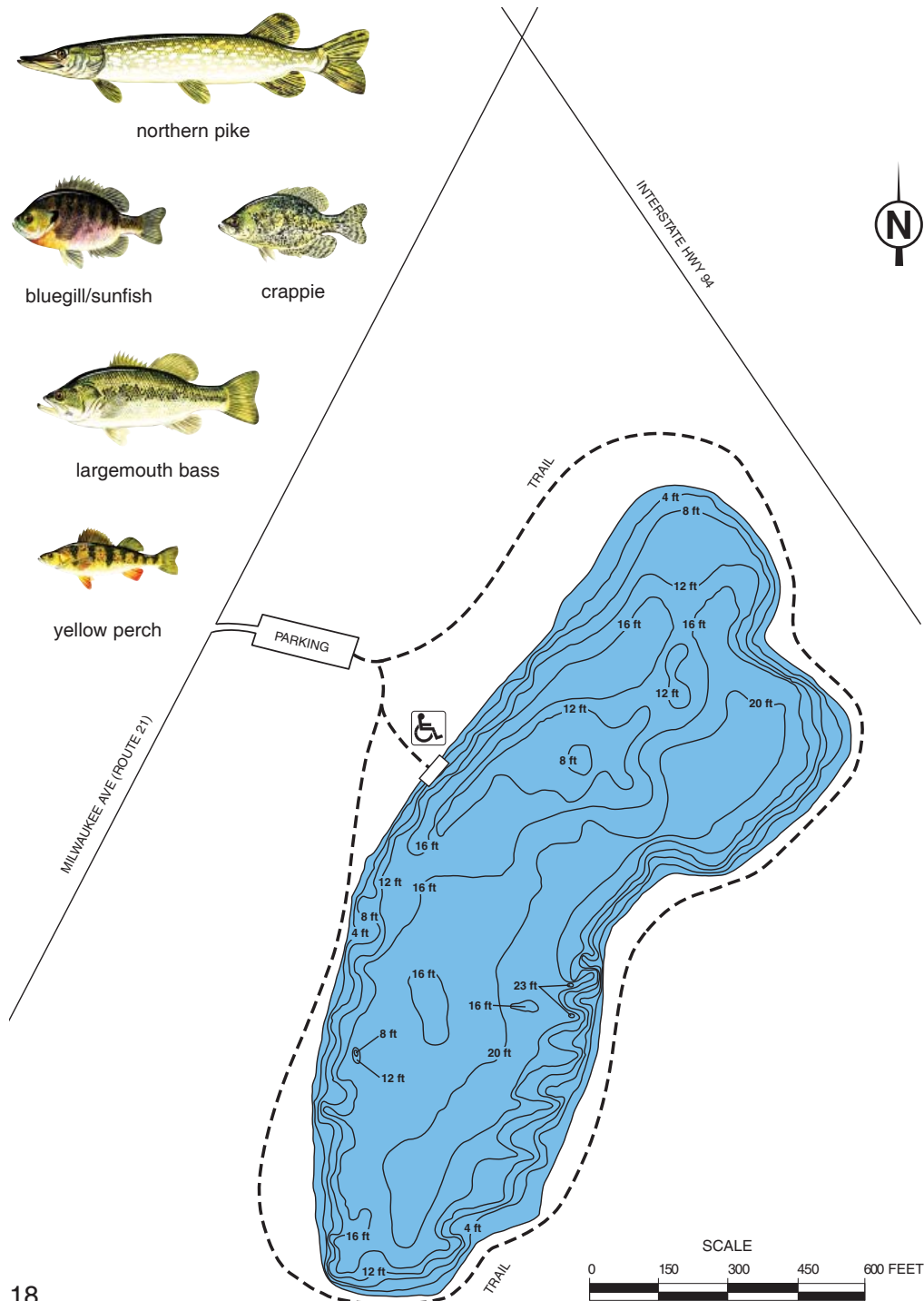
23 acres

max depth: 23 feet

A popular fishing hole and former gravel pit, this preserve's main feature is Lake Carina. A 500-foot gravel trail provides walk-in access and connects the parking area with a handicap-accessible fishing pier.

