

# *This Is My (Pennsylvania) Happy Place*



Finding Outside Insights from the People Who  
Know Pennsylvania's State Parks and Forests



#GIVING  
TUESDAY



**pennsylvania**  
DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION  
AND NATURAL RESOURCES

DCNRPA.gov



It's just our nature to help!

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Penn's Woods is full of the kinds of places that make people happy. At the Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation we discover this each year when we announce our annual Parks and Forests Through the Seasons photo contest and marvel as your breath-taking entries roll in.



And we hear it every day when we talk to the hard-working men and women who earn their daily bread in one of the hundreds of different occupations throughout the parks and forests system. We see the pride they take in their work—and the joy they experience in being outside every day in the places we all love.



On the occasion of this 2018 Giving Tuesday, we are delighted to share some of their favorite places. Maybe one of them will become your happy place as well! Visit DCNR.PA.gov for the state park or forest mentioned in this

booklet. Drop us a line at [PAHappyPlaces@PAParksandForests.org](mailto:PAHappyPlaces@PAParksandForests.org) or visit our Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/PennsylvaniaParksAndForestsFoundation>) and let us know what you find Out There.

#PAParks&ForestsHappyPlace

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I'm drawn to rock outcroppings, hence my attraction to several hiking opportunities in the Michaux State Forest. Sunset Rocks Trail (<https://www.purplelizard.com/blogs/news/camp-michaux-and-sunset-rocks-history-vistas-and-more-in-michaux-state-forest>), a spur to the Appalachian Trail, rewards the intrepid hiker with amazing views along a rocky spine.

Accessed via Michaux Road, if you tackle the 8.3-mile loop you can also view ruins from a Civilian Conservation Corps/WWII Interment Camp. This rugged trail requires you watch your footing—both for rocks and potential snakes.

Also in the Michaux and accessed off of Pine Grove Road is the Blueberry Trail. The 800-foot elevation gain provides exercise for both the lungs and the mind. Hike at the right time of the year and you can fuel your hike with...blueberries!

Tall timbers call my name, and none more so than the hemlocks on the Hemlock Trail in Laurel Hill State Park. This 1.2 mile loop follows Laurel Hill Creek and is part of the Old Growth Forest Network (<http://www.oldgrowthforest.net>).

*Marci Mowery, President  
Pennsylvania Parks & Forests Foundation*



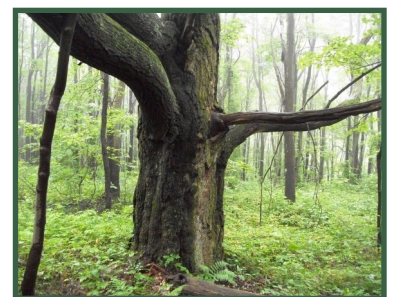
My favorite places in Varden Conservation Area are the most southern trails within the Mid-Valley Tract (Overlook Ridge to Bear Paw Trail). The trails change elevation and go through different woodland habitats, from naturally wooded areas to evergreens that were hand-planted in rows over 50 years ago. This area is especially beautiful in the winter, when all of the trees are covered in snow and ice. The best part is you rarely

see another person when you're walking on these trails. Whenever we have guests my husband and I always take them back on these trails and everyone is always blown away by the beauty and serenity.

*Kaitlyn Gunderson  
Varden Conservation Area*

Take your pick of great hiking spots in the Forbes State Forest! Spring ephemerals bloom wildly along the 3.5 mile Grove Run Trail connecting Forbes State Forest and Linn Run State Park. This moderately challenging hike is worth the effort; be rewarded with a beautiful display of wildflowers throughout the early spring months.

McKenna Trail within the Roaring Run Natural Area of Forbes is a popular destination for cross-country skiers and hikers. This 3-mile trail stretches through reverting farmland, newly maturing forest, and homesteads dating back as early as the 1800s. If you're lucky you may even be able to see a wolf - a wolf tree that is!



