

Shikellamy State Park

Shikellamy State Park is in Union and Northumberland counties. The 54-acre Shikellamy Marina is on the southern tip of Packers Island at the confluence of the West Branch and North Branch Susquehanna River and offers hiking and biking trails, a marina, and a boat launch. The 166-acre Shikellamy Overlook is on the western shore of the Susquehanna River. A 360-foot cliff overlooks the confluence of the branches of the Susquehanna River.



Directions

GPS DD: Lat. 40.88248 Long. -76.79101

Shikellamy Marina is reached off PA 147 (Bridge Avenue) on Packers Island.

Shikellamy Overlook is reached from US 15 by following County Line Road east for 2.3 miles to the park entrance road. From US 11, the overlook is reached by traveling west on County Line Road for about 0.25 mile to the park entrance road.

Wildlife Watching

The habitats found in the two properties of the park are as different as the two properties.

The clifftop, Shikellamy Overlook area, has dry, rocky soil that supports forest tree species like sugar maple, pignut hickory, American beech, white pine, and red oak. Flowers associated with this northern hardwood forest are pink lady's slippers, yellow and white trout lilies, teaberries, mayapples, Virginia bluebells, and wood sorrels. Forest birds, like warblers, nest on the hill, and the cliff provides good viewing of raptors like osprey, bald eagles, red-tailed hawks, and vultures. White-tailed deer, red foxes, wild turkey, coyote, and even black bears have been seen on the overlook.

Shikellamy Marina is an excellent example of a riparian habitat, which is along or near water. Fluctuating river levels affect the moisture of the rich soil and can scour away or deposit soil, constantly changing the island. Tree species growing on the island must be able to tolerate occasionally being partially submerged, like sycamore, silver maple, speckled alder, river birch, cottonwood, and black willow. Wet soil tolerant wildflowers found on the island include spotted touch-me-nots, turtleheads, and skunk cabbages.

Birds flourish on and around the island. The river is habitat to many species of fish and amphibians, which in turn are food for herons, egrets, bald eagles, and osprey. Spring and fall migrations bring various species of ducks, sandpipers, and gulls to the water. Various birds following the river during migration stop on the island to rest and refuel before continuing their journey.

Always view wildlife from a safe distance. Feeding squirrels, ducks, geese, or any other wildlife is prohibited. Feeding wildlife lures too many animals into an area that cannot support them, and improper food may be unhealthy for the animals.



Horned grebe

Recreational Opportunities



HIKING: 3 miles of trails

At Shikellamy Marina, 1.5 miles of paved trails encircle the southern tip of Packers Island.

A walk around the 1.7-mile nature trail on Shikellamy Overlook can reveal the wildlife in the park. Different forest stages can be seen from scrub forest to mature hardwood forest.

BOATING: unlimited hp motors permitted

This portion of the Susquehanna River is known as Lake Augusta, a 3,060-acre lake formed by the world's largest inflatable dam that is two miles downstream from the park. The seasonal lake averages six feet in depth and is a popular water-skiing area.

Motorboats must display a boat registration from any state. Non-powered boats must display one of the following: boat registration from any state; launch permit or mooring permit from Pennsylvania State Parks, available at most state park offices; launch use permit from the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission.

MARINA: Of the 73 marina slips, about 60 can be leased from late May to early October. Slips for transient boaters may be rented for one day up to 14 days. Permits can be obtained from the park office. Four courtesy slips can be used for up to 20 minutes. Overnight trailer parking and dry-boat storage are prohibited.

BOAT LAUNCHING: The Shikellamy Marina section of the park has a boat launch for transient boaters with 90 parking spaces available for trailer-pulling vehicles and 750 spaces for single vehicles.

BOAT RENTALS: During the summer, a boat concession near the boat launch rents pontoons, jet skis, canoes, and kayaks.



SCENIC VIEWS: The two overlooks on Shikellamy Overlook are 360 feet above the river confluence. They offer spectacular views of Sunbury, Northumberland, and the surrounding areas.

In Shikellamy Marina, the Kury Point provides a scenic view of Lake Augusta and the river.

