

# INTO THE WOODS: AN AUTO TOUR OF PENNSYLVANIA'S OLD GROWTH FORESTS

<http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/forestry/oldgrowth/>

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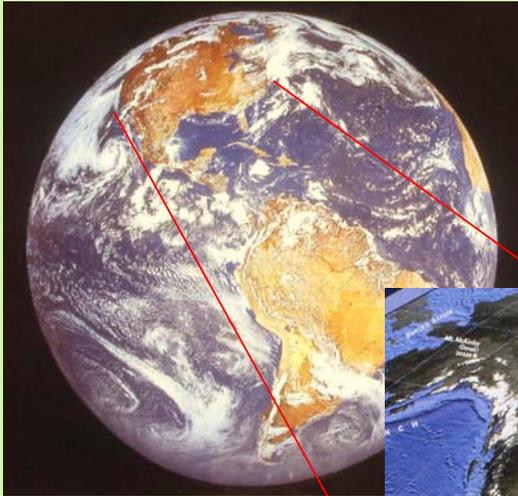
for the Bureau of Forestry

Department of Conservation and Natural Resources



First, let's start by having an overall look at where the tour takes place, what kind of land it is, what it feels like to be there (from a forest's point of view!)... that is, the weather, the terrain and a bit about the people who inhabit this area... And how those people came to be there. Then we'll go in for a closer look at some of the Tour stops.

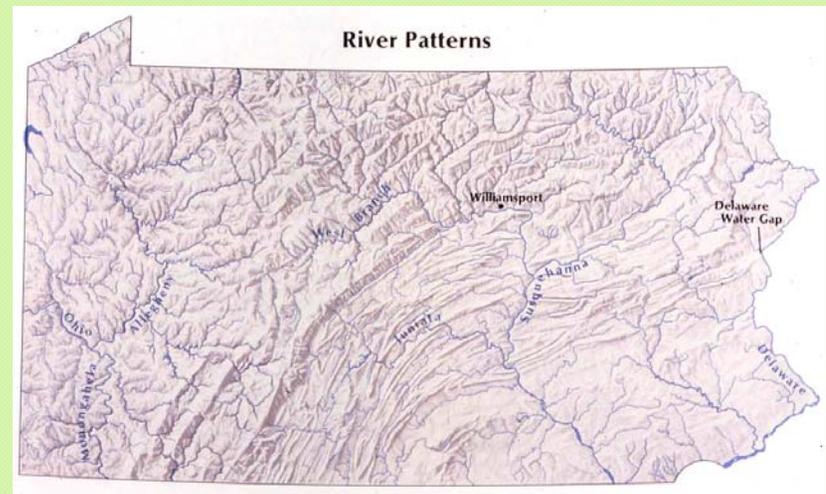
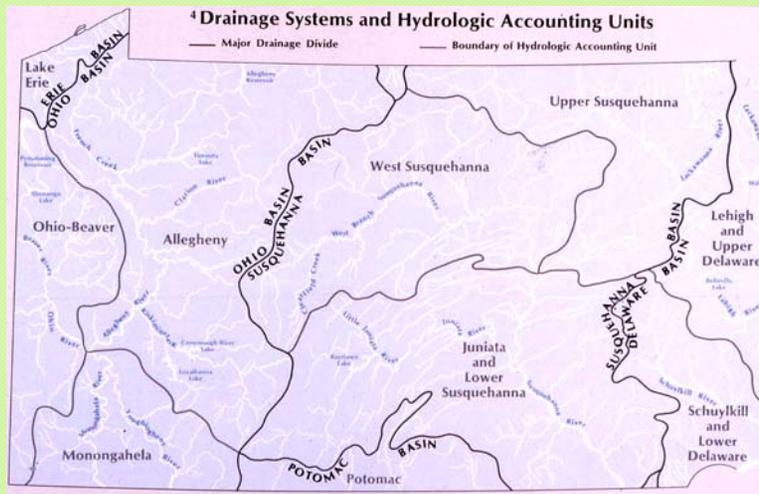
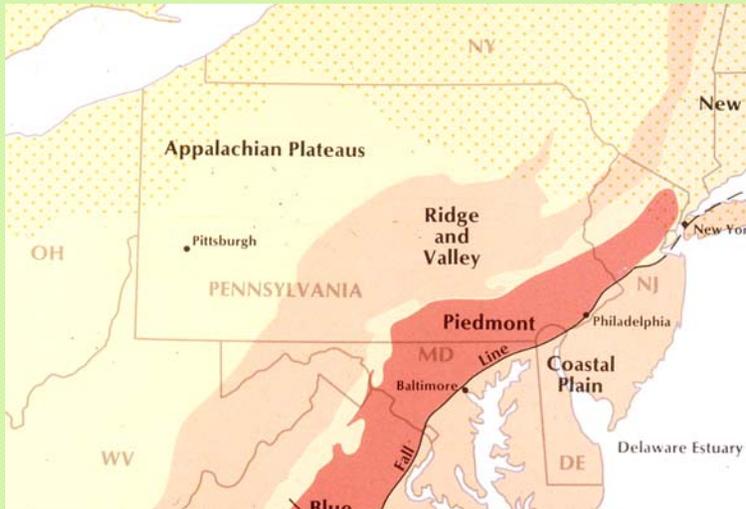




