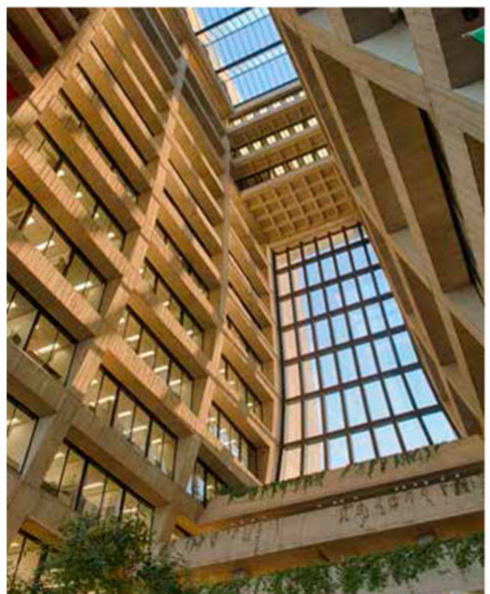
Visitors Guide & Map

Fermilab

Discover Fermilab

Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory is one of the 17 national laboratories of the U.S. Department of Energy. Our laboratory is dedicated to particle physics and accelerator research for the benefit of all. More than 4,000 scientists from around the world collaborate with Fermilab to solve the mysteries of matter, energy, space and time. They use the laboratory's particle accelerators, technology centers and computers to find out what the universe is made of and how it works. To learn more about our research and discoveries, visit our exhibits in Wilson Hall or browse our website at www.fnal.gov.

Fermilab's 6,800-acre site is open to the public every day of the year. It has more than a thousand acres of restored prairies, woodlands, lakes and wetlands that can be enjoyed in all seasons. More than 280 species of birds and 60 species of butterflies have been spotted at Fermilab. This brochure provides information on where you can explore nature and watch bison, coyotes, birds and butterflies. It identifies public access areas where you may want to pursue activities such as hiking, biking, fishing (with a valid Illinois fishing license), photography, dog training, in-line skating and cross-country skiing.



Areas of Interest

1 WILSON HALL, SWAN LAKE AND REFLECTIVE PONDS

The science exhibits and viewing areas in Wilson Hall are among the main attractions of the Fermilab site. Sign in at the reception desk on the first floor of Wilson Hall (atrium level) to go to the viewing areas. Outside the building, the lake and ponds are good places to observe many species of insects and birds. See site 1 on the map.

2 LEDERMAN SCIENCE CENTER AND OUTDOOR AREA

The center offers hands-on science exhibits and educational programs for students in grades 5–12. Outside, children can explore the physics playground and run like a proton, be a gnomon for a sundial, or make a wave. A paved walking trail through woods and across a creek connects Wilson Hall to the Lederman Science Center. See site 2 on the map.

3 MARGARET PEARSON INTERPRETIVE TRAIL

This one-quarter-mile mowed trail is located off Pine Street and traverses 75 acres of reconstructed prairie as well as native woodland. Information panels are placed along the trail, and hikers can see prairie plants including prairie dock, white wild indigo, compass plant, foxglove beardtongue and wild bergamot. See site 3 on the map.

4 BISON PASTURE AND VIEWING

Bison are a symbol of the frontier—the prairie heritage of our site as well as the pioneering research the laboratory does today. The lab's first director, Robert R. Wilson, brought the first bison to the lab in 1969. From either Road D or Batavia Road you can observe the herd year-round as the animals roam their 80-acre pasture. Bison are wild animals: for your safety, please stay away from the fence. See site 4 on the map.

5 DOG TRAINING AREA

Fermilab has designated this open grassland area for off-leash dog exercise and training. A small parking lot off Batavia Road provides access to the area. There is no obstacle course. Dogs must be leashed outside the training area. Please supervise your dogs closely as coyotes frequent this area, too. See site 5 on the map.

6 LAKE LAW AND A.E. SEA NATURE AREA

A mowed path surrounds A.E. Sea and Lake Law and invites you for a walk. This is a great area for bird watching, botanizing, jogging and cross-country skiing. See site 6 on the map.

7 NEPESE MARSH AND DUSAF POND

Nepese Marsh was formerly a sewage treatment lagoon for the town of Weston. It was converted to a wetland with the help of volunteers and lab employees who fully drained, cleaned, and replanted it. Bird watching and botanizing are also possible at the DUSAF Pond, which abuts the Nepese Marsh acreage. See site 7 on the map.

About Fermilab Natural Areas

The mission of the not-for-profit organization Fermilab Natural Areas (FNA) is to restore, manage and conserve Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory's natural areas in support of the laboratory's science mission, and to encourage visitors to experience and enjoy Fermilab's natural beauty. FNA promotes public access to the Fermilab site, which includes one of the largest restored prairies in the Midwest. FNA is a volunteer-based organization supported by member donations and grants. More information and opportunities to support FNA's mission can be found at www.fermilabnaturalareas.org.

