



## Pennsylvania State Parks Mission

The primary mission 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.

[f visitPAparks](#)

2022

## PARKER DAM STATE PARK



Scenic view from Trail of the New Giants

The 968-acre Parker Dam State Park offers old-fashioned charm and character. A scenic lake, rustic cabins, quaint campground, and unbounded forest make Parker Dam an ideal spot for a relaxing vacation. For wilderness explorers, Parker Dam is a gateway to the vast expanses of Moshannon State Forest. Walk through recovering tornado-ravaged woods, backpack into the 50,000-acre Quehanna Wilderness, mountain bike to your heart's content, or enjoy quiet solitude searching for elusive Pennsylvania elk.

### Directions

GPS DD: Lat. 41.1937 Long. -78.5115

Parker Dam State Park is in northern Clearfield County. From I-80, take Exit 111 onto PA 153 north for 5.5 miles. Turn right onto Mud Run Road, and then drive 2 miles to the park.

### 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.

## LEARN, EXPERIENCE, CONNECT

Parker Dam State Park offers a wide variety of programs year round. 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. A small-scale, informational maple sugaring operation runs during March at the park's Sugar Shack with public maple sugaring programming available most weekends.

A small environmental education classroom, attached to the park office, offers educational displays, games, and a library. The Lou and Helen Adams Civilian Conservation Corps Museum near the breast of the dam educates visitors about the life and times of the corps members. The museum is open during the summer season when volunteers are available, or upon request.

Call the park office for more information.

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.

### SPECIAL EVENTS

**Woody Owl Weekend:** Each spring, volunteers gather to do service projects like litter pick-up, painting, tree planting, and trail maintenance. Volunteers receive free camping in the modern campground.

**Woodhick Weekend:** Held on the Sunday of Labor Day weekend since 1984, this unique heritage event allows visitors to compete in lumber skill events for the coveted titles of Woodhick and Woodchick of the Year. Visitors can roll logs, crosscut saw, or try other events to discover the required skills of early loggers. Blacksmithing, camp cooking, and other demonstrations are also held.

**Fall Festival and Pumpkin Float:** Traditionally held the Saturday after Columbus Day, this festival celebrates traditions of autumn, including apple cidering, pumpkin carving, and more. Several vendors, artists, and craftspeople showcase and sell their products. A highlight of the night is floating lit jack-o-lanterns on a raft in the lake, while stories are shared around a bonfire at the beach.

## RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

### Spend the Day



#### BOATING: electric motors only

The 20-acre Parker Lake is popular for canoeing, kayaking, and paddleboarding. A seasonal boat concession has a variety of watercraft for rent daily from Memorial Day to Labor Day, weather permitting. A courtesy mooring rail is available for campground guests.

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.

**GEOCACHING:** Seek out hidden caches or "treasures" by GPS. More information is available at the park office. New geocaches must be approved through the park office before being placed.

**PICNICKING:** Many picnic tables are scattered through a mostly wooded area. Charcoal grills, restrooms, and drinking fountains are nearby. One pavilion is ADA accessible and five have lights and

electric outlets. Choose from modern, open pavilions, or cozy, stone, Civilian Conservation Corps-built pavilions. Each picnic pavilion holds about 75 people. 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.



**SWIMMING:** The beautiful sand beach is open from late-May through September, 8:00 AM to sunset. Swim at your own risk. Please read and follow posted rules. This is a smoke-free beach. A food and refreshment concession and camp store are open daily, weather permitting, from Memorial Day to Labor Day.

**FISHING:** The 20-acre Parker Lake and nearby trout streams are popular with anglers throughout the year. Trout are stocked seasonally. Anglers also can catch largemouth bass, bluegills, and brown bullheads in the lake. Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission regulations and laws apply.

**HIKING:** See reverse side.

#### HUNTING AND FIREARMS:

About 807 acres of the park are open to hunting, trapping, and the training of dogs during established seasons. Common game species are deer, turkey, grouse, bear, rabbit, and squirrel.

Hunting is also available on over 180,000 acres of the surrounding Moshannon State Forest.

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 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.

**ORIENTEERING:** A small, beginner-level orienteering course is located behind the park office, beginning near Fairview Road and the trailhead for Souders Trail. Course information is available at the park office.

## HISTORY



CCC boys constructing a log cabin

When European settlers arrived in Pennsylvania, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy claimed this land and invited the uprooted Lenni Lenape to occupy it. Eventually loggers and homesteaders moved in, forcing them to migrate west.

In 1794, Daniel Delany surveyed the impressive forests of white pine, hemlock, and scattered hardwoods. Logging began slowly as small sawmills processed the wood. The light, strong wood of the white pine made it the jewel of early lumbering. Ship builders in Baltimore prized tall white pine logs for ship masts and paid premium prices. Loggers built white pine rafts and rode them down the Susquehanna River to sell their valuable logs to markets in Baltimore.

