

Ohiopyle State Park

Located primarily in Fayette County, Ohiopyle State Park encompasses about 19,052 acres of rugged natural beauty and serves as the gateway to the Laurel Mountains.

The focal point of the area is the more than 14 miles of the Youghiogheny [yaw-ki-gay-nee] River Gorge that passes through the heart of the park. The “Yough” [yawk] provides some of the best whitewater boating in the Eastern U. S. as well as spectacular scenery.

Surrounding Ohiopyle Falls is the Falls Day Use Area, the central point for the casual visitor. This area provides parking, modern restrooms, gift shop/snack bar, and overlook platforms with magnificent scenery.

Directions

From the West: From the PA Turnpike, take Exit 91, Donegal. Turn left onto PA 31 east. Travel about two miles, turn right onto PA 711 and PA 381 south. Travel ten miles to Normalville, turn left onto PA 381 south for 11 miles to Ohiopyle.

From the East: From the PA Turnpike, take Exit 110, Somerset. Take PA 281 south 25 miles to Confluence. Continue three miles up hill and at the church, turn right onto Sugarloaf Road, SR 2012. Continue nine miles to Ohiopyle.

From the South (DC, MD, VA): Take I-270 north to Frederick, then I-70 west to Hancock, then Rt. 40 and I-68 through Cumberland. Take Exit 14 (Keysers Ridge) to Rt. 40 west to Farmington, PA. Turn right onto PA 381 north for eight miles to Ohiopyle.

From the South (WV): Take I-79 North to I-68 east. Take Bruceton Mills Exit to Rt. 26 north. At the PA border it becomes PA 281 north. Turn left onto PA 40 west, to Farmington, turn right onto PA 381 north to Ohiopyle.

Special Directions for Large RVs to

Kentuck Campground: SR 2019 is very steep. Large RVs should avoid this road and take PA 40 to SR 2010 (Chalk Hill-Ohiopyle Rd.) Follow it for eight miles to a stop sign. Go straight to the campground. A bridge just north of the park on PA 381 has a maximum clearance of 12' 7”.

Access for People with Disabilities

♿ This symbol indicates facilities and activities that are accessible. 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 Pennsylvania Bureau of State Parks: 888-PA-PARKS (voice) 888-537-7294 (TTY) 711 (AT&T Relay Services)

Nearby Attractions

For information on nearby attractions, contact: the Laurel Highlands Visitors Bureau, 800-333-5661, www.laurelhighlands.org.

Natural Treasures

Ferncliff Peninsula National Natural Landmark

Created by a meander in the Youghiogheny River, this 100-acre peninsula is a unique habitat that contains many rare and interesting plants. The northern-flowing Youghiogheny River picks up seeds in Maryland and West Virginia and deposits them at Ferncliff, north of their usual growing range. The deep gorge is slightly warmer than the surrounding area, which allows these southern refugees to survive.

Recognized for its botanical diversity for over a century, in 1973 the 100-acre peninsula was declared a National Natural Landmark.

In 1992, Ferncliff Peninsula was declared a State Park Natural Area which will protect it in a natural state.

Waterfalls and Scenic Water Attractions

Cascades: This beautiful woodland waterfall in Meadow Run is near the park office. The cool, clean waters of this stream make it a favorite haunt of anglers.

Jonathan Run Falls: Several small waterfalls can be seen from Jonathan Run Trail. Just before the trail meets the Youghiogheny River Trail, the largest waterfall tumbles over rocks between rhododendron-lined banks.

Meadow Run Waterslides: The cascading beauty of this unique geologic formation attracts photographers, geologists and recreation enthusiasts. Explore Meadow Run's ancient streambed to find ripples carved in stone and potholes scoured by spinning rocks and powerful currents.

♿ **Ohiopyle Falls:** The power and beauty of this 20-foot waterfall make it a central attraction to the park.

