A Pennsylvania Recreational Guide for Ohiopyle State Park

# Ohiopyle State Park

Located at the southern reaches of the Laurel Ridge, Ohiopyle State Park encompasses 20,633 acres of rugged natural beauty and offers many recreational activities. Passing through the heart of the park, the rushing waters of the Youghiogheny [yaw-ki-gay-nee] River Gorge are the centerpiece for Ohiopyle. The “Yough” [yawk] provides some of the best whitewater boating in the eastern United States, as well as spectacular scenery.

Ohiopyle is the southern gateway into the Laurel Highlands and showcases the beautiful natural resources and unique sense of community that visitors can find throughout the region.

## Reservations

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.

## Directions

GPS DD: Lat. 39.867492 Long. -79.493921

FOR GPS UNITS:GPS coordinates are listed on the map and in the text for many locations. For those who want to use an address, use 124 Main Street, Ohiopyle, PA 15470. This should direct you to the center of the park. Follow signage once you are in the park to find your desired destination.

FROM THE PA TURNPIKE:Take Exit 91, Donegal. Turn left onto PA 31 east. Travel about two miles, turn right onto PA 711 and PA 381 south. Travel 10 miles to Normalville, turn left onto PA 381 south. Drive 11 miles to Ohiopyle.

FROM THE SOUTH (DC, MD, VA):Take I-270 north to Frederick, then I-70 west to Hancock, then travel west on US 40 and I-68 through Cumberland. Take Exit 14 (Keysers Ridge) to US 40 west to Farmington, PA. Turn right onto PA 381 north for eight miles to Ohiopyle.

FROM THE SOUTH (WV):Take I-79 north to I-68 east. Take the Cheat Lake/Fairchance Road Exit to PA 43 north. Take Hopwood Exit to US 40 east. Turn left at second traffic light to PA 381 north for eight miles to Ohiopyle.

SPECIAL DIRECTIONS FOR LARGE RVS TO KENTUCK CAMPGROUND:SR 2019 (Kentuck Road) is very steep. Large RVs should avoid this road and take US 40 to SR 2010 (Chalk Hill-Ohiopyle Road). Follow it for eight miles to a stop sign. Go straight to the campground.

# Top 10 Activities

1. Investigate the Ohiopyle Falls and the Laurel Highlands Falls Area Visitor Center.
2. Stroll through the old growth forest of the Ferncliff Peninsula.

See the deepest gorge in Pennsylvania from Baughman Rock.

Brave the river with a trip on the Middle or Lower “Yough”.

Explore the Meadow Run Waterslides.

Scout out more than 20,000 acres of open hunting ground or angling opportunities on the Youghiogheny River and Meadow Run.

Trek over 80 miles of hiking trails.

Bike the Great Allegheny Passage. Be sure to see the panoramic views from the low and high bridges.

Visit the Sugarloaf Recreational Area for year-round recreational opportunities.

View the majestic Cucumber Falls.

# Waterfalls and Scenic Attractions

♿ Ohiopyle Falls: The power and beauty of this 20-foot waterfall make it a central attraction to the park. View the falls from the ADA accessible observation deck in the Falls Day Use Area.

Cucumber Falls: This 30-foot bridal veil waterfall on Cucumber Run is easily reached from the Cucumber Falls Parking Lot on Kentuck Road. It can also be reached on foot by using the Cucumber Falls Trail or the Great Gorge Trail.

Natural Waterslides:The cascading beauty of this unique geologic formation attracts photographers, geologists, and recreation enthusiasts. Explore Meadow Run’s ancient streambed to find ripples carved in stone and potholes scoured by spinning rocks and powerful currents. An ADA accessible observation deck is easily reached from the parking area.

Cascades:This beautiful woodland waterfall on Meadow Run can be accessed off Meadow Run Trail. The cool, clean waters of this stream are a favorite for anglers.

Sugar Run Falls: This beautiful cascade is located on the Eelah Trail just past the trail intersection with the Great Allegheny Passage (GAP). Hikers can access the falls by hiking Jonathan Run Trail, the GAP, then heading north on Eelah Trail. Bikers on the GAP must park their bikes on the side of the GAP and hike north on Eelah Trail.

