

Self-Guided Tour of the Wolf Lake Watershed

Wolf Lake is a natural lake, but many areas were dredged in years past.¹ It is separated into nine different sections or ponds by dikes left after completion of the dredging project of the 1950s to construct the Indiana Toll Road span across the lake.² Today, the lake's maximum depth is about 20 feet; average depth is about 8.5 feet. More than a century ago, the average depth was 2.5 feet with a maximum depth of about 5 feet.

Wolf Lake straddles the Illinois and Indiana state line.³ It is not known how the area originally became known as Wolf Lake. Some local residents claim that Wolf was an early settler. Others say the lake was named after Noaway, the son of Potawatomi Indian chief Ashkum, who lived in the early 1800s. Noaway translated into English is Wolf. Still others say that years ago wolves were abundant around the lake and that the lake itself was in the shape of a wolf. The Chicago Historical Society was unable to verify any of these possibilities.

The lake and adjacent wetlands provide nesting habitat for four species of endangered birds: yellow-headed blackbird, little blue heron, yellow-crowned night heron, and black-crowned night heron. Wetlands also shelter the threatened marsh speedwell and endangered *carex garberi* sedge. The endangered lake sturgeon and threatened banded killifish, spotted sunfish and Iowa darter also inhabit the waters of Wolf Lake.

Description



A.2. Silhouette of 1946 Illinois state obelisk (bottom center) looking across state boundary into Indiana.

Photo by Rod Sellers

¹ The tour guide evolved over time. It was first published in May 2000 as an eight-page document entitled Wolf Lake Envisioned. Portions of it formed part of the Wolf Lake Vision Document of 2001. Much of the current script was prepared for the 3rd annual Winter Wonderland at Wolf Lake festival in January 2004. It was the text for an escorted bus tour of the area conducted by Joann Podkul.

This tour points to the future, so AWLI hopes those taking the tour will bring along their visioning powers. Sometimes one needs to envision a late spring day; at other times a cold winter morning would be in order. But AWLI will weave the past into the present, at times traveling from a green belt to a rust belt and back to a green belt along the spectrum of time.

Staging Area for Tour

Directions From the Chicago Loop, travel south on the Dan Ryan expressway to the Chicago Skyway. Exit Skyway at 104th Street, continue southeast on Indianapolis Boulevard, which is Highway Route 41, for about a mile. At the third stop light, turn right onto Calumet Avenue, drive south in the left lane for about another mile. As you pass a building painted blue, take a left into the parking lot of the Environmental Education Center (EEC), 2405 Calumet Ave., Hammond.⁴

For those traveling from Cline Avenue, take Columbus Drive west to Indianapolis Boulevard., and turn right and then left at 129th Street. After about a mile, turn right onto Calumet Avenue and you will see the Center to your right.

Environmental Education Center

The Center is located between Wolf Lake Park and George Lake.⁵ Operated by the Lake County Solid Waste Management District, the EEC provides environmental education to local school students and youth groups. It features a classroom, laboratory and indoor trout stream in which generations of rainbow trout live. The building also houses Hammond's Arts and Crafts Reuz Station where items are received and stored and then made available for reuse by such nonprofit groups as schools, scout troops, 4-H groups and churches. AWLI's headquarters was located at the Environmental Education Center from 2004 to 2014.

Travel

From the EEC, drive south. At the stop light, turn right and then another right and enter parking lot. Walk behind the concert pavilion and along the shoreline or onto the pier.

Wolf Lake Park, 121st St.and Calumet Ave.

410.2 acres

Activities: Windsurfing, Sailing, Swimming, Cross-Country Skiing, Fishing, Hiking and Biking, Ice Skating, Picnicking

Facilities: Restrooms, Picnic Shelter, Public Boat Launch, Concert Pavilion, Biking and Hiking



A.3. Home to AWLI between 2004 and 2014, the Environmental Education Center in Hammond is operated by the Lake County Solid Waste Management District and has been the venue for many AWLI events.

