Horseback riding is an engaging way to explore nature. This enjoyable activity combines the majestic beauty of horses with the treasures of Pennsylvania’s natural environments. From the saddle, riders soak in an abundance of fresh air and gain a unique perspective of the surrounding landscape. www.dcnr.pa.gov/Recreation/WhatToDo/horsebackRiding

Health Benefits

A trail ride through rugged forest land can be peaceful, adventurous, and exhilarating. In addition, there are many physical and psychological health benefits associated with horseback riding.

- Burn calories
- Tone or strengthen muscles, particularly essential core muscles
- Develop or maintain balance and coordination
- Build self confidence
- Stress relief that comes from spending time outdoors and from the positive effects related to human-animal interactions

Things to Know

- Not all trails are open to horseback riding.
- Areas closed to equestrians include natural areas, Keystone Hiking Trails, and areas posted closed to horseback riding.
- Camping with horses is permitted along state forest trail systems open to horseback riding. However, you must acquire a camping permit prior to your stay. Camping with trailers is only permitted at forestry trailhead parking areas. In state parks; camping is permitted at the park.
- Equestrians should contact the appropriate forest district or state park office for trail details, camping permits, and for information regarding horse-trailer parking.
- Trails that are open to horseback riding are open to other activities as well. These shared-use trails require common courtesy and cooperation from all users.
- Groups conducting trail rides must secure a special use agreement.
- Know and follow all state forest and state park rules and regulations.
- Practice Leave No Trace minimum impact principles.
- Follow all camping guidelines.
- Do not move firewood when camping.
- Ride only on designated horse trails.
- Do not tie horses directly to trees or shrubs.
- Provide a drinking container for your horse and do not allow horses to drink directly from earthen stream banks.
- To minimize erosion, avoid riding on wet or soft trails.
- Learn to recognize harmful invasive plants and avoid riding through them. For information on invasive species see: www.dcnr.pa.gov/conservation/wildPlants/invasivePlants
- Exercise caution where the trail follows state forest roads. Ride single file on the edge of the road; in the direction of traffic; and always be aware of approaching motor vehicles, especially on “blind curves.”
- Practice proper trail etiquette to preserve the quality of the trail, to protect the land, and to help create a positive, courteous atmosphere.
State Forest Riding Opportunities

Seventeen state forests provide inexhaustible opportunities for horseback riding throughout the state. There are thousands of miles of trail riding open to equestrians in the form of forestry roads, designated equestrian trails, and shared-use trails. Day-use riding is popular and some state forests feature beautiful locations specifically designed for horse camping.

- Bald Eagle 570-922-3344
- Buchanan 717-485-3148
- Clear Creek 814-226-1901
- Delaware 570-895-4000
- Elk 814-486-3353
- Forbes 724-238-1200
- Gallitzin 814-472-1862
- Loyalsock 570-946-4049
- Michaux 717-352-2211
- Moshannon 814-765-0821
- Pinchot 570-945-7133
- Rothrock 814-643-2340
- Sproul 570-923-6011
- Susquehannock 814-274-3600
- Tiadaghton 570-753-5409
- Tuscarora 717-536-3191
- Weiser 570-875-6450

State Park Riding Opportunities

Thirty state parks offer hundreds of miles of horseback riding opportunities. There are several bridle trails maintained for equestrians, and other trails and roadways are open to this activity. Some of the parks listed have limited opportunities within the park but serve as trailhead parking and gateways to adjoining state forests. For trail details and maps, call the park office or visit www.dcnr.pa.gov/Recreation/WhatToDo/horsebackRiding

In the North:
- Black Moshannon 814-342-5960
- Kettle Creek 570-923-6004
- Raymond B. Winter 570-966-1455

In the South:
- Blue Knob 814-276-3576
- Canoe Creek 814-695-6807
- Fowlers Hollow 717-776-5272
- Gifford Pinchot 717-432-5011
- Penn-Roosevelt 814-667-1800
- Prince Gallitzin 814-674-1000
- Susquehannock 717-252-1134

In the East:
- Big Pocono 570-894-8336
- Evansburg 610-409-1150
- French Creek 610-582-9680
- Jacobsburg 610-746-2801
- Lackawanna 570-945-3239
- Marsh Creek 610-458-5119
- Nockamixon 215-529-7300
- Promised Land 570-676-3428
- Ricketts Glen 570-477-5675
- Ridley Creek 610-892-3900

In the West:
- Cook Forest 814-744-8407
- Laurel Summit 724-238-6623
- Linn Run 724-238-6623
- Moraine 724-368-8811
- Ohioyle 724-329-8591
- Raccoon Creek 724-899-2200

Trail head camping is available at Promised Land and Kettle Creek state parks.

Safety Tips

Wear a safety helmet.

Make sure all equipment fits properly and is functional.

Pack drinking water for yourself.

Let someone know where you are going and when you plan to return.

Dress appropriately and be prepared for inclement or changing weather conditions.

Hunters also use areas that are open to horseback riding, so it is important to wear an appropriate amount of blaze orange or to ride only on Sundays during Pennsylvania hunting seasons.

Elk State Forest features Dark Hollow and Gas Well equestrian camping areas. These areas are found along a loop of the Thunder Mountain Equestrian Trail, which spans approximately 30 miles in northern Elk County.

Loyalsock State Forest has a designated equestrian trail called the Bridle Trail. This trail includes 52 miles of riding divided into two loops. There is trailhead camping with a small shelter, latrines, tie rails, and trailer parking.

Sproul State Forest includes a 15-mile equestrian loop that begins at Kettle Creek State Park. A trail map is available at the district office.

Moshannon State Forest provides camping at the Reservoir Road Equestrian Camping Area and at the Benner Run Road Camping area. The Three Runs region has over ten miles of equestrian trails.

Rothrock State Forest permits horseback riding on many forest roads and trails outside of its natural areas and trails marked closed to horses. Motorized Campsite #8 in the Trough Creek Area is designed for horse camping.

Susquehannock State Forest provides over 80 miles of shared-use trails, most of which are suitable for horseback riding. The forest also has two areas that are open to camping with horses.

Tioga State Forest offers a unique designated horseback riding trail adjacent to the Pine Creek Rail Trail. This 5.55-mile trail runs parallel to the popular bike trail and extends from the village of Ansonia to Tiadaghton. There are many additional opportunities in this forest district.