McConnells Mill State Park

Located in Lawrence County, McConnells Mill State Park encompasses 2,546 acres of the spectacular Slippery Rock Creek Gorge, a National Natural Landmark. Created by the churning of plutonic lava thousands of years ago, the gorge has steep sides with wide ledges bordering the valley. Visitors can tour a historic gristmill and covered bridge that date to the 1800s and get a closer view of the powerful Slippery Rock Creek, a National Natural Landmark. Created by the churning of plutonic lava thousands of years ago, the gorge has steep sides with wide ledges bordering the valley.

DANGER: Whitewater – Slippery Rocks

Visitors entering McConnells Mill State Park should be aware of the natural hazards and steep terrains of the Slippery Rock Creek Gorge. This area contains smooth rocks that are often damp and slippery, and varying degrees of wilderness conditions, including deep pools, rapids, and swift currents. Adults should closely supervise children at all times. Visitors must be aware of these features and monitor the conditions carefully. Numerous accidents have resulted in injury and death. Please exercise extreme caution and stay on trails.

FISHING: Fishing is permitted anywhere along Slippery Rock Creek with the exception of the dam structures. The best fishing is for trout and bass. Trout are stocked several times throughout the season. There is a fly fishing only, catch and release area at Armstrong Bridge. Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission regulations and fees apply.

CLIMBING AND RAPPELLING: Two climbing and rappelling areas are available to properly equipped and experienced climbers. The Rim Road Climbing Area is across the creek from the Old Mill. The most advanced and rugged area is near Breakneck Bridge.

Numerous accidents have occurred, resulting in serious injuries. Please exercise extreme caution when climbing or hiking in these areas. Climbing and rappelling are prohibited from the bridges, rock areas along park roads, dams, or any other areas outside of the two designated climbing areas.

McConnells Mill Covered Bridge

One of two covered bridges in Lawrence County, it was built in 1874 and improved in 1888. Thomas McConnell bought the mill in 1879 and improved it by replacing the waterwheel with water turbines and the gristmill stones with rolling mills. One of the first rolling mills in the country, it processed wheat, buckwheat, corn, and oats for local customers. At one time, this building was the hub of the community, grinding the grain that put fresh baked bread on every dinner table. Suggesting profits and anticipated equipment closed the mill in 1928. In 1978, it was listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and it was conveyed from Thomas H. Hartman to the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy and later to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania with the wish that it be preserved for future generations. McConnells Mill State Park was formally dedicated in October of 1977.

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 pose hazards. Your personal safety and that of your family are your responsibility.
- Alcoholic beverages are prohibited.
- Prevent forest fires by only having a fire in a proper fire pit and properly disposing of hot coals. Do not leave a fire unattended.
- Because uncontrolled pets may chase wildlife or frighten other visitors, pets must be physically controlled and attended at all times and on a leash, caped, or muzzled. Electrical fences and leashes are prohibited.
- Do your part to keep wildlife wild! Enjoy wildlife from a safe distance and do not feed or approach wild animals.
- Please park only in designated areas and obey all traffic regulations.
- Please recycle. Place trash accumulated during your stay in proper receptacles or take it home with you.
- Soliciting and posting signs are prohibited unless approved from the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.

Contact:

724-658-9001
New Castle, PA 16105
www.visitPAparks.com
888-PA-PARKS (888-727-2757), Pennsylvania Recreational Guide for A Pennsylvania Recreational Guide for Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible for people with disabilities. This publication text is available in alternate formats.

Nearby Attractions

Information on nearby attractions is available from the Lawrence County Tourist Promotion Agency.

A few miles to the east on US 422 is Moraine State Park. This large park offers cable car, boating, fishing, swimming, hiking, horseback riding, and other various activities.

Access for People with Disabilities

This symbol indicates facilities and activities that are accessible for Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible for people with disabilities. This publication text is available in alternate formats. If you need 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 at the Old Mill. An emergency phone is directly accessible from across the Old Mill. A steep, wooded trail leads to the eastern edge of the gorge where a fire tower can be seen. See information on safety and regulations to ensure you and your family are safe.