And last but not least, rugged terrain and narrow tunnels of rhododendron characterize Rankin Trail, located within the Quebec Run Wild Area of the Forbes. This one mile, single-track trail meanders alongside Quebec Run, a pristine wilderness trout stream.

*Rachael Mahony, Environmental Education Specialist  
Forbes State Forest*



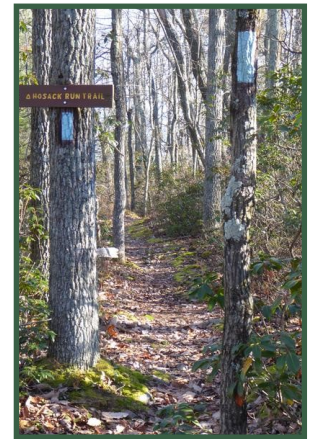


It's nearly impossible to pick just one favorite place because my family makes it a point to visit parks and forests year round, determined to complete our *Pennsylvania State Parks and State Forests Passport* (<http://bit.ly/PAParksForestsPassport>). You'll find us hiking, camping, and fishing; spotting and photographing wildlife; learning about the natural world; and enjoying spectacular scenic views like this one of the Susquehanna River from Hyner View

State Park. If you're lucky, you might be able to watch hang gliders soaring from the overlook. Our family times are best with no phone, computer, video games, and other distractions; and something interesting to see and learn in the outdoors.

*George Asimos, Board of Directors  
Pennsylvania Parks & Forests Foundation*

One of my favorite places in Michaux is the Hosack Run-Appalachian Trail loop (<https://www.purplelizard.com/blogs/news/visit-the-nicest-shelter-on-the-appalachian-trail-a-hike-in-michaux-state-forest>). Park at the end of Quarry Gap Road, and walk to the northeast along the gated Greenwood Road/Locust Gap Trail, which features vernal pools. Then turn left onto Hosack Trail, which takes you up a narrow ravine and a steep climb to the top of the ridge. A left turn onto the Appalachian Trail and downhill takes you to the incomparable Quarry Gap Shelter, where you can rest, snack, play board games, or chat with fellow hikers while listening to the burble of Quarry Run. Finally, follow the AT south through a beautiful rhododendron tunnel, and take a quick left onto the powerline ROW to get you back to your car on Quarry Gap Road.

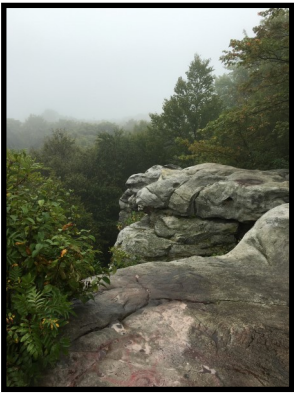


*Andrew Rohrbaugh, Botanist  
Bureau of Forestry Ecological Services Section*



The spillway overlook at Nockamixon State Park is beautiful any time of year when there is water coming over the spillway. Look for herons fishing—and it's especially nice when ice forms in the winter.

*Obie Derr, Park Manager  
Nockamixon State Park*



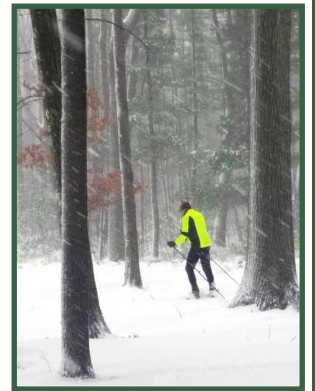
My favorite spot is Beam Rocks in the Forbes State Forest. This is a great spot for a hike because you get a wooded, flat hike to a beautiful rock formation and view or you can continue down where you can climb on a few rocks and look up at the outcropping. Unfortunately, it is a spot that draws graffiti vandals and over the past few years I have watched with pride the work of dedicated volunteer to remove it and help keep the area clean. This photo was taken on a cloudy, drizzly day but it is still a beautiful sight.