Photo by Michael Boos

*Trails, Aquatic Play Center (splash pad)*⁶

To the north is the beach, the only authorized swimming area at Wolf Lake, and the Aquatic Play Center, where windsurfers stage their launches. Wolf Lake is considered one of the best windsurfing lakes in the Midwest. It draws from the four-state area of Wisconsin, Michigan, Illinois and Indiana. Instructor Jackie Butzen, now retired, is an AWLI member.

Looking toward the west horizon, up against the I-90 Toll Road,⁷ you can see the Illiana Yacht Club. Ice boating is popular during winter when the ice is thick enough and the wind has swept most of the snow off the ice surface.

A picnic shelter is just north of the pavilion along the hiking trail. Just south of this area is the boat launch. The nearby Scout Island is a popular and safe nesting site for water fowl who have no predators to fear. It is visited by canoeists during the wetlands festival in May. Further south, beyond your view, is a second island, called Strawberry Island. During the wetlands festival, canoeists find it covered with the white blossoms of wild strawberries and, at times, only a narrow passage around its southern shoreline. Students from Scott Middle School released beetles there a decade ago to attack the invasive purple loosestrife plant. Nearby stands a windmill that provides energy to park buildings.

For boaters, Hammond limits the size of motors to maintain safe conditions for both boaters and swimmers and to protect the shallow lake bottom.



A.1. Dikes that divide the lake also provide greater access to view wildlife up close, such as this family of mute swans.

Photo by Roberta Lammers-Campbell

Travel

Exit parking lot, turn left onto Calumet Avenue, turn left at 119th Street and proceed west, enter Forsythe Park at south entrance and proceed north.

Forsythe Park, 117th St. and Carolina Ave.

65.1 acres

Activities: *Cross-Country Skiing, Fishing, Biking and Hiking, Ice Skating, Picnicking*

Facilities: *Four Ball Fields, Tennis Court, Warming House, Restrooms, Hiking and Biking Trails, Monument/Memorial, Playground Area*

⁶ Construction of the pavilion for concerts was completed in 2010. The Aquatic Play Center is was completed in 2011. Both projects were part of a \$31.5 million grant from the Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority for Lake Michigan shoreline improvements as set forth in the Marquette Plan.

The North Channel is a popular place for fishing throughout the year, but in winter particularly. During the winter, the discharged water from Unilever (formerly Lever Brothers) tends to be warmer than water in other areas of Wolf Lake. The North Channel tends to be open water when the rest of the lake is frozen and it attracts a variety of waterfowl. Runoff from Indianapolis Boulevard flows through the Roby and Forsythe Pump Houses. Although Wolf Lake is spring-fed, discharge from Unilever provides a stable base flow of at least 16.5 cubic feet per second or 11 million gallons per day.



A.6. Cargill, Inc. plant at the point where the North Channel enters the main body of Wolf Lake.

Travel

Exit Forsythe Park, turn right at Indianapolis Blvd. until you can make a U-turn and travel west. At first stop light, turn left past the Cargill plant, then turn right and proceed west on 112th St. At Avenue E, turn left into Eggers Grove, proceed to the far parking lot.⁸

Photo courtesy of U.S. Forest Service

State Line Marker

En route to Eggers Grove, note the oldest known monument in Chicago, the 15 ½ foot-high sandstone obelisk, located near the entrance to where the State Line Generating Plant once stood. It stands at the northern end of the state line that was the surveyed boundary between Illinois and Indiana in 1830. The Illinois-Indiana State Line Boundary Marker, erected in 1838, was declared a Chicago landmark by the City Council in 2002..

Eggers Grove Forest Preserve District, 112th and Avenue E, Chicago

250 acres

Activities: Picnicking, Biking and Hiking

Facilities: Picnic Area, Walking Paths Through Wetlands and Swamp Forest, Biking and Hiking Trails, Restroom

Part of the Cook County Forest Preserve District, Eggers Grove, also known as Eggers Woods, comprises about 250 acres, much of



A.4. Four lakes are in close proximity. The western reach of the Indiana Harbor and Ship Canal is at lower right. A proposed site for the environmental youth campground is along the north shoreline between the state line and Indiana Toll Road span.

which is made up of slag fill, especially south of 118th Street.⁹ There are sections of oak savannah, some 20 acres of wetland, and pools of water. This is a remnant sand spit typical of what this area was like before the sand hills were mined for Chicago shoreline fill under the Burnham Plan. Now it is one of the last habitats of this type.



