

Preservation

Glacial Park — At nearly 3,500 acres in size, Glacial Park features a diverse array of prairie, wetlands, savannas and delta kames. With the gradual addition of parcels over the years, land restoration has been vital to making Glacial Park a cohesive natural community.

District staff and volunteers have restored hundreds of acres of native communities by removing invasive plant species, conducting prescription burns, and re-creating wetlands. In 2000, 3.5 miles of Nippersink Creek was remeandered to restore its natural path, preventing erosion, and improving the wetland habitat. In 2014, the Army Corps of Engineers began a 5-year restoration of another 3.5 miles of stream corridor.

The effects of land restoration on the wildlife and plant communities are evident at Glacial Park. Four hundred acres of state-designated nature preserve

exist within its central core, providing habitat for over 41 species of state endangered and threatened plants and animals, like Northern Harriers, Blanding's turtles and Forster's tern. In 1993, 13 wild turkeys were reintroduced to Glacial Park and today, flocks of 20–30 can be seen. In addition, muskrats, badger, woodchuck, 13-lined ground squirrels, green frogs and American toads are commonly spotted. It is also not unusual to see hundreds of migrating birds during a fall sunset.

Savannas provide a beautiful backdrop of oaks and hickory trees interlaced with seasonal wildflowers like shooting stars, columbine, mayapples and prairie smoke. The wide open space at Glacial Park provides a sanctuary for numerous plants and animal communities.

Red-tailed Hawk



Blanding's Turtle



History

Wiedrich Barn

Peter Wiedrich purchased roughly 560 acres from Samuel Walker in 1875 in what today is known as Glacial Park. He was the father of seven children and grandfather to the Wiedrich sisters Ethel, Laura, and Marian. Peter's son, Frank, built the barn in 1902. He and his wife gathered the stones for the foundation from the fields and bought the lumber from a friend in McHenry. Electricity wasn't installed on the farm until 1953. Each day the family would hand-milk up to 25 cows in the barn. They planted acres of oats, corn, hay and wheat. The farm was also home to 15 heifers, four horses, hogs, chickens, guineas, ducks, geese and turkeys. In 1975, the Wiedrich sisters sold the 120 acres that remained of the family farm to the Conservation District.



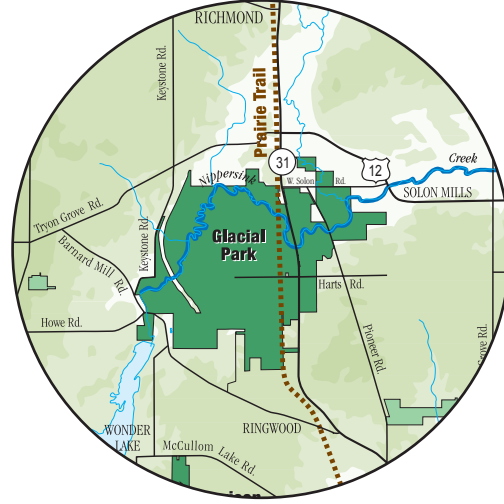
Lost Valley Visitor Center

The original building was a home built by Frank Howard as part of the Hickory Creek Farms operation in the

late 1950's. From the late 1960's until 1986 the property was a private residence. In 1986, the parcel, along with 1,100 acres north of Glacial Park was purchased by Comdisco Corporation and opened as Tamarack Hunt Club and Lodge. During this period, the grounds and structures were renovated and expanded by Comdisco. They operated it as a company retreat center, which included 20 bedrooms, a kitchen, dining area, meeting rooms, lounge, sauna, and swimming pool. In 2001, the corporation added a large conference room to the east end with additional bedrooms on the second floor.

During an economic downturn in the early 2000's the hunt club and the lodge were sold to a development corporation. In 2006, the Conservation District acquired the former lodge and retreat center from the developer. Its location as a 34-acre inholding within Glacial Park, as well as the interconnected hydrologic systems and oak savannas, made it a long sought after acquisition.

Glacial Park



Glacial Park Conservation Area
Route 31 & Harts Road, Ringwood, IL

Lost Valley Visitor Center
April–October: Daily, 9 a.m.–5:30 p.m.
November–March: Daily, 9 a.m.–4:00 p.m.



McHenry County
CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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Done with the map? Recycle it by placing it back in the brochure holder for the next visitor.

Glacial Park Conservation Area



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Recreation



Canoeing/Kayaking Spend a day paddling the clear, tranquil waters of Nippersink Creek, a high-quality stream characterized by the numerous species of plant life, fish, frogs and other aquatic creatures that live within its waters. Canoers and kayakers can enjoy the meandering water trail and scenic views by putting in at Keystone Road Landing or Pioneer Road Landing.

Fishing Nippersink Creek is home to bass, bluegill, channel catfish, walleye, carp, bullhead, green sunfish and many others. Anglers can fish at Keystone Road Landing or Pioneer Road Landing.

