



Pennsylvania Bureau of Forestry

Mt. Davis Area

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Mt. Davis was named after John Nelson Davis, an early settler and former owner of the site. He was a Civil War veteran, a naturalist. It is said that he could readily identify the wildlife and wild plants in the region, and was familiar with the various rock formations.

This area is unique in that the central feature is a rock, 3,213' above sea level. **This rock is the highest point in Pennsylvania.**

Most of the State Forest land surrounding Mt. Davis was purchased by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in 1929. In 1935 the observation tower was constructed on the site.

Mt. Davis was given recognition as an area of special significance in 1945, when it was declared a State Forest Monument. In 1974, 581 acres surrounding the High Point were designated a State Forest Natural Area. Because of the 1935 development at the High Point, the seven acres immediately surrounding it were not included.

Unusual circular patterns of stone, formed by frost action over thousands of years, occur near the base of the observation tower.

The Mtn. Ridgeline

For 150 years after the first colonies were established, this area was untouched by settlers. The Allegheny Front presented a barrier to western migration. Treaties with the Indians in 1754 and 1758 forbade occupancy west of the Allegheny Mountains. Only a few adventurous traders and trappers wandered along the Casselman River before 1690. Political and economic interest in the western territory developed during the mid 1700s. The British and French were both interested in claiming the territory for themselves. It was during this period that the mountain received its name. Several versions of the story exist but all agree that a large, powerful black man valiantly

Distinguished himself in a battle with the Indians. Thereafter, the mountain on which he died and was hastily buried in an unmarked grave in his honor.

Mt. Davis is the highest point on a ridgeline that is 30 miles long, and located in the center of the Allegheny Plateau. It lies between Laurel Mountain on the east and Allegheny Mountain on the west. It is one of the oldest geological rock formations in the area, evidenced by the different rock outcroppings along the ridge. The terrain is deceptive. The mountains are not sharply elevated, and their smooth water-washed surfaces give them a low profile.

Weather is an important factor in the region. Annual temperatures range from –30 degrees to 95 degrees Fahrenheit. Frost has been observed at some point during every month of the year. Annual rainfall ranges from 38 to 42 inches. It is not uncommon for snow depths to reach 3 to 4 feet by mid-winter.

Civilian Conservation Corps

The 1930s had a profound effect on this area. President Franklin D. Roosevelt created the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) in 1933 to provide jobs for more than 200,000 young men during the Great Depression. CCC camp S-97 was established in June 1933 at a site on Tub Mill Run. The camp was in operation until July 1937. During these 4 short years, many improvements were made. This group of men constructed North and South Wolf Rock Roads, Shelter Rock Road, Vought Rock Road, and many miles of fire access trails. Springs were developed to supply water for fire fighting. The existing shelter at Mt. Davis picnic area was also constructed by the group.

Other projects include telephone line construction, road and trail clearing, construction of the Negro Mtn. fire tower, timber stand improvement, tree planting, seed collecting, bridge construction, stream improvement projects, and feeding wildlife.

Two of the cabins from this camp still exist on the site (see map for location).

Directions

From Somerset:

Follow Rt. 219 south to Meyersdale exit, follow Old 219 into the town. Right on Broadway St. (SR 2004). Just out of town, bear right on Mt. Davis Rd (SR 2004), and follow this road about 9 miles to the Mt. Davis State Forest picnic area.

From Salisbury:
Take Rt. 669 west. Just out of town make right on St. Paul Rd (SR 2003). Follow St. Paul Rd about 4 miles, make left on Mt. Davis Rd (SR 2004). Follow Mt. Davis Rd about 2 miles to the Mt. Davis State Forest picnic area.



Pennsylvania contains about 17 million acres of forestland. Of this total, over two million acres are in the state forest system, which is publicly owned and managed by the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Bureau of Forestry. The Forbes State Forest comprises over 60,000 acres located in Westmoreland, Somerset, and Fayette Counties.

