

Welcome TO THE ELK SCENIC DRIVE



The 127-mile Elk Scenic Drive is a picturesque driving tour in the heart of the Pennsylvania Wilds region. Drive stops not only include some of the best places to observe our awe-inspiring wild elk herd, but also help travelers experience the diversity and abundance of the region’s wildlife and recreational assets that are hallmarks of this scenic and rugged landscape. The drive’s Quehanna Spur also offers visitors access to wildlife viewing sites, several hiking trails and other places of interest within the remote Quehanna Wild Area.

Elk History
Elk once roamed across Pennsylvania, but their range was drastically reduced to a small area in Elk County by the mid 1800s. In 1867, the last native Pennsylvania elk was killed near Ridgway. As part of a major conservation effort to restore this great animal to the state, the Pennsylvania Game Commission released 177 Rocky Mountain elk into Pennsylvania between 1913 and 1926. Today, at 1,000 animals, the herd is the largest in the northeastern United States.



To help support the growth of the elk herd and to keep the animals away from agricultural areas, the Game Commission and the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources,with financial and volunteer assistance from many conservation organizations including the Keystone Elk Country Alliance and the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, have established and maintained elk habitat areas and food plots.

The Fall Mating Season
“The Fall Rut”—in other words, elk mating season—lasts from September through October and is a particularly fascinating time to observe elk. During this time, bull elk bugle—or emit a low bellow that ascends to a long high note, followed by guttural grunts—to gather harems of 15 to 20 cows for breeding. They protect these mates and their territory by sparring with other males. Fighting bulls lock antlers and then push and shove each other until the weaker bull eventually gives up and trots away.

When Viewing Elk and Wildlife

- Watch quietly, move slowly and blend in with your surroundings - wear neutral colored clothing.
- Do not approach elk. Use binoculars or spotting scope to view at a safe distance.
- Only stop at roadway pulloffs; don't be a hazard on the road or block driveways.
- Respect wildlife homes - leave nests and their occupants as you found them.
- Do not feed or pet wildlife as it is dangerous to you and the animals.
- Respect private property. View wildlife on public lands.

Winter Watch
Winter, after the hunters have retired, is another great time to view elk. In these cold months, both male and female elk grow dark brownish-gray coats of long, coarse guard hairs overlaying wooly underfur. Whitish fur covers their rumps and 4-to-5-inch tails. The dark-haired animals are easy to spot against the snow and often congregate in small groups in lower elevations.

In late February through March, the harsh winter stresses are obvious in the animals’ ragged coats and lean bodies. They paw through snow to reach what little grass is available, or turn to twigs, buds, and the bark of trees for nourishment. Mature bulls drop their antlers and begin to grow a new set within a few days. Be aware that there is no winter maintenance on most public state forest roads.



Spring and Summer Renewal
During spring and summer, the bull elk’s velvet antlers re-grow rapidly as plentiful food—grasses and herbaceous flowering plants—becomes available. A bull elk’s antlers can grow about a half-inch per day, and eventually will tower four to five feet above the animal’s head and support five or six times that branch off of the main stem of the antler. Rarely found, elk sporting seven tines on each stem, or fourteen points, are known as Imperial Bulls.

In spring and summer, the coats of adult males and females are short, thin, and reddish brown. The cows and calves, which are dappled with spots, separate from the males and form smaller groups at this time. The mothers communicate with their young by barking and grunting and the calves make sharp squealing sounds in return.

Visitor Centers
There are two major visitor centers where you can get better oriented to the Elk Scenic Drive, find detailed information about the greater Pennsylvania Wilds region, and participate in a variety of conservation education programs and events. They are the Elk Country Visitor Center and the Wildlife Center at Sinnemahoning State Park. More visitor information can also be found at pawilds.com or at locations in communities marked on the map with ⓘ symbol.

If you have access to the Internet, check out the **Elk Scenic Drive Story Map** at maps.dcnr.pa.gov/StoryMaps/ for more detailed site information.