A.23. Eggers Grove viewing from south to north and Lake Michigan. Note Burnham Greenway bike trail along the western borders (left) and the West Point entrance to the Indiana Toll Booth and Cargill, Inc. Further to the right.

Photo courtesy of U.S. Forest Service

Once connected to Wolf Lake with vast wetlands that provided substantial spawning habitat, Eggers Grove is currently isolated from Wolf Lake by slag fill and includes an area where cyanide has been dumped. One section of Eggers Grove has been classified as a swamp forest. Beyond your view, near the state line, is a fill area where drainage could be reverted to its historical direction south and east toward Wolf Lake. This section lies just west and north of the next area we'll view: the proposed organized youth campground.

American elm and a variety of willow trees. Note how the Burnham Greenway forms the western boundary of the watershed at this point. Marsh-nesting birds and migrant songbirds are among Eggers Grove's 170 bird species.

Travel

Return to the entrance, turn left onto 112th Street and continue west to Avenue O. There, turn left and proceed south.

Memorial Day Massacre

En route to William W. Powers State Recreation Area, notice the building on the left at 117th Street. It was Memorial Hall and home to United Steelworkers Local 1033. It is dedicated to those who lost their lives in the labor protest on Memorial Day, 1937, at Republic Steel. It is now the Zone, a youth and community center operated by the East Side United Methodist Church. On the right side of Avenue O,



A.7. Nike Ajax missile, dedicated in 1999, points in direction of launch site.

Photo by Rod Sellers

about a quarter of a mile west, is the site of the massacre.

Travel

As you approach 126th Street, turn left at the stop light and enter the William W. Powers State Recreation Area. After half a block, turn left onto Veterans Drive and proceed north. After less than a mile, you will pass Nike Missile Monument, kiosk and boat launch to the right; continue north for about another mile past the entrance from the Burnham Greenway and abandoned Nike Missile Launch Site and stop in large parking lot adjacent to site.

Nike Missile Monument

The Nike Ajax Missile was dedicated in September 1999 as part of a six-day, century-end celebration of the William W. Powers State Recreation Area.¹⁰ George Sadowski, a Hegewisch funeral director, formed a group of veteran organizations and community residents that inquired about obtaining a Nike missile from a military museum near San Francisco. When told one was available, they sent a truck out to San Francisco to transport it Wolf Lake. Upon arrival, the missile was restored and repainted before being placed on a concrete platform. Note that the missile points toward the launch site.

Kiosk

The kiosk was donated by local attorney George Tamvakis for the 1999 rededication of the William W. Powers State Recreation Area. It is maintained by the Illinois DNR.

Nike Missile Launch Site

The closed Nike Missile Launch Site served in the 1950-60s during the Cold War as a response in case of airborne attacks from Russia. The steel mills and refineries in the area were thought to be prime targets for a Russian air offensive. Missile launchers were constructed on the ground, then 10 feet of slag was dumped around and over the launch sites. It created a plateau that you see today.

