

Pennsylvania State Parks Mission

The primary purpose of Pennsylvania state parks is to provide opportunities for enjoying healthful outdoor recreation and serve as outdoor classrooms for environmental education. In meeting these purposes, the conservation of the natural, scenic, aesthetic and historical values of parks should be given first consideration. Stewardship responsibilities should be carried out in a way that protects the natural outdoor experience for the enjoyment of current and future generations.

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2013



LITTLE BUFFALO STATE PARK

Certain places just attract people. The cool, clear water of Little Buffalo Creek has been attracting people for centuries. American Indians frequented Little Buffalo Creek on hunting trips. Farmers and merchants used to gossip and pass news while the grain was ground at Shoaff's Mill. Nearby, merchants, local people and travelers met at Blue Ball Tavern. Today, thousands of people meet at Little Buffalo State Park to picnic, swim, fish, hike and experience nature and history.

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.

Directions

From PA 322, take the Newport Exit and follow PA 34 south through the town of Newport. One mile from town, turn right onto Little Buffalo Road to the park. From PA 322 to the park entrance is 4.6 miles.

RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Spend the Day

PICNICKING: Many picnic tables offer nice views of the lake and most are shaded by beautiful oak, maple and ash trees. Charcoal grills are scattered throughout the picnic areas. All picnic areas are open from 8 a.m. to sunset. Picnic pavilions can be reserved up to 11 months in advance for a fee. Unreserved picnic pavilions are free on a first-come, first-served basis.

Main Picnic Area is a large, shaded lawn surrounding the swimming pool. There are showers, first-aid station, play field, seasonal food concession, playground equipment, boat rental, two picnic pavilions that each seat 80 people, horseshoe pits, restrooms and many picnic tables. Main Picnic Area is closed November through April.

Next to the swimming pool, a boat rental operates the weekend of Memorial Day through Labor Day, from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. daily, unless otherwise posted. Canoes, rowboats and pedal boats are available. Motorboats must display a boat registration from any state. Non-powered boats must display one of the following: boat registration from any state; launching permit or mooring permit from Pennsylvania State Parks that are available at most state park offices; launch use permit from the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission.



FISHING: The 88-acre Holman Lake offers year-round fishing opportunities. This warm water fishery enjoys natural reproduction of largemouth bass, catfish and panfish. The lake is designated as a "Big Bass Lake." Bass must be at least 15 inches long with a daily limit of four. Brook, brown, and rainbow trout and fingerlings of tiger muskellunge are stocked several times a year. The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission rules and regulations apply. An ADA accessible fishing pier is by the Main Boat Launch. See **ENJOY THE WINTER** below for information on ice fishing.

HUNTING AND FIREARMS: About 300 acres of Little Buffalo State Park are open to hunting, trapping and the training of dogs during established seasons. Common game species are deer, turkey, grouse, rabbit, pheasant and squirrel. 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.

PLAYGROUNDS: There is a playground in Main Picnic Area and in East Picnic Area.

Stay the Night

CAMPING: flush toilets and showers

The modern campground is open from the day before trout season to the third Sunday in October. There are forty sites, some have electric and water hook-ups. All campsites have a picnic table and fire ring. Pets are permitted on all sites.

CAMPING COTTAGES: The five rustic cottages sleep five people in bunk beds. Each cottage has electricity and a table and chairs. Pets and smoking are prohibited.

MODERN CABIN: The ADA accessible cabin sleeps 12 people in three bedrooms. Amenities include heat and air conditioning, stove, refrigerator, microwave and dishwasher. Pets and smoking are prohibited. Renters should bring their own bed linens, towels, dishes, cookware and dinnerware.

GPS: Lat. 40.45967 Long. -77.19131



ENJOY THE WINTER

CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING: All hiking trails in Little Buffalo State Park are open for cross-country skiing, but skiing is recommended on Little Buffalo Creek Trail. A 2.5-mile loop can be skied by taking Little Buffalo Creek Trail to Main Picnic Area, then ski the Newport and Sherman's Valley Railroad trace. Return to Little Buffalo Creek Trail along the edge of woods.

