

Archbald Pothole State Park

A Pennsylvania Recreational Guide

1/2017



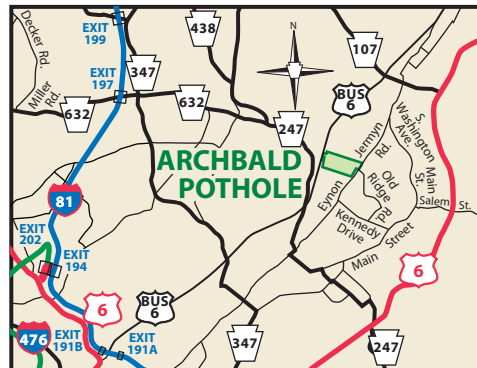
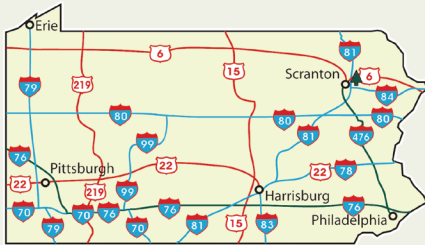
Archbald Pothole State Park is a 150-acre park in northeastern Pennsylvania. The park is named for Archbald Pothole, a geologic feature that formed during the Wisconsin Glacial Period, around 15,000 years ago.

The pothole is 38 feet deep and has an elliptical shape. The diameter of the pothole decreases downward. The largest diameter is 42 feet by 24 feet. At the bottom it is 17 feet by 14 feet. The pothole has a volume of about 18,600 cubic feet, so could hold about 140,000 gallons. It would take 35 fire truck tankers to fill the pothole.

Directions

Archbald Pothole is in Lackawanna County, nine miles north of Scranton. The park is easily reached from Interstate 81. Take Exit 191A to US 6 east towards Carbondale. The park entrance is six miles on the right.

GPS DD: Lat. 41.51305 Long. -75.5757



More Information

Archbald Pothole State Park
c/o Lackawanna State Park
1839 Abington Road
North Abington Township, PA 18414
570-945-3239
email: lackawannasp@pa.gov

An Equal Opportunity Employer
www.visitPAParks.com

Information and 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, for state park
information and reservations.

facebook.com/visitPAParks
twitter.com/visitPAParks



Nearby Attractions

Information on nearby attractions is available from the Northeast Pennsylvania Convention and Visitors Bureau. www.visitnepa.org

Built on reclaimed strip-mined lands, **Ed Staback Park** has tennis and basketball courts, baseball fields, and a playground.

Pennsylvania's first heritage park, the **Lackawanna Heritage Valley**, tells the story of the important role that the Lackawanna Valley played in America's Industrial Revolution--supplying over 80 percent of the nation's anthracite coal that fueled the growth of American industry. www.lhva.org

Nearby Glacial Attractions

At **Hickory Run State Park**, Boulder Field is 14 acres of jumbled stone caused by severe weather of the last glacial period. The glacier end moraine crosses the park. Hickory Run State Park can be reached at Exit 274 off of I-80. Follow PA 534 east to the park. 570-443-0400

Glacial meltwater eroded the bedrock and created a series of potholes in an area now called Whirlpool Valley. Owned by the Bureau of Forestry, the **Seven Tubs Natural Area** can be reached at Exit 164 off I-81. Follow PA 115 south for 2.5 miles. The park is on the right. 570-477-5467

The 150-acre **Tannersville Cranberry Bog** is the southernmost low altitude boreal bog on the eastern seaboard. The wetland contains carnivorous plants, rare orchids, and other plants. The bog is owned by the Nature Conservancy and can only be visited during scheduled tours. 570-629-3061

Recreational Opportunities

The eastern side of the park has undergone strip mine reclamation and has athletic fields in Ed Staback Park.

HIKING: A small loop trail starting at the wayside follows an old coal mine tram road passed rock ledges and through a forest.

HUNTING AND FIREARMS: Over 100 acres are open to limited hunting, trapping and the training of dogs during established seasons. Common game species are deer, squirrel, and turkey.

Use **extreme caution** with firearms at all times. Be sure to read and follow all hunting and firearms rules and regulations posted on the Bureau of State Parks' website.
www.visitPAParks.com



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.

