

Great Lakes Seaway Trail - Pennsylvania

Follow America's "North Coast" on the Pennsylvania Great Lakes Seaway Trail. Recreation and history abound along the shores of Lake Erie, which offers both a rural landscape of lush farming and the hustle and bustle of historic downtowns. Historic sites tell stories of the War of 1812 and provide year-round activities.



Length: 64 miles / 102.4 km

Time Allow two hours to drive
to the byway without stopping
Allow: or 14 hours to visit places
along the way.

Local Information

VisitErie

1-800-524-ERIE (1-800-524-3743)

Visitor Services



Bicycle/Pedestrian Facilities

The Seaway Trail in Pennsylvania features paved shoulders throughout on Route 5 for biking. The Bayfront Bikeway, a continuous paved multi-use trail system, will soon span the entire Bayfront.



Camping

There are places to camp along this byway.



Food

There are places to buy food along this byway.



Gasoline

Gasoline is available.



Information

Information and brochures can be obtained, including Seaway Trail's *Journey* magazine, Erie, PA's *The All-Seasons Visitor Guide to the Lake Erie Region* (1-800-524-3743, www.VisitEriePA.com), and *Pennsylvania's Byways*. Brochures on activities, destinations, accommodations, shopping and dining are available at: * I-90 east, near the Ohio border * I-79 north, south of Edinboro * Stull Interpretive Center * Dobbins Landing * Erie Area Convention & Visitors Bureau * I-90 west, near the New York border * 1-800-VISITPA



Lodging

There is overnight lodging along this byway.



Phone

Public phones are available along this byway.



Restrooms

There are toilet facilities along this byway.



Retail

There are places to shop along this byway.

Special Considerations

The Great Lakes Seaway Trail welcomes disabled visitors and special accommodations are made to ensure access particularly to recreational activities at Presque Isle State Park and on the Erie Bayfront. These include accessible trails and walkways, beach access via ramps and mats at Beach 7, and fishing access including ramps and lower railings. Water taxis are accessible, and Wolverine Park has accessible docks and a lift for boat accessibility. Handicap parking and accessible restrooms can be found throughout.

Restrictions

The entire Great Lakes Seaway Trail in Pennsylvania is paved and accommodates automobile and two-wheel-drive passenger vehicles at the least. The Bayfront and Presque Isle portions are also continuously paved and also accommodate automobile and two-wheel-drive vehicles. The Seaway Trail can be enjoyed from passenger cars, motorcycles, recreational vehicles, motor coaches, bicycles, and walking.

Presque Isle State Park is a day-use area. Camping is available nearby.

Seasons

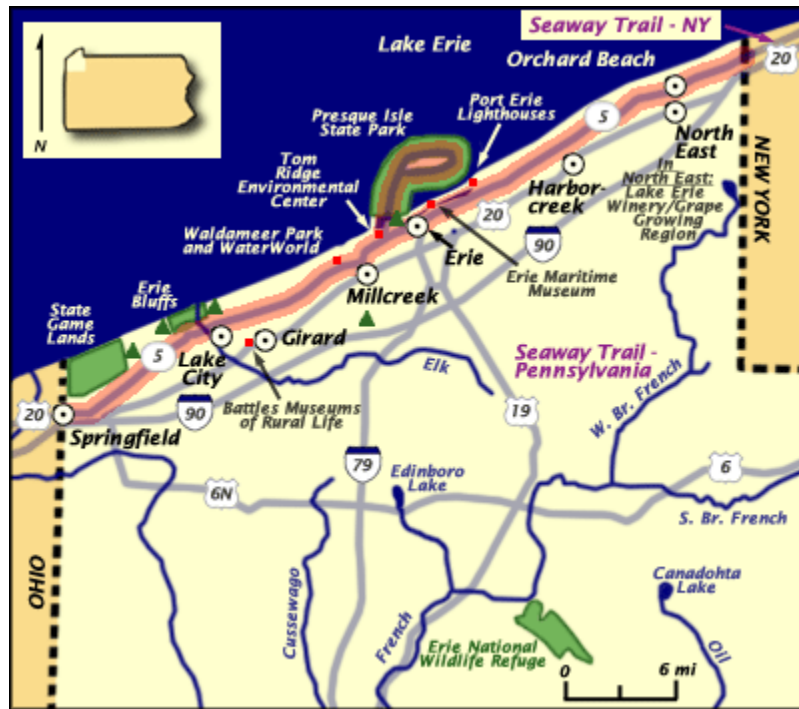
Best Time to Drive

Summer is the season for beach and water-related recreation; museums and historic sites extend their hours, and there are ecology and nature programs.