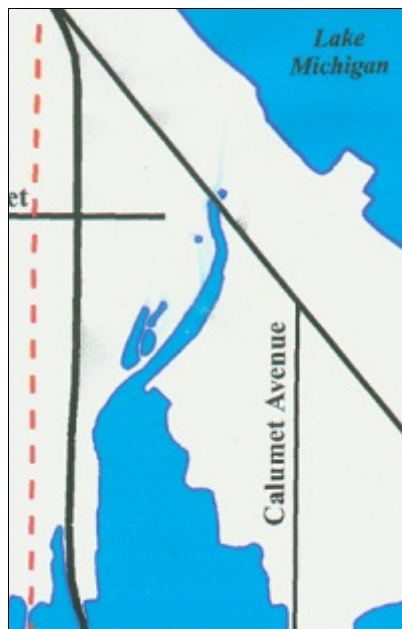
Cook County owns the 44-acre site. It was constructed in 1956 and closed in 1963. The US Department of Defense transferred the property to the Forest Preserve District of Cook County in 1965. By the early 1970s, all buildings had been removed and the site leveled, but concrete pads remain. A preliminary assessment to identify all potentially contaminated areas was completed and corrected. The US Army Corps of Engineers began the study in March 2002 under oversight by the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency. It was completed several years later with a final cleanup.

In a survey by the Field Museum of Natural History, some 123 bird species, including migrant hummingbirds and songbirds, were found at the site.

Proposed Wolf Lake Lodge and Conference Center

The abandoned Nike Missile Launch Site at one time was being considered to serve as a resort for visitors interested in the multitude of amenities in the area and to serve clients of the 120 companies whose facilities are in proximity. The lodge would be just 40 minutes by public transportation to Chicago's Loop. Historic Pullman is a 15-minute ride away, as is the Sand

Ridge Nature Center. Chicago's new Ford Environmental Center at Big Marsh, scheduled to be constructed beginning in 2019, is a mere 10 minutes away. Also 10 minutes away are gaming casinos, the Environmental Education Center, and the PGA golf course, Harborside, overlooking Lake Calumet. The Burnham Golf Course is within five minutes. Also nearby is Hammond's Lost Marsh Golf Course on George Lake.¹¹



A.8. Proposed campground would be located in the lower left portion between the dotted state line and the Indiana Toll Road.

the north shoreline of Wolf Lake between 112th and 122nd Streets and just west of the Indiana Toll Road.¹² The parcels are sitting vacant.¹³ The abandoned Nike Missile Launch Site parking lot in Illinois would serve the proposed campground as a staging area for hikes leading through Eggers Grove.¹⁴ Piers from the former Dolphin Ski Club still can be seen in the channel west of the Indiana Toll Road and just north of the state line dike. Note fence marking state line and proximity of Eggers Grove to parking lot.

Travel

From the abandoned Nike Missile Launch Site parking lot, return to Veterans Drive. Turn left at stop sign, veer right and stop briefly at Indian Creek to view obelisk east of roadway that was

As was true a century ago, visitors to Wolf Lake today continue to fish, hunt duck and geese (in season), watch birds, picnic, canoe, swim, walk along trails to enjoy nature, camp, and, in winter, ice fish, ice skate and cross-country ski. Windsurfing and water skiing, off the Indiana shoreline, are new. The Burnham Greenway links the area to Chicago's lakefront bike path and to the south suburbs. The 20-acre location for the proposed lodge and the 35-acre abandoned Nike Missile Launch Site on Wolf Lake's south shore were designated historic sites by the National Park Service in its 1998 study of the Calumet Region.

Proposed Organized Youth Campground

The proposed organized environmental youth campground involves leasing parcels of land along



A.9. Scouts camping out near to where a campground is proposed to be set up.

Photo by Michael Boos

¹¹ Also referred to as George Lake by local residents.

erected in 1946 for the dedication of Wolf Lake Park. Then continue south through park to 129th Street. Continue through residential streets to 13139 Avenue M.

Veterans Markers

In the 1940s, stone markers were placed alongside newly planted trees to serve as living memorials in honor of veterans groups then active. Over the years, the markers were not maintained. Many became buried, some damaged by mowers. Almost all of the original 104 markers were recovered by Washington High School students in 1997. One had become entangled in the roots of a tree. Markers not found and those heavily damaged were replaced.

William W. Powers State Recreation Area,

126th St. and Avenue O

580.2 Acres

Activities: *Cross-Country Skiing, Fishing, Hunting, Biking and Hiking, Ice Skating, Duck Blinds (in season)*

Facilities: *Picnicking Area and Shelters, Playground Area, Restrooms, Public Boat Access, Biking and Hiking Trails*

Park hours are 6 a.m. to sunset.