A popular loop in East Picnic Area starts in the parking lot and follows the path to Clay's Covered Bridge. The trail passes Shoaff's Mill then returns to the starting point on either Mill Race Trail or the shorter service road.

Skiing is also permitted on service roads and unplowed roads in the day use area.

ICE SKATING: Conditions permitting, a two-acre skating area is maintained on the east end of the lake by the Main Boat Launch. Heated restrooms are provided. The skating area is open from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. **Ice thickness is monitored in the skating area only.**

ICE FISHING: Ice fishing is permitted on Holman Lake except in the ice skating area. The lake is noted for a high panfish harvest, along with trout and warm water game fish. **Ice thickness is not monitored.** For your safety, be sure the ice is four inches thick and carry safety equipment.



NEARBY ATTRACTIONS

HEMLOCKS NATURAL AREA: Located in Tuscarora State Forest, this 120-acre plot of old growth timber is covered by massive trees 100 feet tall and four to six feet in diameter. Some of these giant trees started as seedlings about the time Christopher Columbus was discovering America! From the park, it takes about 45 minutes to reach this site. Take 274 west to Big Spring State Park, turn left onto Hemlock Road. It is five miles to the natural area.

BOX HUCKLEBERRY NATURAL AREA: Just south of New Bloomfield on Huckleberry Road, this 100-acre plot is managed by the Pennsylvania Bureau of Forestry. Visitors can hike a self-guided loop trail and see the rare box huckleberry which grows here and in only two other locations in Pennsylvania. This is also a good place to see wildflowers like trailing arbutus and mayapple. Limited parking is available.

Additional travel information on natural and historical sites and other activities in Perry County is available from the Perry County Tourist and Recreation Bureau, 717-834-4912 or 717-834-4457.

HISTORY

It is unknown why the stream is called Little Buffalo Creek or the adjacent ridge is called Buffalo Ridge, but local tradition holds that buffalo, also called bison, inhabited the area.

Little is known of the original inhabitants of the land that became Little Buffalo State Park. It was occupied by many American Indian tribes and nations for short periods of time as they migrated away from the increasing European population. The Albany Purchase of 1754 acquired the land from the Iroquois League of Six Nations.

The park area was gradually settled after the American Revolution. These settlers farmed the fertile land, a lifestyle that continues even today. John Koch opened the Blue Ball Tavern in 1811 along the Carlisle Pike, the main road between Carlisle and Sunbury, currently called the New Bloomfield Road.

In 1808, David Watts of Carlisle built a charcoal burning iron furnace along Furnace Run just south of the present day park. The need for charcoal brought colliers to the area of Little Buffalo Creek.

Making charcoal was very time consuming. In winter, colliers cut wood and allowed it to dry. In summer, several days were spent stacking the wood into piles. Leaves and then soil or clay was packed on the pile, then the wood was set to burn. To get charcoal, the wood burned slowly for eight to ten days while the colliers watched

the piles and extinguished flames which kept the wood smoldering. It then took several days for the charcoal to cool.

Each mound was 20 to 25 feet in diameter and made 300 to 500 bushels of charcoal. The wood from one acre of land would make enough charcoal to run the furnace for 24 hours.

The Juniata Iron Works smelted iron until the prized hardwoods used in charcoaling were depleted around 1848. Visitors can see remains from these "burns" along Buffalo Ridge Trail. Look for the 20-25 foot-diameter circles of darkened earth along the trail.



About 1840, as part of the iron works community, the company built a water-powered gristmill which served the neighboring farms long after the furnace fell silent. Shoaff's Mill operated until 1940. Farming continued to be the main use for the land until the 1960s.