Trails Glacial Park has over eight miles of trails designated for hiking, horseback riding, snowmobiling and cross-country skiing. A portion of the 26.5-mile Prairie Trail also runs north/south along the park's eastern boundary. Trail users can park at the Harts Road parking lot and bicycle from one end of the county to the other, as well as ride the 6.3-mile westbound Hebron Trail link.

Hikers can also trek the two-mile Interpretive Nature Trail along the Deerpath Trail loop. Guide books, located at the trail head kiosk by the Visitor Center, interpret four different topics: "Plant Communities", "Wildlife", "History of the Land", and "Geology".

Picnic Areas and Shelters Visitors can enjoy a picnic lunch at the Kettle Lot, Keystone Road Landing or Harts Road Shelter. The Kettle Lot and Harts Road Shelter can also be reserved for large group gatherings.

Facilities



Lost Valley Visitor Center To enhance the existing natural attractions at Glacial Park, the Conservation District opened the doors to the Lost Valley Visitor Center in 2010 to immerse guests in an even greater experience while on site. Nestled in the geographic center of the park, the visitor center is the gateway to a day's adventure where guests can connect, learn, and discover the importance of preserving nature.

The Lost Valley Visitor Center includes the *Passport to Lost Valley Adventure* museum-type, interactive exhibit, classrooms for environmental education programs and workshops, a large conference room, and reading library with wireless internet access. The visitor center hosts multiple special events, summer day camps, and field trips for

local school children. A wide variety of guided hikes and engaging programs can be found on the District's website or sign up to receive the quarterly magazine, *Landscapes*.

Green Technologies Another significant feature of the Lost Valley Visitor Center is its green technologies. When renovating the building, the District did its best to reduce the use of traditional energy sources, preserve and protect the area's clean water supply, and reduce the use of the earth's resources. From energy efficient lighting and geothermal heating and cooling to daylight harvesting and the installation of rain gardens, the District took every measure to achieve LEED® Gold certification. Throughout the building, interpretive signs point out these features.



The "LEED® Certification Mark" is a registered trademark owned by the U.S. Green Building Council® and is used with permission.

Powers-Walker House

The Powers-Walker House is a rich educational and historical resource that is open for special events and programs throughout the year. By participating in these events, visitors gain insight to the early settlers' connection to the land. Annual events include the *Ice Cream Social of 1858*, *Archeological Awareness* and *Harvest Gathering of 1858*.

The Powers family first built their frame house, a Greek-Revival style home, in 1854. After the Powers family moved on, Samuel Walker, a prominent local citizen, purchased the farm. In the late 1990's, the District and McHenry County Historic Preservation Commission determined that the house still contained a significant portion of architectural integrity, unaltered over 140 years of use. An active volunteer group is working to restore and refurbish the home's interior and exterior historic appearance.



Powers-Walker Homestead

Research Library The focus of the collections is on the geology, soils, flora, and fauna of the area, as well as the history, practice, and science of ecological restoration. The collections include historical maps, a database of ecological surveys conducted in McHenry County, periodicals, books, and soil and wetland maps. The intended audience includes college students and land-management professionals. Access is by appointment only.

The Research Field Station conducts scientific research, coordinates ecological restoration and issues permits to coordinate research by scientists who work in collaboration with regional institutions and universities.

Education



Passport to Lost Valley Adventures In 2020 the Conservation District opened this museum-quality exhibit. Traveling through, visitors can build a basic understanding of the local landscape and our three primary native ecosystems—prairies, woodlands and wetlands—and our interrelationship and benefits from them.

