

Susquehannock State Park

Three properties along the scenic Lower Susquehanna River comprise the Susquehannock State Park Complex. The 224-acre Susquehannock State Park is on a wooded plateau overlooking the Susquehanna River in southern Lancaster County. Besides the outstanding view, the park offers a variety of recreational opportunities for year-round fun. Scenic views of the river abound just north at Pinnacle Overlook, and northwest at Urey Overlook.

Directions

SUSQUEHANNOCK STATE PARK, LANCASTER COUNTY: From Lancaster and PA 372, turn left on Susquehannock Drive then right onto Park Road. From York and PA 372, turn right on River Road, right on Furniss Road, hard right on Susquehannock Road, and right onto Park Road.

PINNACLE OVERLOOK, LANCASTER COUNTY: From Lancaster and PA 324, turn left onto River Road. After about 5 miles, turn right onto Pinnacle Road. From York and PA 372, turn left on River Road and then left onto Pinnacle Road.

UREY OVERLOOK, YORK COUNTY: Urey Overlook is along PA 425 between PA 74 and PA 2018.

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 and dial 911. Directions to the nearest hospital are posted on bulletin boards.

NEAREST HOSPITALS

Lancaster General Hospital
555 North Duke Street
Lancaster, PA 17602
717-544-5511
or
Memorial Hospital
325 South Belmont Street
York, PA 17405
800-436-4326

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.

History

SUSQUEHANNOCK INDIANS

While exploring the Chesapeake Bay in 1608, Captain John Smith first encountered the Susquehannocks. In his journal, Captain Smith described them as “seemed like Giants to the English” but archeological research shows the Susquehannocks to have been of average size.

It is unknown what the Iroquoian-speaking Susquehannocks called themselves, but the name that graces the river, the people and the state park is derived from the name, Sasquesahanough, given to Captain Smith by his Algonquian-speaking American Indian interpreter. The word has been translated “people at the falls” or “roily water people” referring to the Susquehannock’s home by the river. This small but powerful tribe occupied only one or two major towns at a time, but controlled the important trade routes along the Susquehanna River and the Chesapeake Bay. Their last town was near present-day Conestoga and the Susquehannocks were sometimes referred to as Conestoga Indians.

During the Beaver Wars, 1649 to 1656, the Susquehannocks formed an alliance with Maryland to acquire rifles and successfully fought the much larger Iroquois Confederacy. A brief peace followed before the Susquehannocks again waged war with the Iroquois until suffering a major defeat in 1675.

Some Susquehannocks moved to old Fort Piscataway, below present-day Washington DC. Problems on the frontiers led to the mobilization of the militias of Maryland and Virginia and in confusion, they surrounded the peaceful Susquehannock village. Five Susquehannock chiefs went to

Recreational Opportunities



SCENIC VIEWS: Panoramic views of the Susquehanna River can be seen from the 380 feet high overlooks of the park complex. When enjoying the views, visitors should remain a safe distance back from drop-off areas and children should be closely supervised.

At Susquehannock, **Hawk Point Overlook** offers visitors a glimpse of the Conowingo Reservoir, the northernmost and largest of several hydroelectric impoundments on the lower Susquehanna. Straddling the Pennsylvania and Maryland border, the reservoir generates hydroelectric power and cooling water for the Peach Bottom nuclear reactors while also serving as a popular boating and fishing destination.

Located downstream on the far left of Hawk Point, visitors can see Mount Johnson Island, the world’s first bald eagle

Hiking: 5.6 miles of trails

Scenic hiking trails offer a variety of interesting habitats and evidence of past use of the area. Native holly, rhododendron, spring and summer wildflowers, and a variety of other plant life await discovery. Sit quietly or walk along a trail to observe deer, songbirds, lizards and many other forms of wildlife. From the overlooks, watch for vultures, hawks, osprey and even bald eagles. Several trails also feature remnants of old homestead sites.

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

CHIMNEY TRAIL: 0.35 mile, more difficult hiking

This wooded trail is great for birding and viewing spring wildflowers.

FIRE TRAIL: 0.33 mile, more difficult hiking

Actually a short logging road, this trail features a nice stand of poplar trees.

FIVE POINTS TRAIL: 0.7 mile, most difficult hiking
Hikers can see rhododendron and views of creek valleys from this trail.

sanctuary. For many years, Mount Johnson Island hosted a pair of nesting bald eagles. Visitors can use the optical viewer or binoculars to spot eagles, osprey, turkey vultures and black vultures that regularly soar by these cliffs using columns of rising air called thermals.

