

OAKLAND COUNTY PARKS

The Wilder Side of Oakland County

by Jonathan Schechter

CENTRAL PARK - 12 Acres of Nature Embracing Enjoyment


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Earlier this week I headed to Central Park; not the well-known 843-acre Central Park in New York City, but the 12-acre Central Park that's just a short distance from the downtown area of the Village of Milford. My plan was to explore for just an hour, but it was such a delightful treat I stayed for almost three hours and am already thinking about a return visit!

Everything about the park was a pleasure, from the welcoming entrance sign to colorful interpretive signage along the short trail. Perhaps calling the trail a walking path is more accurate; it's flat and easy to navigate. One of the first things I noticed was everyone I encountered was smiling and a few were having picnic lunches. (a)

To start my exploration I meandered over to a chair near the shoreline of the small lake and just sat there taking in the views and watching overflights of geese. That was hour number one; and a very good hour at that. Sometimes sitting and looking and listening to nature's way is the way to go. I noticed a lone Wood Duck as well, but it was well out of range for a clear photo. Apparently, this one has skipped its usual southern migration time. (b)

I then followed the creek, which is part of the Huron River Watershed, a few hundred feet back upstream to the restored powerhouse and listened to the music of flowing water which in a word was delightful. Signage at that location shared the story of an old saw mill and distillery that used to be there. Next it was back to the edge of the pond where I meandered along a small boardwalk taking in the eye-catching autumn views. (c)

The Central Park Wildflower Restoration Project sign at the water's edge caught my attention. That location gave me my second sighting of a colorful Wood Duck at the water's edge; perhaps the same one I saw earlier.

I chatted with a few people I encountered during my trek and most were local and told me they come several times a week just to sit and relax and they also came for summer concerts. They also brought to my attention a circular area of chairs set up around a fire pit, a favorite place to socialize with their friends. (d)

I found a bench to sit and stayed there for about half an hour to get a better feel of the place and take in the autumn colors of the maple trees and watch a flurry of bird activity. I fully agree with this statement from their website that mentions the scenic backdrop. "Central Park is a 12-acre site in the heart of the community, within easy walking distance of the downtown district. The Huron River and Pettibone Creek provide a scenic backdrop enjoyed by the many visitors to the park, whether they come for the summer concert series, to play a game of tennis, or merely to bring a picnic basket and relax for the day." (e)


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A small foot bridge was scenic in itself and gave access to the rest of this enticing tiny park. I stayed on the bridge for about 10 minutes just taking in the sights, watching milkweed seeds floating in the wind and trying to identify a few small fish swimming under the bridge. (e)

Although the park was not busy during my visit, the ample benches and chairs told me that some days may be very different. Of note the hard surfaced walking paths that lead from the parking area to benches facing the water give easy access to people of all abilities. (f)

As I walked back to the parking area I made note of the small playground with attractive features that emitted sounds of happy children playing. I can certainly see why these 12 acres add to the quality in the Village of Milford. Go visit!

More information on Central Park can be found at: https://www.villageofmilford.org/discover/parks/Central-Park/index.php

Oakland County Parks staffer Jonathan Schechter is an avid "nature-embracing" hiker who follows phenology - the study of natural cycles of nature's way - to inspire his blogs.


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