# Learn, Experience, Connect

♿ Ohiopyle State Park offers a wide variety of programs year round. Programs focus on the Youghiogheny River, its gorge, and the natural, cultural, and recreational resources of the Ohiopyle area. The park also features the ADA accessible Laurel Highlands Falls Area Visitor Center with interactive exhibits on transportation history, geology, river ecology, and wildlife.

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 also 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.

# Recreational Opportunities

## Spend the Day

BIKING: **27 miles**

The 150-mile Great Allegheny Passage has 27 miles of trail in the park and connects Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania to Cumberland, Maryland. The flat, crushed-limestone trail was once the railbed for the Western Maryland Railroad. This trail is suitable for all ages and is ADA accessible. Rental bicycles are available in Ohiopyle borough. The trail is excellent for hiking, jogging, and cross-country skiing, and can be used to combine a bike ride or hike with some excellent wilderness trout fishing or hunting. Horses and all motorized vehicles are prohibited. E-bikes are permitted but must follow all e-bike guidelines. www.dcnr.pa.gov/Pages/EBikePolicy.aspx

More information on the Great Allegheny Passage can be found at [www.GapTrail.org](http://www.GapTrail.org).

MOUNTAIN BIKING: **26 miles**

Multi-use trails are open to mountain biking, including Sugar Run Trail and the Sugarloaf Recreational Area. These trails are shared with hikers and sometimes horseback riders. Bikers are urged to use proper trail etiquette and yield to other users. E-bikes are permitted but must follow all e-bike guidelines. www.dcnr.pa.gov/Pages/EBikePolicy.aspx

ROCK CLIMBING: Numerous climbing opportunities exist in Ohiopyle State Park. Meadow Run, Bruner Run, and a series of four walls along the Lower Youghiogheny section of the Great Allegheny Passage have a combination of top-roping and sport routes for climbers of all abilities. The short entrance trails leading to the rock faces are blazed in blue. Inexperienced climbers should consider a guided trip with one of the outfitters in Ohiopyle Borough.

HORSEBACK RIDING: **9 miles**

There is a designated horse trailer parking area at Sugarloaf Recreational Area. Sections of the Sugarloaf Trail System and Pressley Ridge Trail are open to horseback riding. These trails are shared with hikers and mountain bikers. Please use caution when riding.

FISHING: The Youghiogheny River provides good wilderness trout fishing. In cooperation with the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission, fingerling trout are stocked throughout the entire section of river within the park. An all-tackle trophy trout program exists on a 9-mile section of the river from Ramcat Launch Area downstream to the PA 381 bridge in Ohiopyle.

Meadow Run also provides fine trout fishing for anglers who prefer smaller stream fishing. A 2.2-mile section of Meadow Run, from Dinner Bell Road downstream to the river, is designated for delayed harvest, artificial lures only. Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission regulations and laws apply.

HUNTING AND FIREARMS: ♿ Over 20,000 acres are open to hunting, trapping, and the training of dogs during established seasons. Common game species are white-tailed deer, turkey, ruffed grouse, rabbit, squirrel, and other small game. Loaded firearms are not permitted within 50 feet of the Great Allegheny Passage. Adjacent State Game Lands 51 and 111 provide additional hunting and recreational opportunities.

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.

PICNICKING: ♿ Three picnic areas in the park provide picnic tables, grills, non-flush restrooms, and charcoal disposal areas.

The secluded Cucumber Run Picnic Area is adjacent to Cucumber Run, a beautiful creek lined with rhododendron bushes and large trees. Two pavilions are available on a first-come, first-served basis.

Tharp Knob Picnic Area is adjacent to the Tharp Knob Overlook that provides a panoramic view of the Youghiogheny River Gorge and the borough of Ohiopyle. The picnic area has a large ball field, volleyball court, and two reservable pavilions. Reservations can be made up to 11 months in advance for a fee. Unreserved pavilions are free on a first-come, first-serve basis. Tharp Knob Picnic Area has access to the Tharp Knob Loop Trail.

A large pavilion located at the Sugarloaf Recreation Area is available on a first-come, first-served basis. A non-flush restroom is located adjacent to the pavilion.