Recreational Opportunities

The park is open from sunrise to sunset
♿ **Bicycling:** 27 miles of trails

The Youghiogheny River Trail has 27 miles of trail in the park and is part of the Great Allegheny Passage that connects Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and Cumberland, Maryland. The flat, crushed limestone trail was once the rail bed for the Western Maryland Railroad. This trail is suitable for all ages and accessible to people with disabilities. Rental bicycles are available. The trail is excellent for hiking, jogging and cross-country skiing and can be used to combine a bike ride or hike with some excellent wilderness trout fishing or hunting. *All motorized vehicles and equestrians are prohibited.*

From the Ramcat Launch Area and Trailhead Parking Area in the east side of the park, the trail descends at a 1% downhill grade to the Train Station/Visitor's Center parking lot in the town of Ohiopyle. Bikers/hikers can enjoy this 10-mile trail section and watch canoers and rafters travel through the class I and II rapids.

From the Train Station/Visitor's Center parking lot in the town of Ohiopyle, the 17 miles of trail crosses the river twice and descends at a 3% grade to the western park border. Visitors can also park in Ferncliff Peninsula Parking Area. Bikes are not permitted on the trails of the Ferncliff Peninsula. Along the trail are mile markers and posts with the initials of the famous rapids in the river. There is plentiful parking in the town of Connessville in parking lots on Third Street and in the Youghiogheny Riverfront Park.

Mountain Biking: 13.2 miles of trails

The Sugarloaf Snowmobile and Mountain Bike Area has 9.4 miles of mountain bike/equestrian trails. Sugarloaf Trail stretches 3.8 miles from the edge of the Sugarloaf Snowmobile and Mountain Bike Area to the Middle Take-out Parking Area in the town of Ohiopyle.

Horseback Riding: 9.4 miles of trails

The Sugarloaf Snowmobile and Mountain Bike Area has 9.4 miles of mountain bike/equestrian trails. A separate parking area is off of Grover Road and has a fenced paddock and nearby water.

Fishing: The Youghiogheny River provides good wilderness trout fishing. In cooperation with the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission, fingerling trout are stocked throughout the entire section of river within the park. An all-tackle trophy trout program exists on a 3.5-mile section of the river from Ramcat downstream to the SR 381 Bridge in Ohiopyle. Meadow Run also provides fine trout fishing for anglers who prefer smaller stream fishing. A delayed harvest artificial lures only section is on a 2.2-mile section of Laurel Run from Dinnerbell Road downstream to the mouth of the river. See the PA Fish and Boat Commission's *Summary of Fishing Regulations and Laws* for more details on these special regulations areas.

♿ **Hunting and Firearms:** Over 18,000 acres are open to hunting, trapping and the training of dogs during established seasons. Common game species are deer, turkey, grouse, rabbit, squirrel and other small game. Loaded firearms are not permitted within 50' of the Youghiogheny River Trail.

The best viewing is from the observation deck in the Falls Day Use Area, in the heart of Ohiopyle.

Cucumber Falls: This 30-foot bridal veil waterfall on Cucumber Run (pictured below) is easily reached from Meadow Run Trail and has parking on SR 2019.



Adjacent state game lands 51 and 111 provide additional hunting and recreational opportunities. 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 accessible hunting information.

Use extreme caution with firearms at all times. Other visitors use the park during hunting seasons. Firearms and archery equipment 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 must be kept in the owner's car, trailer or camp.

♿ **Waterslides:** Sit in the creek bed and ride the water through two natural waterslides in Meadow Run. Parking is available adjacent to the SR 381 bridge crossing Meadow Run. Follow the signs to Meadow Run Trail or follow the path at the back of the parking lot. An ADA accessible observation deck is easily reached from the parking area.

Picnicking: Two picnic areas provide picnic tables, grills, restrooms, charcoal disposal areas and reservable pavilions. The secluded Cucumber Run Picnic Area is adjacent to Cucumber Run, a beautiful creek lined with rhododendron bushes and large trees. The scenic Great Gorge Trail begins in this picnic area. Tharp Knob Picnic Area is adjacent to the Tharp Knob Overlook that provides a panoramic view of the Youghiogheny River Gorge and the town of Ohiopyle. The picnic area has a large ball field, volleyball court, playground, two pavilions and access to the Kentuck Trail and loop hiking trails.

Winter Activities

Ohiopyle State Park is exceptionally beautiful during the winter, and offers many winter activities. Be sure to dress appropriately for the weather and to follow all trail signs and markings to have a safe and enjoyable experience.

Snowmobiling: The 3.8 miles of Sugarloaf Trail and the 9.4 miles of trails in the Sugarloaf Snowmobile and Mountain Biking Area are available with proper snow cover. The Sugarloaf snowmobile area has a parking area with an unloading ramp.

