

# Penn's Stewards

News from the Pennsylvania Parks & Forests Foundation

Spring 2025 Newsletter



The mission of the Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation is to inspire stewardship of Pennsylvania's state parks and forests.

Vision: To be the trusted voice and advocate to sustain and enhance Pennsylvania's state parks and forests.

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## The Past and Future of Pennsylvania's Trails Movement

By Silas Chamberlin

Just before the holidays, in late December 2024, Congress passed the Explore Act, a package of policy prescriptions that allow federal agencies to better manage outdoor recreation on public lands. The Act received a lot of fanfare from conservation groups and shocking bipartisan support during a period when a government shutdown seemed likely, passing the House with unanimous consent.

At roughly the same time but with far less ado, Congress reauthorized the Economic Development Administration and tucked within the reauthorization was a mandate for the nation's primary economic agency to recognize, prioritize and invest in outdoor recreation infrastructure, such as parks and trails, as a means of rural economic development—just as they do energy facilities and other critical infrastructure.

Lest we take the significance of these federal actions for granted, it is worth considering that for most of the history of outdoor recreation, park and trail construction and maintenance were grassroots, mostly voluntary activities stewarded by voluntary associations of hikers, campers and sportsmen.

As I noted in my book *On the Trail: A History of American Hiking* (Yale University Press, 2016), the volunteer and communitarian ethos of outdoor recreation that defined the American hiking community since the mid-1800s gave way to a more individualistic, consumer-driven forms of outdoor recreation in the 1960s and 1970s, driven in part by the success of hikers and conservationists in forcing the

*Continued on page 3...*

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## President's Message

*Marci Mowery*

Perhaps you joined one of the 2,488 intrepid hikers who participated in one of 74 First Day Hikes? Collectively, these hikers covered 6,487 miles! Or, perhaps, you created your own First Day Hike. We annually do a private hike that looks something like this: gather in a state forest, hike a short distance, spread out a lavish feast while enjoying the company of friends, pack up, hike out, then gather for the traditional Pennsylvania New Year's Day meal.

It seemed appropriate to kick off the year with a hike, as the focus on the Foundation this year will be trails. As you may recall, last year we supported funding in Governor Shapiro's budget that would have invested \$8.5 million annually into Pennsylvania's trail systems. This funding would have not only completed trail gaps, maintained existing trails, and brought trails closer to communities, it would have created dedicated trail staff within the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. Unfortunately, that funding did not pass.

With this in mind, we started the year with a letter to the Governor and the chairs of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees expressing our support of trail funding. Our 2025 photo contest will focus on trails. In this issue of Penn's Stewards you will find a survey to seek your input on your favorite trails. We look to kick off a new trail volunteer program later this year and we will be inviting you and elected officials to join us as we explore the value and the needs of trails in Pennsylvania.

In a recent survey for the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, the importance of outdoor recreation to Pennsylvanians and to the Commonwealth's economy was underscored. See a summary of key results in the Bringing Your Voice article on page 13.

Join us as we celebrate, and share our concerns for Pennsylvania's trails.

*Marci and Joe enjoying a first day hike with friends*





*Continued from page 1...*

hand of state and federal governments to take a stronger role in protecting and expanding access to outdoor recreation opportunities across the nation. As such, the National Trails System Act of 1968, which mandated the federal government invest in and help maintain a network of long-distance, historic and recreation trails, can be seen as a watershed moment that has led—more than 50 years later—to the increasingly sophisticated legislation we just saw passed.

This type of federal support for trails would have been welcomed by Pennsylvania's earliest hiking clubs, such as the Blue Mountain Eagle Climbing Club founded by Reading civic and business leaders in 1916 and the first statewide hiking club, the Pennsylvania Alpine Club, founded by Henry Shoemaker in Harrisburg in 1917. These voluntary associations were led by prominent individuals who attracted others to give their time and money to organizing a full slate of hikes, group activities and projects, including early attempts to build new hiking trails. In fact, blazing and maintaining trails became a galvanizing role for clubs that attracted and retained members and made participation a central part of members' social lives.

For example, the Back to Nature—or Batona—Hiking Club championed blazing the Horse-Shoe Trail some 140 miles from Valley Forge to the Appalachian Trail at Manada Gap. Beginning in 1935, the Club used loppers and pick mattocks to clear and mark paths through patches of woods, along country lanes and across private property (thanks to handshake agreements) to create a route for equestrians



*Breaking ground on the Schuylkill River Trail*

and hikers. Unlike the Appalachian Trail, however, the Horse-Shoe Trail never captured the attention of the federal government and even today struggles to maintain an open corridor across land without permanent protection. For much of the twentieth century, hiking clubs relied almost solely on the capacity of their volunteer leaders and membership to create and expand the hiking and trails movement.

The upside of this reliance on volunteers was the grassroots and communal nature of the hiking community, which meant it was incredibly resilient and self-sufficient. Hikers literally built and maintained the very trails upon which they walked, sporadically partnering with public entities, like state forest staff, the game commission or—in the 1930s—the Civilian Conservation Corps, but not relying on anyone but themselves and their collaboration with other hiking and trail clubs to advance their cause. Many club members took part in the negotiations and agreements with property owners or state agencies to grant trail access. Then they poured sweat and occasionally a little blood into caring for trails and keeping them open. Only then did they get to enjoy the fruits of their labor by taking a hike on the trail they produced. As a result, hikers had deep ties to the action of trail building and maintenance, independent of anything but peripheral support from government. In fact—as is the case today with Appalachian Trail maintenance clubs and state park friends groups—these early clubs provided services that made the otherwise overwhelming work of maintaining public lands possible—in effect, privately providing a public service.

