Reeds Gap State Park

Reeds Gap State Park is 220 acres of wilderness in the New Pennsylvania Valley of Mifflin County. Large hemlocks and white pines cast cool shadows over Honey Creek, which flows through the park.

Directions

From PA 322 take the Milroy Exit. Turn east toward Milroy. At the traffic light, turn left onto Old US Hwy 322. Continue straight onto Hill Street and then make a right onto Sigler Street. At the stop sign continue onto South Main Street. In 0.3 mile, keep right to stay on South Main Street. Continue onto Nagney Road. At the next stop sign, continue straight onto Honey Creek Road. Honey Creek Road turns left and becomes Lockie Mills Road. From Lockie Mills Road, turn right onto New Lancaster Valley Road and follow it for 3 miles to Reeds Gap State Park.

Reservations

Make online reservations at: www.visitPAparks.com or call toll-free 888-PA-PARKS (888-727-2757), 7:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Monday to Saturday, for state park information and reservations.

Recreational Opportunities

FISHING: Native and stocked trout are found in Honey Creek. Mountain streams like Reeds Gap Run hold small populations of native trout. Hiking trails offer access to Honey Creek. The spring months offer the best angling. Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission regulations and taxes apply.

CAMPING: tents only, pets permitted on all sites. The 14-site campground is for tents only and opens the second Friday in April and closes the third Sunday in October. Water is by Site 6. The shower house is by Parking Lot B across State Park Road.

PICNICKING: Mostly wooded picnic areas are available year-round. There is ample parking, tables, and benches. Picnic tables, the restroom in Parking Lot B, and the environmental education area are pet friendly.

Environmental Education and Interpretation

A park educator offers programs during the late spring and summer months. Organized groups and schools can request special programs by contacting the park office.

The annual Reeds Gap Fall Festival is held the second Saturday in October and features many children’s activities.

History

Reeds Gap is a natural water gap in Hightop, also called Thick Mountain. American Indians from the village of Ohsenas, today’s Lewistown, used this valley as hunting grounds. When European settlers arrived, they homesteaded and named the area the New Lancaster Valley.

During the late 1700s, Reeds Gap became a popular bush meeting ground. People packed lunches and traveled in horse-drawn wagons to the area to hear a circuit preacher and enjoy neighborhood fellowship. These bush meetings, also known as homecomings, were held through the 1920s.

In the mid-1800s, the park’s namesakes, Edward and Nancy Reed, set up a water-powered sawmill along Honey Creek just inside of the western boundary of the present park.

Part of the historic water-storage dam is still visible near Honey Creek in the southeastern corner of the park. Edward Reed’s son, George Wilbur Reed, was a surveyor at the mill. Another son, John, later moved the watermill to Virginia by horses.

Around 1900, a steam-powered sawmill operated by the park’s maintenance building. After decades of logging, the forests were gone. On January 15, 1905, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania purchased the depleted land from William Winner and Sons lumber company. Eventually parts of this land became Reeds Gap and Poe Valley state parks.

Around 1930, people sold five-cent bottles of soda pop cooled in Reeds Gap Run to attract picnickers and to improve the local economy during the Great Depression.

In 1953, a national work program called the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) built a residential camp five miles east of Reeds Gap Run in the upper end of New Lancaster Valley. The former Pennsylvania Department of Forests and Waters ran Camp S-113 and the U.S. Army directed the young men. A goal of the camp was to change the “jungle” around Reeds Gap Run into an attractive recreational facility. By the late 1930s, the park offered stone shelters, tables, picnic pavilions, play equipment, pit toilets, and running water.

Reeds Gap State Park officially opened in 1938. On summer Sunday afternoons, local bands entertained from a stage. In the late 1930s, the park offered stone fireplaces, tables, picnic pavilions, play equipment, pit toilets, and running water.

In 1965, a major development project replaced the old dam with swimming pools. A new water system, flush toilets, modern facilities, and the Big Valley Vista on the gravel parking lots were constructed. In 2009, the aging swimming complex was closed and a new water system, flush toilets, modern facilities, and the Big Valley Vista on the gravel service roads, and open areas. About five miles of ungroomed trails are available with proper snow conditions.

HUNTING AND FIREARMS: Over 100 acres are open to hunting, trapping, and the training of dogs during established hunting seasons. Common species are turkey, bear, and squirrel. Hunting is also permitted on the adjacent Bald Eagle State Forest.

Hunting woodchucks, also known as groundhogs, is prohibited. Hunters must obtain a permit from the day following Labor Day through March 31 in designated hunting areas. The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission issue permits and regulations apply. Contact the park office for ADA accessible hunting information.

Use extreme caution with firearms at all times. Other violations of hunting regulations are subject to a fine or imprisonment. Firearm and archery equipment used for hunting may be unsecured 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 ammunition shall be kept in the owner’s case, trailer, or leased campsite. Exceptions include: law enforcement officers and individuals with a valid Pennsylvania Concealed Firearm License or Curio/Firearm certificates are authorized to carry a firearm concealed on their person while they are within a state park.

Natural History

The dominant habitat in and around the park is of towering white pines, hemlocks, and oaks. Maple, ash, tulip poplar, black gum, hickory, dogwood, mountain laurel, and rhododendron add to the year-round scenic beauty.

Nearby Attractions

Some picnic tables, the restroom in Parking Lot B, and the park office are ADA accessible. Service roads may be used to provide 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

Geisinger - Lewistown Hospital 1401 New Lancaster Valley Road Lewistown, PA 17044 717-248-5411

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. Campers should use local wood. 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 and attended at all times and on a leash, caged, or crated. Electronic fences and leashes are prohibited.

Access for People with Disabilities

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