Cross-country Skiing: There are 33.9 miles of trails. The Sproul Trails and a section of the Kentuck Trail were created for cross-country skiing. With deep snowfall, the Youghiogheny River Trail is good for cross-country skiing.

Sledding/Tobogganing: A hill is maintained for sledding in the Sugarloaf Snowmobile and Mountain Bike Area, adjacent to the parking area.

International Scale of River Difficulty

The classes below are the American version of the rating system used throughout the world. This system is not exact. Rivers do not always fit easily into one category and there may be regional interpretations. This information is from American Whitewater.

Class I: Easy - Fast moving water with riffles and small waves. Few obstructions, all obvious and easily missed with little training. Self-rescue is easy.

History

When Europeans first reached North America, the mysterious Monogahela People inhabited the Mississippi River and its tributaries, including the Youghiogheny River. For unknown reasons, this powerful tribe disappeared just as Europeans arrived, leaving few traces behind. Other tribes of American Indians migrated through the area as the increasing European population pushed them out of their lands. The name Ohiopyle is believed to be derived from the American Indian word “ohiopehlha” which means “white, frothy water.”

In the mid-1750s, the Iroquois Nation, the French and the British vied for the Ohio River Valley. Employed by the British, George Washington traveled through the Ohiopyle area to talk to the French in 1753.

A year later Washington returned with sixty soldiers to evict the French. Washington arrived at Confluence and tried to find an easier travel route by the river, but the falls were impassable. Washington continued towards the future site of Pittsburgh and surprised a small party of French soldiers. One French soldier escaped and sought reinforcements. Washington built Fort Necessity to await the French retaliation. Overwhelming French forces caused Washington to surrender. The French and Indian War had begun. Two British armies cut roads through the area, eventually defeating the French and securing the important Ohio River Valley.

The recently acquired land was declared Indian territory by the King of England and European settlers were asked to leave but did not. In 1768, King George III purchased the land from the Iroquois.

Stay the Night

Camping: modern sites, some with electricity

Kentuck Campground is open from the beginning of March to late December. There are about 200 campsites, 27 of which are walk-ins that have more privacy but require a short hike from the vehicle to the campsite. Many campsites have electric hookups. All campsites have a picnic table, fire ring and parking space, and the campground



Whitewater Boating

The Youghiogheny River has exciting whitewater boating for all experience levels. Only sturdily constructed rubber rafts, kayaks and closed-deck canoes may be used in the river. River levels can change the difficulty of rapids. Check at the launch area or contact the park office for current water levels.

The famous Lower Yough begins after the Ohiopyle Falls and flows seven miles downstream to the Bruner Run Take-out. This is the busiest section of whitewater east of the Mississippi River.

The numerous class III and IV rapids make for exciting rafting that should only be attempted by experienced whitewater boaters. Inexperienced whitewater boaters should run this section of the river on a guided raft trip with an authorized concessionaire. The natural river environment contains undercut rocks, ledges and swift currents.

All whitewater boaters on the Youghiogheny must learn to recognize natural dangers and understand that injury and death are a possibility when boating the Lower Youghiogheny.

The Middle Yough begins at the Ramcat Put-in near Confluence, and ends near the town of Ohiopyle. This section contains class I and II rapids and is ideal for beginning kayakers or experienced canoers. Families often raft this section because it provides thrilling rapids at normal river levels.

Private Trips: Go online to www.visitPAparks.com or call 888-PA-PARKS or the Ohiopyle State Park office at 724-329-8591 to schedule a launch time. Equipment rentals are

Class II: Novice - Straightforward rapids with wide, clear channels which are evident without scouting. Occasional maneuvering may be required, but rocks and medium-sized waves are easily missed by trained paddlers.
Class III: Intermediate - Rapids with moderate, irregular waves which may be difficult to avoid and which can swamp an open canoe. Complex maneuvers in fast current and good boat control in tight passages or

Pennsylvania and Virginia both claimed the territory and the dispute continued through the American Revolution and was not settled until 1784.

Centered in Western Pennsylvania, the Whiskey Rebellion tested the resolve of the new United States. A tax on whiskey was viewed as extreme and in 1794, citizens attacked tax collectors. George Washington and 15,000 militiamen marched through the Ohiopyle area to put down the revolt.

