

# Cross-country Skiing in Pennsylvania State Parks and Forests

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## Beginner Tips

- Choose trails that match your fitness and skill level.
- Stay on marked trails; cross-country trailheads are posted with the international symbol of a white skier on a brown background and blazed with blue, rectangular markers.
- Ski with a partner and let someone know where you plan to go and when you will return.
- Dress in layers with moisture-wicking fabrics inside and waterproof shell outside.
- Carry plenty of drinking water with you.
- Pack along a first aid kit that includes cold-weather survival items.

## Contacts

For more information, contact:

Bureau of Forestry  
PAForester@pa.gov  
717-787-2703

Bureau of State Parks  
ra-parkinfo@pa.gov  
717-787-6640



## Cross-country Skiing in Pennsylvania State Parks and Forests

Cross-country skiing is a great way to experience the outdoors in winter. Pennsylvania's state parks and forests offer some of the best places to ski. Particularly tranquil and scenic during the winter months, these year-round facilities provide seemingly endless miles of snow-covered trails. Many trail networks are specifically designated and maintained for cross-country skiing.

### Fitness and the outdoors

This heat-generating activity defies winter's grip by keeping you warm outdoors even on the coldest winter days. Hailed by fitness experts as the ultimate cardio exercise and full-body workout, cross-country skiing burns more calories than almost any other sport. Skiers can use an estimated 400 to 1,100 calories per hour depending on terrain, pace, fitness level and body size. This type of skiing is a low impact, easy to learn activity that is family-friendly and ideal for all age groups. Beyond its health and fitness benefits, spending a day gliding through the winter woods or across a snowy meadow on a pair of skis is simply enjoyable.

### Getting Started

Cross-country skiing requires minimal equipment and is one of the most affordable snow-sports around. Skis, poles and boots are all you really need to get started. Beginners can rent or buy gear and many clubs and organizations arrange group outings or offer instruction on the basic skills. An experienced friend or online tutorial can also guide you through the basics which should cover learning stride technique, using poles, getting up hills, navigating turns, slowing down, and stopping. When choosing trails, make sure trail conditions match your skill level. You can check with a park or forest office for trail recommendations.

Get Outdoors PA is a great starting point for this activity. An events and program calendar covering a full spectrum of outdoor activities, including cross-country skiing, can be found at the Get Outdoors PA website: [www.getoutdoorspa.org](http://www.getoutdoorspa.org).



### Organizations and Clubs

- Allegheny Outdoor Club, [www.alleghenyoutdoorclub.org](http://www.alleghenyoutdoorclub.org), Johnstown
- Greater Johnstown Athletic Ski Club, [www.johnstownpa.com/skiclub](http://www.johnstownpa.com/skiclub), Johnstown
- Kick n Gliders, [www.kickngliders.org](http://www.kickngliders.org), Mechanicsburg
- New Hope Nordics, <http://prnt4u.com/nhn1.htm>, Philadelphia
- Pennsylvania Cross Country Skier's Association, [www.pacsa.org](http://www.pacsa.org), western Pennsylvania
- American XC Skiers, [www.xcskiworld.com](http://www.xcskiworld.com),
- Western Pennsylvania Ski Council, [www.wpsc.net](http://www.wpsc.net)
- Cross Country Ski PA, [www.crosscountryskipa.com](http://www.crosscountryskipa.com)
- Cross Country Ski Areas Association, [www.xcski.org](http://www.xcski.org)



## State Park Highlights

Parks in the northern tier typically receive plenty of snowfall each year for winter activities, particularly in the northern-most counties and the northeast and northwest corners of the state. Lake-effect snowfall in the northwest blankets the region with an average of 70 to 113 inches of snowfall during winter ensuring suitable conditions for cross-country skiing. In the northeast corner, snow generally sticks around a little longer with the region's cold temperatures. The Laurel Highlands hold great potential for snow cover as well with the highest average snowfall in the state. Most parks have trails open for cross-country skiing, but several offer groomed trails and a few also have warming huts.

## State Forest Highlights

Within 15 state forests there are 560 miles of cross-country ski trails. In addition, most of the 3,671 miles of trails are open and appropriate for skiing. Check with district offices for trail recommendations and maintenance information. The following forests have developed cross-country ski trails:

Bald Eagle (570) 922-3344; 24 miles

Buchanan (717) 485-3148; 17 miles

\*Cornplanter (814) 723-0262; six miles

Forbes (724) 238-1200; North Woods Trail System and Laurel Mountain Trail System (warming hut along each trail system)

\*Gallitzin (814) 472-1862; 7 miles

\*Loyalsock (570) 946-4049; two trail systems of 21 miles and 15 miles

\*Susquehannock (814) 274-3600; 40 miles in three trail systems

\*Tiadaghton (570) 753-5409; over 50 miles

\*Ski trail map and guide available

## Great Parks for XC-Skiing

- Chapman – Groomed Trails (GT)
- Cook Forest – GT
- \*Denton Hill – GT
- Hickory Run
- Hills Creek
- Kooser – GT
- \*Laurel Ridge – GT and ski rental concessions
- Lehigh Gorge
- Maurice K. Goddard
- Nescopeck
- Ohiopyle – GT
- \*Oil Creek – GT
- Ole Bull – GT
- Parker Dam – GT
- Presque Isle – ski rental concessions
- Prince Gallitzin
- Promised Land
- R.B. Winter
- Raccoon Creek
- Warriors Path

\*Trail-use fees apply at these parks



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