

**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.

f visitPAparks

2022

**FRENCH CREEK STATE PARK**

Once an industrial complex for the fledgling United States of America, French Creek State Park is now an oasis for people and wildlife. In the center of the Schuylkill Highlands, the 7,916-acre park is the largest block of contiguous forest between Washington D.C. and New York City. The forests, lakes, wetlands, and fields are a destination for hiking, fishing, camping, and biking. Those same habitats are home to many plants and animals that are rare in the southeastern region of the commonwealth. French Creek State Park is an Important Mammal Area and is part of the Hay Creek-French Creek Forest

Block Important Bird Area as designated by the National Audubon Society. The park also includes the 90-acre Pine Swamp Natural Area, an acidic broadleaf swamp with rare and valuable wetland habitat.

**Directions**

GPS DD: Lat. 40.19843 Long. -75.79327

Entrances are located on PA 345 (south of Birdsboro) and north of PA 23.

**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.

**WILDLIFE WATCHING**

Great blue heron

The scenic hills of French Creek provide habitat for a variety of plants and animals that inhabit southeastern Pennsylvania. Visitors may see white-tailed deer, raccoons, squirrels, foxes, beavers, songbirds, and waterfowl. The park is designated as an Important Bird Area by the National Audubon Society and an Important Mammal Area. French Creek has diverse habitats that include wetlands, woodlands, streams, and lakes. Each ecosystem provides a unique habitat for the wildlife that need the high quality resources found at French Creek. Visitors are

encouraged to attend seasonal events at the park such as viewing a salamander migration and vernal pools in the spring, mountain laurel and rhododendron blooming in early summer, autumn foliage, and animal tracking in the winter snow.



Red fox

**RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES****Spend the Day****BOATING: electric motors only**

Boat launches are provided at the 68-acre Hopewell Lake and the 22-acre Scotts Run Lake. Seasonal boat mooring spaces are available from April 1 to November 1 at each lake. Contact the park office for mooring information.

Boat rentals are available at the Hopewell Lake pool complex daily from Memorial Day to Labor Day and on weekends during May and September.

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.

Air mattresses and inflatable toys are prohibited. Inflatable watercraft devices used on Pennsylvania State Park waters must meet the following requirements: must be made of high quality durable material, consist of one or more inflatable bladders, and be a minimum of seven feet long.

**ORIENTEERING:** French Creek and the Delaware Valley Orienteering Association have developed a permanent orienteering course for use by visitors of all ages. For a healthy, fun way to exercise both mind and body, locate markers in the park using a map and compass. Maps are available at the park office or from [www.dvoa.org](http://www.dvoa.org).

**FISHING:** A fishing license is required for those 16 and over. Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission regulations and laws apply.

**Scotts Run Lake:** This 22-acre lake offers excellent fishing for trout and other coldwater species. Hatchery-raised trout are stocked throughout the year.

**Hopewell Lake:** The 68-acre lake presents a challenge for anglers. A wide variety of Pennsylvania warmwater species are found in Hopewell Lake, including northern pike, chain pickerel, bass, walleye, muskellunge, and many species of panfish. This lake is designated as a Big Bass Lake and specific regulations apply.

**PICNICKING:** Tables and charcoal grills are located throughout the park. Picnic areas and restroom facilities are near Scotts Run and Hopewell lakes. Both locations offer peaceful picnic opportunities.

**DISC GOLFING:** The course winds through the woods on the south side of Hopewell Lake. This year-round activity attracts visitors of all ages. Sometimes referred to as Frisbee golf, disc golf is a great activity for individuals and families who want to be challenged while tossing a flying disc through the woods. Score cards and maps are available at the course and park office. The course begins near the top tier of the day use parking lot at Hopewell Lake. During the winter months, park at the playground parking area near the park office to access the course.