Ironically, the volunteer hiking clubs of the twentieth century became victims of their own success. They became so good at advocating for new trails, increased maintenance, and government support for their work that eventually the state and federal government created agencies, policies and funding mechanisms to do work once carried out by hiking club volunteers. Some grassroots hiking and conservation clubs began to morph into more sophisticated and better-funded non-profit organizations that allowed them to hire staff and further professionalize volunteer activities like advocating to government, negotiating with property owners, organizing outings and even building and maintaining trails. Volunteer-led trail design gave way to the work of landscape architects and professional engineers.

*Continued on page 4...*

Along with each step towards government engagement and professionalization came an inevitable distancing of the average hiker from the act of building and caring for trails. As trail and park access came to be seen as a right provided by government, the average recreationist shifted from a producer of outdoor infrastructure to a consumer of outdoor activities, with the unintended consequence of diminishing the role of voluntary clubs and ultimately leading to declining membership and capacity. For example, the Appalachian Trail Conservancy estimates 6,000 individuals volunteer to maintain the AT out of the roughly 3 million hikers who use the trail each year. On one of the most popular footpaths in America, 0.002% of its users are engaged in maintaining it or volunteering to sustain its primary stewardship organization.

And then there are rail trails. Pennsylvania is home to the oldest rail trail in America, created in 1897 when a group of Danville, PA residents leased a rail corridor serving a local iron ore mine, removed the rails and ties, and created a safe and level place to try out their newly acquired safety bicycles. Today, the J. Manley Robbins Trail is still in use.

Beginning in the 1980s, the ideas of rails to trails conversions became much more widespread and, today, most new trail construction is along former rail lines, in part thanks to the incorporation of rail trails into federal and state transportation funding programs that vastly increased the funding available to trail construction—but notably not footpaths. While there are some examples of purely volunteer, grassroots construction efforts in Pennsylvania, for the most part the design, engineering, construction and maintenance of rail trail projects is done by paid professionals. Rail trail volunteers certainly play important roles controlling vegetation, patrolling, populating boards, raising funds and advocating, but the



*Hikers on the early Horse Shoe Trail*

trails themselves are consumed by trail users not produced by them, altering the relationship between user and trail. This arrangement works during periods when government is willing to spend on infrastructure, but it begs the question of what happens if this funding goes away in the future.

The good news? A century ago, hikers probably couldn't have imagined a time when "too much" public support might shift the balance away from a reliance on volunteerism. Today we have the luxury of the highest rates of outdoor recreation participation in history, and we can find small but meaningful ways to return to a better balance between producing and consuming trails. One way to start is to volunteer, even a few hours a month, to your favorite park or trail. You'll be taking part in a century-plus legacy of volunteerism in the hiking community, and you'll be making the trails movement even more resilient in the future.



**Plan Ahead!** Continue the legacy of conservation of our state parks and forests for future generations through a bequest or life income gift to PPF.

**Did You Know?** PPF is able to accept your TAX DEDUCTIBLE donations of stock to support our work and/or projects in state parks and forests.

For more information visit [www.PAParksAndForests.org](http://www.PAParksAndForests.org)



# Exploring History

## On the Trail: A History of American Hiking

By Dr. Silas Chamberlin

Join Silas as he explores the journey of hiking in the United States. From the mid-nineteenth century urban walking clubs to the tens of millions of Americans who rank hiking as their top outdoor activity, this book tells the unique history of American hiking.

## Cradle of Conservation: An Environmental History of Pennsylvania

By Dr. Allen Dieterich-Ward

The story starts with forester Ralph Brock at the dawn of the conservation era and continues through the eras of energy production using coal, oil, natural gas, and other resources. Allen Dieterich-Ward also investigates how the non-human world shapes the history of the commonwealth and examines the impact of pollution.



Both books are available in the PPFF Store.

## The Pennsylvania Conservation Heritage Project

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has a remarkable history of conservation dating at least to the late 19th century when industrialization rapidly took hold and when environmental resources were impacted and, in many cases, depleted by economic growth. Examples of conservation efforts are apparent in the stories about the people, places, events and policies that shaped Pennsylvania.

The Pennsylvania Conservation Heritage Project attempts to capture those histories through oral interviews, documentaries, and stories. Learn more about the project and recommend stories and interview by visiting: <https://paconservationheritage.org/> or by scanning the QR code:



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### 2025 PPFF Virtual Book Club

Join us at 12pm online to discuss some of our favorite books! Scan the QR code or get details online at <https://ppff.events/book-club-2025>

<p>ANIMAL, VEGETABLE, MIRACLE A Year of Food Love BARBARA KINGSOLVER</p>	<p>ETHAN TAPPER How to Love a Forest</p>	<p>NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER HOW ANIMAL SENSES REVEAL THE HIDDEN REALM AROUND US AN IMMENSE WORLD ED YONG WINNER OF THE PULITZER PRIZE</p>
Feb. 26, 2025	Apr. 30, 2025	Jun. 25, 2025
<p>BICYCLING with BUTTERFLIES MY 10,000-MILE JOURNEY FOLLOWING THE MONARCH MIGRATION SARA DYKMAN</p>	<p>LIFE, LIBERTY AND DEATH on the Appalachian Frontier ROBERT B. SWIFT</p>	<p>A WALK IN THE PARK THE TRUE STORY OF A SPECTACULAR MISADVENTURE IN THE GRAND CANYON KEVIN FEDARKO AUTHOR OF THE ENERALD HILL</p>
Aug. 27, 2025	Oct. 29, 2025	Dec. 17, 2025



