

Raymond B. Winter

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State Parkpennsylvania
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.



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RAYMOND B. WINTER STATE PARK



Raymond B. Winter State Park covers 695 acres of the Ridge and Valley Province in central Pennsylvania. Located within Bald Eagle State Forest, the park lies in a shallow basin surrounded by rocky ridges covered with an oak and pine forest. The focal point of the park is Halfway Lake which is filled by spring-fed mountain streams and contained by a hand-laid, native sandstone dam. Open year round, the park provides diverse opportunities for recreation.

Directions

GPS DD: Lat 40.99088 Long. -77.1937

The park is in Union County on PA 192, 18 miles west of Lewisburg.

Reservations

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

LEARN, EXPERIENCE, CONNECT

Raymond B. Winter State Park offers a wide variety of programs spring through fall. Gain a better understanding of the park's natural, cultural, and historical resources through guided outdoor recreation, hands-on activities, walks, special events, and other programs.

Curriculum-based environmental education programs are available to schools and organized groups. Call the park office to schedule a group program. A variety of professional development workshops are also offered for teachers.

Contact the park office or explore the online calendar of events, <https://events.dcnr.pa.gov>, for more information on programs and other learning experiences.



Halfway Run Environmental Learning Center/Sheary-Linn Amphitheater

Equipped with many educational tools, the environmental learning center includes classroom and program space. The center features a hands-on science area with displays of native wildlife, a library of field guides, classic environmental literature, and children's books. Visitors can test their knowledge of lumber on the Wall of Woods display. Others can enjoy sitting at the

center's observation window listening to birds gathered at the microphone-equipped feeding station. Large porches provide opportunities to relax and enjoy the surrounding forest scenery. The Sheary-Linn Amphitheater sits near the learning center.

HALFWAY TO WINTER - A Forester's Dream



In 1967, Raymond B. Winter wrote an account of his time in the Buffalo Valley. The following is an excerpt from his booklet *Halfway to Winter*. The entire brochure is available at the park office.

A Forester's Dream . . .

In the mystic beauty of the Bald Eagle State Forest District is the Raymond B. Winter State Forest Park—the day dream of a young forester who was fortunate enough to see his dream come true. . . .

I shall n'er forget my gracious welcome to the beautiful Buffalo Valley. My first view of the Valley came from the hill south of Mifflinburg. The late summer scene was glorious—the cultivated fields, the well-kept buildings, the beautiful trees, and the sparkling over flowing reservoir all spoke of abundance and peace . . . rode north to the Forest House, going to work September 1, 1910.

The Brush Valley or 14 Mile Narrows Road was laid out before the turn of the 18th century. It traversed over Sand Mountain through Pine Swamp to the Centre County line. It was later improved by building up Rapid Run to meet the original road. Its principal use was transporting farm produce, mostly in the winter time, with teams and sleds from Centre County to the Susquehanna River.

The original name was Halfway House. It came from the fact that at one time a tavern with barn was located there. Teamsters could stop and feed their teams—even stay all night, about half way through the mountains.

The Pennsylvania Railroad, that was built up Penns Creek through Coburn, was opened for operation in 1873. This method of transportation made the former methods more or less obsolete. No doubt during this time some logging of the Virgin forests was going on here in the Park area.

Later logging was started in earnest. Lumber shacks, a saw mill, and a timber dam were built. Some of the finest white pine ever cut in Pennsylvania came from this area. I am told that trees six feet across the stump and about two hundred feet tall would cut 5,000 board feet of lumber—each enough to build a good size home. One can still find old stumps to prove it.

Later the big lumbermen came in. They built large logging camps and also narrow gauge railroads connecting the land with large mills and railroads in the valleys. By the turn of the 19th century, in about one hundred years, the timber which nature had built over the centuries was gone. What was left, in many places, was burned over through careless logging and sparks from their dinky engines.

The park area was purchased from J.K. Reish in 1905. Previous to that the State took over the surrounding land to give it ownership and to rehabilitate it. Through lack of understanding and organization during the drought of 1909 thousands of acres were burned completing the destruction. In many places nothing was left but bare rocks and mineral soil. . . .

The Fourteen-Mile or Brush Valley Road was the only driveable road left, and it was little used and neglected. At Halfway there were several small clearings. The largest one was at the site of the present Park Shop. . . .

During the spring of 1912 Steve Roadarmel and Leslie Stover were appointed Rangers, giving me permanent help. We started clearing and burning the dead brush and debris which were left from the 1909 fire. Then planting was started in the cleared areas. This was kept up the following springs and in a few years the Park area was cleaned and planted. . . .