Getting closer and closer...



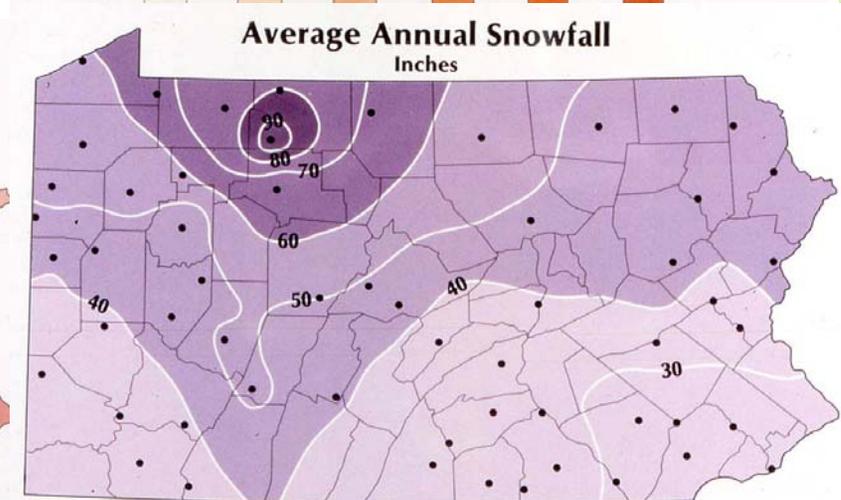
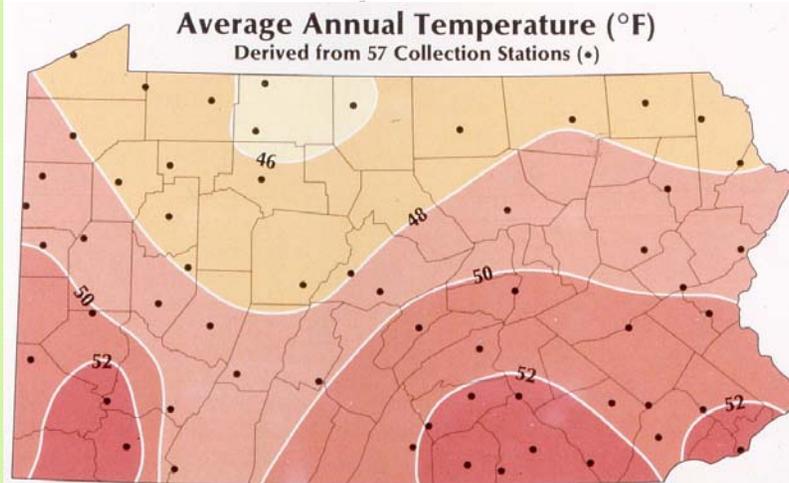
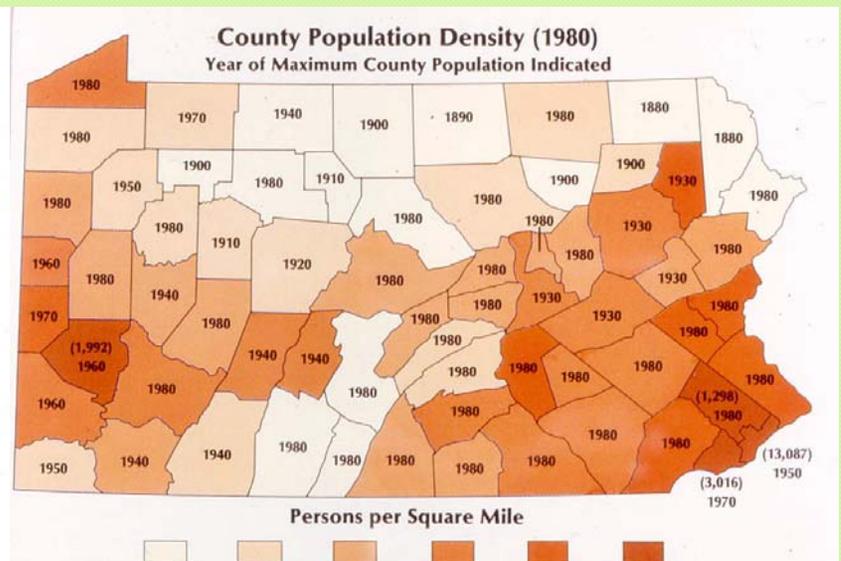
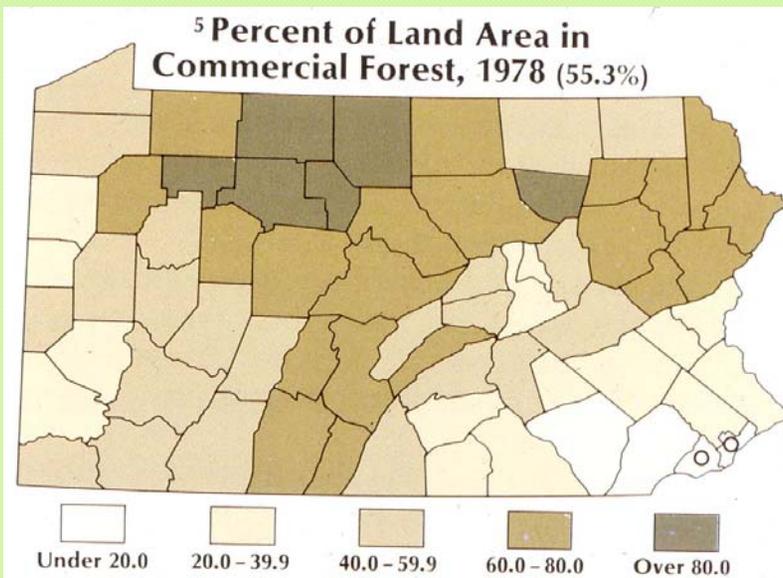
...right into  
Pennsylvania



These maps from the Pennsylvania Atlas show the “shape of the land” in the entire state. Note particularly the familiar curve of the folded Appalachian Mountains and the Plateau to the Northwest.

