



# Pine Grove Furnace

A Pennsylvania Recreational Guide for

Pine Grove  
Furnace  
State Park



## Pennsylvania State Parks Mission

The primary purpose of Pennsylvania state parks is to provide opportunities for enjoying healthful outdoor recreation and serve as outdoor classrooms for environmental education. In meeting these purposes, the conservation of the natural, scenic, aesthetic, and historical values of parks should be given first consideration. Stewardship responsibilities should be carried out in a way that protects the natural outdoor experience for the enjoyment of current and future generations.



2022



## TOP 10 ACTIVITIES



1. Double the fun! Swim in two lakes, build sand castles at two beaches, and picnic in two different picnic areas, all separated by a short bike ride.
2. Set foot on the famous Appalachian Trail. The park is near the halfway point for this National Scenic Trail spanning from Georgia to Maine.
3. Enjoy one of the many education programs offered by the park, like Orienteering for Beginners.
4. Walk back in time on the Historical Walking Tour. Explore an iron furnace and other historic buildings from one of the most productive iron communities of the 19th century.
5. Relax in the modern campground with upgraded facilities.
6. See hundreds of jack-o-lanterns float on Fuller Lake during the Fall Furnace Fest.
7. Visit the first hiking museum in the U.S. -- the Appalachian Trail Museum.
8. See the park from above! Take a hike to Pole Steeple View and view the eastern part of the park and surrounding Michaux State Forest from the overlook.
9. Tour the Ironmaster's Mansion. Once the home of the iron operations ironmaster, some famous Americans slept here, too!
10. Enjoy year-round trout fishing in the stocked Mountain Creek and Laurel Lake.

## PINE GROVE FURNACE STATE PARK



Steeped in natural and historical features, the 696-acre Pine Grove Furnace State Park is at the northern tip of the Blue Ridge Mountains in an area known as South Mountain. Throughout the historic areas of the park, visitors enjoy many recreational opportunities, including two mountain lakes (Laurel Lake and Fuller Lake), hiking

the Appalachian Trail, biking the Hiker Biker Trail, visiting the Appalachian Trail Museum, and imagining when the park was a charcoal-fired iron furnace community. The park is surrounded by Michaux State Forest, which provides opportunities for exploring extensive public lands around South Mountain.



### Directions

GPS DD: Lat. 40.03295 Long. -77.30467

The park is easily reached from I-81. Visitors should take exit 37 to PA 233 south then travel for eight miles.

### Reservations

Make online reservations at [www.dcnr.pa.gov/StateParks](http://www.dcnr.pa.gov/StateParks) or call toll-free 888-PA-PARKS (888-727-2757), 7:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Monday to Saturday.

## LEARN, EXPERIENCE, CONNECT



Pine Grove Furnace State Park offers a wide variety of programs from April through October. Gain a better understanding of the park's natural, cultural, and historical resources through guided outdoor recreation, hands-on activities, walks, special events, and other programs.

The ADA accessible visitor center in the park office has exhibits on the historic charcoal iron furnace community, which flourished for over 130 years. The visitor center is open daily April through October and Monday through Friday during the rest of the year.

Curriculum-based environmental education programs are available to schools and organized groups. Call the park office

to schedule a group program. A variety of professional development workshops are offered for teachers.

Contact the park office or explore the online calendar of events, <https://events.dcnr.pa.gov>, for more information on programs and other learning experiences.

**FALL FURNACE FEST:** This weekend-long event is held in October. Historical demonstrations, park programs, entertainment, hayrides, and food and craft vendors provide a great family-oriented event. The highlight of the weekend is the telling of the Legend of the Hairy Hand, which includes a float of hundreds of lit jack-o-lanterns on Fuller Lake.

## WILDLIFE WATCHING

The diverse habitats of Pine Grove Furnace State Park support a variety of wildlife through all seasons. The historic use of the area during the iron furnace period created various habitats that make the area unique for wildlife.