### Directions

Located along the Des Plaines River Greenway near Gurnee. The entrance and parking area are located on the east side of Milwaukee Avenue (Route 21), between Washington Street and Belvidere Road (Route 120).



northern pike



bluegill/sunfish



crappie



largemouth bass



yellow perch

## Banana Lake

3 acres

max depth: 25 feet

## Taylor Lake

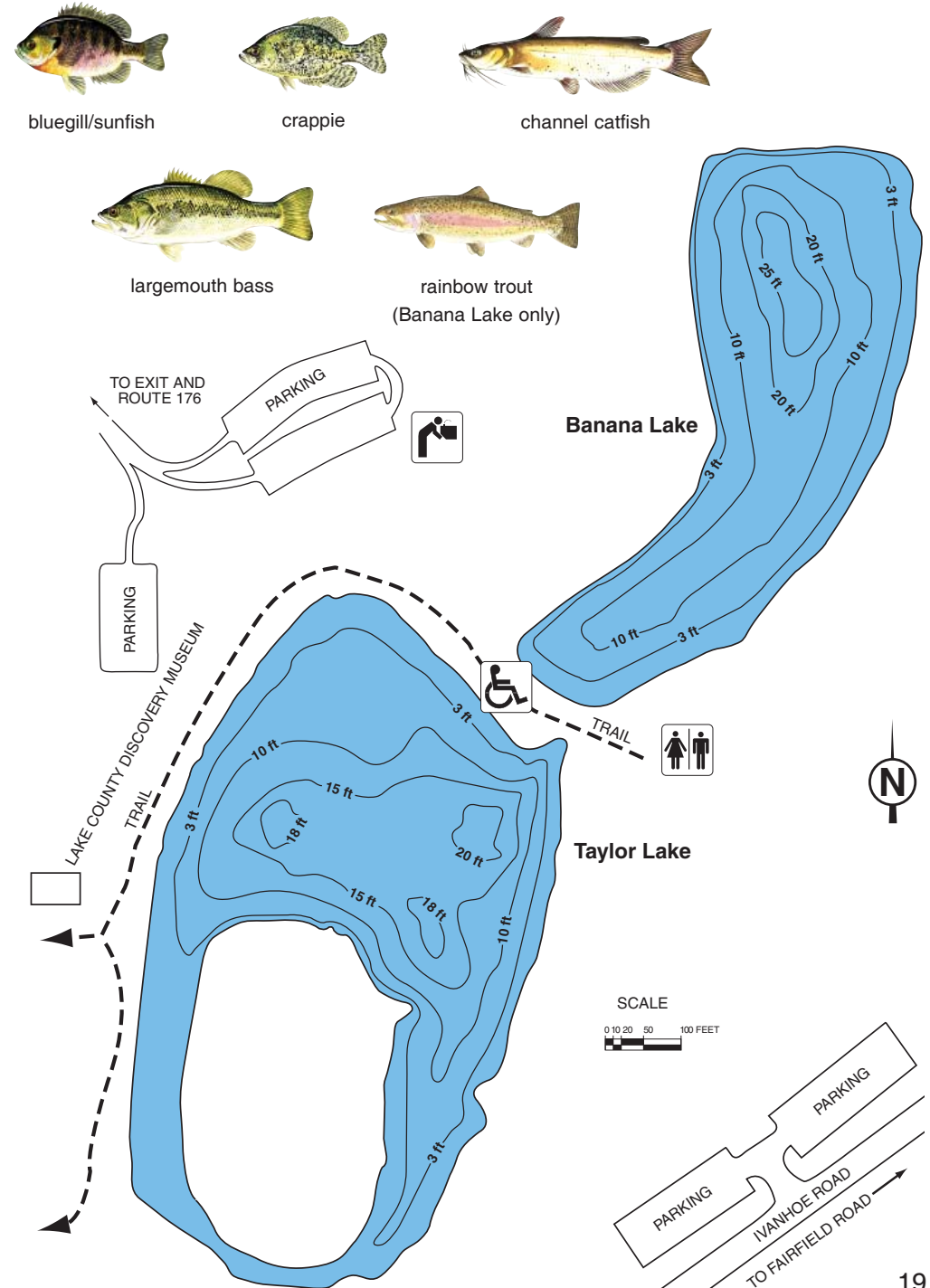
8 acres

max depth: 20 feet

Lakewood's five fishing ponds are shown in this guide. Most are natural potholes and sloughs that were dammed to create deeper, permanent lakes and ponds. Banana Lake is closed for trout stocking the second half of each March and the first half of each October. Ice fishing is permitted on Banana Lake only when conditions allow.

