



Oil Creek State Park

The Oil Creek Valley is the site of the world's first commercial oil well. Oil Creek State Park tells the story of the early petroleum industry by interpreting oil boomtowns, oil wells and early transportation. Scenic Oil Creek carves a valley of deep hollows, steep hillsides and wetlands.

Directions

Between Drake Well Museum and Titusville to the north, and Oil City four miles to the south, the main entrance to the park is off PA 8, one mile north of the Borough of Rouseville.

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.

Recreational Opportunities



BICYCLING: A 9.7-mile paved bicycle trail through scenic Oil Creek Gorge is a major park attraction. Trailheads are at Petroleum Centre in the south and Drake Well Museum in the north. Trail users may rent bicycles at the park office.

Picnic tables, benches, rain shelters and restrooms are at key points along the trail. Historical markers detail special events of the 1860s oil boom era.

The trail is open to two-way bicycle traffic. Stay to the right while riding. When passing another cyclist, first ensure that there are no oncoming riders, then call out to the cyclist that you are passing. Bicycles should be parked off of the trail to avoid obstructing traffic.

Caution: Park maintenance and emergency vehicles may be on the trail.

HUNTING AND FIREARMS: About 6,250 acres are open to hunting, trapping and the training of dogs during established seasons. Common game species are rabbit, deer, squirrel, turkey, black bear and ruffed grouse.

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 within the park.

FISHING: Oil Creek is known for its bass and trout. Boughton Run, Toy Run and Jones Run provide brook trout fishing. Two delayed harvest, artificial lures only areas cover 2.5 miles of Oil Creek.

CANOEING AND KAYAKING: Oil Creek offers a scenic float and is classed as a beginner's creek under normal conditions. Water levels can change rapidly and canoeists should call the park office for current water conditions. Generally, the canoeing season is from March to early June.

To launch in a state park, a non-motorized vessel needs a state park or PA Fish and Boat Commission launch permit.

CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING: A cross-country ski trail complex located between Petroleum Centre and Plumer can be accessed on SR 1004. A network of 11.5 miles of groomed trails offers beginner and intermediate skiers a variety of skiing experiences. The area includes a large parking area, warming hut and restrooms. Track is set on all trails in the complex. A fee is charged for a ski pass, which is required in the complex. No mountain bikes permitted on ski trails.

The 9.7-mile bicycle trail is open to skiers without a pass. Check at the park office for trail conditions.

PICNICKING: Blood Farm Day Use Area and Egbert Farm Day Use Area are on the southern side of the park and are ideal settings for an enjoyable outing. The day use areas have picnic tables, charcoal grills, drinking fountains, restrooms, playfields, and picnic pavilions that may be reserved up to 11 months in advance for a fee. Unreserved picnic pavilions are free on a first-come, first-served basis.

ORGANIZED GROUP TENTING: Organized groups can rent a rustic camping area in Wildcat Hollow or behind the Ski Warming Hut. Each area has nearby parking, picnic tables, fire circle, composting toilets and seasonal water, but no showers. Each camp can accommodate up to 25 people. Call the park office for accommodations for larger groups. Advance reservations are required.

Waterfalls

Oil Creek is home to four beautiful waterfalls. The best time to view the falls is early to late spring. For safety reasons, visitors are encouraged to stay on the trails while viewing the falls. Additional information can be obtained at the park office.

Environmental Education and Interpretation

The park offers a wide variety of environmental education, recreational and interpretive programs. Through hands-on activities, guided walks and evening programs, participants gain appreciation, understanding and develop a sense of stewardship toward natural and cultural resources.

Curriculum-based environmental education programs are available to schools and youth groups. Teacher workshops are available. Group programs must be arranged in advance and may be scheduled by calling the park office.

Programs are offered early spring through late fall. For more detailed information contact the park office.



Hiking: 52 miles of trails



Hiking and interpretive trails lead visitors through areas rich in historic and scenic interest. Trail maps and information are available at the park office.