Spring is a time of bird migration. The forest, interspersed with ponds and wetlands, makes the park a rest stop for many migrating forest birds. Warblers, vireos, and thrushes stop to rest and eat before flying on to their breeding or winter homes. Barred owls, eastern screech owls, and great horned owls are often heard throughout the park. Spring is also a great time to visit Creek Trail, as multiple vernal pools provide breeding habitat for frogs, salamanders, and toads.

Laurel Lake and its shoreline wetlands are a beacon that lures birds in the spring. Wood ducks, Canada geese, mallards, loons, teal, and many other ducks can be seen swimming, diving, and dabbling for vegetation and small fish. Bald eagles and

ospreys survey the open water searching for a meal.

Summer is the time of lush green vegetation and growing young animals. In thickets and along roads, watch for resting spotted fawns and frantic eastern bluebirds searching for food to feed their hungry chicks. Great blue herons frequent both lakes, stalking the shorelines in search of fish and frogs. Butterflies reach their peak numbers and can be seen floating from flower to flower in the fields and wetlands. The rocky banks that separate Mountain Creek and Fuller Lake provide the perfect habitat for reptiles such as five-lined skinks and northern water snakes.

In the fall, deciduous trees lose their chlorophyll, allowing their leaves to reveal beautiful reds, oranges, and yellows. Many animals are preparing for the winter season ahead. There is a growing population of black bears in the area and visitors may see one putting on weight for winter. Beavers may occasionally be spotted at twilight



where Mountain Creek meets Laurel Lake.

Winter is a good time to see woodpeckers and new evidence of their presence. Pine Grove Furnace has at least six species of woodpeckers. Winter snows expose tracks of the mammals that are seldom spotted by visitors.

## RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

### Spend the Day



**PICNICKING:** Many picnic tables are available throughout the park. Charcoal grills, drinking water, and restrooms are by the lakes and historic district. Three picnic pavilions (seating 80 to 140) may be reserved up to 11 months in advance for a fee. Unreserved picnic pavilions are free on a first-come, first-served basis. Furnace Stack and Brickyard pavilions are ADA accessible.



**FISHING:** Common fish species in the 25-acre Laurel Lake and the 6-acre Fuller Lake are pickerel, perch, bass, and stocked trout. Mountain Creek, which flows through the park, has coldwater species like brown, brook, and rainbow trout. Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission regulations and laws apply. Fishing is prohibited within the beach and swimming areas.

**BICYCLING:** All park roads and service roads are open to bicycles unless posted otherwise. A two-mile bike trail connects the Furnace Stack Day Use Area with the Pole Steeple Parking Lot. Once the railroad bed of the South Mountain Railroad, the trail surface is crushed limestone or paved. Over half of this route is on Old Railroad Bed Road and shares the road with vehicles. Bicyclists are advised to use caution because all trails are shared with pedestrian traffic and some are open to motor vehicles. Pennsylvania state law requires all bicyclists under the age of 12 to wear an approved helmet.

**HUNTING AND FIREARMS:** Archery hunting is permitted in most of the park. Small sections in the south and west portions of the park are open to rifle hunting. Common game species are white-tailed deer, turkey, rabbit, and squirrel.

Hunting woodchucks, also known as groundhogs, is prohibited. Dog training is only permitted from the day following Labor Day through March 31 in designated hunting areas. The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and the Pennsylvania Game Commission rules and regulations apply. Contact the park office for ADA accessible hunting information.

Use extreme caution with firearms at all times. Other visitors use the park during hunting seasons. Firearms and archery equipment used for hunting may be uncased and ready for use only in authorized hunting areas during hunting seasons. In areas not open to hunting or during non-hunting seasons, firearms and archery equipment shall be kept in the owner's vehicle or enclosed trailer. Exceptions include: law enforcement officers and individuals with



a valid *Pennsylvania License to Carry Firearms* are authorized to carry a firearm concealed on their person while they are within a state park.

**SWIMMING:** The beaches at Fuller and Laurel lakes are open from May 1 to September 30, 8:00 AM to sunset. In the summer season, a snack bar is available at each beach area.

Laurel Beach is swim at your own risk. An ADA accessible ramp provides access to the Laurel Lake Beach.