William W. Powers State Recreation Area is on Chicago's far southeast side, near Interstate 94 and 90, and Highway 41.

A.12. Scientists hear the latest update at the Biodiversity Blitz at Wolf Lake in August 2002.

Photo by Rod Sellers

The state of Illinois acquired a 160-acre tract in 1946, and it became known as the Wolf Lake State Recreation Area. Other acquisitions have now increased the area to 580 acres, of which 419 acres are water. The shoreline runs between 120th and 134th Streets. The park road on the east side runs parallel to the Indiana/Illinois state line. In 1965, the state legislature approved changing the name of the state recreation area to honor the memory of William W. Powers, a former state legislator, who was well-known for his deep interest in the promotion of recreation for the residents of his district.¹⁵ Illinois State Representative Powers' generosity also included providing annual Christmas parties for children, baskets of food, and fuel for the less fortunate during the Depression years.

In August 2002, more than 130 scientists joined local volunteers to identify all plants and animals in the area during a 24-hour period. This assessment is called a Biodiversity Blitz (BioBlitz).¹⁶ After 24 hours, scientists identified 2,257 species of plants and wildlife. This figure was to increase by several hundred in the following months and beyond as unknown species were studied further and then identified by scientists at the Field Museum.

Fishing

Wolf Lake contains largemouth bass, northern pike, bluegill, red ear sunfish, crappie, bullhead,

carp, walleye, hybrid muskie, and yellow perch.¹⁷ About six miles of shoreline is available to bank fishermen. The state line dike allows visitors to fish the lake's center without a boat.

Picnicking

The main picnic area is located south of the main entrance and parallels Avenue O. An ample quantity of tables and grills is provided in shady spots beneath the many willow and cottonwood trees. Four shelters are available by reservation only.

Boating

Boats with motors 10 horsepower or less are allowed. There are three boat launching ramps north of the entrance.

Winter Sports

Ice fishing is permitted when the ice is thick enough. Please contact the park office for the most current information.

Hunting

Waterfowl hunting season begins in the fall and extends into January. Hunting must be done from authorized blinds, which are allocated at a public drawing during the month of July. Unoccupied blinds are available on a daily basis. Consult the park superintendent for information concerning hunting regulations and blind site locations.

Rules



A.11. AWLI's annual Sunrise Worship Service in the Wetlands, Wind & Water festival is held at the State of Illinois' obelisk that was made to mark the creation of William W. Powers Conservation Area in 1946.

Photo by Rod Sellers

While groups of 25 or more are welcome and encouraged to use the park's facilities, they are required to register in advance with the site office to avoid crowding or scheduling conflicts. At least one responsible adult must accompany each group of 15 minors. Pets must be kept on leashes at all times. Actions by nature can result in closed roads and other facilities. Please call ahead to the park office before you make your trip. Camping or swimming is not permitted. No plants or parts of any tree may be removed or damaged.

Travel

Exit William W. Powers State Recreation Area and continue west along 126th Street. As you approach Carondolet Avenue, note Hyde Lake wetlands to the left. Pass Carondolet and exit on right and park next to the rechanneled Indian Creek.

Indian Creek

One-third of Indian Creek was restored to a meandering stream in 2003 as part of the Chicago Manufacturing Campus project, a.k.a. Ford Supplier Park. Developers had to mitigate for impact on the creek. The work was conducted by V3 Consultants, utilizing some restoration ideas from US Forest Service hydrogeologist E. Sandy Verry. The hope is that the remainder of the creek

(the 2/3 on the Don Schroud site) will be restored in a similar manner once legal issues on that site are resolved.



A.15. Cleaning up portion of Indian Creek that bisects Hyde Lake Wetlands.

