

BEARTOWN LAKES RESERVATION is a 149-acre park located in both Bainbridge and Auburn townships. Mature beech-maple woods and more than 22 acres of open water are the highlights of this park. It is Geauga Park District's intent to protect this natural area in perpetuity.



VIEW OF MIDDLE BEAR LAKE FROM THE LAKE TRAIL IN SUMMER

HISTORY

In 1811, the David McConoughey family was the first to settle in Bainbridge Township, with Robert Smith's family soon following. Both families cleared land and built log cabins on the tract where Beartown Lakes Reservation is now located. Bears, deer, elk and wolves were plentiful. One of McConoughey's sons harvested five bears in one day; this legendary abundance prompted settlers to name the area Beartown.

Farming was the main occupation of the time and maple sugaring was an important source of income. In the first half of the 20th century, Francis Yaxley, owner of a sugarbush in Beartown, was known as an outstanding syrup maker. The healed tap holes on maple trees in the woods southwest of the lakes are all that remain of this active sugarbush.

In 1950, Al and Jocie Bieger purchased land in Auburn Township. By the end of the decade, they had opened a private fishing club, creating three interconnecting lakes, a trout raceway and a minnow pond. Members could fish for trout, catfish and northern pike. Anglers enjoyed fishing there until the club closed in the early 1970s.

In January 1993, then, Geauga Park District purchased Beartown Lakes Reservation and began construction of facilities the following year. The park was dedicated in September 1996.

NATURAL HABITATS

Spring Creek, a tributary of the Aurora branch of the Chagrin River, flows along the northwest boundary of the park. Extensive wetlands occur adjacent to this stream and around the lakes. Beaver lodges can be seen in these areas.

Three interconnecting bodies of water and a smaller pond cover more than 22 acres of the park. Upper Bear Lake is teeming with frogs, turtles, water snakes and other aquatic life. Middle Bear has many dead snags for cavity nesting birds, while Lower Bear is larger and deeper, supporting populations of bass and bluegill.

Forest land covers approximately 70 acres of the park. Mature beech-maple woods, carpeted with spring wildflowers, were once an operating sugarbush. Successional hardwood forest, a pine stand, shrub thickets and a meadow abundant with wildflowers and grasses offer a variety of habitats for many species of wildlife. Forest songbirds, deer and a variety of small mammals can be found in these environments.



A PERFECT PICNIC SPOT AT THE SMALL SHELTER OVERLOOKING LOWER BEAR LAKE

AMENITIES




Three picnic areas are available within the park. North Point Shelter overlooks Lower Bear Lake, while Minnow Pond Shelter is nestled in the woods. Amenities at both of these shelters include electricity and nearby restrooms, and North Point includes a water fountain and a playground. Both shelters can be reserved. A third, smaller shelter is also available along the Lake Trail.



THE LAKE TRAIL WINDS THROUGH THE WOODS FOR A SHADY STROLL

TRAILS

Three trails circle their way through the park, each offering its own special attraction.

-  The paved all-purpose Lake Trail around Lower Bear Lake provides access for people of all abilities.
-  The Whitetail Trail winds through the forest and along meadows for the enjoyment of both horseback riders and hikers.
-  Large trees, wildflowers, wetland pockets and an observation point at Upper Bear Lake are featured along the Beechnut Trail.

Cross-country skiing can be enjoyed on all trails as conditions permit. Sledding is also encouraged in the designated area below Lower Bear Lake.



FAMILIES ENJOYING A DAY OF SLED RIDING AND WINTER FUN

FISHING

Most of Middle and Lower Bear Lakes are available for anglers to try their luck. Three fishing piers provide access to deep water areas. Rainbow Trout is stocked in Lower Bear Lake every fall for put-and-take fishing.

To protect wildlife habitat, fishing is permitted only in designated areas. Please handle fish carefully to minimize stress. Collection of live bait is not permitted in the park. Due to safety concerns, fishing from the causeway is prohibited.

Beartown Lakes Reservation



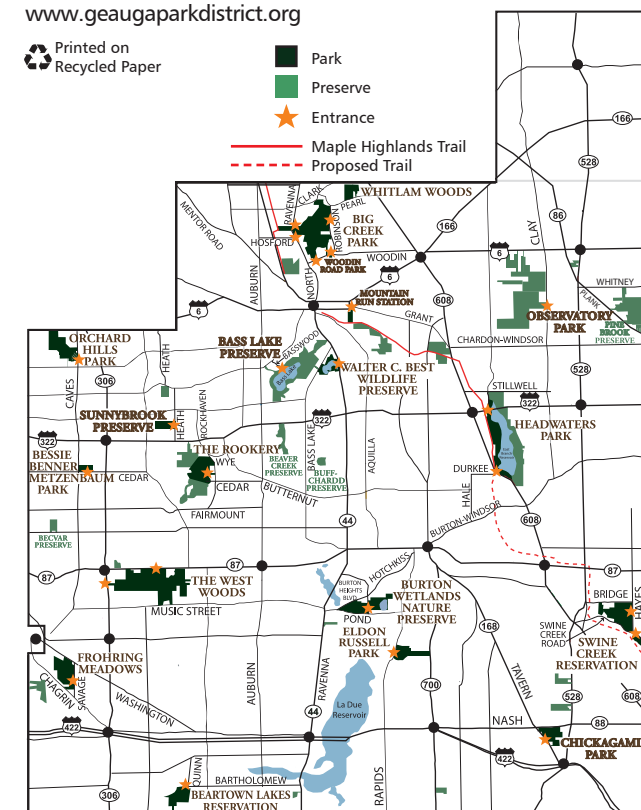
GEAUGA PARK DISTRICT














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MAP KEY

-  Park Entrance
-  Woodland
-  Mowed Areas
-  Wetlands
-  Conifer Forest (evergreens)
-  Shrub/Meadow
-  Prairie Plantings
-  Shore Fishing Permitted
-  Fishing Platform
-  Sledding Hill
-  Restroom Location














Quinn Road
Crystal Trail

AMENITIES

North Point Shelter   

Minnow Pond Shelter 
 (Roadway, shelter and restroom closed from November 1 - April 30)

TRAILS		MILES
 Lake Trail	  	0.7
 Beechnut Trail	 	0.6
 Whitetail Trail	  	1.5

