

Photo by North Country Trail Association

Two official "sections of the North Country National Scenic Trail cross Pennsylvania including the 97-mile section located through the Allegheny National Forest, then skirting south of the Great Lakes region for an additional 175 miles. Thirty marked campsites along the way well make up for a lack of cell service. Get away from it all!



Photos by MiaBug (Waymarking.com)

The Over the Hill Gang at Oil Creek State Park tend the 36-mile loop that is the Gerard Trail down the east and west sides of the Oil Creek Valley. Some beautiful views and charming bridges (like Alfred's Bent Nail Bridge above) are your reward for the underpacking, along with comfortable overnights in the Adirondack style shelters located in groups of six at two different locations along the way.



The 3,184-acre Kennerdell Tract of Clear Creek State Forest was added to the forest in 1980, providing a lovely vista overlooking the Allegheny River at Dennison Point and the opportunity to experience a backpacking adventure using, for example, a route as mapped by blogger Matt Jacobs on his CalTopo blog.



### BACKPACKING IN THE GREAT LAKES

### REFERENCES

(For state parks or forests, visit [DCNR.PA.gov](http://DCNR.PA.gov))

#### Backpacking:

Kennerdell Tract: <https://CalTopo.com/m/IUVH>  
Gerard Trail: <http://FriendsOCSP.org/trails/hiking/GHT.html>  
North Country Trail: <https://NorthCountryTrail.org>

#### Day Hiking:

Tuscarora Trail: [PATC.net](http://PATC.net)

#### Cycling:

Samuel Justus Trail: [AVTA-Trails.org](http://AVTA-Trails.org)  
Erie Pittsburgh Trail: <https://EriePittsburghTrail.org>

#### On the Water:

Upper Shenango River Water Trail: [VisitMercerCountyPA.com/Blog/Anyone-Can-Enjoy-Easy-Paddling-on-the-Upper-Shenango-River-Water-Trail-in-Mercer-County-PA/](http://VisitMercerCountyPA.com/Blog/Anyone-Can-Enjoy-Easy-Paddling-on-the-Upper-Shenango-River-Water-Trail-in-Mercer-County-PA/)

#### Uniquely Pennsylvania's Great Lakes:

Tom Ridge Environmental Center: <http://TRECPI.org>

## The Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation's Pocket Guide to Recreation in Pennsylvania's Great Lakes

Featuring places and activities from the October 2018 issue of *Explore PA: Pennsylvania's Outdoors in Your Inbox*

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1845 Market Street | Suite 202  
Camp Hill, PA 17011  
717.236.7644  
[PAParksandForests.org](http://PAParksandForests.org)



**DAY HIKING IN THE GREAT LAKES**

With the lake its major focus, you might be surprised to find that Pymatuning State Park also offers some pleasant hiking, including the 2.5-mile Spillway Trail that follows an old railroad grade offering great sunset views and bird—and wildlife watching all year long.

Photo by Mary Thall



A portion of the 1,500-acre Corplanter State Forest, the Ingraham Tract, lies in Crawford County. Along Strawberry Road off PA Route 408 near the borough of Towhille, the Ingraham Tract offers 2.5-miles of easy low-density trails perfect for wildflowers on a warm spring afternoon.

Photo by DCNR



**ON THE WATER IN THE GREAT LAKES**

As the Commonwealth's largest lake, Pymatuning definitely qualifies as "great" just like the fun you can have on its waters.



At the state park, boat launches abound and three marinas mean your watery dreams are limited only by your imagination (and a 20 hp maximum motor). Wind, arm, or engine-driven, the lake is calling and you should go!

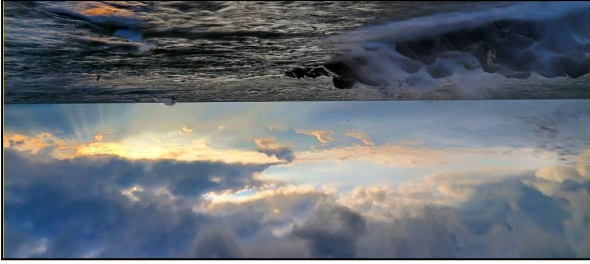
Photo by Pymatuning Lake Rentals

While we are on the subject of Pymatuning, bear in mind that the Upper Shenango River Water Trail begins at the Pymatuning Dam and continues 23 miles to Shenango River Lake. The trail is still being developed by Shenango River Watchers but it is a fabulous resource and there are outfitters waiting to help you begin your adventure.

Photos by Visit Mercer County



**UNIQUE IN THE GREAT LAKES**



It goes without saying that what is unique about the Great Lakes Region is the region's Great Lake.

*Pennsylvania has a beach!*

And in any season, the shores of Lake Erie provide delights for all senses and all ages. Winter sunsets, summer sunrises, sandy toes, and a sun-kissed nose are only a few of the reasons to pay Presque Isle State Park a visit.

Careful! If you visit the Tom Ridge Environmental Center, you will learn something, too!

A quick 18-mile drive west on PA Route 5 takes you to Erie Bluffs State Park, largely undeveloped and with a different look at the lake entirely.

Photo by Bruce Berchtold

**CYCLING IN THE GREAT LAKES**



Some day, the 10-mile rail-trail at Oil Creek State Park will connect to the south with the Samuel Justus Trail and the dream of a Pittsburgh to Erie Trail. For now, it is a beautiful riverside ride through history and nature. And because it is paved, it is suitable for strollers and wheelchairs.

Photo by Pam Metzger



For many years, the multi-purpose trail at Goddard State Park bore that rather unimaginative name. Then in 2015 it was renamed for the first secretary of DCNR and the John C. Oliver Multi-Purpose Trail had a name worthy of its popularity. With hills to climb and turns to negotiate, this 12-mile loop provides a challenge usually reserved for mountain biking—but with the benefit of a smooth asphalt surface.

Photo by DCNR