

# A Pennsylvania Recreational Guide for Varden Conservation Area



**Varden Conservation Area**  
c/o Promised Land State Park  
100 Lower Lake Road  
Greentown, PA 18426-9735  
570-676-3428  
PromisedLandSP@pa.gov

**Make online reservations at:**  
[www.visitPAparks.com](http://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](http://www.visitPAparks.com)



## Varden Conservation Area

A gift from veterinarian Dr. Mead Shaffer, the 444-acre Varden Conservation Area is in Wayne County. This magnanimous gift is in an area that was once a remote section of the state but is now beginning to feel the pressure of development. The land is now protected as a respite from daily life for future generations. Varden is a place to learn about Pennsylvania’s wonderful natural history. The property is managed by Promised Land State Park, which is in Pike County.

*“Environmental education always has been a primary concern of mine. I trust this land will allow present and future generations to observe and study the diverse ecology found in the Varden Conservation Area.” - Dr. Shaffer*

### Directions

Tannery Tract GPS DD: Lat. 41.48758 Long. -75.38254  
225 Tannery Road, Lake Ariel, PA 18436

Mid Valley Tract GPS DD: Lat. 41.48107 Long. -75.405724  
1070 Mid Valley Road, Lake Ariel, PA 18436

Varden is at the intersection of PA 196 and PA 296, in Wayne County. Tannery Road provides access to the Tannery Tract. Mid Valley Road provides access to the Mid Valley Tract.

### Recreational Opportunities

**FISHING:** The pond in the Tannery Tract has largemouth and smallmouth bass, redbreast sunfish, and catfishes. Middle Creek provides native trout fishing. Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission regulations and laws apply.

**HUNTING AND FIREARMS:** The Tannery Tract is open to hunting, trapping, and the training of dogs during established seasons. Common game species are deer, bears, and turkeys.

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 Promised Land State 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 AND SNOWSHOEING:**  
All trails are recommended for cross-country skiing and snowshoeing when conditions permit.

### Hiking

Varden Conservation Area offers a network of short hiking trails through farm fields, forests, and wetlands. Please stay on the trails and respect private property. All trails are blazed blue.

**TANNERY TRACT TRAILS: 4.03 miles**

**Bluebird Trail: 0.71 mile, easiest hiking**

This trail winds around the meadow edges and is good for observing plants and animals. Numerous bluebird boxes along the trail are monitored by volunteers.

**Middle Creek Trail: 0.45 mile, easiest hiking**

At the edge of a large, flat meadow, this trail follows Middle Creek along the southern tract border and ends at the conservation area boundary.

**Pond Loop: 0.73 mile, easiest hiking**

This ADA accessible trail begins at the teaching pavilion in the Tannery Tract, loops around to Middle Creek, passes through a forested area around a pond, and then wraps back to the pavilion.

**Shortcut Trail: 0.1 mile, easiest hiking**

This wooded trail links Steel Tower Trail and the barn on Tannery Trail.

**Steel Tower Trail: 0.27 mile, easiest hiking**

This trail traverses the road beneath a portion of a power line.

**Tall Timber Trail: 0.35 mile, easiest hiking**

This wooded trail winds through forest connecting Wood Tower Trail to Tannery Trail.

**Tannery Trail: 0.63 mile, easiest hiking**

This trail begins on Pond Trail at the footbridge that crosses Middle Creek. Tannery Trail crosses an old meadow, winds through a hemlock forest, and then merges with Bluebird Trail. Most of the trail follows an abandoned township road.

**Wildcat Trail: 0.37 mile, easiest hiking**

This trail starts at Hemlock Road, across from the Western Wayne Middle School entrance, winds through the forest, and connects with Bluebird Trail in a meadow.

**Wood Tower Trail: 0.79 mile, more difficult hiking**

This trail begins at the park boundary, connects with Bluebird Trail, intersects Tall Timber Trail, and ends near where Middle Creek enters the property. Wood Tower Trail follows the original power line built in the 1920s to carry electricity from Lake Wallenpaupack to the Lackawanna Valley. This trail has a steep but short climb on the eastern part of the trail.

**MID VALLEY TRACT TRAILS: 3.32 miles**

**Bear Paw Trail: 0.62 mile, easiest hiking**

This trail begins at the Mid Valley Tract access area then splits into a loop that follows the western edge of the park and travels through a conifer plantation planted by Dr. Shaffer.