During the late 1960s, the state legislature and Secretary Maurice K. Goddard of the

Little Buffalo Historic District: National Register of Historic Places

SHOAFF'S MILL: When the Juniata Iron Works closed in 1848, its lands, buildings and equipment were divided up for sale. In 1849, William Shoaff purchased 63 acres of land including the gristmill and a log cabin. William continued to mill wheat flour, buckwheat flour, corneal and livestock feed and made extensive improvements to the mill. A successful miller, he built a fine brick home for his family in 1861. This brick home is currently a private residence.

William died in 1888 and his wife, Catherine, took over operation of the mill until their son Ellis Shoaff bought and took possession of the mill in 1900. To increase the speed and power of the mill, Ellis made improvements and bought one of the largest waterwheels east of the Mississippi. The wheel is still in use. Shoaff's Mill continued to operate until 1940. The mill has been renovated and is back in operation milling corneal, cracked corn and grinding apples for cider during educational programs and demonstrations.

The brochure "Shoaff's Mill" is available at the park office.



CLAY'S COVERED BRIDGE: Originally built in 1890 by bridge contractor George Harling, the 82-foot bridge spanned the

Little Buffalo Creek and was located one mile west of its present location. The bridge was moved when Holman Lake was created.

The bridge architecture is a Burr Truss, patented by Theodore Burr of Connecticut. One large arch extends from one side of the bridge to the other. The roof and floor are attached to this arch, as are many king posts. The Burr Truss allowed longer distances to be bridged. There were many Burr Truss bridges built in the Susquehanna watershed, including the longest, single-arch wooden span bridge in the world built at McCall's Ferry. Clay's Covered Bridge is one of 14 covered bridges that can still be found in Perry County.

BLUE BALL TAVERN: Travelers knew that the tavern was full when a large blue ball, the tavern's namesake, was placed outside of the tavern.

John Koch began farming the site in the late 1790s and in 1811 opened Blue Ball Tavern. The tavern offered food and drink, and a sleeping loft for travelers. Local people met at the tavern to gossip and exchange news. During the War of 1812, the tavern served as a stopover point for messenger riders coming from Carlisle to Sunbury. It is rumored that the Blue Ball Tavern was the meeting place in 1821 where plans were laid to create the new county of Perry.

For unknown reasons, the tavern closed in 1841. The current farmhouse was built around 1865 on the foundation of the tavern. Recycled boards and hardware found throughout the farmhouse may have

Department of Forests and Waters (now the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources) instituted the goal of providing a state park within 25 miles of every citizen in Pennsylvania. To raise money to reach this goal, there were two voter-approved state bond issues. At Little Buffalo State Park, money from Project 70 purchased the land, and the park facilities were constructed with Project 500 funds. Little Buffalo State Park officially opened its gates to the public on June 11, 1972.



originated in the tavern.

Today the Perry County Historical Society operates and maintains a museum and library in the farmhouse. Members volunteer to open the museum every



NEWPORT & SHERMAN'S VALLEY RAILROAD: In 1890, railroad Owner David Gring moved his narrow gauge railroad from Huntingdon County to the western half of Perry County to harvest the valuable timber. For several years, the railroad hauled logs and freight, then eventually passengers. Gring faced fierce competition from the Perry County Railroad, a standard gauge railroad from Duncannon through New Bloomfield to Loysville. (Standard gauge track is 56 1/2 inches wide and narrow gauge track is 36 inches wide.) After 44 years, the narrow gauge railroad lost out to its larger competitor and went bankrupt in 1937. The small engines and trains could not haul enough cargo to compete against the larger, stronger standard gauge railroad.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND INTERPRETATION

Little Buffalo State Park offers a wide variety of environmental education and interpretive programs. Through hands-on activities, guided walks and campfire 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 year-round. Many programs feature Shoaff's Mill. Over 12,000 people visit the mill annually. Contact the park office for more detailed information on programs.



SPECIAL EVENTS



Old Fashion Apple Festival: Held the third weekend of October in time for fall foliage, this festival will take your taste buds back to the mid-19th century. You can see and taste apple butter cooked in a large copper kettle in front of Shoaff's Mill. Apples are ground and squeezed in a century-old water powered press. Shoaff's Mill grinds corneal, cracked corn and apples. Visitors may taste samples of apple cider, apple butter and corneal recipes as long as supplies last.