While working on Bake Oven Trail and other advantageous points Ranger Stover

and I recognized the natural beauty of the place and day dreamed of a beautiful park in the area someday. Putting our thoughts into action we built some crude fireplaces, picnic tables, and other improvements. Later we succeeded in getting some funds and about 400 acres were set aside for a park. The beavers moved toward the east end of the area and built dams. They were a real attraction and helped fishing. This brought in wild ducks for the hunters. . . .



One fine day in early 1933 lightning struck. The Bald Eagle State Forest District was to get four CCC Camps of 200 boys each. One was listed for the Halfway Park Area. We pooled our meager tools and equipment, leased, borrowed, even begged more. While other Camps over the State were sulking in their tents waiting for plans and equipments, we were off to a flying start.



The first big job was the dam. Forester Sayers, Engineer Wagner, Camp Superintendent, Foremen, and boys labored hard and willingly with the excellent cooperation from our Army Commander, Lieutenant Sheppard, who later was promoted to general and headed the U. S. Marines. In a little over a year they had cleaned a seven acre area of brush debris including stumps. They removed the old dam and constructed the first cement and stone dam ever built by CCC in the United States, making a beautiful seven acre lake. The Fish Department stocked it with rainbow trout to improve fishing. A bathing beach was soon built and a diving tower in deep water was put in for swimmer's enjoyment. . . .

July 1, 1955, my 45 years of doing the best I could, with the handicaps we had, came to an abrupt end.

That same year (1955) Senator Samuel B. Wolf introduced Senate Resolution Serial No. 151 into the State Senate. Supported by Mr. Harry Haddon and his Sunbury Daily Item—as also many other influential friends—this Resolution passed, paying me a wonderful tribute as here recorded.

NATURAL RESOURCES



GEOLOGIC FORMATIONS

Various geologic formations are explained in the brochure, *Trail of Geology*, which is available at the park office or environmental learning center.

SCENIC OVERLOOK

By hiking the Overlook Trail or driving up McCall Dam Road, visitors may enjoy the vista that includes Halfway Dam, the Rapid Run water gap, and several mountains surrounding the park.

LITTLE BUBBLER

Halfway Lake receives a significant amount of water from underground springs, which contributes to the lake's chilly temperatures. Little Bubbler is an artesian spring located at the west end of the beach. The sand bubbles as water seeps up through the ground. The water temperature reaches highs only in the low 50s. Geologists are not certain about the cause of the Little Bubbler, but they assume that water is flowing through a crack in the bedrock.

VERNAL POOLS

The Rapid Run Natural Area has many vernal pools. These temporary pools usually contain water through the winter and spring but dry up each summer. Animals and plants have adapted to this unique habitat. Wetland plants inhabit the special soil in and around the pools, and many animals depend on vernal pools for their survival. Fairy shrimp live only in vernal pools. Spotted salamanders, wood frogs, and many insects lay their eggs there. These eggs hatch quickly into larvae and then

metamorphose into adults, usually before the pool dries up for the summer.

ROCK FIELDS

Found along the mountain ridges, rock fields are areas where numerous rocks cover the ground. Formed during the last glacial period, 10,000 to 15,000 years ago, cold temperatures caused ice crystals to grow in the natural crevices of the sandstone mountains. Strong quartzite rock was split into loose boulders that eventually slid down the mountain slopes. Once temperatures became warmer, vegetation returned to the shallow soil. Patches of boulders that have resisted new growth are still visible from several park trails.

BUTTERFLY AND BIRD GARDENS



At the park office and the Halfway Run Environmental Learning Center, several flower and herb gardens attract wildlife. Native plants and garden flowers draw butterflies such as swallowtails, satyrs, fritillaries, painted ladies, admirals, tortoiseshells, and monarchs. Hummingbird moths and silver spotted skippers also frequent the gardens. Birds feeding on seeds, insects, or nectar include goldfinches, chipping sparrows, juncos, and ruby-throated hummingbirds.

RAPID RUN NATURAL AREA

When colonists first arrived in Pennsylvania, they were overwhelmed with the dense forests. Conrad Weiser, one of the area's earliest explorers, claimed "the wood is so thick that for a mile at a time we could not find a place the size of a hand, where the sunshine could penetrate, even in the clearest day..." Even though most settlers found the forest to be an obstacle, it supported abundant wildlife and plants. While the forests of Pennsylvania have been logged several times, visitors to Raymond B. Winter State Park can step back in time and encounter the forest as it appeared in 1850. The 39 acres surrounding the Rapid Run Nature Trail is one of the first State Park Natural Areas. Natural areas are set aside to provide locations for scientific observation of natural systems, to protect examples of typical and unique plant and animal communities, and to protect outstanding examples of natural interest and beauty.