Self-Guided Family Exploration Packs

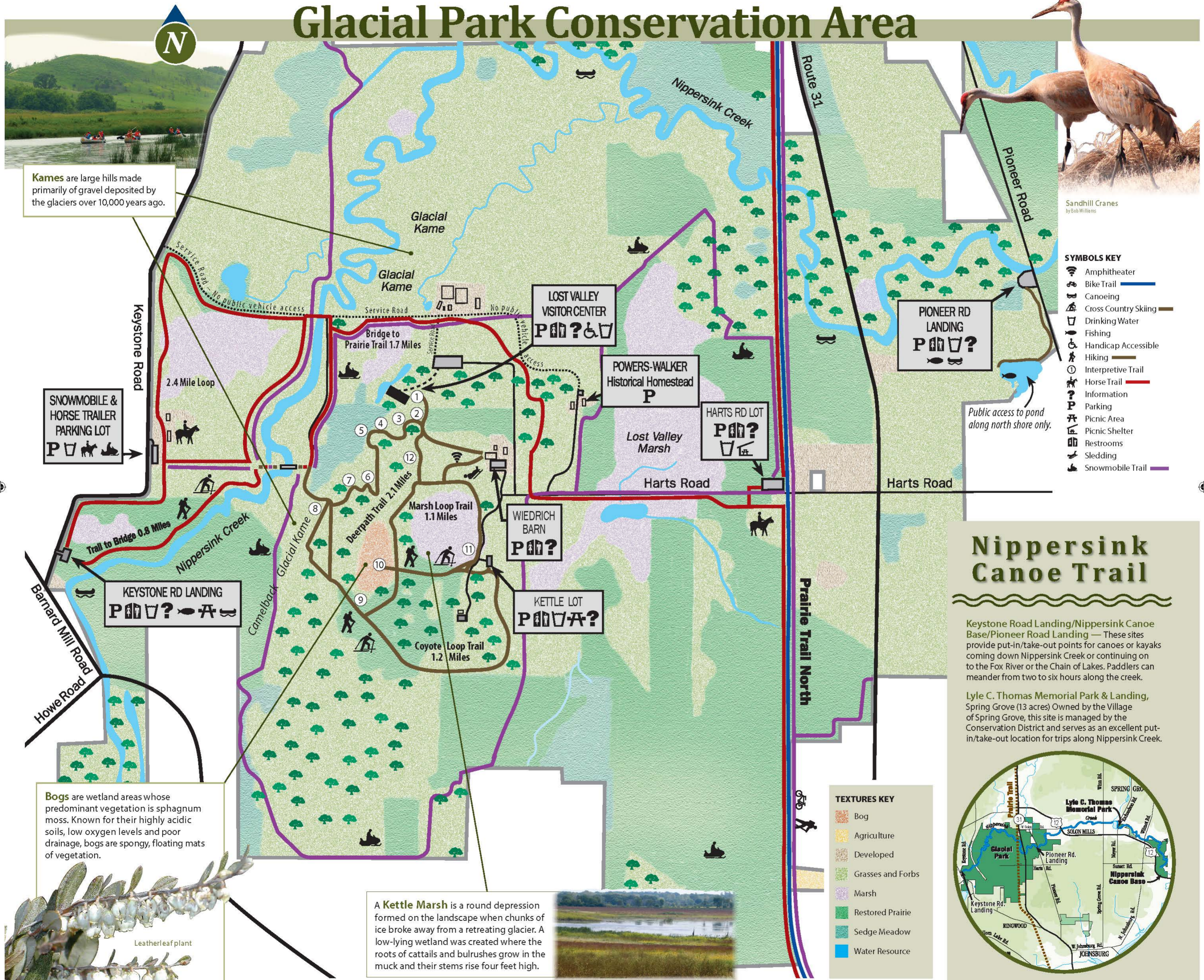
Create your own adventure with the Conservation District's exploration packs. These backpacks are filled with materials your family or small group can borrow for use on the trails at Glacial Park.



Interpretive Nature Trail A two-mile interpretive trail follows the Deerpath Trail loop and the circled numbers on the map correspond to different stops along the way. Guide books, located in Lost Valley Visitor Center, interpret four different topics: "Plant Communities", "Wildlife", "History of the Land", and "Geology".

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Glacial Park Conservation Area



Kames are large hills made primarily of gravel deposited by the glaciers over 10,000 years ago.

SNOWMOBILE & HORSE TRAILER PARKING LOT
P [Icons]

KEYSTONE RD LANDING
P [Icons]

LOST VALLEY VISITOR CENTER
P [Icons]

HARTS RD LOT
P [Icons]

WIEDRICH BARN
P [Icons]

KETTLE LOT
P [Icons]

PIONEER RD LANDING
P [Icons]

Public access to pond along north shore only.

Sandhill Cranes
by Bob Williams

- SYMBOLS KEY**
- [Icon] Amphitheater
 - [Icon] Bike Trail
 - [Icon] Canoeing
 - [Icon] Cross Country Skiing
 - [Icon] Drinking Water
 - [Icon] Fishing
 - [Icon] Handicap Accessible
 - [Icon] Hiking
 - [Icon] Interpretive Trail
 - [Icon] Horse Trail
 - [Icon] Information
 - [Icon] Parking
 - [Icon] Picnic Area
 - [Icon] Picnic Shelter
 - [Icon] Restrooms
 - [Icon] Sledding
 - [Icon] Snowmobile Trail

Nippersink Canoe Trail

Keystone Road Landing/Nippersink Canoe Base/Pioneer Road Landing — These sites provide put-in/take-out points for canoes or kayaks coming down Nippersink Creek or continuing on to the Fox River or the Chain of Lakes. Paddlers can meander from two to six hours along the creek.

Lyle C. Thomas Memorial Park & Landing, Spring Grove (13 acres) Owned by the Village of Spring Grove, this site is managed by the Conservation District and serves as an excellent put-in/take-out location for trips along Nippersink Creek.



- TEXTURES KEY**
- [Texture] Bog
 - [Texture] Agriculture
 - [Texture] Developed
 - [Texture] Grasses and Forbs
 - [Texture] Marsh
 - [Texture] Restored Prairie
 - [Texture] Sedge Meadow
 - [Texture] Water Resource

Bogs are wetland areas whose predominant vegetation is sphagnum moss. Known for their highly acidic soils, low oxygen levels and poor drainage, bogs are spongy, floating mats of vegetation.



A **Kettle Marsh** is a round depression formed on the landscape when chunks of ice broke away from a retreating glacier. A low-lying wetland was created where the roots of cattails and bulrushes grow in the muck and their stems rise four feet high.