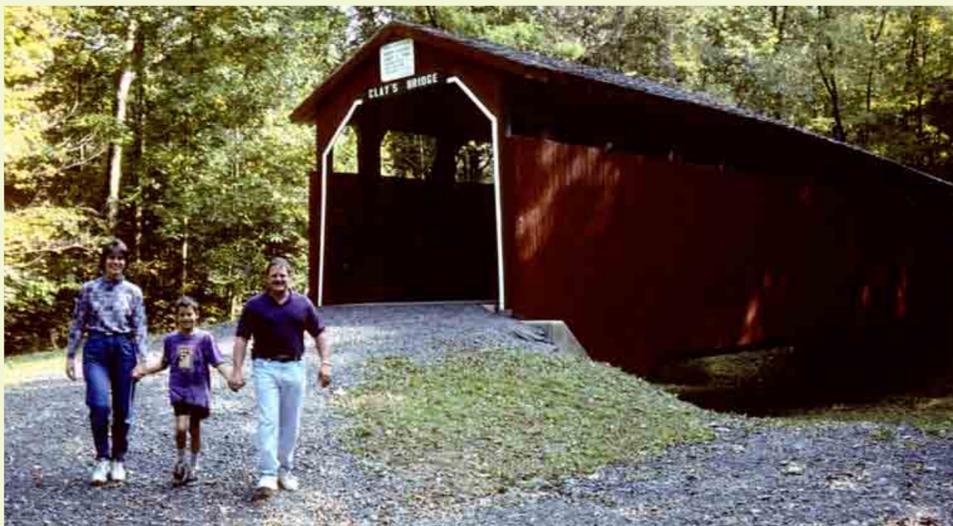
Christmas Walk: This family-oriented activity has become a popular holiday event in the county. Thousands of lights and holiday cutouts dot East Picnic Area and provide the perfect holiday atmosphere. Santa always makes an appearance. Local

4-H Clubs sell cookies and hot chocolate. Area choirs sing carols many of the nights. The program runs December 17 through December 23 from 6 to 9 p.m.



Halloween Night: Held in East Picnic Area on the Saturday before Halloween, this program features storytelling, pumpkin carving, refreshments and haunted hayrides. Activities start at 6 p.m.

HIKING: 8 MILES OF TRAILS



Little Buffalo has approximately 8 miles of hiking trails. Sturdy footwear is recommended because of rocky footing on some trails.



VOLKSMARCHING: Governed by the American Volkspart Association and the International Federation of Popular Sports, Volksmarchers earn awards for hiking. Little Buffalo State Park has a Volksmarch Year Round Walk. White arrows point out the 10K (6.2 miles) walk on Mill Race, Fisherman's, Buffalo Ridge, Little Buffalo Creek, Middle Ridge and Exercise trails and Little Buffalo State Park Road. For official information contact the park office.

LITTLE BUFFALO CREEK TRAIL: 1 mile, easiest hiking, blue blazes

Located at the west end of the park, this trail offers hikers the beauty and sounds of water and good opportunities for viewing wildlife. This trail runs between Main Picnic Area and the west end of the park. During the winter season, Creekside Trail makes a nice cross-country ski trail especially when skiers include the Newport and Sherman's Valley Railroad trace and the mowed strips in the west end of the park.

EXERCISE TRAIL: 1.2 miles, easiest hiking, mowed path

This loop trail has 18 permanent stations where hikers can do many different exercises, including balance beam, pull-ups, hand walks, bar vaults, sit-ups and many other exercises. It is a good trail on which to see bluebirds.

BLUE BALL TRAIL: 0.25 mile, easiest hiking, paved

This paved trail is ADA accessible from East Picnic Area and runs near Blue Ball Tavern.

CAMPGROUND SPUR: 0.5 mile, easiest hiking, green blazes

This trail begins at the campground pond. It drops down an easy grade in a hollow to connect with Middle Ridge Trail.