**SWIMMING:** Swimming is available at the swimming pool by Hopewell Lake from 11:00 AM to 7:00 PM from Memorial Day weekend to Labor Day, unless otherwise posted. A fee is charged. The pool is near the shore of the lake and provides a beautiful setting for swimmers and sunbathers. Certified lifeguards are on duty when the pool is open.

During the swimming season, an ADA accessible food concession is open at the pool complex. Firewood, charcoal, and other picnic supplies are also sold.

A picnic pavilion inside the pool complex is available for rent. Reservations must be made at the pool entrance. All children nine years of age or less must be accompanied and supervised by a responsible individual. Any one person shall supervise no more than five children.

Swimming is prohibited in both lakes. Address: 865 Park Road, Elverson, PA 19520

**HORSEBACK RIDING:** Horse-Shoe

Trail winds through the park and into adjacent lands. The 140-mile trail runs from Valley Forge National Historic Park to the Appalachian Trail, about 15 miles north of Harrisburg. Horses are prohibited on hiking only trails.

**HUNTING AND FIREARMS:** The combination of habitats at French Creek offers a variety of hunting opportunities. Over 6,000 acres of the park in Berks and Chester counties are open to hunting, trapping, and the training of dogs during established seasons. Know and follow county specific hunting regulations. Common game species include deer, turkey, rabbit, pheasant, and squirrel.

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 bike riders enjoy more than 20 miles of trails that climb hills, cross streams, and pass through forests. The trails explore most parts of the park and are rated difficult riding due to the rocky terrain. Mountain bikes are prohibited south of Park Road and in the neighboring Hopewell Furnace National Historic Site.

**CABINS:** Ten furnished, modern cabins, nestled among the hardwoods, offer a pleasant alternative to state park camping. Each cabin features sleeping for six, electric heat, kitchen, private bath with shower, and wall-to-wall carpeting. Dishes, cookware, utensils, and bedding are not provided. Cabins can be reserved year-round. Pets are only permitted in Cabin 6. Cabins 9 and 10 are ADA accessible.

**ORGANIZED GROUP TENTING:** Qualified organized groups can camp in the rustic group tenting area from late March to late October. One site holds 60 people and 16 other sites each hold 30 people. Reservations are required.

**ORGANIZED GROUP CAMPS:** Group camps are open to organized youth and adult groups from April to October. These facilities include dining halls, central washhouses, camper cabins, and staff quarters. Group Camp One holds 135 people. Group Camp Two (Clewell) holds 68 people. Applications are accepted after January and reservations awarded after March 1.

**LEARN, EXPERIENCE, CONNECT**

French Creek State Park offers a wide variety of programs from 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 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.

**HISTORY**

French Creek's history overlaps with that of its neighbor, Hopewell Iron Furnace. While the furnace was in operation from 1771 to 1883, the area surrounding the operation, including the present day French Creek State Park, produced charcoal. Hopewell Furnace thrived in the 1800s and required massive amounts of charcoal to fuel the large blast furnace. On the surrounding rolling hills, woodcutters downed much of the forest as colliers used the lumber to create charcoal in hearths. The hillsides were timbered repeatedly to keep the furnace in operation until 1883.



In the 1930s, the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), part of Roosevelt's new deal, recruited young men and veterans to live and work in camps at French Creek. At the time, the area was named French Creek Recreation Demonstration Area (RDA), and the veteran company 3301 SP-17 was tasked with refurbishing this area for public use. The corps built two dams, two group camps, several tent camping areas, beaches,

roads, and picnic areas. An additional veteran CCC camp, 3304 SP-7 was created on the grounds of Hopewell Furnace. In 1946, most of the property and recreation facilities were transferred to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, creating French Creek State Park. Once barren, the hills of French Creek State Park are now a second growth, mixed oak forest, part of the larger 73,000-acre Hopewell Big Woods landscape.

**HIKING: 35 miles**

Hikers at French Creek State Park have a wide variety of opportunities for quiet reflection, nature study, and physical challenge.