Fuller Beach has lifeguards on duty from 11:00 AM to 7:00 PM most days throughout the summer seasons. When unguarded, the beach is swim at your own risk. Please follow posted rules for swimming when lifeguards are off duty. Swimmers at Fuller Lake are advised to exercise caution because of the extreme depths and cold subsurface waters.

**BOATING: electric motors only** Boating is permitted only on the 25-acre Laurel Lake, which has a boat launch, kayak launch, mooring spaces, and boat rental.

Motorboats must display a boat registration from any state. Non-powered boats must display one of the following: boat registration from any state; launch permit or mooring permit from Pennsylvania State Parks, available at most state park offices; launch use permit from the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission.

**ORIENTEERING:** A beginner course starts near the Fuller Lake Parking Lot and takes adventurers on a 1-mile loop through the Fuller area. Orienteering maps and information are available at the park office.

**HIKING:** See reverse side.

### Stay the Night



Paymasters cabin

**CAMPING:** warm showers and flush toilets

70 tent and trailer sites, 45 with electric hookup, are available from late March to mid-December. Each campsite has a picnic table and fire ring. The campground also offers modern restrooms, showers, firewood sales, amphitheater, playground, and sanitary dump station. A seasonal camp store is one-quarter-mile from the campground.

GPS DD: Lat. 40.02769 Long. -77.30977

**PAYMASTERS CABIN:** This two-story historic house, which served as the paymaster's office when the iron furnace was in use, has been converted into a modern cabin. It is available for rent year round and has modern conveniences like electric heat, air conditioning, kitchen, and full bathroom. An outdoor area has a picnic table and fire ring. The cabin sleeps six people and is near the camp store. Guests

### Enjoy the Winter

**ICE SAFETY:** Ice thickness is not monitored except in the designated skating area. For your safety, make sure ice is at least 4" thick for a single user and 7" thick for a small group. Always carry safety equipment.

**Ice skating and fishing are prohibited on Fuller Lake.**

**ICE SKATING:** At Laurel Lake, a small area by the boat launch is maintained for ice skating, when conditions permit.

should bring all essentials like sheets, linens, and dishes.

During the summer season, the Paymasters Cabin must be rented for a one-week period, beginning on a Friday. During the remainder of the year, the cabin must be rented for a minimum of two days, up to a maximum of 14 consecutive days.



**ICE FISHING:** Ice fishing is permitted outside of the ice skating area at Laurel Lake.

**CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING:** Skiers enjoy the Hiker Biker Trail when snow conditions allow. Although no trails are specifically recommended for cross-country skiing, numerous opportunities exist, especially during winters with heavy snowfalls, both within the park and on the surrounding state forest lands.



## HISTORY



### Pine Grove Furnace

In the 1770s, partners George Stevenson, Robert Thornburgh, and John Arthur built Pine Grove Furnace along Mountain Creek. This traditional, cold-blast charcoal iron furnace cast ten-plate stoves, fireplace backs, and iron kettles. During the American Revolution, artillery shells were produced.

In 1782, Michael Ege, a rising Cumberland County iron mogul, became a part owner. Ege eventually was the sole owner of four regional iron works: Pine Grove, Cumberland, Mount Holly, and Carlisle.

Michael's oldest son, Peter Ege, oversaw Pine Grove Furnace beginning in 1800, and inherited it in 1816. The red brick Ironmaster's Mansion standing on a hill overlooking the furnace was built in 1829 for Peter's wife, Jane Arther Ege. Jane died there in 1841 and was laid to rest in the Pine Grove Cemetery.

Peter expanded his operation in 1830, building Laurel Forge, which reheated and hammered cast iron "pigs" from the furnace to produce wrought iron, a bendable metal that could be formed into many shapes.

The financial panic of 1837 bankrupted the Pine Grove Iron Works. At a sheriff sale the following year, Judge Frederick Watts and his law partner Charles Bingham Penrose purchased the operation but were not traditional ironmasters here. From 1845 to 1864, Judge Watts' younger brother William was full owner and ironmaster.

