



Blue Knob State Park

Blue Knob State Park offers year-round outdoor adventures on 6,128 acres of woodland. The park is in the northwestern tip of Bedford County, west of I-99. One of the unique features of the park is the solitude it provides the visitor. There are many opportunities to enjoy the quiet and refreshing serenity of the mountains and streams.

The elevation of the park can cause air temperatures to be several degrees cooler than surrounding cities. Annual snowfall averages about 12 feet.

Directions

GPS DD: Lat. 40.2666 Long. -78.58376

From East or West: Take the Pennsylvania Turnpike to Bedford, Exit 146. Go north on I-99 to Exit 7. Follow PA 869 west to Pavia, then follow signs through Pavia to the park.

From North: Take I-99 south to Exit 23. Follow Old US 220 south. Turn right onto PA 164 west and continue to the town of Blue Knob. Turn left onto Knob Road (SR 3003) and continue five miles to northern entrance of the park.

From South: Take I-70 west to Breezewood, then US 30 west to Bedford, then north on I-99 to Exit 7. Follow PA 869 west to Pavia, then follow signs through Pavia to the park.

Recreational Opportunities

The park is open sunrise to sunset.



SWIMMING: Weather permitting, the swimming pool is open daily from 11:00 AM to 7:00 PM from Memorial Day weekend to Labor Day, unless posted otherwise. Pool depth ranges from 2 to 5 feet. Diving is prohibited at the pool for visitor safety.

PICNICKING: Burnt House and Mowery Hollow picnic areas are open year round. Willow Springs Picnic Area closes the Friday after Thanksgiving and reopens the week before Memorial Day.

Seven 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.

MOUNTAIN BIKING: 19 miles

Most of the park's multi-use trails are designated for mountain bike use. For beginners, Chappells Field Trail is a good challenge. For experienced riders, Three Springs Trail is an intermediate ride. Three Springs Trail is also open to horseback riding. Please be considerate of other trail users. For more experienced and expert mountain bikers, Crist Ridge, Rock 'N' Ridge, and Mountain View trails are suggested.

HUNTING AND FIREARMS: About 5,000 acres are open to hunting, trapping, and the training of dogs during established seasons. Common game species are deer, squirrels, and turkeys.



White-tailed deer

Scenic Views

Blue Knob State Park is named for its majestic dome-shaped mountain. At 3,146 feet above sea level, Blue Knob is the second highest mountain in Pennsylvania, only 67 feet less than Mount Davis in Somerset County. Situated on a spur of the Allegheny Front and overlooking the scenic Ridge and Valley Province to the east, Blue Knob has spectacular views. Unique photographic opportunities are available during low humidity weather and with changes of season.

A **northeastern view** from the second highest point in Pennsylvania can be seen near the Blue Knob All Seasons Resort ski lodge.

A **southeastern view** can be enjoyed at Chappells Field, across from the campground. Included with this view is a close-up of the western slope of Blue Knob Mountain.

A **southern view** can be enjoyed at the Willow Springs Picnic Area.

A **southwestern view** along the Appalachian Plateau can be seen after a hike along Mountain View Trail to the Pavia Overlook.

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.

The park is adjacent to the 12,000-acre State Game Lands 26. This combination of public lands provides many recreational opportunities and offers both easily accessible areas and several walk-in areas. "No Hunting" areas are posted. Permanent tree stands are prohibited on public lands.

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.



FISHING: Native brook trout inhabit streams within the park. Trout are stocked in streams through a cooperative nursery program operated by the Pavia Sportsmen Club, Inc. and the park. Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission regulations and laws apply.

HORSEBACK RIDING: 7 miles

The equestrian trails, Three Springs, Sawmill, and Homestead, and a portion of Chappells Field, are marked with orange diamonds. The trailheads with ample parking are Chappells Field and Willow Springs Picnic Area. Horseback riding is permitted along the right-hand side of park roads. Use caution on trails in hunting areas. All groups planning to conduct trail rides must secure a special use agreement.

