



Pine Grove Furnace

A Pennsylvania Guide for

Pine Grove
Furnace
State Park



Pennsylvania
Department of Conservation
and Natural Resources

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.



PAStateParks

2025



Top 10 Activities

1. Double the fun! Swim, build sandcastles, and picnic at two different lakes.
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.
4. Step back in time on the Historical Walking Tour. Explore an iron furnace and other historic buildings from the 19th century iron community.
5. Relax in the modern campground with upgraded facilities.
6. Catch a glimpse of a bald eagle at Laurel Lake.
7. Visit the first hiking museum in the U.S. — the Appalachian Trail Museum.
8. Hike to the Pole Steep Vista. View the eastern part of the park and surrounding Michaux State Forest from the overlook.
9. Tour the Ironmaster's Mansion.
10. Enjoy year-round trout fishing in the stocked Mountain Creek and Laurel Lake.



Appalachian Trail Museum

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 park, visitors enjoy many recreational opportunities, including two mountain lakes (Laurel Lake and Fuller Lake), hiking the Appalachian Trail (AT), 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.pa.gov/state-parks 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 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 festival. 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

Pine Grove Furnace State Park's diverse habitats support a range of wildlife through all seasons. Watch for bald eagles, osprey, and great blue herons around the lakes hunting for their next meal. Springtime vernal pools along Creek Trail provide nurseries for young frogs, toads, and salamanders. Autumn visitors may spot a black bear foraging for food to prepare for winter. White-tailed deer are frequently seen at dusk throughout the park. After dark, the calls of great horned and barred owls may be heard.



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 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 Bickyard 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 trouts. 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 Furnace Stack Day Use Area with Laurel Lake Day Use Area. 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 bicycling trails are shared with pedestrian traffic. Pennsylvania state law requires all bicyclists under the age of 12 to wear an approved helmet.

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 are available at the park office.

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 season. 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 trolling motors only; slow no wake 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.

HIKING: 4 miles of trails

See reverse side.

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.

Stay the Night



Paymaster's Cabin

PAYMASTER'S CABIN: This two-story house historically served as the Pine Grove Furnace paymaster's office. It is now available for rent year-round as a modern cabin. It features 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 should bring all essentials like sheets, linens, and dishes.

During the summer season, the Paymaster's 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.

CAMPING: modern facilities

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

GPS DD: Lat. 40.02769 Long. -77.30977

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.

ORGANIZED GROUP TENTING: Qualified, organized adult or youth groups may reserve the rustic area year-round. The area is divided into six separate sites with a total capacity of 180 people. The sites are adjacent to an open playfield. A modern restroom is available.

IRONMASTER'S MANSION: This renovated, historic, brick mansion serves as a hostel and provides dormitory-style lodging for AT hikers. The mansion is also an educational facility with meeting rooms and is a venue for special events.

The mansion was built in 1829 by the ironmaster, Peter Ege, and has an impressive history of guests and owners, including senators, federal department leaders, a millionaire, and a university founder.

The Ironmaster's Mansion is open April to December. To book an overnight stay, wedding, meeting, or special event, please email IronmastersPineGrove@gmail.com or call 717-486-4108.



Ironmaster's Mansion

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

CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING: Although no trails are specifically recommended for cross-country skiing, many enjoy using the Hiker Biker Trail when snow conditions allow. Winters with heavy snowfall provide opportunities for further exploration in the park and the surrounding state forest.

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. Artillery shells were produced during the American Revolution.

In 1782, Michael Ege became a part-owner of the furnace and eventually became the sole owner. Michael's oldest son, Peter Ege, 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. Peter expanded the operation in 1830 by building Laurel Forge, which reheated and hammered cast iron "pigs" from the furnace to produce wrought iron.

The financial panic of 1837 bankrupted the Pine Grove Iron Works. Over the next 30 years, the iron works changed hands several times. In 1870, the South Mountain Railroad was completed, allowing easier transport of heavy raw materials and finished goods.

In 1877, Jay Cooke and Jackson Fuller purchased the operation forming the South Mountain Mining and Iron Company. During their ownership, the furnace was renovated which improved the efficiency of making iron at the century-old works. In the peak year of 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, Pine Grove Furnace could not compete with new technologies and better transportation networks elsewhere. The 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).

The State Park

In 1913, almost 17,000 acres owned by Pine Grove Iron Works were sold to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Some of that land became Pine Grove Furnace State Park.

In 1933, the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) established nearby Camp S-51, known today as Camp Michaux. The CCC workers developed roads, improved the surrounding state forest, and built a few facilities at Laurel Lake.

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



A view of the current furnace stack through a transparent historic photo of the furnace and surrounding buildings.

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

Information and Reservations

Pine Grove Furnace State Park

1100 Pine Grove Road
Gardners, PA 17324
717-486-7174
PineGroveSP@pa.gov

An Equal Opportunity Employer
www.pa.gov/state-parks

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

@PineGroveFurnaceSP

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 to summon medical, fire, or safety professionals.

Call or text 988 to contact a crisis center counselor during a mental health or substance abuse crisis.

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

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. There is a 4-hour maximum time limit. Overnight charging is prohibited. Please move to another parking space once your vehicle has been charged or the maximum time-limit has been reached.

