

Walter C. Best Wildlife Preserve is a 101-acre reservation located in Munson Township, 1.5 miles south of the City of Chardon. The Preserve's natural habitats provide visitors the opportunity to enjoy a rich diversity of plant and animal life. It is Geauga Park District's intent to protect this natural area in perpetuity.

## HISTORY

Walter C. Best, founder of the nearby Best Sand Corporation, built a 30-acre lake in the 1960's because of his interest in waterfowl. After his death, his wife, Edna May, donated the lake and surrounding land to Geauga Park District. The Preserve was dedicated in 1988.



## FISHING

Fishing is permitted along designated areas of Best Lake shoreline. Gamefish include largemouth bass, yellow perch, channel catfish, bluegill, and other sunfish. Fishing platforms provide access to deep-water areas. Fish may be taken only with rod and reel: a current Ohio fishing license is required in accordance with state regulations. Boating and wading are not permitted, nor is collecting live bait.

*Geauga Park District encourages catch-and-release practices to help maintain a balanced and healthy fish population.*

## WILDLIFE

Mammals such as woodchucks, chipmunks, and squirrels are readily seen, while deer, racoon, red fox, mink, and voles leave signs of their secretive presence. Muskrat and beaver are often seen in and around Best Lake.

More than 100 kinds of birds have been sighted at Best Preserve. While many are migratory visitors, the marshy meadows, thickets and wooded stream corridor harbor an outstanding variety of nesting songbirds. Nest boxes shelter bluebirds, tree swallows, and wood ducks. The aerial courtship display of the male American woodcock can be observed at dusk on early spring evenings.




Many kinds of waterfowl visit Best Lake during the spring and fall migrations. Aquatic plants provide a soggy "salad bar" for ducks and geese. Fish-eating birds such as grebes, mergansers, gulls, loons, terns, and herons frequent the lake at various times of the year. A keen observer may spot an occasional osprey or bald eagle.


A patch of tallgrass prairie has been planted at Best Preserve using Ohio seeds. Its flowers are an attractive nectar source for hummingbirds, many kinds of butterflies, and other fascinating insects.




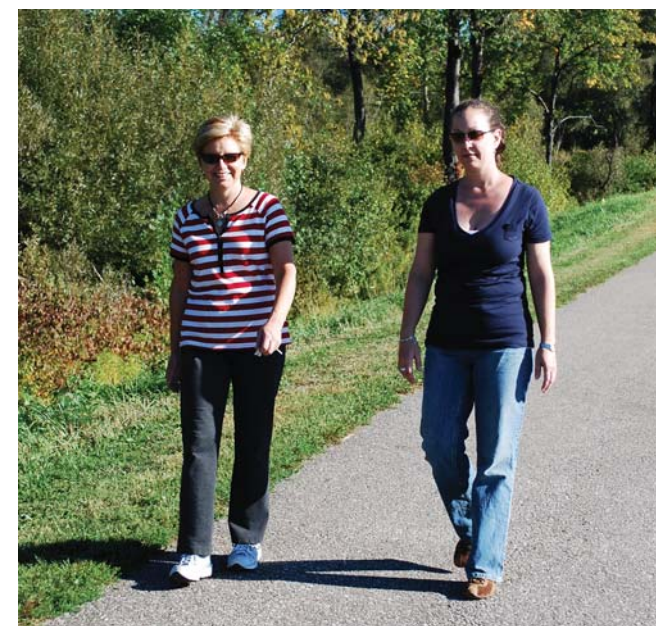
## TRAILS

Walter C. Best Preserve is complete with 1.6 miles of trails that provide a variety of experiences. All trails are paved and wheelchair accessible.

 Goldenrod Trail is a small loop trail accessible from the North and South Parking entrances. It crosses the bridge by the inlet area and trails around the prairie.

 Waterfowl Walkway takes nature watchers to the Wildlife Observation Blind. The structure provides a unique vantage point at which to relax and enjoy resting and feeding waterfowl. Look for waterfowl ID panels during the spring and fall migrations.

 Cattail Trail is an extension of Goldenrod Trail and takes hikers all the way around the lake. Experience many different views of this scenic nature preserve with fishing platforms located all along the way.