Stay the Night



CAMPING: modern sites, some with electric

About 50 tent and trailer sites are open from the second Friday in April to mid-October. Campsites are in open fields and wooded areas. Most sites have electric hookups. Many campsites permit pets. Two non-electric, walk-to sites are available. Water, a sanitary dump station, modern shower houses, and playground equipment are available. A campground host is usually available during the camping season.

CABINS: Three modern cabins and one house are available for rent. Fishers Haven and Bear Den cabins sleep four people. Directors Cabin sleeps six. The cabins are available from the second Friday in April through the last weekend of October. Twin Fawn House sleeps eight and is available year round.

Cabins offer electric heat, air conditioning, two bedrooms, living room, bathroom, and kitchen. Twin Fawn House offers three bedrooms, living room, bathroom, and kitchen. Guests must supply their own bed linens and towels. A limited supply of dishes, pots and pans, and dinnerware are provided. In the summer season, the cabins and house are weekly rentals, only. In the non-peak season, the minimum rental is two days. Advance reservations are recommended.

ORGANIZED GROUP CABIN CAMP: A 100-person capacity camp is available for overnight use to organized groups from June through August. The group camp offers sleeping quarters, bathroom and shower facilities, and a large dining hall/kitchen complex. Reservations are based on: previous long-term use, priority for youth groups, length of stay, and number of people. Contact the park office for additional information.

Enjoy the Winter

SNOWMOBILING: Snowmobile routes are open daily after the end of statewide rifle hunting season in December. The trail system consists of eight miles of trails and roads and is marked with orange diamonds. Park roadways are not open for snowmobile use with the exception of Park Road from the office to Willow Springs Picnic Area. Please stay on the designated trails. Other off-road vehicles are prohibited on state park lands.

CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING: Most park trails are suitable for expert skiers. For beginner skiers, Chappells Field Trail and the closed campground are recommended. For the intermediate skier, the service roads, closed roadways, and open fields are recommended. Weather conditions on the trails are usually ideal. Skiers should use expert or mountain ski equipment.

Downhill Skiing

The park leases the downhill skiing area to Alpine Resort Operations, LLC, which operates Blue Knob All Seasons Resort, one of the most challenging ski resorts in Pennsylvania. The area offers a vertical drop of 1,050 feet. The ski area provides snowtubing, day and night skiing with extensive snowmaking, and a total of four chairlifts to ensure a fast return to the top of the mountain. 814-239-5111. www.blueknob.com



Learn, Experience, Connect

Blue Knob State Park offers a wide variety of programs April through October. Summer programs are conducted on Friday and Saturday evenings and Sunday mornings at Buck Hill Amphitheater unless otherwise posted. Fall and spring programs are conducted for schools and organizations upon request.

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.

Wildlife Watching

Blue Knob State Park is a great place to see wildlife in all seasons.

Fall is an exciting time at Blue Knob. Visitors can discover wildlife and plants preparing for the coming winter season. Animals begin to migrate, prepare to hibernate, and others put on great displays during fall courtship, which makes them easier to observe. The vibrant colors of fall foliage usually peak in the second and third weeks of October. With an abundance of sugar and red maples, the mountain appears to be on fire due to the orange and yellow leaves.

Meanwhile, oak trees produce large crops of acorns so that at least a few will escape the black bears, deer, squirrels, and turkeys that are fattening up for winter. The antlers of white-tailed deer bucks mature in time for the autumn rut. Brook trout are even more vibrant in color as they spawn in gravel areas. Many birds can be viewed migrating. Look for flocks of robins, grackles, and warblers as they gather together before migrating. Many other birds can also be seen lying south.



Ovenbird

Blue Knob is a winter wonderland. The snow depths and season length are almost unmatched in Pennsylvania. While it is often difficult to see wildlife, their tracks are quite evident in the snow. Enjoy the winter wanderings of deer, coyotes, bobcats, fishers, and foxes as you follow their tracks. Small animals like mice and voles make tunnels in the deep snow. Deer, turkeys, and red-tailed hawks spend their days in search of food.