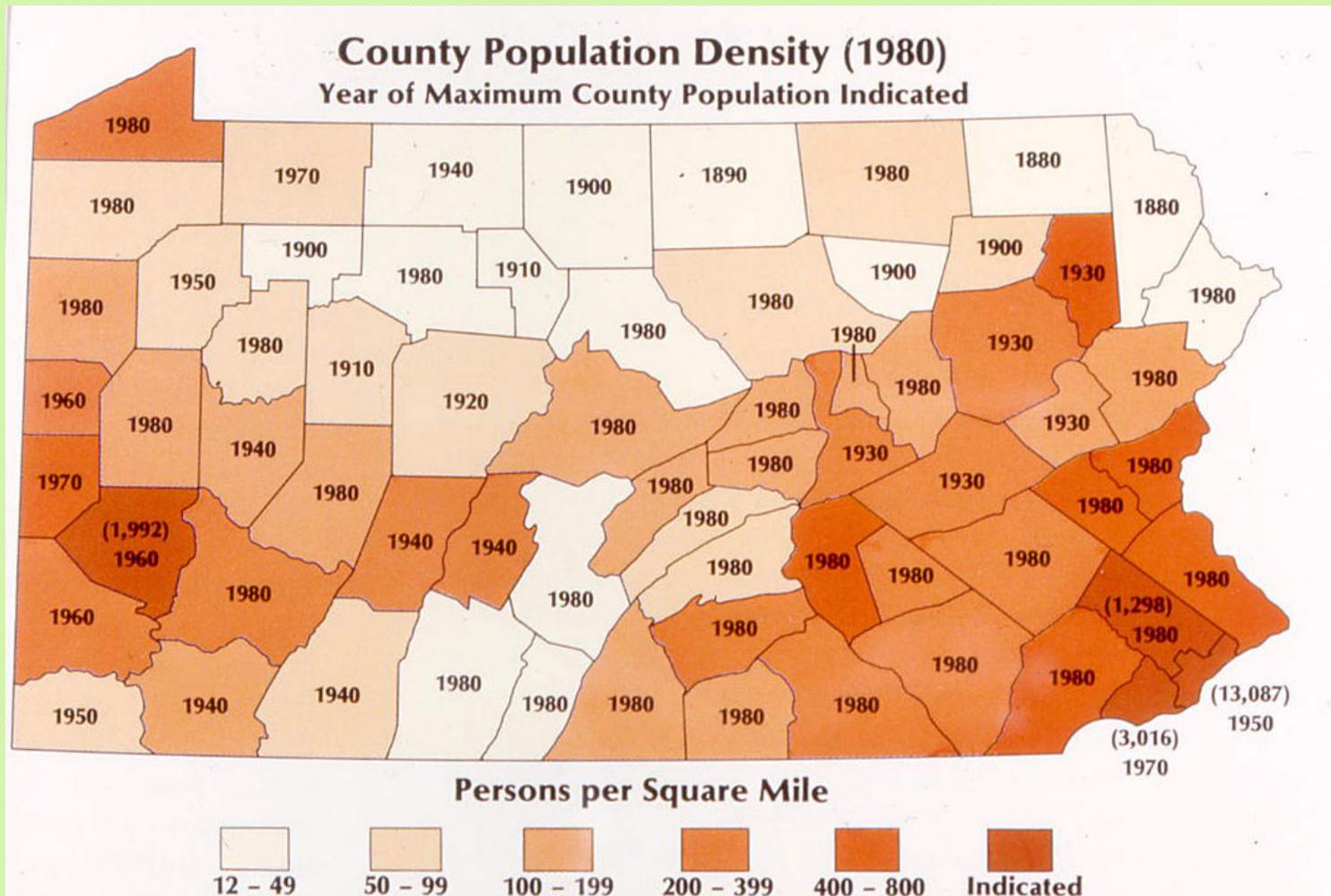


This is a map of one entire watershed, showing the various types of canoeing streams. This is the Allegheny River, stretching almost from Lake Erie to Pittsburgh, including a stretch in New York state.