NEAREST HOSPITAL

Geisinger Community Medical Center
1800 Mulberry Street
Scranton, PA 18510
570-703-8000

History

Archbald Pothole was discovered in 1884 by coal miner Patrick Mahon while extending a mine shaft. Mr. Mahon fired a blast of explosives and water and stones came rushing down. The miners fled fearing that the mountain was falling on them. Edward Jones, the manager of the mining company, investigated and ordered the area cleared of debris. About 800 to 1,000 tons of small rounded stones were removed and Mr. Jones realized that the vertical tunnel was a large pothole.

About 1,000 feet north of Archbald Pothole, another pothole was found, but it was thought to be larger than the first pothole and was not excavated because of the excessive cost.

Archbald Pothole was briefly used as a ventilation shaft for the mine. A large fire kept burning in the bottom made the pothole function like a chimney, drawing air out of the mine. In 1887, Colonel Hackley, the landowner, built a fence and retaining wall around the hole. Edward Jones gave many tours of the pothole to local citizens and to noted geologists. The pothole became a popular tourist attraction. In 1914, the widow of Colonel Hackley donated a one-acre deed, which included the pothole, to the Lackawanna Historical Society.

With the addition of 150 acres, Archbald Pothole became a Lackawanna County park in 1940. The county deeded the property to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania 1961, and after improvements, Archbald Pothole State Park was dedicated in 1964.

The Ice Ages

At least four ice advances, often called ice ages, have moved south into Pennsylvania. Most of the evidence of glaciers in Pennsylvania is from the most recent advance, the Wisconsin Glacial Period. About 70,000 years ago North America had a similar climate to modern time. Familiar animals lived here,

but so did unique animals like saber-toothed cats, giant ground sloths, mammoths, beavers the size of wolves, deer the size of horses, and other prehistoric animals.

The climate of the earth began to cool. Ice sheets in the arctic regions began slowly spreading in all directions. In the Northern Hemisphere, this glacier was called the Laurentide Continental Glacier and was several miles thick in the center while the edges were around 500 feet thick. The glacier moved very slowly, sometimes only several feet a year. The edge of the glacier often advanced in the winter, only to partially melt back in the summer. Like a giant bulldozer, the glacier scraped the land, removing vegetation and soil, and flattening hills and ridges. On the top, edges and underneath the glacier, ice melted and flowed in rivers carrying sand, pebbles, and boulders.

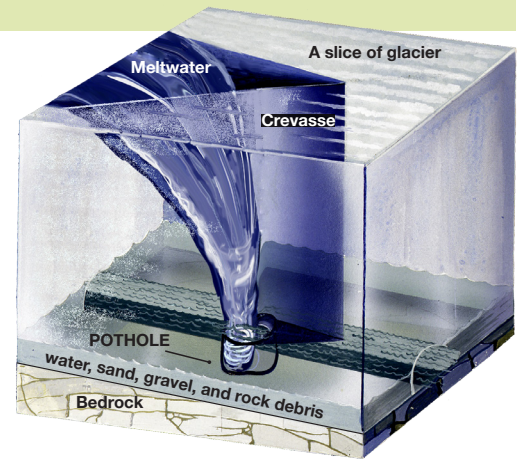
Near the glacier, the climate was very cold. The annual temperature was 20° to 25° F cooler than the current climate.

About 13,000 years ago, the Laurentide Continental Glacier was at its greatest size, and covered two-thirds of North America, including the northeast and northwest corners of Pennsylvania.

Again the climate changed, becoming warmer, and the giant blanket of ice quickly melted and retreated. Animals and plants slowly repopulated the warming lands, but many of the prehistoric animals became extinct.

Formation of the Pothole

A pothole usually is a hole that is worn into the bedrock of a stream at the base of waterfalls or in strong rapids. The moving water spins sand, gravel, and rock fragments in any small indentation in the bedrock. After enough time, the sand and stones carve out an elliptical hole. Potholes may also form under or near the edge of glaciers by the action of glacial meltwater.