Spring is a time of renewal at Blue Knob. Sap flows back up into the trees and many animals that moved to lower elevations return to the heights. Songbirds and vultures return, joining the winter inhabitants to nest in the park. A great time to see forest birds like warblers and vireos is before the leaves come out on the trees. Wildflowers rush to bloom in the sunlight before the trees get their leaves. The forest floor can be carpeted in spring beauties, violets, and hepaticas. In mid-April, the sounds of turkeys gobbling and grouse drumming echo off of the hillsides.

In early summer, babies abound. The broods of many birds hatch and fledge, as well as young owls making their first flights and learning to use their voices. White-tailed deer fawns are usually born by mid-June. Black bear sightings are the highest in May and during the June to mid-July mating season, but become more elusive later in summer.

Songbirds can be heard singing in the forest canopy and bushes as they forage for insects. Larger animals venture into open fields at dusk to dine on tender grasses. Summer brings the most people to the park. Remember that we are the guests and should try not to disturb the wildlife we are observing.



History

Pennsylvania Germans from the eastern part of the state first settled in the Blue Knob area shortly after the American Revolution. They cleared and farmed land near the fledgling town of Pavia. Early industries included several distilleries in 1812, a log mill in 1833, and a gristmill in 1843.

On the northern border of the park is the Cox Monument to the Lost Children of the Alleghenies. In 1856, the two children of the Cox Family disappeared. Over a thousand people searched for the children, who were not found until after their deaths at the site of the monument.

In the late 1800s, logging companies, based out of South Fork, clear-cut the forests of hemlock and hauled away the lumber on steam railroads that snaked up the steep hillsides. The lumber companies closed from November to March because the railroad could not operate in the severe winter weather.

One railroad followed Bobs Creek and needed six switchbacks to descend the rugged grade. A State Game Lands 26 service road now follows this old railroad grade. Another steam railroad followed Wallacks Branch through five switchbacks. Lost Turkey Hiking Trail follows this old railroad grade.



In 1935, the National Park Service created the Blue Knob National Recreation Demonstration Area to provide recreation to the people of Altoona and Johnstown. The Works Progress Administration employed local workers to build cabins, hiking trails, and roads. Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) Company 2327 arrived in October of 1939. After building Camp NP-7-PA, the young men aided in creating the park recreational facilities. World War II ended the CCC. On September 26, 1945, the National Park Service transferred Blue Knob to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and it became Blue Knob State Park.

Since the CCC years, facilities of the park have been improved and new facilities built, but the park still retains its rustic, natural character.

Nearby Attractions

Information on nearby attractions is available from:

Bedford County Visitors Bureau.


www.VisitBedfordCounty.com

Visit Johnstown, PA. www.VisitJohnstownPA.com

Explore Altoona www.ExploreAltoona.com

Within three miles of the western park boundary, the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission, in partnership with Highlands Sewer and Water Authority, operates the 345-acre **Beaverdam Reservoir** for fishing, kayaking, and electric motorboating. Only electric motors are permitted on the lake. A boating access is along PA 869, west of the park. Special regulations are posted at this access point.

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. Cell phone service is very limited throughout the park, but may be attained at Chappells Field and Willow Springs areas. Emergency telephones are located in several areas including: park office, campground, cabin area, Burnt House Day Use Area, and swimming pool area.

NEAREST HOSPITAL

UPMC Bedford Memorial
10455 Lincoln Highway
Everett, PA 15537-7046
814-623-6161

A Pennsylvania Recreational Guide for Blue Knob State Park



pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION
AND NATURAL RESOURCES



Blue Knob State Park

124 Park Road
Imler, PA 16655-9207
814-276-3576
BlueKnobSP@pa.gov

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.

www.visitPAparks.com

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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 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. Use local firewood. Do not take wood home and do not leave firewood. Burn It!

- Prevent forest fires by having a fire in proper facilities and properly disposing of hot coals. Do not leave a fire unattended.

- 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 swimming areas.

Hiking: 23 miles

Many trails at Blue Knob are steep and include uphill and downhill hiking. A well-planned, extended trip includes multiple trails and minimizes a steep return climb. Please be sure to wear appropriate foot wear when hiking in Blue Knob State Park.