### Directions

Located in Wauconda in southwestern Lake County. At corner of Route 176 and Fairfield Road, go west on Route 176 to preserve entrance. Follow signs to Museum.



bluegill/sunfish



crappie



channel catfish



largemouth bass



rainbow trout  
(Banana Lake only)

## Beaver Lake

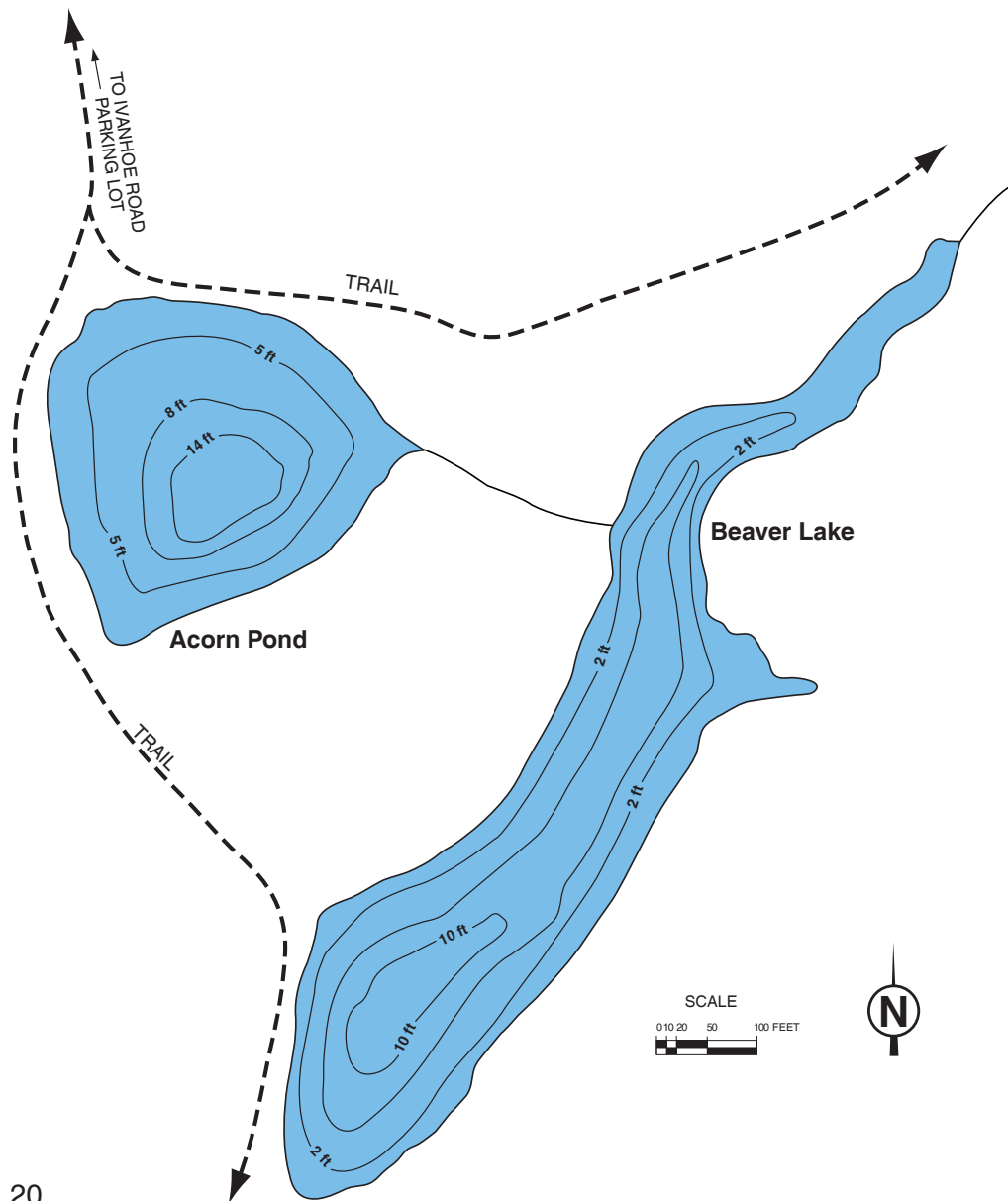
5 acres

max depth: 10 feet

### Directions

Located in Wauconda in southwestern Lake County. At corner of Route 176 and Fairfield Road, go south on Fairfield to Ivanhoe Road. West on Ivanhoe for less than 1/2 mile to gravel road on south side. Take gravel road to end and park. Head straight south on trail for 1/4 mile to Acorn Lake. To reach Beaver Lake, continue south on trail.

