Equestrian, Hiking, Biking Trails

Two 22-car/trailer parking lots, along with the 26-mile Governor's Hiking and Equestrian Trail, are located in the northwest corner of the property. A 51-site Class A Equestrian campground opened in August of 1999. A 24-mile hiking and mountain bike trail circumvents the 215-acre Lake and is open from April 16-October 31. Hikers will also find three miles of trails at Gridley Lake. A paved bicycle trail starts at 011 Parking Lot or the Park Office and makes a 9.5-mile loop. Those wanting a shorter trek may enjoy a 1/4-mile wildflower trail located at the Park Office.

Picnicking

Picnicking is available at Painter Pond, Gurney Pond, Geiss Pond and Gridley Lake and Westlake Day Use areas.

Hunting

Hunting is allowed for white-tailed deer, wild turkey and mourning dove, as well as upland species (pheasant, quail, woodcock, snipe and rabbit), turkeys (raccoon, opossum, red fox, gray fox, striped skunk and coyote) and squirrels. Season dates and hours, permit requirements and other regulations are published in the Illinois Digest of Hunting and Trapping Regulations and in the Jim Edgar Panther Creek State Fish and Wildlife Area’s own hunting digest, available through the Department of Natural Resources.

A notable aspect of the site’s hunting opportunities is its participation in the Department of Natural Resources’ Quality Deer Management Program. Here, and at other DNR sites designated as Quality Deer Management areas, only antlerless deer or deer with a minimum of four points on one side may be taken during the archery and firearm deer seasons. The program protects 1- and 2-year-old bucks to provide future opportunities for harvesting trophy-size deer, while managing local herds through the taking of does and other antlerless deer. Non-resident participation in archery deer hunting is restricted by permit.

Sunflower fields are situated throughout the property to accommodate dove hunting. Dove hunting is by special permit only the first five days of the season. Upland game hunting is restricted to four units, based on habitat suitability, to provide a choice of hunting options. Designated parking areas are provided.

The hunter check station, located in a former farmhouse on County Highway 11, handles all hunting administrative functions.

Jim Edgar Panther Creek State Fish & Wildlife Area

KEY

forest
grassland
cropland
hiking trail
equestrian - hiking trail
mountain bike - hiking trail
bike route
primary road
secondary road
creek, intermittent stream
lake, pond
fishing pond
parking lot
telephone

USE AREAS
- Cox Creek Hill Prairie Natural Area
- Office and Check Station
- Westlake Day Use Area and Boat Access
- Painter Pond Day Use Area
- Gridley Lake Day Use Area and Boat Access
- Jake’s Point Overlook
- Drake Lake Day Use Area and Boat Access
- Governor’s Trail Parking and Trailhead
- Geiss Pond Fishing Area – Bike Route Trailhead
- Field Trail Headquarters Area
- Hemmert Pond Fishing Area
- Gurney Pond Fishing Area (Trout Pond)
- Opening Hill Equestrian Campground
- Family Campground
- Group Campground
- Lake Point Shelter
- Mt. Bike Trailhead
- Primitive Campground

SITE INFORMATION

Emergency:
- Phone: Use 911 or call 217-663-2796
- Visitor Center: 744-5500, Fax 744-5501

Thank You:
- Thank you for making our park your own special place. Remember, litter only grows, leaves only flowers. Developed by Office of Facility & Environmental Planning.

MILES