

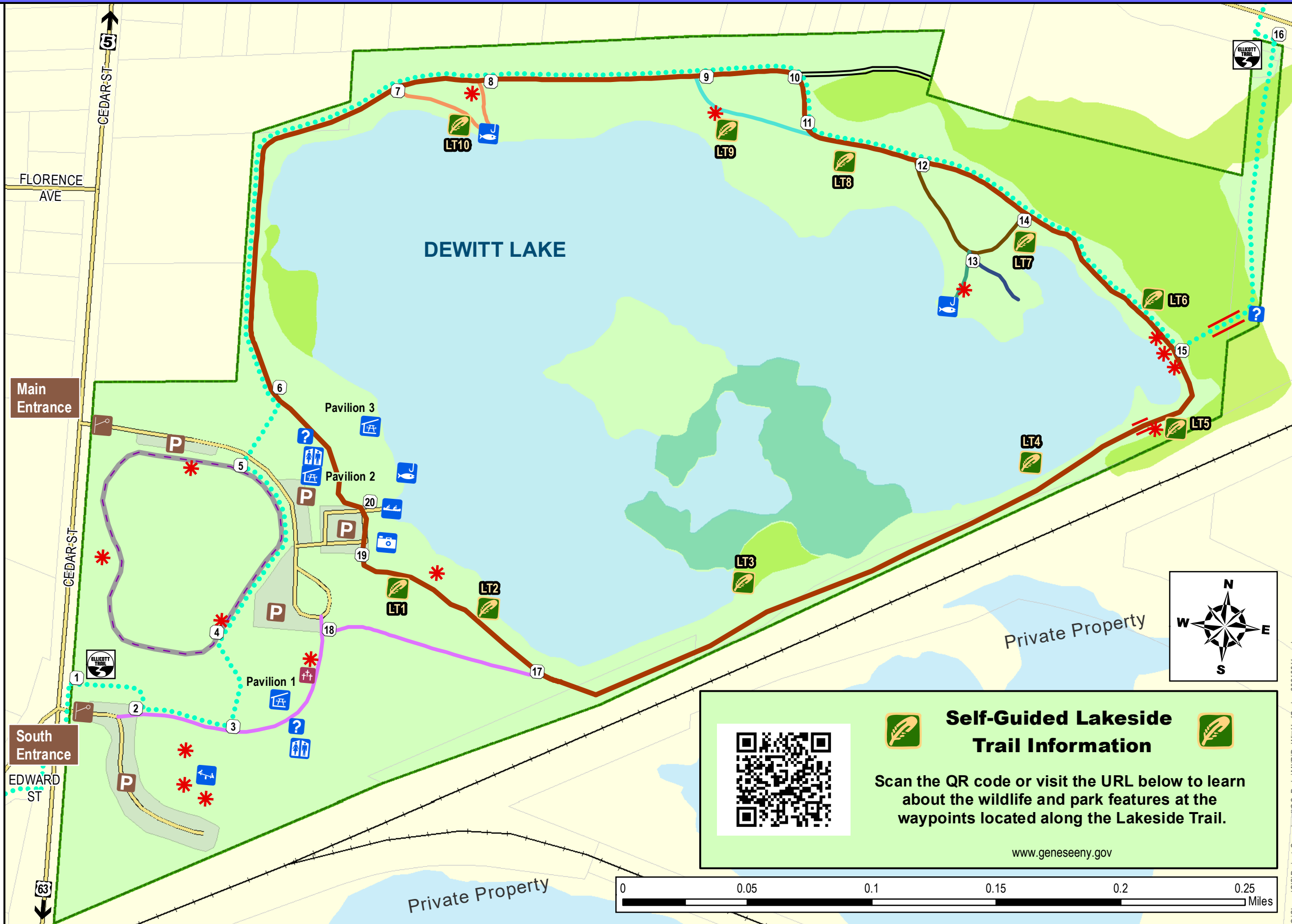


115 Cedar Street  
Batavia, New York 14020

# DEWITT RECREATION AREA

Est. 1996  
64 Acres

- ① Trail Intersection Marker
- Active Railroad
- ⊕ Park Boundary
- P Parking Lot
- ☁ Pond
- 🌿 Wetland
- 🌊 Area Flooded at High Water
- ▭ Parcel Boundary
- \* Bench
- 🚤 Boat Launch
- 🐟 Fishing Dock
- 🚪 Gate
- ❓ Kiosk
- ⛪ Memorial
- 🏠 Overlook
- 🏠 Pavilion
- 🎡 Playground
- 🚻 Restroom
- 🌿 Self-Guided Trail Waypoint
- Recreation Area Trails**
- ⋯ Ellicott Trail
- 🟢 Lakeside Trail (1 mi.)
- 🟡 Wildflower Trail (.20 mi.)
- 🟠 Goose Neck Trail (.07 mi.)
- 🟣 Overlook Trail (.06 mi.)
- 🟡 SeaBees Point (.06 mi.)
- 🟢 Blue Heron Point (.04 mi.)
- 🟣 Sunfish Point (.03 mi.)
- 🟠 Walking Track (.25 mi.)
- 🟡 Access Road (.06 mi.)
- 🚶 Bridge



### Self-Guided Lakeside Trail Information

Scan the QR code or visit the URL below to learn about the wildlife and park features at the waypoints located along the Lakeside Trail.

