Pennsylvania’s vast state forest system comprises 2.2 million acres for you to use, enjoy and explore. The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources’ Bureau of Forestry manages these forests to ensure their long-term health and to conserve native wild plants. Buchanan State Forest comprises 71,638 acres in Bedford, Fulton and Franklin counties. The Sideling Hill Division is in Fulton County and hosts 39 camp sites.

**Care for the Land**

State forests belong to all Pennsylvanians. Take time to enjoy them, but know the rules and regulations designed to protect the forests and you. Please be careful with fire, keep our forests litter free, and don’t damage trees and other plants.

**Certified “Well Managed”**

Pennsylvania’s 2.2-million-acre state forest system is one of the largest dual certified forests in North America. The forest is certified under Forest Stewardship Council™ and Sustainable Forestry Initiative® standards. The FSC® is an independent organization supporting environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial, and economically viable management of the world’s forests. SFI® certification focuses on protection of water quality, biodiversity, wildlife habitat, species at risk, and forests with exceptional conservation value. Dual certification ensures that Pennsylvania’s state forests are managed to the highest third-party standards.

**For more information**

Buchanan State Forest  
Forest District #2  
25185 Great Cove Road McConnellsburg, PA 17233  
(717) 485-3148  
F002@pa.gov

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**Terms and Definitions**

**Motorized Camping** – overnight camping in or near the vehicle where the vehicle continues to be used for storage or transportation

**Primitive Camping** – overnight camping where all equipment is transported in limited trips by non-motorized vehicle methods and where a motorized vehicle is not located near or part of the camping experience.

**Group Camping** – more than 10 people in a unit overnight motorized or primitive camping. A Letter of Authorization must first be obtained from the District Forester. A camping permit and letter of Authorization are issued to the group.

**Designated Dispersed Campsite** – a relatively small, distinctly defined area accessible from a State Forest road or drivable trail. Each site is identified with a vertical post indicating the campsite number at its entrance. The use of designated dispersed camp sites will reduce wide spread soil compaction, loss of vegetation, negative riparian effects, and the accumulation of trash and human waste.

**Leave No Trace**

The Buchanan State Forest is managed on a leave no trace philosophy. Anything you carry in to use while camping and recreating must be carried back out with you. Depositing any refuse on State Forest Lands is prohibited.

All field privies (individual use or slit trench latrines) must be at least 200 feet from a lake, stream, spring, or other open water source. Self-contained portable toilets are encouraged and may be required to be used at some designated dispersed campsites.

Wash yourself and your dishes and clothes using a container. Washing in a spring, lake or waterway is prohibited.

When camping with horses, refrain from tying horses directly to trees. Additionally, all horse manure must be removed from the campsite.

**Camping in the Buchanan**

If you want to camp in Buchanan State Forest, you will trade the modern conveniences found in state parks for a true wilderness camping experience! Buchanan offers both primitive camping and motorized camping at designated dispersed campsites. These sites do not have any modern facilities, water, dump stations, or utility hook-ups. However, they offer up the opportunity to experience unique ecosystems, wild landscapes, and the general peace and beauty of nature.

Buchanan State Forest requires that all motorized campers obtain a free camping permit for all motorized camping. Motorized camping in Buchanan State Forest is available at numbered, designated sites scattered throughout the three maintenance divisions: Bear Valley, Sideling Hill, and Chaynesville. The sites vary in size; some may accommodate a vehicle and tent while others may accommodate several vehicles or a RV.

Primitive backpack camping is also permitted on the Buchanan. If you are staying no more than one night at any primitive campsite, you are not required to have a permit; however, for safety reasons permits are still recommended. All primitive camp sites must be at least 25 feet from the nearest edge of a trail and out-of-sight of the trail, where possible. All camping must be at least 100 feet from any stream or other open water source. Permits are issued to individuals aged 18 and over. They will be issued no more than 90 days in advance and are handled on a first come first serve basis.

Permits are issued for no more than seven consecutive nights. After seven nights the campers must vacate the site for a minimum of 48 hours. Exceptions to this require a Letter of Authorization issued by the District Forester. Groups of 10 or more also require a letter.

Use of camp stoves is encouraged. Small campfires for cooking and warming purposes are permitted EXCEPT when the fire danger is high, very high or extreme and from March 1 to May 25, unless authorized on the Camping Permit. If present, stone fire rings are to remain intact at designated dispersed campsites. All fires must be extinguished completely before leaving the campsite.

Only downed and dead wood within the immediate vicinity of your campsite may be gathered for firewood. Power saws are not permitted without a fuelwood permit. Collect only the amount needed for your stay and burn any firewood that you collect before leaving. Do not bring firewood with you. Use only firewood that you gather or purchase locally. Minimizing the movement of firewood helps protect our forests from devastating insects like the emerald ash borer, Asian, long horned beetle, siberian worm weps, gypsy moth, and spotted lanternfly.

**Sideling Hill Campsites**

The Sideling Hill Division contains 24,603 acres of state forest land with a rich history. In 1758, General Reginald Forbes of the British Army built a road from Carlisle to Pittsburgh through this area. Construction of the South Penn Railroad, as it is called today, was started in 1884, and halted in 1885. This left a short section of railroad bed, a 200 foot-long, hand-made stone culvert, and two incomplete tunnels. Most of this area was logged by the Rechley Brothers between 1900 and 1930, using a narrow-gauge railroad and then sold to the state. This area hosted the Oregon CCC Camp which was converted to a World War II conscientious objectors camp, and then converted to a prison camp to hold German POWs. The Pennsylvania Turnpike also used this area to help house workers constructing the nation’s first superhighway.

There are 57 miles of roads open for public use at least seasonally. This division has 85 miles of multi use trails for hiking, horse riding or biking many created by the CCC workers. There is an ATV trail open for the summer season with 15 miles of trail. In the winter, this area hosts a snowmobile trail system of 19 miles. Thirty-nine camp sites have been established in this area to provide access to these recreational opportunities.

**State Forest Rules**


The District Forester or designee may revoke a valid camping permit if the holder is found to be in violation of the Rules and Regulations or permit conditions.