Logging accelerated in 1851 because of a log boom built across the West Branch of the Susquehanna River at Williamsport. The boom stopped floating logs for sorting and cutting by sawmills. Upriver, "woodhicks" felled trees, cut off their branches and marked each log with the seal of the lumber company that employed them. Most logging occurred in winter, when a thick layer of snow and ice made hauling easier. Woodhicks built wooden log slides on rocky hillsides to more easily move logs to temporary pools called splash dams. A reproduction log slide and early lumbering tools can be seen near Log Slide Trail.

Splash dams were released each spring to flood logs down Laurel Run to Bennetts Branch, then to Sinnemahoning Creek, and

then into the West Branch of the Susquehanna River for the journey to the sawmills at Williamsport.

The park takes its name from William Parker, who leased lumbering rights from John Otto. Parker built a splash dam on Laurel Run at the site of the present dam.

Full-scale lumbering in the area most likely began around 1870. The forests were cut and recut, first for the white pine and later for hemlock and hardwoods.

In the early 1900s, the log boom at Williamsport became obsolete because geared locomotives moved the logs directly from the forests to the mills. The log boom was dismantled in 1909.

The Central Pennsylvania Lumber Company built railroads and began logging the park land a final time in 1909, removing the hemlock trees. Crews loaded up to 45 railroad cars a day until logging ended in the park in 1911. Old railroad grades are still visible on Moose Grade Road, and on Spurline, Beaver Dam, and Quehanna hiking trails. Fires and floods plagued the area for nearly two decades after the last tree was felled.

In 1930, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania began buying land from the Central Pennsylvania Lumber Company for \$3 an acre. Around the same time, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt started a conservation movement to help stem the Great Depression and restore the nation's natural resources. He called it the Civilian

Conservation Corps (CCC), and it employed young men in conservation work and gave them hope.

In 1933, the CCC boys set up camp at the intersection of Tyler and Mud Run roads (Camp S-73-PA, Tyler). The CCC planted trees, built roads and trails, and constructed the cabins of native sandstone and chestnut logs. They also built the current dam of native sandstone on the site of William Parker's splash dam. Their handiwork is seen in the stone pavilions and in the Lou and Helen Adams CCC Museum near the breast of the dam. Parker Dam was designated a recreational reserve in 1936. The park was officially opened on Fourth of July weekend, 1937. The CCC and the Works Progress Administration continued improvements until many CCC boys were drafted in 1941 for World War II.

Since the days of the CCC, Parker Dam has changed little. New facilities have been added and seedlings planted by the CCC have grown into trees. In May of 1985, many of the majestic trees in the park were lost to a tremendous tornado. Through it all, there is a constant - the beauty and serenity of Parker Dam State Park.

The tornado of 1985 blew a swath of destruction across the park. The forest to the west of Mud Run Road has been left in a natural state and the fallen trees on the east side of the road were salvaged and removed. Despite the devastation, the forest has significant regrowth.

## NATURAL RESOURCES

**PARKER LAKE:** Created in 1935 by the Civilian Conservation Corps, the 20-acre Parker Lake provides for a great natural swimming area and sand beach, fishing, boating, or simply enjoying a forested lakeshore. Migrating waterfowl rest and refuel on the lake before continuing their migration.

**DEEP FORESTS:** The forest located within park boundaries, as well as the surrounding Moshannon State Forest, provides visitors with many readily accessible opportunities to experience the wild nature of the Pennsylvania Wilds. The nearly unbroken forest features mixed stands of both deciduous and coniferous tree species in varying stages of forest growth and maturity, especially in areas affected by the 1985 tornado. Mountaintop springs, wetlands, and hemlock corridors over headwater streams provide a sense of solitude and connection to nature. Though not the same as the original white pine, hemlock, and scattered hardwood forest harvested in the late 1800s and early 1900s,

this current mixed hardwood forest provides immense species diversity of flora and fauna for visitors to discover.



White-tailed buck

**WILDLIFE WATCHING:** Parker Dam State Park and the surrounding Moshannon State Forest harbor deep forests where wildlife thrives in unbroken wilderness. In conifer forests, look for ravens, and black-throated green and Blackburnian warblers. The shy ovenbird and American redstart make the deciduous forest their home. Look for turkey in Abbot Hollow, and along Laurel Ridge and Mud Run roads.

## EXPLORE PENNSYLVANIA WILDS

Pennsylvania Wilds is two million acres of public lands for hiking, biking, fishing, boating, hunting, and exploration in northcentral Pennsylvania.