# 2024 Photo Contest Winners

## Best In Show

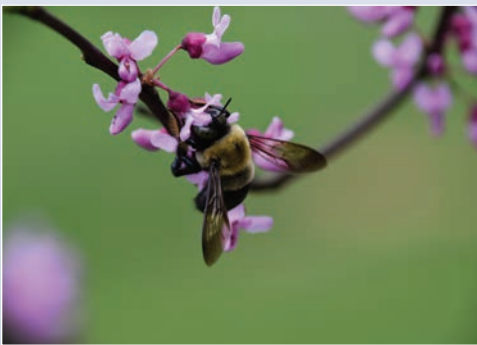


*Best in Show - Judges' Choice: Hilary Schnabel, Sproul State Forest (entered in the Beyond the Edge category)*



*Best in Show - People's Choice: Jessica Mitchell, Kings Gap Environmental Education Center (entered in the Awe category)*

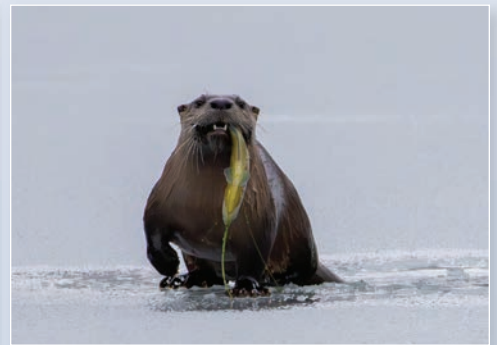
## Awe



*Awe - Judges' Choice: Carey Fritz, Clear Creek State Park*



*Awe - People's Choice: Wendy Hempe, Forbes State Forest*



*Awe - Runner Up: Sabine Panzner, Kooser State Park*

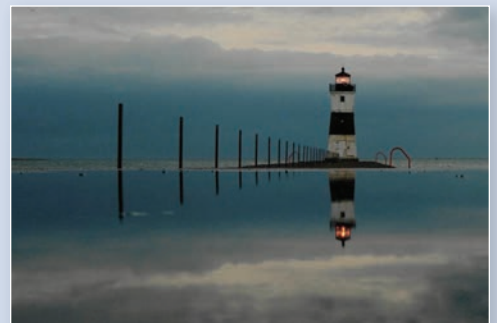
## Beyond the Edge



*Beyond the Edge - Judges' Choice: Holly April Harris, Ohiopyle State Park*



*Beyond the Edge - People's Choice: Todd Underwood, French Creek State Park*



*Beyond the Edge - Runner Up: Rick Baker, Presque Isle State Park*



## 'Leap In' to the Lesser Known



*'Leap In' to the Lesser Known - Judges' Choice: Colin Gillette, Mount Pisgah State Park*



*'Leap In' to the Lesser Known - People's Choice: Liz Mickley, Fowler Hollow State Park*



*'Leap In' to the Lesser Known - Runner Up: Jason Philibotte, Pinchot State Forest*

## 'Leap In' to New Experiences



*'Leap In' to New Experiences - Judges' Choice: Gloria Benfer, Shikellamy State Park*



*'Leap In' to New Experiences - People's Choice: Ally Latham, Ricketts Glen State Park*



*'Leap In' to New Experiences - Runner Up: David Nolte, Hyner View State Park*

## 'Leap In' to Volunteering



*'Leap In' to Volunteering - Judges' Choice: Maureen Dwyer, Presque Isle State Park*



*'Leap In' to Volunteering - People's Choice: Sam Rob, Pine Grove State Park*



*'Leap In' to Volunteering - Runner Up: Linda Stager, Tioga State Forest*



## Young Photographers



Young Photographers - Judges' Choice:  
Brodie Bard, McConnells Mill State Park



Young Photographers - People's Choice:  
Lilly Zhang,  
Marsh Creek State Park



Young Photographers - Runner Up:  
Mikayla Bond, Little Buffalo State Park

Experience the Journey

# TRAILS

# 2025 Photo Contest

© Jack Neborak

The contest is open to amateur and professional photographers alike. All photos must be taken in a Pennsylvania state park or forest. For full contest details, visit [ppff.online/PhotoContest](http://ppff.online/PhotoContest) or scan the QR code.



© Beth van Horn

### 2025 Categories:

- Beyond the Trail
- Comradery on the Trail
- Peaceful Easy Feeling
- Tales/Tails from the Trail
- Texture of the Trail
- Young Photographers (12-17)



**Deadline:  
Sept. 30!**



© Phyllis Terchank



## Memorial or Honorary Gifts

You can honor the memory of a special person or joyous occasion while supporting PPF's work in conservation, recreation, education, and volunteerism in our state parks and forests.

Download a form at [www.PAParksAndForests.org/support/ways-to-give](http://www.PAParksAndForests.org/support/ways-to-give)



# Skill Builder: Cross-Country Skiing in Pennsylvania State Parks and Forests

*Adapted from a fact sheet originally written by Kathy Korber*

Cross-country skiing is a great way to experience the outdoors in winter. Pennsylvania's state parks and forests offer some of the best places to ski. Particularly tranquil and scenic during the winter months, these year-round facilities provide seemingly endless miles of snow-covered trails. Many trail networks are specifically designated and maintained for cross-country skiing.

