



## The Lake Walk at Ronkonkoma



**A proposal to create a unified park encompassing the shoreline parks of Lake Ronkonkoma, Lily Pond Preserve and W.S. Commerdinger County Park.**

This proposed Lake Walk features a series of attractions linked by paved walkways and boardwalks following the entire shoreline of the lake. The Lake Walk connects these attractions, which include gazebos, seating and picnic areas, fishing piers, scenic vistas, the three town parks, Lily Pond and W.S. Commerdinger County Parks, as well as the new proposed Bavarian Park at the site of the former Bavarian Inn.

**The benefits of this proposal include:**

- Restores Lake Ronkonkoma as a focal point of the community, nearby towns and county.
- It promotes education of local residents as to their role in protecting the watershed.
- Provides a resource for local neighborhoods and town and county residents.
- Local residents will have improved access to all of the lake facilities.
- Creates a place for year-round activities such as: walking, jogging, concerts, swimming, kayaking, fishing, ice skating, ice boating, picnicking and more.
- Provides a historical perspective of the Lake by identifying points of interest and their role in the development of surrounding communities.
- Creates a greater appreciation of the Lake as a natural resource and promotes self-policing of littering and pollution.
- Reduces shoreline erosion by pedestrians by confining access to walkways and paths.
- Encourages access to Lily Pond and Commerdinger Nature Preserves.
- Provides a plan for the redevelopment of the Bavarian Inn property as a park.
- Stimulates improvement of nearby commercial areas and encourages new businesses.
- Promotes pedestrian, bicycle and mass transit access to the Lake.

## **Take the Lake Walk Tour around the Lake**

(See back page for key)

The centerpiece of the Lake Walk is Bavarian Park (1). The Park borders Portion Road and is located on the site of the former Bavarian Inn. There is a pavilion and surrounding lawn area that is ideal for picnicking and summer concerts. Trees and benches along the lakeside provide shade and wonderful views of the Lake. There is ample parking available, as well as drop-off areas for cars and public transportation. Protected crosswalks provide access from nearby residential areas.

On the west side of Bavarian Park, a boardwalk leads to the existing beach at Suffolk County Park. An extension of the boardwalk takes you to Portion Road where a crosswalk brings you to Lily Pond County Park. As you follow the trails in this park you can cross a foot bridge and enter the W.S. Commerdinger, Jr. County Park and Nature Preserve.

At the west side of Bavarian Park is a multi-use area that includes: shallow water wading, canoe/kayak launch, and winter ice-skating. On the east end there is a pavilion with restrooms and information depicting the historical role of the Lake and the development of this area in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

On the eastern shoreline of Bavarian Park is a pier reaching out into the Lake (2). It ends in a gazebo where you can enjoy great views of the Lake and fishing. At this pier the Lake Walk begins its journey around the Lake. It starts by bringing you over the water where you have views of both the shoreline and the Lake.

The boardwalk continues east and joins the Metzner Gazebo (3). This gazebo has seating, provides shade and is also a fishing spot. From the Gazebo the Lake Walk moves onto land on a paved path where you can walk on the shoreline for several hundred feet. Along the way you'll see historical markers telling about hotels built there in the 1930's. The concrete bulkhead and stairs still remain as a reminder of those times.

As you walk along the shoreline you'll come to St. Mary's Pavilion(4). This Pavilion is a neighborhood access to the Lake Walk. There are street level and lake level decks with seating, shade and great views of the lake. Neighborhood residents can access via the protected crosswalk. Stairs lead to the lake level, as well as a ramp for handicapped access. At lake level there are locations for fishing. As you leave the St. Mary's Pavilion the boardwalk continues towards Lake Shore drive. Along the way there are widened boardwalk areas (5) for fishing along with observation seating.

The Lake Walk returns to land at Triangle Park (6), which is adjacent to the intersection of Portion Road and Lake Shore Drive. Local residents can access the Lake Walk via protected crosswalks across both roads. It is convenient to public transportation busses and this location also provides convenient sidewalk access to downtown Ronkonkoma. The park has benches and tables for lakeside picnicking. The picnic area can also be accessed by canoe.