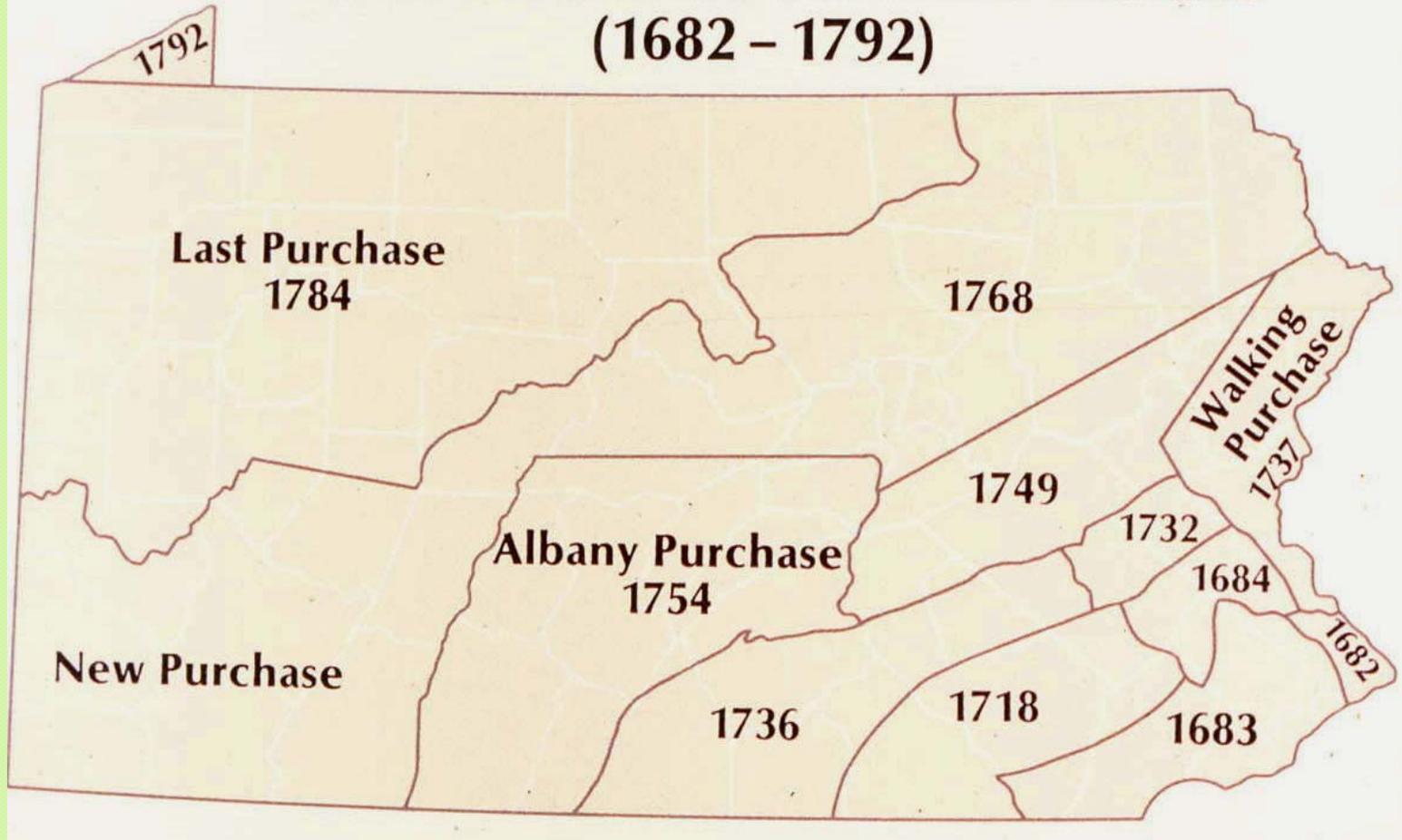


These maps show the state's commercial forest land, its recent population density by county (and when the peak population occurred in all those counties), plus a glimpse of the severity of the weather.

- Population peaked over a century ago in some of these counties, but is rising now in others. Overall, though, the density is very low in the north central area of the state.



### **3 Land Purchased from the Indians (1682 - 1792)**



This interesting map shows how and when the European settlers acquired the land from the resident Native Americans, generally a dark chapter in our history.

- Now that we know a few of the important overall features of the state, let's look at where the Tour will lead us. You might have noticed that the forests and the snow and the cold temperatures are centered in the area of lowest population density. This area is also known as Pennsylvania's Lumber Heritage Region, and most of the tour is located within those 15 northwestern and north central counties. Sometimes this is called "The Empty Quarter" of Pennsylvania.
- The next series of slides will describe the Tour and show some of the features of the various stops on it.
- There are four groupings of stops with a total of 20 in all. It would take you at least four full days to get to all of them, so taking this whole Tour is not just a weekend venture.



