

## Brooks Run Division

Elk 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.

### Wild and Natural Areas

**SQUARE TIMBER WILD AREA** is 8461 acres in size. This area abuts the Bucktail Natural Area to the west. The area is bordered by Stillhouse Road to the north and Grove Hill Road to the south, and finally, Ridge Road to the east.

This area is almost entirely roadless and will remain this way. Although there are few roads, the area has several long and scenic but rustic trails that were developed by the Civilian Conservation Corps or CCC’s are open for your hiking enjoyment.

Wild areas are generally extensive tracts managed to protect the forest’s wild character and provide backcountry recreational opportunities.

**BUCKTAIL NATURAL AREA** is a 75-mile scenic drive from Emporium to Lock Haven, involving 16,433 acres in the Sproul and Elk State Forest dedicated in 1975. All state owned land from rim to rim is included in this memorial honoring the Civil War volunteers who traveled this route to serve the Union.

Natural areas are “managed” by nature and direct human intervention is limited. They provide places for scenic observation, protect special plant and animal communities, and conserve outstanding examples of natural beauty.

**JOHNSON RUN NATURAL AREA** is 216 acres in size, consisting of old growth hemlock and white pine. The lower portion of Johnson Run is within the Bucktail Natural Area. The easiest access to this remote area is from the Bucktail Path, a hiking trail described in this brochure.

### Trail System

**SQUARE TIMBER TRAIL**-Square Timber Trail is 7.4 miles long and is marked in yellow. The trail begins on Stillhouse Road and traverses 4.2 miles of the Bucktail Natural Area and .8 miles of private lands. Please stay on the trail through private lands and respect their property. It continues on for 2.4 miles in the Square Timber Wild Area. This trail is a combination of the Kissel Trail (named after a former Elk State Forest Ranger) and the Square Timber Trail which derives its name from the hollow. This hollow is so named because pine timbers were once cut, hewed square and removed from the hollow, producing the most rail cars of logs in one day in the state!

**LICK ISLAND CAMP LOOP**– This 1.8-mile trail marked in yellow follows an old trail down the left branch of Lick Island Run to the main branch of Lick Island Trail. A 1.3 mile side trail takes off the loop trail and connects to Lick Island Trail by way of an old wagon trail and a camp access road.

**LICK ISLAND TRAIL**-This 2.4-mile trail is marked in yellow. It was once a road, built in the 1930s by the CCC; as part of the state forest road system. In 1942, the road was washed out in several places and is no longer passable. It is a connector trail that could connect any of the trails from Ridge Road to Route 872. This trail also connects to the Game Refuge Trail and was named for the naturally occurring salt lick in the area.

**RIDGE TRAIL**-Ridge Trail is 6.0 miles long from the gate number 123 off Ridge Road to Brooks Run Road near the Brooks Run Ranger House and marked in yellow. The first 3 miles follow the Ridge Trail Haul Road, from there it is 1.7 miles on the ridge; then it is 1.3 miles down to Brooks Run Road. This trail derives its name from the ridge it follows.

**BUCKTAIL PATH**-This trail is 34 miles and marked in orange. It begins near Sizerville State Park and ends in the village of Sinnemahoning on Grove Street. This designated state forest hiking trail passes through the Square Timber Wild Area and the Bucktail Natural Area.



It is the only trail which passes through the Johnson Run Natural Area. There is a separate brochure for the Bucktail Path. This trail is maintained by district staff and the Keystone Trails Association.

**GAME REFUGE TRAIL**-This trail is 2.5 miles and begins at the eastern section of Lick Island Road and ends on Brooks Run Road, sharing part of the trail on the ridge with Ridge Trail. This trail is marked in yellow. This trail was once the boundary of the game refuge. It is the combination of the Gravelly Run Hollow Trail and an unnamed hollow trail. The refuge was dismantled in the 1950s. You may still find old remnants of the fence and signs along the trail. Parts of this trail were drivable at one time.

**JOE KING TRAIL**– This trail is 4.2 miles and is marked in yellow. It begins on Brooks Run Road and follows the hollow to the ridge between Brooks Run and Mill Run. It then turns northwest, connects with a timber haul road, and meets Ridge Road at gate number 128.

**PHINS TRAIL**– This 2.2-mile trail is marked in yellow and begins on Joe King Trail at the top of the hollow and follows the ridge southeast. It then follows Bridge Hollow Trail and comes out behind the Brooks Run Ranger House and onto Brooks Run Road.

**BIG RUN TRAIL**-The main trail is 3.7 miles and is marked in yellow. This trail follows the left fork of Big Run to the Square Timber Trail. Big Run is named for the long length of the run and the size of the watershed. It begins in the Bucktail Natural Area along Route 120 and proceeds up Big Run into the Square Timber Wild Area. The right fork of this trail splits near the location of an old camp and is 1.7 additional miles long and connects to the Bucktail Path near Ridge Road. This main trail system is maintained yearly by the Mountaineer Search and Rescue Team of Emporium.

**LUSHBAUGH TRAIL**-This is a connector trail from the CCC Ranger House, Camp Lushbaugh (which is along Brooks Run Road) to Phins Trail. This trail is 1 mile and marked in yellow.

**BIG FLAT TRAIL**-This yellow-marked trail is 5.15 miles and connects the Ridge Trail to the Game Refuge Trail along the Big Flat. You can also cut the hike short and follow the fence line to Ridge Trail Road (.61 miles).

**PEPPER HILL TRAIL**-This trail is 6.4 miles, marked in yellow, and starts from the gate at Pepper Hill Trail (gate #121 along Ridge Road). Part of this trail is also a snowmobile trail so you will see orange diamond-shaped markers too. Part of this trail crosses private lands, so please stay on the trail and respect both private and public property. Before the trail turns and follows switchbacks into Pepper Hill Run, there is a short spur trail which takes you to Survivor Rock. This is the rock where three CCC members escaped and survived while fighting the Pepper Hill Fire of 1938. Eight other corps members perished on this arson fire.

This trail also connects to Lick Island Trail. To connect to Lick Island Trail, when you reach the first pipeline, turn left and follow pipeline to the yellow blazes across Pumpkin Hollow and onto the pipeline.

So the story goes - Pepper Hill was named when a shanty log raft made a sharp turn in the river just below the hollow and dumped the pepper shaker off the table.

### 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 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.



Scan the code to download the Geo-referenced Brooks Run Division Trail Map



## For more information

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