## Fitness and the Outdoors

This heat-generating activity defies winter's grip by keeping you warm outdoors even on the coldest winter days. Hailed by fitness experts as the ultimate cardio exercise and full-body workout, cross-country skiing burns more calories than almost any other sport. Skiers can use an estimated 400 to 1,100 calories per hour depending on terrain, pace, fitness level and body size. This type of skiing is a low impact, easy to learn activity that is family-friendly and ideal for all age groups. Beyond its health benefits, spending a day gliding through the winter woods or across a snowy meadow on a pair of skis is simply enjoyable.



## Getting Started

Cross-country skiing requires minimal equipment--skis, poles and boots are all you really need to get started. Beginners can rent or buy gear and many clubs and organizations arrange group outings or offer instruction on the basic skills. An experienced friend or online tutorial can also guide you through the basics which should cover learning stride technique, using poles,



getting up hills, navigating turns, slowing down, and stopping. When choosing trails, make sure trail conditions match your skill level. You can check with a park or forest office for trail recommendations.

## Beginner Tips

- Choose trails that match your fitness and skill level.
- Stay on marked trails; cross-country trailheads are posted with the international symbol of a white skier on a brown background and blazed with blue, rectangular markers.
- Ski with a partner and let someone know where you plan to go and when you will return.
- Dress in layers with moisture-wicking fabrics inside and waterproof shell outside.
- Carry plenty of drinking water with you.
- Pack along a first aid kit that includes cold-weather survival items.

## Organizations and Clubs

Skiing with a club is one way to hone your skills, meet other interested people, and explore new areas.

- Allegheny Outdoor Club, [www.alleghenyoutdoorclub.org](http://www.alleghenyoutdoorclub.org), Johnstown
- Greater Johnstown Athletic Ski Club, <https://www.johnstownskiclub.com/about-us/>, Johnstown
- Kick n Gliders, [www.kickngliders.org](http://www.kickngliders.org), Mechanicsburg
- New Hope Nordics, <http://prnt4u.com/nhn1.htm>, Philadelphia
- Pennsylvania Cross Country Skier's Association, [www.paccca.org](http://www.paccca.org), western Pennsylvania
- American XC Skiers, [www.xcskiworld.com](http://www.xcskiworld.com)
- Cross Country Ski PA, [www.crosscountryskipa.com](http://www.crosscountryskipa.com)
- Cross Country Ski Areas Association, [www.xcski.org](http://www.xcski.org)

## State Park Highlights

While winters have been finicky the past few years, parks in the northern tier and Laurel Highlands both typically receive plenty of snowfall each year for winter activities. Most parks have trails open for cross-country skiing, but several parks offer groomed trails and a few also have warming huts.

## State Forest Highlights

Within 15 state forests there are roughly 560 miles of cross-country ski trails. In addition, most of the 3,671 miles of trails are open and appropriate for skiing. Check with district offices for trail recommendations and maintenance information.

To explore more, visit: <https://www.pa.gov/agencies/dcnr/recreation/what-to-do/cross-country-skiing.html>

# I Love My State Parks (and Forests) Week!

Are you ready?

Join the national movement to celebrate state parks by participating in I Love My State Parks Week! ILMSPW begins annually on Mothers' Day and extends until the following Sunday. In 2025, that's May 11 to 18, 2025.

Organized by the National Association of State Park Foundations, the week celebrates the nation's 8,500 state parks (who receive more than 809 million visitors), covering 18.6 million acres with 52,600 miles of trails, and the army of volunteers and Friends groups that help care for them.

In Pennsylvania, 124 state parks and 2.2 million acres of state forest provide a myriad of recreational opportunities and receive more than 42 million visitors a year. We like to add our affection for state forests and celebrate I Love My State Parks (and Forests) Week kicking off with Dr. Joseph Trimble Rothrock Week, which begins April 19th. Who doesn't love a month-long celebration!

Rothrock's legacy as the "Father of Pennsylvania Forestry" is visible to anyone who has ever visited the more than 2 million acres of sustainably managed PA State Forests. That is why the Pennsylvania General Assembly proclaimed the last week of April as "J.T. Rothrock Memorial Conservation Week". Since that day in 1961, all Pennsylvania citizens are "encouraged to consider through suitable activities the broader subject of the conservation of all of the natural resources from which the wealth of the Commonwealth is derived."

How can you get involved:

- Think broadly about the connections you have to parks and forests and communicate their importance to your elected officials. Watch the PPFF website for ideas and initiatives.
- Use the hashtags #ILoveMyStateParks #ILoveMyStateParksWeek #ProtectOurParksAndForests #JTRothrockWeek to engage with the celebration and to follow along with the event.
- Visit a nearby state park or forest or try a new one. Bring a friend along to introduce them to the outdoors and create more voices for their protection.
- Promote the annual PPFF photo contest to capture pictures of the state parks and forests near you!
- Attend the PPFF annual banquet to join the celebration!
- Take part in the Happy Little 5K to raise funds for tree plantings.

Join a friend's group volunteer day or reach out to PPFF if your company is interested in doing a volunteer day in a state park or forest!