# Penn's Woods: An Auto Tour of Old Growth Forests

- <http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/forestry/oldgrowth/>. You can visit the Tour website at this address. The yellow letters and numbers on the map below show Tour stop locations



# AUTO TOUR STOPS

- North West section
- [Anders Run Natural Area](#)
- [Hearts Content, Allegheny National Forest](#)
- [Tionesta National Scenic and Research Natural Areas](#)
- [Cook Forest State Park](#)

- North Central section
- [quehanna Wild Area,](#)
- [Wykoff Run Natural Area](#)
- [Johnson Run Natural Area Lower](#)
- [Jerry Run Natural Area](#)
- [Bucktail State Park Natural Area](#)
- [Cranberry Swamp](#)
- [Proposed Natural/Old-growth area, Sproul State Forest](#)
- [Forrest H. Duttlinger Natural Area](#)

- South Central section
- [The Hook Natural Area](#)
- [Snyder Middleswarth Natural Area, Tall Timbers Natural Area](#)
- [Detweiler Run Natural Area](#)
- [Bear Meadows Natural Area](#)
- [Alan Seeger Natural Area](#)

- North section
- [Pine Creek Gorge](#)
- [Bark Cabin Natural Area](#)
- [Lumber Museum](#)

# Tour Stop Descriptions

- 15 of the stops can be easily driven to, but the remaining five are classified as “remote” and require some thought and planning to access. Here’s a description of one of those remote ones, known as Jerry Run Natural Area. How to get there is given below under “Access Details.”
- Lower Jerry Run is a small stream draining into Sinnemahoning Creek. The area not only contains a remnant stand of old growth white pine and hemlock , but it is also a reptile and amphibian protection area. The entire area is relatively inaccessible, but the old growth is found on a northeast-facing slope at the upper (south) end of the watershed, in the forks of Lower Jerry Run. This is a challenging and remote area visited only on foot. You can go all day without seeing another vehicle on the narrow dirt roads or another person in the forest. Solitude is almost guaranteed. Be warned and go prepared with topographic maps and compass. If worse comes to worst and you get thoroughly lost, go downhill. Eventually you will reach the valley of the Sinnemahoning Creek.

## **Access Details**

- From Sinnemahoning travel east on PA Rt 120 for approximately 0.6 miles. Turn right (south) on Wykoff Run Road and in just a short distance turn left onto Jerry Run Road (narrow, rough areas). Follow this about 7 miles to a T at Three Runs Road. Turn left (northeast) and go approximately 1 mile to Jerry Ridge Trail. This is an old woods road on the left. From this point you may want to walk if your vehicle has low clearance. About 0.25 miles down the road turn right into the parking lot and follow the orange blazed trail into the Natural Area.
- With those precautions and descriptions of the Tour sites, let's go out "into the woods" to see what we can find along the Tour.



Heart's Content Scenic Area

**USE YOUR SENSES TO**  
**Learn about the forest**

**LOOK for the secrets of the forest**  
*Although this is a very old forest, it is constantly changing. You can understand the changes if you know what to look for.*

**Look at the big beech trees**  
*They are the ones with the smooth bark. There are lots of big trees, but they are dying from beech bark disease. Look closely at the trunk of a big beech tree and you may see lots of tiny white spots. That's the beech bark scale. Within twenty years there probably won't be many large, living beech trees here.*

**Look at the huge white pine and hemlock trees**  
*Do you see any young pine trees more than a few feet tall? Why not? It's because new pine trees need lots of sunlight to get started. Since this is a very shady forest, most of the young trees are hemlock and beech - the kind that can get started in the shadows of the big trees. But hemlock seedlings are also scarce because hemlock buds and cones are important food for deer. You want to find a little pine tree, look for places where sunlight comes to the forest floor. Some of these seedlings may survive and grow. Huge pine trees like these surround you.*

**at the ferns**  
*Are there so many ferns? In some places they cover the forest like a thick carpet. This is because there are so many deer in this area and almost all of the young plants, except the ferns, which they like. If the deer population can be reduced, or the young beech protected, there will be a greater variety and quantity of plants in the future.*