WILDLIFE WATCHING: Ohiopyle State Park is a designated Important Mammal Area as well as an Important Bird Area. Because of its location on the Chestnut and Laurel ridges and the variety of habitats, Ohiopyle is excellent for bird watching, especially wood warblers. The Youghiogheny River provides habitat for water-loving birds like mergansers, kingfishers, and bald eagles. Visitors should also be on the lookout for a variety of snakes, including venomous copperheads and timber rattlesnakes.

HIKING: See **Hiking** section on reverse side.

## Stay the Night

CAMPING: ♿ **flush toilets, warm showers**

GPS DD: Lat. 39.88783 Long. -79.49427

Kentuck Campground has about 200 campsites and is open from April to mid-December. The campground has 27 walk-to sites that require a short hike from the parking lot to the campsite. Kentuck Campground also has three Great Gathering Friends and Family Electric Sites for small groups. All campsites have a picnic table, fire ring, and parking space. The campground has a sanitary dump station and modern shower houses. Many campsites have electric hookups.

Advanced reservations are required to ensure campsite availability. 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.

CAMPING COTTAGES: ♿The rustic, wooden cottages have lights, electric heat, windows, a small table, and chairs. Each cottage sleeps five people in bunk beds. Three cottages are ADA accessible. Shower houses and potable water are near the cottages.

YURTS: ♿ Located in the center of Kentuck Campground,these round, canvas and wood walled tents have a wooden deck and sleep five people in bunk beds. Each yurt has a cooking stove, microwave, refrigerator, countertop, table, chairs, electric heat, fire ring, and picnic table. The yurts offer convenient accommodations for weekly rentals in the summer. Shorter stays are available during the spring and fall seasons. One yurt is ADA accessible. Shower houses and potable water are near the yurts.

ORGANIZED GROUP TENTING: Qualified adult and youth groups may rent this area which is equipped with picnic tables, grill, and access to a shower house. Groups may use a 20- or 40-person site or multiple sites for larger gatherings. Shower houses and potable water are near the sites.

BIKE-TO CAMPING: The High Bridge Biking Campsites are located along the GAP, near Campground Connector Trail. Five bike-to tent sites may be reserved for one night only. Reservations are required. Non-flush restrooms are nearby.

## Enjoy the Winter

Ohiopyle State Park is exceptionally beautiful during the winter and offers many winter activities. Be sure to dress appropriately for the weather and to follow all trail signs and markings to have a safe and enjoyable experience.

SNOWMOBILING: **13 miles**

The Sugarloaf Trail System and Pressley Ridge Trail are open to snowmobiles. The Sugarloaf Snowmobile Area has a parking area. Snowmobiling begins after antlered deer season in December and ends April 1, conditions permitting.

CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING: **47 miles**

Because of the elevation, many people choose to ski Hall, Hyatt, Sarver, McCune, Canyon Edge, Sproul, Beech Loop, Chulens, and Burd trails. With deep snowfall, the Great Allegheny Passage is good for cross-country skiing.

SLEDDING: A large hill is maintained for sledding in the Sugarloaf Recreational Area, adjacent to the parking area. The warming hut is open when there is enough snow to sled.

# Whitewater Boating

The Youghiogheny River has exciting whitewater boating for all experience levels. Only whitewater approved crafts intended for whitewater use may be used on the river. River levels can change the difficulty of rapids. Check at the launch area or contact the park office for current water levels.

**All whitewater boaters on the Youghiogheny must learn to recognize natural dangers and understand that injury and death are a possibility when boating the Youghiogheny River.**

The famous Lower Yough begins below Ohiopyle Falls and flows seven miles downstream to the Bruner Run Boater Take-out. The numerous class III and IV rapids make for exciting rafting that should only be attempted by experienced whitewater boaters. Inexperienced whitewater boaters should run this section of the river on a guided raft trip with an authorized concessionaire. The natural river environment contains undercut rocks, ledges, and swift currents.

The Middle Yough begins at the Ramcat Launch Area near Confluence and ends near the borough of Ohiopyle. This section contains class I and II rapids and is ideal for beginning whitewater boaters. Families often raft this section because it provides rapids at normal river levels.

## Private Trips on the Yough

Equipment rentals are available in the town of Ohiopyle through any of the licensed outfitters.

