

Willard Beach opens with new swimming area, pavilions

Dillon Davis, dwdavis@battlecreekenquirer.com 2:54 p.m. EDT July 10, 2015

After months of construction, Willard Beach Park has reopened to the public.

The park on Goguac Lake has undergone several changes including shifting the swimming area northward to shelter it from boat traffic.

Other additions include three new pavilions and a path along the lake to connect the swimming area to the main entrance.

Battle Creek resident Jamie Wagner was setting up her daughter Jailynn Radcliffe's eighth birthday party Friday under one of the new pavilions. Wagner said Willard Beach is their favorite local beach, and they're looking forward to spending time there for the remainder of the summer season.



Addison Madry, 4, makes a sand castle Friday at Willard Beach. (Photo: Al Lassen/For the Enquirer)

"I love how they re-did it over here," she said. "It's much different. We pulled up and we were going to try to get the little pavilion and we looked over and were like 'Oh my god, they've put in so many new pavilions. It's amazing."

Others like Marshall resident Jamie Madry and her daughters Taylor, 7, and Addison, 4, were soaking up the sun in the new swimming area. Madry said she not a frequent Willard beachgoer, but seeing the changes makes her want to come back in the future.

"We brought some lunch stuff and we're just here for a couple of hours," Madry said. "I definitely can see us coming back. It's very clean and I like that."

Gates are open from 8 a.m. to 8:30 p.m., and the beach closes at 8:15 p.m. Park admission is \$2 per person and \$5 for vehicles of three or more people.

The project was funded by a \$300,000 Michigan Department of Natural Resources grant the city received in 2014. The city's required match was nearly \$119,500.

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