

Primitive Backpack Camping Guidelines

If you are camping close enough to your vehicle to access it to store gear and supplies, you are not primitive backpack camping, but are roadside, or motorized, camping and need a permit.

- Camping must be a minimum of 100 feet from any stream or open waterway.
- Camping must be at least 200 feet from and out of sight of roads and parking areas. They must also be 25 feet from and where possible, out of sight of the nearest edge of a trail.
- Field privies must be at least 200 feet from a lake, stream, spring, or other open water source—and all human waste must be buried a minimum of 6 inches.
- All trash must be carried out of the forest.
- Regulations for campfires are the same as those for Motorized Camping, except that there are no designated fire rings. All stone fire rings must be scattered following use, even if previously existing.
- **No group camping (more than 10 persons) is permitted without written permission of the District Forester.**

The following areas are closed to primitive backpack camping:

- Carbaugh Run Natural Area, Meeting of the Pines Natural Area, Mt. Cydonia Natural Area and Beartown Woods Natural Area.
- Within 300 feet of a leased campsite without the lessee’s permission.
- Within 300 feet of Old Forge State Forest Picnic Area.
- Within one quarter mile of Long Pine Run Reservoir, Waynesboro Reservoir, and Carbaugh Reservoir.
- Within one road mile of an entrance to a State Park having camping facilities.
- Pole Steeple overlook.
- Any other area posted closed to camping.

Group Camping

Group camping is primitive or motorized camping with more than ten persons. This requires written permission (Letter of Authorization) from the District Forester. A Letter of Authorization for group camping must be requested a minimum of 30 days in advance.

Motorized group camping is permitted solely at the Piney Mountain and Big Flat designated campsites.

Winter Camping

Winter camping season begins annually the 3rd Sunday following Thanksgiving and ends April 1st. During the winter camping season, the following designated motorized campsites are available for reservation:

- **Campsite #1:** Big Flat Parking Lot
- **Campsite #2:** Piney Mtn Parking Lot
- **Campsite #21:** Teaberry Parking Lot
- **Campsite #22:** Peggy’s Hill Parking Lot

State forest roads do not receive winter maintenance and are not plowed. Travel at your own risk.

Camping with Horses

Motorized camping with horses requires a permit and is only permitted at the following designated sites:

- Piney Mountain
- Big Flat
- Peggy’s Hill
- Teaberry
- Swift Run

Horse are NOT permitted in the Long Pine Run Reservoir Parking Area.

Tether lines must be used when horses are kept on site. Horses may NOT be tied directly to trees or shrubs. Horses may not be tied in or near streams or other water sources.

Manure must be removed from all designated motorized camping sites, and all parking areas. Manure must be scattered in the woods at least 100 feet from all primitive camping 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.

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 Sustainable Forestry Initiative® and Forest Stewardship Council™ 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 forests are managed to the highest third-party standards.



For more information

Michaux State Forest
10099 Lincoln Way East
Fayetteville, PA 17222
(717) 352-2211
Office Hours: Weekdays 7:30am-3:30pm
fd01@pa.gov
www.dcnr.pa.gov



Camping

Michaux 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 plants.

Michaux State Forest comprises nearly 90,000 acres in Cumberland, Franklin and Adams counties.



Types of Camping in Michaux State Forest

Roadside campsites* are sites located along dirt and gravel state forest roads. They may be pull offs or have a short driveway. These sites allow for overnight camping in or very near a vehicle. Depending on layout, the sites may accommodate different types of equipment such as tents, small RVs, or trailers. Michaux State Forest offers two roadside campsites.

Roadside hike-in campsites* are remote sites with designated parking along a dirt and gravel state forest road and a defined trail or gated road that is followed to the campsite. Hike-in lengths vary, and the sites are tent only. Michaux State Forest offers multiple hike-in campsites

State forest rustic campsite* are within a campground setting with a concentration of other sites nearby. These are ideal for those who want a rustic experience but still be near to other campers. They receive regular maintenance, and some include a pit latrine or vault toilet but no other amenities. Michaux State Forest offers four areas of this type for a total 27 sites, which accommodate RVs, campers, trailers, and equine camping.

