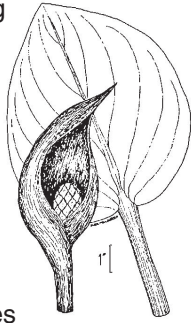


to maintain its warmth for flowering because it can transpire (breathe) two times faster than most other plants and the latent heat is released from the groundwater. Another distinguishing feature is the skunk-like odor that the plant gives off to attract carrion flies that pollinate it. The leaves decay in late summer/fall, but unlike other plants that dry up and fall off, this plant essentially dissolves into a black slimy substance that soaks into the ground.



#### 14. BEAVERS

These animals are famous for their big strong teeth, which they use to gnaw down trees. After chewing down a tree, beavers chew off the branches and tow them across the water to build their dams and lodges. From the sign, the dam is to the left (opposite the skunk cabbage) and the lodge is across the lake to the right. The dam has raised the level of Big Finster Lake by 18-24 inches.

#### 15. GEOLOGIC FORMATION

The landscape around you was formed by the melting of a massive ice sheet. The high knob you are standing on is called a kame, which separates three kettle lakes, and was formed from gravelly sediment that slid off the ice blocks around it. The dry, exposed summit supports a remnant oak savanna, marked by large, open-growth oaks with spreading limbs, and a more open understory.

*By the bench keep left to stay on the trail.*

#### 16. POISON IVY VARIATIONS

Can you identify the various forms of poison ivy here? In front of you are three growth habits including growing up a tree, bush, and vine on the ground. Just remember leaves of three, let them be!

#### CONGRATULATIONS

You're back to where you started from. Turn right to go back to the historic Stanley Schoolhouse.

*We hope you enjoyed this self-guided trail. Did you know...this is lake country and small boater's paradise. Nine connecting lakes will be the center of your adventures here at Chain O'Lakes. Paddle through the chain of serene kettle lakes, hike the 23 miles of trails, fish the electric-motors-only lakes, stay overnight in a hillside family cabin, visit the park's historic one-room schoolhouse, or explore the Nature Center. Other facilities available for visitors to enjoy include a campground, beach, and picnic shelters. Enjoy your stay!*

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION



Write: Chain O'Lakes State Park  
2355 E County Road 75 S  
Albion, IN 46701  
Call: (260) 636-2654  
Online: [stateparks.IN.gov](http://stateparks.IN.gov)



Write: Division of Nature Preserves  
402 W. Washington St., W267  
Indianapolis, IN 46204  
Call: 317-232-4052  
Online: [IN.gov/dnr/naturepreserve](http://IN.gov/dnr/naturepreserve)



Please carry out all trash you produce in order to keep your park clean and beautiful for others to enjoy!



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# CHAIN O'LAKES STATE PARK SELF-GUIDED HIKE TRAIL 8



Welcome to Chain O'Lakes State Park self-guided nature trail. Our Ice Age landscape and the plants and animals that inhabit it tell a story full of many surprises for you to discover. This ½-mile-long trail will introduce you to some of the unique features that make this park so special. The trail will take 30-45 minutes to complete as you circle Finster Lake. If you have any questions about this trail, please contact the park Interpretive Naturalist.

Enjoy your hike and remember—leave nothing but footprints, take nothing but pictures, kill nothing but time.

Parking is located within Chain O' Lakes State Park. State park entrance fee applies.

FOR MORE INFO  
[stateparks.IN.gov](http://stateparks.IN.gov)

## TRAIL ENTRANCE

Trail 8 begins by the historic Stanley Schoolhouse. The descriptions in this brochure correspond to 16 numbered stops along the trail circling Finster Lake. Enjoy your hike!

### 1. BLACK WALNUT

The leaves are compound and toothed. The bark on mature trees is deeply furrowed while the inner bark is a rich dark chocolate brown. The nut husks and leaves have a lemony smell. Squirrels scatter and bury the nuts. Black Walnuts are Indiana's most valuable timber species, used for fine woodworking of many types.