Trail Information

Points of Interest

- High Point**—Observation tower and informational plaques at the highest point in Pennsylvania.
- Mt. Davis Natural Area**—581 acres set aside to protect this unique area.
- Mt. Davis picnic area**—Constructed by CCC in the 1930s—rest rooms, picnic tables, grills, and a shelter.
- CCC Camp S-97**—Remnants of the CCC camp can be found in what is now the Forest Maintenance Supervisor Headquarters on South Wolf Rock Road.
- High Point Lake Vista**—In 1989 an eagle scout constructed a viewing platform of the lake along South Wolf Rock Road.
- Tar Kiln**—located west of the High Point, was operated by an escaped slave until 1835. The kiln was built on top of a rock that had a depression on the top, with a trough hollowed out. Pitch pine knots were placed in the kiln, and heated until the pine tar ran out into the depression and along the trough to a container. The pine 'tar' was used as a lubricant for wagon axles, marking sheep, and as a cure for distemper.
- Baughman Rocks**—These rocks are located near the intersection of SR2004 and South Wolf Rock Road.

Camping Information

Camping in the Forbes is restricted to backpack-type camping, except for several designated motorized sites. Permits are required if staying more than one night at any campsite, and for all motorized camping. All are encouraged to obtain a permit in case you are overdue or if someone needs to reach you.

- Camp at least 100 feet from any stream or open water source;
- Camp at least 200 feet from and out of sight of roads and parking areas;
- Camp at least 25 feet from and out of sight of any trails;
- Keep field privies at least 200 feet from any water source;
- Pack out all trash;
- Not have campfires when wildfire danger is high.
- Camping in Natural Areas is prohibited.

For More Information

Bureau of Forestry
Forbes Forest District 4
1291 Route 30, P.O. Box 519
Laughlintown, PA 15655-0519
Tele: (724) 238-1200 • Email: FD04@pa.gov
Website: <http://www.dcnr.pa.gov>

In the event of an emergency, contact a state forest employee or dial 911.

If you become lost: stop, stay calm, stay put, & dial 911. The further you walk the longer it will take to find you.



pennsylvania

DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION
AND NATURAL RESOURCES

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- Livengood Trail**—Livengood meanders 1.1 miles between Laurel Run Trail and South Wolf Rock

- Shelter Rock Road**—1.6 mile road, serves as a hiking trail and eastern boundary of the Natural Area

- Wolf Rock Trail**—Only 0.8 miles long, this path was built by the CCC and joins Laurel Run Trail and South Wolf Rock Road.

- Laurel Run Trail**—Originally built as a CCC fire trail, 1.9 mile trail Christner Road to South Wolf Rock Rd.

- Timberslide Trail**—0.5 mile trail connects Tub Mill Trail with Shelter Rock Road.

- Tub Mill Run Trail**—Rocky 2.8 mile trail connects High Point Trail and South Wolf Rock Road. Paralells Tub Mill Run for part of its length.

- Shelter Rock Trail**—1 mile trail originates from observation loop to Shelter Rock Road. Points of interest include a stand of pitch pine, the stone quarry from which stone was used to build a shelter at the High Point, sorted stone net, & frost/water pockets.

- Mt. Davis Trail**—0.1 mile trail connecting Shelter Rock Trail and High Point. Many of the trees and plants common to the area are found here.

- High Point Trail**—Old 0.8 mile CCC trail connects the Mt. Davis Picnic Area and High Point. Easy walking.

NORTH WOLF ROCK, VOUCHT ROCK, SOUTH WOLF ROCK, and CHRISTNER ROADS ARE OPEN FOR USE BY MOTOR VEHICLES AND SNOWMOBILES. EXERCISE CAUTION WHEN USING THESE ROADS.

Yellow—trails open to **foot traffic ONLY** such as hiking, backpacking, cross-country skiing, and snowshoeing.

Administrative roads (see map) are open to non-motorized use unless posted otherwise.

Red—shared-use trails, usually with a narrower corridor and rockier tread. Open to nonmotorized use.

Mt. Davis Area

Legend

- Administrative Road
- Improved Gravel Road
- Hard Surface Road
- Trail - Shared Use
- Trail - Foot Only
- Stream
- State Forest
- Contour Line
- Natural Area
- Restrooms
- Picnic Area
- Scenic View
- Lookout Tower
- Office