During the week, Lower Yough boaters must sign-in at the launch area. An access pass, available at the launch area, must be purchased on weekends and holidays. No shuttle service will be provided on weekdays. Bruner gate will be open during the week (Monday-Friday).

**Inexperienced boaters should not attempt the Lower Youghiogheny River without qualified guides.**

## Guided Trips

Guided trips are available from licensed commercial outfitters that provide rafts, guides, all necessary safety equipment, and transportation to and from the river.

#### LAUREL HIGHLANDS RIVER TOURS

4 Sherman Street, Ohiopyle, PA 15470

800-4-RAFTIN (800-472-3846)

[www.laurelhighlands.com](http://www.laurelhighlands.com)

#### OHIOPYLE TRADING POST

4 Negley Street, Ohiopyle, PA 15470

888-OHIOPYLE (888-644-6795)

[www.ohiopyletradingpost.com](http://www.ohiopyletradingpost.com)

#### WHITE WATER ADVENTURERS

6 Negley Street, Ohiopyle, PA 15470

800-WWA-RAFT (800-992-7238)

[www.wwaraft.com](http://www.wwaraft.com)

#### WILDERNESS VOYAGEURS

103 Garrett Street, Ohiopyle, PA 15470

800-272-4141

[www.wilderness-voyageurs.com](http://www.wilderness-voyageurs.com)

## Ohiopyle Falls Access Program

#### PRIVATE BOATER FALLS ACCESS GUIDELINES

Running the falls in a group of three or larger is permitted April 1st through the weekend before Thanksgiving. Boaters must obtain permission and follow all rules available at the Lower Launch Area or posted on the website.

# <http://www.dcnr.pa.gov/StateParks>Hiking: 83 miles

The hiking trails at Ohiopyle showcase the spectacular scenery of the Laurel Highlands. There are a wide variety of hiking trails from short day hikes to challenging backpacking trips. When hiking, always wear sturdy shoes, and bring a map, snacks, and water. Trail use is indicated by blaze color: red--multi-use, yellow--hiking only, blue--skiing and hiking. Each trail is also marked with a medallion color.

Visitor Center Area Trails:

**Recreations permitted:** hiking only

These trailheads are all within walking distance of the Ohiopyle State Park Office and Laurel Highlands Falls Area Visitor Center. Many of these trails are within or surround the Ferncliff National Natural Area which is preserved for its unique flora, including old growth hardwood groves.

**Buffalo Nut Trail: 0.1 mile | More difficult hiking | Connector trail | Blue medallions**

This short trail connects Ferncliff Trail to Oakwoods Trail.

**Cucumber Falls Trail:** **0.5 mile | More difficult hiking | Out-and-back trail | White medallions**

This trail leads from the visitor center to Cucumber Falls, traveling along the river. This scenic, yet difficult trail travels along Entrance Rapid, giving a great view of the river and boaters. The trail then leads through a mature hemlock forest, hiking over natural rock terrain on the way to Cucumber Falls. This trail is susceptible to flooding.

**Ferncliff Trail: 1.7 miles | More difficult hiking | Loop trail | Green medallions**

This trail passes Ohiopyle Falls, Washington's Overlook, and Lover’s Leap. Hikers travel through an old growth forest of towering hemlocks, white pines, and a variety of giant oaks.

**Fernwood Trail:** **0.4 mile | Easiest hiking | Connector trail | Orange medallions**

A mature forest and the remnants of the Ferncliff Hotel can be seen along this trail.

**Great Allegheny Passage (GAP):** **27 miles in the park, 150 miles total | Easiest hiking | Point-to-point trail | Mile markers**

♿ This ADA accessible rail trail, once the railbed from the Western Maryland Railroad, is suitable for all ages and most recreations. See the **Bicycling** section on reverse side for more information.

**Great Gorge Trail:** **1.8 miles | Easiest hiking | Out-and-back trail | Black medallions**

This trail follows an old tramway that was used to transport coal from Keister Mine to the railroad and passes through the best spring wildflower area in the park.

**Lower Baughman Trail: 1.8 miles | Most difficult hiking | Out-and-back trail | Yellow medallions**

This steep, rocky section of trail leads from Ohiopyle to Baughman Rock, a spectacular overlook.