**Beechwood Trail: 0.15 mile, easiest hiking**

A u-shaped trail off Overlook Ridge Trail, Beechwood Trail travels through northern hardwood forests and a utility right-of-way back to Overlook Ridge Trail.

**Critters Run: 0.08 mile, easiest hiking**

The shortest trail in the conservation area, Critters Run connects the northern and southern portions of Overlook Ridge Trail. Eastern hemlocks, white pines, and many northern hardwoods border this trail.

**Deer Run: 0.12 mile, easiest hiking**

This trail bisects Overlook Ridge Trail, going east to west and through a utility right-of-way.

**Holster Creek Trail: 0.55 mile, easiest hiking**

This trail follows Holster Creek along the northern border, then crosses Mid Valley Road to intersect Shaffers Way. Diverse vegetation can be seen along Holster Creek Trail.

**Overlook Ridge Trail: 1.14 miles, easiest hiking**

Beginning and ending on Bear Paw Trail, Overlook Ridge Trail travels the heart of the Mid Valley Tract. This is an excellent trail to see many tree species, including Eastern hemlocks, white pines, and red maples.

**Pond View Trail: 0.43 mile, easiest hiking**

This trail intersects with Shaffers Way Trail twice, and then loops partway around the spring-fed pond. Amphibians and other wildlife can be seen during the spring and summer months.

**Shaffers Way: 0.23 mile, easiest hiking**

Connecting Overlook Ridge and Pond View trails, and intersecting Holster Creek Trail, Shaffers Way travels through hundreds of conifers planted by Dr. Shaffer.

Tell us about your hike at:



### Learn, Experience, Connect

A wide variety of programs are offered at Varden Conservation Area and Promised Land State Park from April through October. Programs feature the abundant wildlife and forest management practices that can be seen in the conservation area. 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.

Contact Promised Land State Park’s office or explore the online calendar of events, <https://events.dcnr.pa.gov>, for more information on programs and other learning experiences.

### History

The Varden area has been home to eight generations of the Shaffer family, beginning with John Shaffer in 1786. The chimney of the John Shaffer house is in the southwest corner of the Tannery Tract. Dr. Mead Shaffer donated the original 430 acres of land that became Varden Conservation Area in 2001.

The name Varden was given to the area by an early postmaster who liked the character Dolly Varden from the book Barnaby Rudge by Charles Dickens.

### Wildlife Watching

There are many opportunities to see wildlife in the conservation area. The most common trees in the forest are the native red maples and Eastern hemlocks. In addition to the native trees of the area, many trees were planted, including: blue, white, and Norway spruce, ash, white birch, red and white pine, and Douglas and balsam fir. The diverse forest and wetland habitats produce ideal conditions for amphibians, birds, and mammals. White-tailed deer, black bears, squirrels, beavers, and many species of birds inhabit the area, including wild turkeys.

### Nearby Attractions

Information on nearby attractions is available from the Pocono Mountains Visitors Bureau, 570-421-5791.  
[www.pocomountains.com](http://www.pocomountains.com)

### 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.

- Do your part to keep wildlife wild! Enjoy wildlife from a safe distance and do not feed or approach wild animals.

- Please park only in designated areas and obey all traffic regulations.

- Varden Conservation Area is a carry-in, carry out facility. Please take your trash and recyclables home with you.

- Soliciting and posting signs are prohibited without approval from the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.

