





A Pennsylvania Recreational Guide for

Gifford Pinchot

Gifford Pinchot 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

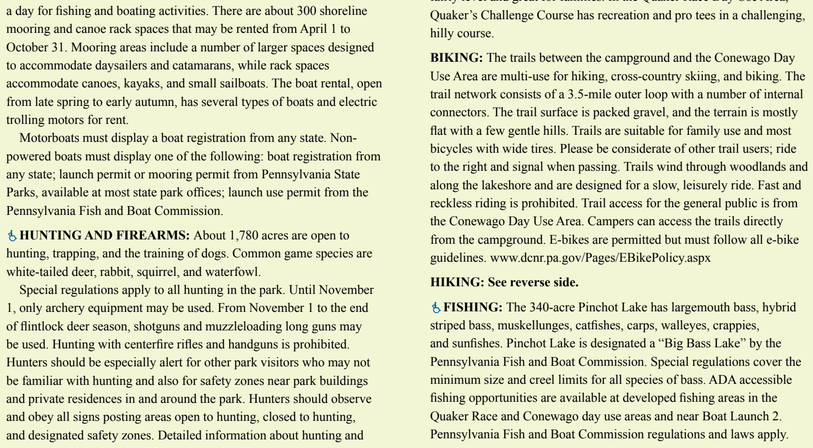
2023



TOP 10 ACTIVITIES



1. Stay the night in a modern cabin, featuring a full kitchen, modern restroom, and bedrooms.
2. Experience the fun of flat-water kayaking, canoeing, or paddleboarding on Pinchot Lake.
3. Enjoy a round of disc golf with friends or family at one of the two 18-hole courses.
4. Enjoy a night under the stars in the campground.
5. Take a swim and cool off at Quaker Race Beach.
6. No tent, no camper? Enjoy a stay in one of the yurts or camping cottages with a scenic view of the lake.
7. Enjoy one of the many educational programs and discover something new about Gifford Pinchot State Park.
8. Visit in May when the eastern redbud trees turn the park a lovely pink hue with their abundant blooms.
9. Check out the diabase boulders and rock outcrops throughout the park that make for picturesque lake scenes or spots for quiet solitude.
10. Fish the “Big Bass” waters of Pinchot Lake for many species of game fish and panfish.



GIFFORD PINCHOT STATE PARK

The 2,338-acre Gifford Pinchot State Park is in northern York County along PA 177 between the towns of Rossville and Lewisberry. The park consists of wooded areas and hillsides from reverted farm fields surrounding the 340-acre Pinchot Lake, which serves as the prime attraction.

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.

Directions

GPS DD: Lat. 40.087 Long. -76.888

The park is near the metropolitan areas of York and Harrisburg.

From Harrisburg, take the Lewisberry exit (35) off I-83 south, then PA 177 south; or by US 15 south to Dillsburg, then to PA 74 south.

From York, take the Newberrytown exit (32) off I-83 north, then PA 382 west to PA 177 south. Or take PA 74 north.

RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Spend the Day



BOATING: electric motors only; slow, no-wake speed
The 340-acre Pinchot Lake has three launch areas available 24 hours a day for fishing and boating activities. There are about 300 shoreline mooring and canoe rack spaces that may be rented from April 1 to October 31. Mooring areas include a number of larger spaces designed to accommodate daysailers and catamarans, while rack spaces accommodate canoes, kayaks, and small sailboats. The boat rental, open from late spring to early autumn, has several types of boats and electric trolling motors for rent.

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.

HUNTING AND FIREARMS: About 1,780 acres are open to hunting, trapping, and the training of dogs. Common game species are white-tailed deer, rabbit, squirrel, and waterfowl.

Special regulations apply to all hunting in the park. Until November 1, only archery equipment may be used. From November 1 to the end of flintlock deer season, shotguns and muzzleloading long guns may be used. Hunting with centerfire rifles and handguns is prohibited. Hunters should be especially alert for other park visitors who may not be familiar with hunting and also for safety zones near park buildings and private residences in and around the park. Hunters should observe and obey all signs posting areas open to hunting, closed to hunting, and designated safety zones. Detailed information about hunting and trapping in the park is available at the park office.

