

Yellow Creek State Park

The 2,981–acre Yellow Creek State Park is in Indiana County on the western edge of the Allegheny Mountains. The park is named for Yellow Creek and Little Yellow Creek that flow into the 720–acre lake. Both creeks contain yellow clay in their banks and stream bottoms.

The park and surrounding landscape contain old farmlands and northern hardwood forests, reflecting early settlement patterns in western Pennsylvania's rolling hills and valleys. Today, visitors enjoy the sand beach, picnicking, lodging, recreation, and education programs. Yellow Creek Lake is a destination for boaters and anglers. The lake and park provide an important rest stop for migrating birds.

Directions

GPS DD: Lat. 40.578333 Long. -79.000583

Yellow Creek State Park is along US 422 between the towns of Ebensburg and Indiana.

Reservations

Make online reservations or call toll-free 888–PA–PARKS (888–727–2757), 7:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Monday to Saturday.
www.pa.gov/state-parks

Learn, Experience, Connect

Yellow Creek State Park offers a wide variety of programs from April through October. Gain a better understanding of the park's natural, cultural, and historical resources through guided outdoor recreation, hands-on activities, walks, special events, and other programs.

Curriculum-based environmental education programs are available to schools and organized groups. Call the park office to schedule a group program. A variety of professional development workshops are also offered for teachers.

For more information on programs and other learning experiences, contact the park office or explore the online calendar of events.
https://events.dcnr.pa.gov

Friends of Yellow Creek

The Friends of Yellow Creek State Park is a nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving, protecting, and enhancing Yellow Creek State Park. www.foyc.org



Recreational Opportunities

BOATING: Maximum 20 hp/15 kWh Motors Permitted
Yellow Creek Lake has boat launches on the north shore, the south shore, in the beach day use area, and a small launch in Grampaps Cove. Mooring is available in McFeaters Cove by permit.

A boat rental in the day use area offers canoes, kayaks, pontoon boats, and paddleboards. The boat rental is open from Memorial Day to Labor Day.

Motorboats must display a boat registration from any state. Non-powered boats must display one of the following: boat registration from any state; launch permit or mooring permit from Pennsylvania State Parks, available at most state park offices; launch use permit from the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission.

FISHING: The 720–acre Yellow Creek Lake is well stocked with most warmwater game fish and panfish. Common species are smallmouth and largemouth bass, walleye, northern pike, tiger muskellunge, yellow perch, bluegill, and catfishes. An ADA–accessible fishing area is on the north shore. Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission big bass regulations are in effect on Yellow Creek Lake.

Laurel Run, Yellow Creek, and Little Yellow Creek provide opportunities for brown and brook trout fishing.

The breast of Dragonfly Pond is accessible to many people with disabilities, and children 16 years and younger are permitted to fish here. Benches are provided.

Fishing is prohibited in the swimming area, from boat launching docks, or in the boat mooring area. Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission seasons and limits apply.



SWIMMING: The 300–foot sand beach is open from late May to early September unless otherwise posted. Swimming hours are from 8:00 AM to sunset. Swim at your own risk. Please read and follow posted rules for swimming. An ADA–modern restroom with changing areas is available. Pets are prohibited on the beach.

YURTS: These round, canvas and wood walled tents have a wooden deck and sleep four or five people in bunk beds. Yurts have a cooking stove, refrigerator, microwave, countertop, table, chairs, electric heat, fire ring, picnic table, and electricity. Yurts do not have running water, but restrooms, showers, and potable water are nearby.

CAMPING COTTAGES: Six cottages sleep five people in bunk beds, and have wooden floors, electric heat, porch, picnic table, fire ring, and electricity. They do not have running water but are near potable water and a modern shower house.

ORIENTEERING: A small orienteering course is on the north shore near the pavilions. The course includes a 1.2–mile beginner option and 2.4–mile intermediate option. Orienteering maps are available in the park office.

HUNTING AND FIREARMS: Most of Yellow Creek State Park is open to hunting, trapping, and the training of dogs during established seasons. Common game species are white-tailed deer, ring-necked pheasant, cotton-tailed rabbit, squirrel, black bear, wild turkey, and waterfowl.

Hunting woodchucks, also known as groundhogs, is prohibited. Dog training is only permitted from the day following Labor Day through March 31 in designated hunting areas. The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and the Pennsylvania Game Commission rules and regulations apply. Contact the park office for ADA–accessible hunting information.

