A Pennsylvania Recreational Guide for Colonel Denning State Park

In north-central Cumberland County, Colonel Denning State Park has 273 acres of woodland and a 3.5-acre lake. The park serves as a gateway to the 96,000-acre Tuscarora State Forest. These scenic and historic public lands are located in Doubling Gap, so named by the "S" turn where Blue Mountain doubles back on itself.

Directions

GPS DD: Lat. 40.280743 Long. -77.418227

The park is nine miles north of Newville and eight miles south of Landisburg, along PA 233.

Reservations

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

Learn, Experience, Connect

Colonel Denning State Park offers a wide variety of programs April through November. Gain a better understanding of the park's natural, cultural, and historical resources through guided outdoor recreation, hands-on activities, walks, and other programs.

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.

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

History

Although never a colonel, William Denning (1737-1830) served as a Revolutionary War sergeant from March 1778 to April 1780. Stationed just outside of Carlisle at Washingtonburg Forge (now Carlisle Barracks), it is said that Denning earned his place in history making wrought iron cannons for the Continental Army. Unfortunately, none of Denning's cannons survive today. After the Revolution, Denning lived near Newville and is interred in the Big Spring Presbyterian Church cemetery in Newville. It is not known who added the "Colonel" to Sergeant William Denning's name, or when.

Colonel Denning State Park became a state recreational area around 1930, under the Pennsylvania Bureau of Forestry. It was developed further in 1936 through the efforts of the Civilian Conservation Corps Camp S-111-PA in Perry County.

Recreational Opportunities

PICNICKING: ♿ Numerous picnic tables and charcoal grills are scattered throughout the park and located near playground equipment. Two 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.

HORSEBACK RIDING: From the Equestrian Trailhead Parking Lot, horseback riders can follow Old Doubling Gap Road to numerous equestrian trails in Tuscarora State Forest.

FISHING: ♿ The 3.5-acre Doubling Gap Lake has trout fishing. Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission regulations and laws apply.

SWIMMING: ♿ The sand beach is open from late May to mid-September, 8:00 AM to sunset. Swim at your own risk. Please read and follow posted rules for swimming.

CAMPING: ♿ flush toilets, warm showers, electric hookups
The small tent and trailer campground is open from April to December. Each site in this forested campground has a picnic table and fire ring, including the five walk-to sites. Pets are permitted on designated sites for a fee. Along the campground entrance road is a sanitary dump station and an amphitheater.

ORGANIZED GROUP TENTING: Qualified adult and youth groups of up to 20 people may reserve the organized group tenting area for overnight use. This walk-to space includes five tent pads, picnic tables, lantern holders, and a large fire ring.

BOATING: Non-motorized canoes and kayaks may be used on Doubling Gap Lake except between the opening day of trout season until the Friday before Memorial Day. Boats must be carried in from the nearby parking lot and launched in the designated area located at the south end of the beach.

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: Beginning near the amphitheater, there are three orienteering courses for different skill levels. Maps are available at the park office and the Orienteering Kiosk.

HUNTING AND FIREARMS: ♿ Many acres are open to hunting, trapping, and the training of dogs during established seasons. Common game species are white-tailed deer, gray squirrel, and wild turkey. Hunting is also permitted on the adjacent Tuscarora State Forest.

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.

CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING: While there is no formal cross-country skiing trail system, skiing is permitted in all areas of the park, including roads and trails. Terrain is moderately hilly to mountainous.

ICE SKATING: When ice conditions permit, an area of the lake is available for ice skating on Doubling Gap Lake. Skating is permitted until sunset.

Ice thickness is not monitored. For your safety, make sure ice is at least 4" thick for a single skater and 7" thick for a small group. Always carry safety equipment.

HIKING: 3.8 miles in the park

Two trails lie entirely inside the park. Hikers can also access many miles of trails in the adjoining Tuscarora State Forest. Hiking information and maps are available at the park office.

Doubling Gap Nature Trail

1 mile | Easiest hiking | Loop trail | Yellow blazes
Recreations permitted: hiking
Trailhead amenities: benches
Beginning and ending at Doubling Gap Lake, this mostly flat trail traverses both sides of Doubling Gap Run. In spring, wildflowers bloom in the wetlands near the trail.

Flat Rock Trail

0.6 mile in the park, 2.6 miles total | Most difficult hiking | Out-and-back trail | Yellow blazes
Recreations permitted: hiking
From the Main Parking Lot below Doubling Gap Lake, this trail starts in the park and continues along the 2.6-mile Flat Rock Trail which leads to the top of Blue Mountain in Tuscarora State Forest. Two miles of this trail are on state forest land. This steep and rocky trail is worth the effort, ending at Flat Rock, a natural outcrop that provides a beautiful scenic vista of the Cumberland Valley to the south here at around 1,900 ft in elevation.

Campground Connector

0.5 mile | Most difficult hiking | Connector trail | Yellow blazes
Recreations permitted: hiking
Starting near the campground and amphitheater, this steep and rocky trail will get you to the popular Flat Rock Trail in 0.5 mile or to Tuscarora State Forest's Springhouse Trail in 0.2 mile.

Rattlesnake Trail

1.6 miles | More difficult hiking | Connector trail | Yellow blazes
Recreations permitted: hiking
From its trailhead in the Equestrian Parking Lot, Rattlesnake Trail soon splits. The south spur intersects the trailhead for Flat Rock Trail. The long north spur is a rugged trail through a mixed oak forest on Blue Mountain and curves back to meet a different part of Flat Rock. Hikers can

make a 2-mile loop by using a portion of Flat Rock Trail.

Springhouse Trail

0.1 mile, 0.4 mile total | Most difficult hiking | Connector trail | Yellow blazes
Recreations permitted: hiking
Branching from Campground Connector Trail, Springhouse Trail is a challenging alternate route to Flat Rock Trail in Tuscarora State Forest.

Tuscarora Trail

0.1 mile in the park, 220 miles total | Most difficult hiking | Point-to-point trail | Blue blazes
Recreations permitted: hiking, backpacking
Passing through a corner of the park along PA 233, Tuscarora Trail is an extensive 220-mile bypass route of the Appalachian Trail.

Backpack camping is permitted within the state forest, and a rustic, open-faced shelter is located along the trail near Fowlers Hollow State Park.

Nearby Attractions

Information on nearby attractions is available from the Cumberland Valley Visitors Bureau. www.VisitCumberlandValley.com

The park is surrounded by over 96,000 acres of **Tuscarora State Forest**. These lands offer many recreational opportunities like hiking, biking, camping, hunting, horseback riding, picnicking, and sightseeing. 717-536-3191

Located between PA routes 641 and 997, about 15 miles southwest of the park, several thousand acres of **State Game Lands 169** are primarily managed for upland game animals and deer. Along PA 944, about 25 miles east of the park, is **State Game Lands 230** which also includes a shooting range. 877-877-9107

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.

Electric Vehicle Charging Station

A 2-plug, first-come, first-served, electric vehicle charging station is available for public use in the Main Parking Lot. 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.

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

For More Information Contact:

Colonel Denning State Park
1599 Doubling Gap Road
Newville, PA 17241-9756
717-776-5272
ColonelDenningSP@pa.gov

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www.pa.gov/state-parks

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