

Lumber Heritage Quests: Celebrating America

Explorer Quest

Allegheny Portage Railroad National Historic Site - Cambria

The Allegheny Portage Railroad was the first railroad built over the Allegheny Mountains, completed in 1834. It was a major link in the Main Line Canal system connecting Philadelphia to Pittsburgh.

The route passed directly through Cambria County, where visitors today can explore remnants of the historic line, including sections of the Staple Bend Tunnel (the first railroad tunnel in the U.S.). These sites show how early infrastructure shaped Pennsylvania's communities and industries, including the movement of lumber and goods.

For more context, exhibits, and programs, begin at the Visitor Center (located just outside Cambria County), where you can find maps, staff guidance, and detailed interpretation of the site.

PLAN YOUR VISIT:

Explore the linked website for more information!

<https://www.nps.gov/alpo/planyourvisit/summit-level-visitor-center.htm>

Austin Dam Ruins - Potter

Be sure to look for the Interpretive Panel funded in part by the Lumber Heritage Region!

The Bayless Pulp and Paper Company constructed the dam in 1909 to provide steady water supply to the downstream mill. After a number of concerning partial failures the dam broke on September 30, 1911, wiping out the towns of Austin and Costello leading to extensive loss of life and millions of dollars in damages. PLEASE NOTE - The road into the park does NOT have winter maintenance (plan travel accordingly. <https://austindam.mailchimpsites.com/>)

Baby Arch at Warren County Visitor Bureau - Warren

The Baby Arch stands in front of the Warren County Visitors Bureau. This 14-foot stainless steel replica honors the workers who fabricated 80% of the wedge-shaped steel sections used on the iconic Gateway Arch in St. Louis from 1962-1965 in Warren County, PA.

Visitors will also find educational displays at the site, telling the men's stories of work, craftsmanship, and how Warren, PA played a critical yet often overlooked role in the creation of this national monument.

Be sure to look for our Lumber Heritage Trail Sign - download the LHT app to discover more in the region!

PLAN YOUR TRIP:

The Baby Arch is located in front of
Warren County Visitors Bureau
22045 U.S. Route 6
Warren, PA 16365

<https://lumberheritage.org/grants-projects/mini-grants/baby-arch-project/>

Barbour Rock Trail - Tioga

The Barbour Rock Trail in Tioga County leads to a stunning overlook of the Pennsylvania Grand Canyon (Pine Creek Gorge). The main trail is ADA-accessible, giving more visitors the chance to experience this unforgettable view.

From the overlook, you can see the gorge carved by Pine Creek — a landscape showing centuries of change. In the 1800s, this canyon was filled with lumber drives, railroads, and logging camps. Today, the view highlights both the natural beauty of the gorge and the story of how the land has recovered since the lumber era.

Though unconfirmed, some say Barbour Rock gets its name from a log driver named Samuel Barbour, who died trying to break a jam at a bend in the river.

PLAN YOUR TRIP:

Linked DCNR map of the Bucktail Path in Tioga State Forest

<https://elibrary.dcnr.pa.gov/GetDocument?docId=1742005&DocName=sf-FD16-Barbour%20Rock%20Trail.pdf>

Bilger's Rocks - Clearfield

Bilger's Rocks is a 300 million-year-old sandstone "city" of rocks, covering over 300 acres in Clearfield County.

Visitors can observe and explore various openings, crawlspaces, passageways, and arches.

Be sure to look for our Lumber Heritage Trail Sign and download the Lumber Heritage Trail App for additional discovery! https://www.visitclearfieldcounty.org/parks_cabins_bilgers

May Hollow Skyway - Cameon

The Lumber Heritage Region is one of Pennsylvania's best places to experience truly dark skies, far from excess light pollution. While not yet an officially designated Dark Sky Park, this site in Cameron County is being recognized for its potential. The site was recently given an official name: May Hollow Skyway!

Not a fan of the dark? That's okay, the site is beautiful and teeming with wildlife in the daylight hours too!

PLAN YOUR TRIP:

The site remains primitive, with no camping and seasonal road access, but hiking in is permitted year-round for those seeking an unspoiled night sky.

Light pollution dims the stars for most of us, but throughout much of the LHR the Milky Way still shines brightly.

Indigenous Nations and communities of the region, like the Seneca, were the region's earliest astronomers. The night sky served as a guide to seasons, navigation, and cultural storytelling. Today, these skies still connect us to both natural rhythms and human heritage.

To learn more about light pollution, visit darksky.org

Getting There:

If you're unfamiliar with the area, we recommend coming from Emporium - starting from South Broad Street:

⚠️ If your GPS tries to send you onto Thomas Ryan Road - do NOT follow it. ⚠️

1. Take South Broad Street to Whittimore Road (heading up the mountain).
2. Follow Whittimore Road until you reach the stop sign.
3. Go straight at the stop sign onto May Hollow Road.
4. Stay on May Hollow Road until you see the turn-off for Lookout Lane (there will be a sign for the Dark Sky Site).

WINTER NOTE - Parking on the other side of the road is available year-round for those who plan to hike back.

