Maurice K. Goddard State Park



The 2,880–acre Maurice K. Goddard State Park features the 1,680–acre Lake Wilhelm, which is very popular with anglers and boaters. Many recreational activities attract visitors in all seasons. The large lake, abundant wetlands, old fields, and mature forests provide a diversity of habitats for wildlife, especially waterfowl, eagles, and ospreys.

Directions

GPS DD: Lat. 41.4275 Long. -80.14522

The park is five minutes from I-79. Take Exit 130 (Sandy Lake-Greenville) and travel west on PA 358 (toward Greenville) for about 0.1 mile, then bear right onto Sheakleyville Road. At the first stop sign, turn right onto Lake Wilhelm Road, which goes directly to the park.

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

Recreational Opportunities



BIKING: 12 miles
The paved John C. Oliver Multi-Purpose Loop Trail follows the shoreline. It can be accessed from boat launches 1, 2, and 4, the marina, the parking lot below the park office, the dam, and small access areas around the lake. The trail is shared by hikers, snowmobilers, and cross-country skiers. Stay to the right while bike riding. Park bicycles off of the trail to avoid obstructing traffic. Please read trail guidelines located at the trailheads.

FISHING: Lake Wilhelm is a warmwater fishery. Common species are largemouth bass, walleye, crappie, muskellunge, bluegill, catfish, perch, and sunfish. A bait and fishing tackle concession is at the marina. There is an ADA-accessible fishing pier in the Marina and a fishing pier in Launch Four. Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission seasons and limits apply.

PICNICKING: Picnic tables and charcoal grills are available throughout the park. Boat launches 1, 2, 3, 4, and the marina have restrooms and large picnic areas. Picnic pavilions can be reserved in advance for a fee online at www.pa.gov/state-parks or by calling 888–PA-PARKS. Unreserved picnic pavilions are free on a first-come, first-served basis.

Launch 1 Pavilion – seating for 40, no electricity
Launch 2 Pavilion – seating for 40, no electricity
Launch 3 Pavilion – seating for 100, electricity
Marina Pavilion – seating for 100, electricity

HUNTING AND FIREARMS: Over 1,155 acres of Maurice K. Goddard State Park, plus Lake Wilhelm, are open to hunting, trapping, and the training of dogs during established seasons. Common game species are white-tailed deer, ring-necked pheasant, and waterfowl. State Game Lands 270 is adjacent to the park.

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.

BOATING: Maximum 20 hp/15 kWh Motors Permitted
The 1,680–acre Lake Wilhelm has a 191–slip marina and a 21–space dry land mooring area available from May 1 to October 31.

The marina has 250 car parking spaces, 121 car/trailer parking spaces, a four-lane boat-launching ramp, a courtesy dock, a marina building, and fueling station.

A boat concession in the marina rents motorboats, pontoon boats, kayaks, and canoes.

In addition to the marina, there are four other boat launches in the park. Spaces on the kayak/canoe storage rack at launches 3 and 4 can be reserved in advance for a fee.

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.

Life jackets must be worn in accordance with Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission regulations and laws.

The Pennsylvania Game Commission manages the 240–acre portion of the lake northwest of I-79. Electric-powered and non-powered boats are permitted in this section.

HIKING: see other side.

Learn, Experience, Connect

Maurice K. Goddard State Park offers a wide variety of programs from February 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. An interpretive brochure guides hikers through the hemlock forest along Falling Run Nature Trail.

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

Winter Activities

When conditions permit, visitors enjoy a variety of winter activities.

SLEDDING AND TOBOGGANING: There is a one-acre hill for sledding at the dam.

SNOWMOBILING: The north section of the John C. Oliver Multi-Purpose Loop Trail (6 miles) is open for snowmobiling. The trail can be accessed at Boat Launch 4 and the parking lot below the office. Be aware of hikers. Snowmobilers must share the trail with other users.



CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING: Skiing is permitted on all trails and open areas. Skiing is recommended on the multi-purpose trail from the Marina to Boat Launch 1, which is 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: Ice fishing accounts for many of the larger fish caught in Lake Wilhelm.

ICE SKATING: Skaters can enjoy the natural ice of the lake in the bay by Launch 3.

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

Friends of Goddard State Park (FrOG)

The volunteer organization supports the state park with funding, volunteer projects, and sponsoring events such as Music at the Marina in August. Contact the park office for volunteering opportunities.

Nearby Attractions

Information on nearby attractions is available through Visit Mercer County PA.
visitmercercountypa.com

The 2,027–acre State Game Lands 270 is adjacent to the park. Its rolling terrain is open, with interspersed wooded areas. A 240–acre portion of Lake Wilhelm is part of this tract. Common game species include duck, rabbit, turkey, pheasant, squirrel, woodcock, deer, and dove. For more information, contact the Pennsylvania Game Commission, Northwest Division Headquarters.

The McKeever Tract of Clear Creek State Forest is adjacent to the park and can be accessed by the Goddard-McKeever Trail.

History

Sandy Creek, which traverses the park, was first noted in reports made by George Washington during his trip to Fort LeBoeuf in 1753.

The creek's history of flooding prompted the initial flood control study by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in 1939. The U.S. Soil Conservation Service subsequently committed to building a dam for flood control and conservation purposes. The recreational potential of the project became so apparent during the initial planning phase that state, county, township, and municipal authorities were drawn into an outstanding cooperative effort to construct the park and game lands. The land was acquired for the project in the late 1960s. The dam was completed in 1971 and recreational facilities were dedicated in 1972.

Lake Wilhelm is named in honor of Lawrence J. Wilhelm. As the Mercer County Commissioner and a Soil and Water Conservation District Director for Mercer County, Mr. Wilhelm provided leadership in the development of the park from its beginnings in 1959 to the time of his death in October of 1968.

