



# A Pennsylvania Recreational Guide for Raccoon Creek

Raccoon Creek State Park



## 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.



2023



## TOP 10 ACTIVITIES



Photo by Eric Greenblatt

1. Take a hike! The park has 44 miles of trails.
2. Catch some sun at the beach and stop by the concession for ice cream.
3. Explore the 101-acre Raccoon Lake by kayak, canoe, rowboat, or hydro bike.
4. Enjoy a stroll through the Wildflower Reserve.
5. Set up camp in the modern campground.
6. Learn something new by attending an educational park program.
7. Go fish! Spend a day fishing for trout, panfish, bass, carp, or walleye in Raccoon Lake or Traverse Creek.
8. Explore the Frankfort Mineral Springs and discover the history of the “healing” waters.
9. Stay in comfort by renting the Lakeside Lodge or a cabin.
10. Hunt for small game, deer, and turkey on more than 7,000 acres.

## RACCOON CREEK STATE PARK

Raccoon Creek State Park is one of Pennsylvania's largest and most visited state parks. The park encompasses 7,572 acres and features the beautiful 101-acre Raccoon Lake. Facilities are a mix of modern and rustic with group camps built by the Civilian Conservation Corps.

### Directions

GPS DD: Lat. 40.503385 Long. -80.424596

Raccoon Creek State Park is in southern Beaver County. Access the park from the east and west on US 30, or from the north and south on PA 18, which passes directly through the park.

### Reservations

Make online reservations at [www.dcnr.pa.gov/StateParks](http://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.



Swamp milkweed

## RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

### Spend the Day



**PICNICKING:** About 200 picnic tables are available throughout the park. All picnic areas have charcoal grills, drinking water, and modern restrooms. Roadside East and Roadside West picnic areas are both located along Raccoon Park Road. Both areas have ADA picnic tables and restrooms.

**SWIMMING:** The 500-foot, ADA accessible, sand/turf beach 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. A shower house and a concession stand are nearby.

**FISHING:** Raccoon Lake has yellow perch, walleye, muskellunge, crappie, saugers, bluegills, sunfishes, bullhead and channel catfishes, and largemouth and smallmouth basses. The lake is open to fishing year round. Brown and rainbow trout are stocked in the lake and feeder streams. An ADA accessible fishing peninsula is located on Raccoon Lake near the beach.

A short stretch of Traverse Creek near the park office is regulated specifically for children under 16. Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission regulations and laws apply.

**HIKING:** See **Hiking** section on reverse side.

### Enjoy the Winter

Winter is no time to stay inside! View breathtaking ice formations at Frankfort Mineral Springs from the Mineral Springs Loop Trail.

**CAMPING:** Enjoy winter camping at Sioux Rustic Campground.

**CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING AND SNOWSHOEING:** Skiing and snowshoeing are permitted on all trails. Pinto Loop and Cross-country Ski trails are recommended.

**SNOWMOBILING:** Nichol and Pioneer Camp roads are open for snowmobiling, weather permitting.

**SLEDDING:** Sledding is permitted in the park. The hill by the dam is an ideal location for sledding.

### Stay the Night



**CAMPING: Modern and rustic facilities**  
The **main campground** has modern campsites (electric, non-electric, tent-only, and pet-friendly) divided into multiple loops. E and F loops open early April and close in mid-October. A, B, C, and D loops open late May and close mid-September. Loops A, B, E, and F have paved parking areas. Loop D allows tent camping only. Pets are permitted only in loops C and F. The campground has an amphitheater, playground, sanitary dump station, and modern shower houses. ADA accessible campsites are located by accessible restrooms.

The **Sioux Rustic Campground** has four campsites for tent or trailer camping and is located near the Sioux Organized Group Tenting Area. Pets are permitted.

**BACKPACKING:** The Pioneer and Sioux backpacking areas both offer five Adirondack shelters and five tenting sites. These shelters and tent sites are for backpacking only and can be reserved through the park office or online. Only the Sioux area has potable water available nearby. Overnight parking is available at the park office and at Heritage/Forest, Palomino, and Camp Trail trailheads. Great for backpacking, the Raccoon Loop is 20 miles long and combines parts of Heritage, Forest, and Appaloosa trails.

