

Archbald Pothole State Park

For More Information Contact:

Archbald Pothole State Park
c/o Lackawanna State Park
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Dalton, PA 18414-9785
570-945-3239
lackawannasp@state.pa.us
An Equal Opportunity Employer

www.state.pa.us, PA Keyword: state parks

Information and Reservations

For general state park information or to reserve a campsite, cabin, organized group tenting area or picnic pavilion, call toll-free 888-PA-PARKS, Mon. to Sat. 7 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Archbald Pothole State Park

Archbald Pothole State Park is a 150-acre park in northeastern Pennsylvania. The park is named for Archbald Pothole, a geologic feature that formed during the Wisconsin Glacial Period, around 15,000 years ago.

The pothole is 38 feet deep and has an elliptical shape. The diameter of the pothole decreases downward. The largest diameter is 42 feet by 24 feet. At the bottom it is 17 feet by 14 feet. The pothole has a volume of about 18,600 cubic feet, so could hold about 140,000 gallons. It would take 35 fire truck tankers to fill the pothole.

Directions

Archbald Pothole is in Lackawanna County, nine miles north of Scranton. The park is easily reached from Interstate 81. Take Exit 191A to US 6 east towards Carbondale. The park entrance is six miles on the right.

Recreational Opportunities

The interior lands of the park are undergoing strip mine reclamation. This reclaimed land will be used for outdoor recreation and will also include athletic fields.

Hiking: A small loop trail starting at the wayside follows an old coal mine tram road passed rock ledges and through a forest.

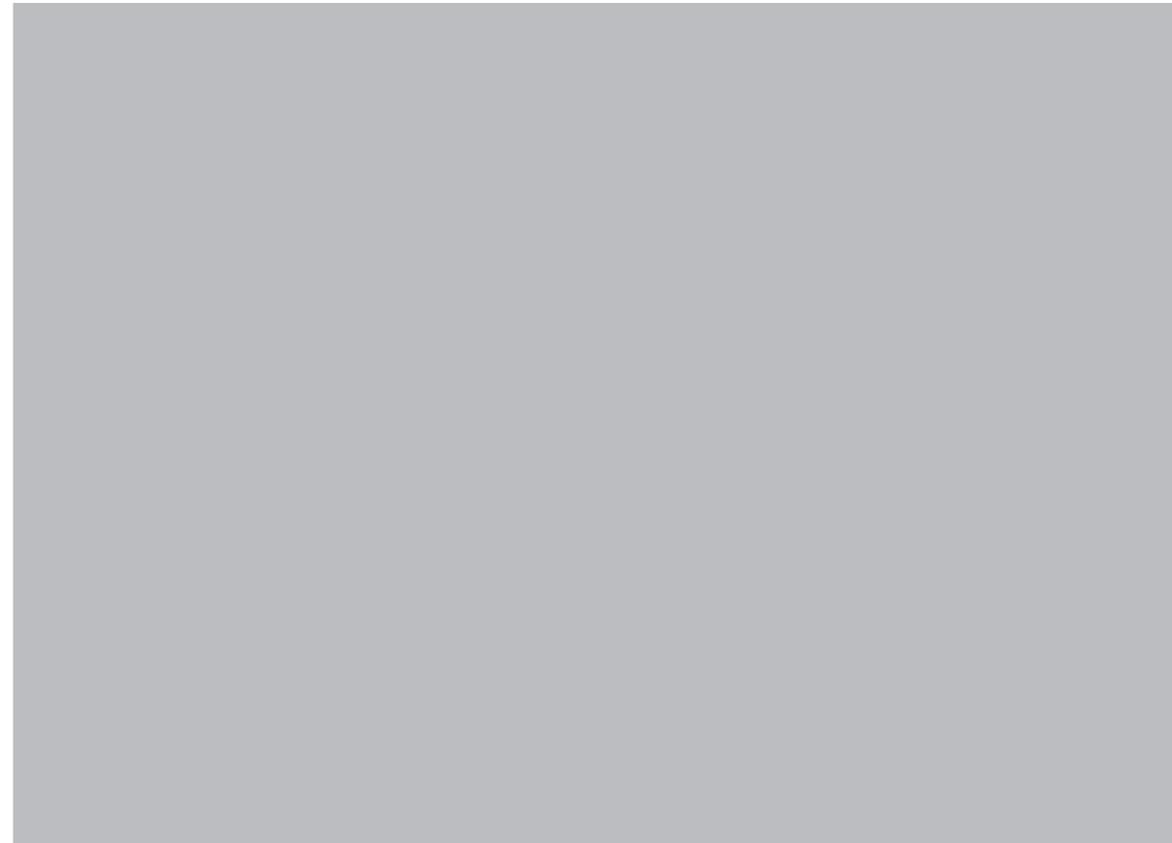
Hunting and Firearms: Over 100 acres are open to limited hunting, trapping and the training of dogs during established seasons. Common game species are deer, squirrel and turkey.