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: A large, ADA accessible beach in the Quaker Race Day Use Area is open from late May to mid-September, 8:00 AM to sunset. Swim at your own risk. Water advisories can be found on the park website or by calling the park office. Please read and follow posted rules. Picnic facilities and an ADA accessible playground are near the swimming beach. A nearby food concession and boat rental are open seasonally. ADA floating wheelchairs are available at both beaches upon request.

PICNICKING: The ADA accessible Quaker Race Day Use Area is on the north side of the lake. The Conewago Day Use Area is on the south side of the lake. Picnic tables, charcoal grills, convenient parking lots, drinking water, modern restrooms, playgrounds, and horseshoe pits are throughout the areas. The Quaker Race area has a volleyball court and the Conewago area has a ballfield. Four picnic pavilions, two that are ADA accessible, may be reserved up to 11 months in advance for a fee. Unreserved picnic pavilions are free on a first-come, first-served basis.

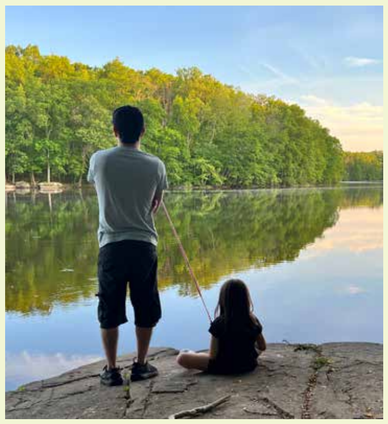
HORSEBACK RIDING: In the northeast section of the park is an area set aside for horseback riding. Equestrians may enjoy several miles of interconnecting trails that wind through wooded areas, former farm fields, pine plantations, and deciduous woodlands. There is a gravel parking lot off of Alpine Road, a short distance south of the intersection with PA 177. Horse rentals are unavailable.

DISC GOLFING: Two 18-hole disc golf courses are on opposite sides of the lake. In the Conewago Day Use Area, Boulder Woods Course is fairly level and great for families. In the Quaker Race Day Use Area, Quaker’s Challenge Course has recreation and pro tees in a challenging, hilly course.

BIKING: The trails between the campground and the Conewago Day Use Area are multi-use for hiking, cross-country skiing, and biking. The trail network consists of a 3.5-mile outer loop with a number of internal connectors. The trail surface is packed gravel, and the terrain is mostly flat with a few gentle hills. Trails are suitable for family use and most bicycles with wide tires. Please be considerate of other trail users; ride to the right and signal when passing. Trails wind through woodlands and along the lakeshore and are designed for a slow, leisurely ride. Fast and reckless riding is prohibited. Trail access for the general public is from the Conewago Day Use Area. Campers can access the trails directly from the campground. E-bikes are permitted but must follow all e-bike guidelines. www.dcnr.pa.gov/Pages/EBikePolicy.aspx

HIKING: See reverse side.

FISHING: The 340-acre Pinchot Lake has largemouth bass, hybrid striped bass, muskellunges, catfishes, carps, walleyes, crappies, and sunfishes. Pinchot Lake is designated a “Big Bass Lake” by the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission. Special regulations cover the minimum size and creel limits for all species of bass. ADA accessible fishing opportunities are available at developed fishing areas in the Quaker Race and Conewago day use areas and near Boat Launch 2. Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission regulations and laws apply.



Stay the Night



Modern cabin

CAMPING: Modern sites, some full-hookup sites
With about 290 campsites at the western end of the lake, this park has one of the largest state park campgrounds in the Commonwealth. The campground opens in mid-April and closes in late October. Many sites have paved pads and can accommodate most types of camping equipment from a large motorhome to the smallest tent. Some sites are full-hookup, and some are electric hookup. The campground has an ADA accessible swimming beach, ADA accessible campsites, hiking trails, boat launching and mooring area, sanitary dump stations, seasonally staffed campground office, and modern shower houses. Pets are permitted within the designated pet camping area.

YURTS: Each round, canvas and wood walled tent has a wooden deck and sleeps five people in bunk beds. Yurts have a stovetop, refrigerator, microwave, countertop, table, chairs, electric heat, outlets, fire ring, picnic table, and lantern holder. Restrooms, showers, and potable water are nearby. The yurts offer convenient accommodations for weekly rentals in the summer. A two-night minimum stay is required in the spring and fall. Pets are prohibited.