## WILDFLOWER RESERVE

The 314-acre tract, originally purchased in 1962 by the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, contains one of the most biodiverse and unique stands of wildflowers in Pennsylvania. More than 700 species of plants can be found along the 4.5 miles of trails, between a variety of habitats including oak-hickory forest, pine plantations, meadows, and riparian forest.

A record of the species documented in the reserve can be found at the Wildflower Reserve Interpretive Center. Wildflowers can be found throughout the growing season with peak blooms in late April through early May and again in August through early September.

Hungerford Cabin is accessed via Jennings Trail and was the get-away for famous political cartoonist Cy Hungerford. He worked at Pittsburgh

### Hiking: 4.5 miles

**Art Witt Trail: 0.26 mile | Easiest hiking | Out-and-back trail | Yellow blazes**

This short, fern-lined trail meanders through a pine forest at the entrance of the Wildflower Reserve. This trail is dedicated to Art Witt, the first person to complete 10,000 volunteer hours in Pennsylvania state parks.

**Audubon Loop Trail: 0.17 mile | Easy Hiking | Loop trail | White blazes**

The Audubon Loop Trail begins close to the Audubon Trail entrance and can be used with a short section of Audubon Trail to make an easy walking loop.

**Audubon Trail: 0.44 mile | More difficult hiking | Out-and-back trail | White blazes**

Audubon Trail is elevated high above the flowing waters of Raccoon Creek with many places to stop and admire the valley below. During spring, this is a good trail for birding, and in autumn, it is great for fall foliage. One end of the trail intersects Henrici, Jennings, and Old Field trails.

**Beaver Trail: 0.22 mile | Easiest hiking | Connector trail | Purple blazes**

Connecting with Jennings Trail, Beaver Trail passes through an American sycamore forest along the banks of Raccoon Creek. There are several nice spots to view wildlife.

**Esther Allen Trail: 0.12 mile | Easiest hiking | Connector trail | Green blazes**

This short trail connects Old Wagon Road with Jennings Trail. It honors Esther Allen for her volunteer work educating park visitors about the botanical treasures of the Wildflower Reserve.

**Henrici Trail: 0.51 mile | More difficult hiking | Out-and-back trail | Red blazes**

This trail allows hikers to explore a forested valley of the reserve featuring an abundance of ferns. The eastern section is covered by wildflowers in the spring. This trail honors Max Henrici, who strongly advocated the preservation of the reserve and played a leading role in the development of the trail system in the Wildflower Reserve.

Sun-Telegraph and then the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette between 1927 and 1977.

The Wildflower Reserve is the focal point for programming at Raccoon Creek State Park. Programs on a wide range of topics are presented to the public, schools, and organized groups.

**To protect this unique area for current and future visitors, follow these rules:**

- Picking or collecting of plants is prohibited.
- Trails are for hiking only. Bicycles, horses, and motor vehicles are prohibited.
- Pets are prohibited on the trails or in the interpretive center.
- Smoking on the trails or in the center is prohibited.

**Hickory Trail: 0.16 mile | Easiest hiking | Connector trail | Pink blazes**

Accessed from Meadow Trail, much of Hickory Trail follows along the bank of Raccoon Creek. A very short spur trail leads to a scenic spot along the creek. This trail honors the Hickory Club, an outdoor association, which preserved a large section of the present-day Wildflower Reserve.

**Jennings Trail: 1.54 miles | More difficult hiking | Out-and-back trail | Blue blazes**

**Trailhead amenities: picnic tables**  
This is the longest trail in the Wildflower Reserve. It travels past the historic Hungerford Cabin, vernal pools, forested banks along Raccoon Creek, a spectacular diversity of wildflowers, fall foliage, and many locations for wildlife and birding observations. The trail allows access to many of the shorter trails within the reserve. The trail honors botanist, O. E. Jennings, for his contributions to the Wildflower Reserve.

