

Hunters Creek Park

Sargeant Mark Rademacher Park

Hunters Creek Park is a 750 acre park located in the Town of Wales, NY. It is designated by the 2003 Erie County Parks Master Plan as a "Conservation Park". It contains a deep gorge, a shale bottom creek, many tributary ravines, ancient and second growth forests, and open meadows. The park is accessed primarily from the parking lot on Centerline Road, just east of Vermont Hill Road. There is also a parking lot on Hunters Creek Road in the northern section of the park that is best used only in mid summer or winter.

Conservation Parks

Erie County Conservation Parks, including Hunters Creek, are undeveloped parks primarily suited for nature study and passive recreation. The Erie County Parks Master Plan established the following management goals for Conservation Parks:

- Protection of important natural and cultural heritage features.
- Management and enhancement of environmental resources.
- Self-directed, resource-oriented outdoor recreation, that complements the unique and natural features of each site, without compromising the environmental integrity, i.e. fishing, nature enjoyment, trails uses.
- Development of trails of a type suited to a natural park environment, with a hierarchy based on types of use and skill level; Identifying appropriate use areas and trail routes; Install proper safety measures and trail signage/markings.

Trail Conduct Rules from the Parks Master Plan

- Trails are remote and use is at your own risk. Cell phones and a "trail buddy" are recommended.
- Check trail distances and difficulty before heading out. Know your limits in terms of endurance and ability.
- Respect the natural beauty of the area. Stay on the designated trail system. Trail beaking can cause environmental damage.
- Don't alter/remove signs/trail markings. Others depend on them.
- Whatever you carry in, carry out.
- In general, trails are multi-use. Please share the trails, and respect the rights of other trail users. Wheels yield to heels and hooves. Allow faster riders or walkers to pass on the left. Indicate your intent to pass
- Respect fencelines and no-trespassing signs, and avoid entering private property.
- Avoid frightening or disturbing wildlife or livestock that may be in close proximity to you.

Please Respect the Park Boundary

The boundary of the park is not well marked. Historically, it has been hard to know when one was leaving park property and trespassing on private property adjacent to the park. Trespassing has been a concern among adjacent landowners. Please respect private property rights and stay on park property.

Please Respect the Trails

There are approximately 20 miles of trails throughout the park that allow users to access most of the park. Please note that Hunters Creek is not a "Trails Park". Some trails are routed better than others. Help save Hunter's Creek's trails using these guidelines.

Please use the Marked and Designated Trails. This map presents the officially designated trails system in the park. The colors on the map represent the colors of the blazes in the park. For the most part, these represent the most sustainable trails in the park.

Experienced park users may choose to use unmarked trails, however, some of these are wet, overgrown or erodable. Some have sections that cannot be used sustainably much of the year.

Avoid Trails When Wet. The soil at Hunters Creek makes a good trail surface when it dries and sets up hard. Refrain from trail use in the spring before drying allows the trails to harden. Most of trail damage occurs in early spring use. Remember this is the snow belt and spring comes later at Hunters Creek than in Buffalo. Trails are usually not ready for use until around April 15.

The park's personality changes with the seasons. Do not expect trails in the spring to be like trails in mid-summer. Stay in tune with the weather, and visit the park when conditions are driest. Get to know the trails well and stick to the driest after wet weather.

Access Trails From Centerline Road. Although a second parking lot exists in the northern part of the park on Hunters Creek Road, the narrow section of park that connects this lower portion to the rest of the park is wetland. Trails through this section of the park are not dry enough to use until midsummer or until frozen.

Do Not Detour Around Wet Areas. If you encounter a wet area, pass straight through it. Walking or riding the edge of a mudhole or detouring around it only widens it until the trail is damaged. Limit wet trail use impacts by staying on the trail. If it is too muddy to get through, use another trail until the weather improves.

Do Not Build New Trails. Hunters Creek has more miles of trails per acre than most parks. It is not legal to build new trails in this park unless pre-approved by the Erie County Parks Department. Building new trails or shortcuts destroys vegetation and may cause erosion. This is especially true of "fall line" trails that descend straight down hillsides.

Please Respect All Trail Users

Shared Use Trails. The trails at Hunters Creek are open to all nonmotorized users. Cyclists should yield to hikers and horses. This applies even if a hiker or horse has stepped aside. This is often due not to courtesy but to a perceived fear of being hit.

Access to cyclists and equestrians is granted only so long as trails remain in good shape.

Notes to Cyclists. Hunters Creek is a difficult park for bicycling. The trails are uneven, sport natural obstacles, and can be steep. While this appeals to experienced cyclists, it makes the park difficult for beginners. If you are new to mountain biking, it is best to hone your skills on easier trails such as Sprague Brook Park before riding at Hunters Creek.

