

Deer Lakes Park Trail Notes

Enter the park on Mahaffey Road (3.9 miles from Route 28 - Creighton Exit (#13) on the Orange Belt.

Southern Trails

There are two access areas for trails in the Southern half of the park.

The White trail approaches the first two parking lots inside the entrance.

After turning on to Mahaffey Road from the Orange Belt, take the first right into the first parking lot.

This is about 500 feet from the Orange Belt. From the parking lot, walk towards Mahaffey Road.

Mahaffey Road bends to the right about 800 feet from the Orange Belt entrance (about 300 feet from the parking lot entrance). On the other side of Mahaffey at the bend to the right, you should be able to see a white blaze. This section of the trail goes north and connects to the Green Loop.

The other White trail access is near the second parking lot inside the park entrance. After turning on to Mahaffey Road from the Orange Belt, pass the first parking lot and turn right into the second lot (about ¼ mile past the first bend in Mahaffey). From the parking lot, walk to and cross the pedestrian bridge that spans a small stream connecting two of the lakes. From the end of the bridge, you should be able to look up and see a trail entering some pine trees about 90 feet in front of you. The pines have white trail blazes. This section of the White trail goes south and splits soon after entering the woods into White and the Yellow access trail (yellow blaze with a black dot in the center).

The other access area is along Cattail Drive. Cattail turns off of Mahaffey by a park sign that says "Park Entrance #1". This is about ¾ mile from the intersection of Mahaffey and the Orange Belt.

It is the next right turn after the second parking lot. There are four parking lots on Cattail Drive.

The first parking lot is on the left and has no access to any of the blazed trails. Each of the next three lots (all of the remaining lots on Cattail) has trail connections.

The second lot on Cattail (right turn) has an access trail at the far end of the lot that goes to the purple trail. The access trail is marked by a purple blaze with a black dot.

The third lot on Cattail (right turn) also has an access trail to the purple loop. The access trail is marked by a purple blaze with a white dot.

The fourth lot on Cattail (right turn just before the pavement ends and a gravel service road begins) is crossed by the orange trail. Trees in the grass island in the middle of the parking lot are marked.

Northern Trails

To access trails in the Northern half of Deer Lakes Park:

From the main entrance at Creighton and-Russelton Road (Orange Belt) take Mahaffey Road about 0.9 miles and turn left at Park Entrance #2 (you will pass Park Entrance #1 on the right). Park Entrance #2 will put you on Crayfish Drive.

Red and Blue Trail Access Near Pike Shelter

To access the Red and Blue loops, drive about ¼ mile from the turn off Mahaffey and make a right turn into the first parking lot. This is the parking lot for Pike Shelter. Park here and walk to the end of the lot and short gravel drive toward Pike Shelter. As you approach the shelter, look to the right. Several large trees in the clearing by the shelter have over-size trail blazes on their trunks. Follow them to the end of the clearing where you will find a dirt road and a Bridle Trail sign. The Red and Blue trails share this road for about 1000 feet.

Deer Lakes Park Trail Notes

Northern Trails (continued)

If you turn left and follow the dirt road down hill, the Blue Trail will leave the road to the left just after the road enters the trees (about 300 feet from the Bridle Trail sign). The Red Trail leaves the road to the right about 150 feet past the Blue Trail turn off.

If you follow the road to the right of the Bridle Trail sign, you will walk about 600 feet to a trail intersection where the Red and Blue Trails leave the road at the same spot. The Blue Trail turns to the right and enters the woods with visible blazes on the trees. The Red Trail turns to the left and heads up a hill at the edge of a field with few blazes, since there are no large trees next to the trail. A few small trees at the edge of the field have been blazed. The trail is visibly worn into the grass, and at the top of the hill, in the corner of the field, it turns left into the woods and normal blazes resume.

Because Red and Blue Trails share this road, you will sometimes see two blazes (side by side) on the same tree. This is not a double blaze. A double blaze will be two blazes of the same color vertically stacked, not side by side.

Blue and Green Trail Access Near Minnow and Carp Shelters

To access the Green Trail as well as a second access to the Blue trail, continue on Crayfish Drive past the Pike Shelter parking lot about a quarter mile to the next parking lot on the right (if you miss the turn, the drive ends in a turn-around loop 200 feet past the parking lot). This is the parking lot for the Minnow Shelter. Park here, walk to the end of the lot and follow the power line. The first over-size blue blaze on a power pole is a turn in the blue trail. Turn left and follow the blue blazes into the trees to follow the Blue Trail or access the Green Loop. The Green Loop begins about 900 feet from where you enter the trees on the Blue Loop.

If you continue to follow the power line past the first blue blaze (instead of turning left), the next pole will also have a blue blaze. Shortly after the second blazed pole, the mowed grass grove around Minnow Shelter ends. The trail is visible in the grass. Just a few feet after the trail enters the tall grass, the Blue loop will split to the right from the trail that follows the power line. There is no double blaze here to show the turn, because there is no large tree in the tall grass. Follow the fork in the trail to the right and when the trail enters the trees after a few feet, the blue blazes will resume.

Another access to the Blue Loop is just to the left of Minnow Shelter (as you face it while walking from the parking lot). It is an access trail in the corner of the mowed grass grove. This path to the Blue trail is marked by a blue blaze with a black dot in the center.

The Minnow Shelter parking lot can also be used for a more direct access to the Green Loop. After parking, walk out to the turn-around loop past the parking lot entrance. Cross the ball field towards Carp Shelter #1. About 40 feet to the right of the shelter is an access trail into the woods. The access trail is marked by a green blaze with a blue dot in the center. Bear to the left when the access trail merges with the Blue Loop. The Green Loop is about 100 feet from the intersection of the access trail and the Blue Loop.

Finally, the Southern leg of the Green Loop has a large field. The trail goes around the edge of 2 sides of the field. There are no trees near enough to the trail to use a blaze, but the trail is well worn into the grass. When the trail re-enters the woods at either end of the field, the blazes will resume.