*Amanda Trimmer, Outreach Coordinator  
Pennsylvania Parks & Forests Foundation*

Pay a visit to Parker Dam State Park all year long! A spectacular view of Parker Lake can be reached via a short hike on the Trail of New Giants. This gradual climb is well worth the view. Hike the Trail of New Giants from either trail head along Mud Run Road and take the spur trail to the scenic view.

Access the 70+ mile Quehanna Trail from Parker Dam. This wilderness experience trail can be broken down into many shorter day hikes, or you can decide to make it a great backpacking experience in the Moshannon State Forest. The park provides ample parking for dayhikers and multi-day hikers alike. Stop at the park office for a map of the trail and to complete a trail registration (if you are planning to be out overnight).

Parker Dam is a great place to enjoy winter! Cabins are open year round for winter enthusiasts and the park embraces winter recreation. A skating area is maintained, programs are offered, including several weekends with skate rentals, supported by the Friends of Parker Dam. Take a trip down “Parker’s Peak” sledding hill, located along Mud Run Road or come out to enjoy groomed cross country ski trails; programming (including xc ski equipment) is offered periodically throughout the winter for beginners. The park also serves as a snowmobile trailhead to the surrounding Moshannon State Forest. Check out the DCNR Calendar of Events for programming opportunities, and be sure to check the Winter Report for up-to-date winter conditions at the park.



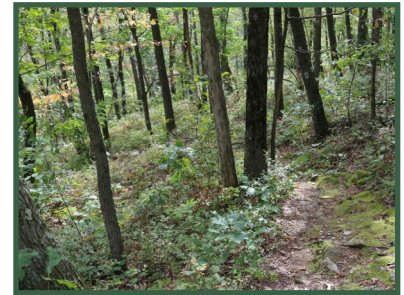
*Jim McCorkle, Park Manager  
Parker Dam State Park*



If you are looking for a spectacular view, the vista platform off of the County Line trail in the Gallitzin State Forest is the place. Looking east from the Allegheny Front on a clear day it treats viewers to a panoramic view of Bedford County. Get there off Route 56 east of Windber near the little village of Ogletown. For directions, check out <http://www.pahikes.com/trails/gallitzin-state-forest/655-county-line-trail-new-multi-use-trail-in-gallitzin-state-forest>.

*Daniel Snyder, Forester  
Gallitzin State Forest*

Locust Lake State Park in Schuylkill County has a picturesque moderately easy mountainside creek hiking path named “Oak Trail”. It is blazed well and easy to follow the trail up the mountain. The hike has an arboretum feel to it because much of the trees and plant life is catalogued for a great opportunity to learn the native plant species.



*Maria Montero, Board of Directors  
Pennsylvania Parks & Forests Foundation*

Two unique and different parcels are highlights of any visit to the William Penn. Goat Hill Wild Plant Sanctuary, located on the Mason-Dixon Line in Chester County, is an Audubon Important Bird Area and supports some world-rare plants and lepidopterans. This unique environment fascinates young and old alike and the Rose Trail gives access

Second is Little Tinicum Island (LTI) located south of Philadelphia International Airport in the Delaware River. Because every departing and incoming southbound flight flies over LTI, this



little treasure is viewed by more people than any other forest land. Yet is probably one of the least accessed pieces of forest property. Strong tidal influences of the Delaware River present challenges to reaching LTI – it takes a bit of skill and a sturdy watercraft – which means that few of the folks who have seen the island from the air have actually set foot on it.

*Joe Frassetta, District Forester  
William Penn State Forest*



My favorite places change with the seasons as well as new discoveries. But you can't miss with:

- Laurel Ridge – any of the rock labyrinths along the Laurel Highlands Hiking Trail. I might have a slight preference to the one south of Grindle Ridge. Or any of the shelters along the LHHT for by far one of the state's unique overnight experiences (and a PPFF-sponsored restoration project: <http://bit.ly/lhhtsheltersfund>).
- Kooser – fly fishing along Kooser Run.
- Laurel Hill – another vote for hiking through the Hemlock Natural Area.