**Meadow Run Trail System:** **2.9 miles | More difficult hiking | Out-and-back or Loop trail | Green medallions**

Most of the trail follows Meadow Run, a delightful, rock-strewn creek. The Cascades, Flat Rock, and the climbing area can be accessed from the trailhead on Dinnerbell Road. The Meadow Run Waterslides parking lot provides access to the other end of the trail.

**Oakwoods Trail:** **0.5 mile | Easiest hiking | Connector trail | Black medallions**

This trail passes through an old growth oak forest on the ridge of the peninsula.

Kentuck Campground Area Trails:

**Recreations permitted:** hiking only

**Beech Loop:** **0.8 mile | Easiest hiking | Loop trail | Black medallions**

This short hike travels through a variety of habitats including mature forest and old field.

**Beech Trail:** **2.1 miles | Most difficult hiking | Connector Trail | Black medallions**

This trail leads through a towering forest of American beech trees.

**Burd Loop:** **0.8 mile | Easiest hiking | Loop trail | Black medallions**

This trail loops through diverse habitats and is great for birding in the spring.

**Chulens Trail:** **0.3 mile | Easiest hiking | Connector trail | Orange medallions**

This trail passes through a variety of habitats and an old homestead.

**Jackson Trail:** **0.2 mile | Easiest hiking | Connector trail | Blue medallions**

This very short trail connects the campground amphitheater to the overflow parking lot.

**Kentuck Trail:** **0.8 mile | Most difficult hiking | Out-and-back trail | Green medallions**

This steep trail connects Kentuck Campground and Jonathan Run Trail to the GAP.

**Sproul Loop: 1.2 miles | More difficult hiking | Loop trail | Blue medallions**

This trail winds through forest, meadow, and wetland habitats. In the spring, birding is popular along this trail.

**Tom Faucet Trail: 1.1 miles | Most difficult hiking | Out-and-back trail | White medallions**

Connecting the Kentuck Campground contact station and the Great Allegheny Passage, this trail steeply descends a small ravine and traverses a stream along the way.

Old Mitchell Place Area Trails:

**Recreations permitted:** hiking and as designated on the map

**Eelah Trail: 0.7 mile | Most difficult hiking | Connector trail | Black medallions**

This steep trail passes Sugar Run Falls before connecting to the GAP.

**Old Mitchell Loop: 2.2 miles | Easiest hiking | Loop trail | Blue medallions**

This trail meanders through a variety of habitats including forest and meadow and is excellent for birding in the spring.

**Sugar Run Trail: 1.5 miles | Most difficult hiking | Out-and-back trail | Yellow medallions**

This steep trail starts at Old Mitchell Place Parking Area and steadily descends until connecting to Jonathan Run Trail.

Sugarloaf Recreational Area Trails:

**Recreations permitted:** hiking, mountain biking, and other uses as designated on the map

In the southeast area of the park, the trails provide many year-round recreational opportunities. Non-flush restrooms and picnic tables are at the trailhead.

**Baughman Rock Connector: 0.4 mile | Easiest hiking | Connector trail | Red medallions**

This wooded trail connects Sugarloaf trails to the Baughman trails and leads to Baughman Overlook.

**Canyon Edge Trail:** **0.8 mile | Easiest hiking | Loop trail | Yellow medallions**

This short, flat loop winds through the forest.

**Hall Loop:** **0.9 mile | More difficult hiking | Loop trail | White medallions**

This loop ascends to the top of the sledding hill and passes through a variety of habitats.

**Hyatt Connector and Loop:** **1.1 miles | More difficult hiking | Connector trails | Yellow medallions**

These trails traverse the Sugarloaf wildlife food plot areas and pass through varied habitats including open meadow.

**Lower Canyon Edge Trail:** **2.2 miles | Easiest hiking | Connector trail | Blue medallions**

This easy trail connects Canyon Edge Trail to Upper Sugarloaf Trail.

**Lower Sugarloaf Trail: 3.5 miles | Most difficult hiking | Out-and-back trail | Blue medallions**

This multi-use trail descends 800 feet in elevation and ends at the Middle Yough Take-out in Ohiopyle.