Yurt

CABINS: Ten modern cabins with heat and air conditioning can be rented year round. Cabins are furnished and have a living area, kitchen/dining area, bathroom with shower, and two or three bedrooms. Renters provide their own bed linens, bathroom essentials, kitchenware, eating utensils, coffee maker, and toaster. Cabin 1 is ADA accessible. Cabin occupants may moor their boats during their stay at nearby Boat Mooring #2. The cabins offer convenient accommodations for weekly rentals in the summer. A two-night minimum stay is required in the spring and fall. Pets are prohibited.



Camping cottage

CAMPING COTTAGES: Three cottages have wooden floors, windows, electric heat, lights, outlets, porch, picnic table, fire ring, and lantern holder. Restrooms, showers, and potable water are nearby. Each cottage sleeps five people in bunk beds. A two-night minimum stay is required. Up to two dogs are permitted at Willow Cottage.

ORGANIZED GROUP TENTING: This area is for eligible groups, which are defined as:

- An organized group that has a formal organization to coordinate and carry out its activities—appointed or elected leadership and periodic meetings are mandatory.
- An organized youth group that has a majority of its members under age 18 and is affiliated with an ongoing organization like school, youth, and church groups.
- An organized adult group that has a majority of its members above age 18 and is affiliated with an organization like Rotary or Lions club.

Advance reservations are required. Make online reservations at www.dcnr.pa.gov/StateParks.

Enjoy the Winter

CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING: With adequate snow cover, all trails and many other areas of the park provide excellent opportunities for cross-country skiing. Trails are not groomed.

ICE SAFETY: Ice thickness is not monitored. For your safety, make sure ice is at least 4” thick for a single user and 7” thick for a small group. For iceboating, make sure ice is at least 6” thick. Always carry safety equipment.

ICE FISHING: When conditions permit, ice fishing is a popular attraction on the 340-acre Pinchot Lake. Anglers most often catch largemouth bass, walleyes, muskellunges, crappies, and sunfishes.

ICE SKATING: Ice skating is permitted when natural conditions allow it.

ICEBOATING: Iceboats must display a current state park launch permit.



NATURAL HISTORY



Redbud tree blossoms

Diabase rock underlies most of the park and was created when molten rock intruded the sandstone and melted it into a new kind of rock. Many of the diabase rocks have unique cracks that formed as the rocks slowly cooled. The numerous boulders and rock outcroppings become more visible after the leaves have fallen. A brochure about the diabase rock formations is available online and at the park office.

The diverse habitats of Gifford Pinchot State Park support a variety of wildlife through all seasons. Winter is a great time to view the diabase rocks and boulders scattered in the park’s woods. Look for white-tailed deer, gray squirrels, and winter resident birds, like chickadees, titmice, and woodpeckers, as they spend their waking hours hunting for food.

Spring is the time for wildflowers. The forest floor transforms into a carpet of bluebells, spring beauties, and many other native ephemerals. Before the redbud’s leaves emerge, the tree bursts into a brilliant display of pink to lavender flowers. Also, during the spring, male largemouth bass make nests and aggressively defend their territory and fry (baby fish).

Gifford Pinchot State Park is an area of predominately oak-hickory forest surrounded by farm fields which makes the park an ideal rest stop for migrating forest birds. Warblers, vireos, and thrushes stop to rest and eat before flying on to their breeding or winter homes. Pinchot Lake and its shoreline wetlands lure many species of waterfowl like mergansers, snow geese, mallards, loons, and other ducks which can be seen swimming, diving, and dabbling for vegetation, insects, and small fish.

During the summer, eastern bluebirds search for food for their growing chicks. Camouflaged spotted fawns hide in the forests and fields. Along the lake shoreline, dragonflies and damselflies hunt for insect prey. Butterflies and moths reach their peak numbers and can be seen flying from flower to flower, including the largest butterfly in North America, the giant swallowtail butterfly.

Eastern red cedar and various pines become more noticeable in autumn when oak and hickory trees change their colors and lose their leaves. Catch a glimpse of squirrels, chipmunks, deer, and wild turkeys foraging for fallen acorns.



Red-bellied woodpecker

LEARN, EXPERIENCE, CONNECT



Gifford Pinchot State Park offers a wide variety of programs year round. 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.

