

Blue Knob State Park

Blue Knob State Park offers year-round outdoor adventures on 6,128 acres of woodland. The park is in the northwestern tip of Bedford County, west of I-99.

There are many opportunities to enjoy the quiet and refreshing serenity of the mountains and streams. The elevation of the park can cause air temperatures to be several degrees cooler than surrounding cities.

Directions

GPS DD: Lat. 40.2666 Long. -78.58376

From East or West: Take the Pennsylvania Turnpike to Bedford, Exit 146. Go north on I-99 to Exit 7. Follow PA 869 west to Pavia, then follow signs through Pavia to the park.

From North: Take I-99 south to Exit 23. Follow Old US 220 south. Turn right onto PA 164 west and continue to the town of Blue Knob. Turn left onto Knob Road (SR 3003) and continue five miles to the northern entrance of the park.

From South: Take I-70 west to Breezewood, then US 30 west to Bedford, then north on I-99 to Exit 7. Follow PA 869 west to Pavia, then follow signs through Pavia to the park.

Recreational Opportunities



SWIMMING: Weather permitting, the swimming pool is open daily from 11:00 AM to 7:00 PM from Memorial Day weekend to Labor Day, unless posted otherwise. Pool depth ranges from 2 to 5 feet. Diving is prohibited at the pool for visitor safety.

PICNICKING: Burnt House and Mowery Hollow picnic areas are open year round. Willow Springs Picnic Area opens in mid-May and closes in late November.

Seven 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. White Pine Pavilion is accessible for people with disabilities.

HIKING: 23 miles
See reverse side.

MOUNTAIN BIKING: 19 miles
Most of the park's multi-use trails are designated for mountain bike use. For beginners, Chappells Field Trail is a good challenge. For experienced riders, Three Springs Trail is an intermediate ride. Three Springs Trail is also open to horseback riding. Please be considerate of other trail users. For more experienced and expert mountain bikers, Crist Ridge, Rock 'N' Ridge, and sections of Mountain View trails are recommended.

HUNTING AND FIREARMS: About 5,000 acres are open to hunting, trapping, and the training of dogs during established seasons. Common game species are white-tailed deer, black bears, cottontail rabbits, wild turkeys, and squirrels.



White-tailed deer

Scenic Views

Blue Knob State Park is named for its majestic dome-shaped mountain. At 3,146 feet above sea level, Blue Knob is the second highest mountain in Pennsylvania, only 67 feet less than Mount Davis in Somerset County. Situated on a spur of the Allegheny Front and overlooking the scenic Ridge and Valley Province to the east, Blue Knob has spectacular views. Unique photographic opportunities are available during low humidity weather and with changes of season.

A **northeastern view** from the second highest point in Pennsylvania can be seen near the Blue Knob All Seasons Resort ski lodge.

A **southeastern view** can be enjoyed at Chappells Field, across from the campground. Included with this view is a close-up of the western slope of Blue Knob Mountain.

A **southern view** can be enjoyed at the Willow Springs Picnic Area.

A **southwestern view** along the Appalachian Plateau can be seen after a hike on the Pavia Lookout Loop Trail.

Reservations

Make online reservations at 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.

The park is adjacent to the 12,000-acre State Game Lands 26. This combination of public lands provides many recreational opportunities and offers both easily accessible areas and several walk-in areas. "No Hunting" areas are posted. Permanent tree stands are prohibited on public lands.

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.



FISHING: Native brook trout inhabit streams within the park. Trout are stocked in streams through a cooperative nursery program operated by the Pavia Sportsmen Club, Inc. and the park. Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission regulations and laws apply.

HORSEBACK RIDING: 7 miles
The equestrian trails, Three Springs, Sawmill, and Homestead, and a portion of Chappells Field, are marked with orange diamonds. Trailheads within the Chappells Field and Willow Springs picnic areas have ample parking. Horseback riding is permitted along the right-hand side of park roads. Use caution on trails in hunting areas. All groups planning to conduct equestrian trail rides must secure a special use agreement.

Stay the Night



CAMPING: modern amenities, some electric sites
About 50 tent and RV sites are open from mid-April to mid-October. Campsites are in open fields and wooded areas. Most sites have electric hookups. Pets are permitted at designated sites. Two non-electric, walk-to sites are available. Water spigots, a modern shower house, a sanitary dump station, and playground equipment are available. A campground host is usually available during the camping season.

