



# Tuscarora/Locust Lake

A Pennsylvania Recreational Guide for

Tuscarora &  
Locust Lake  
State Parks



**pennsylvania**  
DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION  
AND NATURAL RESOURCES

## 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.

[visitPAparks](#)

2022



White-tailed deer fawn

## TUSCARORA AND LOCUST LAKE STATE PARKS

### Tuscarora State Park

When viewed from the lake or the day-use area, Locust Mountain seems to drop right into the southern side of Tuscarora Lake. The scenic picnic area and picturesque swimming beach hosts many day trips, and the lake is a popular fishing spot. The 1,618-acre park is home to the park office and visitor center for Tuscarora and Locust Lake state parks, which has information about the parks, the environmental education program, and local attractions.



Tuscarora Lake

#### DIRECTIONS:

GPS DD: Lat. 40.78499 Long. -76.11921

From I-81 northbound, take exit 131A. Turn right onto Morea Road. Turn right onto PA 54 north and follow signs to the park. From I-81 southbound, take exit 131A, turn right to PA 54 north, and then follow signs to the park.



Locust Lake

### Locust Lake State Park

Known as a popular camping area, Locust Lake State Park is nestled on the side of Locust Mountain. The 52-acre Locust Lake, situated between the two sections of the campground, is surrounded by beautiful forests. Hiking and fishing are popular activities in the 1,772-acre park.

#### DIRECTIONS:

GPS DD: Lat. 40.4705 Long. -76.0715

From I-81 northbound, take exit 131B, cross under the I-81 overpass, and then make an immediate left turn toward New Boston. Travel 1.1 miles to a left turn, follow signs. (Left turn is also signed.)

From I-81 southbound, take exit 131A, turn left then travel 1 mile and then turn left, follow signs. (Left turn is also signed.)

### 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.



Tuscarora Lake

## LEARN, EXPERIENCE, CONNECT

Tuscarora and Locust Lake state parks offer a wide variety of programs from March to November. Gain a better understanding of the parks' 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



Colliers and hut

### The Tuscarora

Before European Settlers arrived in Pennsylvania, a deep forest of hemlocks, white pines, ash, hickories, elms, oaks, cherries, and American chestnuts covered the Locust Valley.

The area was first settled by the Lenape before being conquered by the Susquehannocks, and finally controlled by the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois Confederacy).

The Tuscarora dwelled in small villages along several major rivers in the coastal plains of North Carolina. After contact with European traders, the Tuscarora became avid fur traders. Land-hungry settlers dealt unfairly with the Tuscarora. Years of unequal trade, mistrust, and even kidnapping of Tuscarora children for slaves escalated into the Tuscarora War from 1711 to 1713.

The Tuscarora were defeated and requested help from their powerful New York relatives, the Haudenosaunee. The Haudenosaunee sent this message to Governor Robert Hunter of New York:

*Tuscarore Indians are come to shelter themselves among the five nations they were of us and went from us long ago and are now returned. . .we desire you to look upon the Tuscarores that are come to live among us as our Children who shall obey our commands & live peaceably and orderly.*

O'Callaghan and Fernow (eds.), Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York, V, 387.

The Haudenosaunee welcomed the Tuscarora. Although not equal with the other five tribes, the Tuscarora voiced their opinions through one of the other tribes.

Beginning in 1714 and continuing for 90 years, bands of Tuscarora migrated from North Carolina to southern New York. Most of the families followed the Tuscarora Path up the valleys of the Susquehanna River to New York, but many also made their own paths. All along the routes, mountains, streams, valleys, and towns bear the name Tuscarora, evidence of this 500-mile migration. In the early 1700s, some of the Tuscarora briefly dwelled in the Locust Valley. Tuscarora State Park was named to honor these transient residents of Pennsylvania.



### Locust Valley

In the mid-1800s, anthracite coal was discovered in Schuylkill County. Immigrants swiftly arrived for the mining jobs. It was not economically feasible to mine the coal in the Locust Valley, but the area did not escape the American Industrial Revolution.

The forests fell to the logger's ax as sawmills turned trees into lumber, shingles, tool handles, and other wood products. Tanneries crushed hemlock and white pine bark for tanning leather. Colliers burned chestnuts and oaks into charcoal. Strong timbers supported the roofs of mines.

The forests were gone by the early 1900s, replaced by shrubby land prone to seasonal floods and forest fires. Some farmers tilled the cleared land.