The land around Ohiopyle was slowly settled, and eventually the rugged land near the river was settled. The early settlers were farmers, hunters and trappers. In 1811, the National Road passed near Ohiopyle, making the area more accessible to settlers and to markets. Lumbering became a major industry. The production of barrels and other wood products, tanning, salt mining and coal mining were small industries.

In 1871, railroads reached Ohiopyle. The Baltimore and Ohio Railroad and eventually the Western Maryland Railroad had stations in Ohiopyle. At the turn of the century, lumbering became a major industry with narrow gauge railroads snaking around the hills hauling lumber to the mills in town and the larger railroad lines. A large mill was erected near Ohiopyle Falls.

The railroads brought tourists to Ohiopyle. It cost \$1 to ride from Pittsburgh to Ohiopyle and back. By the 1880s, there were numerous

has washhouses with hot water and flush toilets, four children's play areas, and a sanitary dumping station. There are three platform tents. These pre-pitched tents have electric hook-ups, dining canopy, mattresses, picnic tables, and fire ring.

Advance reservations are required to insure campsite availability. Go online to www.visitPAparks.com or call toll-free 888-PA-PARKS.

Camping Cottages: These rustic, wooden structures have electric lights and outlets, windows, a screened porch and heater. A cottage sleeps five people in a single bunk and a single/double bunk.

Organized Group Tenting: Qualified adult and youth groups may use this area which is equipped with picnic tables, water and flush toilets. Groups may use a 20-person area or multiple sites for larger gatherings. The area is open from May to mid-December. Advance reservations are recommended.

available in the town of Ohiopyle. There is a fee to launch boats on weekends and holidays on the Lower Yough. During the week, boaters must sign-in at the launch area.

Inexperienced boaters should not attempt the Youghiogheny River without qualified guides.

Guided Trips: Outfitted trips are available from licensed commercial outfitters that provide rafts, guides, all necessary safety equipment, and transportation to and from the river. The following is a list of licensed, commercial outfitters currently operating on the Youghiogheny River.

Laurel Highlands River Tours
P. O. Box 107, Ohiopyle, PA 15470
800-4-RAFTIN (800-472-3846)
www.laurelhighlands.com

Ohiopyle Trading Post
P. O. Box 94, Ohiopyle, PA 15470
888-OHIOPYLE (888-644-6795)
www.ohiopyletradingpost.com

White Water Adventurers
P. O. Box 31, Ohiopyle, PA 15470
800-WWA-RAFT (800-992-7238)
www.wwaft.com

Wilderness Voyageurs
P. O. Box 97, Ohiopyle, PA 15470
800-272-4141
www.wilderness-voyageurs.com

around ledges is often required. Strong eddies and powerful current effects can occur.

Class IV: Advanced - Intense, powerful but predictable rapids requiring precise boat handling in turbulent water. May be large, unavoidable waves and holes or constricted passages demanding fast maneuvers under pressure. Rapids require “must” moves above dangerous hazards. Self-rescue is difficult.

hotels in the area, and Ferncliff Peninsula had a boardwalk, dance pavilion, bowling alley, walking paths, tennis courts, ball fields, fountains and the Ferncliff Hotel.

The freedom afforded by the automobile was the end of the resort. The buildings eventually were removed, allowing the forests to regrow. Foundations of these buildings can still be seen in the Ferncliff Peninsula. Recognizing the natural beauty of the area, the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy purchased much of the property and sold it to the Commonwealth in the mid-1960s.



A Recreational Guide for

Ohiopyle State Park



Department of Conservation
& Natural Resources
Michael DiBerardinis, Secretary

Drop-in DCNR
logo F. P. O.

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Edward G. Rendell, Governor

Drop-in I.O.C.
map F. P. O.

For More Information Contact:

Ohiopyle State Park
P.O. Box 105
Ohiopyle, PA 15470-0105
724-329-8591
e-mail: ohiopylesp@state.pa.us
An Equal Opportunity Employer

www.visitPAparks.com

Information and Reservations

Make online reservations at: www.visitPAparks.com or call toll-free 888-PA-PARKS, 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday to Saturday, for state park information and reservations.

