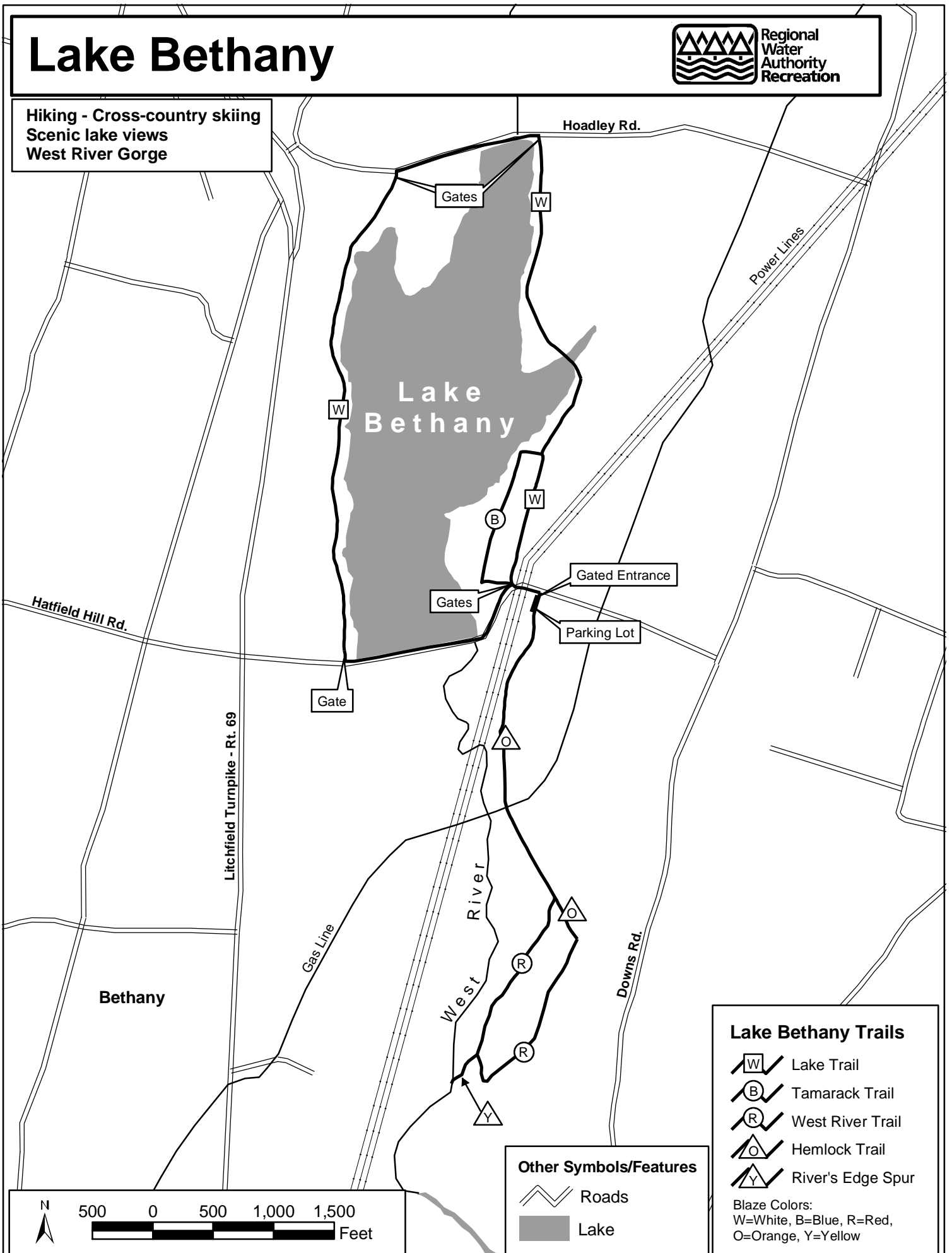


Lake Bethany



Regional Water Authority Recreation

Hiking - Cross-country skiing
 Scenic lake views
 West River Gorge



Hoadley Rd.

Power Lines

Lake Bethany

Hatfield Hill Rd.

Litchfield Turnpike - Rt. 69

Bethany

Gas Line

West River

Downs Rd.

Gates

W

W

B

W

Gates

Gated Entrance

Parking Lot

Gate

O

R

R

Y

O

Y

Other Symbols/Features

Roads

Lake

Lake Bethany Trails

- Lake Trail
- Tamarack Trail
- West River Trail
- Hemlock Trail
- River's Edge Spur

Blaze Colors:
 W=White, B=Blue, R=Red,
 O=Orange, Y=Yellow



Lake Bethany

Walk or jog around the scenic shores of Lake Bethany or take a more moderate hike that offers views through a forested landscape of a ravine carved by the West River.

Trail Guide to Lake Bethany

Lake Trail (white rectangle) 2.2 miles. Not far from Hatfield Hill Road on the east side of the lake, the trail crosses an old field that once grew hay for water company draft horses. The field is now planted with white pine, larch and Norway spruce. Look for a large boulder called a glacial erratic. This boulder was pushed here by a glacier more than 15,000 years ago.

Varied habitats make the trail along the west side of the reservoir a birdwatcher's delight. Maturing and medium sized maple and birch alternate with tall pines and clearings dominated by blackberries, goldenrod and meadow-sweet. There's even an old apple orchard here. The groves of young trees were once occupied by lovely evergreens that succumbed to disease. The dying trees were harvested in the 1970's and used to build log cabins.

Tamarack Trail (blue circle) 0.3 miles. The tamarack tree, also called the American larch, is one of the only two native conifers that drop all their needles every fall.



The trees along this trail are actually European larch, a close relative. Notice their soft, green new growth in the spring. Tamarack is one of the last trees to drop its tawny brown needles in the fall.

Hemlock Trail (orange triangle) 0.6 miles. The brushy, young trees at the start of this trail give no hint of the majestic hemlock spires further along. Nearly all of southern Connecticut was once cleared for farming, including some of these steep, rocky slopes. But farming was discontinued early here, and trees quickly returned. Protected in this ravine, trees grow taller and older than on surrounding land. But a close examination of these woods, where young hemlock, birch and maple trees have begun to grow beneath their lofty seniors, reveals a forest in transition. Lightning has shattered and killed some of the tallest trees, while gypsy moth caterpillars killed many of the weaker ones. The young trees are growing where dying trees are leaving openings in the forest canopy. The dominant trees will someday be birch, maple and oak, as the aging hemlocks are replaced in a natural process called succession.

West River Trail (red circle) 0.6 miles. Of all the trails in our system, this one feels most like Vermont. The trail follows moderate grades and offers a delightful view through the trees of the West River. The West River starts north of Lake Bethany, then flows into our Lake Watrous and Lake Dawson reservoirs and ends in New Haven. As you hike, notice pieces of quartzite, a white mineral, in the stone walls and schist bedrock. Schist is a metamorphic rock formed millions of years ago when mud and clay were compressed by the weight of thousands of feet of sediment lying on top of them. The quartzite pieces formed from small deposits of sand in the mud. Today, schist forms the top layer of bedrock underlying most of Woodbridge and Bethany.

River's Edge Spur (yellow triangle) 0.1 miles. This short spur trail drops steeply to the river, providing a short but challenging hike down to the water's edge.