Elk Country Visitor Center

Located in Benezette, the Elk Country Visitor Center (ECVC) opened in 2010 to provide a facility for conservation education related to Pennsylvania’s elk herd as well as a prime location for viewing this amazing animal in its natural habitat. The non-profit Keystone Elk Country Alliance, manages the facility for DCNR who owns the building and grounds. This world-class, eco-friendly visitor center offers panoramic

views, interactive exhibits, a 4-D immersive story theater, a “Made in the USA” Gift Shop, and a hands-on Discovery Room for younger visitors. Outside, you can explore well-tended wildlife trails, elk observation areas, and viewing blinds. The site is also known for its horse-drawn wagon rides, wildlife programs and special events like the annual Elk Expo. For more information go to www.elkcountryparc.com.



Wildlife Center at Sinnemahoning State Park

In the heart of the Pennsylvania Wilds region, the Sinnemahoning State Park Wildlife Center contains state-of-the-art interpretive exhibits about the park’s native wildlife, area history and state conservation leaders, as well as visitor information. It has a full schedule of conservation and recreation programs throughout the year including the popular “Women in the Wilds” program held each June. The George B. Stevenson Dam and Reservoir provides excellent boating and fishing in the park and its creekside Forty Maples day-use area is a beautiful spot for picnicking. The park also has a special wildlife viewing area and trail at the north end of the park — a beautiful setting where you might spot white-tailed deer or elk in the open fields along the Sinnemahoning Creek. For more information go to www.dcnr.state.pa.gov.

Did You Know?

1

Elk are best seen an hour or two after dawn or right before dusk.

2

Mature male elk, called bulls, stand 50-60 inches at the shoulder and weigh 600-1000 pounds.

3

Females, or cows, weigh 500-600 pounds and stand 4-5 feet tall at the shoulder. They have no antlers.

4

Elk can run 30 miles per hour for short distances, and can trot for miles. They can jump and swim like pros.

5

Antlers aren’t just a showy hood ornament—they are used by males for sparring and to impress the ladies.

6

Listen for a bull’s low bellow that reaches a long high note. This is called bugling and is done during the mating season to attract the cows.