Photo by Michael Boos

In the past, the creek was altered to a channelized ditch connecting Wolf Lake with the Calumet River. As you will see, the new creek meanders and contains pools and riffles, creating a much more natural system. Native plants were installed as part of the project as well. The Chicago Manufacturing Campus is innovative in its approach to stormwater and landscaping. There are no sewers in the area, and water quality in the creek and river would suffer if all rainfall were to flow directly into it without a detention pond or treatment. The site has many vegetated swales to treat water running off the roofs and parking

lots, and even the roadways (through curb cuts that were installed). The swales then drain into a stormwater detention treatment wetland for slow release into Indian Creek, and then into the Calumet River. Utilizing this system of stormwater collection, treatment and slow release is better for the environment as it reduces the salt and contaminant load in the water as it moves through the system. The result is cleaner water entering the creek and hence the Calumet River.

In the summer of 2000, E. Sandy Verry of the US Forest Service in Minneapolis began a Hydrologic Evaluation & Stream Restoration Recommendation for Indian Creek, which was published in early 2001. It called for restoration of the creek that carries water from Wolf Lake to the Calumet River.

During high waters, carp and largemouth bass enter Indian Creek from the Calumet River and migrate to Wolf Lake fisheries. In the fall, salmon make their way from Lake Michigan to Wolf Lake via the Calumet River and Indian Creek. Once Indian Creek meandered in long swoops, providing for fisheries, and was home to all other kinds of aquatic life. With man's intervention, it became more of a ditch than a



A.14. Restoration of the western portion of Indian Creek

Photo courtesy of Chicago Department of Environment

creek. It was altered to flow in a straight line west from Avenue O to Carondolet Avenue, then flow in a straight line northwest to the Calumet River. For the final third of the creek's length, this straight line exists no longer. For this section, the meander is back.¹⁸

In 2016, US EPA Region 5 and Illinois EPA discovered that slag, some 20 feet deep, lay beneath the surface of a 67-acre site just south of Indian Creek and just west of Avenue O. There also were large piles of slag rising some 30 feet above the surface. Sediment samples from Indian Creek "document the migration of lead, zinc, chromium, and hexavalent chromium from the site into the creek at levels meeting the observed release criteria." The pH reached levels of 11-plus. Soil samples collected along the shoreline were significant. They included lead samples of 2540 ppm, elevated chromium at 4400 ppm and elevated zinc readings of 1560 ppm. All of these samples either exceeded the removal action level or were three times the background sample. (See Site Inspection for Schroud Realty Group, by US EPA and Illinois EPA Bureau of Land, February 8, 2017.)

Travel: From the Indian Creek stop, return to 126th Street. Turn left for a short distance and then turn right onto Carondolet Avenue. Baseball fields are on your right and the Hyde Lake Wetland on your left.

**Hyde Lake Wetland, 125th Street and Carondolet Avenue, Chicago, accessed from 126th Street
40 acres**

Hyde Lake, which extended as far south as 133rd Street and north to 110th Street, exists no longer. However, a 40-acre remnant of the lake remains as the Hyde Lake Wetland. Bordering Indian Creek to the south and Carondolet Avenue to the West, the parcel had received some restoration work, but is now overgrown with phragmites. The restoration, managed by Chicago's Openlands organization, was funded by \$150,000 that resulted from a 1997 agreement between the Sherwin-Williams Company and the US EPA Region 5. The \$150,000 was part of \$1 million that the paint company agreed to set aside to compensate local communities. It also paid \$4.7 million for violating pollution laws.

The Sherwin-Williams monies also paid for construction of two bird observation platforms, a wetland burn, re-seeding of the two bird observation sites, and flora and fauna inventories accomplished by Conservation Design Forum and Walter Marcisz. The recent heavy invasion of phragmites, a common reed found in the area, may be due in part to the lowered groundwater from drought years.

The wetland¹⁹ is a true dune/swale remnant peatland. It has organic soils five feet deep, while the wetland north of 126th Street is degraded with concrete and slag fill.²⁰

Travel

From the Hyde Lake Wetland stop, continue south on Carondolet Avenue. Continue to 130th Street, turn left to Baltimore Avenue, turn right to 134th Street, and then turn left to Avenue O.