**PLEASE STAY ON THE BLAZED TRAILS.**

- Double blazes indicate a change of direction in the trail.
- Camping is only permitted at French Creek's established campgrounds.
- Multi-use trails are shared with horseback riders and mountain bikers. Follow trail etiquette.
- Motorized vehicles are prohibited on all park trails.
- Mountain bikes are permitted on roads and approved trails only. All trails south of Park Road are closed to mountain bikes.

**BOONE TRAIL: 6 miles, blue blazes, more difficult hiking**

This trail loop encircles both lakes and connects many areas of the park, including the Hopewell Lake Boat Launch, Organized Group Tenting Areas 13-18, campground contact station, and leads to Hopewell Furnace Visitor Center.

**BUZZARDS TRAIL: 3 miles, yellow blazes with red stripe, most difficult hiking**

From its lowest point near Baptism Creek, this trail climbs 300 feet in elevation to the top of Bear Hill before meeting Mill Creek Trail.

**COLLIERS TRAIL: 1 mile, white blazes, more difficult hiking**

Connecting the campground to Hopewell Furnace National Historic Site, begin this hike near the campground contact station on Lenape Trail.

**HOPEWELL BIG WOODS TRAIL:****2.5 miles in park, no blazes, easiest hiking**

This regional trail is in progress and will eventually traverse the Hopewell Big Woods landscape connecting many partners and lands to the Schuylkill River Trail. The multi-use trail is open to hiking and biking. Signs mark the trail.

The **1.8-mile northern section** offers beautiful views of the Birdsboro Valley. This ADA accessible trail is great for walking, running, or biking. The trailhead is on Center Road off PA 345.

The **0.7-mile southern section** connects the Main Day Use Area and pool area to the Hopewell Furnace National Historic Site. This section is ADA accessible.

**HOPEWELL LAKE LOOP: 2.5 miles, circular brown markers, easiest hiking**

Perfect for first time hikers, dog walkers, or those looking for a relaxing stroll, Hopewell Lake Loop is a flat trail and has scenic views of the lake. Park by the trailhead kiosk at the boat launch near Hopewell Lake.

**HORSE-SHOE TRAIL: 8 miles in the park, yellow blazes, more difficult hiking**

Winding through the park and adjacent lands, this 140-mile trail runs from Valley Forge National Historic Park to the Appalachian Trail north of Harrisburg. Access in the park is from the Firetower Road parking area or Hopewell Lake Day Use Area parking lot.

**KALMIA TRAIL: 1 mile, purple blazes, most difficult hiking**

Located off Six Penny Trail, this mountainside trail travels through mature forests with scattered mountain laurel.

**LENAPE TRAIL: 5.5 miles, green blazes, more difficult hiking**

This loop connects the campground contact station, Scotts Run Lake, and Hopewell Furnace Visitor Center.

**MILL CREEK TRAIL: 6 miles, white blazes with a red stripe, most difficult hiking**

Beginning and ending at the Shed Road parking lot, this trail travels deep into the forest, over Chestnut Hill, across Mill Creek,

and to Millers Point. Due to the terrain of the trail, hikers must wear good footwear and bring plenty of water.

**RACCOON TRAIL: 1.7 miles, red blazes, more difficult hiking**

From the edge of the Hopewell Furnace National Historic Site property to Mill Creek, this trail is the most direct route into and out of the eastern portion of French Creek State Park.

**RIDGE TRAIL: 4 miles, red blazes, more difficult hiking**

Enjoy the solitude of the western side of French Creek on this moderate trail that connects Turtle/Horse-Shoe Trail to the fire tower parking lot.

**SCHUYLKILL RIVER TRAIL: 1 mile in park, no blazes, easiest hiking**

Traveling through the historically rich region of southeastern Pennsylvania, this hiking and mountain biking trail extends 120 miles from Frackville in Schuylkill County, through Montgomery, Chester, and Berks counties to Philadelphia.