## Our Mission

*Mission is to inspire stewardship of Pennsylvania state parks and forests.*

## Our Vision

*To be the trusted voice and advocate to sustain and enhance Pennsylvania's state parks and forests.*



## Partnerships

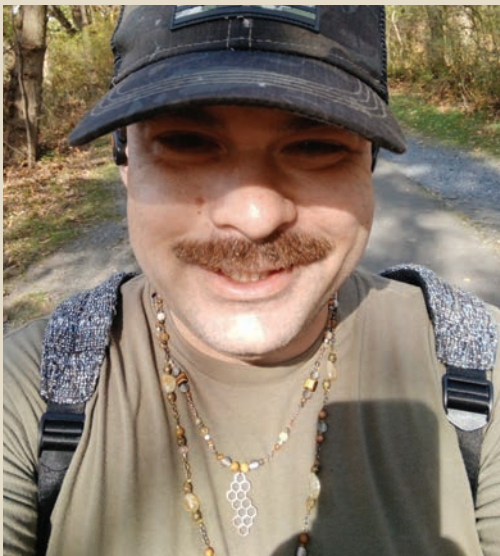
### Trail Maker West Coast IPA

Congratulations to our Friends at New Trail Brewing on their latest year-round beer release! Trail Marker West Coast IPA is made from Centennial, Amarillo, and Simcoe hops for a familiar IPA that is distinctly New Trail! And in the trail world, who doesn't love a well-marked trail!



### Tree Planting

Thank you to staff from People First Credit Union for joining PPF and staff from Tobyhanna State Park for a tree planting. Trees are purchased from donations made by the credit union when members switch from paper to online statements.



## PPFF Welcomes Joey McCauslin as the new Office and Online Retail Facilitator

We're excited to introduce Joey, our new Office and Online Retail Facilitator who's bringing tech-savvy skills and community spirit to the Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation. After 16 years with the Harrisburg School District as an Assistant Technology Manager, Joey is ready to help us steward Pennsylvania's incredible state parks and forests forests.

When he's not managing our office communications and online retail operations, Joey works at Feed My Starving Children - proving he's all about making a difference. His philosophy is, "Working for the betterment of the future should be the legacy that all of us should strive to leave behind."

# Trails and Me Survey

PPFF's theme for 2025 is TRAILS - planning them, financing them, building them, maintaining them, and ENJOYING them. Trails play an important role in our lives, yet many are in need of repair and maintenance.

We will be asking you to lend your voice to efforts to support them in budget discussions to come.

For now, though, we would love for you to share with us your favorite trails in the following categories. (And then watch for a poll to pick the cream of the crop!)

Share your opinion (and your contact information) and we'll send you a sticker and enter you into a drawing to receive the gotta have one Pennsylvania State Parks and State Forests Passport.

Would you like to be kept informed of legislation that impacts trails? If so, leave us your email address below.



**Scan the QR code above to take the survey online or complete the form and mail it to:**

PA Parks & Forests Foundation  
704 Lisburn Road, Suite 102  
Camp Hill, PA 17011

## What is your favorite trail...

To hike with children? \_\_\_\_\_

To a fishing hole? \_\_\_\_\_

For cross-country skiing? \_\_\_\_\_

For quiet contemplation? \_\_\_\_\_

To mountain bike? \_\_\_\_\_

For horseback riding? \_\_\_\_\_

For gravel riding? \_\_\_\_\_

That's a rail-trail? \_\_\_\_\_

To a waterfall? \_\_\_\_\_

To a scenic overlook? \_\_\_\_\_

For backpacking? \_\_\_\_\_

For a challenging climb? \_\_\_\_\_

For a flat ramble? \_\_\_\_\_

That's paved? \_\_\_\_\_

To a picnic spot? \_\_\_\_\_

For birdwatching? \_\_\_\_\_

For seeing wildlife? \_\_\_\_\_

To use adaptive equipment? \_\_\_\_\_

With plenty of seating to take breaks when you need them? \_\_\_\_\_

How many days a year do you estimate you spend on a trail in a state park or forest? \_\_\_\_\_

What is your favorite month(s) for hiking? \_\_\_\_\_

What do trails mean to you? \_\_\_\_\_


What would you like to see for the future of Pennsylvania's state park and forest trails? \_\_\_\_\_

What trail do you feel has the most maintenance needs? \_\_\_\_\_


If you want to be entered in the drawing for a Passport or learn more about legislation or other policy impacts, please leave us your email. And if you would like your sticker just for answering, we'll need a name and snail mail address.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_







Join the discussion!



# Cradle of Conservation

with Author **Allen Dieterich-Ward**  
**Every 3rd Wednesday**  
**12-12:20pm from Feb. to Nov. 2025!**

Each month will have a different focus. Visit our YouTube channel, LinkedIn and Facebook to join, scan the QR code, or visit <https://paparksandforests.org/event/monthly-history-chat-with-allen-dieterich-ward/>

## Bring Your Voice

In a recent survey for the State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, the importance of outdoor recreation to Pennsylvanians and to the Commonwealth's economy was underscored. Respondents to the survey indicated:

- Nearly one-third of Pennsylvanians participate in outdoor recreation activities at least twice a week. Walking and running were the most common activities, followed by scenic driving, picnicking/barbecuing, and hiking/backpacking.
- Eighty-five percent of residents visited some type of outdoor recreation area in the past year.
- **Mental Health Benefits: 82 percent of Pennsylvanians agree that outdoor recreation supports mental health, with 74 percent advocating its use in mental health care.**
- Recreation-related spending often benefits local establishments and chain stores in the area of activity.
- Trail users reported higher spending on activities like lodging, food, travel, and guided experiences compared to other outdoor recreation forms.
- PA is a trail state. While we cannot change our topography to compete with the high mountain peaks of the Whites, the Catskills, or the Smoky Mountains, we can build on our world class trail networks.
- **Both recreation providers and recreation enthusiasts list "hiking/walking/running trails" and "Community or Regional Trail Systems" as top investment priorities when asked to prioritize investment in recreation infrastructure.**



Photo Credit: Matthew Peterson

# Run for the Trees

**BACK FOR 2025**



## Bob Ross Happy Little 5k!

**Anytime from April 19 to 27**  
 Run, Walk, or Roll - you pick the place and the pace!

[ppff.events/RunForTheTrees](https://ppff.events/RunForTheTrees)



Proceeds go towards planting trees in PA state parks and forests!