*Note: Bicycles and dogs are not allowed on these trails.*



## Heron Pond

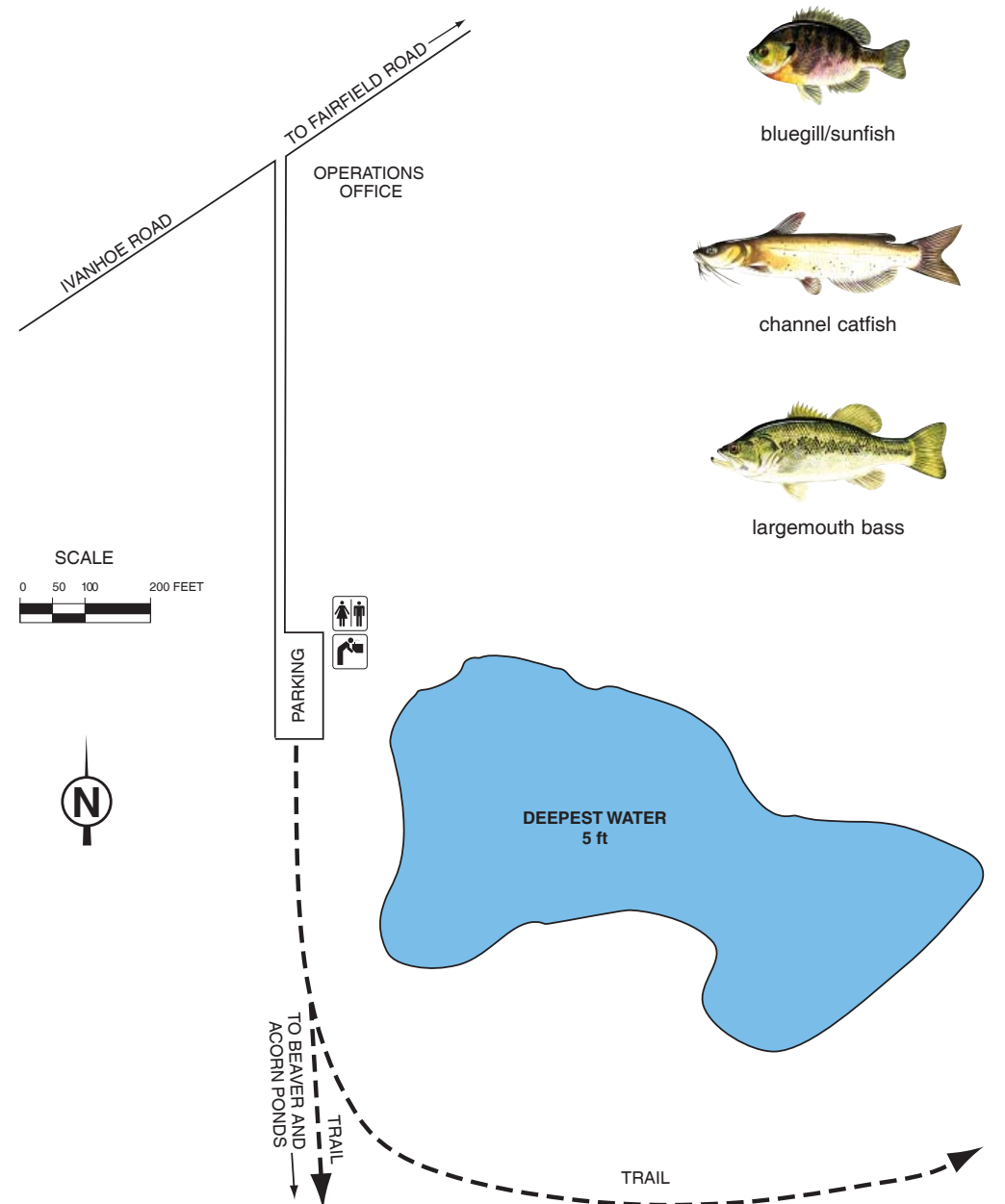
4 acres

max depth: 5 feet

### Directions

Located in Wauconda in southwestern Lake County. At corner of Route 176 and Fairfield Road, go south on Fairfield to Ivanhoe Road. West on Ivanhoe for less than 1/2 mile to gravel road on south side. Take gravel road to end and park. Pond is within sight.

*Note: Bicycles and dogs are not allowed on these trails.*





## Nippersink

13 acres

max depth: 17 feet

Man-made in 1965, extensive shoreline restoration efforts and improved fish habitats make Nippersink's two lakes great for fishing. Anglers can fish from shore or from two handicap-accessible fishing piers.

*Note: Catch-and-release fishing is mandatory. This program makes it recreational for anglers and beneficial for nature. Anglers are encouraged to use barbless, non-stainless steel hooks. See page 4 for proper techniques.*

### Directions

Located in west-central Lake County in Round Lake. The entrance is located on Belvidere Road (Route 120), just west of Cedar Lake Road, east of Fairfield Road.