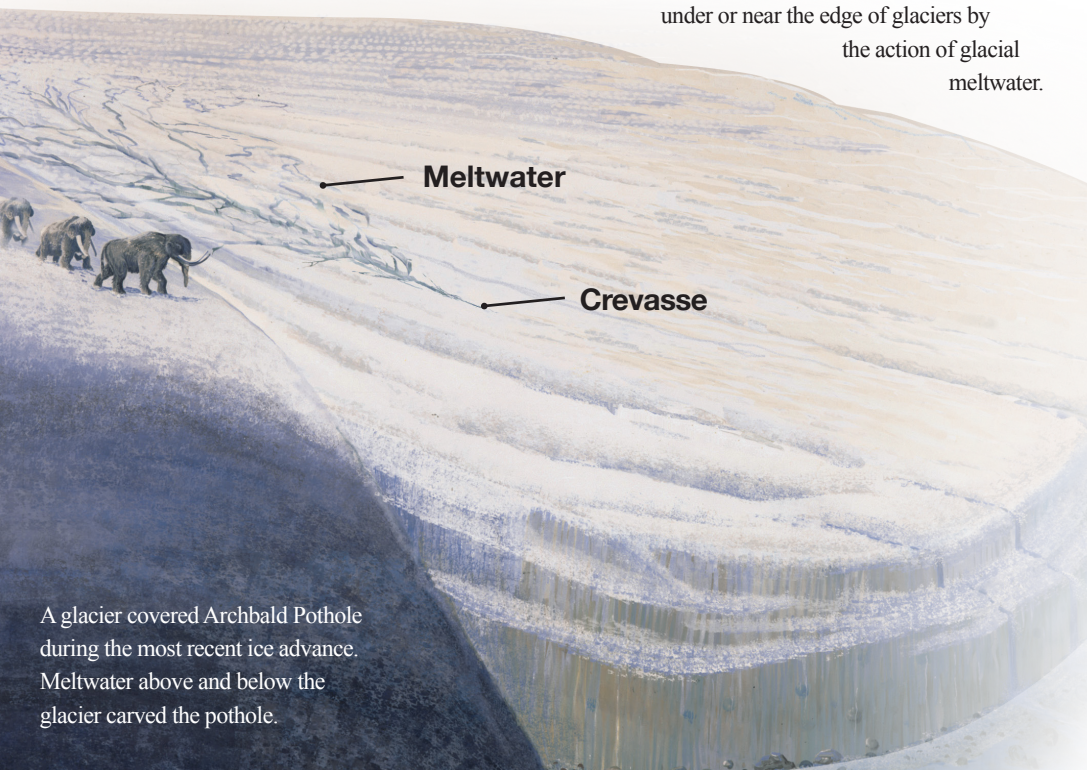
Archbald Pothole was formed during the Wisconsin Glacial Period between 30,000 and 11,000 years ago. A meltwater stream flowing on top of the glacier probably broke through a crevasse (a crack in the glacier) and fell to the bedrock hundreds of feet below. There was enough force generated by the falling water to begin a whirling motion of rock fragments in a small depression. As the rock fragments swirled and bumped each other, they carved the bedrock, making the depression deeper and larger. The rock fragments eventually were reduced to tiny particles, but new rock fragments continually tumbled into the hole, enabling the grinding process to continue. As the glacier moved, so did the crevasse and the waterfall. Sand, gravel, and rounded stones filled in Archbald Pothole and the waterfall moved off to make new potholes.

At Archbald Pothole, the water first wore away the top layer of bedrock, which is sandstone. Next the swirling water and rock carved through gray shale leaving a particularly smooth and polished surface that shows a typical, well-rounded, wavelike surface. This feature is especially noticeable in the lower half of the northern side of the pothole. The bottom layer of bedrock is black anthracite coal.

The southern and western sides of the pothole are nearly vertical, while the other two sides are deeply terraced. This is evidence that the waterfall that formed the pothole moved in a northeast and southwest direction. It is unknown whether the pothole formed during an advance or retreat of the glacier.

Preserved underground by nature for around 13,000 years, the pothole was uncovered in 1884 and has been exposed to weathering. The sides of the pothole are slowly eroding and are covered in ferns and lichens.

Please help preserve this signature of Pennsylvania's glacial history. If you observe someone vandalizing park property, please contact a park official.



A glacier covered Archbald Pothole during the most recent ice advance. Meltwater above and below the glacier carved the pothole.

TO CARBONDALE

ARCHBALD POTHOLE STATE PARK

TO JERMYN



ENLARGEMENT OF MAIN DAY USE AREA

