

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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2014



KINGS GAP ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CENTER



Kings Gap's unique attractions are its mountainous terrain, extensive forest and panoramic views, which may be experienced while driving the winding road to the mansion area, or while hiking the trails. The sweeping view of the Cumberland Valley from the Cameron-Masland Mansion is impressive at any time of the year.

Kings Gap Environmental Education

Center is one of several state parks specifically dedicated to provide environmental education and interpretive programs to the citizens of Pennsylvania. A variety of programs are available for children, teachers and the general public that increase knowledge and awareness of the values and function of our natural resources. Whether enjoying Kings Gap through recreational activities, educational programs,

or its scenic beauty, visitors can be inspired to become stewards of Pennsylvania's outstanding natural resources.

Kings Gap consists of 2,531 acres of forest on South Mountain, with more than 18 miles of hiking trails, a permanent orienteering course, picnicking, hunting and other recreational and educational opportunities. The mansion provides facilities for meals and overnight lodging, and may be reserved for meetings, weddings, receptions and similar functions.

Directions

From Interstate 81, take Exit 37. Travel south on PA 233 for about 2.3 miles. Turn left onto Pine Road and continue 2.2 miles. Turn right onto Kings Gap Road.

The Cameron-Masland Mansion is 3.5 miles from the center's entrance. Follow the winding, paved road to the top of the mountain. In the Mansion Area, bear left to follow the one-way directional signs. Parking is available in several lots adjacent to the education building and mansion.

RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Spend the Day

HUNTING AND FIREARMS:

About 1,860 acres are open to hunting, trapping and the training of dogs during established seasons. Common game species are deer, turkey and squirrel.

An additional 633 acres is listed and posted as no hunting. However, this area is open to deer hunting (both antlered and antlerless) from the first Monday after Thanksgiving through the third Saturday after Thanksgiving - the traditional deer season. This area is closed to all types of hunting during the remainder of the year. Hunters should be aware of "Safety Zones" both posted and not posted. Contact the center office for additional information on the hunting areas.

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. Exceptions include: law enforcement officers and individuals with a valid *Pennsylvania License to Carry Firearms* are authorized to carry a firearm concealed

on their person while they are within a state park.

ORIENTEERING: A permanent orienteering course is located at Kings Gap. Orienteering is a sport that involves using a map and compass to navigate a designated course. Additional information on orienteering and copies of beginner course maps are available at the education building foyer. Additional course maps are available upon request. "Introduction to Orienteering" programs are offered in fall and spring.

PICNICKING: Picnic tables are located throughout the center property. Drinking water is only available in the Mansion Area. Restrooms are available at the education building, Pine Plantation and Kings Gap Hollow areas.

HIKING: see reverse side.

Stay the Night



ORGANIZED GROUP TENTING: This wooded area located in the Kings Gap Hollow Area has one site with a capacity of 30 people and may be reserved year-round by organized adult or youth groups. Reservations from 11 months up to two days

in advance can only be made by calling toll-free 888-PA-PARKS, 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday to Saturday. Reservations two days or less in advance can be made by contacting the center's office at 717-486-5031, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday to Friday.

MEETINGS, RETREATS AND TRAININGS:

The mansion is available to host meetings, retreats and trainings for government agencies, private businesses and non-profit organizations. Meeting rooms, food service and overnight accommodations are available from mid-April through mid-November. Contact the center office for additional information, availability, prices and to make a reservation.

WEDDINGS, RECEPTIONS AND OTHER SPECIAL EVENTS: From sweeping views of mountains and the Cumberland Valley to the historical backdrop of the Cameron-Masland Mansion and surroundings, Kings Gap offers a unique setting for weddings and receptions. The mansion and grounds are available to rent for weddings, receptions and a variety of special events from mid-April through mid-November. Overnight accommodations are also available. Contact the center office for additional information, availability, prices and to make a reservation.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND INTERPRETATION



Kings Gap is committed to providing a diverse array of environmental education and interpretive programs. Programming is offered year-round to schools, civic groups and the community. Educational programs are standards-based, age-specific and generate learning through discovery and a hands-on approach. Kings Gap also strives

to teach outdoor skills that lead to healthy, lifelong outdoor enjoyment.