# Cabins, and Campsites and Yurts, Oh My!

Pennsylvania's state parks and forests offer a variety of overnight opportunities to meet the needs of almost any visitor. Below is a brief overview of opportunities.

## State Forest Camping

For the adventure seeker or person looking to get away, state forests offer primitive and motorized camping without any modern facilities, water, dump stations, or utility hook-ups.

**State Forest Motorized Camping**, or roadside camping, is overnight camping in or near a vehicle where the vehicle is used for storage and transportation. These campsites may be a wide spot near a road, have a short driveway to the campsite, or even require a short hike to the actual site. There are no modern amenities, and the sites receive minimal maintenance. Additionally, there are state forest rustic camping areas where the sites are situated in a campground setting. These often have a vault toilet or pit latrine and receive more routine maintenance but are still more remote and less developed than a state park.

**State Forest Primitive**, or trilside camping, is overnight camping where all equipment is transported manually (by non-motorized methods, including watercraft, bicycle, horse), and where a motorized vehicle is not located near or part of the camping experience. Backpacking is the most popular form and is often done along one of the 18 State Forest Hiking Trails.



**Leave No Trace Principles** must be followed and be sure to observe any permit conditions and other regulations. Motorized camping must always be done at designated sites and a permit is required. Primitive camping typically does not require a permit if staying no more than one night in a single location, however obtaining a permit is suggested for safety reasons. Roadside camping and primitive, trilside camping can sometimes be confused. If you are camping close enough to your vehicle to access it to store gear and supplies, you are not primitive camping but are motorized camping.

## State Park Trail Camping/Trail Shelters

Currently, there are five state parks that allow backpacking and overnight hikes.

These parks provide backpacking trails with overnight trilside shelters or sites. You must pre-register to hike and camp overnight at these state parks.

*Continued on the next page...*





## River Camping

For boating enthusiasts, state parks offer river camping along the Clarion River at Cook Forest State Park.

## State Park Inns and Mansion Stays

The Nature Inn at Bald Eagle State Forests and the Cameron-Masland Mansion at Kings Gap Environmental Education Center offer modern amenities in unique settings.



## Modern Cabin

Modern cabins are beautiful log cabins with the modern conveniences of home. While visitors must provide their own linen and cooking equipment, these cabins are electric, heated, and have the full convenience of a modern kitchen and restroom.

## Rustic Cabins

Rustic cabins are quaint stone or log historic cabins built by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s. Rustic cabins have sparse furnishings and a central bathhouse.



## Unique Houses

Certain state parks have one-of-a-kind houses where you can stay. Unique houses have modern conveniences in historic or unique structures.

## RV and Tent Campsites

A variety of RV and tent campsites exist in the state park system, including:

- **Full-hookup**—nearby restrooms have flush toilets and warm showers, the campsite has sewer, water, electric hookup, picnic table, and fire ring
- **Modern**—nearby restrooms have flush toilets and warm showers, the campsite has a picnic table and fire ring
- **Rustic**—nearby restrooms have non-flush toilets, the campsite has a picnic table and fire ring
- **Modern/Rustic**—nearby restrooms have modern facilities in the warmer months, then have non-flush facilities in the colder months, the campsite has a picnic table and fire ring
- **Multi-site**—allows up to 14 people, available at Keystone and Ohio State parks
- **Walk-to**—are reached by a short walk, the campsite has a picnic table and fire ring
- **Equestrian**—space for horses, available only at Kettle Creek and Promised Land state parks

## Deluxe Cottages and Yurts

Yurts are walled, round tents often situated with deluxe cottages, which have wooden walls and floors, and windows with a few modern conveniences. These are often located in the campground and utilize the bathhouse.

## Camping Cottages

These sleep five people in a single bunk and a single/double bunk. They may or may not be located within a state park campground.

## Group Camping

Forty state parks offer group camping opportunities at designated campsites. Amenities for the campsites vary depending on the state park.

## Cabin Camps

Perfect for large, organized groups, the group cabin camps offer roofed overnight lodging at five state parks: Blue Knob, French Creek, Hickory Run, Laurel Hill, and Raccoon Creek. Amenities vary by park. Applications to use one of these camps are available by contacting the park office.



## Friends in Action

### Friends of White Clay Creek

October 2024 saw the commemoration of the park's 40th anniversary. As part of the celebration, the Friends were happy to share their efforts to restore the masonry on the early 19th century Sexton's House.

Immediate Past Chair Scotty Crowder points out that this first phase focused on the masonry only with work on the wood trim to be a part of the eventual upcoming roof replacement.



Photo Credit: Scotty Crowder, Friends of White Clay Creek

### Friends of Mount Pisgah

The Friends hosted their annual Patriots in the Park veterans program in September with free food, entertainment, and information for local veterans and their families. We love the "service branch quilts" that were part of the day's silent auction.



Photo Credit: Friends of Mount Pisgah



Photo Credit: Rusty Glessner

### Friends of Greenwood Furnace

We certainly hope the Friends will sponsor another summer concert series at Whipple Dam! Here, Erin Condo and the Hoofties who performed last summer are shown in a photo from the classic "Smoke on the Water" concert several years ago.