## Old School Lake

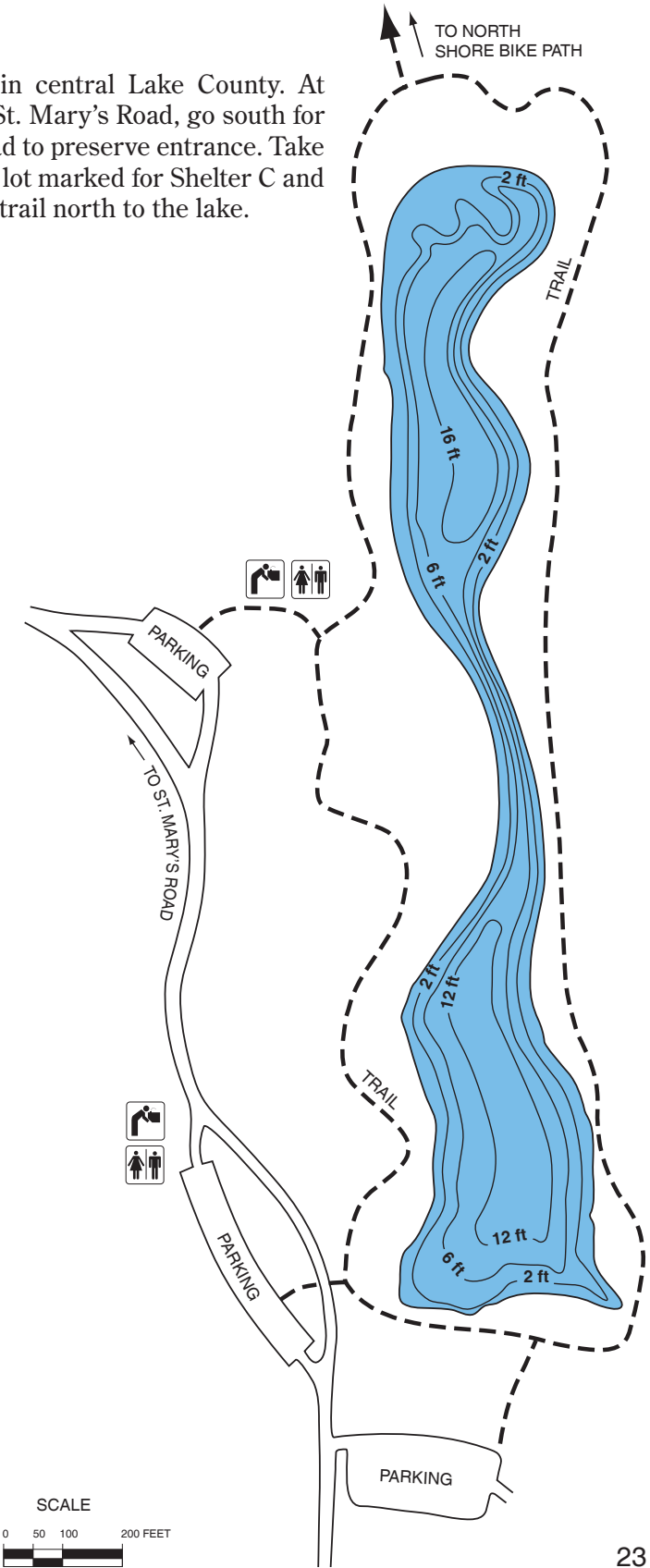
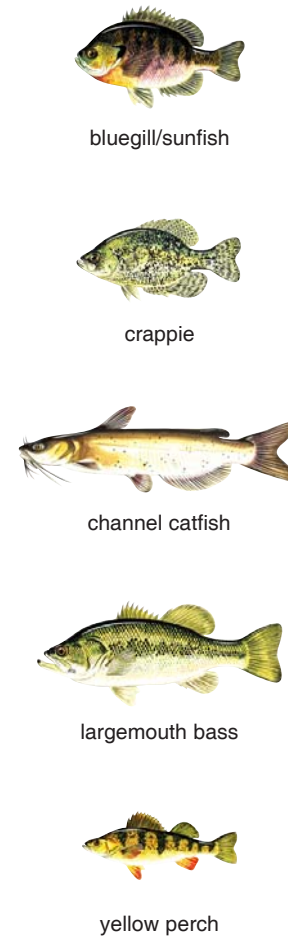
12 acres

max depth: 16 feet

Old School Lake began as a borrow pit left after construction of the adjacent Interstate Tollway 94 in the 1950s.

### Directions

Located in Libertyville in central Lake County. At corner of Route 176 and St. Mary's Road, go south for 1/2 mile on St. Mary's Road to preserve entrance. Take preserve road to parking lot marked for Shelter C and Sled Hill. Take the short trail north to the lake.