PICNICKING: Both areas of the park offer picnic tables, picnic pavilions, drinking water, and restrooms. Picnic pavilions 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.dcnr.pa.gov/StateParks or call toll-free 888-PA-PARKS (888-727-2527), 7:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Monday to Saturday.

BICYCLING: A 1.5-mile, paved hiking and biking path encircles Shikellamy Marina.

FISHING: The Susquehanna River and the 3,060-acre Lake Augusta are popular for basses and walleyes. Other game fish found in the lake are muskellunges, black crappies, northern pikes, and catfishes. All Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission regulations and laws apply.

History

SHAMOKIN AND SHIKELLAMY

In 1727, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, the People of the long house, took control of the lands of the West Branch of the Susquehanna River. The new southern border was administered from Shamokin (the Place of Eels) at the confluence of the forks of the Susquehanna River (modern Sunbury, Packers Island, and Northumberland). Shamokin was one of the most important Indigenous cities in Pennsylvania during the first half of the 18th century and had a reputation for rowdiness. The resident Haudenosaunee welcomed displaced tribes to shelter under their Tree of Peace, including, Conestoga, Conoy, Nanticoke, Tutelo, Saponi, Occaneechi, Tuscarora, Lenape and their king, and the rebellious Shawnee, making for a volatile atmosphere, made even more incendiary with visits by their British trading partners.

Canoe routes and about ten Indigenous paths converged on the town, including important highways to Indigenous cities like the Great Warriors Path to Tioga and the Haudenosaunee homelands in New York, the Great Shamokin Path to Kittanning, the Paxtang Path to Harrisburg, the Penns Creek Path to Frankstown; the Tuscarora Path to North Carolina; and also the Tulpehocken Path which led through Conrad Weiser's hometown and on to the capital of the Province of Pennsylvania at Philadelphia.

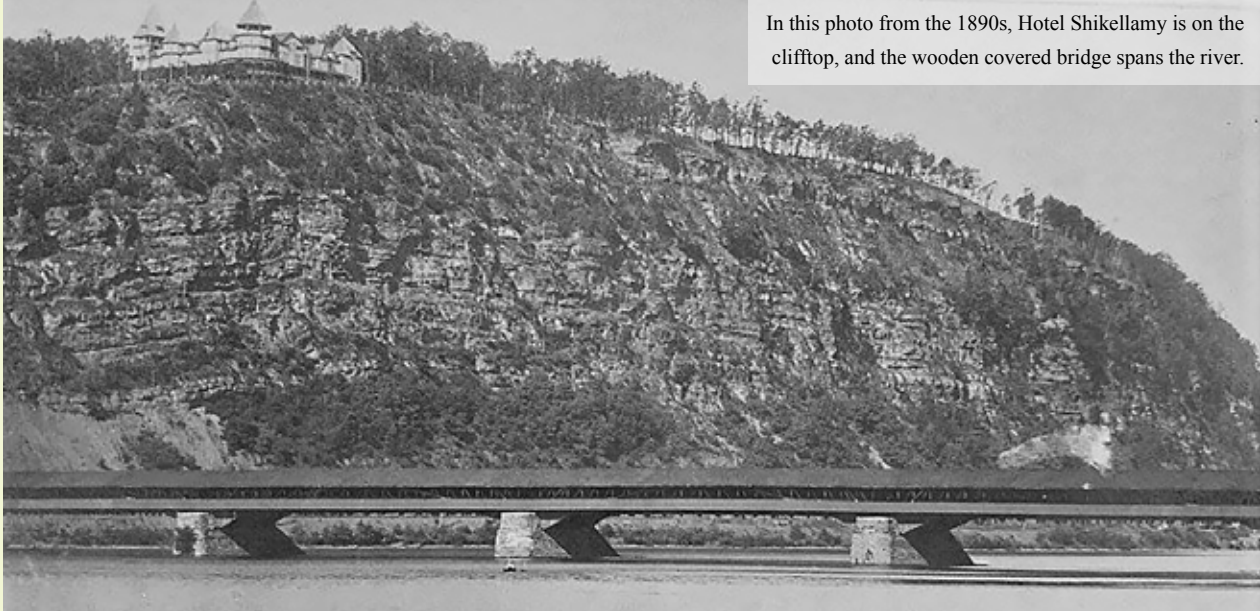
In 1728, the Haudenosaunee sent an overseer from the Oneida, the People of the standing stone, to be the eyes and ears of the confederacy and to insure peace between the Indigenous people and the European colonists. This intermediary had many titles attributed to him, like ambassador, interpreter, diplomat, negotiator, half-king, emperor, viceroy, and magistrate, and also multiple names, but is most famous as Shikellamy, "our enlightener."