A schedule of community programs is available at the center. School programs can be arranged by calling the center at 717-486-3799. Check the Calendar of Events at www.visitPAparks.com for a listing of events from today forward.

SECONDARY (9-12): Programs emphasize critical thinking and problem solving skills while fostering an appreciation for the environment. Kings Gap offers *Watershed Education*, and programs on topics like problem solving and biodiversity.

COLLEGE: Programs are provided upon request. Externship opportunities are available for students seeking degrees in environmental education, resource management, biology and other related fields.

TEACHER TRAINING: A variety of natural history and curricula workshops are

available to teachers, through both credit and non-credit workshops as well as in-service and pre-service teacher workshops. These workshops are designed to provide information and ideas that can easily be integrated into the classroom.



SUMMER CAMPS: During the summer months, youths ages 4 to 12 are invited to participate in the Bureau of State Parks' DiscoverE Day Camps. This series of outdoor learning programs give young people opportunities to explore and learn about the environment in three age specific levels.

SPECIAL EVENTS: Kings Gap provides special programming on a variety of topics, including environmental scout day, an annual native plant sale, adventure camp, new family camper program and earth week.

PUBLIC INTERPRETIVE PROGRAMS: Community programs present various environmental topics in an informative and entertaining way through media presentations, trail walks and public workshops.

WILDLIFE WATCHING

Kings Gap straddles South Mountain, which rises in elevation from 700 feet to 1400 feet above sea level. This dramatic elevation change gives Kings Gap two distinct forest habitats.

On the lower slopes of South Mountain is a forest habitat of white oak, red oak and tulip trees, and sparse undergrowth. In the tree canopy, birds like scarlet tanagers, Baltimore orioles and vireos hunt for insects to feed their young. Ovenbirds, eastern towhees and wood thrushes scour the ground for insects. Sharp-shinned hawks hunt for songbirds, reptiles and amphibians. These woods are also wet with spring seeps, small natural ponds and vernal pools found after the spring thaw and rains. Wood frogs and spotted salamanders journey to the fish-free waters to mate and lay their eggs to hatch and grow in relative safety. Summer brings on the blooms of fly poison and white snakeroot.

The Pine Plantation, a man-made habitat at the foot of the mountain, is home to animals that prefer coniferous forests. The chatter of a red squirrel often breaks the silence of the pine forest. In winter, red-breasted nuthatches scour the tree bark for food. Although impacted by invasive plants, the understory is also home to spicelbush, a good food for mockingbirds, catbirds and bluebirds. Barred owls nest here.

The dry ridge tops of South Mountain are a forest habitat of chestnut oak trees, with an understory of mountain laurel, blueberry and black huckleberry. Pileated woodpeckers, eastern wood-peevees, brown creepers and kinglets thrive in the dry forest. The showy blooms of pink lady slipper and the tiny flowers of trailing arbutus show briefly in the spring. White-tailed deer, turkey and fox squirrel feast on the acorn crop each fall. The ridge tops are excellent sites to view both black and turkey vultures soaring on warm updrafts from the valley.

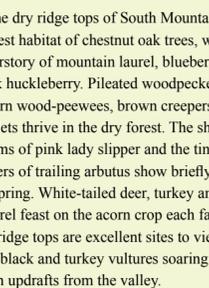
Kings Gap is great habitat for a variety of reptiles, including box turtles, five-lined skinks, northern copperheads and timber

rattlesnakes. Snake sightings are not uncommon in the summer months. If left alone, snakes are usually not aggressive. The timber rattlesnakes of South Mountain are an isolated population whose numbers have dramatically declined in recent years. For this reason it is unlawful to hunt, take, catch or kill timber rattlesnakes in the South Mountain region. For additional information on these reptiles, contact the center office.

The Irishtown Gap Access and Pine Brook Access areas are gateways into an undeveloped section of the center grounds. This tract is crisscrossed with existing old trails and logging roads which are not blazed or marked. Many of the trails can be impassable due to wet conditions which support abundant moisture-loving plants like royal fern. For the adventurous, wildlife abounds. Black bear, coyote and fox are sometimes sighted in this area. The calls of the common flicker and black-capped chickadee breaks the silence of the woodlands.



