

Lumber Heritage Quests: Celebrating America

Adventurer Quest

Bald Eagle Valley Trail - Clinton

The Bald Eagle Valley Trail follows the old Beech Creek Railroad corridor, once used to haul coal, lumber, and goods through Clinton County. Today, it's being developed as a multi-phase rail-trail project that will eventually connect Castanea to the Pine Creek Rail Trail.

The first completed section begins at the historic Castanea Train Station, where parking and trail access are available. The trail provides a level, accessible path for walking and biking, with views of farms, forests, and the Bald Eagle Creek corridor. Explore the route that was once central to Clinton County's lumber and transportation history.

PLAN YOUR TRIP:

Linked website contains visitor information.

<https://susquehannagreenway.org/land-trails/bald-eagle-valley-trail/>

Bark Shanty CCC Camp - Potter

The remnants of this Civilian Conservation Corp Camp are located in Susquehannock State Forest. Once an active CCC camp of Company 2336, which was one of a few companies designated for Black enrollees of the program, the camp later was used as a camp for Prisoners of War (mainly German). Today, the site is getting some of the recognition it deserves, as the foundations have been uncovered, interpretive elements established, and a proper sign and parking area added to invite visitors to explore this site and its ties to major state and national history. <https://lumberheritage.org/heritage/roots-uncovered/ccc-bark-shanty-project/>

PLAN YOUR TRIP - check weather conditions before visiting.

Bucktail Path - Cameron

Hike a section of the Bucktail Path!

The Bucktail Path is one of Pennsylvania's most remote long-distance trails, stretching more than 30 miles through steep valleys and forests.

Known for its solitude and challenge, the path follows terrain once traveled by Native Americans, early settlers, and lumbermen.

Its name honors the "Bucktail Regiment" of the Civil War.

This trail offers a glimpse into the untamed forest landscape that defined the region's past and continues to shape its identity today. With limited road crossings and rugged conditions, it remains a true backcountry experience.

PLAN YOUR TRIP:

Linked DCNR map of the Bucktail Path in Elk State Forest

<https://elibrary.dcnr.pa.gov/GetDocument?docId=3699355&DocName=FD13%20Elk%20Bucktail%20Path%20Map%20and%20Brochure%20with%20QR%202021.pdf>

Forest Cathedral at Cook Forest State Park - Clarion

The Forest Cathedral in Cook Forest State Park is one of Pennsylvania's most famous stands of old-growth white pine and hemlock. Designated a National Natural Landmark, it showcases towering trees — some more than 300 years old — that give a glimpse of what much of the state's forests looked like before the lumber era.

Explore your choice of the trail systems in the Forest Cathedral area. As you walk among these giants, reflect on how the forest has endured centuries of change and what it means for the future of Pennsylvania's woodlands.

<https://kalyumet.com/content/uploads/2020/06/State-Park-Trail-Guide.pdf>

Ghost Town Trail - Cambria

The Ghost Town Trail follows the path of former railroads that once served coal mines, iron furnaces, and lumber operations in Cambria and Indiana Counties. Today, it's a nationally recognized Rail-Trail Hall of Fame trail, stretching more than 46 miles.

In Cambria County, the trail passes through sites of vanished industrial towns and along Blacklick Creek, offering both a scenic ride or walk and a chance to reflect on the industries that once dominated the valley. Interpretive panels along the way share the stories of these communities and the people who lived and worked here.

We recommend starting at the Nanty Glo Trail Head located in the southern portion of the LHR.

PLAN YOUR VISIT:

Linked website contains visitor information!

<https://www.cambriaconservationrecreation.com/ghost-town-trail/>

Hemlock Lake - Indiana

A lake and park named for Pennsylvania's State Tree, Eastern Hemlock.

The Eastern Hemlock Tree has many uses, and for many years the bark was an intrinsic part of the tanning (leather) industry.

PLAN YOUR TRIP - Note: access roads do NOT receive winter maintenance - please see link for list of activities and to find map of the park

<https://indianacountyparks.org/our-parks/hemlock-lake-park/>

Minister Creek Trail:Southern Loop - Forest

Hike the Minister Creek Trail - Southern Loop!

The Minister Creek Trail is one of the Allegheny National Forest's most scenic hikes, known for its towering rock outcrops, hemlock groves, and sweeping creek views. The full trail runs about 6.6 miles, and the southern loop mostly within Forest County showcases the trail's highlights.

This area was once heavily logged, but today's forest reflects decades of regrowth. In the 1930s, the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) played a role in building trails, roads, and recreational access, helping transform cutover lands into a national forest enjoyed by visitors today.

PLAN YOUR TRIP:

Linked ANF map - see ANF webpages for more tips/info

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/r09/alleggheny/recreation/opportunities/hiking>

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/sites/nfs/files/r09/alleggheny/publication/Minister%20Creek%20Hiking%20Trail.pdf>

Old Loggers Path - Lycoming

Hike a section of the Old Loggers Path!

The Old Loggers Path is a nearly 28-mile loop trail in the Loyalsock State Forest, northeast of Williamsport. Its name comes from the railroads and logging roads once carved into these mountains during Pennsylvania's lumber boom. Today, many of those routes have been reclaimed by forest, creating a trail that blends natural beauty with echoes of the past.

Hikers encounter rugged ridges, scenic vistas, and quiet hollows, along with reminders of the industry that once transformed the landscape.

PLAN YOUR VISIT:

Linked DCNR website shows a map of Old Loggers Path

<https://elibrary.dcnr.pa.gov/GetDocument?docId=3234925&DocName=OLP.pdf>

Penn's Cave & Wildlife Park - Centre

PLAN YOUR VISIT:

See schedules and rates online (linked).