In 1864, Jay Cooke and Company bought the iron works and formed South Mountain Iron Company, bringing in Jackson C. Fuller as superintendent. The new company completed the South Mountain Railroad in 1870. This was the first time that heavy raw materials and

finished goods could be transported in and out of the mountains other than on mule-drawn teamster wagons.

In late 1872, economic turmoil led Cooke to sell the property to the Thomas Iron Company, a conglomerate based in northeastern Pennsylvania. Caught in a financial crisis, the Thomas company defaulted on the mortgage and Pine Grove Iron Works sat idle for 4 years. In 1877, Jay Cooke and Jackson Fuller purchased the operation, forming the South Mountain Mining and Iron Company.

Future founding member of the Pennsylvania Forestry Association, John Birkinbine, became the furnace's engineer. Concerned over Pennsylvania's dwindling forest reserves and wanting to show that charcoal iron furnaces could be fired with alternative fuels like coke and anthracite coal, Birkinbine renovated the furnace in the winter of 1877-1878. Locally made hardwood charcoal remained the primary fuel for iron smelting here, but the furnace could alternatively run on coal imported on the railroad. Birkinbine also increased the height of the furnace and improved the air blast machinery, vastly improving the efficiency of making iron at the century-old works. In the peak year of production, 1883, Pine Grove Furnace produced 6,000 tons of iron, roughly ten times what it could make when it was first built.

Despite these improvements, traditional small iron furnaces could not compete with new technologies and better transportation networks elsewhere. Pine Grove Furnace went out of blast for the last time in April 1895, and Laurel Forge soon followed. But even as the iron industry declined, Jackson Fuller sought other uses of the mountain property such as an amusement park (1878-1900), natural ice harvesting at Laurel

Forge Pond (1879-1920s), and commercial brickmaking (1892-1907). Fuller died at the Ironmaster's Mansion in 1904, and Cooke passed away the following year in Philadelphia. It was truly the end of an era.

