Hammersley Wild Area

The Hammersley Wild Area, at 29,830 acres, is the largest contiguous area in Pennsylvania and is located in the largest concentration of state forest land in the state. The Hammersley provides a unique backcountry experience for hiking, hunting, fishing, and the enjoyment of peace and solitude. The area is almost entirely forested except for four natural gas pipelines and a 1964 wildfire burn scar along the Twin Sisters Trail. The area is noted for its cover of forested hills and northern hardwoods (black cherry, maple, beech, birch) on the north side and a wild area, and oak forests with scrubby understories of mountain laurel and lowbush blueberry on the southern end. Hikers should carry topographic maps and a Trailhead map to hiking the wild area. The Hammersley is perhaps the only place in the state to see five miles from any road. Getting lost here could have serious repercussions.

Duttinger Natural Area

The Duttinger H. Duttinger Natural Area is a 1.592 acre tract is known for its impressive stand of old growth hemlock and white pine. This old forest survived the extensive logging of the early 20th century because of a boundary dispute between logging companies. The natural area was named in honor of H. Duttinger, a pioneer in Pennsylvania forestry who dedicated 53 years of service to the Commonwealth.

Natural areas are set aside to provide locations for scientific observation of plant and animal communities, and to protect outstanding examples of natural interest and beauty. The area is almost entirely forested except for four natural gas pipelines and a 1964 wildfire burn scar.

Civilian Conservation Corps

In 1933, the Tamarack (also known as Hammersley Fork Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camp opened along the Hammersley Fork near the Beech Bottom Trail. A few remnants from the CCC camp survive - watch for a rock and brick chimney from the officers’ quarters, a dynamite shock made of brick and stone, and a cabin which is now a state forest lease camp. The CCC boys built many of the structures in the wild area and their craftsmanship is still evident today. The camp closed in 1936.

Cross Fork Trailhead

This trailhead is located at the Forestry Maintenance Division in the town of Cross Fork. At PA 144, follow Main Street over Kent Creek, turn right at Fire House Lane and keep right for the trailhead. This trailheads offers ample parking, drinking water, restroom and a shelter in case of emergency. Parking is not permitted at the trailhead. You will also find a restaurant, hotel, and convenience store in Cross Fork.

The Pennsylvania Wilds

Susquehannock State Forest lies within the Pennsylvania Wilds, a two-million-acre region in north-central Pennsylvania, comprising 1.5 million acres of state forest and game lands, 29 state parks, and the 500,000-acre Allegheny National Forest. The Susquehannock State Forest is comprised of 265,000 acres located primarily in Potter County.

Trails

The Hammersley Wild and Duttinger Natural Areas offers 50.8 miles of interconnected trails. The trails are best suited to hiking and backpacking. Moped use is not permitted. The mingling between intersections is marked on the map. The trail colors on the map correspond with the trail marking color on the ground.

39 miles of trail in the Hammersley and Duttinger are marked with yellow 2 x 6 inch rectangles. These trails are open to hiking, backpacking and cross-country skiing. Bicycling, ATV, snowmobile and equestrians to provide an easier opportunity to access the Dutlinger Natural Area. Please secure a backcountry setting. The John Summerson Branch and Hammersley Fork are designated Pennsylvania Wilderness Trout Waters by the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission. Elk Lick Run, and Windfall Run are designated Class A Wild Trout Waters by the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission.

Twin Sisters Burn

The dense evergreen canopy associated with mature hemlock stands creates a unique environment that is critical habitat for many animal and plant species.