Known to be level-headed, honest, fair, kind, and trustworthy, Shikellamy used persuasion and common sense to quell rumors and brewing hostilities. He facilitated trade and judged disputes between the shifting arrays of peoples. He was present at most treaties and land sales negotiated with the Province of Pennsylvania at that time, and even some treaties with Maryland and Virginia, preventing a war between the Haudenosaunee and powerful tribes from Virginia and North Carolina. He permitted the Moravians (German Christians) to build a mission in Shamokin. Shikellamy requested a blacksmith for Shamokin, and when the Moravians supplied a smith, Shikellamy helped build the shop.

In 1731, Shikellamy met a German settler named Conrad Weiser, who knew the culture and customs of the Haudenosaunee, and knew the language of the Mohawks, Keepers of the eastern door. A year later, Shikellamy took Weiser to Philadelphia to be his translator to the provincial government. This began a long and fruitful partnership between the two who made many trips around Pennsylvania and between Onondaga (NY), Shamokin, and Philadelphia, which helped bind the powerful Haudenosaunee Confederacy and Pennsylvania in a chain of friendship. This favoritism soured the provincial government's relationships with the Lenape and the Shawnee.

Shikellamy received another title in 1745 and was made a sub regent of the Haudenosaunee Confederation, exercising control over all Indigenous people in the Susquehanna Valley. Shikellamy converted to Christianity in 1748, the same year he died of an illness. Shikellamy was buried along the Susquehanna River in a location that has faded out of memory, unlike the memory of the man that still inspires peaceful relations between different cultures.

Shikellamy was married and is believed to have had at least five children, one he named for James Logan, the provincial secretary of Pennsylvania. One son became a powerful chief of the Mingos, and the reputed author of the famous speech "Logan's Lament."



In this photo from the 1890s, Hotel Shikellamy is on the clifftop, and the wooden covered bridge spans the river.

After the nearby massacre at Penns Creek in 1755, the Moravians abandoned their mission. The formerly important city of Shamokin burned to the ground and was abandoned.

SUNBURY AND FORT AUGUSTA

With the start of the French and Indian War in 1754, the Susquehanna Valley became the front line with constant rumors of invasion by the French and their Indigenous allies, including the Shawnee and Lenape, who were a constant threat to British settlers.

In 1756, Colonel Clapham and 400 troops marched upriver and began building Fort Augusta on the ashes of Shamokin. The fort was named for the daughter-in-law of King George II. At its peak, the fort was 200 feet across, had 16 canons, four bastions, a dry moat, and officers and soldiers quarters. Four blockhouses and a stockade made a protected path to the river. Today, all that remains of the fort are the well and powder magazine.

Although never directly besieged, there were constant rumors of an impending attack and the fort was often loosely encircled by hostile forces and snipers that ambushed incautious soldiers. Groups of soldiers also left the fort to attack nearby Indigenous towns.

The war ended in 1763 and tensions in the area cooled, then flared up again during the American Revolution when the fort was a base for American soldiers and an important place of refuge. The Haudenosaunee sided with the British, making 1778-1779 particularly tragic with attacks and reprisals on both sides. Not until the 1784 land purchase by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania did the violence diminish as many of the Indigenous people in Pennsylvania moved west or north.

The nearby town of Sunbury was founded in 1772. The no longer needed Fort Augusta was dismantled.

CROSSING THE RIVER

Early people in the area used canoes and later bateaux boats to cross the river and haul supplies. As the population grew, the need to cross the river increased, leading to the first ferry operated by Robert King in 1772, soon followed by others. A log dam built in 1821 made the river deep enough for steamboats. In addition to being ferries, steamboats sometimes hauled canal boats across the river, and caught canal boats that escaped due to strong currents. In 1859, Ira Clement opened a steamboat ferry company which also offered evening leisure activities with musicians and floating dance floors towed behind the boats.