Use extreme caution with firearms at all times. Other visitors use the park during hunting seasons. Firearms and archery equipment used for hunting may be uncased and ready for use only in authorized hunting areas during hunting seasons. In areas not open to hunting or during non-hunting seasons, firearms and archery equipment shall be kept in the owner's vehicle or enclosed trailer. Exceptions include law enforcement officers and individuals with a valid *Pennsylvania License to Carry Firearms* are authorized to carry a firearm concealed on their person while they are within a state park.

PICNICKING: The beach day use area on the south shore accommodates many visitors. Picnic tables, modern restrooms, and a limited number of charcoal grills are scattered throughout the area. There is also a small picnic area on the north shore near the boat launch.

Four picnic pavilions may be reserved up to 11 months in advance for a fee. Unreserved picnic pavilions are free on a first-come, first-served basis.

Visitors are encouraged to bring their own grills. Open ground fires are prohibited. Pets are permitted in the day use areas and must be physically controlled, attended at all times, and on a leash, caged, or crated.

Hiking Trails: 22 miles

Laurel Run Trail
0.7 mile | Easiest hiking | Loop trail | Red blazes
Trailhead amenities: modern restrooms during office hours

This easy hike starts at the park office, follows Laurel Run, and is especially beautiful in the spring when wildflowers abound.

Pond Loop Trail
0.4 mile | Easiest hiking | Loop trail | No blazes
Recreations permitted: hiking, mountain biking

This easy, flat hike loops around Dragonfly Pond. It is great for the whole family and affords opportunities to see wildlife such as muskrats, waterfowl, herons, and dragonflies.

Ridgetop Trail
2.3 miles and a 0.3 mile extension | More difficult hiking | Loop trail | Red blazes
Trailhead amenities: picnic tables, benches

This challenging trail begins opposite the beach/day use area and winds through a variety of habitats and elevation changes. Ridgetop Extension Trail can lengthen the hike by 0.3 mile. Multiple loops can be created by walking on Simpson Trail, a multi-use trail popular with mountain bikes. A short connector trail leads to Waterfowl Viewing Platform Trail.

Waterfowl Viewing Platform Trail
0.3 mile | Easiest hiking | Out-and-back trail | Red blazes

From a trailhead on the western side of the beach parking lot, this short trail leads to the waterfowl viewing blind. A connector trail leads from Waterfowl Viewing Platform Trail to Ridgetop Trail. The short Wetland Walkway Trail ends on a boardwalk in a wetland.



MULTI–USE TRAILS
These single–track mountain biking trails are also great for long hikes. For navigation, look for lettered posts at multi–use trailheads and intersections, all of which are marked on the map.

A continuous path along the north side of the park can be created by connecting Black Hawk, Stake Church, and Handler Long Haul trails. A route across the western and southern sides of the park is possible by linking Damsite, Simpson, and Paul trails, along with a short section of road.

Black Hawk Trail
1.2 miles | More difficult hiking | Out–and–back trail | Red blazes
Recreations permitted: hiking, mountain biking

From the trailhead on Black Hawk Road, this excellent mountain biking trail follows a service road before entering forest, passes through Camp Seph Mack, before meeting Stake Church Trail.

Damsite Trail
3.7 miles | Most difficult hiking | Loop trail | Red blazes
Recreations permitted: hiking, mountain biking

From a trailhead at the end of Hoffman Road, Damsite Trail loops along the western shore of the lake and through thick forests, with a mid-point stop at the dam which periodically has a spillway waterfall.

Handlers Long Haul Trail
3.5 miles | More difficult hiking | Connector trail | Red blazes
Recreations permitted: hiking, mountain biking

This multi–use trail follows the north shore of Yellow Creek Lake and intersects many roads along its path. From multiple trailheads and connections, the hilly trail passes through forests of different ages.

Paul Trail
2.5 miles | More difficult hiking | Out–and–back trail | Red blazes
Recreations permitted: hiking, mountain biking

Stretching from trailheads at Day Use Road and PA 259, Paul Trail passes Dragonfly Pond. With an elevation change of several hundred feet, this rugged trail passes through fields, hardwood and evergreen forests, and along Little Yellow Creek.

Simpson Trail
6.2 miles | More difficult hiking | Out–and–back trail | Red blazes
Recreations permitted: hiking, mountain biking

Simpson Trail has multiple trailheads between the western trailhead at Hoffman Road, which also connects to Damsite Trail, and the eastern trailhead at Day Use Road. This rugged trail passes through many habitats, particularly forests.