**SCOTTS RUN LOOP : 2 miles, circular brown markers, easiest hiking**

This is a quiet, intimate loop located at Scott's Run Lake. Park near the trailhead kiosk in the Scotts Run Lake Parking Lot.

**SIX PENNY TRAIL: 3 miles, orange blazes, most difficult hiking**

This trail offers hikers a glimpse of the historic Six Penny Recreation Area where dam remnants and the park's original picnic grounds can be seen. Use the orange and green blazed trail west of the campground to access this loop.

**TURTLE TRAIL: 3.6 miles, white blazes, more difficult hiking**

Access through the west entrance trailhead or from the Fire Tower Parking lot, this loop trail encircles the Hopewell Fire Tower.



Mountain Laurel

**Stay the Night****CAMPING: Electric, full-hookup, and pet sites**

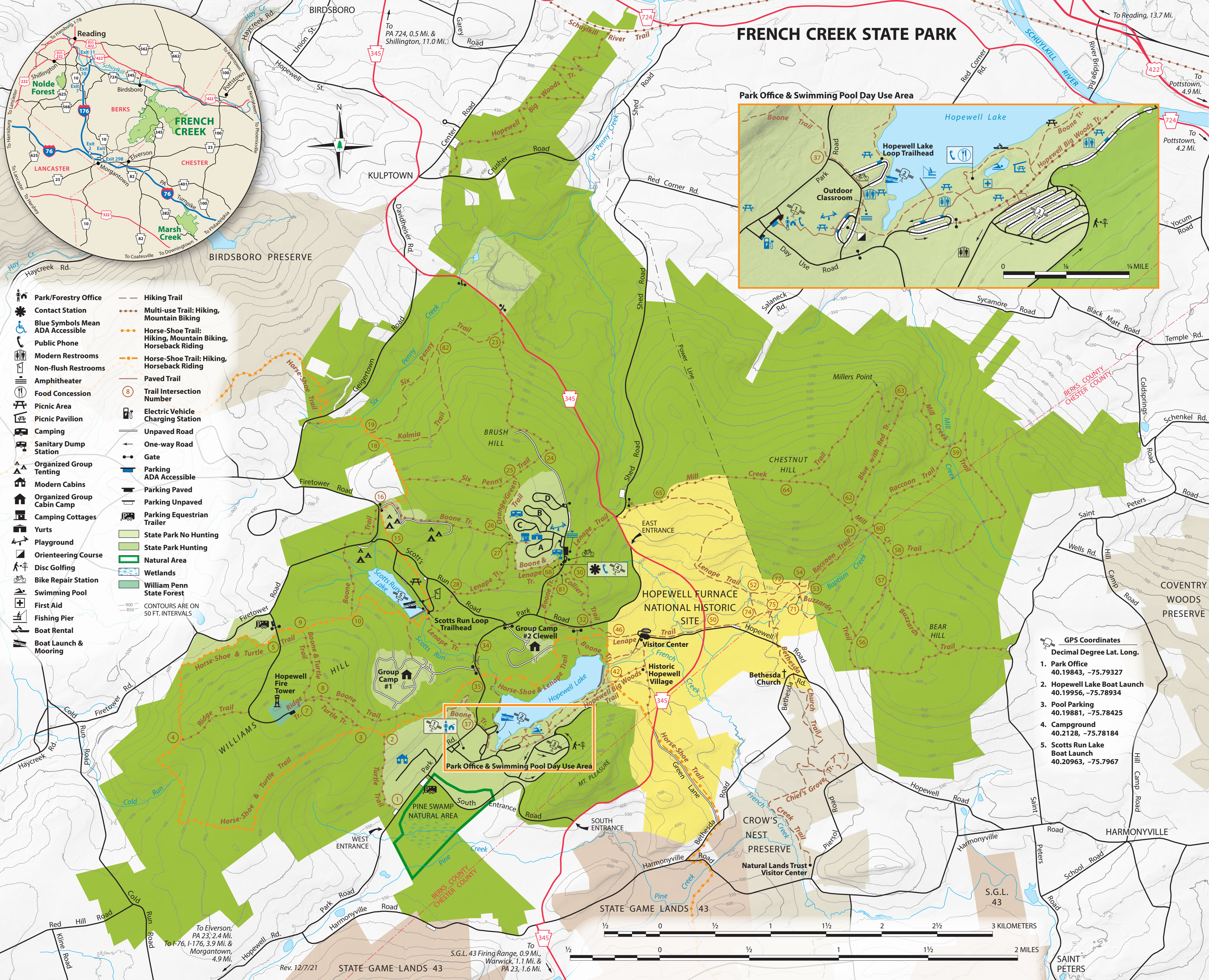
The campground has 200 wooded sites within easy access to shower and modern restroom facilities. 43 sites have electric hookups and 47 full-hookup sites have sewer, water, and electric hookups. Camping is available from early March until the beginning of January. Pets are only permitted on campsites in A and C loops.

