

For More Information Contact:

McConnells Mill State Park
 c/o Moraine State Park
 225 Pleasant Valley Road
 Portersville, PA 16051-9650
 724-368-8811
 email: morainesp@pa.gov
 GPS DD: Lat. 40.96674 Long. -80.16918
 An Equal Opportunity Employer

Information and 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.

www.visitPAparks.com



Nearby Attractions

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

A few miles to the east on US 422 is **Moraine State Park**. This large park offers cabins, boating, fishing, swimming, hiking, hunting, bicycling, and other outdoor activities.
 724-368-8811

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 Old Mill. An emergency phone is directly across from the Old Mill.

Nearest Hospital
 UPMC Jameson North Campus
 1211 Wilmington Rd
 New Castle, PA 16105
 724-658-9001

Environmental and Historical Education and Interpretation

A park naturalist is available to conduct guided hikes, interpretive programs, and school 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.

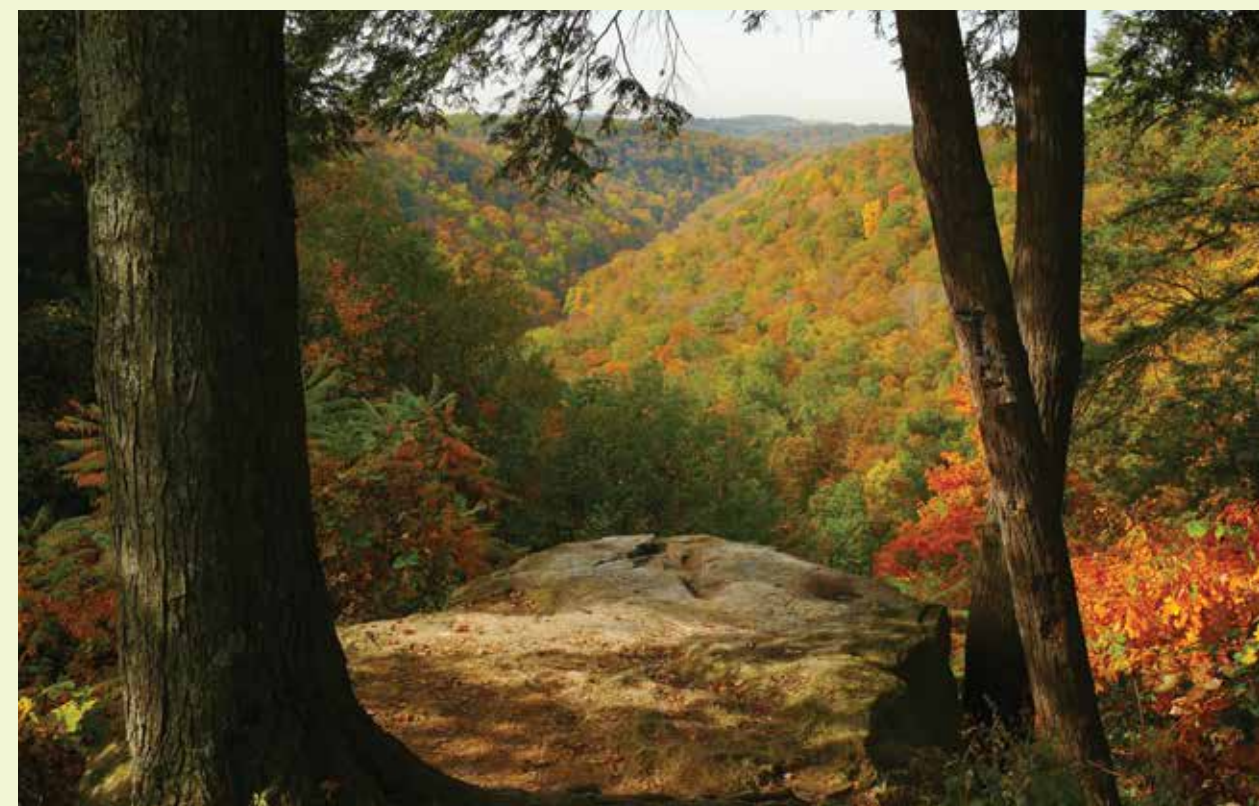


Geologic History



WHICH ROCK IS SLIPPERY ROCK?