### Locust Lake State Park

Purchased by the Marshalonis Brothers, the Locust Lake area became a fishing spot and picnic grove. When digging a lake, the brothers found a dam and the remains of an old logging mill, including boards and the hub of a waterwheel. Due to deforestation during the logging era, much flooding and runoff buried the remains under seven feet of leaves, silt, and debris.

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania purchased the Marshalonis Brothers' land in 1966. Locust Lake State Park officially opened on June 10, 1972.



Locust Lake 1973

### Tuscarora State Park

The land for Tuscarora State Park was purchased in the early 1960s. The U.S. Soil Conservation Service and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania constructed the dam for flood control and recreation. Tuscarora State Park officially opened on June 26, 1971.



Red-tailed hawk

## NATURAL RESOURCES

### Locust Valley

Tuscarora and Locust Lake state parks are six miles from each other in the Locust Valley. Locust Lake is in the western side of the valley near the headwaters of Locust Creek. After meandering east six miles along Locust Mountain, Locust Creek flows into Tuscarora Lake and eventually to the Schuylkill River. Surrounded by lands that were strip-mined for coal, Locust Valley is a green oasis of forests and wetlands with abundant wildlife.

### A Striking Difference

In contrast to the strip-mined lands surrounding the Locust Valley, Tuscarora and Locust Lake state parks contain lush forests, fields, and wetlands.

#### FORESTS

Although extensively logged in the 1800s, the land has reforested with second and third growth timber. The mixed oak forest is dominated by northern red oak, chestnut oak, and white oak trees. There are scattered patches of eastern hemlocks, white pines, and other trees like sycamores, yellow birches, red maples, white ashes, and tulip poplars. The diversity of trees supplies food, nesting sites, and cover for squirrels, chipmunks, bears, deer, turkeys, and ruffed grouse.

To slow soil erosion, over 110 acres of fields in Tuscarora State Park were planted with Austrian, eastern white, red, and pitch pines; Japanese and European larches; Norway and white spruces; and eastern hemlocks. In 1966, about 50,000 trees of each species were planted. Look for areas where the trees are all in rows and are the same species to find these tree plantations.



Highbush blueberry

A variety of smaller trees and shrubs grow under the large trees and provide food and shelter for wildlife. Ironwood and spicebushes are good browse for deer. Black locusts, flowering and silky dogwoods, mountain laurels, rhododendrons, blueberries, and serviceberries have beautiful flowers and edible fruit and seeds for wildlife. Ferns, wildflowers, herbs, and grasses on the forest floor provide shelter and runways for smaller animals like mice, chipmunks, snakes, salamanders, and insects. Locust Lake State Park boasts 15 species of ferns and over 240 species of wildflowers.



Black bear

Over 100 species of birds have been identified at the parks. Because of its location in the Appalachian Mountain section of the Ridge and Valley Province, Locust Valley is positioned along the migration route used by many species of birds of prey, including red-shouldered hawk, red-tailed hawk, merlin, and osprey. Screech owls and great-horned owls are year-round residents.



Fox kits

#### FIELDS

Both state parks manage several fields for wildlife food and habitat. These meadows support a complex food web of plants and animals, including insects. By the entrance of Tuscarora State Park, there are more than 100 acres of open fields. These old fields and upland meadows contain natural herbaceous vegetation and are managed for plant diversity through periodic mowing. Small "islands" in each area are not mowed and allowed to grow. Also, permanent brush fields are maintained to provide cover and food for wildlife. Some of the shrubs are blueberry, huckleberry, and scrub oak.

At Locust Lake by the dam, approximately 40 acres are managed to prevent natural succession by trees. Wildflowers, tall grasses, and other herbaceous plants provide roots, leaves, nectar, and pollen for a host of

meadow-dwelling creatures. Some species of wildlife inhabiting this area are shrews, moles, meadow voles, meadow mice, and many species of insects, which attract larger carnivores.

#### LAKES AND WETLANDS

In the lakes, aquatic vegetation provides food for fish and wildlife, hiding places for smaller organisms, spawning and nursery areas for fish, dissolved oxygen, and homes for insect larvae like dragonflies and mayflies. Milfoil, coontail, and curlyleaf pondweed are common.

The banks of Locust Creek, Tuscarora Lake, and Locust Lake are riparian areas. The often-wet soil is inhospitable to many plants, but sphagnum mosses, rushes, bur-reeds, skunk cabbages, and cattails can only live in wetlands. Many animals depend on wetlands for food and habitat such as pickerel frogs, bullfrogs, red-spotted newts, great blue herons, painted turtles, crayfishes, water snakes, and waterfowl.