FISHERMAN'S TRAIL: 1 mile, easiest hiking, yellow blazes

This hiking trail wanders through a mature hemlock forest between East Picnic Area and Main Picnic Area. A dense canopy of hemlock trees allows very little sunlight to reach the forest floor making for a relatively cool walk even on the warmest days. The dim light prohibits the growth of most plants, but ferns and small hemlocks manage to grow under the canopy. A vista overlooking the lake and dam is on the east end of the trail near East Picnic Area.

MILL RACE TRAIL: 0.5 mile, easiest hiking, orange blazes

This trail can be accessed by Shoaff's Mill and by the Classroom Annex. The trail follows the Furnace Run and the mill race. The race is the narrow channel that supplies water to power the mill. A wayside exhibit explains how the mill race was dug using a mill race scoop pulled by horses. By Furnace Run, hikers can find pieces of slag, a green colored stone that is a waste product of the iron furnace that was located upstream. This trail is good for seeing wildflowers.



MIDDLE RIDGE TRAIL: 2.5 miles, most difficult hiking, red blazes

This trail runs from Exercise Trail to the west end of the park. It offers many short, steep climbs while traveling through a variety of habitats. Open fields feature nice views of the lake. In the mixed hardwood forest, hikers may see large, cone-shaped mounds of earth which may house tens of thousands of Allegheny mound ants. These ants have very strong jaws and can inflict a painful bite on those who disturb their mounds.

BUFFALO RIDGE TRAIL: 1.5 miles, most difficult hiking, white blazes

This trail runs from East Picnic Area to the Newport and Sherman's Valley Railroad trace by Main Picnic Area. This difficult trail winds up Buffalo Ridge and offers glimpses of the industrial history of the area. A mixed hardwood forest with scattered hemlock giants covers the area today, but before it was timbered, the ridge was covered in giant oaks, hickories and American chestnut. Coal miners scoured the ridge to make charcoal for the Juniata Iron Works. Look for flat areas of dark ground where wood was stacked, covered with soil and leaves, and burned slowly to make charcoal.



WILDLIFE WATCHING

There are many opportunities to see wildlife, but please observe from a safe distance and do not feed wildlife. Little Buffalo Creek Trail offers good opportunities for seeing white-tailed deer. The tracks of beaver, muskrat and mink can be found in the stream beside the trail. Middle Ridge Trail is a good place to see turkey, grouse and also large colonies of Allegheny mound ants.

Holman Lake provides habitat for many animals, including green herons, egrets and beavers. The west finger of the lake is a good place to see wood ducks. Although not residents, bald eagles and ospreys are often seen near Holman Lake. Many waterfowl

use the lake as a rest stop during migration, including Canada geese, mallards, blue-winged teal, mergansers, buffleheads, common loons and ring-necked ducks.

Many species of warblers inhabit the forests of the park. Common yellowthroat, yellow warbler and the blue-gray gnatcatcher are common. The blue-winged warbler can be seen by the power line along Millrace Trail and on the west side of the lake.

Nest boxes are scattered throughout the park, but the best place to see eastern bluebirds is along Exercise Trail. Please enjoy viewing the bluebirds, but do not disturb the nest boxes.



FOR YOUR INFORMATION

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 hospitals, look on bulletin boards or at the park office.

NEAREST HOSPITALS:

Carlisle Regional Medical Center
361 Alexander Spring Rd.
Carlisle, PA 17015
717-249-1212

Harrisburg Hospital
111 South Front Street
Harrisburg, PA 17101
717-782-3131



Information and Reservations

For More Information Contact
Little Buffalo State Park
1579 State Park Road
Newport, PA 17074-9428
GPS: Lat. 40.4585 Long. -77.1682
717-567-9255
email: littlebuffsp@pa.gov
An Equal Opportunity Employer
visitPAparks.com

Information and Reservations

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www.visitPAparks.com or call toll-free
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Pocket Ranger™ App by Parks by Nature



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