Slippery Rock Creek is 49 miles long and full of slippery rocks, yet it is named for one exceptionally slick rock below the Armstrong Bridge. It is believed that an Indian trail forded the creek at a shelf of sandstone near a natural oil seep, which made the rock exceptionally slippery, and gave its name to the creek, a town, a university, a rock formation, and many local



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.
- Prevent forest fires by only 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

businesses. In the late 1800s, oil wells briefly flourished in the valley, but the oil was swiftly invaded by groundwater and the wells were abandoned.

SLIPPERY ROCK GORGE NATURAL AREA

The 930-acre Slippery Rock Gorge was designated a National Natural Landmark by the U.S. Department of the Interior in 1972 and became a State Park Natural Area in 1998. The steep-sided gorge contains numerous rocky outcrops, boulders, old growth forest, waterfalls, and rare plants. Cleland Rock Vista is a great place to view the gorge.

A particularly scenic part of the natural area, Hells Hollow, has a wide array of wildflowers, waterfalls, and habitats in addition to what can be found in the Slippery Rock Creek Gorge. According to local legend, this lovely valley got its ominous name from a military officer who was lost late at night, and coming upon the glowing fires of the limekilns, mused that he had wandered as far as the gates of hell. A one-half-mile hiking trail follows Hell Run to a cascading waterfall and an old lime kiln.

Recreational Opportunities

PICNICKING: The Kildoo 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. Alcoholic beverages are prohibited. The ADA accessible Kildoo 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 playfield is across the road from the Kildoo Picnic Area and may be used for softball and other activities.



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 by Armstrong Bridge. Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission regulations and laws 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 more 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.

Whitewater Boating



Slippery Rock Creek is a Class II to IV river, depending on water level. Spring and fall are the best times for boating. Boaters generally start from Rose Point (US 422 bridge), outside of the park boundary, and boat to Eckert Bridge, covering two and a half miles with a portage around the dam at the Old Mill. It is illegal to boat over the dam. Boaters must stay at least 50 feet from the boil at the base of the dam. An additional three and a half miles of whitewater from Eckert Bridge to Harris Bridge can extend the run for boaters to six miles. Rafts, canoes, and kayaks are not available for rent in the park.

All whitewater boaters on Slippery Rock Creek must learn to recognize natural dangers and understand that injury and death are a possibility when boating Slippery Rock Creek.

Only those with the proper equipment, training, and experience should consider whitewater boating. Whitewater boating is permitted in rubber rafts, whitewater canoes, and whitewater kayaks. Rafts must be at least eight feet long and have at least two air chambers in the gunnels with a minimum outside diameter tube of 14 inches. Non-inflatable canoes and kayaks must be of a design intended for whitewater use. Boating must be in accordance with the American Whitewater Affiliation Safety Code. All boaters enter the water at their own risk. Inner tubes and air mattresses are prohibited.

All boaters must wear U.S. Coast Guard approved personal flotation devices at all times. Helmets are strongly recommended.

Non-powered boats launched in the park must display one of the following: boat registration; launch permit or mooring

NO SWIMMING! Slippery Rock Creek is a very swift and dangerous whitewater creek. Many people have drowned in this dangerous creek. For swimming opportunities, please visit nearby Moraine State Park, which has two swimming beaches.

HUNTING AND FIREARMS: Many acres are open to hunting, trapping, and the training of dogs during established seasons. Common game species are grouse, deer, turkey, rabbit, and squirrel.

Hunting woodchucks, also known as groundhogs, is prohibited. Dog training is only permitted from the day following Labor Day through March 31 in designated hunting areas. The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and the Pennsylvania Game Commission rules and regulations apply. Contact the Moraine State Park office for ADA accessible hunting information.