Animals of Interest

Bison *Bison bison*
One of North America's largest grazers, bison widely roamed the prairies across the Midwest. Their feeding and herding activity created micro-habitats for native plant succession and opportunities for smaller animals to live in their wake. Bison viewing at Fermilab is available year-round.

Bobolink *Dolichoryx oryzivorus*
With a yellow hat, black front and a brightly colored back during breeding season, this prairie denizen looks upside-down. You can hear its bubbly, cheerful song throughout the summer. Its color turns drab after breeding season, and it is an extraordinary migrant, traveling south of the equator each autumn and making a round-trip of approximately 12,500 miles.

Coyote *Canis latrans*
Coyote, also known as 'song dog' or 'prairie wolf,' are known as the top canine predator in urbanized regions near Fermilab and have a noticeable impact on a variety of wildlife populations. Coyotes can run up to 40 miles an hour. In the fall and winter, they form loose packs for more effective hunting. They are often seen near the bike path along Batavia Road, with a year-round viewing season.

Eastern Meadowlark *Sturnella magna*
One of the classic prairie birds, this summer resident can be heard singing its sweet song in open grasslands. Meadowlarks are robin-sized birds with a bright yellow breast and thick black necklace. Despite their name they are members of the blackbird, not lark, family. Migrating adults arrive in Illinois in March and stay until October or November, flying by day short distances at low altitudes.

Great Horned Owl *Bubo virginianus*
The great horned owl is the most common owl of the Americas, easily recognizable because of the feather tufts on its head. These "plumicorns" resemble horns or, to some, catlike ears. These primarily nocturnal birds breed at Fermilab and hunt small prey. After consuming their dinner, owls regurgitate pellets, which can often be found along prairie paths. Owl viewing is possible year-round at dusk.

Red-tailed Hawk *Buteo jamaicensis*
The red-tailed hawk is one of the most widely distributed hawks in North America and is the most common raptor in the Midwestern region. Breeding pairs live at Fermilab and sometimes migrate south during cold winters. Their food supply is focused on small rodents, reptiles and birds. Viewing is best from spring through fall.

Design by Sandbox Studio, Chicago; Photography by Fermilab Visual Media Services

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2. LEDERMAN SCIENCE CENTER AND OUTDOOR AREA
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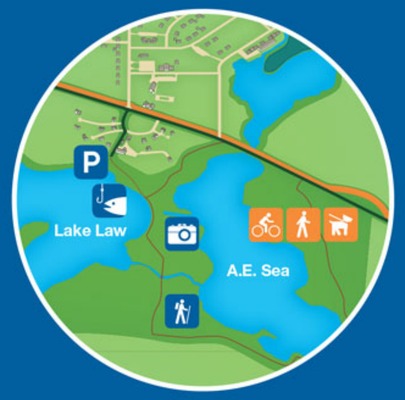