Curriculum-based environmental education programs are available to schools and organized groups. Popular topics include seasonal habitats, bird life, insects, forest ecosystems, and lake ecology. 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.



GIFFORD PINCHOT

Gifford Pinchot was born in 1865 to a wealthy family. A childhood interest in nature led to a career protecting forests. He eventually became one of the founders of the conservation movement. After graduating from Yale University, Pinchot went to France and became the first American trained in forestry. A good friend of President Theodore Roosevelt, Pinchot was named Chief Forester of the U.S. Division of Forestry and served from 1898 to 1910. With the guidance of Roosevelt and Pinchot, over 200 million acres of national forest came under scientific land management. Policies developed by Pinchot help guide most national and state forests today.

“Among the many, many public officials who under my administration rendered literally invaluable service to the people of the United States, Gifford Pinchot on the whole, stood first.” - President Theodore Roosevelt

Gifford Pinchot became Governor of Pennsylvania in 1922. A tireless worker, he often worked 16-hour days. Pinchot created the first Pennsylvania state budget, erased the state’s debt, and gave himself a pay cut. Pinchot was not afraid of a fight. Often at odds with political parties, Pinchot fought hard for the people. Several times a week Pinchot held office hours where anyone could walk in and talk to him. “A public official is there to serve the public and not run them.” - Gifford Pinchot

In 1930, Pinchot was elected to a second term as governor and labored for employment improvements during the Great Depression. Pinchot set up work camps throughout the state that became the models for President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s Civilian Conservation Corps. Pinchot’s work camps built 20,000 miles of paved roads for “taking the farmer out of the mud.” These paved country roads made it easier for farmers to get from the farm to the market. The first “Pinchot Road” crosses the park, now PA 177. Always progressive, Pinchot was the first governor to have two women on his cabinet.

During World War II, Pinchot developed a water-gathering device and fishing kits for use in navy life rafts. Throughout his life, Gifford Pinchot spoke and campaigned for political reform and improved forest management.

After writing his autobiography, Gifford Pinchot died of leukemia in 1946. Gifford Pinchot State Park was dedicated by Governor David L. Lawrence in 1961.



INFORMATION AND RESERVATIONS

Gifford Pinchot State Park
2200 Rosstown Road
Lewisberry, PA 17339
Campground Office: 717-292-4112
Park Office: 717-432-5011
GiffordPinchotSP@pa.gov

An Equal Opportunity Employer

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.

@GiffordPinchotSP

Electric Vehicle Charging Station
Two, two-plug electric vehicle charging stations are available for public use in the Quaker Race Day Use Area next to the ADA parking spaces for the beach shower house. 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 HOSPITALS

UPMC Memorial	UPMC Pinnacle Harrisburg
1701 Innovation Dr.	111 South Front Street
York, PA 17408	Harrisburg, PA 17101
717-843-8623	717-782-3131

Nearby Attractions

Information on nearby attractions is available from the York County Convention and Visitors Bureau. www.yorkpa.org

Nearby are the State Capitol, Hershey, Gettysburg National Historical Park, and Lancaster County’s Amish Country.

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 in metal bins. 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.
- Please park only in designated areas and obey all traffic regulations.
- Please recycle. Place trash accumulated during your stay in proper receptacles or take it home with you.



Spotted salamander

HIKING: 18 miles



Many trails interconnect to allow hikers to personalize their routes, but please stay on the trail. Trail intersections have posts with numbers to aid hikers in navigating the trail system. Be aware that the park is open to hunting. Information on hunting seasons is available at the park office. For your safety, wear orange.

Alpine Trail
0.5 mile | Easiest hiking | Connector trail | Red blazes
Recreations permitted: hiking, biking
Trailhead amenities: modern restrooms, picnic tables

This wide, flat trail has a gravel surface. Alpine Trail has an outstanding crop of wildflowers in April and May, with bluebells and marsh marigolds. The trail begins on the east side of Conewago Day Use Area.

Beaver Creek Trail
1.5 miles | Most difficult hiking | Out-and-back trail | Yellow/blue blazes
Recreations permitted: hiking

This trail runs between a small parking area off Squire Gratz Road and Mooring Area # 1 in the northwestern corner of the park. The trail meanders through low-lying wooded terrain and over boardwalks. Sections of the trail can also be rocky or muddy. Many habitats, including wetlands, can be seen in this undeveloped section of the park.