Highlights of the area are elk watching, scenic PA 6, Pine Creek Gorge (PA Grand Canyon), the darkest skies in the east at Cherry Springs State Park, and hundreds of miles of backpacking trails, bike paths, and trout fishing streams. [www.pawilds.com](http://www.pawilds.com)



Bull elk



#### CAMPING: modern restrooms with showers, electric, and full-hookups

The camping area on the eastern side of the lake is open from early April through mid-December and has a sanitary dump station. Electric hookups are available at most campsites. Full-hookups are available on some sites. Pets are permitted on designated sites. A seasonal camp store near the beach has camping equipment and supplies.

The maximum stay is 14 days during the summer season and 21 days during the off season. Campers must vacate the park for 48 hours between stays.

#### ORGANIZED GROUP TENTING:

These open, grassy areas are in the northern end of the park near the intersection of Mud Run and Tyler roads. One area accommodates 20 campers. The other area accommodates 50 campers. Advance reservations are required. Amenities include: non-flush toilets, water hydrants, picnic tables, and fire rings. For an additional fee, organized groups can use the campground showers.

**RUSTIC CABINS:** There are 16 rustic cabins available for rent year round. Each cabin sleeps 4, 6, or 8 people and has bunk beds, mattresses, gas cooking stove, refrigerator, table and benches, gas heaters, and wood burning fireplaces. A private restroom with a sink, shower, and flush toilet is near each cabin. Renters must provide their own bedding, firewood, cookware, and tableware. In the summer season, cabins are only rented by the week (Friday to Friday). In the off-season, the minimum rental is two nights. Advance reservations are required.



Cabin 8

**TYLER CABIN:** This unique, octagonal log cabin can be rented year round. The large, one-room rustic cabin features propane heat, ceiling fans, tables, benches, chairs, and a central stone fireplace. The cabin sleeps

12 people in bunk beds. A small alcove with a galley-type kitchen holds a refrigerator and propane stove. Up to two dogs are permitted. An ADA accessible, non-flush restroom is nearby.

**BACKPACKING:** The park is the western trailhead of the Quehanna Trail System. Through a series of loops and connecting trails, this system offers over 73 miles of hiking opportunities. Backpacking trips range from one to seven or more days. Backpack camping is prohibited within the park. Quehanna Trail maps are available at the park office. After registering at the park office, backpackers may park in the second car parking lot by the campground. This lot is closed in winter. Alternative parking is available near the park office.



Tyler Cabin

**ICE SAFETY:** For your safety, make sure ice is at least 4" thick for a single user and 7" thick for a small group. Always carry safety equipment.

**ICE FISHING:** Ice fishing is permitted on Parker Lake with a valid fishing license. Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission regulations and laws apply. **Ice thickness and conditions are NOT monitored outside of the skating area.**

**ICE SKATING:** Conditions permitting, an ice skating area is maintained at the swimming area. Ice thickness is monitored for safety.



### Enjoy the Winter

Parker Dam State Park is a haven for winter activities. A heated restroom is open in the day use area.

**CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING:** Conditions permitting, groomed ski trails are maintained on Beaver Dam, Souders, CCC, Skunk, Stumpfield, and Spurline trails.

**SNOWSHOEING:** Snowshoes can be used throughout the park.

**SLEDDING:** A sledding area is located at the power line along Mud Run Road. Parking is available at the sledding area. Use caution when sledding and be aware of your surroundings.



HIKING: 5.25 miles within park boundary



Many hiking trails begin in Parker Dam State Park and continue into the surrounding Moshannon State Forest. Some trails travel through a historical tornado blowdown area, while others follow streams or pass through hardwood forests. Hike the Trail of New Giants and then Souders Trail to compare a young forest to a mature forest.

Abbot Hollow Trail: 2.3 miles, blue blazes, more difficult hiking

This Moshannon State Forest trail may be accessed via Tornado Alley Trail. Explore a wilderness valley devastated by a tornado in 1985, then salvage-logged in 1986. Opportunities abound to view wildlife in varying habitats due to the logging roads, gas well sites, and beaver dams that followed in the blowdown area.

Beaver Dam Trail: 2.2 miles, blue blazes, easiest hiking

Evidence of beavers, like cuttings, tracks, lodges, and dams, can be seen along this

Moshannon State Forest trail which follows Mud Run. The trail also passes through a hardwood forest, a hemlock forest, and pine plantations.

CCC Trail: 0.8 mile, blue blazes, easiest hiking

This trail is a walk down memory lane to the days of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). In the 1930s, this was the road used daily for travel between the residential CCC camp (now the Organized Group Tenting Area) and the work site at the dam. A connector trail leads to Laurel Run Trail.

Laurel Run Trail: 1.6 miles, yellow blazes, more difficult hiking

Long used by fishermen, this trail starts near the campground bridge, follows the eastern shoreline of the lake, traverses the dam breast, and follows Laurel Run. This trail also winds through the historical tornado blowdown area.