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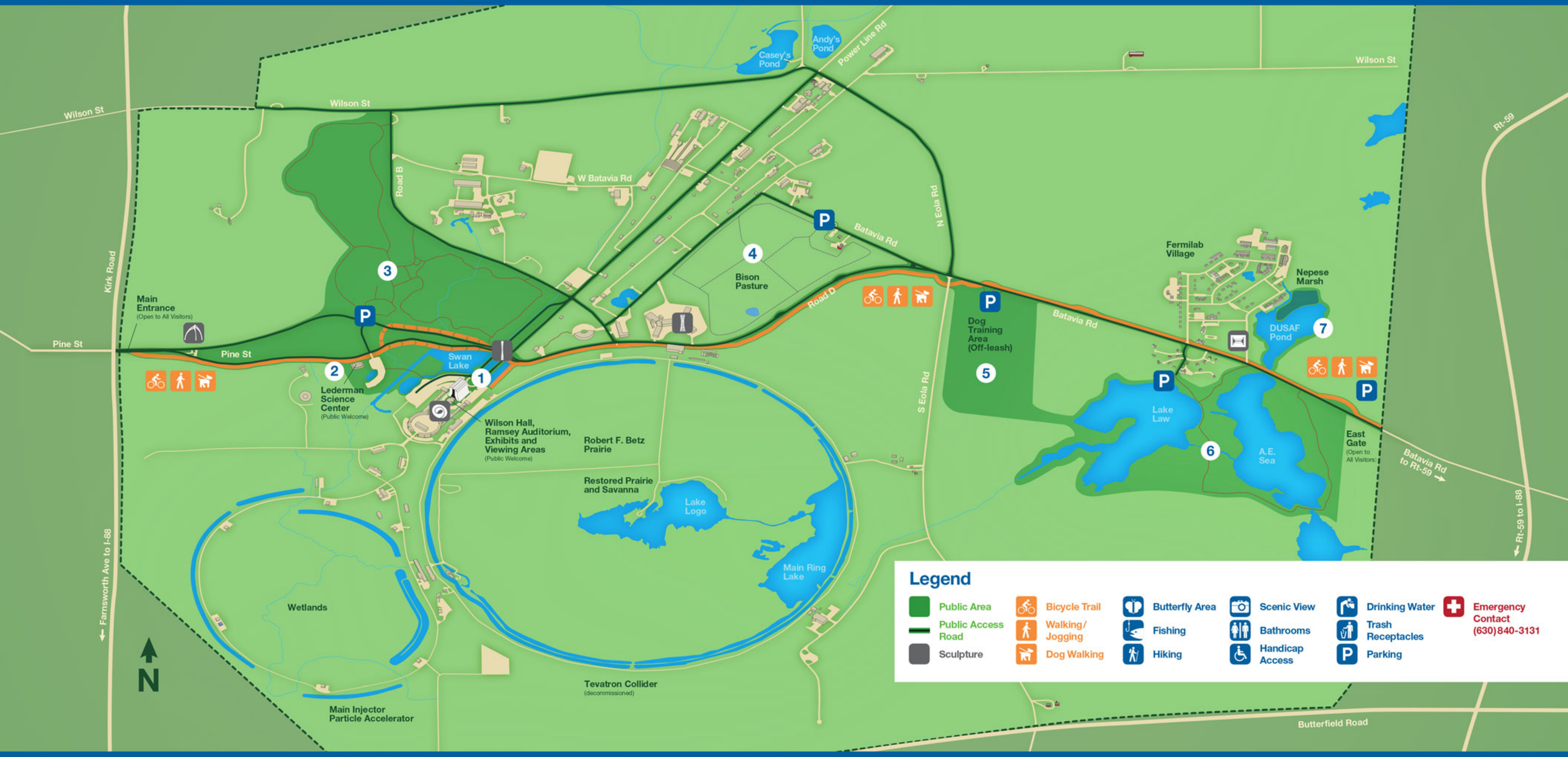

Things to do at Fermilab

Fermilab is America's national laboratory dedicated to particle physics and accelerator research. If you're looking for opportunities to enjoy nature, learn about cutting edge research and have a little fun, Fermilab has you covered. The public outdoor areas of our 6,800-acre site are open from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. from November to March, and from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. the rest of the year.

Self-guided tours

Our exhibit and viewing areas on the 15th floor of Wilson Hall are open Monday–Friday from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Just sign in at the reception desk in the atrium. Self-guided tours of the public-access portion of Fermilab's natural areas can be taken during the site's opening hours via automobile or bicycle or on foot. Downloadable guides are available at www.fermilabnaturalareas.org.

Guided science tours

Fermilab offers guided tours on most Wednesdays at 10:30 a.m., and on some Sundays as part of our Ask-a-Scientist program. Check the calendar on our home page at www.fnal.gov for more details. Tours for groups of 10 or more are available by appointment; call 630-840-5588.

Guided nature tours

The Fermilab site is designated a National Environmental Research Park and features the major ecosystems of the Midwest: tall grass prairies, wetlands, grasslands, oak savannas, woodlands and agriculture fields. Guided tours of natural areas are offered seasonally. Extensive seasonal guides to the birds, butterflies and plants of Fermilab are available at www.fnal.gov/birds. To arrange a tour, call 630-840-4845 or visit www.fermilabnaturalareas.org.

Lederman Science Center

The Leon Lederman Science Education Center is chock full of hands-on science exhibits for students in grades 5–12. It is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and Saturday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Groups of six or more must book a visit by calling 630-840-8258. Learn more at ed.fnal.gov/lsc.

Arts and science

Fermilab regularly hosts public events in Ramsey Auditorium, including lectures and arts performances. For a schedule of events and to order tickets, visit www.fnal.gov/culture. The Art Gallery in Wilson Hall is open to visitors Monday–Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Sign in at the reception desk.

Upcoming events

For up-to-date information on our education programs, public events and site access, please check the Fermilab home page at www.fnal.gov or subscribe to our monthly community newsletter at www.fnal.gov/pub/science_next_door.

Emergency/first aid/security

Call 630-840-3131 for the dispatch operator.

Location

Fermilab's main entrance is located at the intersection of Kirk Road and Pine Street in Batavia, Illinois, about 45 miles west of Chicago. For directions, site access and visitor information, go to www.fnal.gov/pub/visiting.

Fermilab | U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY | Office of Science