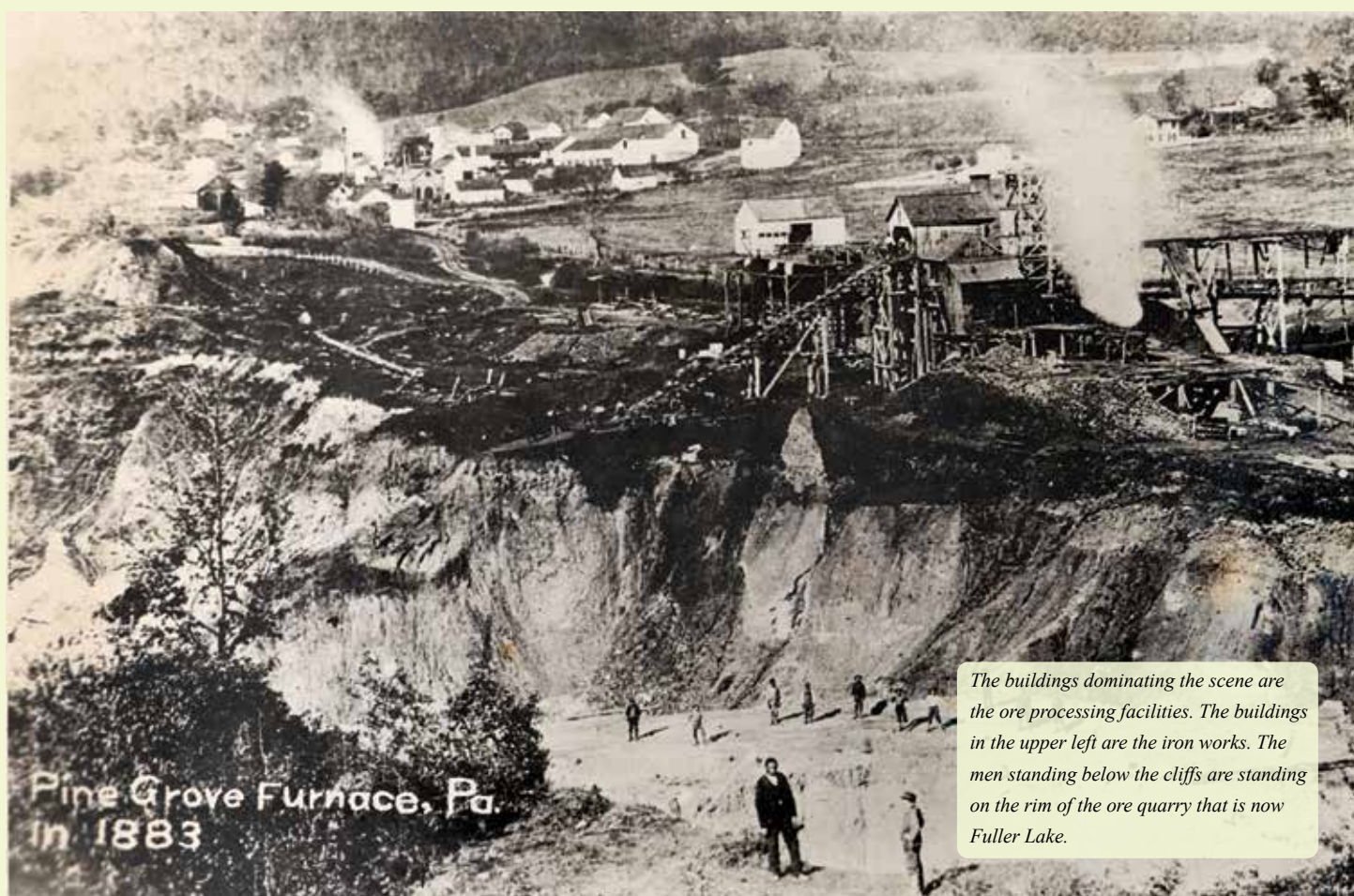
### The State Park

In 1913, almost 17,000 acres owned by Pine Grove Iron Works were sold to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to be part of the new Forest Reserve system. Much of the land became the northern portion of Michaux State Forest, while the industrial core became Pine Grove Furnace State Park. Fuller Lake, an iron ore quarry, which had filled with groundwater when mining ceased, became a popular swimming area. Laurel Lake had supplied waterpower for Laurel Forge. Today it is popular for fishing, boating, and swimming.

In 1933, the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) established Camp S-51 in the nearby forest, at a former iron company farm. This historic site is today known as Camp Michaux. The CCC boys built roads and improved the State Forest, and built a few facilities at Laurel Lake before the CCC shut down after U.S. entry into World War II.

Many historic buildings dating back to the charcoal iron community still stand and include the stone furnace stack, Ironmaster's Mansion, clerk's office (Paymaster's Cabin), mule stable (general store), grist mill (Appalachian Trail Museum), and an 1850s boarding house (the current park office). Remnants of water races, charcoal hearths, piled-up mining tailings, and other manmade features are still discernible.

In 1977, Pine Grove Iron Works was entered in the National Register of Historic Places.



Pine Grove Furnace, Pa.  
In 1883

The buildings dominating the scene are the ore processing facilities. The buildings in the upper left are the iron works. The men standing below the cliffs are standing on the rim of the ore quarry that is now Fuller Lake.

## FRIENDS OF PINE GROVE FURNACE

The Friends of Pine Grove Furnace State Park exists to keep history alive and promote the educational and recreational programs of the park and surrounding area through special events and trail development, while protecting the park's natural resources.

The friends group raises money and organizes volunteers to support projects in the park that include:

- Bridge work on trails
- Enhancement and creation of trail links
- Resource management – control of invasive species, planting native species
- Enhancement of the Furnace Stack Area
- Facilitation of special events
- Development of educational displays





HIKING: 4 miles within park boundary

Many hiking trails begin in Pine Grove Furnace State Park and continue into the surrounding Michaux State Forest.

**APPALACHIAN TRAIL:** 1.5 miles in park, white blazes, easiest hiking  
See Appalachian National Scenic Trail section for more information.