**Meadow Trail: 0.36 mile | Easiest hiking | Connector trail | Light green blazes**

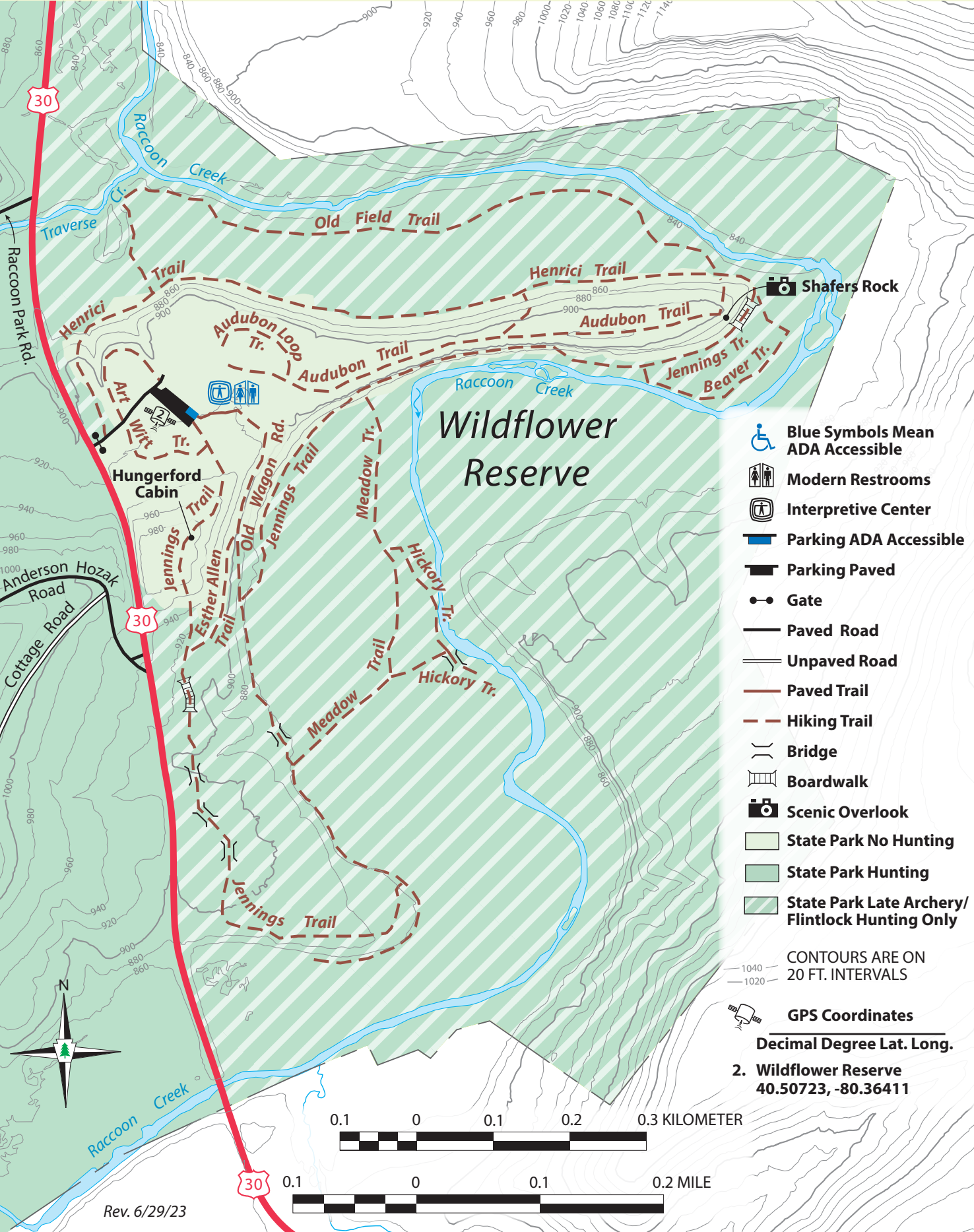
This trail begins and ends in a hardwood forest with a large meadow in the middle. In August and September, the meadow is filled with late summer wildflowers. It is also a great location for watching butterflies and hummingbird moths. Both ends of Meadow Trail connect with Jennings Trail.

