

The Grand Canyon of Pennsylvania

Leonard Harrison and Colton Point state parks are on opposite sides of Pine Creek Gorge, also called the “Grand Canyon of Pennsylvania.” Many scenic vistas offer spectacular views into the 800-foot-deep, glacial flood-water-carved canyon. The scenery at these parks is superb in every season of the year and is especially stunning in late September through mid-October. The large abundance of



Leonard Harrison State Park

On the east rim of the canyon, the 585-acre Leonard Harrison State Park has modern facilities, a visitor center, and the most famous scenic views of the gorge. GPS DD: Lat. 41.698 Long. -77.45156

Directions

To reach Leonard Harrison State Park on the eastern rim of the canyon, take PA 660 west from Wellsboro for ten miles.

Recreational Opportunities

CAMPING: flush toilets and hot showers
The campground is open from the second Friday in April until the third Sunday in October. Picnic tables, fire rings, showers, flush toilets, and a sanitary dump station are provided. Some sites have electricity.

PICNICKING: Picnic tables (seven of which are covered), charcoal grills, restrooms, drinking water, and trash bins are available. Schloder Pavilion can be reserved for a fee. If unreserved, the pavilion is available on a first-come, first-served basis.

HIKING: Hiking information is on the other side of this brochure.

Gift Shop

The gift shop is open from late April to late October as staffing allows. Call the park office for hours and seasonal changes. All proceeds benefit Pennsylvania State Parks. Water, soda, and juice vending machines are available from late April to late October.

History

Leonard Harrison State Park honors Leonard Harrison (1850-1929) of Wellsboro. Mr. Harrison was a civic-minded businessman and banker who contributed his time, energy, and finances to the betterment of his home community. Leonard Harrison State Park originally consisted of 121 acres and was called “The Lookout.”



Mr. Harrison owned and developed the area as a public picnic ground. He gave the area to the commonwealth in 1922. The park was further developed by the boys of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) Camp S-155-PA Darling Run during the mid-1930s. A bronze monument to the CCC’s achievements is on the overlook. Additional lands were added to the park in the late 1940s.

deciduous hardwood trees display beautiful autumn shades of yellow, orange, red, and purple. Pockets of evergreen trees provide a dash of green year round.

Pine Creek Gorge begins just south of Ansonia, along US 6 and continues south for about 47 miles. At its deepest point, the gorge is 1,450 feet deep and nearly one mile wide. At Leonard Harrison and Colton Point state parks, the depth of the gorge is about 800 feet and these parks have the most spectacular scenic overlooks.

Many recreational opportunities are available in the gorge.

Colton Point State Park

On the west rim of the canyon, the 368-acre Colton Point State Park resonates with the rustic charm of the Civilian Conservation Corps era of the 1930s. The rugged overlooks offer great views of the gorge. GPS DD: Lat. 41.70824 Long. -77.4553

Directions

From US 6 near Ansonia, follow Colton Road south for five miles.

Recreational Opportunities

CAMPING: rustic sites
The campground is open from the second Friday in April until the third Sunday in October. Rustic toilets, tables, fire rings, and a sanitary dump station are provided. Campsites at Colton Point are not reservable but are available first-come, first-served.

PICNICKING: Picnic tables are available for year-round use. There are also five reservable pavilions throughout the park. Three of the pavilions have fireplaces.

ORGANIZED GROUP TENTING: Qualified adult and youth groups may use this 90-person capacity area from the second Friday in April to the third Sunday in October, weather permitting. The camp is equipped with picnic tables. Advance reservations are recommended. This area is rustic in nature and so vehicles are prohibited in the camping area.

SNOWMOBILING: Registered snowmobiles may use the trail network on state forest land daily after the close of the deer season in December. The park provides parking, picnic tables, and restrooms.

ATVs are not considered snowmobiles.

HIKING: Hiking information is on the other side of this brochure.

History

Colton Point was named in the late 1800s for Henry Colton, a lumberman who supervised harvesting trees in the area. Logs were floated down Pine Creek to sawmills in Williamsport. The park was established from state forest lands purchased in the early 1900s.

Colton Point State Park was developed by the boys of Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) Camp S-91-PA Painter Run from 1933 to 1936 and opened to the public in 1936. The CCC’s contributions are still visible today through the five stone and timber pavilions in the park. In 1988, the CCC-built facilities were added to the National Register of Historic Places.

Some of these activities are regulated by the Bureau of State Parks or by the Bureau of Forestry, which has slightly different rules and regulations. Visitors can hike, mountain bike, ride horses, fish, birdwatch, hunt, camp, and seasonally whitewater boat.

FORMATION OF THE GORGE

Until about 20,000 years ago, Pine Creek flowed northeasterly. Then the Laurentide Continental Glacier, which covered most of northern North America, moved into the

area, pushing rocks, soil, and other debris, which dammed Pine Creek, forming a lake near Ansonia.

