

Trails to the Haystack Rapids

There are several routes to travel to get to the final destination of the awesome Haystack Rapids:

1. The Haystacks Trail is blazed in yellow rectangles and leaves the western edge of the parking lot. It is the most gentle option, however, there are still some relatively steep portions. When the trail intersects the RR grade, turn left and follow the grade to the emergency access road. At the bottom of the access road, at the stream's edge, follow the LT blazes to the rapids.
2. The Loyalsock Trail leaves the northern edge of the lot and descends down a steep and rocky slope. Following the blazed LT will take you away from the RR grade and along the scenic Loyalsock Creek.
3. An old unmarked road leaves the southeastern edge of the parking lot. It is steep, but relatively wide. In a short distance, it will link to the RR grade, where you will turn left then follow directions from (1) above.
4. Elderly hikers can be dropped off at the RR grade along Rt 220, but parking there is limited to persons with handicap placarded vehicles.

Regardless of which route you take, the last 500 feet is very rugged. Hikers need to take extreme caution due to the slippery, rocky and uneven trail surface.

Please note that camping at the Haystacks is permitted, however, you must get a camping permit prior to your stay. Due to the fragile nature of the area, campfires are not allowed. Permits are issued free of charge at the Resource Management Center near Laporte (weekday hours 8:00am to 4:00pm), or by telephone. Please allow several days when permits are mailed.

Loyalsock State Forest

The Loyalsock State Forest, located in Sullivan, Lycoming and Bradford Counties is a valuable part of Pennsylvania's 2.2 million-acre State Forest system. It receives its name from the Loyalsock Creek, which winds for over 60 miles through the forest district.

The Loyalsock State Forest contains about 115,000 acres, characterized by high plateaus and ridges cut with numerous deep stream valleys. Northern hardwood tree species, such as birch, beech and maple associated with black cherry, white ash, tulip-poplar and hemlock, fill the forest. The beauty of these hardwoods, combined with the spectacular topography provides for a diversity of forest based recreational opportunities. Under the provisions of the forest's Resource Plan, forest managers integrate this recreational potential with the increasing demand for sustained yields of high-quality water, beneficial wildlife habitat, and valuable wood products. These requirements, not only depend heavily on scientific expertise, but demand the full cooperation of all forest users.



While visiting the area, please respect nature as well as the other visitors. Take only pictures and leave only footprints so that others may enjoy this work of nature as much as you have.

Dual Certified Forest

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.

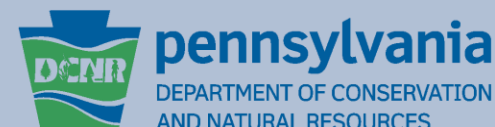
SFI© certification focuses on protection of water quality, biodiversity, wildlife habitat, species at risk, and forests with exceptional conservation value. Dual certification ensures that Pennsylvania's state forests are managed to the highest third-party standards.



For more information

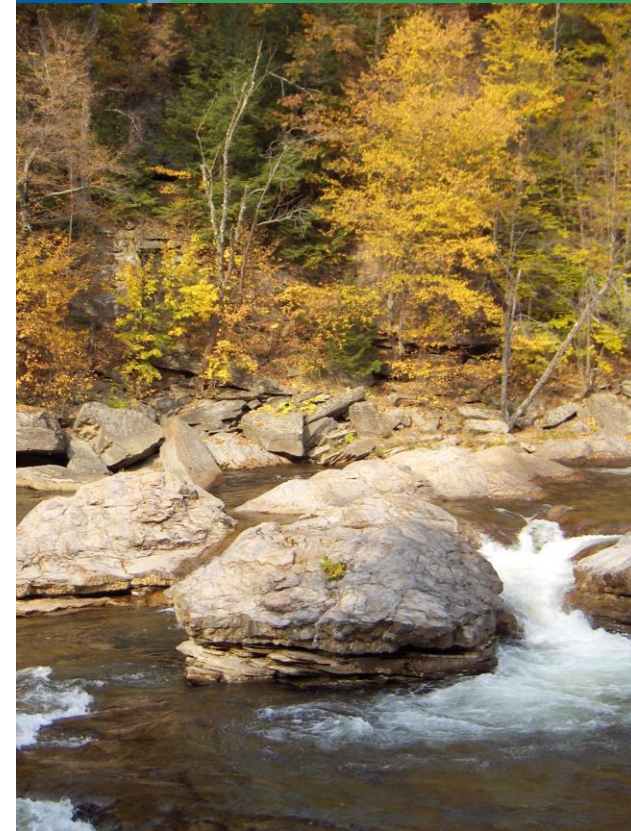
Loyalsock State Forest
Resource Management Center
Forest District #20