As you leave Triangle Park, you proceed along a paved walkway that separates the Lake from the eastern filtration pond. The pond is a biological recharge basin (7) constructed in the late 1970's to purify rainwater runoff from surrounding neighborhood streets before it enters the lake. Today, the pond area teems with wildlife and plant life.

The walkway follows the shoreline and gradually climbs to street level. Across from the Lake Shore Adult Residence is a covered deck (8). The deck area provides shade, seating and great views of the Lake. There is roadside parking for several cars. A short distance further south are stairs leading to the Lake. These are remnants from the 1940's era of hotels and bathhouses. The stairs now lead to a deck area that can be used for fishing and enjoying sunsets at the Lake.

Across from Lincoln Road is the site of the Used Book Store (9). At this location is a refreshment kiosk and restrooms. A commemorative placard notes the history of the hotels in this area and the bookstore that was at this location for more than 20 years. There is also a small parking area at this location.

As you walk south towards Harding Road you reach several roadside picnic areas (10). There are picnic benches and barbeques and a roadside parking area. These roadside areas provide great views of sunsets over the Lake. There are stairs leading down to the lake ending in a fishing pier. These dedicated fishing areas provide Lake access to fisherman while preventing erosion of the delicate lake shoreline.

From there, the Lake Walk follows Lake Shore Drive and meanders through a wooded area. A small foot bridge (11) crosses a ravine at the shoreline and provides great views of the Lake. The paved shoreline path then becomes a roadside boardwalk heading south. Across from the former Heatherwood Lane is the road level Raynor Gazebo (12). It has seating, shade and great views of the Lake and sunsets..

The Lake Walk leads you to Michael P. Murphy Memorial Park (13). Along the way is an open shoreline area with benches that allow for a relaxed view of the Lake. This open area turns into sandy beach as the Lake Walk joins the Park. At this point, all of the facilities of Murphy Park and Raynor Beach County Park are within walking distance.

As you leave the Park, the Lake Walk continues westerly as a boardwalk along the shoreline. Along the way there is a widened boardwalk area (14) for fishing and an observation seating area. The boardwalk extends to a point just before the sand at the Town of Islip Ronkonkoma Beach. Here it comes onto the shore as a ramp (15) extending into the woods surrounding the Ronkonkoma Senior Center. An extension of the Lake Walk backtracks to a high area in the woods. This path ends in a gazebo (16) that overlooks the lake and gives views from 40 feet above the water. The Lake Walk weaves through the woods, across a pedestrian bridge over a ravine, and then joins the facilities of the Town of Islip Ronkonkoma Beach Park (17). The paved path allows access to the sandy beach in front of the pavilion.

At the north end of the beach the Lake Walk changes to boardwalk along the shoreline. There, a widened boardwalk area (18) provides a fishing place and observation seating. Along the way you will see concrete bleacher seating (19) built decades ago by the Lake Ronkonkoma Heights Beach Club. In this area there is no boardwalk railing to minimize the visual impact to local residents

A hundred yards further north the Lake Walk comes back on shore. Here also is a neighborhood access point from Blythe Road (20). You proceed along a paved walkway that separates the Lake from the western filtration pond. The pond is a biological recharge basin (21) constructed in the late 1970's to purify rainwater runoff from surrounding neighborhood streets before it enters the lake. Today, the pond area teems with wildlife and plant life.

A short distance further is the NY State Boat Ramp (22) and then the Lake Walk joins the facilities of Lake Ronkonkoma County Park (23). Between this park and Bavarian Park is a 500-foot stretch of beach (24). The Lake Walk boardwalk crosses and provides access to the beach at several points. A 'tee' off the boardwalk (25) accesses Portion Road where a crosswalk leads you to Lily Pond and W.S. Commerdinger County Parks. This tee is the last stop before the Lake Walk returns you to Bavarian Park.

### Key to Lake Walk Attractions