**BRICKYARD TRAIL:** 0.3 mile, yellow blazes, easiest hiking  
Traveling near wetlands, an underground spring, and a historic water race, this short trail connects the Brickyard Day Use Area to the Organized Group Tenting Area.

**BUCK RIDGE TRAIL:** 6 miles, yellow blazes, easiest hiking  
This Michaux State Forest trail connects Kings Gap Environmental Education Center to Pine Grove Furnace State Park. The trailhead and a small parking area are north of the park office.

**CREEK TRAIL:** 0.5 mile, yellow blazes, easiest hiking  
Creek Trail begins at the amphitheater and winds past vernal ponds, wetlands, and a stand of white pine along Mountain Creek near the campground.

**HIKER BIKER TRAIL:** 3 miles, no blazes, easiest hiking  
Stretching from the Furnace Stack Day Use Area to the back side of Laurel Lake, the Hiker Biker Trail is fairly level with a paved or crushed limestone trail surface. Hikers are advised to use caution because the entire trail is shared with bicyclists, and a section is open to motor vehicles.

**KOPPENHAVER TRAIL:** 1-mile loop, yellow blazes, easiest hiking  
Access this scenic loop trail at the far end of Fuller Field or the parking area off Old Railroad Bed Road. The footpath crosses Toms Run, follows Mountain Creek, and passes through stands of mature pines and hemlocks.

**MOUNTAIN CREEK TRAIL:** 1.4 miles, yellow blazes, easiest hiking  
This trail is a link between the Hiker Biker Trail to Fuller Lake and Icehouse Road to Laurel Lake. The trail affords the hiker an alternate path to Laurel Lake Day Use Area other than the paved roadway. The trail meanders through forests and wetlands as it follows Mountain Creek downstream to Laurel Lake. Deer, herons, waterfowl, and beavers can be seen along this trail.

**POLE STEEPLE TRAIL:** 0.75 mile, blue blazes, most difficult hiking  
This steep Michaux State Forest trail can be accessed from the Appalachian Trail, Old Railroad Bed Road, or the Pole Steeple parking lot in the park. The trail begins along Old Railroad Bed Road by Laurel Lake and proceeds up Piney Mountain to the rocky overlook. The park can be viewed from the Pole Steeple Overlook, which is a quartzite rock outcropping.

The steep grade and sheer drop may stress some individuals. Parents are advised to closely supervise children, especially when they are on the rocks and ledges. Arrive early on weekends and nice days as parking is limited.

For a 4-mile loop, combine Pole Steeple, Appalachian, and Mountain Creek trails with a short section of Old Railroad Bed Road.

**SUNSET ROCKS TRAIL:** 2 miles, blue blazes, most difficult hiking  
This Michaux State Forest trail can be accessed from Old Shippensburg Road or the Appalachian Trail northwest of the park. The forested trail passes Sunset Rocks Overlook, a rocky outcropping with a view of surrounding Michaux State Forest.

**SWAMP TRAIL:** 0.25 mile, yellow blazes, easiest hiking  
This short, loop trail circles a small, forested swamp filled with various plants and animals. The trail begins and ends on the Hiker Biker Trail.

- FOR A SAFE HIKE:**
- Check the weather before you hike. It is not safe to hike during thunderstorms or when heavy snow is expected.
  - Tell someone where you are going and when you will return.
  - Wear sturdy shoes to protect your feet.
  - Carry the proper safety equipment, like a first aid kit and a poncho.
  - Carry drinking water. DO NOT drink from streams, springs, or lakes without properly treating the water first!
  - Stay on the trail for your safety and to protect fragile habitats.
  - Observe wildlife from a safe distance. Do not try to get close to wild animals.
  - A cell phone can be useful for calling for help, but many sections of the park do not have cell phone coverage.

APPALACHIAN NATIONAL SCENIC TRAIL



**HALFWAY POINT**  
Annually, about 4,000 people attempt to hike the entire A.T. These long-distance hikers are called thru-hikers and most pass through the park from late spring through the summer months. About one out of four thru-hikers will complete the whole trail. Reaching the park is a symbolic halfway milestone as the true halfway point lies several miles south of the park in Michaux State Forest.



