A Pennsylvania Recreational Guide for

Colonel Denning State Park

pennsylvania DCNR
DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Colonel Denning State Park
1599 Doubling Gap Road
Newville, PA 17241-9756
717-776-5272
ColonelDenningSP@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 visitPAparks

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Colonel Denning State Park

In north-central Cumberland County, Colonel Denning State Park has 273 acres of woodland and a 3.5-acre lake. The park serves as a gateway to the 96,000-acre Tuscarora State Forest which nearly surrounds the park. These scenic and historic public lands are located in Doubling Gap, so named by the "S" turn where Blue Mountain doubles back on itself.

Directions

GPS DD: Lat. 40.280743 Long. -77.418227

The park is nine miles north of Newville and eight miles south of Landisburg, along PA 233.

Recreational Opportunities

HIKING: 3 miles

Doubling Gap Nature Trail: 1 mile, easiest hiking
This mostly level trail traverses both sides of Doubling Gap Run. Beginning and ending at Doubling Gap Lake, the self-guided trail has several educational waysides to explain the natural history found around a mountain stream.

Rattlesnake Trail: 1.2 miles, more difficult hiking
Rocky in a few places, this trail winds through a mixed oak forest on the foothills of Blue Mountain.

Flat Rock Trail: 2.5 miles, most difficult hiking
The park is the trailhead for this rugged trail that leads to the top of Blue Mountain in Tuscarora State Forest. This steep and rocky trail culminates at Flat Rock, a natural rock outcrop that provides a beautiful scenic vista of the Cumberland Valley.

In addition to the park trails, there are many miles of trails in the adjacent Tuscarora State Forest, including the Tuscarora Trail which passes through the park. The northern portion is a 220-mile bypass of the Appalachian Trail. For maps and detailed trail descriptions, consult the "Hiking and Nature Trail Guide" which is available at the park office.

HORSEBACK RIDING: From the equestrian trailhead parking lot, horseback riders can follow Old Doubling Gap Road to numerous equestrian trails in Tuscarora State Forest.

FISHING: The 3.5-acre Doubling Gap Lake has trout fishing. Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission regulations and laws apply.

CAMPING: flush toilets, warm showers, electric hookups
The small tent and trailer campground is open from April to December. Each site in this forested campground has a picnic table and fire ring, including the five walk-to sites. Pets are permitted on designated sites for a fee. Along the campground entrance road is a sanitary dump station, and an amphitheater.

ORGANIZED GROUP TENTING: Qualified adult and youth groups of up to 20 people may reserve the organized group tenting area for overnight use. This walk-to space includes five tent pads, picnic tables, lantern holders, and a large fire ring.

BOATING: Non-motorized canoes and kayaks may be used on Doubling Gap Lake except for the period of time between the opening day of trout season until the Friday before Memorial Day. Boats must be carried in from the nearby parking lot and launched in the designated area located at the south end of the beach.

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 park offices; launch use permit from the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission.

ORIENTEERING: Beginning near Pavilion 1 there are three orienteering courses of different skill levels. Maps are available at the park office.

PICNICKING: Numerous picnic tables and charcoal grills are scattered throughout the park and located near playground equipment. Two 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.

SWIMMING: The sand 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 food concession near the beach may be open during the summer season.

HUNTING AND FIREARMS: Many acres are open to hunting, trapping, and the training of dogs during established seasons. Common game species are white-tailed deer, gray squirrel, and wild turkey. Hunting is also permitted on the adjacent Tuscarora State Forest.

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.

CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING: While there is no formal cross-country skiing trail system, skiing is permitted in all areas of the park, including roads and trails. Terrain is moderately hilly to mountainous.

ICE SKATING: When ice conditions permit, an area of the lake is available for ice skating on Doubling Gap Lake. Skating is permitted from 8:00 AM until sunset.

Ice thickness is not monitored. For your safety, make sure ice is at least 4" thick for a single skater and 7" thick for a small group. Always carry safety equipment.

Learn, Experience, Connect

During the summer months, a wide variety of programs are offered. Gain a better understanding of the park's natural, cultural, and historical resources through guided outdoor recreation, hands-on activities, walks, and other programs.

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

Although never a colonel, William Denning (1737-1830) served as a Revolutionary War sergeant from March 1778 to April 1780 in Nathaniel Irish's Company of Artillery Artificers in Benjamin Flower's Regiment. Stationed just outside of Carlisle at Washingtonburg Forge (now Carlisle Barracks), Denning earned his place in history making wrought iron cannons for the Continental Army. Unfortunately, none of Denning's cannons survive today. After the Revolution, Denning lived near Newville and is interred with his only son and daughter in the Big Spring Presbyterian Church cemetery in Newville. His monument reads "The patriotic blacksmith and forger of wrought iron cannon during the Revolutionary War." It is not known who added the "Colonel" to Sergeant William Denning's name, or when.

Colonel Denning State Park became a state recreational area around 1930, under the Pennsylvania Bureau of Forestry. It was developed formally in 1936 through the efforts of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) Camp S-111-PA in Perry County.