When exploring the natural area, look for trees containing large, oval cavities chiseled by the large, black and white pileated woodpecker. In the evenings, listen for the "who cooks for you, who cooks for you all" call of the barred owl. During spring hikes, a close observation of vernal pools can reveal fairy shrimp, caddisfly cases, and spotted salamander and wood frog eggs.

A discovery guide, *The Shrouded Forest*, describes the one-mile loop trail and suggests activities for exploration. The guide is available at the park office.

THE BEAR TRUTHS

Many Pennsylvania state parks have healthy forests that provide perfect habitat for black bears. Although they appear cute and cuddly, black bears are wild animals.

A black bear can scramble up a tree like a raccoon and sprint up to 35 mph. Bears use their claws to tear apart rotting logs to find food as well as open trash cans and coolers. Pennsylvania has some of the largest black bears in the United States.

Black bears have an excellent sense of smell, which makes up for poor eyesight and fair hearing. Aromatic scents coming from your food and toiletries can attract a curious and hungry bear from a great distance.

Keep your campsite clean. Clean up after meals, and store all food and scented items inside a locked vehicle. Do not hang garbage from the hook on the lantern pole provided at each site. These practices will prevent bears and other wildlife from visiting your campsite at night. Feeding bears is illegal.

Black bears normally avoid people, but bears dependent on eating human food can become aggressive when people get between them and food. Never approach a bear and be especially wary of mother bears and cubs.

If you encounter a black bear, do not run. Back away slowly without making direct eye contact. If the bear does not leave the area, make a loud noise like blowing a whistle, honking a car horn, or banging a pot. Notify a park employee if you have difficulties with bears, and call 911 if it is an emergency.

RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Spend the Day

PICNICKING: About 150 picnic tables are dispersed throughout the park. Charcoal grills, drinking water fountains, restrooms, horseshoe pits, play areas, and other park facilities are accessible within the picnic areas. Two separate picnic pavilions may be reserved up to 11 months in advance for a fee. Unreserved pavilions are available on a first-come, first-served basis.

FISHING: The park is a coldwater fishery, stocked with brown, rainbow, and brook trout. With the exception of the swimming area, the lake and its tributary streams are open to public fishing. The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission stocks the lake and Rapid Run regularly during the season. Many anglers gather near the sandstone dam or the fishing pier. For ice fishing information, see **Enjoy the Winter**.

Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission regulations and laws apply.

HUNTING AND FIREARMS: 487 acres of Raymond B. Winter State Park are open to hunting, trapping, and the training of dogs during established seasons. Common game species are deer, bear, wild turkey, woodcock, squirrel, and grouse.

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 vehicle or enclosed trailer. 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.



MOUNTAIN BIKING: Mountain biking is permitted on designated trails. Raymond B. Winter State Park provides access to 25 off-road mountain bike trails in Bald Eagle State Forest. Riders can traverse over 48 miles of trails with nearly 100 miles of connecting forestry roads. The Central Mountains Shared-Use Trail System brochure provides general information and a map showing trails of varying length and difficulty. Brochures are available at the park office and the mountain bike trailhead in the main parking lot.

SWIMMING: The swimming beach features 300 feet of white sand and is open from late May to mid-September, 8:00 AM to sunset. Swim at your own risk. Please read and follow posted rules for swimming. The beach

area includes restrooms, dressing facilities, a beach volleyball court, and a children’s play area.

A seasonal food concession is at the beach house. The limited menu includes hot dogs, hamburgers, chips, cold drinks, and ice cream.

Stay the Night

CAMPING: The 61-site campground accommodates tents, trailers, and motor homes April through December. Each site is equipped with a picnic table, lantern holder, and a fire ring. Most campsites have electric hookups. In the campground, there is a playground, amphitheater, playfield, sanitary dump station, and modern restrooms with warm showers. All campsites are completely shaded, close to a playfield, and within easy walking distance to all other park facilities. Pets are permitted on designated campsites for a fee.



CAMPING COTTAGES: The three cottages sleep five people in bunk beds and have wooden floors, windows, skylights, lights, outlets, electric heat, porch, picnic table, and fire ring. The cottages require a two-night minimum stay with advance reservations. A one-night stay is accepted for walk-ins.

ENJOY THE WINTER

The Pennsylvania state parks Winter Report allows winter outdoor recreation enthusiasts to monitor snow and ice conditions within state parks. The report is updated weekly (at a minimum) during the winter season. www.dcnr.pa.gov/StateParks/WinterReport

CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING: Five miles of park trails provide skiing and snowshoeing opportunities and connect to trails and roads on surrounding state forest land. Trails are not groomed.