Nearby Attractions

Information on nearby attractions is available from:

Cumberland Valley Visitors Bureau.
www.visitcumberlandvalley.com
Destination Gettysburg.
<http://destinationgettysburg.com>

The park is surrounded by the 85,000-acre **Michaux State Forest**, which offers hiking, hunting, fishing, boating, snowmobiling, and ATVing. 717-352-2211

Kings Gap Environmental Education Center includes a historic mansion, garden, trails, picnicking, and educational programming. 717-486-5031

Nearby **Caledonia State Park** has opportunities for camping, fishing, hiking, swimming, and picnicking. 717-352-2161



Spotted salamander

Hiking: 4 miles



Many hiking trails begin in Pine Grove Furnace State Park and continue into the surrounding Michaux State Forest. A cell phone can be useful for calling for help, but many sections of the park do not have cell phone coverage.

Appalachian Trail
1.4 miles in the park, 2,190 miles total | Easiest hiking in the park | Point-to-point trail | White blazes
Recreations permitted: hiking, backpacking
Trailhead amenities: modern restrooms, potable water, picnic tables
See Appalachian National Scenic Trail section for more information.

Brickyard Trail
0.3 mile | Easiest hiking | Out-and-back trail | Yellow blazes
Recreations permitted: hiking
Trailhead amenities: modern restrooms, picnic tables
This short trail connects the Brickyard Day Use Area to the Organized Group Tenting Area. It also leads to the intersection of Creek Trail and Campground Trail.

Buck Ridge Trail
6 miles outside the park | Most difficult hiking | Point-to-point trail | Yellow blazes
Recreations permitted: hiking
This 6-mile trail through Michaux State Forest connects Kings Gap Environmental Education Center and Pine Grove Furnace State Park over challenging, rocky terrain. The trailhead and a small parking area are across from the park office.

Campground Trail
0.33 mile | Easiest hiking | Connector trail | Yellow blazes
Recreations permitted: hiking
This trail meanders through the trees and connects the Charcoal Hearth Campground to the Furnace Stack Day Use Area providing campers easy access to historic sites and the general store.

Creek Trail
0.5 mile | Easiest hiking | Out-and-back trail | Yellow blazes
Recreations permitted: hiking
The trail begins at the amphitheater and wraps around the campground. Hikers can see vernal ponds, Mountain Creek, and the historic furnace raceway.

Hiker Biker Trail
3.0 miles | Easiest hiking | Out-and-back trail | No blazes
Recreations permitted: hiking, biking, cross-country skiing recommended
Trailhead amenities: modern restrooms, potable water, picnic tables
This ADA-accessible, family-friendly trail travels from the Furnace Stack, past Fuller Lake, to the Laurel Lake area. The trail overlaps the Appalachian Trail and Old

Railroad Bed Road. It provides access to multiple other trails in the park. Part of the trail is paved and part is gravel.

Koppenhaver Trail
1.0 mile | More difficult hiking | Loop trail | Yellow blazes
Recreations permitted: hiking
This scenic trail winds through many tall pines and hemlocks and passes by Toms Run and Mountain Creek. Remnants of the old girl scout camp can be seen on part of the trail.

Mountain Creek Trail
1.4 miles | Easiest hiking | Out-and-back trail | Yellow blazes
Recreations permitted: hiking
This trail is a link between the Hiker Biker Trail, Koppenhaver Trail, and Icehouse Road near Laurel Lake. The trail gives hikers 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 and provides easy access for trout fishing opportunities.

Pole Steeple Trail
0.75 mile outside the park | Most difficult hiking | Out-and-back trail | Blue blazes
Recreations permitted: hiking
Accessed from Pole Steeple Parking Lot, this trail in Michaux State Forest is a short but steep climb to the top. The entire park can be viewed from Pole Steeple Overlook, which is a quartzite rock outcropping. The trail begins on the opposite side of Old Railroad Bed Road from Laurel Lake and proceeds up Piney Mountain to the rocky overlook.

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.

Swamp Trail
0.25 mile | Easiest hiking | Loop trail | Yellow blazes
Recreations permitted: hiking
Accessed from the Hiker Biker Trail, this short trail circles a small, forested swamp filled with interesting plants and animals.



Pole Steeple Overlook

Appalachian National Scenic Trail

Running through the heart of the park is one of the most famous footpaths in the world, the Appalachian Trail (AT). The approximately 2,190-mile-long trail traverses the Appalachian Mountains through 14 states, stretching as a continuous footpath from Springer Mountain in northern Georgia to Mt. Katahdin in central Maine.

HIKING
About 2 to 3 million people walk a portion of the AT each year. Pine Grove Furnace State Park is a popular access point for short-term backpacking and day hikes. The trail is marked with white blazes, which can be seen near the Pine Grove General Store, Appalachian Trail Museum, Fuller Day Use Area, and on the Hiker Biker Trail.
Boiling Springs to the north and Caledonia State Park to the south are each about a 20-mile hike from Pine Grove Furnace.
Overnight parking is available for backpackers in a marked section of the Furnace Stack parking lot. For safety, backpackers should check in at the park office to register their vehicle, supply contact information, and provide an itinerary.
The Ironmaster's Mansion serves as a hostel and provides dormitory-style lodging for AT hikers.
Information, maps, guides, shuttles, and more are available from the Appalachian Trail Conservancy. www.appalachiantrail.org
HALFWAY POINT
Annually, about 4,000 people attempt to hike the entire AT. Long-distance hikers, called thru-hikers, 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.
APPALACHIAN TRAIL MUSEUM
Near the midpoint of the AT, 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 newcomer and veteran AT hikers, frequently offering the 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