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At the stop light turn right and continue south several blocks. At the stop light turn left on to Brainard Avenue. Entrance to Powderhorn Lake is on the left after several blocks.

Powderhorn Lake and Prairie Forest Preserve District, accessed off Brainard Avenue between Avenue O and the Illinois-Indiana state line

175 acres

Activities: *Birding, Fishing, Nature Walks*

The 175-acre Powderhorn Lake and Prairie, historically connected to Wolf Lake, attracts fishing enthusiasts and those who value the diversity in plant and wildlife. Managed by Cook County Forest Preserve District, the area features a dune and swale topography created by the retreating ice fields of the last ice age. It boasts plant life said to be the most diverse in Chicago and 10 acres of tallgrass prairie.

The lake was created in the 1950s when wetlands there were mined for sand to build dikes on nearby Wolf Lake. The dikes allowed workers and supplies to be transported to construction sites.

Birding

Some 134 bird species have been spotted there, including migrant waterfowl and wet prairie breeding birds. Birds include the rare yellow crowned night heron.²¹



A.18. Powderhorn Lake was created when the wetland was dredged for sand in the construction of the Indiana Toll Road, upper right.

Courtesy of US Forest Service

Fishing

The dredging converted a wetland into a prime fishing lake. Fish inhabiting Powderhorn Lake include largemouth bass, northern pike, bluegill, sunfishes, bullhead catfish, white crappie, yellow perch, channel catfish and carp.

Travel

Return to Avenue O and 134th Street. At the stop light, turn right, past Harbor Point Estates and the state line. Stop at entrance to Calumet Container for a few minutes, then continue east to Sheffield Avenue.²² At Sheffield, turn left, continue north under the Indiana Toll Road to 129th Street. Then turn right and continue east past stop light at Calumet Avenue. Turn left to enter golf course on left. Continue past club house to highest point overlooking George Lake.

Abandoned Calumet Container site, 136th Street and the state line

11.5 acres restored wetland and prairie

The 11.5-acre, triangle-shaped site lies along the state line between a set of railroad tracks along Hammond's 136th Street and Chicago's 134th Street (Boy Scout Drive), just 200 yards north of Cook County's Powderhorn Lake and Prairie. It is the site of the abandoned Calumet Container plant, which recycled industrial drums in the 1960s and 1970s. Most of the property is in Indiana, but the parcel's strip along the west border, about 10 percent of the total, lies in Illinois.²³

In 2005-2006, the US EPA removed more than 20,000 cubic yards or about 30 tons of mostly subsurface soil that was contaminated in various degrees by heavy metals, volatile substances and acids. Found were lead, chromium, PCBs, BETX and cadmium. One thousand cubic yards were hazardous.²⁴

Today, it is a restored wetland and prairie.

Some 25 years ago, soon after closure, Calumet Container received two Superfund Emergency Response removal actions. In April and May 1982, EPA conducted a surface cleanup of 5,500 gallons of liquid waste and 27 cubic yards of solid wastes. In January and February 1984, EPA removed 5,000 gallons of liquid waste and 995 cubic yards of soil that most likely contained acids, volatiles and heavy metals.

A November 16, 1980 article in the *Chicago Sun Times*, entitled "Drum people--saints and sinners," described the company's activities. Written by investigative reporters Pam Zekman and Harlan Draeger, it was the first in a series on hazardous wastes. They described the Calumet Container site thus: "Surrounded



A.21. Only a few trees remain after the cleanup. Most of them encircle the pond.

Photo by Michael Boos



A.20. More than 20,000 cubic yards of contaminated soil were removed from Calumet Container site.

Photo by Michael Boos

by green trees and nearby lakes, it resembles a resort. Up close, however, this Calumet Container plant is anything but scenic." Since closure, neighbors near the site lived with the fear that groundwater would carry toxic contaminants off site. Groundwater flows northeast toward Wolf Lake. Runoff and groundwater flow toward Powderhorn Lake and Prairie. Wolf Lake lies just to the north and trailer courts lie to the northwest, east and southeast of the site.²⁵

In 2002, AWLI, through its Wolf Lake Vision Implementation Committee, recommended that the site be restored as a wetland. Some ten groups supported this recommendation. It has been one of the areas of the lake most heavily affected by what is known as "fly dumping." Fly dumping is the practice by independent contractors, homeowners, and others of illegally dumping waste materials. Materials dumped are commonly roofing and building materials, tires, and discarded furniture and old kitchen appliances.