McConnells Mill Heritage Festival is held on the last full weekend in September. The festival celebrates the operational era of the Old Mill (1813-1928). Visitors can observe artisans and craftpeople demonstrating their unique skills, and try old-time games and crafts. Other activities include mill tours, corn grinding demonstrations, musical entertainment, a Civil War encampment, and food vendors.

McConnells Mill State Park

Long. -80.16918
724-658-9001
New Castle, PA 16105
For More Information Contact:}

PENNCORING: The Kittles Picnic Area is adjacent to the parking area at the northern end of the gorge near the Old Mill. A steep trail leads down to the Old Mill. Picnic tables, charcoal grills, and restrooms are available. Alcoholics are prohibited. The ADA accessible Kittles Pavilion accommodates up to 50 people and can be reserved up to 11 months in advance for a fee. If unreserved, the pavilion is available on a first-come, first-served basis. A playground is across the road from the Kittles Picnic Area and may be used for softball and other activities.

Environmenal and Historical Education and Interpretation

A park naturalist is available to conduct guided hikes, interpretive programs, and guided group activities. Please contact Moraine State Park to schedule a program.

The operational gristmill shows how waterpower was used to grind grains into flour. Guided tours of the mill are available Memorial Day through October and as otherwise posted. Please visit the calendar of events at www.visitPAparks.com for a complete listing of mill hours, tours, and public programs.

For More Information Contact:
Rugged trails traverse the gorge. Please wear appropriate clothing, including boots. For your safety and to protect the resource, please stay on the trails.

**ALPHA PASS:** 1.5 miles, blue blazes, more difficult hiking
This trail is at the northern end of McConnells Mill State Park and is part of the North Country National Scenic Trail. The trail begins at the Alpha Pass scenic vista and follows the east bank of Slippery Rock Creek. There is an exit to the Point Parking Area or the trail follows the creek to the Old Mill.

**HELLS HOLLOW:** 0.5 mile, easiest hiking
This trail begins at the Hells Hollow parking lot and follows and twice crosses Hell Run en route to a lime kiln and Hells Hollow Falls. Although the main trail is smooth and level, the section by the waterfall can be slippery.

**KILDOO:** 3-mile loop, more difficult hiking
Kildoo Trail is south of the Old Mill and begins at either end of the covered bridge. On the eastern bank of the creek, the trail begins with a 400-yard paved section which leads to rocky terrain on the remaining section to Eckert Bridge. Hikers then cross Slippery Rock Creek and continue on the west bank upstream to the covered bridge. The western section of the trail has blue blazes and is part of the North Country National Scenic Trail.

**SLIPPERY ROCK GORGE:** 6.2 miles, blue blazes, more difficult hiking
Part of the North Country National Scenic Trail, Slippery Rock Gorge Trail begins jointly with Hells Hollow Trail at the Hells Hollow parking lot. The Gorge Trail splits off just below the second footbridge. The first two miles of the trail follows the upper Hell Run Valley. The rest of the trail follows Slippery Rock Creek Gorge north for just over four miles to Eckert Bridge. As about the 3.5-mile point, the trail descends into the deepest part of the gorge. This broad alluvial flood plain is known as Walnut Flats. The trail then becomes more difficult, traversing very steep terrain. At the 5-mile point, the trail crosses bluffs then drops back down to creek level and follows along the creek bank to Eckert Bridge.

Hikers should allow a minimum of six hours to hike to Eckert Bridge and back. This is not a loop trail. If you only plan a one-way trip, please set up a shuttle. Many hikers have become lost after nightfall from underestimating the length of the hike. Mobile phone reception is poor in this area.

**FOR A SAFE HIKE**

- Wear sturdy shoes to protect your feet.
- Stay on the trail. If you hike off of the trail, you might get lost or damage the fragile habitat.
- Check the weather before you hike. If you leave your purse, wallet, or valuables in your vehicle, be sure to lock them in the trunk or other hidden location in your vehicle.