**Old Field Trail: 0.65 mile | Easiest hiking | Connector trail | Orange blazes**

This trail traverses a field undergoing forest succession with several sections that follow the banks of Raccoon Creek. Old Field Trail connects with Henrici Trail on both ends.

**Old Wagon Road: 0.19 mile | More difficult hiking | Connector trail | Light blue blazes**

**Trailhead amenities: benches**  
This short, elevated trail descends to the floodplain along Raccoon Creek from the interpretive center. It connects to Esther Allen Trail and ends at Jennings Trail. It features lovely fall foliage and spring wildflowers.



## PIONEER HISTORY

Before the footsteps of early European settlers, herds of elk and white-tailed deer roamed the forests and meadows. Streams teemed with fish and fur-bearing animals, such as minks and beavers. In the rock crevices, cougars and wolves made their dens and hunted beneath old growth stands of hemlocks, white pines, and oaks.

In the early to mid-1700s, the Shawnee inhabited villages along the banks of the Ohio River. The Lenape moved into western Pennsylvania after being pushed westward by European settlers in the expanding east. An Indigenous trail became today's PA 168 following the western boundary of the park.

During exploration of the Ohio Valley, the French claimed that the explorer of a river was entitled to all lands watered by its tributaries.

They defended their claim to the Ohio River region by their discovery of the Mississippi River in the late 1680s. The English insisted the various independent Indigenous nations owned the lands.

The English had strong alliances with local Indigenous tribes and their lands were protected by the British Crown. The rivalry between the two countries eventually sparked the French and Indian War from 1754-1763.

With defeat of the French and their allies, European settlers began homesteading in the lands south of the Ohio River. Levi Dungan was the first European to settle in what became Beaver County. He claimed 1,000 acres within present day Raccoon Creek State Park and established his homestead at the head of Kings Creek in 1772.

## KINGS CREEK CEMETERY



The cemetery on the park's southwestern boundary, off PA 168, is the final resting place of many of the first European settlers of the area. There are 142 tombstones. The oldest tombstone is that of James Leeper, who died in 1810, and the most recent is that of James Cameron, who died in 1906. Some of the men buried in this cemetery served in the American Revolution, the War of 1812, and the Civil War. Some common pioneer family names include: Cameron, Gibson, Harper, Leeper, Martin, Miller, Ralston, Ramsey, and Standish.

## FRANKFORT MINERAL SPRINGS

The springs are located at the upper end of a wooded ravine with a U-shaped shale and sandstone grotto. The stream carved the small grotto from solid rock over thousands of years, forming a picturesque, seasonal waterfall spilling over the rim of the ravine.

Frankfort Mineral Springs are opposite the falls, emerging directly from the shale and sandstone. The water in the stream originates from surface drainage, while the spring water comes from an underground reservoir. The stream water may dry completely, whereas the spring water flows year round.

In 1827, land including the springs was sold to Edward McGinnis. He found the mineral waters "healing to his ailments" which led to the development of a health spa and resort.

The nearby small village of Frankfort saw rapid growth after development of the springs and adopted the name Frankfort Springs. The springs later became known as the Frankfort Mineral Springs.

Hike the short Mineral Springs Loop Trail from the parking lot on PA 18 or from the park office. A detailed brochure about the springs is available at the park office.



## PARK DEVELOPMENT

The creation and development of Raccoon Creek State Park is a direct result of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal to stimulate the economy in the 1930s and to begin implementing a sound conservation program across the nation.

Raccoon Creek was chosen as one of five Recreational Demonstration Areas (RDA) in Pennsylvania developed under the federal Emergency Conservation Work Act. RDA sites were developed on primarily deforested, non-sustainable, and over-used agricultural lands with the goal of reclaiming the area to a natural state. Another goal was to provide outdoor recreation for large, urban populations. Only 25 miles from Pittsburgh, the area that is now Raccoon Creek State Park was an ideal choice.

Land acquisitions began in 1934 and by 1935, the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) along with local men under the Works Progress Administration (WPA) began developing the area for the National Park Service. Projects included three organized group camps, picnic areas, roads, trails, the establishment of nurseries for reforestation, the dam (no longer existing) for Upper Lake, and quarrying stone for bridges and culverts.