### 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.

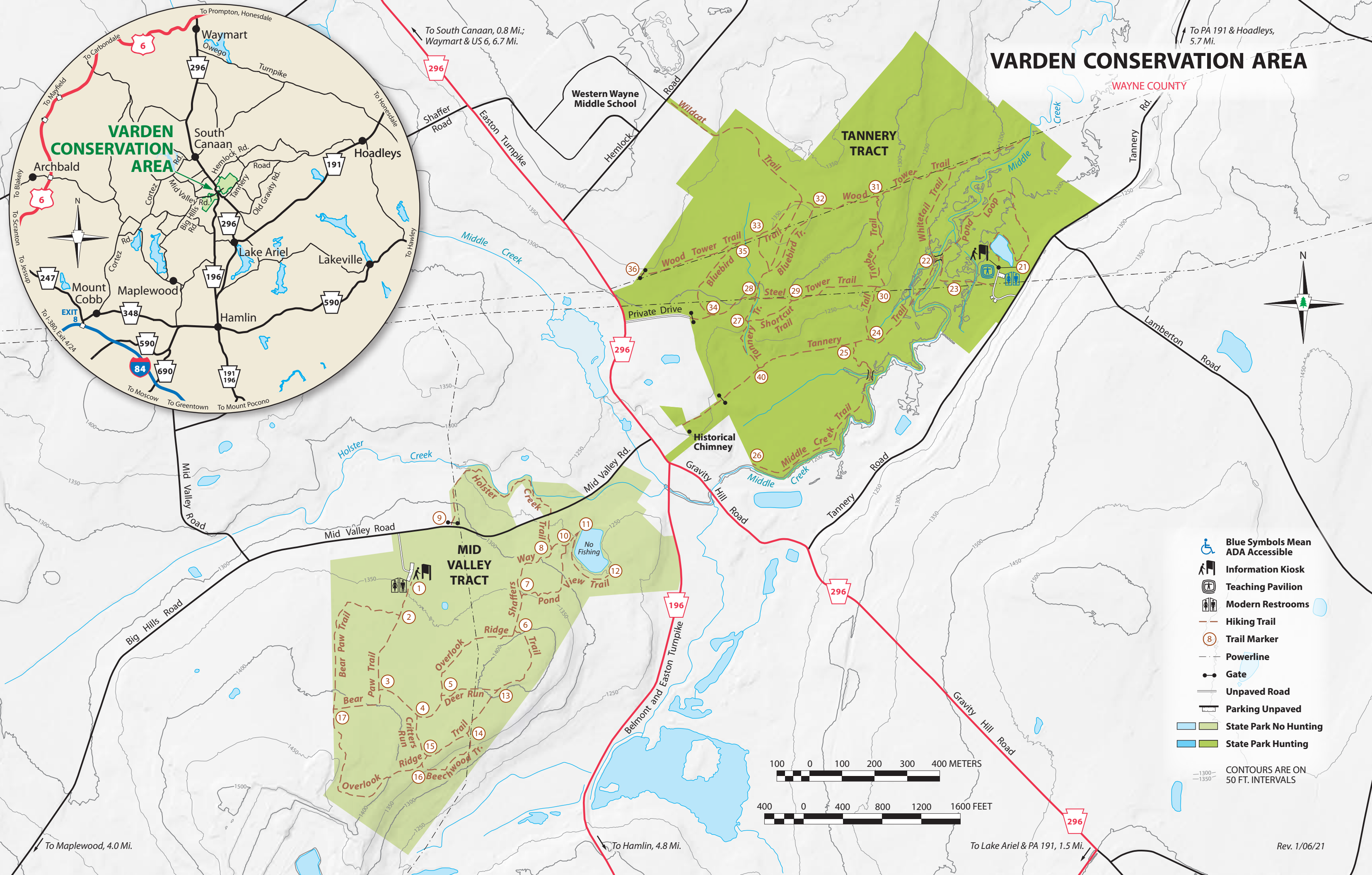
### In an Emergency Call 911

Call 911. Directions to the nearest hospital are posted on bulletin boards.

#### NEAREST HOSPITAL

Wayne Memorial Hospital  
601 Park Street  
Honesdale, PA 18431  
570-253-8100  
[www.wmh.org](http://www.wmh.org)





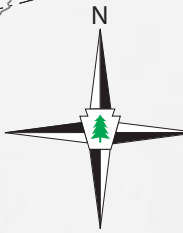
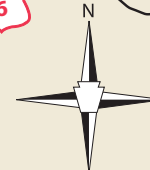
# VARDEN CONSERVATION AREA

WAYNE COUNTY

To PA 191 & Hoadleys, 5.7 Mi.

To South Canaan, 0.8 Mi.; Waymart & US 6, 6.7 Mi.

## VARDEN CONSERVATION AREA



- Blue Symbols Mean ADA Accessible
- Information Kiosk
- Teaching Pavilion
- Modern Restrooms
- Hiking Trail
- Trail Marker
- Powerline
- Gate
- Unpaved Road
- Parking Unpaved
- State Park No Hunting
- State Park Hunting

CONTOURS ARE ON 50 FT. INTERVALS