**McCune Trail:** **3.7 miles | More difficult hiking | Loop trail | White medallions**

McCune Trail runs along the highest ridge in the park through various habitats and rock formations, and passes an overlook. Hikers can see an old springhouse and pond that are evidence of the McCune Homestead.

**Oriole Trail:** **1.7 miles | More difficult hiking | Loop trail | Yellow medallions**

This loop trail is accessible from the Sugarloaf parking lot and traverses the forested Sugarloaf Knob.

**Sarver Loop:** **1.0 mile | More difficult hiking | Loop trail | Blue medallions**

This loop is accessed via Hall Loop. When combined, they create a moderate, 2-mile loop.

**Upper Baughman Trail:** **1.2 miles | More difficult hiking | Out-and-back trail | Yellow medallions**

This trail travels through rock outcrops as it hugs the edge of the Youghiogheny River Gorge.

**Upper Canyon Edge Trail:** **1.2 miles | Easiest hiking | Connector trail | Yellow medallions**

This easy trail connects McCune Trail to Canyon Edge Trail.

**Upper Sugarloaf Trail: 2.0 miles | Loop trail | Loop Trail**  **| Blue medallions**

Upper Sugarloaf Trail begins at the Sugarloaf Recreational Area by Sugarloaf Knob.

Woodrat Trail: **0.5 mile | Easiest hiking | Connector trail | Orange medallions**

This short trail connects Lower Canyon Edge to Upper Baughman Trail.

Other Park Trails:

**Recreations permitted:** hiking and other uses as designated on the map

**Betty Knox Trail:** **1.3 miles | Easiest hiking | Connector Trail | Orange medallions**

This wooded trail connects Tharp Knob Loop to Kentuck Campground and Tom Faucet Trail.

**Jonathan Run Trail: 1.6 miles | Easiest hiking | Out-and-back trail | White medallions**

This trail is the easiest access to Sugar Run Falls via the GAP and Eelah trails.

**Laurel Highlands Hiking Trail (LLHT): 6.3 miles in the park, 70 miles total | Most difficult hiking | Point-to-point trail | Mile markers**

Ohiopyle serves as the southern terminus for the Laurel Highlands Hiking Trail. The trail is open for year-round hiking and backpacking. The portion of the trail within Ohiopyle State Park is very strenuous and rocky hiking. Hikers are rewarded for their efforts as they pass beautiful overlooks and creeks.

Reservations for backpack camping are required in advance by calling 888-PA-PARKS or online at [www.dcnr.pa.gov/StateParks](http://www.dcnr.pa.gov/StateParks).

Pressley Ridge Trail: **4.2 miles | More difficult hiking | Out-and-back trail | Red medallions**

This multi-use trail connects Hyatt Loop to the Pressley Ridge gate. It is under development and poorly marked at this time.

**Tharp Knob Loop: 0.9 mile | Easiest hiking | Loop trail | Green medallions**

This scenic trail travels through an old homestead and leads to Tharp Knob Overlook, which provides an outstanding view of the Borough of Ohiopyle and Yough River Gorge.

# Ferncliff Peninsula National Natural Landmark

Created by a meander in the Youghiogheny River, this 100-acre peninsula is a unique habitat that contains many rare and interesting plants. The Youghiogheny River flows north, picking up seeds in Maryland and West Virginia and depositing them at Ferncliff, north of their usual growing range. The deep gorge is slightly warmer than the surrounding area, which allows these southern refugees to survive.

Recognized for its botanical diversity for over a century, the peninsula was declared a National Natural Landmark in 1974.

In 1992, Ferncliff Peninsula was declared a State Park Natural Area to protect it in its natural state.

# History

Many important pieces of early American history are tied to Ohiopyle. This area, which now provides rest and recreation, once hosted many conflicts.

Native Americans: To increase trading with Europeans, the Haudenosaunee and Shawnee expanded their territory into the Ohio River Valley, including Ohiopyle. The Lenape migrated through the area as the increasing European population pushed them out of their lands. The name Ohiopyle or “Ohiopehelle” is believed to be derived from a combination of Native American words which mean “white, frothy water.”

French and Indian War: In the mid-1700s, the French and the British competed for the Ohio River Valley. Employed by the British, Major George Washington traveled through the Ohiopyle area to talk to the French in 1753.