Notes to Equestrians. Although all trails are open to equestrians, some are more suitable than others for horses. Some of these suggested trails are so designated on trails signs.

More Information

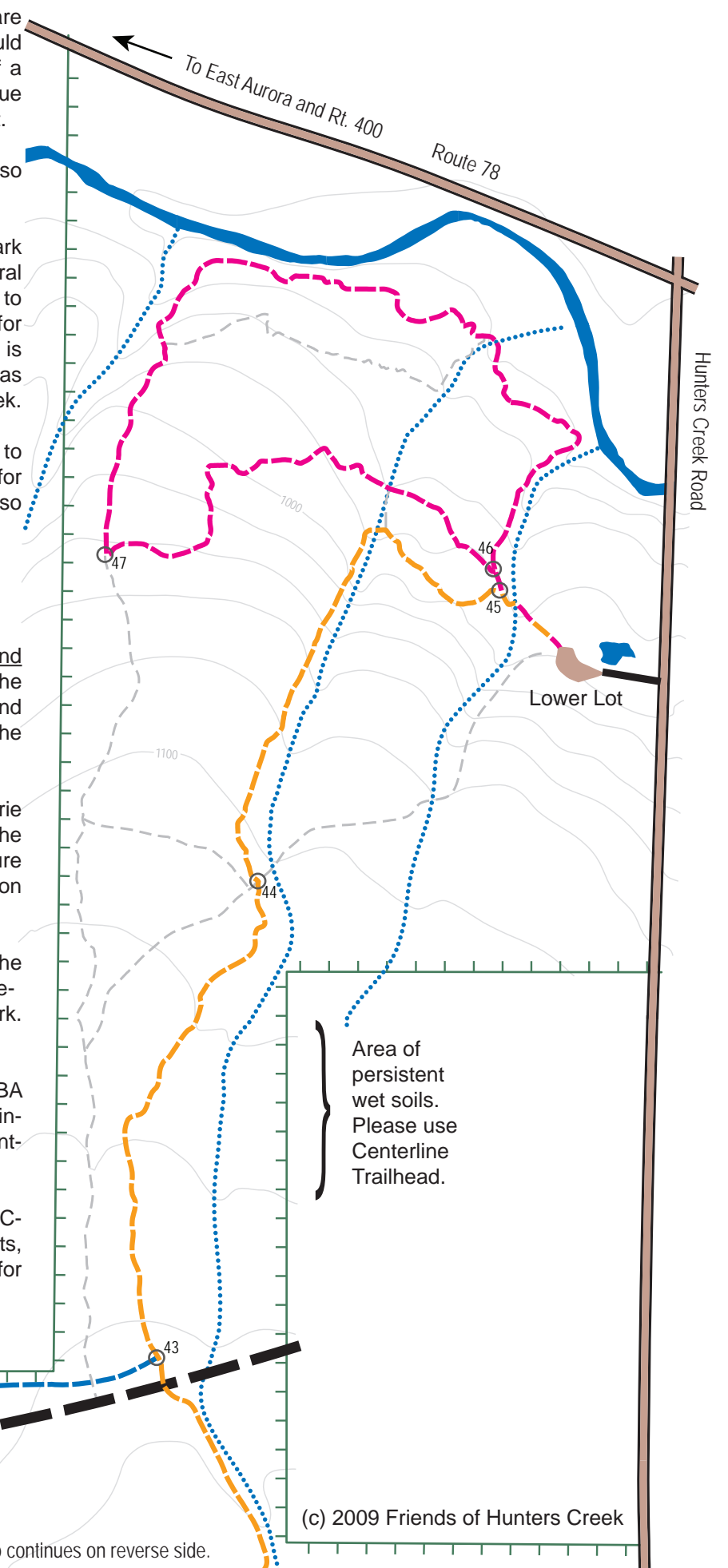
Erie County Department of Parks, Recreation and Forestry. Hunters Creek Park is managed by the Erie County Department of Parks, Recreation and Forestry. More information at 858-8355 or on the web at www.erie.gov/parks

Friends of Hunters Creek. FOHC works with Erie County to maintain the park and implement the master plan. FOHC produced this map/brochure and schedules trail maintenance days. FOHC is on the web at www.Hunters-Creek.org

Foothills Trail Club. FTC is the local affiliate of the Finger Lakes Trail Club and sponsors the orange-blazed Conservation Trail that traverses the park. Contact them at www.foothillstrailclub.org

WNY Mountain Bicycling Association. WNYMBA assists in FOHC trail maintenance events and maintains a user-reported trail conditions forum for Hunters Creek trails at its website www.WNYMBA.org

Western Chapter of the NYS Horse Council. WC-NYSHC assists in FOHC trail maintenance events, and recommends most appropriate routes for horses. Contact them at www.WCNYSHC.org



Map continues on reverse side.

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