

Local Recreation Sites

Join the Cortland SWCD in celebrating World Conservation Day this week! Use this opportunity to get outside and explore the wonderful natural areas of Cortland County. To get you started, we have provided below a list of unique recreation areas open to the public in Cortland County. You may have lived here your whole life and never know some of these places exist. Use our hashtag **#CortlandConservation** to share your experiences with us.

Calico Pond and Gee Brook State Forest: Gee Brook State Forest encompasses 865 acres off State Rte 41 near Cincinnatus and is named for the beautiful sparkling creek that gently flows through the peaceful forest. It is a small but popular area that offers a variety of recreational activities including three designated campsites at Calico Pond and at-large primitive camping. Calico Pond provides 6 acres of fishing opportunities and is loaded with pickerel, largemouth bass, perch, and of course black crappie (Calico bass), for which the pond is named.

Cuyler Hill State Forest and Rose Hollow: Cuyler Hill offers 8.5 miles of trails through 20 acres of secluded forest, with wildlife viewing opportunities. There is also a 0.3 mile hike off the main trail to Rose Hollow campsite by a scenic stream.

Dwyer Memorial Park: This 55-acre park located in Homer off Rte. 281 is a perfect place for the whole family. The park is on Little York Lake, open for boating and fishing. You can picnic in the park, on the porch of the historic Little York Pavilion or at a picnic table by the stream. There is shallow wading, perfect for kids. Across the bridge on the far side of the parking lot there are walking paths through the forest and there is a colonial-style herb and native plant garden at the end of the entrance road on the right, where you can see flowers, herbs, and edible plants planted in quadrants.

Heiberg Memorial Forest: This property is owned by SUNY-ESF and used for hands-on teaching and forestry experimentation, but all the lands are open to the public. You can take a quick 0.7 mile Nature Trail Hike off Maple Ridge Rd. or simply explore the property and forests. The view of the Tully Valley from behind the classroom buildings is especially breathtaking.

High Vista Nature Preserve: 1.1mile loop hike through lush forest, past deep ravines, and along small streams and waterfalls. 556 Vincent Hill Rd, Homer, NY 13077

Hoxie Gorge State Forest: This preserve is a 2,115 acre forest with multiple trails through meadows, forest, and streams. While there you can hike a portion of the Finger

Lakes Trail and experience flora and fauna found in the most remote forests in New York. The property can be accessed by taking NY Route 11 to Hoxie Gorge-Freetown Road. To reach the southern portion of the forest, follow Hoxie Gorge-Freetown Road to Marihew Road, and then to Steve Russell Hill Road.

Jim Shug/ Dryden Lake Trail: This 4.2 mile trail is flat and easy to walk, following an old railroad bed. This trail is ideal for hiking, biking, horseback riding, and cross country skiing, and includes benches every 0.5 miles. The trail starts in Cortland at George St. near North St. and goes all the way out past Dryden Lake. The trail has great opportunities for wildlife viewing, fishing, and plant identification.

Labrador Pond and Tinker Falls: As part of the 1483 acre Labrador Hollow Unique Area, bordering Cortland and Onondaga Counties, enjoy a beautiful waterfall only a short walk (0.25 miles) from NY 91, with optional trails up to and above the falls, as well as the 2.2 mile round trip hike to Jones Hill with a beautiful view of the valley and pond from a hang glider launch. Less than a mile north on NY 91 from Tinker Falls is the Labrador Hollow boardwalk through hemlock swamp and open water, only 0.5 miles round trip through unique native vegetation. The pond is open for fishing and motor-less boating from the boat launch and fishing dock located on the west side of the pond.

Lime Hollow Nature Preserve: This preserve, just outside the City of Cortland, is home to the Lime Hollow Nature Center, which offers year round interpretation as well as summer camps. There are 12 miles of trails onsite with a variety of lengths and difficulties. They pass through forest, meadows, bogs, and encircle two ponds on the preserve. You can take one huge loop or wander as you go, depending on what you want to see.

338 McLean Rd, Cortland NY 13045

Morgan Hill State Forest: Over 5,000 acres of scenic state forest perfect for hiking, camping, hunting, and fishing. All camping is free with a DEC permit. The North Country National Scenic Trail runs for nearly 15 miles through the state forest and allows access to Hemlock Glen, which features multiple small waterfalls and cascades. You can also take a short hike to Spruce Pond, stocked with trout and surrounded by woods, from the trailhead on Herlihy Road. This is only a fraction of trails and destinations available in this wilderness located in our own backyard.

Papish Pond Multi Use Area: The main attraction of this site is the 38-acre pond open for boating and fishing, with a hand launch located on Gee Brook Rd. South of Cincinnatus. The area is also open for hiking, and exploring without formal trails, and camping, free with a DEC permit.