Equestrian Trails
2.33 miles | Easiest hiking | Connector trail | Red blazes
Recreations permitted: hiking, equestrian

This network of trails has its own separate equestrian parking area off Alpine Road. The trails offer a variety of loops and connect to Rosstown Road and Lakeside Trail.

Fern Trail
0.15 mile | More difficult hiking | Connector trail | Yellow blazes
Recreations permitted: hiking

This short trail connects Midland Trail to Lakeside Trail near Boat Mooring Area 3. Fern Trail has dirt and rock surfaces and steeper slopes as it winds through the most mature forests in the park. There are many wildflowers under the large oak, hickory, and tulip poplar trees.

Gravel Trail
1.2 miles | Easiest hiking | Connector trail | Red blazes
Recreations permitted: hiking, biking, cross-country skiing recommended
Trailhead amenities: modern restrooms, potable water

This wide trail follows an old road and has a gravel surface. A loop can be made by using part of Lakeside Trail, making a nice trail for hiking, jogging, cross-country skiing, and biking. Concrete supports from an old toboggan run can be seen along this trail.

Lakeside Trail
8.5 miles | Most difficult hiking | Loop trail | Yellow/red/blue blazes
Recreations permitted: hiking, biking on designated sections
Trailhead amenities: modern restrooms, potable water, picnic tables, benches

The longest and most scenic trail in the park, Lakeside Trail may be accessed from all major use areas of the park. Walking time is five to six hours. Many parts of the trail are easy walking with gravel surfaces, but some remote sections are often wet. Many hikers combine portions of this trail with other trails like Alpine, Gravel, Oak, and Quaker Race to make shorter loops.

Mason-Dixon Trail (National Recreation Trail)
6.8 miles in the park, 200 miles total | Most difficult hiking | Point-to-point trail | Blue blazes
Recreations permitted: hiking, backpacking

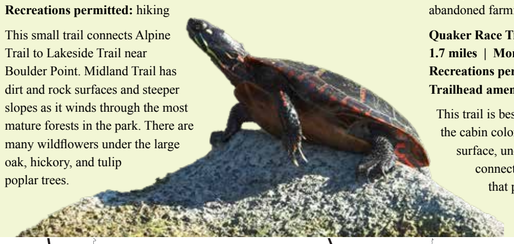
This 200-mile trail system runs through Delaware, Maryland, and Pennsylvania. The trail has blue blazes and follows portions of Lakeside, Alpine, Pinchot, Ridge, and Beaver Creek trails as it traverses the length of Gifford Pinchot State Park.

The trail enters the park along Conley Road in the east and Squire Gratz Road in the northwest. Through-hikers may only camp at the park campground.

Many hikers combine portions of this trail with other trails like Alpine, Gravel, Oak, and Quaker Race to make shorter loops.

Midland Trail
0.25 mile | More difficult hiking | Connector trail | Yellow/blue blazes
Recreations permitted: hiking

This small trail connects Alpine Trail to Lakeside Trail near Boulder Point. Midland Trail has dirt and rock surfaces and steeper slopes as it winds through the most mature forests in the park. There are many wildflowers under the large oak, hickory, and tulip poplar trees.



Oak Trail
0.4 mile | Easiest hiking | Connector trail | Red blazes
Recreations permitted: hiking, biking
Trailhead amenities: modern restroom, potable water, picnic tables, benches

This short trail connects the campground to the Environmental Learning Center at the western end of the Conewago Day Use Area. The trail is gently rolling and wide with a gravel surface. The trail passes through a maturing oak and hickory forest and past a large diabase rock outcropping near the Environmental Learning Center. This trail connects with Gravel and Lakeside trails.

Old Farm Trail
1.0 mile | Easiest hiking | Connector trail | Yellow blazes
Recreations permitted: hiking, biking

This trail runs along the northeastern border of the campground and is a connector between Lakeside, Oak, and Ridge trails. Old Farm Trail follows an old farm road to the top of Straight Hill.