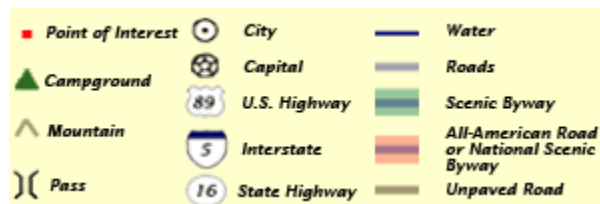
High Season

To avoid summer crowds, take advantage of fall on the Great Lakes Seaway Trail; U-Pick opportunities beckon, grape harvest is underway, and the steelhead trout are running!

Map and Directions



Legend:



Driving Directions

The Great Lakes Seaway Trail in Pennsylvania begins at the Ohio/Pennsylvania border on US Route 20.

Ohio/Pennsylvania Border to Presque Isle, PA

- Follow US 20 east 1.5 miles to the junction of PA Route 5.
- Make a left turn onto PA 5 and proceed northeasterly 19 miles to the (signalized) multi-leg intersection at Asbury Road and PA ALT 5 (West Lake Road); (the Erie International Airport is ahead to the right.)
- Veer left onto ALT 5/West Lake Road and proceed 2.5 miles to the (signalized) multi-leg intersection at Waldameer Drive (entrance to Waldameer Park) and West 6th Street.
- Veer left onto West 6th Street and proceed .25 mile to the (signalized) intersection of PA 832 (Peninsula Drive.)

- Continue straight to follow the primary route on West 6th Street or turn left onto the spur route to Presque Isle. The spur route continues around the perimeter of Presque Isle in a 14-mile loop, returning back to the primary route.

Presque Isle, NY to Pennsylvania/New York Border

- The primary route continues easterly on West 6th Street 1.75 miles to the intersection of Shawnee Drive and entrance of Frontier Park area.
- Veer left at the stop sign, continuing .5 miles on West 6th Street around the northern perimeter of Frontier Park, passing over the Bayfront Parkway, to the (signalized) intersection at Cranberry Street.
- Turn left and proceed .25 miles to the Bayfront Parkway, turn right and follow the Bayfront Parkway 3 miles to the (signalized) intersection of East 6th Street.
- Turn left and follow East 6th Street 0.25 miles to the (signalized) intersection of East Avenue.
- Proceed straight onto East Lake Road 1.5 miles to the (signalized) intersection of Franklin Avenue (junction with PA 5.)
- Continue straight on East Lake Road (now also PA 5) .75 miles to the (signalized) multi-leg intersection of Water Street and PA 955 (Iroquois Avenue.)
- Veer left, remaining on PA 5, and continue northeasterly 16 miles to the NY border.

Getting to the Byway

From Pittsburgh to Seaway Trail - PA

- Take I-79 north to Erie.
- Continue on Bayfront Pkwy to PA-5 to enter the byway.

Road Trip: Miles of Fun and Adventure

Departure: Farm Markets and U-Pick Fruits and Vegetables, Pennsylvania

Destination: Farm Markets and U-Pick Fruits and Vegetables, Pennsylvania

Time to allow: 1 day

Whether you're traveling through in a few hours or spending a few days, the Great Lakes Seaway Trail is ready to welcome you for year-round fun and adventure. Its rural areas offer farm markets, winery tours and tastings, fishing, boating, and recreation. Find history and recreational activities galore in the City of Erie and Presque Isle State Park, the centerpieces of the Great Lakes Seaway Trail. Four seasons of activities please the entire family at Presque Isle: sandy beaches, trails, unique and diverse ecology, lighthouses, and War of 1812 historic sites. Rent a bike, boat, or scuba gear; or take a free, interpretive pontoon boat tour. A water taxi transports you to Dobbins Landing on the Erie waterfront to visit the Bicentennial Tower, the Erie Maritime Museum, and Liberty Park, as well as the historic downtown and museums. The eastern end of the Great Lakes Seaway Trail offers a seamless transition to the Great Lakes Seaway Trail National Scenic Byway in New York.

Day 1

- **Start: Farm Markets and U-Pick Fruits and Vegetables**

Five farm markets along the Western end of the Great Lakes Seaway Trail offer farm-fresh fruits and vegetables and a glimpse of the traditional farming way of life in rural Erie County. Some sites offer opportunities to pick your own produce and also feature crafts, prepared foods, and more.