Site Name / Phone / GPS Coordinates	ACTIVITIES													
	Picnicking	Swimming	Boating	Fishing	Hiking	Bike Trails	Water Fountain	Parking	Hunting	Canoe Access	Camping	Restrooms	Beach	Handicap Access
1. S. B. Elliott State Park / (814) 765-0630 / N 41.11276, W 78.52594	⛶				🚶			Ⓜ	🏹		🏕	🚻		♿
2. Parker Dam State Park / (814) 765-0630 / N 41.19640, W 78.51028	⛶	🏊	🚤	🐟	🚶	🚲	🚰	Ⓜ	🏹	🛶	🏕	🚻	☂	♿
3. Marion Brooks Natural Area / (814) 765-0821 / N 41.26508, W 78.27832					🚶			Ⓜ	🏹					
4. Beaver Run Dam Wildlife Viewing Area / (814) 765-0821 / N 41.26097, W 78.25800					🚶			Ⓜ						
5. Hoover Farm Wildlife Viewing Area / (814) 765-0821 / N 41.22652, W 78.18781					🚶			Ⓜ				🚻		♿
6. Wykoff Run Natural Area / (814) 486-3353 / N 41.22990, W 78.19208					🚶			Ⓜ	🏹					
7. Winslow Hill Viewing Area / (877) 877-7674 / N 41.34105, W 78.36896					🚶			Ⓜ	🏹					♿
8. Dent's Run Viewing Area / (877) 877-7674 / N 41.34600, W 78.34654					🚶			Ⓜ	🏹					♿
9. Pine Tree Trail Natural Area / (814) 486-3353 / N 41.37952, W 78.28029					🚶			Ⓜ	🏹		🏕	🚻		
10. Thunder Mountain Equestrian Trail / (814) 486-3353 / N 41.39993, W 78.29282				🐟				Ⓜ	🏹		🏕			
11. Hicks Run Wildlife Viewing Area / (814) 486-3353 / N 41.36101, W 78.24864								Ⓜ	🏹			🚻		♿
12. Bucktail Path Trailhead/Johnson Run Natural Area / (814) 486-3353 / N 41.32350, W 78.09671					🚶			Ⓜ	🏹					
13. Lower Jerry Run Natural Area / (814) 486-3353 / N 41.24992, W 78.08186					🚶			Ⓜ	🏹					
14. Sinnemahoning State Park Viewing Area / (647) 747-8401 / N 41.418512, W 78.04877	🗨	⛶	🏊	🚤	🚶	🚲	🚰	Ⓜ	🏹	🛶	🏕	🚻	☂	♿
15. Kettle Creek State Park / (570) 923-6004 / N 41.37603, W 78.92903	⛶	🏊	🚤	🐟	🚶	🚲	🚰	Ⓜ	🏹	🛶	🏕	🚻	☂	♿
16. Cranberry Swamp Natural Area / (570) 923-6011 / N 41.26509, W 78.73363					🚶			Ⓜ	🏹					
17. East Branch Swamp Natural Area / (570) 923-6011 / N 41.23942, W 78.77248					🚶			Ⓜ	🏹					
18. Fish Dam Run Scenic View / (570) 923-6011 / N 41.23554, W 78.78193					🚶			Ⓜ				🚻		♿
19. Two Rock Run Scenic View / (570) 923-6011 / N 41.19012, W 78.85364								Ⓜ						
20. Fields Ridge Road Overlook / (570) 923-6011 / N 41.20951, W 78.95911								Ⓜ						
21. State Game Lands 100 / (570) 398-4744 x 0 / N 41.11777, W 77.97303								Ⓜ	🏹					
22. German Settlement Reclamation Project / (570) 398-4744 x 0 / N 41.06913, W 77.98795					🚶	🚲		Ⓜ	🏹					
23. Karthaus Canoe Launch / (570) 923-6011 / N 41.11427, W 78.11146	⛶			🐟	🚶		🚰	Ⓜ		🛶		🚻		
ⓘ Elk Country Visitor Center / (814) 787-516 / N 41.32592, W 78.367599	⛶				🚶		🚰	Ⓜ	🏹	🛶	🏕	🚻		♿
ⓘ Sinnemahoning State Park / (814) 647-8401 / N 41.47341, W 78.05653	⛶		🚤	🐟	🚶	🚲	🚰	Ⓜ	🏹	🛶	🏕	🚻		♿

Explore THE ELK SCENIC DRIVE



MAP KEY

- STATE FOREST
- STATE GAME LAND
- ELK SCENIC DRIVE
- QUEHANNA SPUR
- STATE PARK
- VISITOR CENTER SITE
- VISITOR INFORMATION*

1 S.B. Elliott State Park

Take a quick hike, enjoy a picnic lunch or stay overnight in a rustic CCC-era cabin in this small wooded park.

2 Parker Dam State Park

Watch for black swallowtail butterflies in wildflowers at edge of Parker Lake or the occasional osprey or bald eagle overhead. Walk Beaver Dam Trail to experience varied habitat types and look for sturdy beaver huts.

3 Marion Brooks Natural Area

This area is best known for its stand of white birches. In late July, blueberries and huckleberries abound here, a favorite of bears and hungry hikers. Listen for wood peckers and eastern towhees.

4 Beaver Run Dam Viewing Area

Walk the short trail to a viewing blind and look for cavity-nesting wood ducks and hooded mergansers. Smaller nest boxes house eastern bluebirds and tree swallows. You may also see great blue heron fishing by the shore.

5 Hoover Farm Viewing Area

Take the short trail to a viewing blind and look for elk, white-tailed deer, wild turkeys, and grassland birds. A longer 5-mile hike option also loops around the viewing area.

6 Wykoff Run Natural Area

Birds, birds, and more birds! At this Audubon Important Bird Area, hikers and cross-country skiers can spot a wide variety of species while exploring the Old Hoover Trail that bisects the natural area.

7 Winslow Hill Viewing Area

Once strip-mined, this reclaimed site provides good elk viewing with more parking off Dewey Road. About 1/4 mile further on Winslow Hill Road, look for the Woodring Farm Trail, a 3/4 mile walking path to another viewing area.