In 1813, the Northumberland Bridge Company built the first bridge which connected Sunbury and Packers Island. A covered bridge followed in 1831 and spanned from Northumberland to the west shore. Built primarily to get the mules from the North Branch canal to the West Branch canal, a second lane was for public traffic. When the canal closed, the bridge became two public lanes. The wooden bridge survived in use until 1923 when it burned. Reports claim that it burned in as little as 20 minutes, and up to 50 minutes.

PACKERS ISLAND

In 1784, Mungo Reed purchased the island from the Penns for \$1,413. He soon sold it and the island changed hands many times over the years, with farming being the main use. When John Packer purchased the island in 1877, there were three homes, buildings, farm fields, and also a railroad bridge and public bridges connecting the island to the two shores. Packer's son, James, built a one-mile horse sulky racetrack on the north end of the island.

In 1894, Packer opened Island Park as an "easily accessible pleasure ground" which had a stop for the new Sunbury and Northumberland Electric line (trolley). Today's swings are reminiscent of the ones pictured in postcards from that era. The park closed in 1911. The park was planned to reopen multiple times, but did not until 1923. The new park had a

ballroom, swimming pool, and even a roller coaster, but closed in 1934. The ballroom continued to host concerts and dances, before becoming a skating rink. The Island Amusement Center hosted concerts and mini golf until at least 1977.

In 2016, an observation area on the southern point of Packers Island was named Kury Point, honoring Franklin Kury, the Pennsylvania representative and senator who authored the Environmental Rights Amendment to the Pennsylvania Constitution.

Article 1, Section 27 of the Pennsylvania Constitution
The people have a right to clean air, pure water, and to the preservation of the natural, scenic, historic and esthetic values of the environment. Pennsylvania's public natural resources are the common property of all the people, including generations yet to come. As trustees of these resources, the Commonwealth shall conserve and maintain them for the benefit of all the people.

AN ACCIDENTAL AIRPORT

In the earliest days of airmail, weather forced two pilots to land in a farmer's field on the north end of Packer's Island. Shortly thereafter, the U. S. Department of Commerce designated the island an official emergency stop for aircraft and established a charted airfield on the farm. On February 26, 1926, the Post Office Department assigned the first caretaker and weather observer to the Sunbury Intermediate Field. He worked in a small 12' x 12' building which had phone service to Bellefonte. In 1929, Amelia Earhart encountered weather that forced her to land at the airport. Eventually airplanes improved enough to render the airfield unnecessary for airmail, but the airport continues to operate to this day.

BLUE HILL

The earliest name known for the Shikellamy Overlook side of the park is Blue Hill, said to be because of the color of the hill against the western sky. A huckleberry picking party in 1775 described the hill as "so high and so steep," and "covered in shrubby pines."

THE LEANING TOWER OF PENNSYLVANIA

Built in 1839 by John Mason the reclusive farmer who owned the top of Blue Hill, the two-story, wooden tower projected out and up from the clifftop and gave panoramic views of the confluence of river branches. Mason was buried on the hilltop in 1849, but the exact location has been lost to history. Fifteen years after the death of the "Recluse of Blue Hill," vandal railroad workers broke the support cables, sending the tower crashing to the ground 360 feet below.

HOTEL WITH A VIEW

In 1890, construction began on Hotel Shikellamy on top of the cliff. This summer resort opened in 1891 and had three gabled roofs, large porches, ballroom, billiard room, smoking room, writing room, and bowling alley. The hotel burned down in the spring of 1898, but was never rebuilt as it was not financially viable.

THE STATE PARK

Shikellamy State Park opened in 1962 and was the overlook on Blue Hill. As part of the creation of the dam on the river, part of Packers Island was purchased and was added to Shikellamy State Park. The Marina on Packer's Island opened in 1972 and the dedication included water skiing shows, a rock concert, and fireworks.