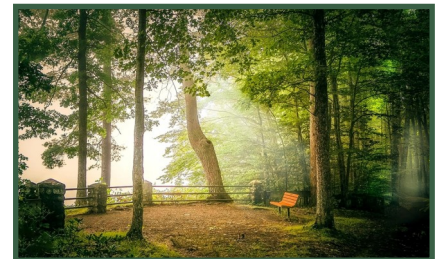
*Michael Mumau, Park Manager  
Laurel Hill State Park Complex*



I would say Susquehannock State Forest's best unique quality is our remoteness. The Hammersley Wild Area and Forrest H. Dutlinger Natural Area that lie within it exemplify that. At a little over 31,000 acres combined it is the largest roadless area in the state forest system so if you like the wilderness experience you'll love it. If you like the wilderness experience plus native trout fishing it is definitely the place for you. Some of the best native trout fishing in northcentral Pennsylvania can be found within. The Dutlinger Natural Area contains around 150 acres of Old Growth Hemlock forest. So while you're exploring the area, stop by and see the large hemlocks that grow there. Some of them are close to four feet in diameter. There is a good network of trails marked and maintained within the area and a brochure with map is available upon request.

*Chris Nicholas, District Forester  
Susquehannock State Forest*

I can't choose just one among them, but my favorite spots are the overlooks along the rim of the Pennsylvania Grand Canyon in Colton Point State Park. The view through the gorge is unparalleled. And even though it's most popular during fall foliage season, it's beautiful all year round.



*Casey Schneck, Intern  
Pennsylvania Parks & Forests Foundation*



When you think great hiking and beautiful vistas, think Sproul State Forest. Kettle Creek Vista is one of the most under-rated vistas in Pennsylvania. From Kettle Creek State Park take Sugar Camp Road to the top of the hill, turn right on Crowley Road, then next left. There's no winter maintenance here but during the rest of the year, you won't regret making the trip.

The Burns Run Overlook has recently been improved. Located off Route 144 between Renovo and Snowshoe, the overlook is the first right past the Texas Eastern Pipeline when you are heading to Snowshoe from Renovo; when heading to Renovo from Snowshoe, it's the first left past Two Rock Run Vista.

And, speaking of Two Rock Run Vista, that's just past Dehas Road between Snowshoe and Renovo. You'll find restroom facilities and an interpretive kiosk here and it's a can't miss!

For more information, maps, and advice on everything the Sproul has to offer don't hesitate to get in touch with the Forest District office.

*Ted Ligenza, Forester  
Sproul State Forest*



My husband and I tend to refer to Shawnee State Park as *our* park. It's close to home so we can get out and enjoy a morning walk or paddle nearly every weekend. It's fantastic to have such an amazing place so close by. And if you're lucky enough to be near the park around the Fourth of July, the Friends of Shawnee sponsor one beautiful fireworks display over the lake.

*Tina Molski, Board of Directors  
Pennsylvania Parks & Forests Foundation*





When life gets you bogged down, head out to the bog at Black Moshannon State Park for a peaceful walk along the half mile Bog Trail board walk.

*Jared Fencil, Park Manager  
Black Moshannon State Park*

Elk State Forest in the Pennsylvania Wilds helps the region live up to its name. On the Fred Woods Trail, you can hike through large boulders with an opportunity to see wildlife and enjoy the vistas.

At the Bucktail Overlook (very near the Fred Woods Trail and in the Bucktail Natural Area) you're rewarded with an expansive view, best seen in early morning with fog in the valleys and at night with dark skies.



Finally, Ridge Road is Pennsylvania's own miniature Blue Ridge Parkway, a 26-mile scenic drive through the forest on a state forest road with multiple vistas (<https://endlessmountains.wordpress.com/2017/09/14/scenic-driving-on-ridge-road-elk-state-forest>).