[www.geneseeny.gov](http://www.geneseeny.gov)

## Self-Guided Lakeside Trail Information

**1. Habitat for Wildlife (LT1)** This area was graded and seeded in 2018 with a mix of warm season grasses and wildflowers recommended by the NRCS. These plants reduce erosion on the slopes, which improves water quality of the lake. Wildflowers such as Blackeyed Susans, Partridge Pea, Purple Coneflower, and Oxeye Sunflower provide food and shelter for pollinators and other insects. Pollinators improve agriculture by pollinating food plants and allowing them to make many of the fruits and vegetables we enjoy. You can [help these important tiny animals](#) by reporting your insect sightings to wildlife scientists. Check out and join Bumble Bee Watch, the Lost Ladybug Project, Firefly Watch, and more!

**2. Wildlife Conservation (LT2)** These nest boxes are specially designed for Eastern Bluebirds. Eastern Bluebirds are native to the eastern United States, and their diet consists of insects and their larvae, which provides valuable pest control. Because bluebirds nest in hollow trees and they are territorial, their populations have been in decline due to competition for nest sites, pressure from invasive starlings and house sparrows, and habitat loss. Thanks to the development of bluebird trails and nest boxes since the 1970's, Bluebirds are no longer threatened. To provide nesting sites and keep populations healthy, this effort is continued by volunteers who monitor bluebird nest boxes— 5 nest boxes here at DeWitt Recreation Area and 10 boxes at the Genesee County Park & Forest. Nest box monitoring data from the parks is given to NestWatch, the nationwide monitoring program created by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. You can [join in protecting wild bird populations](#) and have fun outdoors!

**3. Native vs Invasive Species (LT3)** Many plant and animal species have migrated and made a new home for themselves in New York State, and some of them at the DeWitt Recreation Area. It is natural for plants and animals to migrate to new areas. However, when a living thing becomes harmful to the environment, economy, or health of other living things in the ecosystem, it is considered to be an invasive species. Many invasive species have no natural predators or pathogens in their new home, and as a result their population explodes. The Common Reed, or *Phragmites australis* that you see dominating this beach of DeWitt Lake, is an invasive species now common to wetland areas of New York State. *Phragmites* is troublesome because it crowds out the native cattails and other vegetation that our wild animals such as geese, ducks and muskrats use for food and shelter. It grows in dense stands and changes the flow of water through marshes and topography. Invasive species such as these are found in common areas of cities, towns, suburbs and rural areas. They may be found in your own back yard and right under your nose. Many ongoing efforts are in action to stop the spread and protect habitats for wildlife. You can help by [identifying invasive species](#) that live in your neighborhood and [reporting them](#) to help scientists catalogue, map, and respond to invasive species throughout New York State.

**4. DeWitt Lake (LT4)** The water source of DeWitt Lake is the glacial-outwash aquifer underneath the Batavia area and Townawanda Creek. An aquifer is a natural underground layer of rock or gravel, sand, or silt that can contain or transmit groundwater. Aquifers feed surface waters for cities, towns and homes. The water level of this lake varies with the amount of water in the aquifer, which is recharged during periods of rain and snow melt, and is slowly

emptied in periods of drought. The lake level typically rises during the spring season and falls during autumn, sometimes dramatically. Because groundwater and surface waters are connected, it is up to all of us to protect and care for our water sources and homes for animals such as lakes, ponds and rivers. You can do easy things every day to [keep your groundwater clean and safe](#).

**5. Watershed Stewardship (LT5)** This small wetland is flooded when the lake level is high. Water in this wetland is connected to the larger wetland on the east side of the Lakeside trail. These wetlands are part of the Black Creek Watershed. A watershed is an area of land on which all of the water flows into the same river or lake. For example, the Black Creek Watershed gets its name because all of the water in or on that area of land drains into Black Creek. Black Creek flows northward through Genesee County through Bergen Swamp into the Genesee River, which empties into Lake Ontario. Ultimately this water is connected to the Atlantic Ocean through the St. Lawrence River. From the groundwater in DeWitt Lake to the ocean currents, water is all connected. Protecting your water at home keeps our rivers, lakes and oceans clean! [Find your watershed](#) and get easy everyday tips to [keep your water clean](#).