- **Stop 1: Elk Creek Access Area/Erie Bluffs State Park**



From previous stop: 10 minutes / 1 mi (1.6 km)

Directions: Farm markets, Elk Creek, and Erie Bluffs are all within a few miles of one another along the Great Lakes Seaway Trail in the vicinity of Lake City on the western end of the Great Lakes Seaway Trail.

Elk Creek Access Area is the largest and most popular Erie County tributary.

- **Stop 2: Battles Museums of Rural Life**



From previous stop: 10 minutes / 3 mi (4.8 km)

Directions: From the Great Lakes Seaway Trail take Route 18/Rice Avenue south to US Route 20/East Main Street in Girard, go left onto US Route 20/East Main Street and right onto Walnut Street. The museum is at 436 Walnut Street.

Suggested time at this stop: 1 hour 30 minutes

This 130-acre complex consists of two historic houses (the R.S. Battles Farmhouse and the Charlotte Elizabeth Battles Memorial Museum) and a farm, owned and operated by the Erie County Historical Society & Museums. The mission of the Battles Museums of Rural Life is to preserve and interpret the agricultural methods and lifestyles of Northwestern Pennsylvania and its surrounding region from the 1840s to present. The site consists of 50 acres of farmland, 80 acres of woods and hiking trails, and two historic homes.

- **Stop 3: Waldameer Park and WaterWorld**



From previous stop: 20 minutes / 15 mi (24.0 km)

Directions: From Battles Museums of Rural Life, follow Walnut Street north to US 20/East Main Street, go left on US 20/East Main Street, and right on Route 18/Rice Avenue. Take a right onto the Great Lakes Seaway Trail and follow it to Peninsula Drive in Millcreek. Take a left onto Peninsula Drive; Waldameer is located near the entrance to Presque Isle State Park.

Suggested time at this stop: 3 hours

A must-see attraction, this historic amusement park and water park has more than 75 rides. Parking and admission to amusement park are free, with a fee for rides. There is also a fee for the Waterworld picnic areas, concessions, midway, fireworks, and daily events. Established in 1896 as the Hopkins Grove picnic area, it later became an amusement park. It is the fourth-oldest such park in Pennsylvania and the 11th-oldest in the nation.

- **Stop 4: Presque Isle State Park**



From previous stop: 2 minutes / 0.5 mi (0.8 km)

stop:

Directions: From Waldameer Park and Waterworld proceed north on Peninsula Drive into Presque Isle State Park.

Suggested time at this stop: 3 hours

at this stop:

Unique in the world, Presque Isle State Park is a popular destination attracting four million visitors annually for passive and active recreation including hiking, biking, running, birdwatching and boating. The park contains the historic Presque Lighthouse, the North Pier Light, and important War of 1812 historic sites. The park is a National Natural Landmark, home to more rare, threatened, and endangered species than any other area of comparable size in the state. Presque Isle Bay is the finest natural harbor on the Great Lakes. With six distinct ecological zones, it is a laboratory of natural and physical science. The peninsula sits along the Atlantic flyway and more than 320 species of birds have been inventoried there. The Stull Interpretive and Information Center in the park is a starting point for interpretation and educational programs about the ecology of the park. Recreational resources include sand beaches and more than ten miles of trails, not including the paved Karl Boyes Multi-Purpose Trail. The park hosts the annual Erie Marathon, one of the flattest and fastest marathon courses on the East Coast. Free interpretive pontoon boat rides are available; a water taxi runs between the Park and Erie's Dobbins Landing; the Lady Kate offers tours of the Bay; and canoes and kayaks may be rented at the boat livery. Fishing, swimming, windsurfing, water-skiing, and picnicking are all summer activities. Bicycle rentals are available. Winter activities include ice fishing, ice boating, and cross-country skiing. No admission fee applies.

- **Stop 5: Tom Ridge Environmental Center**



From previous stop: 30 minutes

Starting June 2006, the 65,000-square-foot Tom Ridge Environmental Center (TREC) will offer interactive educational exhibits, an orientation theater showcasing Presque Isle State Park, a large-screen theater with exciting films on the "Big Green Screen", a food court, and specialty nature shop and gallery.

- **Stop 6: Lake Erie Arboretum at Frontier Park (LEAF)**



From previous stop: 10 minutes / 3 mi (4.8 km)

Directions: From Presque Isle State Park continue south on Peninsula Drive and go left on West Sixth Street, the Great Lakes Seaway Trail. LEAF is located on West Sixth Street.