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

Chappells Field Trail: 2.5 miles, inverted orange V blazes, easiest hiking

This multi-use trail is a gentle sloping loop trail with little gradient change. It is ideal for families and cross-country skiing. This trail follows the back end of Chappells Field through wildlife management areas, crosses Forest Road, travels to the bottom loop of the campground, and returns through a forested section to the starting point. Park at the Chappells Field Trailhead.

Crist Ridge Trail: 1.9 miles, orange blazes, easiest hiking
This multi-use trail starts at an intersection of Chappells Field Trail and extends to below the pool. To access the trail, park at the lowest intersection of Chappells Field Trail and Forest Road, or at the second curve above the pool.

Homestead Trail: 1.8 miles, orange blazes, easiest hiking
This wide, gentle trail is suitable for the whole family. The trail winds through old homestead sites in a rolling valley section of the park. The old fields are great for birding. Trailhead parking is available along Park Road at the second curve past the park office and in Willow Springs Picnic Area.

Lost Turkey Trail: 26 miles, 4 miles in the park, red blazes, most difficult hiking
Beginning at the towers and ending at the Babcock State Forest Ranger Station on PA 56, this 26-mile trail is a favorite of backpackers, cross-country skiers, and day hikers. This trail uses a combination of public and private lands.

It follows many of the narrow-gauge railroad beds from the logging activities of the 1930s. Lost Turkey Trail covers a wide variety of terrain contained in the ridge and valley section of the park, including Blue Knob Mountain and the Allegheny Front. Unnamed connecting trails are blazed with a double blue blaze. Proper hiking boots are recommended. This trail is not recommended for small children. A separate topographical trail map is available for the entire Lost Turkey Trail and the Bureau of Forestry's John P. Saylor Trail. Overnight parking is at the Babcock Ranger Station or the Blue Knob park office. Overnight camping by backpackers is allowed only on forestry lands by permit.

Mountain View Trail: 4 miles, double red blazes, most difficult hiking
This multi-use trail is in a wilderness area of the park. Trailheads are at the curve below the ski lodge on Ski Access Road or in Willow Springs Picnic Area. The trail follows an old waterline, climbs steep slopes, and follows Beaverdam Creek. The trail is recommended only for adults in good

hiking condition. Proper footwear (boots) is a must due to the steep and rugged terrain. Access points to different sections of the trail are limited. This trail should not be used during inclement weather as fog can become quite dense as a result of the elevation.

Lookout Loop: 1 mile, easiest hiking
Beginning near the Blue Knob All Seasons Resort, this multi-use trail loops around near the top of the mountain to Pavia Lookout.

Rock 'N' Ridge Trail: 2.8 miles, inverted blue T blazes, more difficult hiking
This multi-use trail starts at the picnic pavilion above the pool, then follows a homestead road weaving through the center of the park near a mountain brook. The trail is a steady uphill climb until it peaks near the mountain slopes and returns along the high ground connecting to the ridge top east of the pool complex. This is a ridge and valley trail suitable for the whole family. Park at Mowery Hollow Picnic Area.

Sawmill Trail: 3 miles, yellow blazes, more difficult hiking
This multi-use trail bisects the park and uses openings created by waterlines and service roads. Beginning on Ickes Hill on Queen Road, this trail passes Willow Springs Picnic Area, Organized Group Cabin Camp, the campground, and Chappells Field, then connects to the lower section of Rock 'N' Ridge Trail leading to the pool complex. Parking is available at the Chappells Field and Queen Road trailheads.

Three Springs Trail: 2 miles, orange blazes, easiest hiking
Using service roads and waterlines, this multi-use trail is a very wide, gentle mountain trail. It begins at the curve below the ski slope and extends along the eastern slope of the mountain to the Willow Springs Picnic Area. Enjoy the mountain forest setting with views of the lowlands from about 2,000 feet. Park at the curve approaching the ski resort along Ski Access Road.



Mountain laurel