6735 Route 220
Dushore, PA 18614
(570) 946-4049



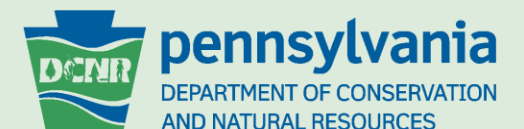
The Haystack Rapids

Loyalsock State Forest



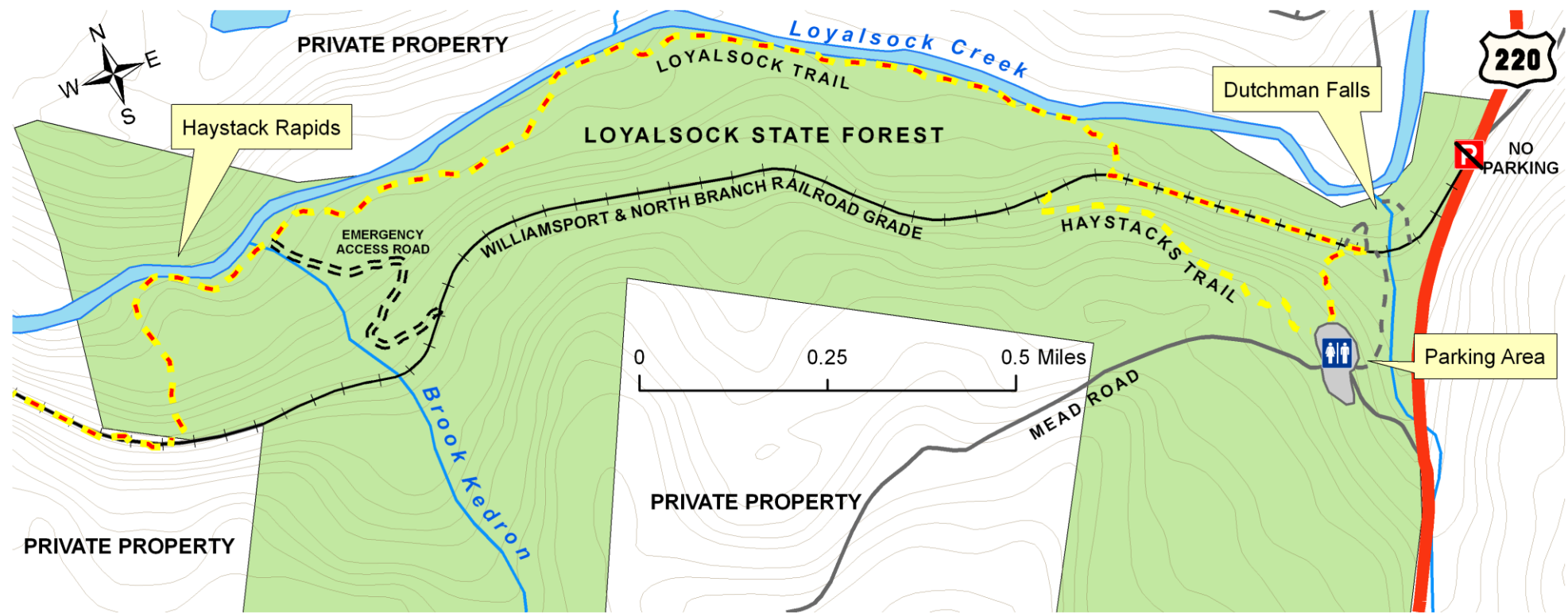
Pennsylvania's vast state forest system comprises 2.2 million acres for you to use, enjoy and explore. The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources' Bureau of Forestry manages these forests to ensure their long-term health and to conserve native wild plants.

The Loyalsock State Forest comprises 115,000 acres in Bradford, Lycoming and Sullivan counties.



A Geologic Oddity

The Haystack Mounds and Haystack Associated Rocks have long puzzled geologists. While most prominent at the Haystack Rapids, the rock formation can be found in Sullivan, Lycoming and Wyoming counties. This strata is located in the middle of the Huntley Mountain Formation (HMF). The HMF is a consistent sandstone found throughout the region. The sandstone was formed by the deposition of westerly flowing rivers over a long period of time. The HMF formation can be found underneath the Haystack formation and over top of it as well (except where the upper layers have been eroded away to expose the Haystack formation, such as in the Loyalsock Creek.) Previous explanations of the origin of the Haystack formation led scientists to believe that the sediment that makes up the rock was deposited in a very abrupt manner, unlike the HMF formation which was formed very slowly. The grains which make up the rock are randomly oriented and are not bound together by clays, but by fine-grained silica. This is unlike the HMF sandstone which have grains bound by fine silts and clays. The silica cementing the grains of the Haystack formation gives the layer a distinctive appearance compared to the other sandstone in the HMF. Geologists have suggested catastrophic explanations for the origin of the Haystacks such as debris ejected from a large meteor impact and deposits associated with earthquakes. Recent studies on the Haystack formation propose a much less violent origin. The Haystacks have characteristics similar to rocks called silcrettes. Silcrettes are layers of sandstone that are bound by silica. The silica is thought to be sourced from groundwater that flowed through the sediments before it solidified to become rock. Why these silcrettes happened to form at this location is still unknown.



The Rapids and More!

The large Haystack boulders in the creek are much harder than the surrounding rock because of the concentrations of silica. Overtime, the stream has eroded away the sandstone, but the Haystacks have remained as an obstacle to the waters of the creek. The moving water picks up velocity as it is squeezed through the narrow spaces between the boulders. The resulting rapids are a breathtaking display, especially in the springtime and after a period of heavy rain. Even during low flows, the shimmering boulders and crystal-clear water are a site to behold.

During your visit, please be sure to stop by Dutchman Falls. This small stream drops suddenly over the bedrock to form one of the best waterfalls in the county.

You can see the Haystacks formation at Dutchman Falls as a 3-foot-thick layer just downstream from where the stream passes under the railroad grade. The bridge over the stream was constructed with hand cut and hand lain stone by the railroad workers. There are also several smaller hand-laid stone culverts along the railroad grade. The Haystack boulders were a major obstacle to loggers at the turn of the century. Log jams as high as 3 stories were reported. The lumbermen attempted to blast the boulders to allow logs to move freely but the mighty Haystacks prevailed!

CAUTION must be taken at all times when exploring the area. The water can be extremely swift and dangerous. Boulders are slick. Please keep young children away from stream's edge.



Dutchman Falls, second tier