*Jeanne Wambaugh, District Forester  
Elk State Forest*



For me, hiking is the perfect blend of planning, adventure, fitness, and quiet reflection. And at Ricketts Glen State Park, you can add a little taste of adventure on the Falls Trail. Its 7½ miles can be a challenge but reward you with 21 waterfalls—which can't be beat on a hot summer day.

*Brian Kavalukas, Board of Directors  
Pennsylvania Parks & Forests Foundation*

Even before I came to work for PPFF, I was a fan of Pennsylvania's state parks and forests especially because every summer my family and a group of our friends travels to the Pine Creek Trail in the Tioga and Tiadaghton state forests for a week's vacation. We swim and bike and just spend time getting reacquainted around a campfire. They say "memories last a lifetime," and for me they certainly will!

*Beth Artz, Office Assistant  
Pennsylvania Parks & Forests Foundation*





Come to Moshannon State Forest to experience some of Pennsylvania's best hiking (not that we're biased, of course). The Kunes Camp Trail is accessed off the Quehanna Highway in the heart of the 50,000 acre Quehanna Wild Area and provides users with a taste of history and remoteness. The trail meanders thru the walls of the old Kunes Camp that was built between two boulders nearly 100 years ago. There is the option to create multiple loops for shorter or longer hikes using Erie Camp Trail and Chipper Road. Elk are commonly sighted in this area of the Moshannon State Forest.

For Allegheny Front vistas, the Allegheny Front Trail (AFT - yellow blazes) in Centre County near Black Moshannon State Park features a series of majestic vistas along the namesake of the trail - Allegheny Front. This section of the AFT is arduous and rocky but the reward of great views is worth the effort. To enjoy these vistas, park at the Trailhead Parking Area at the intersection of Tram Road and State Route 504 and hike south on the AFT. On a clear day you might see Tussey Mountain and Bryce Jordan Center on the Penn State campus.

*Zachary Miller, Forester  
Moshannon State Forest*



When you're lucky enough to live on the edge of a state park and a 150-mile rail-trail passes by, too, it becomes a favorite place pretty easily. The Great Allegheny Passage through Ohiopyle offers many a scenic overlook and a great way to burn off the effects of a long day in front of a computer. Along the trail west of Ohiopyle itself near the Bruner Run takeout for whitewater rafters is a rock outcropping perfect for perching and watching the river. Just be careful of your footing and your seat—the occasional snake has been known to enjoy the sunshine there as well.

*Pam Metzger, Membership Coordinator  
Pennsylvania Parks & Forests Foundation*





A really interesting area in Delaware State Forest is Stairway Wild Area. This 2,882 acre wild area combines historical significance as a bluestone quarry during the 1840s with its wetlands, remoteness, and wild natural beauty. Featuring Stairway Lake and the nearby vista overlooking the Delaware River, this wild area offers a remote, quiet getaway for shared use recreationists. Stairway Wild Area buffers Buckhorn Natural Area to the northeast.

Another notable area is Bruce Lake Natural Area, covering 3,160 acres including two lakes, Bruce Lake and Egypt Meadow Lake. Bruce Lake is a glacial formed lake and is completely spring fed. Virgin stands of pine and hemlock were cut in the late 1800s leaving the area vulnerable to fires that destroyed the rich humus soil layer. Egypt Meadow Lake was constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps in 1935. Bordering the Bruce Lake Natural Area to the west is Promised Land State Park.

*Julian Maza, Recreation Forester  
Delaware State Forest*

Due to my love of history, my favorite place at Promised Land State Park is the Masker Museum, dedicated to the park's rich CCC history and natural resources. Located off of Pickerel Point Road near the Pickerel Point Campground, the Masker Museum is run by an all-volunteer force and is usually open on weekends from Memorial Day through Labor Day, but is open seven days a week in July and August. The park still receives donations of CCC items from former CCC Boys and their loved ones for the park to display at the museum!