### Friends of Cowans Gap

Ohiopyle is not the only state park campground with a new golf cart for campground hosts (see page 18). Thanks to the Friends of Cowans Gap, the busy campground hosts there have an easier way up and down the hills.



Photo Credit: DCNR

### Friends of Tuscarora & Locust Lake

No Friends in Action would be complete – especially one during the year in which we focus on trails – without hard-working friends replacing a bridge! This time it's a bridge on the Oak Trail at Locust Lake that got annihilated by a fallen tree replaced by the Friends AND supplemented by a teaching table with the leftover wood. Special thanks to the youngsters (ranging in age from 6 to 17) who took part. As one social media commenter noted, "The smiles ... are priceless. I will think of them when I cross the new bridge."

### Friends of Black Moshannon

The best part of having a "good ol' Pennsylvania winter" for a change is that events like the annual Fun in the Snow at Black Mo were able to be a true celebration of the season. The Friends report that "the snow was powdery so not the best for the snowman making [but] ice bowling had over 300 participants!"



Photo Credit: Friends of Black Moshannon



Photo Credit: Friends of Tuscarora & Locust Lake



## List of Friends

Cherry Springs Dark Sky Association  
 Friends of Beltzville  
 Friends of Big Pocono  
 Friends of Black Moshannon  
 Friends of Buchanan  
 Friends of Caledonia  
 Friends of Canoe Creek  
 Friends of Chapman  
 Friends of Colonel Denning  
 Friends of Cook Forest  
 Friends of Cowans Gap  
 Friends of Davis Hollow Cabin  
 Friends of Goddard  
 Friends of Greenwood Furnace  
 Friends of Kings Gap  
 Friends of Laurel Hill  
 Friends of Little Buffalo  
 Friends of Lyman Run  
 Friends of Michaux  
 Friends of Milton  
 Friends of Mont Alto  
 Friends of Mount Pisgah  
 Friends of Nockamixon  
 Friends of Nolde Forest  
 Friends of Oil Creek  
 Friends of Ole Bull  
 Friends of Parker Dam  
 Friends of Pinchot  
 Friends of Pine Grove Furnace  
 Friends of Prince Gallitzin  
 Friends of Promised Land  
 Friends of RB Winter  
 Friends of Ridley Creek  
 Friends of Ryerson Station  
 Friends of Shawnee & Blue Knob  
 Friends of State Line Serpentine Barrens  
 Friends of Trough Creek & Warriors Path  
 Friends of Tuscarora & Locust Lake  
 Friends of Tyler  
 Friends of Varden Conservation Area  
 Friends of Weiser - Haldeman/Greenland  
 Friends of Weiser - Roaring Creek  
 Friends of White Clay Creek  
 Friends of Worlds End  
 Friends of Yellow Creek  
 Lackawanna State Park Trail Care Crew

## We Will Miss

### Alex Day

**Died October 29, 2024**

Alex was a Forester for over 40 years beginning in 1971, retiring as nursery operations manager at the Bureau of Forestry's Penn Nursery (now the Mira Lloyd Dock Resource Center) in Potters Mills. He was the recipient of the PA Forestry Association's Rothrock Conservation Award in 2006 and was very active in efforts to restore the beloved American chestnut.



### Ralph Heilig

**February 24, 1933 — November 18, 2024**

Ralph served 41 years with the Bureau of Forestry before retiring as District Forester in the Rothrock State Forest in 1999. A dedicated and selfless volunteer for forestry organizations, fire companies, and his church. Over the years, Ralph was instrumental in bringing his forestry classmates together for frequent reunions at Mont Alto.

### Jim Hooper

**Died January 27, 2025**

An electrical engineer by trade, Jim was a trail guy by avocation. Devoted to the preservation of native lands, building trails, and working on his farm, he was instrumental in the development and maintenance of the Mason Dixon Trail. Over the years, he served as chair of the Adirondack Mountain Club Search & Rescue Team, president of the York Hiking Club, director for the Appalachian Trail Conference and Keystone Trails Association, and, of course, president of the Mason Dixon Trail Association. Fittingly, attendees at his February Celebration of Life were encouraged to attend in hiking attire.



Photo Credit: John Beatty



### Nick Roschinsky

**April 16, 1943 — December 9, 2024**

Walker, known as "Nick" to his friends (including the Friends of Caledonia) served as a board member for the Friends almost since the group's inception in 2015. He volunteered tirelessly for the Friends and could often be found stacking loads and loads of firewood for park campers.

# You Made it Happen

## Not Just for Golfing

Volunteer Campground Hosts are essential to the state park camping experience. Your support of the retail space at Ohiopyle State Park made the host work just a little bit easier with the acquisition of a golf cart. Next time you are camping at Ohiopyle, say hello to the host!



Photo Credit: DCNR

## Education for All

When then-student (now a DCNR employee!) Allyson approached PPFf about assisting her with a grant application as part of her class assignment, we were more than happy to assist. Always willing to help the next generation of leaders, we worked with Allyson who prepared a grant for National Fuel to modernize the amphitheater for Sinnemahoning State Park. Not only did Allyson receive the grant, the park region matched the funding to not only modernize the amphitheater but to relocate it to a more accessible location. PPFf provided additional funding to purchase trees and shrubs to screen the amphitheater using funds from your participation in the Run for the Trees, Happy Little 5K.