Log Slide Trail: 0.4 mile, orange blazes, easiest hiking

A display at the trailhead shows historic lumbering tools and an authentic reproduction of a log slide, which were used in the 1870s to harvest timber. Along the trail, look for locations where the Civilian Conservation Corps workers cut stone in the 1930s. The trail follows part of the Quehanna Trail, which is blazed in orange, and connects to Stumpfield Trail via a pipeline which is blazed in yellow.

Quehanna Trail: 1.2 miles in park, orange blazes, most difficult hiking

This 73-mile-loop trail system travels from the park through the Quehanna Wild Area. Backpacking trips range from one to seven or more days.

Only experienced hikers should use these wilderness trails. The main trail is blazed in orange. Connector trails are blazed in yellow. See the Stay the Night section for information on backpacking the Quehanna Trail.

Skunk Trail: 1.7 miles, blue blazes, easiest hiking

This Moshannon State Forest trail winds through a managed hardwood forest. It connects Souders Trail with Mud Run Road.

Snow Trail: 1.3 miles, blue blazes, easiest hiking

This Moshannon State Forest trail can be accessed from the park via Beaver Dam Trail. Popular with snowmobilers, hunters, and cross-country skiers, Snow Trail offers a pleasant hike in the wilderness.

Souders Trail: 0.9 mile, yellow blazes, easiest hiking

This scenic loop trail features Laurel Run, lush, forest meadows, and large hardwood and evergreen trees.

Stumpfield Trail: 0.4 mile, yellow blazes, easiest hiking

This Moshannon State Forest trail connects with Log Slide Trail via a pipeline. Begin at the campground amphitheater and traverse a meadow that was once a forest of pine and hemlock. Look for large stumps left from logging at the turn of the 20th century. Stunted trees and thick shrubs are evidence of repeated wildfires that destroyed topsoil and slowed forest regrowth.

Sullivan Ridge Trail: 0.9 mile, blue blazes, more difficult hiking

This Moshannon State Forest trail can be accessed from the park via Beaver Dam Trail. It then follows logging roads along the top of Sullivan Mountain, offering scenic overlooks of Moose Run Valley. Sullivan Ridge Trail connects Snow Trail with Abbot Hollow Trail.

Tornado Alley Trail: 1 mile, blue blazes, easiest hiking

This Moshannon State Forest trail connects Sullivan Ridge Trail with the cabin area. It offers a panoramic view of Abbot Hollow.

Trail of New Giants: 1.2 miles, yellow blazes, more difficult hiking

On May 31, 1985, one of Pennsylvania’s largest and strongest tornadoes roared through the park and destroyed the towering forest of ash, oak, beech, and sugar maple trees. The Trail of New Giants cuts through the blowdown and the 250-acre Windstorm Preserve. Walk the trail and see the forest regenerating. A 1/4-mile spur trail leads to two beautiful vistas of the park and surrounding forest.

INFORMATION AND RESERVATIONS

Parker Dam State Park

28 Fairview Road  
Penfield, PA 15849-9799  
ParkerDamSP@pa.gov

An Equal Opportunity Employer  
www.dcnr.pa.gov/StateParks

Make online reservations at

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.

@ParkerDamStatePark

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 and at the park office.

NEAREST HOSPITALS

Penn Highlands Clearfield Hospital  
807 Turnpike Avenue  
Clearfield, PA 16830  
814-765-5341

Penn Highlands Dubois Hospital  
100 Hospital Ave  
Dubois, PA 15801  
814-371-2200

Nearby Attractions and Services

Information on nearby attractions is available from Visit Clearfield County. www.visitClearfieldCounty.org Just off PA 153, near I-80, Simon B. Elliott State Park has picnicking, hunting, hiking, camping, rustic cabins, and winter activities. 814-765-0630

The 190,000-acre Moshannon State Forest offers ample opportunities for recreation including, hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding, camping, fishing, hunting, and various winter activities. 814-765-0821

The Elk Country Visitor Center lies in the heart of the largest, free-roaming elk herd in the northeastern United States. Learn more about elk through educational displays, a 4D theater, and more. 814-787-5167. http://elkcountryvisitorcenter.com

The Elk Scenic Drive outlines a 127-mile dive that takes travelers through the Pennsylvania elk range and offers views of some of the most beautiful areas of the Pennsylvania Wilds. 800-577-2029. www.PAWilds.com

SERVICES AVAILABLE IN NEARBY TOWNS: Penfield (5 miles) has a convenience store, restaurant, coin-operated laundry, mechanics, gasoline stations, church, and post office. Clearfield (17 miles south), DuBois (19 miles west), and St. Marys (20 miles northeast) have shopping centers, restaurants, and hospitals.