Red-breasted nuthatch



Spotted salamander



Five-lined skink

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. Look for directions to the nearest hospital on bulletin boards, education building or center office doors.

NEAREST HOSPITAL

Carlisle Regional Medical Center
361 Alexander Spring Road, 17015
Emergency: 717-249-1212



Information and Reservations

For More Information Contact
Kings Gap Environmental Education Center
500 Kings Gap Road
Carlisle, PA 17015
GPS DD: Lat. 40.09321 Long. -77.2683
717-486-5031
email: kingsgapsp@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.

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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.

Nearby Attractions

Information on nearby attractions is available from the Cumberland Valley Visitor Bureau.
www.visitcumberlandvalley.com

PINE GROVE FURNACE STATE PARK: Visitors enjoy many recreational opportunities, including two mountain lakes, Laurel Lake and Fuller Lake, hiking the Appalachian Trail, biking the rail trail, camping, fishing, swimming, visiting the Appalachian Trail Museum and imagining when the park was a charcoal-fired iron furnace community.

MICHAUX STATE FOREST: This 85,000-acre forest offers general recreation like hunting, fishing and hiking.
717-352-2211

THE NATURE CONSERVANCY'S FOREST POOL PRESERVE AT KINGS GAP AND MOUNT HOLLY MARSH PRESERVE: This 70-acre natural area adjacent to Kings Gap State Park in Cumberland County is part of the South Mountain landscape and serves as a demonstration site for The Nature Conservancy's restoration of vernal pools. Visitors can take a self-guided tour of the project. Kiosks explain the technique used to restore each pool. 717-232-6001
www.nature.org/Pennsylvania

HUNTSDALE STATE FISH HATCHERY: The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission raises trout and other fish for release into Pennsylvania lakes and streams.

Visitor Hours Daily, 8 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
717-486-3419



HIKING: 20 MILES OF TRAILS



Sturdy footwear is recommended due to the rocky footing on most trails. Trails are well marked, but taking a trail map on your hike is strongly recommended. Maps are available at the trailhead parking areas and the center office.

Distances listed are one-way.

TRAIL DIFFICULTY RATINGS:

Ratings are based on technical challenge, not physical exertion.

Easiest

Elevation gain or loss is minimal, less than 5% slope, maximum 20% up to 100 feet

More Difficult

Elevation gain or loss is moderate, 12% slope, maximum 30% up to 300 feet

Most Difficult

Elevation gain or loss is usually severe, less than 18% slope, maximum 30+% up to 500 feet

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

1. PINE PLANTATION TRAIL: 0.6 mile, easiest hiking
This loop trail on soft pine needles has

exhibits to explain management techniques used to thin trees within the 42-acre coniferous plantation.

2. WHISPERING PINES TRAIL: 0.3 mile, paved, easiest hiking

This ADA accessible trail loops through the interior of the pine plantation.

3. ROCK SCREE TRAIL: 1.9 miles, more difficult hiking

This linear trail connects the Pine Plantation and Mansion areas by crossing over the ridge and rocky outcrop where Antietam quartzite was quarried to construct the mansion.

4. RIDGE OVERLOOK TRAIL: 0.8 mile, most difficult hiking

This linear, ridge-top trail with boulder outcrops and a view of the valley below presents a more challenging hike. Rock Scree and Kings Gap Hollow trails provide access to Ridge Overlook Trail.

5. FOREST HERITAGE TRAIL: 1.8 miles, more difficult hiking

This loop trail passes several charcoal hearths, unused for over 100 years.

Maple Hollow and Rock Scree trails provide access to Forest Heritage Trail.

6. MAPLE HOLLOW TRAIL: 1.3 miles, more difficult hiking

This loop trail traverses a hollow with rich soils, plentiful water and resulting maple forest.

7. WOODLAND ECOLOGY TRAIL: 0.6 mile, easiest hiking

Exhibits help hikers identify forest plants and interpret the ecology of a chestnut oak forest on this quiet, mossy loop trail.

8. SCENIC VISTA TRAIL: 2.5 miles, more difficult hiking

This linear trail offers rolling terrain on the way to a pleasant overlook. Benches are strategically placed to relax and enjoy the surrounding view of unbroken forest.