Suggested time at this stop: 30 minutes

LEAF offers an opportunity for respite from the road; with more than 225 varieties of trees it offers access for passive and active enjoyment as well as educational and interpretive programs. Amenities include free admission; multi-use trails; "virtual tree" gazebo; shade, flowering and evergreen trees; and urban stream valley.

- **Stop 7: Historic Downtown Erie: History, Art, and Children's Museums and West Sixth**



From previous stop: 10 minutes / 2 mi (3.2 km)

Directions: Continue along West Sixth Street east toward downtown Erie; in the West Sixth Street Historic District, stop at the Watson Curtze Mansion at 356 West Sixth Street. Continue on to the center of downtown Erie; park in the vicinity of the Great Lakes Seaway Trail and State Street -- you will find all three museums within a few blocks of one another.

Suggested time at this stop: 3 hours

This is the central location for the appreciation, exploration, and enjoyment of the Great Lakes Seaway Trail's historic resources. The Watson Curtze Mansion and Planetarium at 356 West Sixth Street is located within the West Sixth Street Historic District. The Erie Art Museum, 411 State Street; Erie History Center, 419 State Street; and expERIENCE Children's Museum, 420 French Street; are centrally located in historic downtown Erie. Watson Curtze Mansion and Planetarium and West Sixth Street Historic District are located on the Great Lakes Seaway Trail. Three museums, the History Center, art museum, and children's museum are all located within a walkable block or two of the Great Lakes Seaway Trail at State Street in Downtown Erie.

- **Stop 8: Port Erie's Bayfront District**



From previous stop: 10 minutes / 0.5 mi (0.8 km)

Directions: From the museum district, continue north on State Street across Bayfront Parkway and immediately find parking on Dobbins Landing. To reach Liberty Park by car, at State and Bayfront go left on Bayfront; Liberty Park is on the right.

Suggested time at this stop: 1 hour

Recreation and history come together on the waterfront at the Port of Erie. At Dobbins Landing, the Bicentennial Tower features spectacular views from the deck 187 feet up, where interpretive panels help set the context for geography and history. The 8.5-acre Liberty Park features a playground and the Liberty Park Amphitheater on the water is the site of community programming.

- **Stop 9: Erie Maritime Museum, US Brig *Niagara* and Blasco Public Library Complex**



From previous stop: 5 minutes / 0.25 mi (0.4 km)

Directions: From Dobbins Landing, go left on East Front Street.

Suggested time at this stop: 1 hour 30 minutes

Erie Maritime Museum is the home port for the US Brig *Niagara* and includes multimedia and interactive exhibits and tours of the *Niagara* when she is in port. This is an important and fascinating destination for exhibits and interpretation of the War of 1812, Great Lakes maritime history, and ecology of the Great Lakes. The museum shares a former power-generating plant with Blasco Public Library.

• **Stop 10: Port Erie Lighthouses**



From 10 minutes / 3 mi (4.8 km)
previous
stop:

Directions: From the Erie Maritime Museum go left on Bayfront Parkway, following the Great Lakes Seaway Trail on the Eastside Connector taking a left to continue on the Great Lakes Seaway Trail on Route 5A. Take a left onto Lighthouse Street; lighthouse is at the foot of Lighthouse Street.

Lighthouse buffs won't want to miss Erie's three lighthouses. Two of them you have already seen on Presque Isle State Park: Presque Isle Lighthouse, located on the north side of the peninsula, was originally commissioned in 1873 and remains in service. It has an attached keeper's quarters, and for many years the keeper of the lighthouse was the sole resident of Presque Isle. Before electrification, the keeper had to service the light every four hours. Another older light, this one known as the North Pier or Erie Harbor Light, guards the narrow opening to the bay. This one was commissioned in 1857. The lighthouse exhibit at the Erie Maritime Museum at 150 East Front Street includes a lens used in the North Pier Light. The Unique Erie Land Lighthouse is found at the foot of Lighthouse Street, two blocks north of the Great Lakes Seaway Trail. Completed in 1867 by the federal government, the lighthouse is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. A lighthouse first entered service here in 1818 and shares the distinction of first Lake Erie lighthouse with Buffalo lighthouse. The current structure is the third to be built at this location. The property includes the 1858 Keepers House. The lighthouse was permanently decommissioned in 1899 and then restored in 1989 and 2004.