CABINS: Three modern cabins and one house are available for rent. Fishers Haven and Bear Den cabins sleep four people in two bedrooms. Directors Cabin sleeps six in two bedrooms. Cabins offer electric heat, air conditioning, living room, bathroom, and kitchen. Guests must supply their own bed linens, towels, dishes, and cookware. The cabins are available from mid-April through late October, requiring a minimum two-night rental. In the summer season, rentals are weekly, Friday to Friday.

Twin Fawn House sleeps eight people in three bedrooms. This ranch style house offers electric heat, air conditioning, living room, two full bathrooms, dining room, game room, kitchen, and screened porch. Guests must supply their own bed linens and towels. A number of dishes and cookware are provided. Twin Fawn House is available for rent year round, requiring a minimum two-night rental. In the summer season, rentals are weekly, Friday to Friday.

ORGANIZED GROUP CABIN CAMP: A 90-person capacity camp is available for overnight use to organized groups from June through August. The group camp offers rustic sleeping quarters, bathroom and shower facilities, and a large dining hall/kitchen complex. Reservations are based on previous long-term use, priority for youth groups, length of stay, and number of people. Contact the park office for additional information.

Enjoy the Winter

SNOWMOBILING: Snowmobile routes are open daily after the end of statewide rifle hunting season in December, when conditions permit. Snowmobile routes are marked with orange diamonds and include specific trails and Park Road from the park office to Willow Springs Picnic Area. Snowmobiles are prohibited on other park roads. Please stay on the designated trails. Other off-road vehicles are prohibited on state park lands.

CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING: Most park trails are suitable for expert skiers. For beginner skiers, Chappells Field Trail and the closed campground are recommended. For the intermediate skier, the service roads, closed roadways, and open fields are recommended. Skiers should use expert or mountain ski equipment.

Downhill Skiing



The park leases the downhill skiing area to Alpine Resort Operations, LLC, which operates Blue Knob All Seasons Resort. The area offers a vertical drop of 1,050 feet and has some of the most challenging slopes in Pennsylvania. The ski area provides extensive snowmaking for snowtubing and day and night skiing. There are 34 slopes and trails serviced by four chairlifts and two surface lifts to ensure a fast return to the top of the mountain. 814-239-5111. www.blueknob.com

Learn, Experience, Connect

Blue Knob State Park offers a wide variety of programs April through October. Summer programs are conducted on Friday and Saturday evenings and Sunday mornings at Buck Hill Amphitheater unless otherwise posted.

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.

Wildlife Watching

Blue Knob State Park is an exceptional place to see wildlife in all seasons.

Fall is an exciting time at Blue Knob. Visitors can discover wildlife and plants preparing for the coming winter season. Animals begin to migrate, prepare to hibernate, and others put on great displays during fall courtship, which makes them easier to observe. The vibrant colors of fall foliage usually peak in the second and third weeks of October. With an abundance of sugar and red maples, the mountain appears to be on fire due to the orange, red, and yellow leaves.

Meanwhile, oak trees produce large crops of acorns so at least a few will escape the black bears, deer, squirrels, and turkeys that are fattening up for winter. The antlers of white-tailed deer bucks mature in time for the autumn rut. Brook trout are even more vibrant in color as they spawn in gravel areas. Many birds can be viewed migrating. Look for flocks of robins, grackles, and warblers as they gather together before migrating. Many other birds can also be seen flying south.



Black bear

Blue Knob is a winter wonderland. The snow depths and season length are almost unmatched in Pennsylvania. While it is often difficult to see wildlife, their tracks are quite evident in the snow. Enjoy the winter wanderings of deer, coyotes, bobcats, fishers, and foxes as you follow their tracks. Small animals like mice and voles make tunnels in the deep snow. Deer, turkeys, and red-tailed hawks spend their days in search of food.

Spring is a time of renewal. Sap begins flowing in trees, and many animals that moved to lower elevations return to the heights. Songbirds and vultures return, joining the winter inhabitants to nest in the park. A great time to see forest birds like warblers and vireos is before the leaves come out on the trees. Wildflowers rush to bloom in the sunlight before the trees get their leaves. The forest floor can be carpeted in spring beauties, violets, and hepaticas. In mid-April, the sounds of turkeys gobbling and grouse drumming echo off the hillsides.

