

Ryerson Station State Park



For More Information Contact:

Ryerson Station State Park
 361 Bristoria Road
 Wind Ridge, PA 15380
 724-428-4254
 email: ryersonstationsp@pa.gov
 GPS: Lat. 39.88614 Long. -80.44549
 An Equal Opportunity Employer

www.visitPAParks.com

Information and Reservations

Make online reservations at:
www.visitPAParks.com or call toll-free
 888-PA-PARKS (888-727-2757), 7 a.m. to 5 p.m.,
 Monday to Saturday, for state park information
 and reservations.

Cover photo by Charlene Reinhart

Ryerson Station State Park

Ryerson Station State Park is in Greene County in the southwestern corner of Pennsylvania, near the West Virginia border. The 1,164-acre park features the 62-acre Ronald J. Duke Lake that is named in memory of a former manager of Ryerson Station State Park. The lake is currently drawn down for dam safety issues.

Directions

The park is on both sides of Bristoria Road, just off of PA 21, three miles from Wind Ridge, PA. These highways are accessible from either Washington or Waynesburg, PA.

Reservations

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Recreational Opportunities

The 62-acre Ronald J. Duke Lake is currently drawn down for dam safety issues. Any recreational activities associated with the lake are currently unavailable. Efforts are ongoing to rebuild the dam.

CAMPING: rustic sites, some with electricity

A 46-site campground for tents or trailers lies on a ridge overlooking the park. Camping facilities are open year-round. Camping permits must be secured at the park office. Some campsites permit pets for an additional fee. Twenty-two sites have electric hookups requiring an additional fee. Vault toilets and a sanitary dump station are provided. A playfield for kickball and other field sports is in the campground.



CAMPING COTTAGES: Located in the campground, the two cottages sleep five people in bunk beds, and have wooden floors, windows, electric heat, porch, picnic table, fire ring and electric lights and outlets. Parking for up to two vehicles is available at each cottage.

ORGANIZED GROUP TENTING: A rustic camping area is available for organized adult or youth groups from the second Friday in April to the end of September. The area can accommodate up to 100 people and provides vault toilets, drinking water, fire rings, picnic tables and a pavilion. Reservations are required.

FISHING: North Fork of Dunkard Fork flows through the lakebed and offers fishing for trout and panfish. In the spring, the PA Fish and Boat Commission stocks the creek downstream from the breastwork of the old dam and upstream of the lakebed, near the Iron Bridge.



SWIMMING: Weather permitting, a free pool is open 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. from Memorial Day weekend until Labor Day, unless posted otherwise. The pool complex is ADA accessible, including a lift for the pool.

PICNICKING: Picnic tables are available throughout the park, along with charcoal grills, drinking water and restrooms. Some of these facilities are ADA accessible. A small, children's play area is in the main picnic area. The park has five picnic pavilions. Three pavilions may be reserved up to 11 months in advance for a fee. Unreserved picnic pavilions are free on a first-come, first-served basis.

HUNTING AND FIREARMS: Over 900 acres are open to hunting, trapping and the training of dogs during established seasons. Common game species are deer, squirrel and turkey. Early and late goose hunting may occur.

Hunting woodchucks, also known as groundhogs, is prohibited. Dog training is only permitted from the day following Labor Day through March 31 in designated hunting areas. The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and the Pennsylvania Game Commission rules and regulations apply. Contact the park office for ADA accessible hunting information.

Use extreme caution with firearms at all times. Other visitors use the park during hunting seasons. Firearms and archery equipment used for hunting may be uncased and ready for use only in authorized hunting areas during hunting seasons. In areas not open to hunting or during non-hunting seasons, firearms and archery equipment shall be kept in the owner's car, trailer or leased campsite. The only exception is that law enforcement officers and individuals with a valid *Pennsylvania License to Carry Firearms* may carry said firearm concealed on their person while they are in the park.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION: A variety of programs are offered during the summer season. The park environmental educator offers evening programs in the amphitheater on summer weekends, and guided hikes several times a week. Interpretive programs are also conducted at the environmental learning classroom in the park office.