**TOUCH the trees**  
*There are three different kinds of big trees in this forest. See if you can learn the names of each one by the feel of its bark and leaves. After you have touched this panel, touch a real tree along the trail and guess its name.*



Small pine old tree



White pine



**Hemlock**



**Beech**

**LISTEN for the chipmunks**  
*If you are quiet, you can hear animal sounds in the forest. Do you hear any woodpeckers or owls? Do you hear a chipmunk chattering on a log? Can the chipmunk hear you?*



**Can you SMELL the ferns?**  
*The big ferns you see growing under the tall trees have a hayscented fern. They get that name because in the fall they smell like freshly cut hay. Sniff the ferns. Do you agree? Can you smell the evergreen trees?*

Sign at Heart's Content explaining how to tell the various trees apart and other features of the forest.



Signs of an active Pileated Woodpecker having been at work in a big old beech tree.



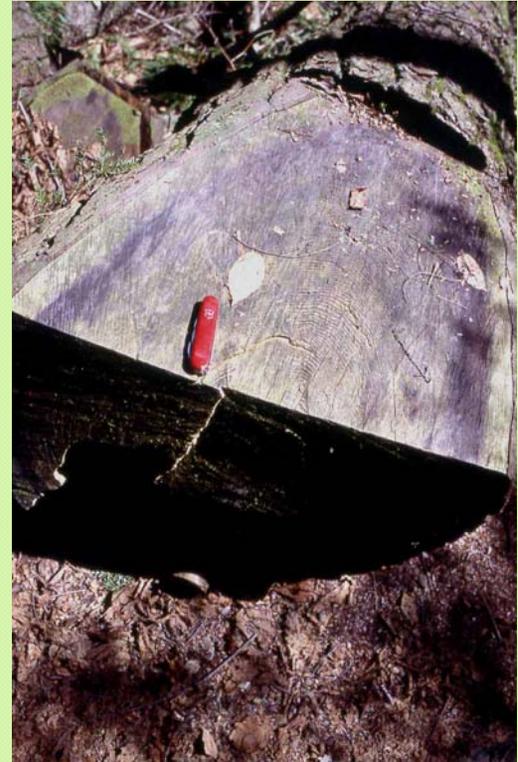
Tionesta Scenic and Research Natural Area. The lower picture shows part of a 1000 acre blow down from a tornado in 1985. It has since grown up much above head high



Beautiful big old  
beech tree at  
Tionesta



Snyder-Middleswath and Tall Timbers Natural Areas.



Tip-ups are an important sign of old-growth. Trees just lie where they fall and influence the development of the forest floor. The old tree on the right had 344 annual rings, meaning it began its growth before William Penn arrived in Penn's Woods.



The views along Rt 144 south of Renovo hold all sorts of interest. The top center photo is from an overlook, showing the flat plateau surface miles in the distance. On the lower left is a view of replanting in an area that has suffered both fire and tornado.



Rhododendrons bordering the Mid-State Trail along Detweiler Run



Cranberry Swamp, an interesting variant on the typical old-growth forest. A remnant of much colder climates from thousands of years ago.



Hammersley Fork, leading into Forrest Duttlinger Natural Area. You have to either ford it or cross it on a cable bridge, then walk a couple of miles to and up Beechbottom Creek to reach the Natural area



The lovely grove of old trees at the top of Beechbottom Creek.









The forest is a great classroom year-round. Above: on the Allegheny National Forest, right, on the Kane Experimental Forest.





Evidence of wildlife is all around.





Nighttime is a great time to be in the forest. Note the different colored stars in Orion's belt.



Waterfalls are scattered through the forest. You might find one where you least expect it.





Vernal ponds are always an interesting discovery, sometimes very noisy ones when the spring peepers are doing their thing.



These two photographs show the difference between the pond viewed without and with a polarizing filter to cut out the sky's reflection.



There's interesting human activity too!





The sky is a spectacular part of almost every day in the forest.

Come back and visit when you have time to take full advantage of all Penn's Woods have to offer. We have only shown the tiniest fraction of all there is to see on this Tour.

