KINGS GAP ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CENTER

WILDLIFE WATCHING

Kings Gap is committed to providing a diverse array of environmental education and interpretive programs. Programming is offered year round to kids, juniors, groups, and for the community. Educational programs are standards-based, grade-specific, and generate learning through discovery and a hands-on approach. Kings Gap also strives to teach environmental education and interpretation.

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**Hiking: 20 Miles of Trails**

- **Coniferous Plantation:** This loop trail on soft pine needles has exhibits that identify forest plants and interpret the ecology of a dominant oak forest. A nature trail on rolling terrain remains on the way to a pleasant overlook. Features are strategically located for hikers to relax and enjoy the surrounding view of the forest.

- **Pine Plantation Trail:** 0.6 mile, easiest hiking. This linear trail winds through the interior of a pine plantation.

- **Rock Street Trail:** 1.9 miles, more difficult hiking. This linear trail follows the Pasc Plantation and Masons area by crossing over the ridge and rocky crevice where Antietam quartzite was quarried to construct the mansion.

- **Ridge Overlook Trail:** 0.8 miles, most difficult hiking. This linear trail connects the Pine Plantation and Kings Gap Hollow trails provide access to Ridge Overlook Trail.

- **Forest Heritage Trail:** 1.8 miles, more difficult hiking. This loop trail passes several charcoal hearths, unused for over 100 years. Maple Hollow and Kings Gap Hollow trails provide access to Black Gum Trail.

- **Whispering Pines Trail:** 1.3 miles, more difficult hiking. This ADA accessible loop trail has exhibits to interpret the ecology of a chestnut oak forest.

- **White Oaks Trail:** 0.3 mile, easiest hiking. This ADA accessible trail loops through the forest. Exhibits help hikers identify forest plants and animals along the trail.

- **Woodland Ecology Trail:** 0.6 miles, easiest hiking. Exhibits help hikers identify forest plants and interpret the ecology of a deciduous white oak forest.

- **Watershed Trail:** 1.9 miles, more difficult hiking. This linear trail encompasses the headwaters for Kings Gap Hollow Run, including a rocky portion beside the stream with many small waterfalls and cascades.

- **Boundary Trail:** 1.5 miles, most difficult hiking. This linear trail travels through an oak/pitch pine forest and blueberry/strawberry meadows.

- **Kings Gap Hollow Trail:** 2.8 miles, more difficult hiking. This linear trail winds through an oak/pitch pine and blueberry/strawberry meadows.

- **Cold Spring Overlook Trail:** 0.4 miles, easiest hiking. This broad trail provides a view of the Cold Spring Run Valley.

- **Irish Gap Hollow Trail:** 0.4 miles, easiest hiking. This trail leads into Irish Gap Hollows.

- **Two Hollows Trail:** 0.9 miles, more difficult hiking. This trail connects Kings Gap and Irish Gap hollows.

**Human Impacts on South Mountain 1700-1900**

- **Kings Gap:** The most scenic of the nine “Kings Gaps” is unknown. For many years the site was a favorite in the region. The relatively young forest of Kings Gap reflects the influence of the charcoal industry from the 1700s through the late 1800s. Before it was economic to ship coal, wood charcoal fueled the iron furnaces located nearby. The furnaces of South Mountain were commercially active on a 20 to 25 year cycle till the fire for charcoal by the nine iron furnaces in the Kings Gap area. The relatively young forest exists as a result of these repeated cuttings.

- **Two Hollows:** The channel, wood road, pipeline and railroad existed here. Thus the 30 to 50 ft diameter circular rings where charcoal was made can still be found. Even more than 100 years later, few woodsy plants grow on the old ruins.

**James McCormick Cameron (1860-1951)**

- **In 2011, the Nature Conservancy, assisted by the community, purchased the mansion and 1,430 acres of South Mountain in 1973. Kings Gap was dedicated as the third state park in 1973.**

- **With Mr. Cameron’s passing in 1949, C. H. Masland and Son Carpet Company of Carlisle purchased the mansion and the surrounding 1,430 acres. The remaining acreage passed into other ownership. Masland refurbished the mansion, turned it into the “Masland Guest House,” which was used as accommodations for potential clients and as a training site for employees and sales representatives. As conference rooms and overnight facilities became more available in the Carlisle area, it was no longer necessary for the company to operate the guest house.**

**For Future Generations**

- **The Nature Conservancy, assisted by the community, purchased the mansion and 1,430 acres of South Mountain in 1973. Kings Gap was dedicated as the third state park in 1973.**

- **In 2011, the Nature Conservancy, assisted by the community purchased 1,077 acres, designated as “Kings Gap Tract,” remaining most of the original Cameron estate.”**