### 2. HONEY LOCUST

The tree is located 30 feet beyond the sign, near the base of the slope. This tree is known for the large branched spines found on the trunk and branches. Can you see them? This tree will produce large brown bean-like seed pods that can grow up to 16" long and inside contains a sweet yellowish substance, hence the name honey locust.

### 3. TURTLE POND

This small pond provides habitat for turtles, frogs, river otters, and other aquatic life. During the summer you can often see many painted turtles sunning themselves on a log. They are very timid, so the slightest noise will send them plunging into the water. Walk softly!

*When you come to the T, turn right.*

### 4. FOREST SUCCESSION

Succession begins with disturbance of an existing ecosystem that creates an opening, and proceeds to a plant climax stage. Succession began on this abandoned farm land when annual plants such as ragweed and foxtail grass took hold, followed by biennial plants. Perennials like goldenrod and asters appeared next, then woody vines such as poison ivy and grape, setting the stage for shade intolerant trees like black cherry and walnut followed by sub-climax trees of oak and hickory making way for the climax species. This process may take 150-300+ years. What stage are you looking at behind the sign?

### 5. BLACK CHERRY

This is another valuable timber species used for furniture in addition to medicine and food for early settlers. Notice the dark scaly bark (like a burnt potato chip) which makes it easy to recognize throughout the year. The white flowers appear in early summer developing into clusters of small red cherries in July and August. Many songbirds rely on the fruit during nesting season.



### 6. SHAGBARK HICKORY

This is one of the easiest trees to identify because of its light colored very "shaggy" bark, which peels in long vertical strips. The wood of the hickory is best known for use in smoking meats. The nuts have husks that split into four sections when mature. Squirrels, deer, and humans are among the many species that use the nuts for food. As you continue along the trail, see how many other Shagbark Hickory trees you can find.



*When you come to the Y, stay left.*

### 7. LIFE IN THE HOLLOW

The cavity in the Black Oak seen here is a very important part of a healthy forest ecosystem. Many species of birds, mammals, insects, and amphibians depend on hollow trees for homes, food, or temporary shelters. Without dead or dying trees, species such as woodpeckers, owls, raccoons, and many others would not be found here.

### 8. RED OAKS

The large, long-lived red oaks are found throughout the park. They are easiest to recognize by their leaves, which have pointed bristle tipped lobes. The bark forms grey, flattened ridges. The acorns mature in 2 years (white oak acorns mature in 1 year). The most common members of the red oak family at the park include northern red oak (next to sign), black oak (behind red oak) and pin oak (wet depressions on clay soil).



### 9. BIG FINSTER LAKE

Like the other lakes in the park and throughout northern Indiana, this kettle lake was formed about 20,000 years ago in a depression created by a melting ice block as the Wisconsin glacier receded. Big Finster covers only 5 acres but is more than 40 feet at its deepest point. The lake has no streams entering or leaving it and is fed entirely by groundwater, which accounts for its clarity and excellent water quality.

### 10. OLD AGE FOREST

The oldest trees in the mature forest around you are at least 150 years old. This is an old-age oak hickory forest, with white oak as the dominant canopy tree. The forest is growing on a winding ridge of sand and gravel known as an esker. This landform resembles an inverted streambed and was deposited by a stream flowing beneath a melting glacier.

*Turn left to stay on trail 8.*

### 11. WHITE OAK

The leaves of the white oak differ from those of the red oaks because they have rounded lobes which are deeply cut. Mature white oak bark usually forms light gray blocky plates with inconspicuous ridges. The White Oak seen here is the most common and longest-lived species in this forest, known to reach 400-600 years old.



### 12. EMERGENTS

In the shallow water of this lake are several plants known as emergents. These plants grow with the roots and lower stems underwater and the leaves above or floating on the water surface. Common emergents here include arrowhead, pickerelweed, and the sweet-scented water lily.

### 13. SKUNK CABBAGE

This is a perennial wildflower that grows only in wet areas where groundwater is coming to the surface. The flowers of this unusual plant appear in late winter. It's one of only a few plants that exhibit thermogenesis, meaning they have the ability to raise their own temperature. This plant is able