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 accessible hunting information.

Use extreme caution with firearms at all times. Other visitors use the park during hunting seasons. Firearms and archery equipment 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 must be kept in the owner's car.

History

Archbald Pothole was discovered in 1884 by coal miner Patrick Mahon while extending a mine shaft. Mr. Mahon fired a blast of explosives and water and stones came rushing out. The miners fled fearing that the mountain was falling on them. Edward Jones, the manager of the mining company, investigated and ordered the area cleared of debris. About 800 to 1,000 tons of small rounded stones were removed and Mr.



Photograph courtesy of the Lackawanna Historical Society

Jones realized that the vertical tunnel was a large pothole.

About 1,000 feet north of Archbald Pothole, another pothole was found, but it was thought to be larger than the first pothole and was not excavated because of the excessive cost.

Archbald Pothole was briefly used as a ventilation shaft for the mine. A large fire kept burning in the bottom made the pothole function like a chimney, drawing air out of the mine. In 1887, Colonel Hackley, the landowner, built a fence and retaining wall around the hole. Edward Jones gave many tours of the pothole to local citizens and to noted geologists. The pothole became a popular tourist attraction. In 1914, the widow of Colonel Hackley donated a one-acre deed, which included the pothole, to the reformed Lackawanna Historical Society.

With the addition of 150 acres, Archbald Pothole became a Lackawanna County park in 1940. The county deeded the property to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania 1961, and after improvements, Archbald Pothole State Park was dedicated in 1964.

In an Emergency

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

Nearest Hospital:
Community Medical Center
1822 Mulberry Street
Scranton, PA 18510
570-969-8000

Nearby Glacial Attractions

Hickory Run State Park, Boulder Field: 14 acres of jumbled stone caused by severe weather of the last glacial period. The glacier end moraine crosses the park. Hickory Run State Park can be reached at Exit 274 off of I-80. Follow PA 534 east to the park. 570-443-0400

Seven Tubs Natural Area: Glacial meltwater eroded the bedrock and created a series of potholes in an area now called Whirlpool Valley. Owned by Luzerne County, Seven Tubs can be reached at Exit 164 off of I-81. Follow PA 115 south for 2.5 miles. The park is on the right. 570-477-5467

Tannersville Cranberry Bog: This 150-acre wetland is the southernmost low altitude boreal bog on the eastern seaboard. It contains carnivorous plants, rare orchids and other plants. The bog is owned by the Nature Conservancy and can only be visited during scheduled tours. 570-629-3061

Nearby Attractions

For more information on nearby attractions: Northeast Pennsylvania Convention and Visitors Bureau, 800-22-WELCOME, www.visitnepa.org. **Lackawanna Heritage Valley:** Pennsylvania's first heritage park tells the story of the important role that the Lackawanna Valley played in America's Industrial Revolution--supplying over 80 percent of the nation's anthracite coal that fueled the growth of American industry, 570-876-6288, www.lhva.org.

Access for People with Disabilities

 This symbol indicates facilities and activities that are accessible. 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 Pennsylvania Bureau of State Parks: 888-PA-PARKS (voice) 711 (AT&T Relay Services)

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. You are responsible for you and your family's safety.
- Alcoholic beverages are prohibited.
- Uncontrolled pets may chase wildlife or frighten visitors. Pets must be controlled and attended at all times and on a leash or otherwise safely restrained.
- Do your part to keep wildlife wild! Enjoy wildlife from a safe distance and do not feed or approach wild animals.
- Prevent forest fires by having a fire in proper facilities and properly disposing of hot coals. Do not leave a fire unattended.
- Please park only in designated areas and obey all traffic regulations.
- Please recycle. Place trash accumulated during your stay in proper receptacles, or take it home with you.
- Soliciting and posting signs is prohibited without approval from the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.

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.

The Ice Ages

At least four ice advances, often called ice ages, have moved south into Pennsylvania. They are the Nebraskan, Kansan, Illinoian and the Wisconsin. Most of the evidence of glaciers in Pennsylvania is from the most recent advance, the Wisconsin Glacial Period. About 30,000 years ago, North America had a similar climate to modern time. Familiar animals lived here, but so did unique animals like saber-toothed tigers, giant ground sloths, beavers the size of wolves, deer the size of horses and other prehistoric animals.

For unknown reasons, the climate of the earth began to cool. Ice sheets in the arctic regions began slowly spreading in all directions. In the Northern Hemisphere, this glacier was called the Laurentide Continental Glacier and was several miles thick in the center while the edges were around 500 feet thick. The glacier moved very slowly, sometimes only several feet a year. The edge of the glacier often advanced in the winter,

only to partially melt back in the summer. Like a giant bulldozer, the glacier scraped the land, removing vegetation and soil, and flattening hills and ridges. On the top, edges and underneath the glacier, ice melted and flowed in rivers carrying sand, pebbles and boulders.

