



*Shoreline buffer zones like this provide crucial habitat for waterfowl and fish.
Photo by Paula Cooley.*

Prendergast Creek Wetland Preserve

Chautauqua Watershed Conservancy

What

Wetland shoreline along Prendergast Creek and Chautauqua Lake

Where

Town of Chautauqua, Chautauqua County, 1.25 miles south of Chautauqua Institution on west side of Chautauqua Lake

USGS Quadrangle(s):
Chautauqua

Why

Birding, wildlife observation

The Prendergast Creek Wetland Preserve is a small, but significant, six-acre site located at the mouth of Prendergast Creek, a tributary stream of Chautauqua Lake. It includes 500 feet of wetland frontage on the lake and 435 feet of the creek. The wetland lake frontage north of the site is owned by New York State, protecting the wetlands north of the creek to the NYS DEC Fish Cultural Station and public boat launch.

Natural History Interest

This property is an integral lakefront part of a 97-acre wetland with the most biologically productive shallow water habitat on Chautauqua Lake. The site's predominant tree species is Silver Maple. Basket Willow, Black Willow, Shagbark Hickory, Red Maple, Silky Dogwood, Red-osier Dogwood, and Buttonbush are among the other tree and shrub species present. The shoreline has a lush community of emergent aquatic plants, which provides essential aquatic habitat for lake fisheries and wildlife. Species include Bullhead-lily, Spatterdock, Fragrant Water-lily, Broad-leaved Arrowhead, and Pickerelweed. Fishermen frequent the lake side of these weed beds in pursuit of Largemouth Bass, Walleye, Yellow Perch and Muskellunge.

Herbaceous flowering plants taking advantage of the wet soils on the site

include Bottlebrush Sedge, Skunk Cabbage, False Hellebore, Cut-leaved Water-horehound, Swamp Smartweed, True Forget-me-not, Purple Loosestrife, Spotted Touch-me-not, Spotted Joe-pye Weed, Boneset, Blue-eyed Grass, Yellow Iris and Blue Flag. Ostrich Fern and Royal Fern also grow here.

Great Blue Heron, Green Heron, Great Egret, Black-crowned Night Heron, Blue-winged Teal, Wood Duck, Red-winged Blackbird, Swamp Sparrow, Pileated Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, and Red-headed Woodpecker are some of the birds that have been observed here. It is a good place to watch for Tundra Swans and other waterfowl during spring and fall migrations.

Mink and deer frequent the site, and the protected waters of a creek oxbow are habitat for reptiles, such as Midland Painted Turtles, and amphibians, such as Bullfrogs. Many species of dragonflies and damselflies inhabit the protected shoreline area.

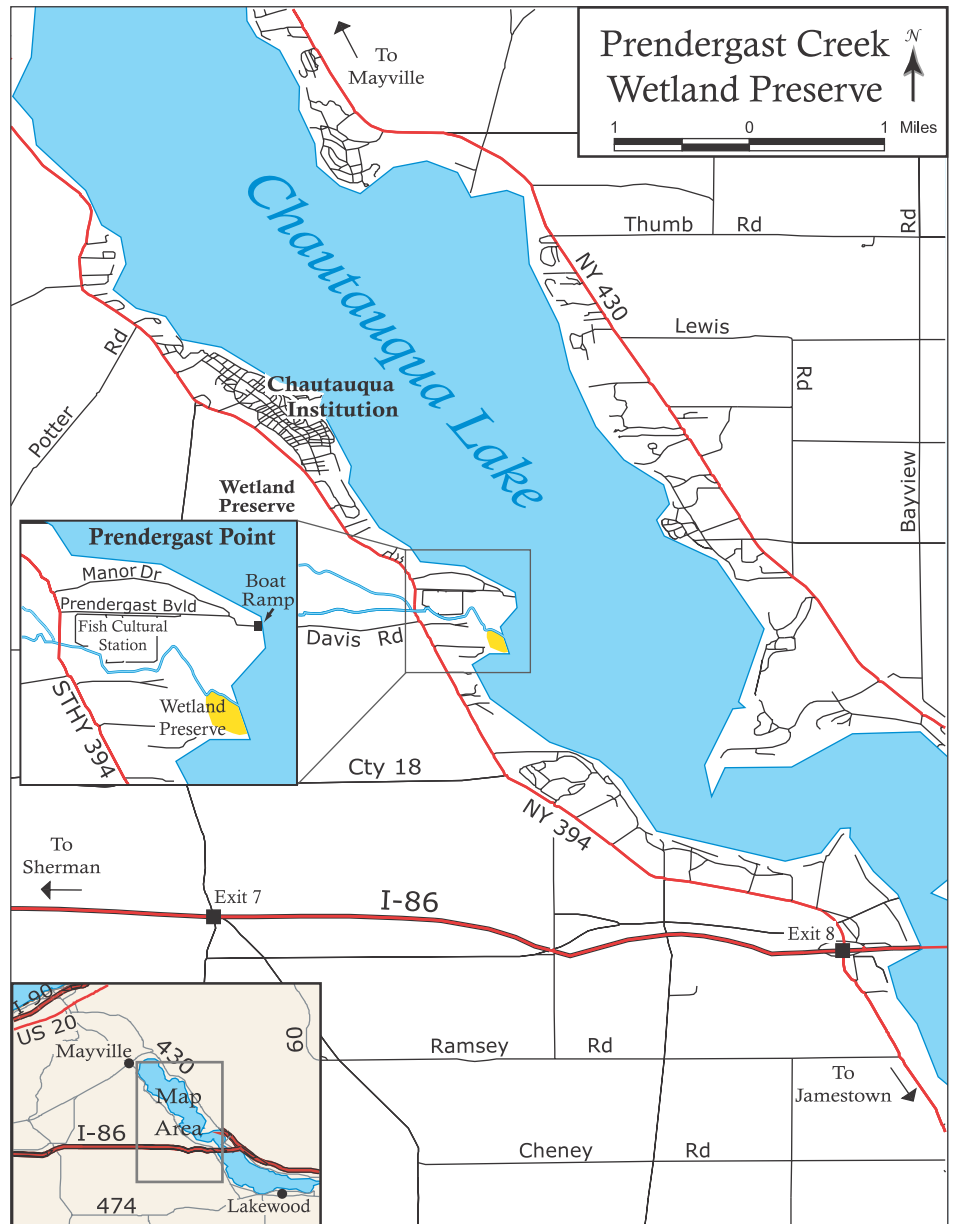
Other Notes

Paddling a kayak or canoe along the shoreline is the best way to observe birds and other wildlife at this preserve. Because of the sensitivity of this habitat, no public foot access is available.

Guided tours of the site may be arranged for youth or adult nature groups of up to six people by contacting the CWC at 413 North Main Street, Jamestown, NY, 14701; Tel: 716-664-2166; Fax: 716-483-5007; E-mail: chautwsh@netsync.net; Web Site: chautauquawatershed.org.

How To Get There

The Prendergast Creek Wetland Preserve is located at the end of Prendergast Point on the western side of



Chautauqua Lake. There is no access to this site from a public highway. However, you can view this preserve from boat or canoe.

To reach the boat launch at Prendergast Point, take NY 394 west from exit 8 (Lakewood/Mayville) off I-86. Continue on NY 394 approximately 4.0 miles to Prendergast Blvd. This road is not marked. However, there is a large brown Chautauqua Fish Hatchery sign where this road meets NY 394. Turn right onto Prendergast Blvd and follow it to its end. The boat launch is located here. By boat, the preserve is approximately 0.2 mile south of the launch and on the south side of the Prendergast Creek outlet.