Primitive backpack camping is permitted at trailside sites while hiking along the Appalachian Trail or other State Forest Hiking Trails. It involves hiking from campsite to campsite, far from your vehicle and nearby buildings, roads, and trailheads where you will find no modern conveniences or campsite improvements. **Remember, if you are camping close enough to your vehicle to access it to store gear and supplies, you are not primitive camping, but are roadside, or motorized, camping and need a permit.** Primitive backpack campers may not stay more than one night at any location. Primitive backpack campers are encouraged to email their contact information, parking information, and itinerary to the forest district office; however, no permit will be issued.

*Camping permits are required.

Camping Permit Reservations

Camping permits are required to stay at designated campsites. Check in and check out time is 3:00 PM. Stays are limited to seven nights at a campsite. Campers must vacate for at least 48 hours before returning

The permit holder is responsible for the actions of the group.

Reservations for camping permits for state forest campsites can made online at the Pennsylvania State Parks and Forest Reservation Website at any time, or by calling 888-PA-PARKS (888-727-2757), Monday through Saturday, 7:00 A.M. until 5:00 P.M. except on Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and New Year’s Day. Reservations cannot be made after 12pm on the day of arrival.



Camping Permit Fee

PA Residents \$10/night
Non-Residents \$15/night

In addition to the cost per night, DCNR charges a \$6.50 non-refundable transaction fee on all reservations and registrations.

DCNR cannot grant any exceptions because this fee is a pass-through cost incurred by the department for the reservation system. The department will not refund this fee if the reservation is cancelled or transferred. For fee and cancellation policies visit bit.ly/MSFfee.

Campfires

Campfires, when permitted, require that adequate precautions be taken to prevent the spread of fire into the forest. All other fires are prohibited. This prohibition does not apply to self-contained camp stoves and gas grills when used in a safe manner.

Campfires are NOT permitted when the fire danger is high, very high, or extreme; and from March 1 - May 25. Campers are responsible for knowing the fire danger level during their trip. To check campfire status call 717-352-2211.

When permitted, campfires may only be in existing fire rings and must always be attended. Unattended campfires must be extinguished.

Dead and downed wood may be gathered and burned when permitted but may not be removed from the site. Power tools and chain saws are not permitted.

A person causing a wildfire, in addition to possible criminal penalty, is liable for all damages, costs of extinction and fines.

Camping Permit Guidelines

Destruction of Property, damaging, defacing or removing any sign, structure, equipment or other material is prohibited.

Littering or disposal of garbage, paper, household refuse, waste or other material of any kind is prohibited.

Manure must be removed from the campsite upon departure.

Pets are permitted on State Forest land if they are kept under control and attended at all times.

Do not feed wildlife. Please keep our wildlife wild.

Practice Leave Not Trace Principles to ensure the long-term sustainability of these valuable natural resources and recreation experiences.

Camping Permit Guidelines (Continued)

Disorderly conduct including the following is prohibited:

- Fighting or other behavior that is threatening, violent or tumultuous.
- Using obscene language or making obscene gestures.
- Creating a hazardous or physically offensive condition by any act which does not serve a legitimate purpose of the actor.
- Creating an unreasonable noise that may disturb other visitors to State Forest land.

Sanitation

- Washing in a water outlet, spring, lake or waterway is prohibited.
- Discharging trailer, camper or motor home sewage, sink or bath water on or into ground or surface waters is prohibited.

Parking which obstructs a gate, road, trail, footpath, bicycle path, access way, drinking fountain, entrance, exit or road turnaround on State Forest land is prohibited. Parking in an area designated for a person with a disability, by the Department, is prohibited unless the vehicle has a valid plate or valid placard.

Cutting, picking, digging, damaging or removing a living or dead plant, vine, shrub, tree or flower on State Forest land. Edible wild plants or plant parts may be gathered without authorization if they are gathered for own personal or family consumption.

Target Shooting with firearms, bows and arrows or devices capable of launching projectiles and causing injury to persons or property is prohibited. This includes paint-ball guns.

Removing or disturbing historical or archeological resources from State Forest land.

Cell phone service is limited throughout the forest. Please plan accordingly.