Nearby Attractions

Information on nearby attractions is available from the Cumberland Valley Visitors Bureau. 888-513-5130. www.VisitCumberlandValley.com

The park is surrounded by over 96,000 acres of **Tuscarora State Forest**. These lands are open to the public and offer many recreational opportunities like hiking, biking, camping, hunting, horseback riding, picnicking, and sightseeing. 717-536-3191

Located between PA routes 641 and 997, about 15 miles southwest of the park, several thousand acres of **State Game Lands 169** are primarily managed for upland game animals and deer. Along PA 944, about 25 miles east of the park, is **State Game Lands 230** which also includes a shooting range. 877-877-9107

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.
- Please camp only in designated areas and try to minimize your impact on the campsite.
- Firewood Advisory: Firewood may contain non-native insects and plant diseases. Bringing firewood into the park from other areas may accidentally spread pest insects and diseases that threaten park resources and the health of our forests. Campers should use local firewood. Do not take wood home and do not leave firewood. Burn it!

Access for People with Disabilities

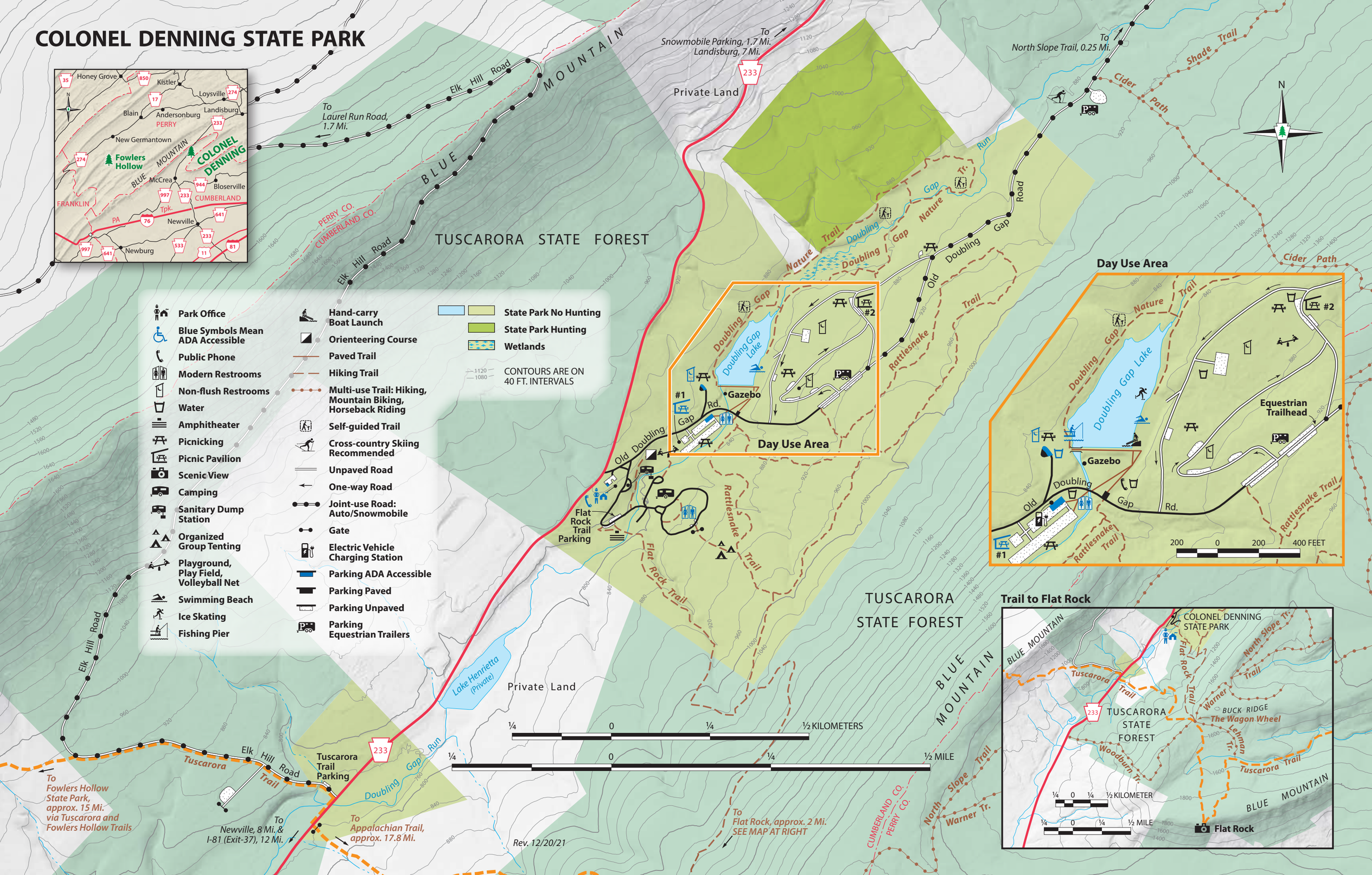
This symbol indicates facilities and activities that are Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible for people with disabilities. This publication text is available in alternative formats.

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
UPMC Carlisle
361 Alexander Spring Road
Carlisle, PA 17015
717-249-1212

Indian pipes

COLONEL DENNING STATE PARK