In early summer, babies abound. The broods of many birds hatch and fledge. Young owls make their first flights and learn to use their voices. White-tailed deer fawns are usually born by mid-June. Black bear sightings are the highest in May and during the June to mid-July mating season, but bears become more elusive later in summer. Songbirds can be heard singing in the forest canopy and bushes as they forage for insects. Larger animals venture into open fields at dusk to dine on tender grasses.

Summer brings the most people to the park. Remember that we are the guests and should not disturb the wildlife we are observing.



Ovenbird

History

Little is known of the original inhabitants of the land that became Blue Knob State Park. It was occupied by many Native Americans for short periods of time as they migrated away from the increasing European population. The Albany Purchase of 1754 acquired the land from the Haudenosaunee.

Pennsylvania Germans from the eastern part of the state first settled in the Blue Knob area shortly after the American Revolution. They cleared and farmed land near the fledgling town of Pavia. Early industries included several distilleries in 1812, a log mill in 1833, and a gristmill in 1843.

On the northern border of the park is the Cox Monument to the Lost Children of the Alleghenies. In 1856, the two children of the Cox Family disappeared. Over a thousand people searched for the children, who were not found until after their deaths at the site now marked by the monument.

In the late 1800s, logging companies, based out of South Fork, clear-cut the forests of hemlock and hauled away the lumber on steam railroads that snaked up the steep hillsides. The lumber companies closed from November to March because the railroad could not operate in the severe winter weather.

One railroad followed Bobs Creek and needed six switchbacks to descend the rugged grade. A State Game Lands 26 service road now follows this old railroad grade. Another steam railroad followed Wallacks Branch through five switchbacks. Lost Turkey Hiking Trail follows part of the old railroad grade.



CCC Camp NP-7-PA

In 1935, the National Park Service created the Blue Knob National Recreation Demonstration Area to provide recreation to the people of Altoona and Johnstown. The Works Progress Administration employed local workers to build cabins, hiking trails, and roads. Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) Company 2327 arrived in October of 1939. After building Camp NP-7-PA, the young men aided in creating the park recreational facilities. World War II ended the CCC. On September 26, 1945, the National Park Service transferred Blue Knob to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and it became Blue Knob State Park.

Since the CCC years, facilities of the park have been improved and new facilities built, but the park still retains its rustic, natural character.

Nearby Attractions

Information on nearby attractions is available from:

Bedford County Visitors Bureau.
www.VisitBedfordCounty.com

Visit Johnstown, PA. www.VisitJohnstownPA.com

Explore Altoona. www.ExploreAltoona.com

Within three miles of the western park boundary, the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission, in partnership with Highlands Sewer and Water Authority, operates the 345-acre **Beaverdam Reservoir** for fishing, kayaking, and electric motorboating. Only electric motors are permitted on the lake. A boating access is along PA 869, west of the park. Special regulations are posted at this access point.

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. Cell phone service is very limited throughout the park, but may be attained at Chappells Field and Willow Springs picnic areas. Emergency telephones are at the park office, campground, cabin area, Burnt House Day Use Area, and swimming pool area.

NEAREST HOSPITAL
UPMC Bedford Memorial
10455 Lincoln Highway
Everett, PA 15537-7046
814-623-6161

A Pennsylvania Recreational Guide for

Blue Knob State Park









pennsylvania DCNR
DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES



Blue Knob State Park
124 Park Road
Imler, PA 16655-9207
814-276-3576
BlueKnobSP@pa.gov

Make online reservations at 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.

www.dcnr.pa.gov/StateParks PAStateParks

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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 minimize your impact on the campsite.
- Firewood Advisory: Firewood may contain non-native insects and plant diseases. Bringing firewood into the park from other areas may accidentally spread pest insects and diseases that threaten park resources and the health of our forests. Use local firewood. Do not take wood home and do not leave firewood. Burn it!
- Prevent forest fires by having a fire in proper facilities and properly disposing of hot coals. Do not leave a fire unattended.
- Because uncontrolled pets may chase wildlife or frighten visitors, pets must be physically controlled, attended at all times, and on a leash, caged, or crated. Electronic fences and leashes are prohibited. Pets are prohibited in swimming areas.
- Do your part to keep wildlife wild! Enjoy wildlife from a safe distance and do not feed or approach wild animals.

Hiking: 23 miles

Many trails at Blue Knob are steep and include uphill and downhill hiking. A well-planned, extended trip includes multiple trails and minimizes a steep return climb. Please be sure to wear appropriate footwear when hiking. There is no cell service in most of the park so please take a map with you when hiking.