Stake Church Trail
1.2 miles | More difficult hiking | Out–and–back trail | Red blazes
Recreations permitted: hiking, mountain biking

From a trailhead on McFeaters Cove Road, the trail passes historic Stake Church and mature, hardwood forests before meeting Black Hawk Trail.

Enjoy the Winter

ICE SAFETY: Ice thickness is not monitored. For your safety, make sure ice is at least 4" thick for a single user and 7" thick for a small group. Always carry safety equipment.

ICE FISHING: Sunfishes, perches, and pikes are frequently caught through the ice at Yellow Creek. Wooden devices for ice rescue are located around all ice use access areas. Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission regulations and laws apply.

ICEBOATING: Iceboating is permitted on the lake. Non-powered boats must display one of the following: boat registration from any state; launch permit or mooring permit from Pennsylvania State Parks, available at most state park offices; launch use permit from the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission. Iceboats are not available for rent.

CROSS–COUNTRY SKIING AND SNOWSHOEING: The park has opportunities for cross–country skiing and snowshoeing for all experience levels on the multi–use and hiking trails.

History

The park, located near the Kittanning Path, was used by the Lenape and Shawnee as a trade route. This path was later travelled by European settlers moving into the Ohio River Valley and points further west. Settlers who stayed provided goods and services to those families continuing to the western territories. Many local families were dependent upon this western traffic for their existence as evidenced by the increasing number of tradesmen, craftsmen, and merchants during the mid–1800s.

Land was purchased during the early 1960s by the Department of Forests and Waters to create regional parks for reservoirs. Development of park facilities and additional land purchases were completed during the 1970s. The park was dedicated on July 3, 1976, in conjunction with the official opening of the beach area.

Nearby Attractions

Information on nearby attractions is available from the Indiana County Tourist Bureau.
www.visitindianacountypa.org

State Game Lands 273 and 248 provide areas for public hunting and general recreation.

Protect and Preserve Our Parks

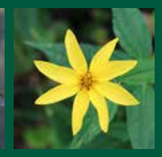
Please make your visit safe and enjoyable. Obey all posted rules and regulations and respect fellow visitors and the resources of the park.

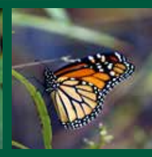
- Be prepared and bring the proper equipment. Natural areas may possess hazards. Your personal safety and that of your family are your responsibility.
- Alcoholic beverages are prohibited.
- Because uncontrolled pets may chase wildlife or frighten visitors, pets must be physically controlled, attended at all times, and on a leash, caged, or crated. Electronic fences and leashes are prohibited.
- Do your part to keep wildlife wild! Enjoy wildlife from a safe distance and do not feed or approach wild animals.
- Please park only in designated areas and obey all traffic regulations.
- Please recycle. Place trash accumulated during your stay in proper receptacles or take it home with you.
- Soliciting and posting signs are prohibited without approval from the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.

A Pennsylvania Recreational Guide for
Yellow Creek State Park









Pennsylvania
Department of Conservation and Natural Resources



Yellow Creek State Park
170 Route 259 Highway
Penn Run, PA 15765–5941
724–357–7913
YellowCreekSP@pa.gov

Make online reservations at
www.pa.gov/state-parks or
call toll-free 888–PA–PARKS
(888–727–2757), 7:00 AM to
5:00 PM, Monday to Saturday.

www.pa.gov/state-parks

PAStateParks

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2025

Access for People with Disabilities

This symbol indicates facilities and activities that are Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible for people with disabilities. This publication text is available in alternative formats.

If you need an accommodation to participate in park activities due to a disability, please contact the park you plan to visit.