5. Turn onto Lookout Lane and follow this road to the parking area (April-October).

6. Walk in from Parking Area ONLY

GPS Coordinates for Parking Area: 41.4598279, -78.2271404

<https://lookupcameroncounty.com/dark-sky-park-cameron-county>

Eagle Iron Works & Curtin Village - Centre

The Eagle Iron Works at Curtin Village, founded in 1810, was the last iron furnace operating in Centre County, closing in 1921. The site includes the ironmaster's mansion, workers' homes, and furnace complex — a rare surviving example of a self-contained iron-making community.

The village relied on nearby forests for charcoal, with the furnace consuming an acre of timber daily. This heavy demand reshaped Centre County's landscape.

Today, Curtin Village is preserved as a historic site with a self-guided walking tour available year-round and guided tours and events throughout the year.

Visitors can step back in time and see how iron, timber, and community life were intertwined.

PLAN YOUR VISIT:

Linked Website Contains Visitor Information <https://www.curtinvillage.com/tourssite-rental.html>

Elk Country Visitor Center - Elk

The Eastern Elk's extinction was due in part to over hunting and habitat loss exacerbated by unsustainable logging practices. Rocky Mountain Elk were introduced to the area in 1913 and the herds have since been managed by Pennsylvania's Game Commission.

<https://elkcountrysite.com/>

Gobbler's Knob Groundhog Visitor Center - Jefferson

Gobbler's Knob is home to the world's most famous groundhog, Punxsutawney Phil. Since 1887, Phil has predicted the coming of spring (or six more weeks of winter!) every February 2nd. This quirky tradition has grown into an international celebration, drawing visitors from across the globe to this small Pennsylvania town.

The Gobbler's Knob Visitor Center is the perfect place to learn about Punxsutawney Phil, The World's Most Famous Groundhog. 📍 **1548 Woodland Ave Ext, Punxsutawney, PA 15767**

Be sure to look for our Lumber Heritage Trail Sign and download the Lumber Heritage Trail App for additional discovery! <https://www.groundhog.org/groundhog-day/>

Kinzua Bridge State Park Visitor Center - McKean

Explore the Visitor Center at Kinzua Bridge State Park!

The Kinzua Bridge was once the longest and tallest railroad bridge in the world, rising 301 feet over the valley when completed in 1882. Though partially destroyed by a tornado in 2003, it remains a symbol of engineering ambition and the resilience of both people and place.

While the Skywalk is currently closed for repairs (open only briefly during fall leaf peeping season), the Visitor Center and exhibits are open year-round. Inside, you'll discover the story of the bridge's construction, its role in railroads and lumber transport, and its enduring impact on the region.

PLAN YOUR VISIT:

DCNR website is linked and contains hours and visitor information

<https://www.pa.gov/agencies/dcnr/recreation/where-to-go/state-parks/find-a-park/kinzua-bridge-state-park#accordion-3a15a35d59-item-b913180f15>

Old Smicksburg Park - Indiana

Explore the history and remnants of an early American village - brochure and walking tour available online.

<http://ExplorethehistoryandremnantsofanearlyAmericanvillage-brochureandwalkingtouravailableonline>.

Sawmill Center for the Arts - Clarion

SEASONAL HOURS

Once a bustling sawmill built by John Cook in 1826, the site had become a small museum by 1976. Thanks to the vision of Verna Leith, it was transformed into a vibrant center where visitors can experience traditional arts, local crafts, and performances.

Today it welcomes thousands each year for markets, classes, festivals, and theatre.

The site is closed in the off-season (reopening in May), so check their online calendar for events. If you stop by while it's closed, snap a photo in front of the building or signs and be sure to return to explore this unique blend of nature, art, and history! <https://sawmill.org/>

State Camp CCC Camp S-76 - Clinton

The remnants of this Civilian Conservation Corp Camp are located in Sproul State Forest. An interpretive trail meanders through the trees planted by this company and signage interprets some of the sites and remnants from Camp S-76 and Company 1330, one of few designated for Black enrollees. PLAN YOUR TRIP - check weather conditions before visiting.

<https://lumberheritage.org/things-to-do/ccc-s-76-state-camp/>

Thomas T. Taber Museum - Lycoming

The Thomas T. Taber Museum brings the history of north-central Pennsylvania to life. Located in Williamsport, the home of Little League Baseball and once the "Lumber Capital of the World", the museum highlights everything from the rise of the lumber industry to fine art, local culture, and everyday life across centuries.

<https://tabermuseum.org/hours-pricing-parking>

Tionesta Dam & Lake - Forest

The Tionesta Dam and Lake, built by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in 1940, protects communities along the Allegheny River from flooding and provides outdoor recreation for thousands of visitors each year.

This site tells the story of how forests, rivers, and people connect. In the lumber era, uncontrolled flooding often carried logs downstream, sometimes devastating towns. The dam offers both protection and new opportunities for fishing, boating, hiking, and wildlife watching.

Like other flood-control projects of the era, the dam reshaped both the landscape and how people connected to the river.

By the Lake is Tionesta Recreation Area, which includes a disc golf course, campground, picnic areas, and boat launch. Nearby you may also see the Lighthouse Island Peace Park (home to one of the few functional inland lighthouses in the U.S.).

PLAN YOUR VISIT:

Linked website contains visitor information. <https://www.visitpa.com/listing/tionesta-lake/1632/>

