

Dunton Locks County Park

Overview (from County website)

http://www.co.becker.mn.us/dept/parks_recreation/dunton_locks.aspx

Map

http://www.co.becker.mn.us/dept/parks_recreation/PDFs/Dunton%20Locks%20Trail%20Map.pdf



Dunton Locks County Park is a 55 acre park nestled on the quiet shores of Muskrat Lake and Lake Sallie. The park is located just three miles south of the city of Detroit Lakes on US 59, then one-third mile west on Co. Rd.6, then south again on Co. Rd. 19 to Dunton Locks Road. The park is also accessible by bicycle, roller blades, or by foot by using the Dunton Locks Trail located on West Shore Drive near the Pelican River. This quiet, year-around park contains two picnic shelters, hiking & mountain biking trails which double as cross-country ski trails in the winter, a paved recreation trail, interpretive history signs, two fishing piers, and a mechanical boat tram that transports boats, PWC, and pontoons between Muskrat Lake and Lake Sallie, allowing boat travel from Detroit Lakes to Lake Sallie.

Picnics are common at Dunton Locks Park and we have the facilities to accommodate almost any size group. The VFW Shelter, located near the shore of Muskrat Lake, contains modern restrooms and a modern kitchen complete with stove, refrigerator, sink, indoor charcoal grill with exhaust hood, a food service area, and electrical outlets. The shelter has covered seating for 48 people plus outside seating for an additional 12 persons. Additional picnic tables can be brought in for special events. The Eagles Shelter, located on the hill overlooking the park area, has electrical outlets, an indoor charcoal/wood fire grill, and covered seating for 48. Both shelters can be reserved for family reunions, weddings, meetings, or business/organizational gatherings.

In addition to picnic opportunities, Dunton Locks Park has 3.2 km of hiking, mountain biking and cross country ski trails located on the hills above the Eagles Picnic Shelter and along the shores between Lake Sallie and Muskrat Lake, south of the bridge. The northern trails wind through hardwood forested hills once a gathering spot for the Sioux Indians. Remnants of Indian burial mounds are still present throughout the park. In fact, much of the park area was a gathering area for netting Tullibies, camping, and trading. The southern trails also wind through rolling, wooded terrain, however much of the trails are located on private land owned by the Soo Pass Ranch. This land is used for camping during the several music festivals the Soo Pass Ranch holds each year.

For those more interested in history of the area, check out the mechanical boat tram located just south of the bridge. Back when the Detroit Lakes area was first being settled, the Detroit Lakes and Pelican River Slack Water Navigation Company installed a series of locks and dams to accommodate steamship traffic from Breckenridge to Detroit Lakes, thus the name Dunton Locks. While the plan was cut short, it did inspire a group of local entrepreneurs in the mid 1970s to try to duplicate the effort, only on a much smaller scale. This group designed, built, and maintained a mechanical boat tram to promote dinner excursions between Shoreham and Detroit Lakes. The County has since taken over the operation of the tram as a local tourist attraction.

Other Facilities/Infrastructure and/or related Information

- 1) 2 Parking lots – one central to the park and one on the periphery of the park located off of Hwy 59 and proximate to the Dunton Locks Trail.
- 2) Dunton Lakes County Park Property ID's: 197013000 (North); 197010000 (North); and 190127101 (Central & South)