Near the glacier, the climate was very cold. Winter lasted for six months and the annual temperature was 20° to 25° F cooler than the current climate.

About 13,000 years ago, the Laurentide Continental Glacier was at its greatest size, and covered two-thirds of North America, including the northeast and northwest corners of Pennsylvania.

Again the climate changed, becoming warmer, and the giant blanket of ice quickly melted and retreated. Animals and plants slowly repopulated the warming lands, but many of the prehistoric animals became extinct.

Formation of the Pothole

A pothole usually is a hole that is worn into the bedrock of a stream at the base of waterfalls or in strong rapids. The moving water spins sand, gravel and rock fragments in any small indentation in the bedrock. After enough time, the sand and stones carve out an elliptical hole. Potholes may also form under or near the edge of glaciers by the action of glacial meltwater.

Archbald Pothole was formed during the Wisconsin Glacial Period between 30,000 and 11,000 years ago. A meltwater stream flowing on top of the glacier probably broke through a crevasse (a crack in the glacier) and fell to the bedrock hundreds of feet below. There was enough force generated by the falling water to begin a whirling motion of rock fragments in a small depression. As the rock fragments swirled and bumped each other, they carved the bedrock, making the depression deeper and larger. The rock fragments eventually were reduced to tiny particles, but new rock fragments continually tumbled into the hole, enabling the grinding process to continue. As the glacier moved, so did the crevasse and the waterfall. Sand, gravel and rounded stones filled in Archbald Pothole and the waterfall moved off to make new potholes.

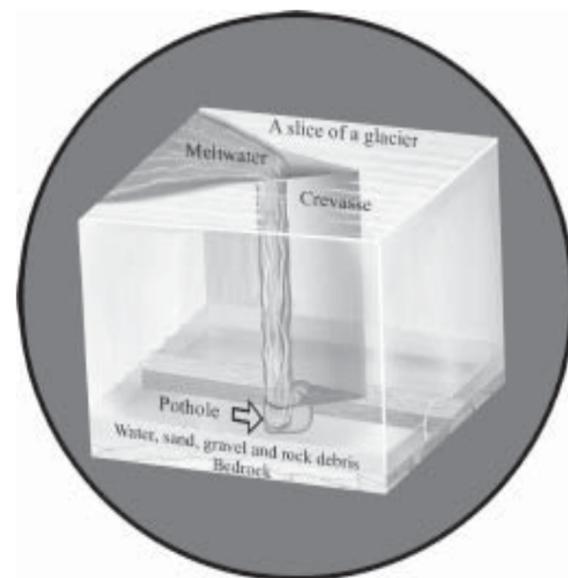
At Archbald Pothole, the water first wore away the top layer of bedrock, which is sandstone. Next the swirling water and rock carved through gray shale leaving a particularly smooth and polished surface that shows a typical, well-rounded, wavelike surface. This feature is especially noticeable in the lower half of the northern side of the pothole. The bottom layer of bedrock is black anthracite coal.

The southern and western sides of the pothole are nearly vertical, while the other two sides are

deeply terraced. This is evidence that the waterfall that formed the pothole moved in a northeast and southwest direction. It is unknown whether the pothole formed during an advance or retreat of the glacier.

Preserved underground by nature for around 13,000 years, the pothole was uncovered in 1884 and has been exposed to weathering. The sides of the pothole are slowly eroding and are covered in ferns and lichens.

Please help preserve this signature of Pennsylvania's glacial history. If you observe someone vandalizing park property, please contact a park official.



Meltwater on top of the glacier plunged through a crevasse and carved the pothole in the bedrock.

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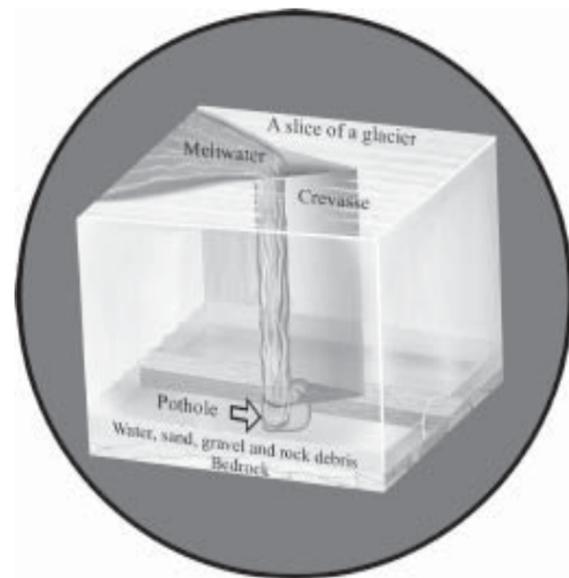
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Drop-in Map Here

F. P. O.