Photo Credit: DCNR

## Got Trail Questions?

Peter has the answer. Friends trail volunteers from across the state joined a virtual question and answer session about trails hosted by PPFf. The Q and A featured Peter Jensen of Peter S. Jensen and Associates who fielded such questions as “How do you increase traction on boardwalks that have become slippery?” to “How do you protect tree roots that have become exposed while reducing tripping hazards for hikers?” PPFf will be bringing Peter back for a second virtual session and plans are in the works for hands-on trail training for friends volunteers.

## Play for All

According to UNICEF and the American Academy of Pediatrics, play is a fundamental aspect of childhood that supports cognitive, emotional, social, and physical development. Through play, children learn to explore the world, experiment with problem-solving, and engage in creative thinking. When children engage in unstructured play, they build critical thinking skills, improve their memory, and enhance their language development.

Moreover, play is essential for social and emotional growth. Studies consistently highlight how play contributes to a well-rounded, healthier childhood, enabling children to thrive both academically and personally.

“Play is not only essential for cognitive and emotional growth, but also for fostering social connections,” Marci Mowery, President of PPFf, stated, highlighting the importance of play in childhood development.

Yet not all children have equal access to play. Using a wheelchair in a playground presents several challenges that can limit a child’s ability to fully engage in play. To create more inclusive playgrounds, it’s essential to prioritize accessible equipment, adaptive play features, and barrier-free environments.

In October, the staff of Little Buffalo State Park, the Friends of Little Buffalo State Park (a chapter of PPFf) and PPFf unveiled a playground two years in the making. Significant funding came from the Partnership for Better Health, Globus Medical Equipment, Hershey Memorial VFW Post 3502, VFW Post 34 of Newport, Blain Barshinger Post 882, and other generous donors. The playground features a poured rubber surface, inclusive elements, and benches. We are currently exploring how to make it more inclusive with an interactive fence.



Photo Credit: Pam Metzger



# You Made it Happen

## Restoring History

With funding from a Franklin County IMPACT grant, the Civilian Conservation Era Chimney at Mont Alto State Park was returned to its original beauty and function. Mont Alto is the oldest park in the Pennsylvania state park system, having been established in 1902. The restoration of the chimney in the pavilion allows family and friend gatherings and community events to continue to use the space for years to come.

“Pennsylvania’s parks and forests are places to connect or reconnect with family and friends, creating memories that last for a lifetime. We are grateful to the Franklin County Commissioners for their support of the project.” said Marci Mowery, President of PPF.



Photo Credit: Practical Preservation Services

Franklin County Commissioner Chairman Dean Horst commented on the project's significance, stating, "Franklin County is pleased to support the work the foundation is doing to enhance and preserve Mont Alto State Park for generations to come."

## Restoring History of a Natural Variety

Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation joined the York Rotary Club, and Go Native Tree Farm to add new trees to the Stine Arboretum at Samuel S. Lewis State Park. The arboretum, a woodland owned by George E. Stine, a local nurseryman, was part of the farm property then purchased by Secretary of Forests & Waters Sam Lewis who donated the land for the park that bears his name. Winds and other bad weather had seriously damaged the trees and we are delighted to be able to bring native species back to the hilltop.



Photo Credit: DCNR

## Spanish Language Recreation Guide

At a press event at Marsh Creek State Park, DCNR unveiled a new Spanish-Language Recreation Guide for the Commonwealth’s 124 state parks and 2.2 million acres of state forestlands during Hispanic Heritage Month as a part of the agency’s initiative to create a more inclusive environment in outdoors spaces, Mosaic. An English-language version of the Recreation Guide preceded the Spanish guide.

PPFF President Marci Mowery was honored to join Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) Director of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging Arlene Marshall-Hockensmith and Pennsylvania Director of Outdoor Recreation Nathan Reigner at Marsh Creek State Park to highlight the agency’s commitment to expanding outdoor recreation access to all communities.



## Wheelin’ Around

PPFF board member Matt Hess and friends have been putting a variety of enhanced motorized chairs to the test as we begin to explore a motorized chair program in Pennsylvania to make access to trails possible for those who use assistive mobility devices. The first chair will be placed this spring at Lackawanna State Park. Watch our website for more details. To support the acquisition of chairs, you can donate through this link [ppff.gives/trackchair](https://ppff.gives/trackchair) or by scanning the QR code to the right.



Photo Credit: Matt Hess



## Welcome Friends

Welcome to the newest member of the PPF family - the Friends of Promised Land State Park. Generations of Pennsylvanians have taken their vacations at Promised Land and we are delighted to add a PPF chapter to the many volunteer groups who give back to this northeastern PA gem. Improved accessible recreation is high on their “to do” list - sounds like they want to make sure that generations of Pennsylvanians can continue to enjoy the park all their lives’ long!



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Thank you for taking the  
leap with us in '24

Challenge issued and answered! Thanks to your support, volunteer efforts and important programs leaped to new heights - and thousands of Pennsylvanians found new experiences in their state parks and forests. And there's much more to come!

Photo by Shawn Grenninger.



## Become a Member Today!

If your current membership has expired, visit our website today to renew or use our form below. New members, complete the form and become a supporter of your parks and forests!

- \$25 Single Membership
- \$35 Family Membership
- I'd like to donate extra money to support the work of PPF! \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email: \_\_\_\_\_

To become a member, fill out the information below and mail this form with your check (made payable to PPF) in an envelope to:

**PA Parks & Forests Foundation**  
 704 Lisburn Road, Suite 102  
 Camp Hill, PA 17011