HIKING: 13 miles of trails

The trails allow visitors to explore the park on foot and on cross-country skis in winter. The trails traverse many habitats, like mature forests, wet valley bottoms, evergreen plantations and fields in ecological succession. Most trails are wide, easily followed and therefore not color-blazed. Where deemed necessary, blazes are yellow.

Contact the park office for detailed trail descriptions.

Tell us about your hike at: www.explorepatrails.com

Winter Activities

ICE SKATING: An ice skating area is in the Maple Grove Day Use Area. Contact the park office for ice skating opportunities.

SLEDDING AND TOBOGGANING: Several small hills throughout the park are suitable for sledding.

SNOWMOBILING: Six miles of snowmobile trails are available for use by registered snowmobiles from the day following the last deer season in December until April 1, weather permitting.

CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING: Cross-country skiing is permitted on the un-groomed hiking trails and open areas throughout the park.

History

Kingdoms, nations and states have fought for the lands in and around Ryerson Station State Park.

The earliest known landholders were the Monongahela People. These American Indians disappeared right after European Colonists arrived in North America, leaving a huge territory that many fought to fill.

France and Great Britain fought for the Ohio River Valley in the French and Indian War, from 1689 to 1763. Unsatisfied with the peace treaty made with the victorious British, American Indian tribes fought Pontiac's Rebellion, which lasted three years.

To settle a land dispute between Pennsylvania and Maryland, Mason and Dixon surveyed the border between the states. In 1767, the surveyors were halted in Southwestern Pennsylvania by the Mingo Tribe who rightly feared that the white men were trying to steal their land.

Because European Settlers were invading Indian lands, angering the Indians, the British bought what became Southwestern Pennsylvania from the Iroquois League of Nations in 1768. The Iroquois claimed the lands, but never lived there. The Mingo, Shawnee and Lenni Lenape tribes that inhabited the land were not at the parley and did not give up their claims. The American Indians fought for their lands, killing settlers.

The colonies of Virginia and Pennsylvania claimed the land. In 1774, Virginia built a fort at the confluence of the North and South forks of Dunkard Fork of Wheeling Creek. A shelter from Indian raids, Ryerson's Fort was used until at least 1784, maybe even 1793. It is unknown when Ryerson's Fort came to be called Ryerson's Station. The fort was one of many stations used by rangers who patrolled for raiding Indians.

The U.S. courts settled the land dispute between the states in 1784, making the land part of Pennsylvania.

The fighting between the settlers and Indians continued. In 1787, seven members of the Davis Family were killed at their home, which was near the current park office.

The American Indians moved west, but the fighting in Southwestern Pennsylvania did not end. In 1794, U.S. citizens took up arms against the government and its new tax in the Whiskey Rebellion. President George Washington brought the army to quell the insurrection, finally bringing peace.

The Park

As part of its plan to have a state park within 25 miles of every resident of Pennsylvania, the former Department of Forests and Waters began acquiring land for a park in 1958.

The dam was completed in 1960. In 1967, the campground was completed and Ryerson Station State Park opened to the public. The park was named for nearby Ryerson's Fort. Duke Lake was named for Ronald J. Duke, a former park manager.



Charlene Reinhart

Nearby Attractions

Information on nearby attractions is available from Greene County Tourist Promotion Agency.
www.gogreencounty.org

Protect and Preserve Our Parks

Please make your visit safe and enjoyable. Obey all posted rules and regulations and respect fellow visitors and the resources of the park.

- Be prepared and bring the proper equipment. Natural areas may possess hazards. Your personal safety and that of your family are your responsibility.
- Alcoholic beverages are prohibited.
- Please camp only in designated areas and try to minimize your impact on the campsite.

Access for People with Disabilities

This symbol indicates facilities and activities that are Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible for people with disabilities. This publication text is available in alternative formats.

If you need an accommodation to participate in park activities due to a disability, please contact the park you plan to visit.

In an Emergency

Contact a park employee or dial 911. For directions to the nearest hospital, look on bulletin boards or at the park office.

NEAREST HOSPITAL

Southwest Regional Medical Center
 350 Bonar Avenue
 Waynesburg, PA 15370
 724-627-3101