In an Emergency

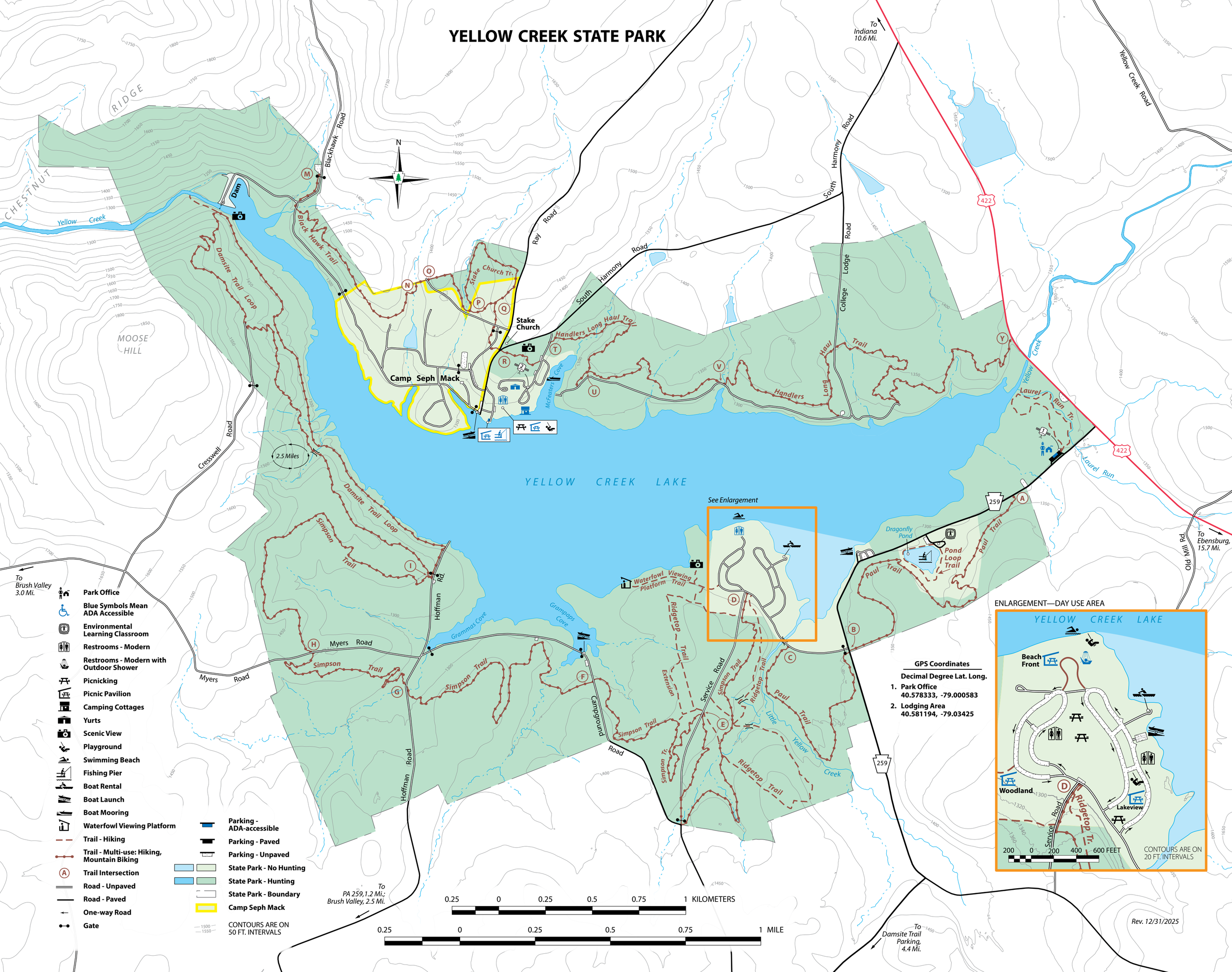
Call 911 and contact a park employee to summon medical, fire, or safety professionals.

Call or text 988 to contact a crisis center counselor during a mental health or substance abuse crisis.

Directions to the nearest hospital are posted on bulletin boards and at the park office.

Nearest Hospital
Indiana Regional Medical Center
835 Hospital Road
Indiana, PA 15701
724–357–7000

YELLOW CREEK STATE PARK



- Park Office
- Blue Symbols Mean ADA Accessible
- Environmental Learning Classroom
- Restrooms - Modern
- Restrooms - Modern with Outdoor Shower
- Picnicking
- Picnic Pavilion
- Camping Cottages
- Yurts
- Scenic View
- Playground
- Swimming Beach
- Fishing Pier
- Boat Rental
- Boat Launch
- Boat Mooring
- Waterfowl Viewing Platform
- Trail - Hiking
- Trail - Multi-use: Hiking, Mountain Biking
- Trail Intersection
- Road - Unpaved
- Road - Paved
- One-way Road
- Gate

- Parking - ADA-accessible
- Parking - Paved
- Parking - Unpaved
- State Park - No Hunting
- State Park - Hunting
- State Park - Boundary
- Camp Seph Mack

CONTOURS ARE ON 50 FT. INTERVALS

ENLARGEMENT—DAY USE AREA

GPS Coordinates

Decimal Degree Lat. Long.

1. Park Office
   40.578333, -79.000583
2. Lodging Area
   40.581194, -79.03425

Rev. 12/31/2025