To commemorate the completion of half of the journey, it is a thru-hiker tradition to attempt the “half-gallon challenge,” eating one half-gallon of ice cream in one sitting. On a summer day, it is common to see hikers working on the challenge at the Pine Grove General Store.

Information, maps, guides, shuttles, and more are available at: [www.appalachiantrail.org](http://www.appalachiantrail.org)



**APPALACHIAN TRAIL MUSEUM**  
Near the midpoint of the A.T., the Appalachian Trail Museum is between the Pine Grove General Store and Furnace Stack parking lot. Museum exhibits and programs pay tribute to the hikers and pioneer trail-builders for their commitment to conservation. The Children's Discovery Area provides interactive, hands-on learning experiences. The museum welcomes newcomers to the A.T. as well as veteran hikers and frequently offers an opportunity to meet current thru-hikers.  
The museum is open seasonally. Check the website for hours of operation. Admission is free of charge, although donations are welcome. Parking for the museum is adjacent to the Furnace Stack Pavilion. 717-486-8126. [www.atmuseum.org](http://www.atmuseum.org)

INFORMATION AND RESERVATIONS

**Pine Grove Furnace State Park**  
1100 Pine Grove Road  
Gardners, PA 17324-9078  
717-486-7174  
[PineGroveSP@pa.gov](mailto:PineGroveSP@pa.gov)  
An Equal Opportunity Employer  
[www.dcnr.pa.gov/StateParks](http://www.dcnr.pa.gov/StateParks)  
[f](#) @PineGroveFurnaceSP

**Make online reservations at**  
[www.dcnr.pa.gov/StateParks](http://www.dcnr.pa.gov/StateParks) or call toll-free 888-PA-PARKS (888-727-2757), 7:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Monday to Saturday.  
**Electric Vehicle Charging Station**  
A two-plug, electric-vehicle charging station is available for public use in the small parking lot off Bendersville Road adjacent to the creek. Please move to another parking space once your vehicle has been charged.

Access for People with Disabilities

This symbol indicates facilities and activities that are Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible for people with disabilities. This publication text is available in alternative formats.

If you need an accommodation to participate in park activities due to a disability, please contact the park you plan to visit.

In an Emergency

Call 911 and contact a park employee. Directions to the nearest hospital are posted on bulletin boards and at the park office.

**NEAREST HOSPITAL**  
UPMC Carlisle  
361 Alexander Spring Road  
Carlisle, PA 17015  
717-249-1212

Nearby Attractions

Information on nearby attractions is available from:  
Cumberland Valley Visitor Bureau. [www.visitcumberlandvalley.com](http://www.visitcumberlandvalley.com)  
Gettysburg Convention and Visitors Bureau. <http://destinationgettysburg.com>  
The park is surrounded by the 85,000-acre **Michaux State Forest**, which offers hiking, hunting, fishing, boating, snowmobiling, and ATVing. Just south of the park is a trailhead that provides parking for vehicles and trailers, and access to many miles of snowmobile and ATV trails on state forest lands. 717-352-2211  
**Kings Gap Environmental Education Center** includes a historic mansion, beautiful garden, many miles of forested trails, overnight opportunities, and educational programming. A variety of programs from pre-school environmental awareness programs to environmental problem solving programs are offered. 717-486-5031  
Nearby **Caledonia State Park** has opportunities for camping, fishing, hiking, swimming, and picnicking. 717-352-2161

Protect and Preserve our Parks

Please make your visit safe and enjoyable. Obey all posted rules and regulations and respect fellow visitors and the resources of the park.

- Be prepared and bring the proper equipment. Natural areas may possess hazards. Your personal safety and that of your family are your responsibility.

- Alcoholic beverages are prohibited.

- Please camp only in designated areas and try to minimize your impact on the campsite.

- Prevent forest fires by having a fire in proper facilities and properly disposing of hot coals. Do not leave a fire unattended.



Five-lined skink