Wisslers Run Overlook gives an excellent view of the Susquehanna’s naturally rocky riverbed. The overlook also provides a view of the Muddy Run pump storage hydroelectric plant with the impressive 21-span Norman Wood Bridge and Holtwood Dam in the background. The Osprey nest on the large power line towers in front of the overlook.

HOLLY TRAIL: 0.5 mile, easiest hiking

Native holly and Christmas fern line this easily hiked trail.

LANDIS TRAIL: 0.6 mile, more difficult hiking

Named for Lester Landis, a former owner of the historic Long Home near the park office, this trail features a fine stand of Virginia bluebells that bloom in late April and early May.

NATURE TRAIL: 0.3 mile, easiest hiking

This trail features mature hardwood trees, ferns and wildflowers.

OVERLOOK TRAIL: 0.55 mile, more difficult hiking

This popular trail leads to Hawk Point and Wisslers Run overlooks, which offer memorable views of the Susquehanna River.

PINE TREE TRAIL: 0.31 mile, most difficult hiking

This short, steep and rocky hike winds its way down to Wisslers Run.

Susquehanna’s Indians by Barry Kent

Indians in Pennsylvania by Paul A. Wallace

Indian Wars by Robert M. Utley and Wilcomb E. Washburn

THE DRUMORE SICKLE

Scotch-Irish began homesteading the eastern shore of the Susquehanna River as early as 1715. They called the area Drumore after Dromore, a place in Ireland where many Scotch-Irish families emigrated from, including the Long and Neel families.

Drumore became known for the manufacturing of sickles and scythes used for grain harvesting. The Drumore Sickle had a reputation for its quality and affordable price which drove the English competition out of the market.

There were several sickle makers in Drumore, crafting sickles and scythes in small blacksmith shops and larger sickle mills. The Long family are standouts with four generations of sickle and scythe makers beginning in the early 1700s through the 1860s.

By the 1860s, the scythe was the standard reaping tool. It would be the late 1880s before machines like the McCormick’s Reaper would replace the sickle and scythe on the farm.

James Buchanan Long was among the last sickle makers in Drumore township, having worked alongside his grandfather and father. He would also be the executor of both of their estates.

JAMES B. LONG HOME – 1850

As part of his inheritance, James chose a piece of his father’s land to farm and build a home for his wife Catherine and

Just upstream of Susquehannock, **Pinnacle Overlook** offers beautiful views of the Susquehanna River’s Lake Aldred. The overlook is a good place to access the Kellys Run Trail System of the Lancaster County Conservancy and the Conestoga Trail System maintained by the Lancaster Hiking Club.

Upstream of Susquehannock on the west side of the river is **Urey [your-ee] Overlook**, which provides spectacular views of the river, Weise Island and the Safe Harbor Dam. Urey Overlook is on the 193-mile Mason-Dixon Trail, a blue-blazed foot path which connects the Appalachian Trail to the Brandywine Trail.

HORSEBACK RIDING: 2 miles of trails

The trails of the park provide a beautiful setting for horseback riding, although it is prohibited at the overlooks and on Rhododendron Trail. Several shaded hitching rails for horses are located in the park to accommodate riding clubs and horse-drawn wagons.

ORGANIZED GROUP TENTING: The four organized group campsites can accommodate various group sizes. Qualified adult and youth groups may reserve space in the organized group tenting area for overnight use. Call toll-free, 888-PA-PARKS (888-727-2757) for reservations.

 **PICNICKING:** More than 80 picnic tables and 20 grills are spread throughout both sunny and shaded areas of Susquehannock State Park. Parking, water fountains, restrooms, a playground, volleyball court, horseshoe pits, and two softball fields with backstops and benches are easily accessible. Two large picnic pavilions with grills, water, electric outlets and lights can accommodate larger groups and special events and may be reserved up to 11 months in advance for a fee. Unreserved picnic pavilions are free on a first-come, first-served basis. 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.

PIPELINE TRAIL: 0.24 mile, easiest hiking

This leisurely stroll follows an old, abandoned pipeline right-of-way that crosses the park.



RHODODENDRON TRAIL: 1.2 miles, most difficult hiking

The park’s longest and most difficult trail crosses steep and rocky terrain and rewards the hiker with spectacular rhododendron blooms during late June and early July. Remnants of the homestead of Thomas Neel and an impressive beech tree can be seen along this trail.