## Walter C. Best Wildlife Preserve



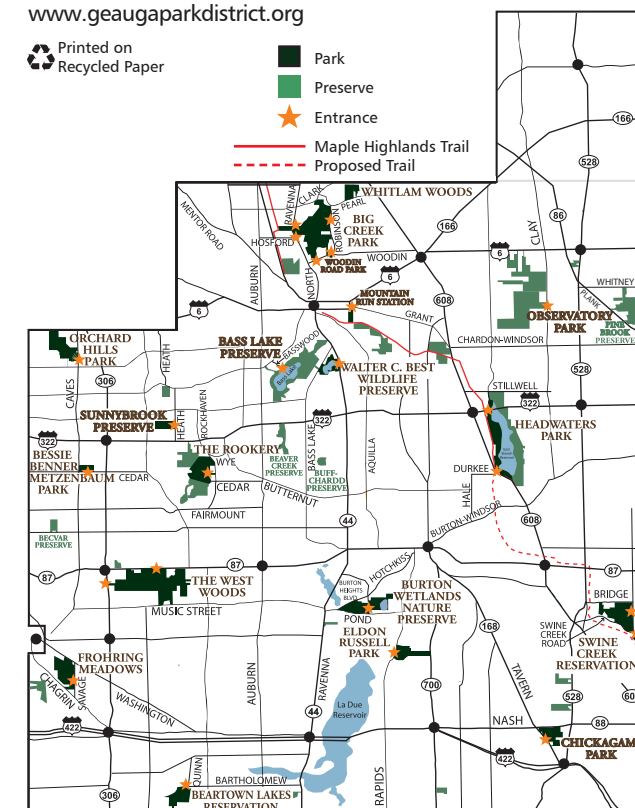
## GEAUGA PARK DISTRICT



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9160 Robinson Road, Chardon, Ohio 44024-9148  
 (440) 286-9516 or (800) 536-4006 (Gaugua toll free)  
 info@geaugaparkdistrict.org  
 www.geaugaparkdistrict.org

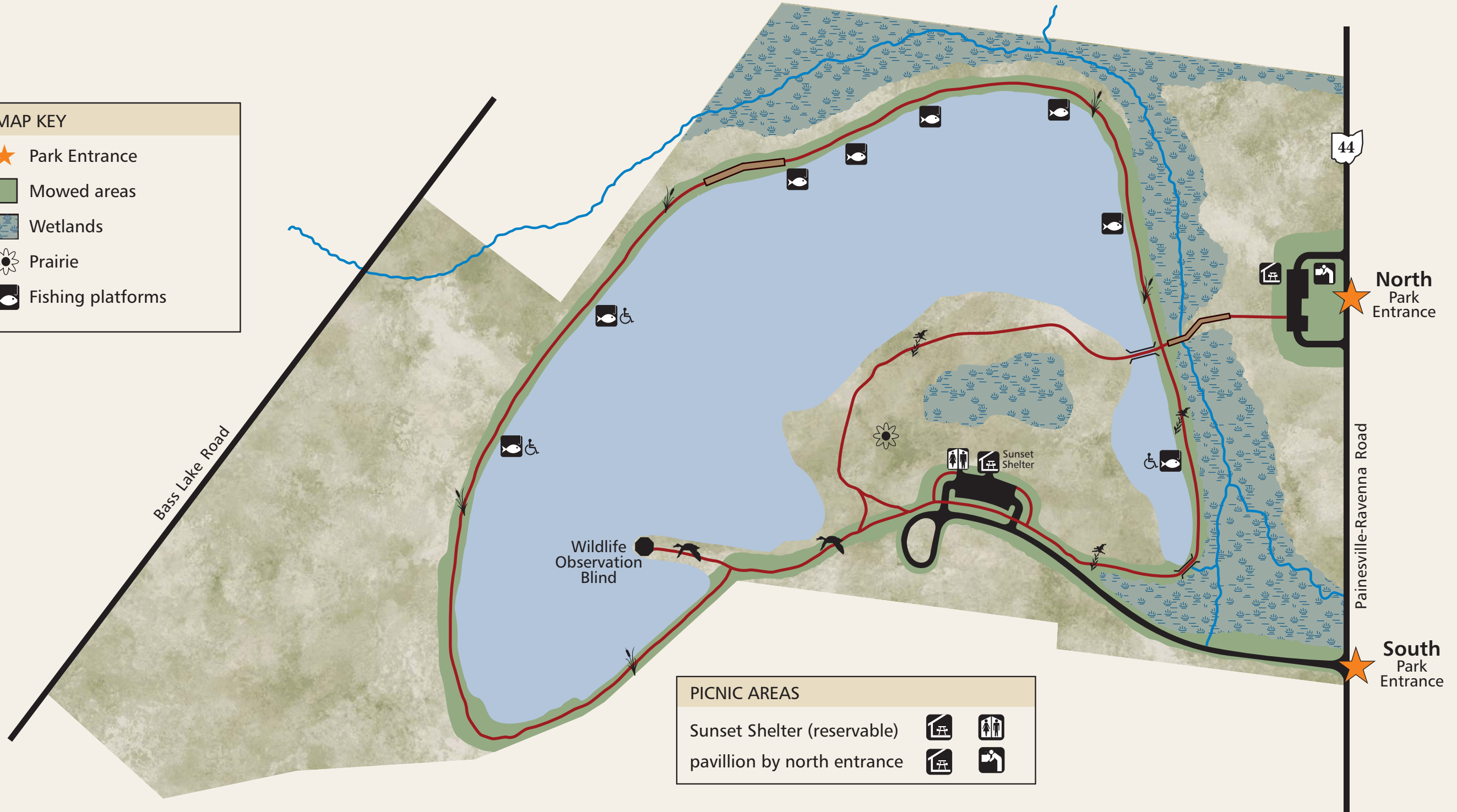
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TRAILS			MILES
	Goldenrod Trail (paved)		0.5
	Cattail Trail (paved)		1.0
	Waterfowl Walkway (paved)		0.1

MAP KEY	
	Park Entrance
	Mowed areas
	Wetlands
	Prairie
	Fishing platforms



PICNIC AREAS	
Sunset Shelter (reservable)	
pavillion by north entrance	