The abundant glacial meltwater eventually overflowed the debris dam, reversing the flow of Pine Creek to its current southerly flow. The meltwater swiftly carved a deep channel. Thousands of years of erosion by Pine Creek has continued to carve the spectacular Grand Canyon of Pennsylvania.

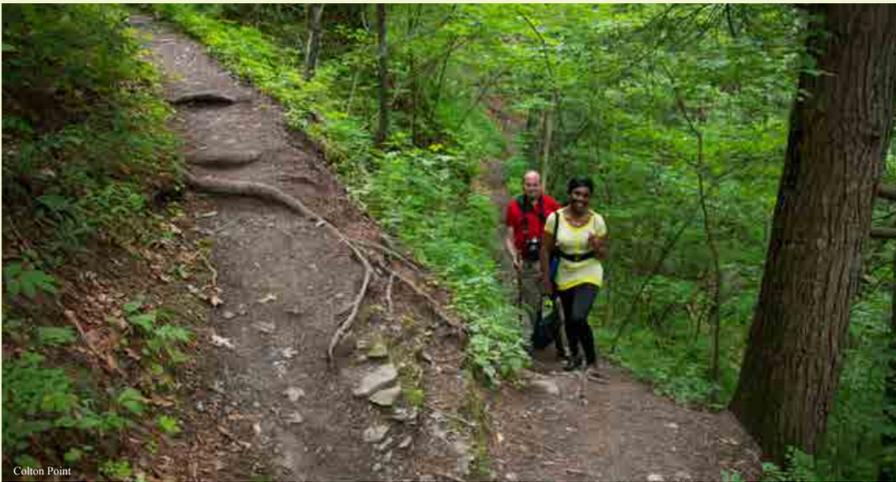
HUMAN INFLUENCE ON THE GORGE

American Indians used the Pine Creek Gorge as a major travel route. Pine Creek Trail follows the same general route as the original path. Just north of the park, at Ansonia, was a seasonal hunting camp called “Big Meadow.”

The lumbering of the native white pine and later, the hemlock and assorted hardwoods, led to the settlement of the area. Each spring, logs were floated in huge rafts to mills at Williamsport. Lumber from this area helped to make Williamsport the lumber capital of the world in the 1880s. Hemlock bark was peeled and hauled to several local tanneries to turn hides into leather. By the 1900s, only a few small areas of native forest were untouched in all of Pennsylvania.

Due to the mass deforestation, massive forest fires, and unregulated hunting and trapping, the wildlife populations declined greatly in the commonwealth. White-tailed deer, beaver, and elk were reintroduced to the state in the early 1900s. More recent additions to the canyon include the reintroduction of river otters in 1983 and fishers in the mid-1990s. Bald eagles, once an endangered species, began nesting in the gorge in the late 1980s.

Prior to being a world-class multi-use trail, Pine Creek Trail was an active railroad. The Jersey Shore, Pine Creek and Buffalo Railway Company began in 1883 by carrying timber to the sawmills in Tiadaghton, Cammal, and Slate Run. The railroad also transported coal north to New York State and vast amounts of hemlock bark to several local tanneries for use in the leather industry. By 1896, the



Environmental Education and Interpretation

An environmental interpreter presents resource-oriented programs and interpretive walks April through October. Major topics and seasonal programs include: *Watershed Education*, astronomy, fall color, old-fashioned cider squeezing, and summer campfire programs. Educational information is available at the visitor center or park office.

The environmental interpretive center at the Leonard Harrison main overlook is open during the summer season through the fall foliage season. A video and educational displays interpret the area and its wildlife. Call the park office for visitor center hours or to schedule an appointment for a group tour.

Nearby Attractions

Information on nearby attractions is available from the Tioga County Visitor’s Bureau, 888-TIOGA-28. www.visittiogapa.com
Wellsboro Area Chamber of Commerce, 570-724-1926. www.wellsboropa.com
Horseback trail rides, covered wagon rides, mountain biking, road bicycling, seasonal whitewater rafting, canoeing, kayaking, and airplane rides are available from private sources in the area.

The 159,466-acre **Tioga State Forest** provides timber products, wildlife habitat, and recreation. 570-724-2868



railroad was carrying seven million tons of freight and three passenger trains on daily runs between Wellsboro Junction and Williamsport.

The railroad changed hands several times and was eventually taken over by Conrail. The last train passed through the canyon on October 7, 1988. Today, the rail line has taken on a new life as a part of the state’s extensive network of railtrails.

In 1968, 12 miles of the canyon were designated a National Natural Landmark by the U. S. Department of the Interior.

In 1993, the gorge became a State Park Natural Area, which will protect it in a natural state for future generations. In 1992, Pine Creek was designated a Pennsylvania Scenic River.

A Pennsylvania Recreational Guide for Leonard Harrison and Colton Point State Parks



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www.visitPAparks.com or call toll-free
888-PA-PARKS (888-727-2757), 7:00 AM
to 5:00 PM, 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 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 - Burn 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 physically controlled and attended at all times and on a leash, caged, or crated. Electronic fences and leashes are prohibited.