Between 1935 and 1941, more than 700 men from the CCC worked at Raccoon Creek. The men were housed in two camps, SP-6 and SP-16. Local experienced men, commonly referred to as LEMs, provided day labor and training in trades such as carpentry and masonry for the younger men.

The park remained with the National Park Service until September 1945 when it was transferred to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Visitors can see the efforts of the CCC and WPA today in the forests, group camps, stonework, and trails.



## INFORMATION AND RESERVATIONS

### Raccoon Creek State Park

3000 State Route 18  
Hookstown, PA 15050-9416  
724-899-2200  
[RaccoonCreekSP@pa.gov](mailto:RaccoonCreekSP@pa.gov)

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Make online reservations at [www.dcnr.pa.gov/StateParks](http://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.

@RaccoonCreekStatePark

### Electric Vehicle Charging Station

A two-plug, electric vehicle charging station is available for public use in the park office parking lot. Please move to another parking space once your vehicle has been charged.

### 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

Heritage Valley Beaver  
1000 Dutch Ridge Road  
Beaver, PA 15009  
724-728-7000



### Nearby Attractions

Information on nearby attractions is available from the Beaver County Recreation and Tourism Department, 800-342-8192. [www.visitbeavercounty.com](http://www.visitbeavercounty.com)

**Hillman State Park** provides hiking, biking, horseback riding, hunting, and a radio-controlled model airplane field. Contact Raccoon Creek State Park office for more information. 724-899-2200

**State game lands 189 and 117** provide hunting and general recreation. Contact the Pennsylvania Game Commission Southwest Regional Office for more information. 833-742-4868 or 833-742-9453

### 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.
- Because uncontrolled pets may chase wildlife or frighten visitors, pets must be physically controlled, attended at all times, and on a leash, caged, or crated. Electronic fences and leashes are prohibited. Pets are prohibited in park buildings, the swimming areas, the beaches, cabins, and the Lakeside Lodge.



Joe-Pye weed



HIKING: 38 miles



**Appaloosa Trail: 3.0 miles | More difficult hiking | Out-and-back trail | Yellow blazes**  
**Recreations permitted:** hiking, backpacking, mountain biking, equestrian

The trail winds along rolling forested hills and passes an old homestead and springhouse. The trail head starts at the Nichol Road parking lot off PA 168 and ends along Pioneer Camp Road near the Riders Ridge Picnic Area. Connector trails lead to the Pioneer Group Tenting Area and backpacking campsites.

**Appaloosa Spur Trail: 0.7 mile | Easiest hiking | Out-and-back trail | Yellow blazes**  
**Recreations permitted:** hiking, backpacking, mountain biking, equestrian

This trail connects the equestrian trailhead parking lot off PA 168 to the Appaloosa Trail.

**Beach Trail: 0.3 mile | Most difficult hiking | Out-and-back trail | Orange blazes**  
**Recreations permitted:** hiking  
**Trailhead amenities:** modern restrooms, potable water, picnic tables, benches

This steep trail connects the D Loop of the campground to the beach and swimming area of Raccoon Lake. A spur trail from Beach Trail connects to the F loop in the campground.

**Heritage Trail: 9.5 miles | Most difficult hiking | Out-and-back trail | Blue blazes**

**Recreations permitted:** hiking, backpacking

The longest trail in the park, Heritage Trail passes through the property and old homesteads of the first European settlers to the area. Sections of the trail follow old wagon roads, the historic Frankfort Mineral Springs, and evergreen tree plantations planted by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s.

**Heron Trail: 0.5 mile | More difficult hiking | Connector trail | Orange blazes**  
**Recreations permitted:** hiking

This short trail connects Wetlands Trail to Nichol Road and Palomino Trail near Sioux Rustic Campground. At the junction with Wetland Trail, look for wildlife near the wetlands.

**Lake Trail: 1.9 miles | More difficult hiking | Connector trail | Blue blazes**  
**Recreations permitted:** hiking

The trail follows an old road along Traverse Creek which leads to Raccoon Lake on the north shore opposite the beach area. It connects to Forest Trail, which can be used to make a loop hike. During the 1800s, a gristmill, stone springhouse, and several homesteads were along Traverse Creek.