- Mountain bikes are prohibited on hiking trails.
- If you find yourself lost, travel downhill to the bicycle trail or Oil Creek and follow either upstream to Drake Well or downstream to the park office at Petroleum Centre.
- The railroad running along Oil Creek is an active line.

Caution: Stay off of the tracks at all times.

History

Along Oil Creek, just south of Titusville, Colonel Edwin Drake struck oil at a depth of 69.5 feet in August 1859. Three words—"They've struck oil!" thundered triumphantly throughout the valley. This statement changed the world forever and marks the birth of the world's oil industry. The New York Tribune stated, "The excitement attendant on the discovery of this vast source of oil was fully equal to what I saw in California when a large lump of gold was accidentally turned out. When California 49ers came into the valley they claimed conditions here were crazier than any they'd ever seen."

Drake's discovery caused thousands of people to pour into the valley in search of liquid gold. Boomtowns sprang up instantly as derricks replaced trees and the valley filled with people. "The boomtowns spring up as of from the touch of a magician's wand, are swept away by fire, or disappear only to reappear miles in advance of their last location."

Oil and mud soon mixed together throughout the valley. Roads were impassable. When J.H.A. Bone got off the train at Petroleum Center he wrote: "...pull up your legs when they disappear from sight, remembering that if you descend deep enough, you may strike oil." Others wrote: "The creek was covered with oil, the air was full of oil...we could see, hear, smell, nothing but oil." "Mud divided our attention with oil, wagons, men and animals were submerged in mud."

By 1871, production in most boomtowns was dwindling. Drillers, speculators and others went to other areas in their endless search for oil as "black as a stack of ebony cats," and the valley was allowed to return slowly to the state it is today.

Historical Opportunities



The primary purpose of Oil Creek State Park is to tell the story of the changing landscape. The early petroleum industry's oil boom towns and important oil well sites are in contrast with clean trout streams and forested hillsides seen today throughout the park. The events of the exciting 1860s, the time of the original oil boom, receive special emphasis.

TRAIN STATION VISITOR CENTER

Historical displays and an exciting diorama provide a glimpse into oil history. A train still chugs through the valley and stops at the Train Station in Petroleum Centre, just as it did over 100 years ago! The train station is open noon to 5 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays.

HISTORICAL TABLEAUS

These full-scale, three-dimensional landscapes contain buildings, machinery, equipment and materials that replicate the historic landscape. Similar to a movie set, the buildings

SELF-GUIDING TRAILS

Changes Through Time, Delzell Trail: Change is constant in the natural environment. The Oil Creek Valley has seen more than most other areas. Along the 0.7-mile long trail, discover how these changes have created and again changed the face of the valley. Pick up a self-guiding brochure in the park office or at the trailhead.

Blood Farm Interpretive Trail: Spend 30 minutes walking a 0.5-mile trail through the 440-acre Blood Farm oil lease. This farm produced more oil than all of the other farms in the oil region in 1861 and 1862. Learn about 15 years of frantic drilling, gushing oil and devastating fires. Interpretive signs throughout the trail will guide your tour.

Petroleum Centre Walking Tour: Petroleum Centre flourished from 1863 to 1870 on its twin livelihoods of oil and entertainment. This company town had no government, law enforcement, sanitation or public works. It was reputed to be the "wickedest town east of the Mississippi!" Start at the Petroleum Centre Amphitheater for this 45-minute self-guiding tour.

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



Scattered ruins dot the landscape of Oil Creek valley. Remnants of old refineries can still be seen, old wells abound, and crumbling stone walls that once protected wells still stick up in the middle of Oil Creek.

The wooded hills of Oil Creek Gorge look almost as they did before the boom. A few wells are still active in the park, pulling the last bits of oil and natural gas from the earth which nature laid down millions of years ago.

"The oil rush changed the pace of the world, and greased the wheels of the machine age. It lit up the future, fueled wars, speeded peace and is still flowing strong."

Reference: Unless stated otherwise, the above quotes are from Paul Gidden's book "Early Days of Oil."

