What is a Conservation Area?

This designation is often made to land donated to the State of Pennsylvania for Parks and Forests. The purpose of the conservation area is to provide for the protection of open space, conserving natural resources, and providing opportunities for passive, non-motorized, low density junior and senior recreational and environmental education activities. A conservation area is characterized in a large area with few improvements and no through traffic. Recreational facilities and development are minimal. Conservation areas are used for low impact recreation and nature study activities. Conservation areas serve as examples of proper stewardship and resource management.

Recreational Opportunities

CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING: All trails in the Conservation Area are open for cross-country skiing. Evergreen and Old-Southern Trail are recommended for cross-country skiers.

HUNTING AND FISHING: About 780 acres are open to hunting, trapping and the training of dogs during established seasons. Common game species are black bear, deer, turkey, raccoon, cottontail and squirrels.

Watching Wildlife

The forest

The conservation tree species of Joseph E. Ibberson Conservation Area are red pine, black cherry and chestnut oak, white, yellow and loblolly pines, tulip popular, eastern hemlock, black gum, basswood, black walnut, locust, black locust, black gum, and table mountain pine, tulip popular, eastern hemlock, black locust, wild black cherry, black cherry, black mulberry, sassafras, American beech and hickory. This diversity of trees produces acorns, nuts, berries, and browse for wildlife like white-tailed deer, squirrels, ruffed grouse, wild turkey, black bear and many species of birds.

Geology

The conservation area is in the Ridge and Valley Province of Pennsylvania. It is characterized by long mountain ridges and valleys. The ridges and valleys were formed by the collisions of the continents which produced many types of fossils. The pine nuts produced by the ancient pines are a good example. The pine nuts were found in the sedimentary rocks of the area. The pine nuts were used to make clothing and baskets.

Geological survey

The conservation area is in the Ridge and Valley Province of Pennsylvania. It is characterized by long mountain ridges and valleys. The ridges and valleys were formed by the collisions of the continents which produced many types of fossils. The pine nuts produced by the ancient pines are a good example. The pine nuts were found in the sedimentary rocks of the area. The pine nuts were used to make clothing and baskets.
EVERGREEN TRAIL: 1.1 miles, red blazes, easiest hiking
This trail begins at the east gate and is a nice loop trail that is also great for cross-country skiing.

VICTORIA TRAIL: 3 miles, medium blue blazes, most difficult hiking
This rugged trail begins at the Education Pavilion, runs near the eastern boundary, crosses over to the west end of the park on the historic Victoria Road and meets the Appalachian Trail for a distance of 1.8 miles. From there, the trail winds down to Game Land 211 and PA 325 for a distance of 1.2 miles. This is the most difficult trail in the conservation area.

FORKED SAWMILL TRAIL: 0.9 mile, yellow blazes, easiest hiking
The loop portion of this trail originates the old location of Baker’s Sawmill, the last steam sawmill in Dauphin County. This is a nice trail for cross-country skiing.

PINE TRAIL: 0.9 mile, lime green blazes, easiest hiking
This trail begins at Evergreen Trail, crosses the conservation area, and loops near the Pond. Pine Trail runs through a multitude of forest habitats and is named for the many white pines along the middle section of the trail.

TURKEY FOOT TRAIL: 0.6 mile, lavender blazes, easiest hiking
Access this trail from the western end of Evergreen Trail. Turkey Foot Trail is a loop trail that offers many good opportunities to view wildlife.

ROCK TRAIL: 0.8 mile, beige blaze, more difficult hiking
This trail goes through some very rocky areas. Rock Trail begins at the intersection of Evergreen, Pine and Old Sawmill trails.

WHITETAIL TRAIL: 1.8 miles, pink blazes, most difficult hiking
This trail begins at the conservation area’s west gate, crosses Victoria and Appalachian trails and the Pond, and ends by reconnecting to Victoria Trail on the south side of Peters Mountain. The mountain section is rugged and includes switchbacks and stone stairs in places. A nice view of Powells Valley can be seen from a stone bench on the north side of the mountain. This is a good trail for viewing wildlife.

APPALACHIAN TRAIL: 5.5 miles, white blazes, more difficult hiking
The famous, national scenic trail extends 2,000 miles from Springer Mountain in northern Georgia to Mount Katahdin in central Maine. The Appalachian Trail is reached from Victoria and Whitetail trails. Just over half of a mile of this famed trail traverses the Conservation Area.