**Mineral Springs Loop: 1.2 miles | Easiest hiking | Loop trail | White blazes**  
**Recreations permitted:** hiking

This trail passes through one of the park's historic areas, once known for the "healing qualities of the mineral water." The remnants of the 1800s Frankfort Mineral Springs Resort are located above the springs.

**Nichol Road: 3.5 miles | More difficult hiking | Out-and-back trail | No blazes**  
**Recreations permitted:** hiking, mountain biking, equestrian, snowmobiling, cross-country skiing recommended

This old road serves as the gateway to most of trails in the western section of the park.

**Palomino Trail: 1.1 miles | Easiest hiking | Connector trail | Yellow blazes**  
**Recreations permitted:** hiking, mountain biking, equestrian

Palomino Trail follows an old roadbed for most of its length. It begins and ends on Nichol Road.

**Pinto Loop Trail: 1.7 miles | Easiest hiking | Loop trail | Yellow blazes**

**Recreations permitted:** hiking, mountain biking, equestrian, cross-country skiing recommended

This wide trail has sections that follow an old wagon road through small forest meadows. These features make it an excellent cross-country skiing trail.

**Raccoon Loop Trail: 20 miles | More Difficult hiking | Loop trail | Green diamonds**  
**Recreations permitted:** hiking

The Heritage, Forest, and Appaloosa trails combine with Lakeside Lodge Road to make up the park's Raccoon Loop Hiking Trail. Access to backpacking shelters and tenting sites are along the trail.

**Upland Trail: 0.6 mile | More difficult hiking | Out-and-back trail | Red blazes**  
**Recreations permitted:** hiking

This short trail begins across from the park office and ends at Mineral Springs Loop Trail. Continue on Mineral Springs Loop Trail for a longer hike.

**Valley Trail: 1.1 miles | More difficult hiking | Out-and-back trail | Red blazes**  
**Recreations permitted:** hiking

Cut in along a steep section of Traverse Valley, the trail passes through an open hardwood forest and ends at the Beach Trail above the Raccoon Lake beach area and below the campground.

**Wetlands Trail: 1.2 miles | More difficult hiking | Out-and-back trail | Green blazes**  
**Recreations permitted:** hiking

Wetland Trail begins along Cabin Road near the Camp Trail Parking Area and follows Traverse Creek. Look for wildlife in the wetland areas.

**X-C Trail: 2.1 miles | Easiest hiking | Loop trail | White blazes**  
**Recreations permitted:** hiking, cross-country skiing recommended

Accessed from a small parking area along Raccoon Park Road, the trail loops through pine forest and small meadows.

DOAK FIELD

Doak Field is named for Robert Doak who was born in Ireland in 1750 and immigrated to eastern Pennsylvania in 1767. In 1772, he arrived here and began homesteading until enlisting in the Colonial Army during the Revolutionary War in 1776. After the war, he met and married Sarah McKibben. Their 800-acre homestead was soon busy with ten children helping with the many chores.

The farm was handed down to Robert and Sarah's descendants. The last Doak to live on the farm was Emma, who married Victor Nickles.

LEARN, EXPERIENCE, CONNECT



Raccoon Creek State Park offers a wide variety of programs year round. 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. The Wildflower Reserve Interpretive Center has exhibits and brochures on natural history and historic areas of the park.

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

Contact the Wildflower Reserve Interpretive Center at 724-899-3611, or explore the online calendar of events, <https://events.dcnr.pa.gov>, for more information on programs and other learning experiences.

WILDLIFE WATCHING

Many opportunities exist at Raccoon Creek State Park to see a variety of wildlife. When observing wildlife, remember to maintain a safe distance and never feed wild animals.

For birds, the Audubon Trail in the Wildflower Reserve is great for warblers. Waterfowl are abundant around Raccoon Lake and Wetland Trail. In winter, large flocks of turkeys are often seen near the campground and roadside picnic areas.

White-tailed deer and raccoons are common throughout the park. Most of the larger stream valleys have active beavers, muskrats, and mink. In the more remote western side of the park, you may encounter red foxes, skunks, and opossums.



Photo by William Cassidy  
Bald eagle