Pinchot Trail
1.4 miles | Most difficult hiking | Connector trail | Yellow blazes
Recreations permitted: hiking, biking

Wear good shoes on this trail because the surface can be rocky and wet. The trail begins at the Environmental Learning Center and climbs past a large diabase rock outcropping that once formed the beginning of the long-abandoned toboggan run. The trail then crosses Gravel Trail and eventually splits into two branches that connect along the top of Straight Hill to form a loop. The habitat is mostly maturing oak and hickory forest. A number of old stone walls provide reminders of long-abandoned farming efforts.

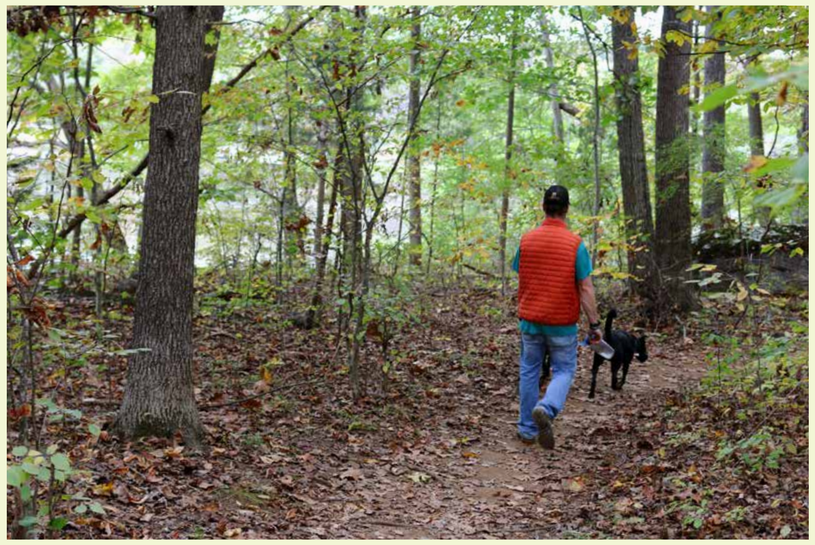
Quaker Race Trail
1.7 miles | More difficult hiking | Connector trail | Yellow blazes
Recreations permitted: hiking
Trailhead amenities: modern restrooms, picnic tables, benches

This trail is best accessed from the Quaker Race Day Use Area or from the cabin colony for cabin occupants. This trail has a dirt or rocky surface, uneven terrain, and one steep, but short, hill. This trail connects to Lakeside Trail at its end to form a three-mile loop that passes through diverse habitats.

Ridge Trail
1.2 miles | More difficult hiking | Connector trail | Yellow blazes
Recreations permitted: hiking, biking
Trailhead amenities: potable water

This trail begins near the campground entrance where it intersects Lakeside Trail, meanders through old overgrown pasture, then climbs into a maturing oak and hickory forest along the top of Straight Hill. The trail surface is dirt and can be rocky with some wet areas near the campground entrance. Butterflies often congregate near the openings in the forest.





GIFFORD PINCHOT STATE PARK

TRAIL INFORMATION
- 1 – 45 Trail Intersection Numbers
- Hiking Trail
- Paved Trail: Hiking, Bicycling
- Multi-use Trail: Hiking and as designated
- Lakeside Trail
- Mason-Dixon Trail
- Mason-Dixon Trail: Multi-use
- Biking
- Biking Prohibited
- Horseback Riding

Park Office
Contact Station
Blue Symbols Mean ADA Accessible
Emergency Phone
Modern Restrooms
Environmental Learning Center
Wayside
Scenic View
Electric Vehicle Charging
Picnicking
Picnic Pavilion
Disc Golfing
Playground
Swimming Beach
Fishing Pier
Boat Launch & Mooring
Boat Rental
Shower House/Restrooms
Camping
Sanitary Dump Station
Modern Cabins
Gate
Unpaved Road
Parking Lot Paved
Parking Lot Unpaved
Parking ADA Accessible
Parking Horse Trailer and Hitching Post
State Park No Hunting
State Park Hunting (Special Regulations Apply)
State Park Special Hunting (Open to Hunting after Campground Closes for Season)
No Trespassing
CONTOURS ARE ON 50 FT. INTERVALS

Special Regulations Apply to Waterfowl Hunting. Contact Park Office

0 1/4 1/2 3/4 1 Kilometers
0 1/4 1/2 1 Miles

Rev. 5/10/2023