

Homer Lake Forest Preserve, 5 km and 10 km Walks

An AVA Sanctioned Year-Round Event Ridgewalkers Walking Club, Illinois Hosted in the Online Start Box

Homer Lake Forest Preserve is an 800-acre area in Champaign County, Illinois, just minutes from I-74. The preserve is popular among locals as a place for walking, fishing, kayaking, birding, play dates, and family gatherings. Pets are welcome and must be kept on a leash. Visit [here for info on the preserve](#). Walks may be done any time the park is open, from sunrise to sunset.

These walk directions and maps may only be used in conjunction with a signed American Volkssport Association athletic waiver. All other uses are prohibited.

Start Location for the Walks

Homer Lake Interpretive Center, 2573 South Homer Lake Rd., Homer, IL 61849

Directions to the Preserve

From I-74: Take Exit 197 for Royal/Ogden. Turn South towards Ogden. At the 4-Way Stop, proceed South on IL-49. Continue for about 2.4 miles. Watch on your Right for a brown and white sign announcing "Homer Lake Forest Preserve, Homer Lake". Turn Right onto Homer Lake Road. Take the first turn to the Left, about 1 mile. The street sign says "South Homer Lk Rd", and "2600 East". Go South a short distance and enter the forest preserve on your Right. Park in the lot in front of the Interpretive Center.

(History note: Homer Lake Road (aka County Rd 14) was the horse trail that Abraham Lincoln traveled when he was a lawyer serving in the 8th Judicial Circuit Court.)

Walk Descriptions: Two AVA walks are available. The 5 km trail travels through the hardwood forest and bluebell fields bordering the Salt Fork River, the historic Maple Sugar Grove, and several wetland, restored prairie and pollinator plantings. The 10 km trail extends this walk, traveling through the forest on the west side of Homer Lake and a large on-going prairie restoration project.

Restrooms and Water: Year-round bathrooms are available on both walks. Flushing restrooms are available in the Interpretive Center and the Walnut Hill Shelter, in season and during operating hours. For current hours, see [Homer Lake Interpretive Center](#). Water is available at each bathroom.

Special Programs: None

Awards: IVV Credit only

Walk Completion: Once you have completed your walk, please remember to finish up in the Online Start Box. Login at [my.ava.org](#), click on the **My Start Box** tab, visit the **Finish Table** and follow the instructions to get credit for your walk.

For event-related information or assistance, call Polly Baker at (317) 490-4896, or Kimberly Bradley at (217) 778-1718.

Homer Lake Forest Preserve, 5 km and 10 km Walks

1. With the Interpretive Center at your back, cross the road and take the Sand Beach Cove Trail. At the split, go Right.
2. At the clearing with the picnic tables, stay to the Left. Continue to the Natural Playscape. Proceed through or around the Playscape.
3. Follow the sidewalk along the shore to the Walnut Hill Shelter (Restrooms available here in the summer months only.) Continue along the shore to the dam.
4. **For the 5 km walk, skip to step 9.**
5. **For the 10 km walk**, walk along the road until it ends. (You will pass a year-round restroom about half-way.)
6. Take the trail at the end of the parking area and follow it to the North end of the Lake. (There is a year-round restroom off to the Right.)
7. Take the turn to the Left to continue through the prairie.
8. Continue straight past the first turn-off. Take the next Left turn back to the road. Use the road to go back to the East side of the Dam.
9. At the East side of the dam, cross the road, go down the hill, and follow the trail to the Left.
10. At the split, go Left. (Or, turn Right and add a 1 km wildflower loop through the woods, which is especially nice in the Spring.)
11. From the split, continue to the road. Cross the road and go Left. Stay to the Left and loop around the pond. Retrace your steps back to the road.
12. At the road, go Left and back to the beginning of Sand Beach Cove Trail.
13. Turn Left and follow the road to the Maple Sugar Grove. (There is a year-round restroom in the grove parking lot.)
14. Enter the trail marked Historic Maple Grove. At the split, go Right.
15. In the open field of the North Peninsula, follow along the shoreline to the parking lot. At the far corner of the parking area, find Timberdoodle Trail. Stay Right on the trail until the clearing.
16. At the clearing, turn Left and then Right to walk through the Pollinator Planting.
17. Follow the sidewalk behind the Observation Deck to return to the Start location.
18. We hope you enjoyed your walk! Remember to complete your walk in the Online Start Box. Login at ***my.ava.org***, click on the **My Start Box** tab, and then visit the **Finish Table**.

These walk directions and maps may only be used in conjunction with a signed American Volkssport Association athletic waiver. All other uses are prohibited.

In an emergency, call 911.

Homer Lake Forest Preserve, 5 km and 10 km Walks