*Brian Taylor, Park Manager  
Promised Land State Park*

The Spruce Flats Bog in the Forbes State Forest features an evolving wetland with (at present) six to eight inches of peat covering almost 2½ feet of mud. There is an ADA-accessible boardwalk leading to an observation platform where I can see wildlife and rare plants so long as I stay on my leash since no one is allowed to go into the bog itself. Afterward, my people and I can enjoy a picnic at Laurel Summit State Park, right next door.



*Isabella, Office Dog  
Pennsylvania Parks & Forests Foundation*



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Bruce Walkovich, 2018 Parks and Forests Through the Seasons Critics' Choice, Best in Show. Susquehannock State Forest.

Purple Lizard Maps, Sunset Rocks Trail. Michaux State Forest.

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Friends of Varden Conservation Area Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/FriendsofVCA>), Mid-Valley Tract.

Fred Chenot (<https://www.alltrails.com/explore/recording/roaring-run-natural-area-roaring-run-loop-hike>), McKenna Foot Trail. Forbes State Forest.

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George Asimos, Family at the Overlook. Hyner View State Park.

Purple Lizard Maps, Hosack Run Trail. Michaux State Forest.

Southeastern PA Hiking, (<http://sepahiking.blogspot.com/2014/06/nockamixon-state-park.html>), Nockamixon Spillway. Nockamixon State Park.

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Amanda Trimmer, Beam Rocks. Forbes State Forest.

Friends of Parker Dam Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/FriendsofParkerDamStatePark>), Cross country skiing. Parker Dam State Park.

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Frank Skokoski (<https://www.KeepYourEyesPeeled.net>), Oak Trail. Locust Lake State Park.

Marci Mowery, Little Tinicum Island. William Penn State Forest.

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Marci Mowery, Route 653 Shelter. Laurel Highlands Hiking Trail.

Nicholas Tonelli, Forrest H. Dutlinger Natural Area. Susquehannock State Forest.

Bernadette Chiamonte-Brown, Overlook. Colton Point State Park.

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PA Wilds Center (<http://www.pawildscenter.org>), Kettle Creek Vista, Sproul State Forest.

Tina Molski, Paddling the Lake. Shawnee State Park.

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Craig Artz, Beth on the Pine Creek Trail. Tioga State Forest.

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Zachary Miller, Kunes Camp Trail. Moshannon State Forest.

Pam Metzger, Great Allegheny Passage. Ohiopyle State Park.

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Garrett Beers ([delawariver.natgeotourism.com](http://delawariver.natgeotourism.com)), Stairway Wild Area. Delaware State Forest.

Promised Land State Park Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/promisedlandpa>), Masker Museum.

Marci Mowery, Spruce Flats Bog. Forbes State Forest.

## *The Pennsylvania State Parks and State Forests Passport- See Them All Challenge*

Has your whistle been whetted? Obviously this is just a taste of the great adventures and beautiful places you can enjoy in our state parks and forests. If you don't already have your copy, visit the PPFF online store at <http://bit.ly/PPFFOnlineStore> and order your copy of the *Pennsylvania State Parks and State Forests Passport* today. Then you'll be ready to take on the ultimate challenge and visit each and every one of those parks and forests. From tiny treasures like



McCalls Dam State Park to the gigantic lake at Pymatuning State Park, from the highest point in Pennsylvania in the Forbes State Forest to the Delaware State Forest's Pine Lake Natural Area just think of the adventures you'll have.

Our Seen 'em All wearable checklist (that's a bandana in case you couldn't guess) will be our gift to you to commemorate your achievement upon completion of the quest. Be in touch with us with your stories of adventure and we'll reward you with one of your very own.

And we would dearly love to share your photographs, stories, favorite memories. Join the Passport Hall of Fame—visit our website at [PAParksAndForests.org/Get-Involved/See-Them-All-Challenge](http://PAParksAndForests.org/Get-Involved/See-Them-All-Challenge) and find out more.

