

## THE AUTISM NATURE TRAIL (The ANT) AT LETCHWORTH STATE PARK

Visitors should enter the Park at the Castile entrance and follow the signs. **The ANT** entrance is halfway up the sidewalk from the parking lot toward the Humphrey Nature Center. The Trail itself is one mile long with 38 stone Trail makers (“vertical ants”) visible at all times.

**The ANT** begins and ends at the same location — a timber frame structure called the Trailhead Pavilion on the way in and the Celebration Station on the way out.

A QR code inside the Trailhead Pavilion takes the visitor directly to **The ANT** website, ***autismnaturetrail.com***.

The main Trail surface is stone dust and suitable for wheelchairs, walkers and strollers. The paths into and around the stations are engineered wood fiber mulch — also ADA-compliant.

The Sensory Station has 2 “gazebos” with a variety of items commonly found in the forest (nuts, pinecones, bark, rocks with fossils, seed pods, etc.) that can be touched and smelled, counted and sorted, classified and categorized. Two carved benches are located here.

The Sunshine Slope is a “maze” up a gentle slope in full sun. Three cuddle swings and one Alone Zone are located here, as are 3 trays on pedestals, filled with donor Tribute Tiles.

The Music Circle includes an accessible stage and 3 nature-inspired instruments in the main circle and 2 “Alone Zones” (not accessible to wheelchairs) up the hill. The Alone Zone on the left has a wooden bench and lily pad cymbals, and the Alone Zone on the right has a wooden bench and a separate path that leads back to the main Trail (an “escape route”). Nearby are 3 more trays on pedestals with donor Tribute Tiles.

The Curiosity Corner is at the entrance to a cut-through back to the Trail’s beginning and has a glider and some interesting items to peruse. (*Cell phone reception may be possible here.*)

The Reflection Knoll marks the halfway point on the Trail and has a dozen boulder seats, a center stone, two mini-Alone Zones, and 7 hidden woodland creatures (cardinal, deer, frog, squirrel and 3 ants) carved in the stones.

The Meadow Run and Climb offers a grassy hill (accessible), a willow dome and tunnel, a log stairway, and 4 pieces of play equipment. Three carved benches are located here.

The Design Zone contains starter structures and natural building materials to construct “houses,” teepees, forts and smaller creations in full shade. A bench made from the old railroad trestle that spanned the Genesee River is located here.

The Playful Path is a series of “loops” made with a variety of surfaces (river stones, slate, log rounds, sand). A carved bench is located here.

Caroline’s Nook is a place to regroup before heading to the Trail’s exit and has 8 log seats (6 feet apart) and 2 wooden benches.

The Celebration Station offers 2 chalkboards for recording impressions or feelings, drawing pictures or just signing names. Shelves are available for returning natural items found.