Wetlands are not only important to plants and animals but provide a great service to people by slowing flood waters and improving the water quality in the Locust Valley.



Eastern painted turtle

## INFORMATION AND RESERVATIONS

#### Tuscarora State Park

687 Tuscarora Park Road  
Barnesville, PA 18214-9715  
570-467-2404  
[TuscaroraSP@pa.gov](mailto:TuscaroraSP@pa.gov)

An Equal Opportunity Employer  
[www.dcnr.pa.gov/StateParks](http://www.dcnr.pa.gov/StateParks)

#### Locust Lake State Park

220 Locust Lake Road  
Barnesville, PA 18214  
Contact Station (seasonal): 570-467-2772

#### 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.



### 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 at Locust Lake / Tuscarora

Call 911 and contact a park employee. Directions to the nearest hospital are posted on bulletin boards and at the park office.

#### NEAREST HOSPITAL to Tuscarora

St. Luke's Hospital - Miners Campus  
360 West Ruddle Street  
Coaldale, PA 18218  
866-STLUKES

#### NEAREST HOSPITAL to Locust Lake

Lehigh Valley Hospital - Schuylkill  
700 East Norwegian Street  
Pottsville, PA 17901  
570-621-4000



### 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!

• 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.

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

### Nearby Attractions

Information on nearby attractions is available from the Schuylkill County Visitors Bureau. [www.schuylkill.org](http://www.schuylkill.org)



TUSCARORA STATE PARK

Recreational Opportunities

**CAMPING COTTAGES:** Six cottages sleep five people in bunk beds and have windows, a porch, picnic table, fire ring, electric lights, and outlets. Camping cottages do not have running water, but restroom and shower facilities are nearby.



**YURTS:** Four round, canvas and wood walled tents each have a wooden deck and sleep four or five people in bunk beds. Yurts have a stove, microwave, refrigerator, countertop, table, chairs, electric heat, outlets, fire ring, and two picnic tables. Yurts do not have running water, but restroom and shower facilities are nearby.

**PICNICKING:** Over 250 picnic tables are available year round. 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. Modern restrooms are available April through October.

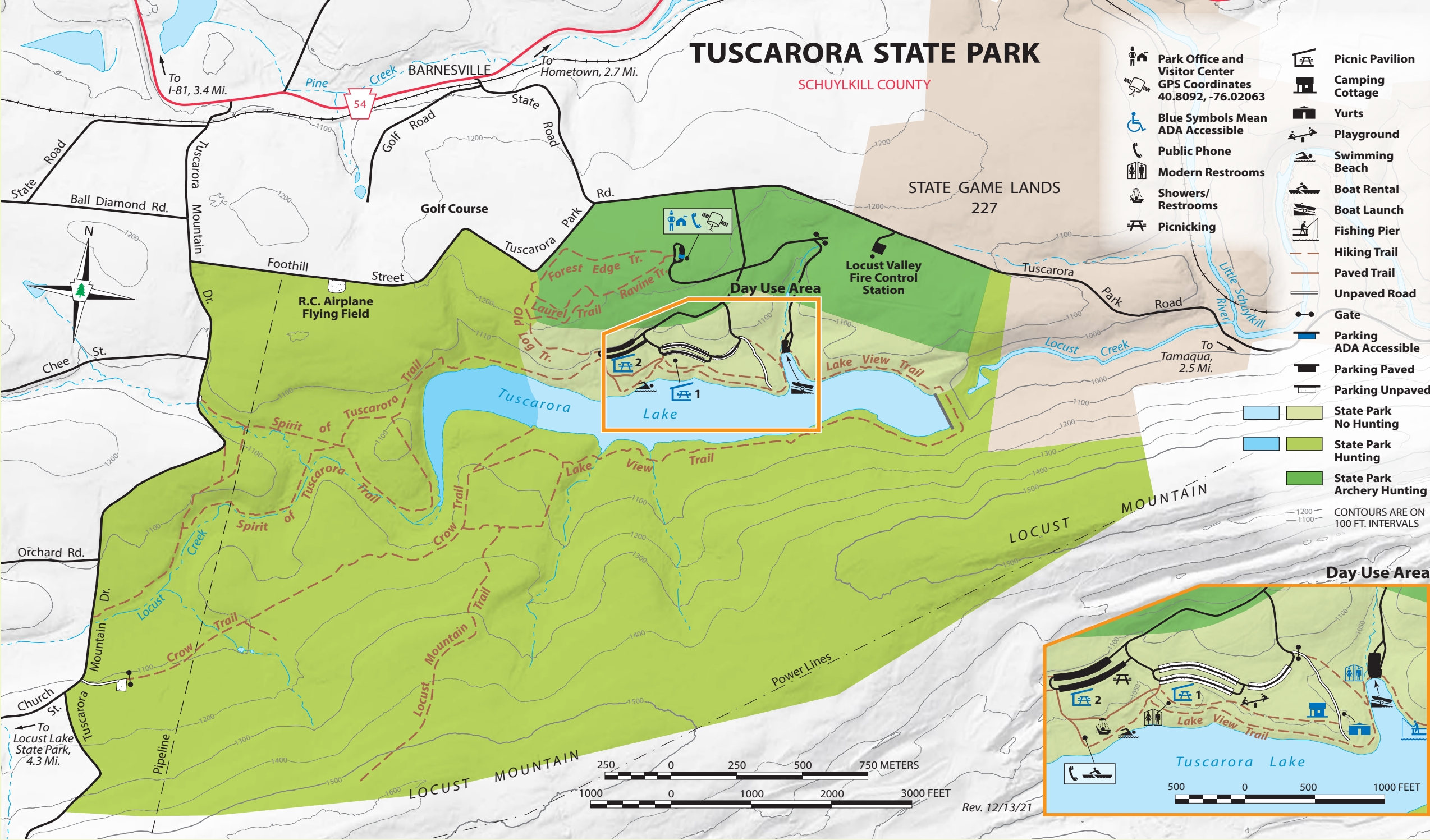
**MODEL AIRCRAFT FLYING FIELD:** A 5-acre model aircraft flying field is maintained by the Tuscarora R.C. Club and open to public use. An AMA license is required, and all field rules must be followed. For more information, visit the Tuscarora R.C. Club. <https://tuscarorarcflyingclub.com>