- **Stop 11: Shades Beach Park**



From previous stop: 20 minutes / 10 mi (16.0 km)

Directions: From the Erie Land Lighthouse, go south on Lighthouse Street and rejoin the Great Lakes Seaway Trail by taking a left at the end of Lighthouse Street. Shades Beach is located in Harborcreek at the end of Bartlett Road. Take a left on Bartlett into the park.

Suggested time at this stop: 1 hour

An opportunity to sample fishing on the eastern end of the Great Lakes Seaway Trail or just to relax and enjoy a picnic, this 27-acre, multipurpose community park on the shores of Lake Erie encompasses a large area along Eight Mile Creek and includes trails, woodlands, play areas, picnic grounds, and beach area. It features two complete, organized picnic facilities with kitchens, playground facilities, horseshoe and volleyball courts, swimming area, boat launch, and picnic grove. It is a very popular fishing destination.

• **Stop 12: Lake Erie Winery and Grape Growing Region**



From previous stop: 40 minutes / 20 mi (32.0 km)

Directions: From Shades Beach go south on Bartlett Road and rejoin the Great Lakes Seaway Trail by going left onto Route 5. To reach Presque Isle Wine Cellars, go right on Moorheadville road to US 20, West Main Road. Go left on US 20/North Main Road; Presque Isle Wine Cellars is on the left. After this stop, continue on US 20/Main Road through the Borough of North East (see next stop on the itinerary). Arrowhead Wine Cellars and Heritage Wine Cellars are both located just east of Dewey Road on US 20/Main Road. To reach both Mazza Vineyards and Penn Shore Vineyards, go north on Dewey Road and rejoin the Great Lakes Seaway Trail/Route 5 by going left. Mazza and Penn Shores are both on the left.

Suggested time at this stop: 30 minutes

Spanning 40,000 acres in Ohio, Pennsylvania, and New York, the Lake Erie region has a 150-year history in grape growing and winemaking. Wineries along the tri-state shoreline invite the public to tour and taste the region's distinctive wines. Winemaking and grape growing are a vital part of the area's agriculture. The first grapevines were planted in the Lake Erie region in the early 1800s. By the turn of the century, these Native American grapes were the foundation of the winemaking industry with such wines as Catawba and Delaware. What makes Erie such a great place to grow grapes? The climate! Five wineries in eastern Erie County comprise the Pennsylvania portion of the Chautauqua Lake Erie Wine Trail. They are:

- Arrowhead Wine Cellars
12073 East Main Road
North East
www.arrowheadwine.com
- Mazza Vineyards
11815 East Lake Road, Route 5 North East
www.mazzawines.com
- Penn Shore Vineyards
10225 East Lake Road
Route 5, North East
www.pennshore.com

- Presque Isle Wine Cellars
9440 Buffalo Road
North East
www.piwine.com
- Heritage Wine Cellars
12160 E. Main Road
North East
www.heritagewinebiz.com

• **Stop 13: North East Borough Historic District**



From previous stop: 15 minutes / 5 mi (8.0 km)

Directions: From Penn Shore Winery, continue east on the Great Lakes Seaway Trail to Route 89/Freeport Road; take a right on Route 89/Freeport Road to the borough.

Suggested time at this stop: 1 hour 30 minutes

The quaint downtown has shopping, restaurants, and beautiful architecture. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1990, it is roughly bounded by Division, N. Lake, Eagle, N. Pearl, and Gibson Streets. The commercial area historic district includes Greek Revival, Italianate, and Queen Anne styles of architecture. The attractive and quaint village atmosphere is conducive to walking, and many shopping and dining options are available.

• **End: Farm Markets and U-Pick Fruits and Vegetables**

From previous stop: 10 minutes / 3 mi (4.8 km)

Directions: Return from Gravel Pit Park to downtown North East via Main Road; Gibson Park is right in the center of the village. To return to the Great Lakes Seaway Trail, take Route 89/Freeport Road north to the Great Lakes Seaway Trail.

Don't leave the Great Lakes Seaway Trail and Pennsylvania without stopping for some farm-fresh goodness! There's a farmers market in North East Borough on Thursdays and Fridays, downtown in Gibson Park from June through October, and two roadside stands right on the Great Lakes Seaway Trail: Westgate Farms at 10951 East Lake Road and Nelson's Fruit Farm at 7931 East Lake Road. Both will let you pick some of your own produce and fruits.

Totals for Day 1

Total Distance Traveled: 66.25 miles / 106.0 km

Total Travel Time: 3 hours 22 minutes

Total Stopping Time: 16 hours 30 minutes