## Timber Lake

33 acres

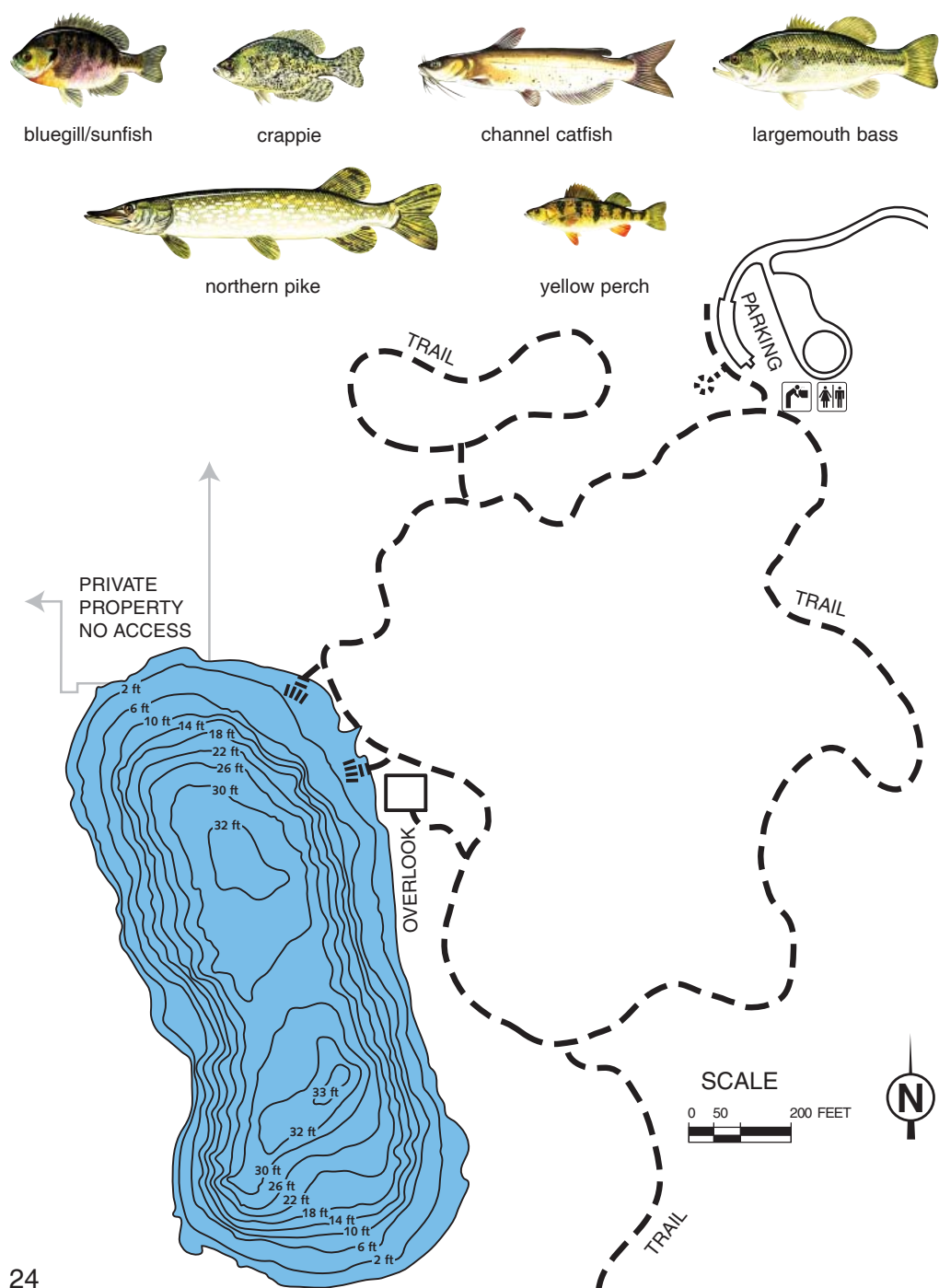
max depth: 33 feet

Timber Lake is one of the most prominent natural features of Raven Glen. Anglers can fish from shore or from two handicap-accessible fishing piers.

### Directions

Located in north-central Lake County between Antioch and Old Mill Creek. Use the main entrance and parking area located on Route 45 south of Route 173 and north of Miller Road.