Address: 410 Park Road, Elverson, PA 19520

**CAMPING COTTAGES:** Three cottages sleep five people in bunk beds, and have wooden floors, windows, electric heat, lights, outlets, a porch, picnic table, and fire ring. Camping cottages do not have running water. Water and restrooms are nearby in the campground. Dishes, cookware, utensils, and bedding are not provided. Dogs are only permitted in Cottage 1. All cottages are ADA accessible.







## NEARBY ATTRACTIONS

Information on nearby attractions is available from:  
Greater Reading Convention and Visitors Bureau.  
visitpaamericana.com  
Chester County Conference and Visitors Bureau.  
www.brandywinevalley.com  
**Hopewell Furnace National Historic Site**, administered by the National Park Service, preserves an early American iron-making community that was active from 1771 to 1883. Hopewell Furnace has free admission daily from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM during the summer. There are programs and events scheduled throughout the year. 610-582-8773. www.nps.gov/hofu  
**State Game Lands 43**, southeast of the park, consists of more than 1,800 acres of public land available for hunting. A public firing range administered by the Pennsylvania Game Commission is at the end of Laurel Road. 610-926-3136  
**Hopewell Big Woods** is the last large, unbroken forest left in southeastern Pennsylvania. The landscape spans over 73,000 acres, or 110 square miles and includes many partners and attractions. www.hopewellbigwoods.org  
**Nolde Forest Environmental Education Center** encompasses more than 665 acres of deciduous woodlands and coniferous plantations. Programs are available to school groups and visitors throughout the year. 610-796-3699

**Daniel Boone Homestead** is a historical site located in nearby Birdsboro. Staff illuminate the daily lives of the region's 18th-century settlers. 610-582-4900. www.thedanielboonehomestead.org  
**Birdsboro Preserve** and **Birdsboro Waters** offer nearly 30 miles of hiking and biking trails that connect to French Creek State Park. A popular parking area is at Rustic Park.  
**Crow's Nest Preserve** has a visitor center and nearly 10 miles of trails that connect to French Creek State Park. The visitor center and trail parking are located off Piersol Road. 610-286-7955  
**Historic Joanna Furnace Iron Works** is a historic remnant of Berks County's thriving early iron industry. This historically restored furnace offers tours and education. 610-286-0388

## INFORMATION AND RESERVATIONS

**French Creek State Park**  
843 Park Road  
Elverson, PA 19520-9523  
610-582-9680  
FrenchCreekSP@pa.gov  
An Equal Opportunity Employer  
www.dcnr.pa.gov/StateParks  
**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.

**Electric Vehicle Charging Station**  
A two-plug, electric-vehicle charging station is available for public use near the park office. Please move to another parking space once your vehicle is 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**  
The Reading Hospital and Medical Center  
6th Avenue and Spruce Street  
West Reading, PA 19611  
866-988-4377