A year later, Lieutenant Colonel Washington returned with 150 soldiers to evict the French. Washington arrived at Confluence and tried to find an easier travel route by river. However, the falls were impassable. Washington continued toward the future site of Pittsburgh and encountered a small party of French soldiers at Jumonville. One French soldier escaped and sought reinforcements. The French retaliated by attacking Washington at the fort he built out of necessity. Overwhelming French forces caused Washington to surrender. The French and Indian War had begun.

Whiskey Rebellion: Even as the new United States formed, the area surrounding Ohiopyle continued to see conflicts. The new nation placed a tax on whiskey in 1791, which angered farmers in western Pennsylvania. The farmers united to attack tax collectors and their movement became known as the Whiskey Rebellion. After a federal marshal was attacked in 1794, George Washington assembled troops and 6,000 militiamen marched Braddock Road near Ohiopyle to put down the revolt.

Trees, Trains, and a Growing Nation: The land around Ohiopyle and eventually the rugged land near the river was settled by Europeans. They were farmers, hunters, and trappers. In 1811, the National Road passed near Ohiopyle, making the area more accessible to travelers and to markets. Lumbering began with the manufacture of barrels and other wood products. Tanning, salt mining, and coal mining were small industries.

In 1871, railroads reached Ohiopyle. The Baltimore and Ohio Railroad and eventually the Western Maryland Railroad had stations in Ohiopyle. Lumbering became a major industry with narrow gauge railroads snaking around the hills, hauling lumber to mills in town and larger railroad lines. A large sawmill was erected near Ohiopyle Falls. The lumber of the surrounding Laurel Highlands was integral to the American Industrial Revolution and the growing industries of coal mining, coke production, and the iron and steel industries.

The railroads brought tourists to Ohiopyle. By the 1880s, there were numerous hotels in the area and Ferncliff Peninsula had a boardwalk, dance pavilion, bowling alley, walking paths, tennis courts, ball fields, fountains, and the Ferncliff Hotel.

Changing Landscapes: The freedom afforded by the automobile decreased the tourists coming to Ohiopyle by train. This, coupled with the decline in water quality caused by local industry, eventually led to the end of the Ferncliff Resort. In time, the buildings were removed, allowing the forests to regenerate. Foundations of these buildings can still be seen in the Ferncliff Natural Area. Recognizing the natural beauty of the area, the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy purchased much of the property and sold it to the Commonwealth in the mid-1960s.

# Information and Reservations

**Ohiopyle State Park**

124 Main Street

Ohiopyle, PA 15470

724-329-8591

OhiopyleSP@pa.govmailto:OhiopyleSP@pa.gov

Mailing Address:

P.O. Box 105

Ohiopyle, PA 15470

An Equal Opportunity Employer

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.

**Electric Vehicle Charging Station**

A 2-plug, electric vehicle charging station is available for public use at the Train Station Parking Lot. Please move to another parking space once your vehicle has been charged.

Facebook @OhiopyleSP

## 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 HOSPITAL**

Uniontown Hospital

500 West Berkley Street

Uniontown, PA 15401

724-430-5000

## Protect and Preserve our Parks

Please make your visit safe and enjoyable. Obey all posted rules and regulations and respect fellow visitors and the resources of the park.

• Be prepared and bring the proper equipment. Natural areas may possess hazards. Your personal safety and that of your family are your responsibility.

• Alcoholic beverages are prohibited.

• Please camp only in designated areas and try to minimize your impact on the campsite.

• Firewood Advisory: Firewood may contain non-native insects and plant diseases. Bringing firewood into the park from other areas may accidentally spread pest insects and diseases that threaten park resources and the health of our forests. Use local firewood. Do not take wood home and do not leave firewood. Burn it!

• Prevent forest fires by having a fire in proper facilities and properly disposing of hot coals. Do not leave a fire unattended.

• Because uncontrolled pets may chase wildlife or frighten visitors, pets must be physically controlled, attended at all times, and on a leash, caged, or crated. Electronic fences and leashes are prohibited.

## Nearby Attractions

Information on nearby attractions is available from Go Laurel Highlands.

724-238-3673. [www.GoLaurelHighlands.com](http://www.GoLaurelHighlands.com)

# Pennsylvania State Parks Mission

The primary purpose 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.

Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

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