*Note: While the District owns 95 percent of Timber Lake, the northern portion of the lake is privately owned and not accessible for public use.*



## Sterling Lake

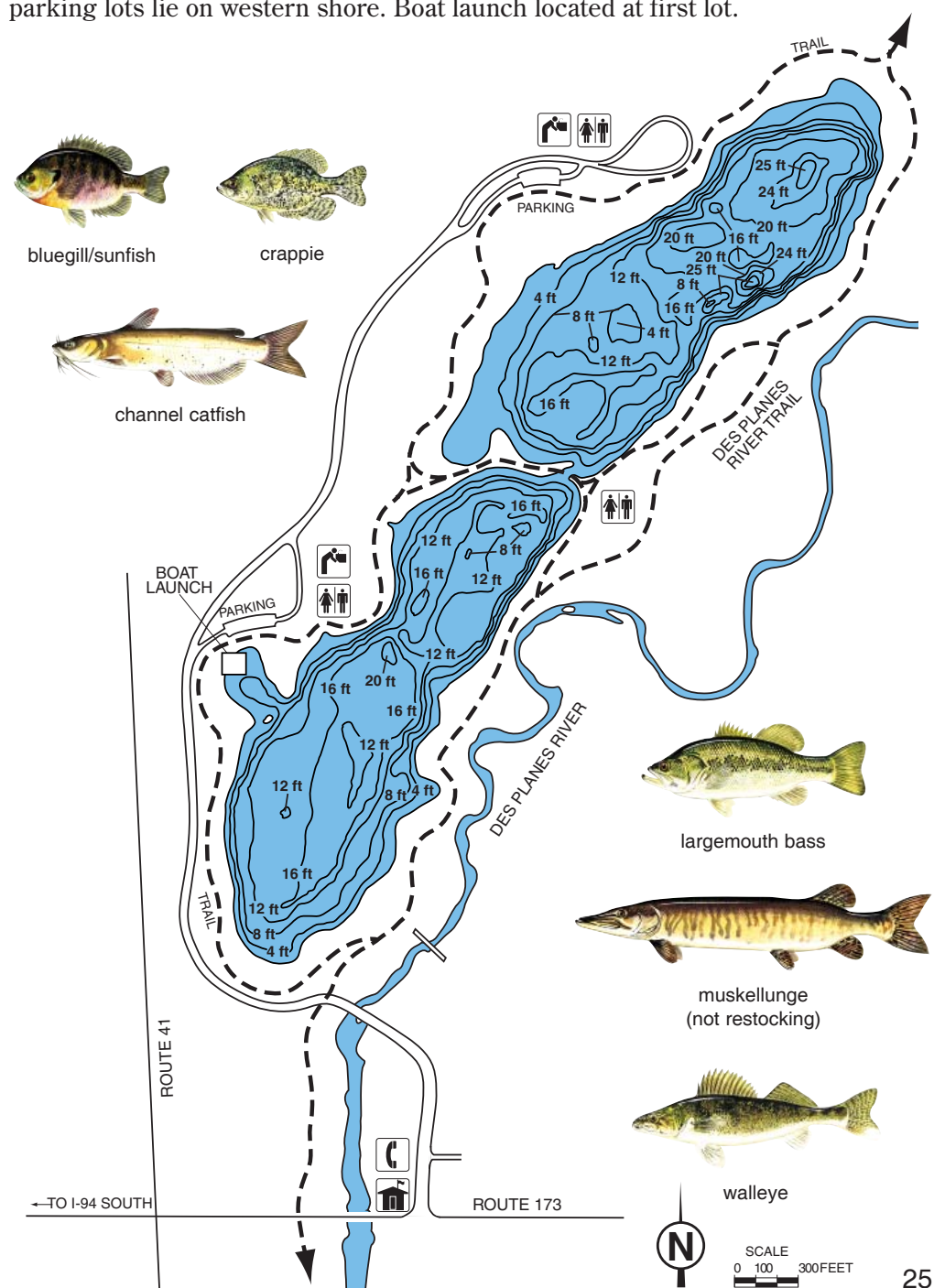
74 acres

max depth: 25 feet

Sterling Lake boasts a public launch for car-top boats: canoes, kayaks or other small watercraft. Launching is free and at your own risk. You'll need approved flotation gear and your boat must be properly registered with the State of Illinois. Trailers are permitted but parking is limited to the grass overflow lot. Electric trolling motors are allowed. Ice fishing is permitted on Sterling Lake only when conditions allow.

### Directions

Located in Wadsworth in northern Lake County. At corner of Routes 173 and 41, go east on Route 173 to preserve entrance. Stay left on preserve road to lake. Two parking lots lie on western shore. Boat launch located at first lot.



## Des Plaines Lake

19 acres

max depth: 36 feet

Originally a sand and gravel pit, researchers from the Wetlands Research Project diverted the Des Plaines River through here in 1987. The lake is not managed for fishing but contains those fish common in the Des Plaines River.