GERARD HIKING TRAIL

This 36-mile long trail encompasses the entire park. The main trail is marked with yellow paint blazes. For shorter day hikes, use the five connecting loops blazed in white. Parking areas are available at several access points. Scenic vistas, waterfalls and historic sites are prevalent along the trail.

Two overnight hike-in shelter areas (Cow Run and Wolfkiel Run) are along the trail. Each area contains tent sites, six Adirondack-style shelters with fireplaces, restrooms and seasonal water supply. A fee and reservations are mandatory for use of these areas and overnight usage is limited to one night per shelter site. Fires are only permitted in camp stoves, fireplaces or designated locations and must be extinguished when unattended. Standing timber and shrubs must not be defaced. Camping is permitted in shelter areas only. Other special regulations pertain to these areas. Contact the park office for further information.

Pets are permitted at the shelter areas. Please contact the park office for guidelines for pets.

Nearby Attractions

Information on nearby attractions is available from the Oil Region Alliance. www.oilregion.org

THE DRAKE WELL MUSEUM: The museum is administered by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission and is at the north end of Oil Creek State Park near Titusville. The museum presents a full-size replica of the engine and derrick over the early oil well, plus outstanding exhibits about Pennsylvania oil country. Within six miles of Oil Creek Valley is **Pithole**, America's largest oil boom town. Oil was discovered in Pithole in January 1865. By September 1865, Pithole had grown into a city of 15,000. www.drakewell.org

EXCURSION TRAIN: The Oil Creek and Titusville Railroad operates an excursion train on weekends and other dates from June through October. The 26-mile round trip travels through Oil Creek State Park from Titusville to Rynd Farm. www.octr.org



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.

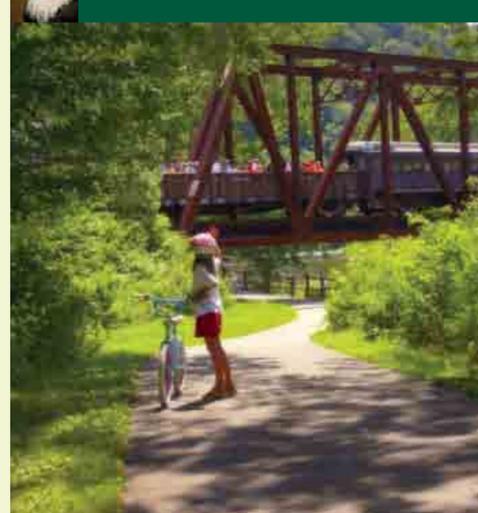
If you need an accommodation to participate in park activities due to a disability, please contact the park you plan to visit

In an Emergency

Contact a park employee or dial 911. Directions to the nearest hospitals are on bulletin boards and at the park office. First aid is available at the park office in Petroleum Centre and at Drake Well Museum.

NEAREST HOSPITALS

UPMC Northwest 100 Fairfield Drive Seneca, PA 16346 814-676-7600	Titusville Area Hospital 406 West Oak Street Titusville, PA 16354 814-827-1851
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For More Information Contact:

Oil Creek State Park
305 State Park Road
Oil City, PA 16301-9733
814-676-5915
email: oilcreeksp@pa.gov
GPS: Lat. 41.51544 Long. -79.68097
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.

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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.

• Firewood Advisory: Firewood may contain non-native insects and plant diseases. Bringing firewood into the park from other areas may accidentally spread pest insects and diseases that threaten park resources and the health of our forests. Campers should use local firewood. Do not take wood home and do not leave firewood. Bum It!

• Prevent forest fires by having a fire in proper facilities and properly disposing of hot coals. Do not leave a fire unattended.

• Because uncontrolled pets may chase wildlife or frighten visitors, pets must be controlled and attended at all times and on a leash, caged or crated.

• Do your part to keep wildlife wild! Enjoy wildlife from a safe distance and do not feed or approach wild animals.

• Please park only in designated areas.