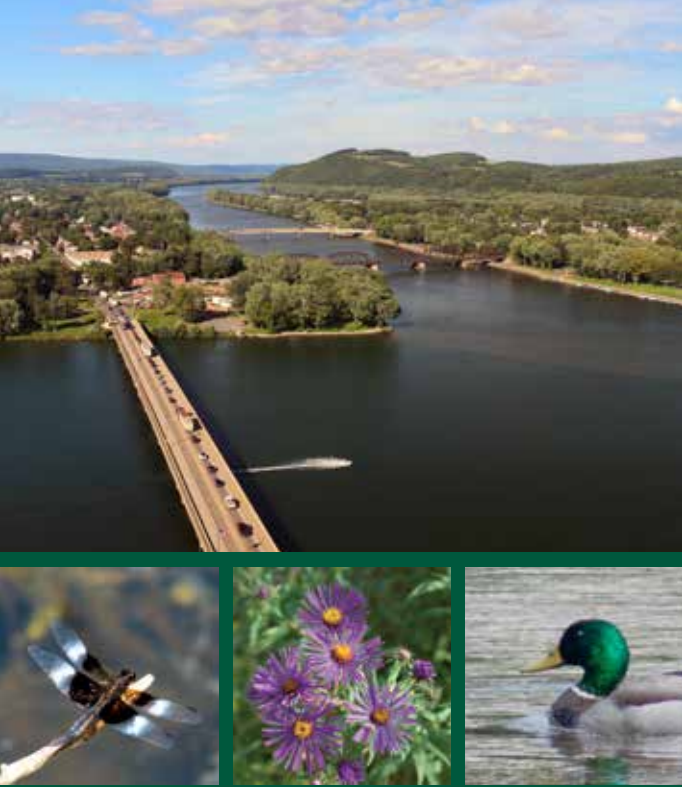
ADAM T. BOWER MEMORIAL DAM

The old log dam was swept away by ice in 1904, making the river only navigable at higher water levels. In 1958, the local tourism board suggested damming the river to create a lake for recreation. Due to concerns that the dam would create flooding of the nearby towns, the US Army Corps of Engineers vetoed the dam proposal. Maurice K. Goddard, the secretary of the Department of Forests and Waters (now DCNR), suggested a new technology of a fabridam be used. Made of nylon bags attached to a cement base, this inflatable and deflatable dam would allow the dam to be raised and lowered as needed, and the proposal was accepted.

In 1969, the world's largest fabridam was dedicated. Stretching 2,100 feet across the Susquehanna River, the seven inflatable bags create the seasonal 3,000-acre Lake Augusta.

In 2001, the dam was renamed for Adam T. Bower, a member of the House of Representatives and later the chief clerk of the House, who helped get funding for the dam.

A Pennsylvania Recreational Guide for Shikellamy State Park



pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION
AND NATURAL RESOURCES



Shikellamy State Park
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Sunbury, PA 17801-1005
570-988-5557
ShikellamySP@pa.gov

Make online reservations at
www.dcnr.pa.gov/StateParks or call toll-free
888-PA-PARKS (888-727-2757), 7:00 AM
to 5:00 PM, Monday to Saturday.

www.dcnr.pa.gov/StateParks



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Nearby Attractions

Information on local attractions and private campgrounds is available from the Susquehanna River Valley Visitor's Bureau. 800-525-7320. www.VisitCentralPA.org

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

Call 911 and contact a park employee. Directions to the nearest hospital are posted on bulletin boards and at the park office.

NEAREST HOSPITALS
Evangelical Community Hospital
One Hospital Drive
Lewisburg, PA 17837
570-522-2000

Geisinger Medical Center
100 North Academy Avenue
Danville, PA 17822
570-271-6211

SHIKELLAMY STATE PARK



- | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Park Office | Marina |
| Blue Symbols Mean ADA Accessible | Boat Rental |
| Public Phone | Boat Launch |
| Building | Hand-carry Boat Launch |
| Modern Restrooms | Hiking Trail |
| Non-flush Restrooms | Paved Trail |
| Water | Unpaved Road |
| Picnicking | Gate |
| Picnic Pavilion | Parking ADA Accessible |
| Playground | Parking Paved |
| Butterfly Garden | Parking Unpaved |
| Scenic View | State Park No Hunting |
| | No Wake Zone |
| | CONTOURS ARE ON 40 FT. INTERVALS |