Hiking: 9.1 miles

Trails wander through several habitats like mature deciduous forest, meadow, and agricultural fields.

CROW TRAIL: 1.4 miles, yellow blazes, easiest hiking

This old dirt road passes through many habitats, including mature deciduous forest, pine and larch plantation, grass fields, and overgrown meadow. This trail ends at the southern shore of Tuscarora Lake.



FOREST EDGE TRAIL: 0.4 mile, no blazes, easiest hiking

This grass mowed trail winds along the edge of a mature forest and agricultural fields. The trail provides access to Old Log Trail and the park office and visitor center.

LAKE VIEW TRAIL: 2.3 miles, yellow blazes, easiest hiking

One end of Lake View Trail is in the day use area. The other end meets Crow Trail. Lake View Trail runs parallel to Tuscarora Lake,

crosses two creeks, and passes through a large rhododendron stand and a hemlock forest. The trail crosses the dam, allowing for spectacular views of the lake.

A 7.5-mile loop around Tuscarora Lake can be made by hiking Lake View, Spirit of Tuscarora, and Crow trails.

LAUREL TRAIL: 0.4 mile, not blazed, easiest hiking

Accessed from Old Log or Forest Edge trails, this grassy road was used to cut trees that

died from severe insect damage. This short loop provides views of mountain laurel and a mature forest.

LOCUST MOUNTAIN TRAIL: 0.4 mile, no blazes, more difficult hiking

This old fire access road winds through a mature deciduous forest on a fairly steep slope as it travels from Crow Trail to the top of Locust Mountain.

OLD LOG TRAIL: 0.3 mile, no blazes, easiest hiking

This old logging road winds through a mature deciduous forest. It has a slight grade and connects to Laurel and Forest Edge trails and the west end of the main parking area.

RAVINE TRAIL: 0.4 mile, no blazes, easiest hiking

The trail is bordered by low shrubs, pines, and sassafras trees. It connects to Laurel Loop and leads back to the park office parking lot.

SPIRIT OF TUSCARORA TRAIL: 4.5 miles, red/white/yellow blazes, more difficult hiking

The trail meanders along Tuscarora Lake and Locust Creek and through deciduous forest, a mature eastern hemlock stand, late successional field, rhododendron thicket, and wetland meadow. Highlights include year-round seasonal wildflowers, a large milkweed patch for monarch butterflies, abundant neotropical songbirds, and the interesting tree for which the trail is named.

RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES AT BOTH PARKS

BOATING: electric motors only

The 96-acre Tuscarora Lake has a boat launch and boat mooring. The 52-acre Locust Lake has a boat launch. Rowboats, canoes, kayaks, and pedal boats are available through a boat rental concession at each park.

Tuscarora State Park has 125 seasonal boat mooring spaces and 20 canoe racks. The season begins April 1 and ends October 31. A required state park mooring permit can be purchased at the park office.

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.



**SWIMMING:** A sand beach at each park is open from late-May to mid-September, 8:00 AM to sunset. Swimming areas are marked with buoys and have a maximum depth of 5.5 feet. Swim at your own risk. Please read and follow posted rules.

**HUNTING AND FIREARMS:** About 1,100 acres of Tuscarora State Park and about 1,700 acres of Locust Lake State Park are open to hunting, trapping, and the training of dogs during established seasons. Common

game species are deer, pheasant, rabbit, squirrel, turkey, grouse, and dove.

Special regulations areas allowing only bow and arrow and flintlock muzzleloader hunting are located by the park entrance of Tuscarora and at several areas of Locust Lake.

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



Locust Lake fishing pier

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.

basses (largemouth and smallmouth), and panfishes give anglers action in all seasons.

Those fishing at Locust Lake who are not camping are required to use the parking area near the park entrance.

In the winter, ice fishing for panfish and trout is popular at both lakes. **Ice thickness is not monitored.** For your safety, make sure ice is at least 4" thick for a single angler and 7" thick for a small group. Always carry safety equipment.

Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission regulations and laws apply.



LOCUST LAKE STATE PARK

Recreational Opportunities

CAMPING: modern restrooms, warm showers

The 281 campsites encircle the lake. Tenting is permitted on all sites, including on the north side of the lake and on the trailer facilities on the south side of the lake. All campsites are in a wooded area and have a parking pad, picnic table, fire ring, and a cleared area for camping equipment. There are also a number of walk-to sites that are a short walk from the designated parking area.

Campground conveniences include modern restrooms and shower houses. A sanitary dump station is on the trailer side of the lake. There are three playgrounds within the camping areas. Trash and recycling areas are on the north and south sides of the lake.

All areas are within easy access to swimming, boating, fishing, and hiking.

A camp store, boat rental, and public phone are on the northwestern side of the lake. The camp store has basic food and camping supplies like wood and bait.

GPS DD: Lat. 40.78499 Long -76.11921

**ORIENTEERING:** A easy orienteering course loops around the lake starting near the camp store. Maps are available at the contact station and at the beginning of the course.

**BIKING:** The paved, 1.3-mile Bicycle Trail circles the lake, providing excellent views over the water.



Hiking: 9.5 miles

BEACH TRAIL: 0.4 mile, no blazes, easiest hiking

Connecting Bicycle Trail to the back loop of the campground, this short trail is often used by campers to go to the beach.

BICYCLE TRAIL: 1.3 miles, no blazes, easiest hiking

This paved path for hikers and bikers loops around Locust Lake. It is ADA accessible and great for strollers. Outdoor fitness stations can be found along the trail.

FIRELINE TRAIL: 3.6 miles, red blazes, most difficult hiking

The trail traverses the mountain over Locust Lake and the Locust Valley as it winds

through pine plantations and up and down mountain terrain. This trail connects the campground to Brockton Mountain Road.

HEMLOCK TRAIL: 0.2 mile, yellow blazes, more difficult hiking

Accessed from Oak Loop Trail, this trail is commonly used to make a 1.7-mile loop, passing through a mature hemlock stand with a woodland stream and by a unique geological outcropping.

OAK LOOP TRAIL: 2.2 miles, white blazes, most difficult hiking

The longest of the loop trails, it encircles a ridge covered by a mature deciduous forest and passes Locust Creek.

PLANTATION TRAIL: 0.8 miles in the park, red blazes, easiest hiking

Traverse mature pine plantations along this old logging road. The entire trail loop is 3.4 miles long and relatively flat with level terrain. At the park boundary, the unblazed section of the trail continues on Blythe Township Municipal Authority property before looping back to the park again.

RIDGE TRAIL: 0.2 mile, blue blazes, more difficult hiking

Accessed from Oak Loop Trail, this trail winds along a woodland creek and through forested areas. It is commonly used to make a 0.75-mile loop with sections of Oak Loop Trail.