NEARBY STATE PARKS AND FORESTS

Raymond B. Winter State Park oversees and maintains the facilities at three nearby state parks that offer additional opportunities for recreation.

McCalls Dam State Park, located in the east end of Centre County, can be reached by McCall Dam Road which connects to PA 192. Pioneers built a dam to provide water power for a sawmill. Later, the dam was used in a series of splash dams to float logs down to the West Branch of the Susquehanna River. No evidence of these dams remain. Limited facilities include non-flush toilets, parking, and a small picnic area.

SNOWMOBILING: Registered snowmobiles are permitted on designated park roads which lead to over 300 miles of roads and trails in the Bald Eagle State Forest. Trailhead facilities at the park include restrooms, parking, and unloading areas.

Conditions permitting, snowmobile trails open the day after the last day of Pennsylvania’s regular or extended rifle deer season and close April 1. Maps and information are available at the park office.

Ravensburg State Park, located in Clinton County on PA 880, received its name because ravens once resided in the steep rocky ledges throughout the park. Twenty-one non-reservable, tent-only campsites are available. Visitors also enjoy hiking, picnicking, and coldwater fishing.

Sand Bridge State Park, located on PA 192 east of Raymond B. Winter, has picnic tables, pavilions, and restrooms. The park also offers stream fishing.

For more information on McCalls Dam State Park, Ravensburg State Park, or Sand Bridge State Park, contact the park office at Raymond B. Winter State Park.

ICE FISHING: Ice fishing is permitted on Halfway Lake. **Ice thickness is not monitored.** For your safety, make sure ice is at least 4” thick for a single angler and 7” thick for a small group. Always carry safety equipment.

INFORMATION AND RESERVATIONS

Raymond B. Winter State Park
17215 Buffalo Road
Mifflinburg, PA 17844
570-966-1455
RBWinterSP@pa.gov
An Equal Opportunity Employer
www.visitPAparks.com

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

@RBWinterSP

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 HOSPITAL
Evangelical Community Hospital
1 Hospital Drive
Lewisburg, PA 17837
570-522-2000



HIKING: 8.58 miles

The 8.58 miles of hiking trails pass through a variety of terrains with only short stretches of steep inclines. Trails within the park are marked and maintained, but a map and proper attire are recommended. Many of the park’s trails connect with trails in the surrounding Bald Eagle State Forest, making Raymond B. Winter an ideal starting point for backpacking trips. Maps and trail information for the park and Bald Eagle State Forest are available at the park office.

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

Bake Oven Trail: 0.96 mile, orange blazes, most difficult hiking

This trail runs in conjunction with the Mid State Trail taking hikers along the ridge top and through areas of mountain laurel and chestnut oak.

Boiling Spring Trail: 1.41 miles, red blazes, easiest hiking

This multi-use trail follows the waterline originally installed by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). Hikers and bikers can enjoy dense mountain laurel and ferns in route to the original CCC springhouse.

Brush Hollow Trail: 0.73 mile, orange blazes, more difficult hiking

This forested trail runs in conjunction with the Mid State Trail on the park’s southern border. Hikers will see thick patches of mountain laurel and rhododendron.

Laurel Trail: 0.3 mile, blue blazes, easiest hiking

This trail avoids the steep section of Bake Oven Trail and allows for a more gradual climb up Bake Oven Mountain.

Mid State Trail: 250 miles (1.8 miles within the park), orange blazes, most difficult hiking

The park is a middle trailhead for central Pennsylvania’s Mid State Trail. Stretching from Bedford County in the south to Tioga County in the north, this wilderness footpath mostly traverses public lands as it passes through state forests, state parks, and game lands. The remote and isolated trail is excellent for backpacking trips.

Old Boundary Trail: 0.77 mile, yellow blazes, more difficult hiking

This multi-use trail connects Bake Oven Trail and Sand Mountain Road. Hikers and bikers cross scenic Halfway Run and its nearby wetland area.

Overlook Trail: 0.88 mile, yellow blazes, more difficult hiking

The trail starts on Sand Mountain Road and climbs through an oak and maple forest to an overlook 300 feet above the park (0.33 mile), then continues (0.55 mile) along the ridge to Boling Spring Trail.

Rapid Run Nature Trail: 1.09 miles, yellow blazes, easiest hiking

This scenic trail loops through the Rapid Run Natural Area. The old growth eastern hemlock and white pine trees shade wetlands, springs, sphagnum bogs, and vernal pools.

West Boundary Trail: 0.64 mile, yellow blazes, most difficult hiking

Stretches of steep, rocky terrain make a rugged, yet scenic hike from PA 192 to Brush Hollow/Mid State Trail along the park boundary.

