Jacobsburg Environmental Education Center

Jacobsburg encompasses 1,168 acres of forests, fields, and creeks which provide a wealth of recreational and educational opportunities. A visitor center with interpretive exhibits is open 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM, Monday through Friday. Hiking, biking, horseback riding, and exploring the park are available year round. The staff of Jacobsburg offers programs for students from preschool through college, as well as community programs focusing on outdoor recreation and the natural and cultural history of the area.

Jacobsburg is a partner in the Lehigh Valley Greenway, which seeks to engage state and local governments and nonprofit conservation groups to promote land conservation and education.

Environmental Education Program

Programs are offered year round to school groups and visitors in the local community. School students engage in hands-on activities while exploring and learning about the unique ecosystems of the park to further their understanding, appreciation, and knowledge of the natural environment. A variety of workshops are available for teachers seeking professional development related to the natural environment. The workshops provide curriculum instruction and resources for various education and recreation topics. Workshops are based on state and national environmental education curricula and state and national standards.

Public programs provide opportunities for visitors to connect to the resources found at Jacobsburg through guided recreation and interpretive programs. These programs focus on the natural, historical, and cultural features of the park and region. Through the Bureau's DiscoverE! program, the center offers week-long, summer day camps for children.

Heritage Education Program

The Jacobsburg Historical Society offers a wide range of exciting historical programs throughout the year. Programs include displays and demonstrations of early gun making at the Pennsylvania Longrifle Heritage Museum, located within the Jacobsburg Historic buildings. These facilities are for use by hikers and bikers and are also available to all-terrain bikers, horseback riders, cross-country skiers, and snowmobilers. Non-hunters are encouraged to wear blaze orange during hunting seasons.

Tell us about your hike at: www.explorepatrails.com

Jacobsburg National Historic District

The Jacobsburg National Historic District encompasses the eastern side of the park property and lies almost entirely within the boundaries of Jacobsburg Environmental Education Center. The district is on the National Register of Historic Places and its story is intertwined throughout the early development and growth of our nation. The history of Jacobsburg focuses on the Henry Family and their small arms industry, which played a key role in the American Industrial Revolution.

The first of the Henry gun makers, William Henry I, opened his gun factory in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, in 1750. He became Armoree for the Braddock Campaign of 1755 and for the Forbes Expedition of 1758. William Henry II established a small gun-making shop in Christian Springs near Nazareth in 1778. In 1792, Henry II purchased land at Jacobsburg and built a gun factory. Henry II acquired the land from the heirs of Jacob Hubler, who in 1740 founded the community from which Jacobsburg derived its name. Only foundations remain at the colonial village of Jacobsburg and at the Henry Forge historic site.

Henry II erected a forge (bloomery) to supply the gun factory with iron to manufacture guns. In 1812, a larger factory was built in nearby Bolton in order to accommodate large government firearms contracts.

Three succeeding generations of Henrys produced small arms at Bolton until the late 1800s. Competition from arms companies using mass production techniques made the Henrys' handcraft technology obsolete.

The Henrys not only produced firearms for all of the nation's major conflicts from the Revolutionary War through the Civil War, but they also were the primary suppliers of rifles for the largest American business enterprise of the early 19th century, John Jacob Astor's American Fur Company. The Henry firelock became the most prominent weapon of the western frontier due to its durability, accuracy, and relatively low cost.

BOULTON HISTORIC SITE

In the southern portion of the Jacobsburg Historic District is the Bolton Historic Site, which is administered by the Jacobsburg Historical Society. Visitors can explore historic buildings and take a self-guided trail that interprets the life of the Henry Family and the Bolton Gun Works. The Henry Homestead, which was built in 1812, houses the Pennsylvania Longrifle Museum. The nearby Joseph Henry House was built in 1832.

More information on the historic district, including a schedule of programs, is available from the Jacobsburg Historical Society, 610-759-9029. www.jacobsburghistory.com