SPRING TRAIL: 0.4 mile, easiest hiking

Pawpaw trees, with their banana-like fruits, can be found along this trail.

six children. Constructed of field stone, it would have been covered in stucco and it still retains its slate roof. The front door is a “Bible and Cross” frame and panel door and the side door is an older style plank door. Inside the walls are horsehair plaster and one room has a large cooking fireplace with panel doors to close when not in use keeping out the cold. On the opposite side of the house is a small chimney for a parlor stove. The floors are constructed of wide wood planks. In the basement’s earthen floor is a cold cellar for storing preserved foods. While the exterior of the structure has been stabilized the interior is currently not safe for public visitation. The home is located next to the park office.



Nearby Attractions

The lower Susquehanna River Valley offers a wide variety of outdoor recreation opportunities including hiking, wildlife watching, boating, fishing, geocaching, picnicking, horseback riding, and environmental and cultural education.

EAST SIDE OF THE RIVER

Information on nearby attractions is available from the Pennsylvania Dutch Convention and Visitors Bureau. www.padutchcountry.com

The Conestoga Area Historical Society Museum and Gallery depicts rural life in southwestern Lancaster County. Exhibits include the Conestoga Wagon, blacksmith shop and local American Indians. www.lancastercountymuseums.org/index.htm

Tucquan Glen offers a two-mile long loop trail along the banks of Tucquan Creek; a Pennsylvania Scenic River. The trail follows the gorge to the Susquehanna River through mature poplars, white and pin oaks and hickory trees. www.lancasterconservancy.org/preserve/tucquan-glen/

The **PPL Holtwood Preserve** has many attractions. www.pplpreserves.com/preserves/holtwood/

Kellys Run Trail System provides six miles of loop trails within the Kellys Run Natural Area leading to a spectacular view of the Susquehanna River from the Pinnacle Overlook.

Shenks Ferry Wildflower Preserve is a popular destination for viewing more than 70 species of spring wildflowers, including jack-in-the-pulpit, trillium, Dutchman’s breeches and bluebells.



WEST SIDE OF THE RIVER

Information on nearby attractions is available from the York County Convention and Visitors Bureau. www.yorkpa.org

The Mason-Dixon Trail is a 193-mile, blue-blazed walking trail passing through historic and scenic areas of Pennsylvania, Delaware and Maryland. Beginning near Lock 12, about 15 miles of this trail follow the Susquehanna River on the York County side and passes Urey Overlook. www.masondixontrail.org

The Indian Steps Museum houses over 10,000 American Indian artifacts. This Arts and Crafts style building sits along the Susquehanna River and was the first American Indian museum in the United States. The museum is open mid-April through October. www.indiansteps.org

Holtwood Whitewater Park offers experienced kayakers the opportunity to surf serious waves on the Susquehanna River. Information on the whitewater park and water releases can be found at: www.pplweb.com/ppl-generation/ppl-holtwood/whitewater-schedule.aspx

Lock 12 Historic Area is a restored lock of the Susquehanna and Tidewater Canal built between 1836 and 1839 for commerce between the greater Harrisburg area and the Chesapeake Bay. The site also includes a restored limekiln and sawmill. www.pplpreserves.com/preserves/holtwood/
Samuel S. Lewis State Park near Wrightsville, York County, offers picnicking, hiking, disc golf and sweeping views of the Susquehanna River. 717-252-1134

Wildlife Watching

Overlooks are great places to see birds from an unusual angle; from above! Bald eagles, osprey and the more common turkey and black vultures regularly patrol the sky by the Hawk Point Overlook. Spring and fall are peak seasons for bird migrations and the overlooks of the park provide great views of migrating hawks, gulls, eagles, ducks, geese, swans, songbirds and shorebirds.

Many islands can be seen from the Hawk Point Overlook, including Mount Johnson Island, the world’s first bald eagle sanctuary. From the overlook, the island is downstream on the far left. Mount Johnson Island featured nesting eagles for many years. Currently, eagles nest on an island just upstream from the overlook.

Conejohela Flats, an internationally recognized migratory shorebird resting area, is a few miles upstream from Hawk Point. As many as 38 species of shorebirds feed and rest on the Flats before continuing their journeys to their breeding

Susquehannock State Park



For More Information Contact:

Susquehannock State Park
6000 Mount Pisgah Road
York, PA 17406
717-252-1134
email: susquehannocksp@pa.gov
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.



grounds, which can be as far north as the Arctic Circle, or wintering grounds in Central and South America. The Conejohela Flats has been designated a state Important Bird Area (IBA) by the Pennsylvania Audubon Society.