

LOEW LAKE SEGMENT

This segment is a key link in the green belt between Washington and Waukesha counties and generally follows the rim of the Oconomowoc River valley winding along the Oconomowoc River and 23-acre Loew Lake. The valley served as a glacial spillway where meltwater flowed south between the Green Bay and Lake Michigan glacial lobes. The segment highlights the Kettle Moraine State Forest – Loew Lake Unit (KMSF-LLU), an area that offers a variety of habitats for wildlife and is extremely popular with hunters and fishermen in all seasons.

From its starting point near the CTH-K/CTH-Q intersection at the Washington/Waukesha county line, the segment passes through a conifer plantation before dropping down to briefly parallel the Oconomowoc River. The segment marsh filled with skunk cabbage and tall cow parsnip. Hikers will cross a boardwalk bridge over a small stream. The segment follows several hedgerows adjacent to an open field and cuts through another conifer plantation before intersecting Emerald Drive.

Upon reaching Emerald Drive hikers should turn right and head northeast along the road for 0.4 miles before heading east onto a short off-road section that features distant views of the Holy Hill Shrine to the north. Just before reentering Emerald Drive is a spring that forms a small stream. It flows southeastward and empties into the Oconomowoc River. In 2000 the local chapter built a large wooden overlook with benches and a platform overlooking the spring.

After an additional 0.2-mile walk along Emerald Drive, the segment again departs the road heading east and weaves in and out of woods, alongside meadows and atop a steep-sided ridge. The segment intersects a horse trail that heads east to cross the Oconomowoc River; a short distance later you can see Loew Lake off to the right. Farther on, the segment intersects a blue-blazed spur trail that heads west to the DNR's Emerald Drive parking area. From this last junction, the segment continues north through a large meadow before climbing out of the river valley on a series of switchbacks to reach the segment's endpoint on Emerald Drive.