**6. Wetlands (LT6)** This six acre wetland on the east side of the Lakeside trail has witnessed development of the surrounding area. It is part of the Black Creek Watershed. Park volunteers and staff removed trash and debris from this wetland to improve the habitat and make way for the construction of the Ellicott Trail. The wetland is home to frogs, turtles, muskrats, geese, ducks, great blue heron and occasionally beaver. As part of the watershed, wetlands like these provide vital functions to keep our waters safe and healthy. Wetlands help purify water, moderate weather events, mitigate flooding and erosion, and filter impurities from surface waters. These benefits have economic value as large sums of money are saved each year in water pollution abatement, flood control and repair costs. You can [protect wetlands](#) each day by doing simple things around your home and yard.

**7. Succession (LT7)** Nature is always slowly changing over time, and so are the habitats at DeWitt Recreation Area. The tree species on this peninsula tell us the story of the habitat and the growing conditions found here. The cottonwood, aspen, willow, and sycamore trees are called "pioneer" trees because they thrive in wide open spaces with nutrient-poor soils. These trees were first to colonize the sandy, wet shores of DeWitt Lake after quarry operations ended in the late 1970's. As they grew their fallen leaves decomposed and enriched the soil and their branches shaded the soil underneath. This created growing conditions favorable for the maple, cherry, ash and oak that live here now. As the plant community changes and species diversity increases, a larger number of different animals find food and shelter in the area. See how small changes in the types of plants in your yard can [create an improved habitat for wild animals](#), and find out why a ["messy" yard is better!](#)

**8. Native Grasses (LT8)** This large area of tall native grasses was planted in 2015. Native grasses are grasses that have lived in the area since before human settlement. They are well adapted to the soils and climate unique to the area. Because of this they are more resilient to the effects of drought and other local climate challenges, and they thrive without fertilizer or pesticides.

In addition to being low-maintenance, they grow in clumps and provide food and great shelter for wildlife including wild turkey, rabbits, small mammals and many pollinators. Native grasses use their long roots to reach more water and nutrients in the soil, which decreases soil compaction, increases water infiltration, and reduces soil erosion. Plantings of native grasses, shrubs and trees were completed at DeWitt Recreation Area in 2003, 2010, 2015 and 2018 to restore habitat and prevent erosion. Species included Little Bluestem, Sideoats Grama, Chewings Fescue, Annual Ryegrass, Canada Wildrye, Deertongue, Purpletop, and more. Learn more about [planting native season grasses for low-maintenance landscaping and more!](#)

**9. Wildlife Watching (LT9)** The island that you see before you was once digging site for machinery during operations of the sand and gravel quarry. Now the island is observed from afar while a small forest community grows and is visited by wildlife. The island is only accessible by boat except during drought years when the water level is low and a sandbar is exposed, connecting it with the beach on the south side of the lake. During those times, an abandoned cement mixing barrel can be seen protruding above the surface of the water just off the edge of the island. Animals leave tracks in the mud at the island edge and fledgling waterfowl leave the safety of their nests to start life on the lake. This lookout point is the perfect place to hear the calls of songbirds and waterfowl, see fish jumping, and enjoy the beauty of the sky at sunset. Wintertime is perfect for observing waterfowl that have migrated south for the season. You can help wildlife populations by [reporting your sightings of wild birds, amphibians, mammals and more](#).

**10. Fishing (LT10)** [DeWitt Lake is home to a variety of warm water fish species](#) such as black crappie, bluegills, pumpkinseeds, largemouth bass, and northern pike. Areas with submerged structure are good places to find these species. Northern pike are often caught in slightly deeper water along weed edges. Brown bullhead, common carp, rock bass, white sucker, sunfish, and perch also live here, and the lake is stocked by the NYSDEC with two-year-old (12-15 inches) brown trout each spring. They share this lake habitat with other wildlife including ducks, geese, raccoons and turtles to name a few. Sadly, many critters of the lake get caught up in fishing line, hooks, and sinkers left behind by anglers. They are found injured, weak, and many times dead because they could not eat or move properly to find food and escape predators. Please help keep the lake safe for all animals and beautiful for the community. Bring a trash bag with you and carry out all of your trash and lost fishing gear, and pick up something that someone else left behind. The lakeshore would be sparkling clean and safe home for animals if everyone picked up more trash than they brought in! [Following best fishing practices](#) will make this lake a beautiful place for everyone!

Use the QR code to scan for the link to this information on our website or visit [www.geneseeny.gov](http://www.geneseeny.gov)

**Acknowledgements:** This map was made possible through the efforts of various Genesee County Departments (Parks, Planning & IT) and a generous Earth Day Grant awarded by the Genesee Finger Lakes Chapter of the Air and Waste Management Association.