9. WHITE OAKS TRAIL: 0.3 mile, paved, easiest hiking

This ADA accessible loop trail has exhibits to interpret the ecology of a deciduous white oak forest.

10. WATERSHED TRAIL: 1.9 miles, more difficult hiking

This loop trail encompasses the headwaters for Kings Gap Hollow Run, including a rocky portion beside the stream with its many small pools and cascades.

11. BOUNDARY TRAIL: 1.5 miles, most difficult hiking

This linear trail travels through an oak/pitch pine forest and blueberry/huckleberry understorey.

12. KINGS GAP HOLLOW TRAIL: 2.8 miles, more difficult hiking

This linear trail winds along its namesake

stream as it follows the gap through the mountain.

13. LOCUST POINT TRAIL: 1 mile, most difficult hiking

This trail loops off of Boundary Trail and then travels to a clearing created by fallen, dead locust trees that presents a view of Kings Gap Hollow.

14. BUCK RIDGE TRAIL: 6 miles, most difficult hiking

This linear trail links Kings Gap to Pine Grove Furnace State Park through Michaux State Forest using a network of rocky footpaths and old logging roads. The trail begins at the mansion and follows Scenic Vista Trail before heading into Michaux State Forest.

15. BLACK GUM TRAIL: 1.1 miles, more difficult hiking

This linear trail with an abundance of black gum (tupelo) trees follows the southwestern contour of the mountainside near the Mansion Area. Kings Gap Hollow and Forest Heritage trails provide access to Black Gum Trail.

16. NATURE TRAIL: 0.2 mile, easiest hiking

This loop trail by the education building guides walkers through open forest on a safe and level circuit around the education building.

17. COLD SPRING OVERLOOK TRAIL: 0.04 mile, easiest hiking

This broad trail ends at a view of the Cold Spring Run Valley.

HISTORY

HUMAN IMPACTS ON SOUTH MOUNTAIN 1750-1900 ERA

The exact origin of the name "Kings Gap" is unknown, but may date back to early settlers in this region. The relatively young forests of Kings Gap reflect the influence of the charcoaling industry from the 1700s through the late 1800s. Before it was economical to ship coal and coke, wood charcoal fueled the iron furnaces located nearby. The forests of South Mountain were systematically clear-cut on a 20- to 25-year cycle to satisfy the unquenchable thirst for charcoal by the nine iron furnaces in the Kings Gap area. A relatively young forest now exists as a result of these repeated cuttings.

To make the charcoal, wood was piled and burned slowly on hearths. These flat, 30- to 50-foot diameter circles where the charcoal was made can still be found. Even more than 100 years later, few woody plants grow on the old hearths.

JAMES MCCORMICK CAMERON 1906-1951 ERA

Near the turn of the century, James McCormick Cameron, a member of the politically prominent Cameron family from Harrisburg, purchased many parcels of land surrounding Kings Gap. Around 1908, Cameron erected a 32-room stone mansion as a summer home. The threat of fire was the most likely reason Mr. Cameron chose to have the mansion exterior faced with the hard native Antietam quartzite quarried nearby and built the interior structure of reinforced concrete. At the turn of the century, forest fires on South Mountain were a constant threat due to poor forestry practices.

Still remaining from the Cameron mountain estate is the water tower, carriage house and small generator building, stone walled mansion garden, caretaker's house (currently a private residence), and ice house where ice, hauled from Pine Grove Furnace each winter, kept food cool during the summer months.

C. H. MASLANDS AND SONS 1951-1973 ERA

With Mr. Cameron's passing in 1949, C. H. Masland and Son Carpet Company of Carlisle purchased the mansion and the surrounding 1,430 acres. The remaining acreage passed into other ownership. Masland refurbished the mansion, then called the "Masland Guest House," which was used as accommodations for potential clients and as a training site for employees and sales representatives. As conference rooms and overnight facilities became more available in the Carlisle area, it was no longer economical for the company to operate its own guest house.

FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

The Nature Conservancy, assisted by the Commonwealth, purchased the mansion and 1,430 acres of South Mountain in 1973. Kings Gap was dedicated as the third state park environmental education center in 1977.

In 2011, the Nature Conservancy, assisted by the Commonwealth, purchased 1,077 acres, designated as "Irishtown Gap Tract," reuniting most of the original Cameron estate.