Chappells Field Trail
2.5 miles | Easiest hiking | Loop trail | Orange V blazes

This multi-use trail is a gentle sloping loop trail with little gradient change. It is ideal for families and cross-country skiing with a sweeping view of Blue Knob State Park. From its trailhead, this trail follows the edge of Chappells Field through wildlife management areas, crosses Forest Road, travels to the bottom loop of the campground, passes through a forested section, crosses Forest Road, and then returns to the starting point.

Crist Ridge Trail
1.9 miles | Most difficult hiking | Out-and-back trail | Orange blazes

After a very steep section by the Mowery Hollow Picnic Area and the pool, Crist Ridge Trail climbs Crist Ridge and offers glimpses of the mountains around. Rock 'N' Ridge and Chappells Field trails can be used to make longer hikes.

Group Camp Trail
2.07 miles | Most difficult hiking | Connector trail | Orange blazes

This multi-use trail runs through the heart of the park and connects to many other trails. The trail follows a homestead road weaving through the center of the park, ascends a valley, passes the Group Camp, and is a rugged alternative to Sawmill Trail on the flank of Blue Knob.

Homestead Trail
1.71 miles | Easiest hiking | Loop trail | Orange blazes

With trailheads on Park Road, Willow Springs Picnic Area, and Queen Road, this wide, gentle trail winds through old homestead sites in a remote, rolling valley section of the park. The old fields are great for birding.

Lost Turkey Trail
4 miles in the park, 26 miles total | Most difficult hiking | Point-to-point trail | Red blazes

This backpacking trail travels between the Gallitzin State Forest Picnic Area Babcock on PA 56 and a trailhead on Tower Road within the park, and there are multiple places to park and access the trail. The trail follows many of the narrow-gauge railroad beds from the logging activities of the 1930s and covers a wide variety of terrain including Blue Knob Mountain and the Allegheny Front. Proper hiking footwear is recommended. This trail is not recommended for small children. A separate topographical trail map is available for the entire Lost Turkey Trail. Overnight parking is permitted at the Gallitzin State Forest Picnic Area Babcock. Overnight camping by backpackers is allowed only on forestry lands by permit. Those wishing to park overnight at Blue Knob must register at the park office.

Mountain View Trail
4.32 miles | Most difficult hiking | Loop trail | Red blazes

This multi-use trail is in a wilderness area of the park. The steep and rugged terrain is best traversed in proper footgear. The trail is recommended only for adults in great hiking condition. This trail should not be used during inclement weather as fog can become quite dense as a result of the elevation.

Although it is the toughest trail in the park, there are scenic views and Beaverdam Creek is very beautiful with small, seasonal waterfalls. Other parts of the trail give hikers a sense of true wilderness. A trailhead is at the Pavia Lookout Parking Lot or the Willow Springs Picnic Area.

Pavia Lookout Loop
2.18 miles | More difficult hiking | Loop trail | Blue blazes

From the Pavia Lookout Parking Lot the trail is gravel then loops on rock and soil. From the trailhead to the overlook is 0.84 mile. From there hikers can retrace their steps or follow the loop which is an additional 1.34 miles. The Pavia Overlook has a lovely view of mountains to the south.

Rock 'N' Ridge Trail
3.54 miles | Most difficult hiking | Loop trail | Blue blazes

From its trailhead in the Mowery Hollow Picnic Area, this multi-use trail follows a homestead road weaving through the center of the park near a mountain brook and passes a small waterfall. Depending on which direction hikers take the trail, it is either uphill or downhill for half of the route. For a more gradual upward climb hike in a clockwise direction. Rock 'N' Ridge Trail connects to Group Camp Trail and via a connector trail to Sawmilll Trail and the trails in the eastern side of the park.

Sawmill Trail
3.2 miles | Easiest hiking | Connector trail | Yellow blazes

Using openings created by waterlines and service roads, Sawmill Trail connects Chappells Field Trail in the northwestern side of the park to the Willow Springs Picnic Area in the southwest side of the park on the flank of Blue Knob. Use a portion of Mountain View Trail and a large part of Group Camp Trail to make a loop.

Three Springs Trail
1.54 miles | More difficult hiking | Connector trail | Orange blazes

Offering a mountain forest setting with views of the lowlands from about 2,000 feet, Three Springs Trail uses service roads and waterlines to make a wide gentle trail. For a return to the Pavia Lookout Parking Lot, hikers must retrace their steps to avoid the very rugged and steep Mountain View Trail.