Penn's Cave & Wildlife Park, in Centre County, is America's only all-water cavern, offering a unique guided boat tour through its limestone passages.

It's also recognized as the only cave in Pennsylvania on the National Register of Historic Places.

In addition to the cave, the site includes a wildlife park, maze, gemstone panning, and other family-friendly attractions.

<https://www.pennscave.com/tours-features>

Pine Creek Rail Trail - Tioga

The Pine Creek Rail Trail stretches more than 62 miles through the heart of the Pennsylvania Wilds, following the path of the former Jersey Shore, Pine Creek & Buffalo Railroad. Voted one of the nation's top rail trails, it offers a gentle grade and spectacular scenery, including the Pennsylvania Grand Canyon.

For this Quest, focus on the northern section in Tioga County, where the trail winds past dramatic canyon walls, Pine Creek, and sweeping forest views. Whether you hike, bike, or stroll a short segment, you're traveling a corridor once used to haul timber and goods through this rugged landscape.

PLAN YOUR VISIT:

Linked DCNR website contains a map of the Northern Section

<https://elibrary.dcnr.pa.gov/GetDocument?docId=3565869&DocName=D12%20D16%20Tiadaghton%20Tioga%20Pine%20Creek%20Rail%20Trail%20North%20Map.pdf>

Quehanna Trail - Clearfield

Hike a section of the Quehanna Trail!

The Quehanna Trail loops for nearly 75 miles through the Quehanna Wild Area, one of the largest roadless tracts in Pennsylvania. Known for its remote feel, open meadows, and quiet forests, it offers a true backcountry experience.

The trail passes through lands once heavily logged and later scarred by industry (including Cold War jet-engine testing) but today the forest has regenerated into a wilderness rich with wildlife and solitude. Hiking here connects you to both the resilience of the land and the ongoing story of Pennsylvania's forests.

PLAN YOUR HIKE:

The linked DCNR website has Quehanna Trail loop mapped in two parts (East and West)
<https://www.pa.gov/agencies/dcnr/recreation/where-to-go/state-forests/find-a-forest/moshannon/maps>

Scripture Rocks - Jefferson

Scripture Rocks Heritage Park, near Brookville, preserves over 1,500 hand-carved messages and symbols created in the early 1900s by Douglas Stahlman. Scattered across sandstone boulders in a forested setting, the carvings reflect personal expression and the cultural conversations of the era.

Today, the park features a network of trails and interpretive panels that guide visitors through this unusual historic landscape. The panels provide context on Stahlman's life, the meanings behind selected carvings, and the broader heritage of Jefferson County's forests and communities.

Exploring the site is both a walk through nature and a journey into the layered stories carved into stone more than a century ago.

<https://scripturerocks.com/>

Tanbark Trail - Warren

Hike a section of Tanbark Trail!

The Tanbark Trail connects Hearts Content Scenic Area to North Country Trail (one of PA's National Scenic Trails).

Its name reflects a vital part of Pennsylvania's lumber history: the tanbark industry.

The bark of the Eastern Hemlock tree was valuable to the leather making (tanning) industries. Stripped and shipped by the ton to make tannins for leather production, Pennsylvania once led the nation not only in producing lumber, but in leather too.

This industry reshaped forests across the region, leaving a lasting mark on both the land and the communities built around it.

Due to its significance, the Eastern Hemlock is Pennsylvania's State Tree.

PLAN YOUR TRIP:

Linked ANF map - see ANF webpages for more tips/info

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/r09/alleggheny/recreation/opportunities/hiking>

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/sites/nfs/files/r09/alleggheny/publication/Tanbark%20Trail%20Map.pdf>

Timberdoodle Flats Interpretive Trail - McKean

The Timberdoodle Flats Interpretive Trail, near Lewis Run in McKean County, is designed to show how active forest management creates habitat. The two loop trails — the Bluebird Loop (0.5 mi) and Woodcock Loop (1.25 mi) — are lined with interpretive panels explaining how forestry, wildlife, and recreation come together.

Explore Timberdoodle Flats Wildlife Interpretive Trail!

The area is managed to provide habitat for the American woodcock, nicknamed the “timberdoodle,” and other species that depend on varied forest habitats. The flat, hardened trails make this an easy walk for all ages, offering both education and a taste of Pennsylvania’s working forests.

PLAN YOUR TRIP:

Linked ANF map - see ANF webpages for more tips/info

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/r09/alleggheny/recreation/opportunities/hiking>

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/sites/nfs/files/r09/alleggheny/publication/Timberdoodle%20Flats%20Wildlife%20Interpretive%20Trail.pdf>

Twin Lakes Trail - Elk

Hike a section of Twin Lakes Trail!

The Twin Lakes Trail begins at Twin Lakes Recreation Area in the Allegheny National Forest. The recreation area was developed in the 1930s by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). Construction of the dam, campground, picnic area, and bathhouse are the result of the efforts of various CCC companies in the ANF area.

Before that, the site had been used as a wood chemical plant producing wood alcohol, a reminder of how forests once fueled industry here.

The name “Twin Lakes” reflects an original plan for two impoundments. Only one was built, as funding was shifted to another project.

Twin Lakes Trail runs more than 15 miles to the Clarion River.

PLAN YOUR TRIP:

Linked ANF map - see ANF webpages for more tips/info

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/r09/alleggheny/recreation/opportunities/hiking>

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/sites/nfs/files/r09/alleggheny/publication/Twin%20Lakes%20Trail.pdf>