Participants at AWLI's Wolf Lake Vision Implementation Committee meetings from 2002 to 2005 were kept informed of US EPA's efforts to restore the site. Three community meetings were held in April 2004 before work began in 2005.

By 2019, NIPSCO purchased and developed four acres of the site bordering 136th Street. Four acres to the south was purchased by the city of Hammond.

The naming of Boy Scout Drive acknowledges the work of Boy Scouts in keeping Wolf Lake's shoreline and 126th Street clean.

129th and Wolf Lake

West of Sheffield avenue, this area is visited frequently by fishermen. For decades the street



A.22. High school students provide the manpower in the restoration of the wetlands just north of 129th Street and south of Strawberry Island. Photo by Rod Sellers

was gravel with numerous potholes; drivers proceeded at their own risk. But in 1912, Hammond paved the street as part of improvements made around Wolf Lake. To the left is the property of Dover Chemical. The street dead ends at the Indiana Toll Road embankment. A biking and hiking trail to the north takes fishermen along the tollway, past several plots where Purdue University Calumet scientists experimented with slag/soil mixtures. In the spring of 2000, efforts were made to create settling ponds to capture runoff from the Indiana Toll Road span. Aquatic plugs and seeds for native prairie plants were planted to improve the wetland there. However, Hammond failed to water the plants and they failed to survive the summer drought. Strawberry Island, where the rare cricket frog

could once be found, lies just to the north.²⁶

**Lost Marsh Environmental & Recreational Facility, 129th Street east of Calumet Avenue
325 acres**

This parcel of land in Hammond had been dormant and contaminated as a dump site since 1938. The site was initially impacted by the industrial dumping of more than 3,500,000 cubic yards of slag, tires, 55- gallon drums, old car bodies, and other industrial waste. The site offered no benefit either economically or socially to improve quality of life in Hammond. An aggressive plan to restore the 325-acre site included phytoremediation and reduction of pollutants created by the slag, cleaning the adjacent George Lake by removal of 150,000 cubic yards of sediment resulting in deepening the lake, installation of walking and biking trails, enhancing the woodland areas, construction of a youth learning center, and adding a 27-hole golf facility to generate funds and sustain the development. The site was opened in 1999 to youth training and has resulted in more than 5,000 children participating in the life skills training program, with one of the students receiving a scholarship to play golf at the University of Georgetown in Kentucky.

Since completion, the site has served to improve life quality and has provided a place for recreation for all Hammond residents. Indiana's governor bestowed upon the site the Award for Environmental Excellence in 2002.

Travel

From the golf course, return to Calumet Avenue, turn right and continue north on Calumet Avenue, then pull off to the right at George Lake causeway for a view of the golf course and biking and hiking trail from there. Then, continue north to the Environmental Education Center to conclude tour.

Providing information to this guide include Chicago Department of Environment, City of Hammond, Openlands, Illinois and Indiana Departments of Natural Resources, Cook County Forest Preserve District and US Army Corps of Engineers. Photos and graphics were provided by Southeast Chicago Historical Society, US Forest Service, US Army Corps of Engineers, Chicago Department of Environment, US EPA and photographers Rod Sellers, Roberta Lammers-Campbell, Andrea Rivera and Joe Nowak.

This tour guide treats Wolf Lake as a single lake viewed from both the Illinois and Indiana shorelines and includes adjacent natural areas. Historically, planning and projects on Wolf Lake have been implemented separately by the two managers: the City of Hammond and the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. Natural areas and open land are owned privately and by other government entities, such as the city of Chicago, Cook County Forest Preserve District, Lake County, Indiana, and the US Department of Defense.