Use **extreme caution** with firearms at all times. Other visitors use the park during hunting seasons. Firearms and archery equipment used for hunting may be uncased 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 archery equipment shall be kept in the owner's vehicle or enclosed trailer. Exceptions include: law enforcement officers and individuals with a valid *Pennsylvania License to Carry Firearms* are authorized to carry a firearm concealed on their person while they are within a state park.



permit from Pennsylvania State Parks, available at most state park offices; launch permit from the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission.

International Scale of River Difficulty

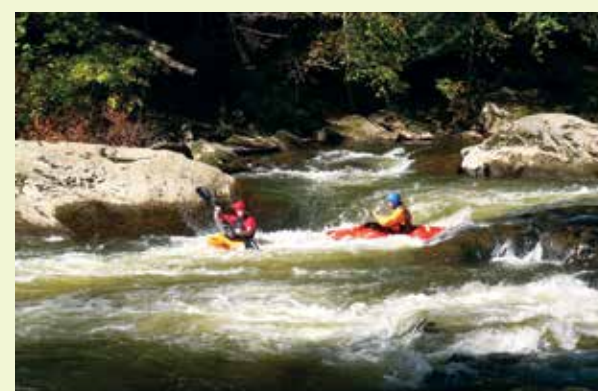
The classes below are the American version of the rating system used throughout the world. This system is not exact. Rivers do not always fit easily into one category and there may be regional interpretations. This information is from American Whitewater.

Class I: Easy - Fast-moving water with riffles and small waves. Few obstructions, all obvious and easily missed with little training. Self-rescue is easy.

Class II: Novice - Straightforward rapids with wide, clear channels which are evident without scouting. Occasional maneuvering may be required, but rocks and medium-sized waves are easily missed by trained paddlers.

Class III: Intermediate - Rapids with moderate, irregular waves which may be difficult to avoid and which can swamp an open canoe. Complex maneuvers in fast current and good boat control in tight passages or around ledges is often required. Strong eddies and powerful current effects can occur.

Class IV: Advanced - Intense, powerful, but predictable rapids requiring precise boat handling in turbulent water. May be large, unavoidable waves and holes or constricted passages demanding fast maneuvers under pressure. Rapids require "must" moves above dangerous hazards. Self-rescue is difficult.



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 draining of glacial lakes thousands of years ago, the gorge has steep sides with huge boulders littering the valley floor. Visitors can tour a historic gristmill and covered bridge that date to the 1800s and get a closer view of the powerful water that continues to carve the valley. Popular activities are hiking, whitewater boating, rock climbing, picnicking, and exploring the scenic overlooks, forests, and waterfalls of the park. The park is open from sunrise to sunset, year round.



Directions

The park is about 40 miles north of Pittsburgh, via I-79. From US 422 west, the park entrance is on the left less than ½ mile from the intersection of PA 19 and US 422. The park is located at 1761 McConnells Mill Road, Portersville, PA 16051.

Danger: Whitewater – Slippery Rocks

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

History

THE OLD MILL

In 1852, Daniel Kennedy built the first gristmill at this site. After fire destroyed the mill, he rebuilt it in 1868. Thomas McConnell bought the mill in 1875 and improved it by replacing the waterwheel with water turbines and the grinding 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. Sagging profits and antiquated equipment closed the mill in 1928.

In 1946, the mill and surrounding property 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 1957.



MCCONNELLS MILL COVERED BRIDGE

One of two covered bridges in Lawrence County, it was built in 1874 and is of the Howe Truss design. A registered National Historic Landmark, the bridge is on state park land but is the property of Lawrence County.



Hiking: 11.2 miles of trails

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 on its way 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 before the second footbridge. The first two miles of the trail follows the upper Hell Run Valley. The rest of the trail follows the Slippery Rock Creek Gorge north for just over four miles to Eckert Bridge. At 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 uplands 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.