### Directions

Located in Gurnee in northeastern Lake County. At corner of Route 41 and Wadsworth Road, go east on Wadsworth Road to the Canoe Launch on south side of road. From parking lot, go south on Des Plaines River Trail  $1\frac{3}{4}$  miles to the lake.



bluegill/sunfish



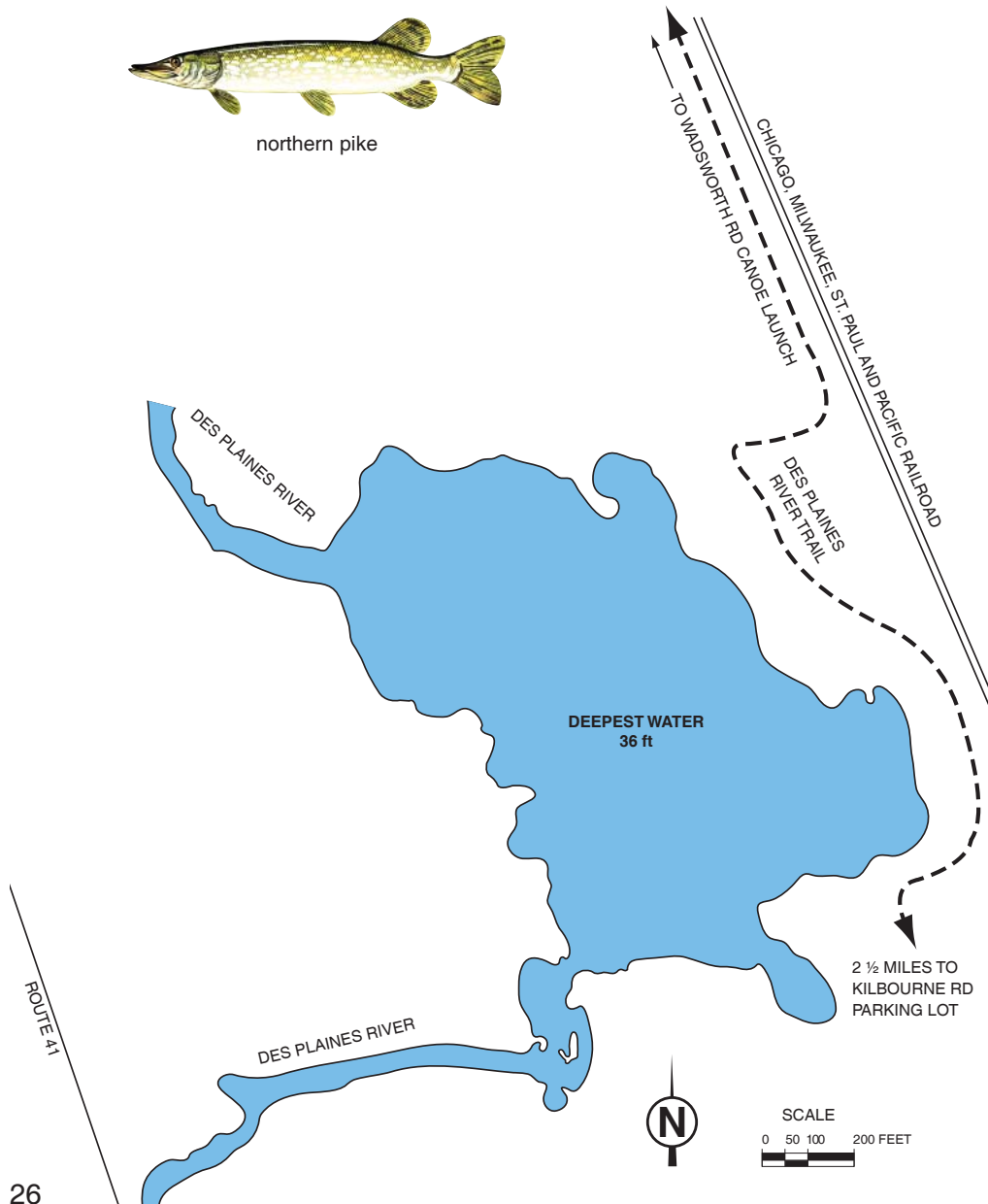
crappie



largemouth bass



northern pike





# Sport Fish Species of the Lake County Forest Preserves



bluegill/sunfish



crappie



channel catfish



muskellunge



northern pike



largemouth bass



rainbow trout



smallmouth bass



walleye



yellow perch



carp

These non-native fish are now found in many Forest Preserve water ways. Carp are popular target fish for many anglers.

**Lake County Forest Preserves**

847-367-6640

[www.LCFPD.org](http://www.LCFPD.org)



Phone: 847-367-6640 Fax 847-367-6649

Email: [forestpreserves@lcpd.org](mailto:forestpreserves@lcpd.org)

Web site: [www.LCFPD.org](http://www.LCFPD.org)

Emergency: call 911

Non-emergency public safety issue: 847-549-5200

Fish illustrations courtesy of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources

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