Recreation

Ann Arbor has 2,000 acres of parkland and more than 145 public parks within city limits. In addition, there are countless outlying parks and natural areas to explore on foot, on wheels or via water. Because lakes, rivers and parklands surround the city, residents and visitors are never at a loss for a chance to escape the hustle and bustle of the downtown atmosphere and indulge in the tranquility of nature within just a few minutes or miles.

Michigan has over 11,000 inland lakes and streams, and touches Great Lakes. There are also 97 state and four national parks, and 134 Metroparks, many only a short distance from Ann Arbor. The parks offer hiking, fishing, canoeing, cross-country skiing, mountain biking, children’s play areas and picnic shelters. Some of them also have camping facilities and designated hunting areas.

With over 40 down hill ski resorts, Michigan was named by Ski magazine as the midwest’s top ski destination. Some of them are less than an hour from downtown Ann Arbor, and many are only a couple of hours away.

No tour of Michigan nature would be complete without a visit to two of Ann Arbor’s major attractions:

Matthaei Botanical Gardens: Located just five miles east of downtown Ann Arbor, these 350 acres of meadow and woods are maintained by the U-M for research and public enjoyment. Stroll along various outdoor trails or explore a large indoor observatory full of tropical and desert plants.

Nichols Arboretum: “The Arb” as it is called by locals, is owned and maintained by the U-M. It consists of 123-acres of wooded slopes and open valleys that are home to a spectrum of native and exotic trees and shrubs. There are walking trails and the Peony Garden which contains over 700 plants from 400 different cultivars.

Contact the City of Ann Arbor Parks and Recreation, Washtenaw County Washtenaw County Parks & Recreation and Michigan’s official economic development and travel site for more information and to learn about other area recreational opportunities.

updated 8/05