Maurice K. Goddard

After receiving a M.S. Degree in forestry from the University of California at Berkley, Maurice K. Goddard served in the United States Army from 1941 to 1945. He was awarded the Bronze Star and the Legion of Merit while also earning the rank of lieutenant colonel.

After serving as the director of the Mont Alto Forestry School, Goddard went on to head the Pennsylvania State University Forestry School.

In 1955, Goddard was appointed Secretary of the Bureau of Forests and Waters. It was here he set a goal of having a state park within 25 miles of every resident of Pennsylvania. Goddard also quickly set out to improve the professionalism of the department by eliminating political appointments and increasing the number of college-educated employees.

In 1959, Maurice K. Goddard received an honorary doctorate of science from Waynesburg College and was thereafter called "Doc Goddard."

In 1971, the Department of Forests and Waters was combined with several other state departments to create the Department of Environmental Resources. Although opposed to the combined department, Dr. Goddard was appointed to lead it.

When Dr. Goddard retired in 1979, after an unprecedented 24 years as a cabinet officer to six governors, he had added 45 state parks and an additional 130,000 acres of state park land. He raised Pennsylvania's parks and forestry bureau to national leaders, while not losing sight of the people and programs. Dr. Goddard received many awards in his career, including the prestigious National Wildlife Federation Special Achievement Award for his 50 years as an outspoken defender of natural resources. And despite his objections, the Sandy Creek State Park project was officially named Maurice K. Goddard State Park in 1969.

John C. Oliver III

The legacy of John C. Oliver III's service to conservation and the community is etched deeply into the story of Pennsylvania State Parks.

Mr. Oliver served as the first Secretary of the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) from 1995–2002. During his tenure, the agency established its guiding principles of stewardship, partnership, and service, which continue to be the foundation of DCNR's work. He was instrumental in establishing many programs that brought DCNR national acclaim, including achieving accreditation as the first independently certified state forest system in the United States; taking a lead role in the Pennsylvania Greenways Program; establishing a Rivers Registry and Conservation Areas program; overseeing the Pennsylvania Heritage Parks program; initiating the DCNR Conservation Volunteer program; and developing a partnership with the newly formed Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation.

Born in Pittsburgh, John C. Oliver served as a as lieutenant in the U.S. Navy during the Vietnam War from 1965–1966, Mr. Oliver was awarded the Purple Heart, the Bronze Star for Valor, and the Vietnamese Gallantry Cross.

Mr. Oliver was instrumental in getting the 12–mile paved loop trail funded and built in 2003. In 2015, the trail was officially named the John C. Oliver Multi-Purpose Loop Trail.



Wildlife Watching

The large lake, abundant wetlands, old fields, and mature forests provide a diversity of habitats that attract wildlife in all seasons.

Once pushed to the edge of extinction, bald eagle and osprey populations are now rebounding. Both of these fish-eating raptors nest at Lake Wilhelm. The combination of old fields and mature forests are home to many birds including American woodcocks, common snipes, common nighthawks, and many species of warblers.

In the spring and fall, thousands of waterfowl stop at the lake during migration for rest and food. Loons, teals, mergansers, goldeneyes, and buffleheads are some of the noteworthy waterfowl.

Winter is a good time to see several species of woodpeckers, including pileated woodpeckers.

In the summer, turtles, northern water snakes, and amphibians are abundant in the quiet waters by the marina. The wetland across Lake Wilhelm Road from the marina entrance has a wildlife observation station and is a great place to see ospreys, eagles, and beavers.



Photo by Fran Bires
Bufflehead

A Pennsylvania Recreational Guide for

Maurice K. Goddard State Park









Pennsylvania
Department of Conservation and Natural Resources



Maurice K. Goddard State Park
684 Lake Wihelm Road
Sandy Lake, PA 16145
724–253–4833
GoddardSP@pa.gov

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.

www.pa.gov/state-parks

PAStateParks

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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 Horizon, Greenville
110 N. Main Street
Greenville, PA 16125
724–588–2100

Hiking: 16 miles



Falling Run Nature Trail

0.7 mile | More difficult hiking | Loop trail | Yellow blazes

Recreations permitted: hiking

With trailheads off of Park Road and in Old Launch Three, this self-guided nature trail winds its way through the hemlocks crowding the Falling Run ravine. Look for a small waterfall along Falling Run as well as the remains of a spring house standing at the site of a former homestead.

Goddard-McKeever Trail

2.8 miles within the park | More difficult hiking | Out-and-back trail | Yellow blazes

Recreations permitted: hiking

This trail traverses a steep slope along the southern shore of Lake Wilhelm before reaching its peak elevation near the Patton Road Crossing and winding downward toward the McKeever Tract of Clear Creek State Forest. Multiple trailheads between the dam and Launch 1 provide opportunities for shorter hikes.

John C. Oliver Multi-Purpose Trail Loop

12.0 miles | Easiest hiking | Loop trail | No blazes

Recreations permitted: hiking, biking, cross-country skiing recommended, snowmobiling on north shore only

Trailhead amenities: modern restrooms, picnic tables, benches

This paved, scenic loop follows the shoreline of Lake Wilhelm and has scenic views of the lake. The trail passes through fields, young forest, and mature hardwoods.

Walker Run Trail

0.7 mile | Easiest hiking | Out-and-back trail | Yellow blazes

Recreations permitted: hiking

From a parking lot near Boat Launch 1, Walker Run Trail passes through forests and fields and crosses Irish Ridge Road to meet the John C. Oliver Multi-Purpose Trail Loop, which can be an alternative route back to Boat Lauch 1.