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Environmental Education and Interpretation

The park offers a wide variety of environmental education and interpretive programs. Through hands-on activities, guided walks and evening programs, participants gain appreciation, understanding and develop a sense of stewardship toward natural and cultural resources. Programs focus on the Youghiogheny River, its gorge, and the natural, cultural and recreational resources of the Ohiopyle area. Curriculum-based environmental education programs are available to schools and youth groups. Teacher workshops are available. Group programs must be arranged in advance and may be scheduled by calling the Train Station/Visitor's Center at 724-329-0986. Programs are offered from March through November.

In an Emergency

Contact a park employee or dial 911. For directions to the nearest hospital, look on bulletin boards or at the park office.

Nearest Hospital:
Uniontown Hospital
500 West Berkeley Street, Uniontown, PA 15401
724-430-5000

Hiking: 79 miles of trails

Always bring a map, water and wear sturdy shoes when hiking. Specific trail maps are available at the park office and the Train Station/Visitor Center.

Baughman Trail: 3.4 miles, **difficult** - This trail has trailheads at the back of the Middle Yough Take-out Parking Area adjacent to the Train Station/Visitor Center in Downtown Ohiopyle and at the Mountain Biking Trail parking lot. This steep, rocky trail passes Baughman Rock, a spectacular overlook of the Youghiogheny River Gorge.

Beech Trails: 2.7 miles total, **moderately difficult** - The Beech Loop begins at the Kentuck Campground Amphitheater and connects to the Beech Trail and Sproul Trails. The 2.1-mile Beech Trail passes through a forest of towering American beech trees and leads to the Great Gorge Trail.

Fernclyff Peninsula Trails

Fernclyff Trail: 1.7-mile, **easy** - All other Fernclyff Peninsula trails branch off of this loop trail which circles the peninsula. The trailhead is near the Fernclyff Parking Lot.

Buffalo Nut Trail: 0.1-mile, **easy** - This short trail is the first branch off of Fernclyff Trail and is a shortcut to Oakwoods Trail.

Fernwood Trail: 0.5-mile, **easy** - This trail features beautiful ferns and the remnants of the old Fernclyff Hotel.

Oakwoods Trail: 0.5-mile, **easy** - This trail passes through a mature hardwood forest.

Great Gorge Trail: 2.6 miles, **moderate** - This trail begins at the Cucumber Picnic Area and crosses several bridges and roads. The trail follows Cucumber Run and past an area known for its spring

wildflowers. The next trail section follows an old tramway used to transport coal to the railroad. A spur of this trail leads up a steep incline to the Kentuck Campground.

Jonathan Run Trail: 1.7-mile, **easy** - The trailhead is along the Holland Hill Road. The trail crisscrosses Jonathan Run and passes by small waterfalls, including Jonathan Run Falls. The trail connects to the Youghiogheny River Trail.

Kentuck Trail: 2.5 miles, **moderately difficult** - This series of trails begins at the Tharp Knob Picnic Area. A short one-mile loop includes the Tharp Knob Overlook. The trail continues to the Kentuck Campground contact station, briefly follows the road, then descends to meet Jonathan Run Trail. The trail then leads to the Youghiogheny River Trail, and finally splits off and climbs the gorge to meet

the Old Mitchell Trail.

McCune Trail: 1.2-mile, **easy** - This trail passes through various habitats and by an old spring house and pond which are all that remain from the McCune Farm.

Meadow Run Trail: 3 miles, **easy** - There are trailheads near the park office, at the waterslides on SR 2011 and at Cucumber Falls on SR 2019. From the waterslides parking lot take the left trail under the SR 381 bridge for 0.7-mile to Cucumber Falls. Take the trail to the right, which leads to a loop trail and the Cascades. This trail is intersected by a path leading to the SR 2011 trailhead.

Old Mitchell Trail Loop: 1.8-mile, **moderate** - This loop trail begins at the Old Mitchell Place Parking Area in the west side of the park. The trail meanders through a variety of habitats including forest

and meadow and is excellent for birding in the spring.

Sproul Trails: 3.7 miles, **easy** - These five interconnecting loops are just north of the Kentuck Campground, near the second overflow parking area outside of the campground.

Sugarloaf Trail: 3.8 miles, **difficult** - This hiking/biking/snowmobiling trail begins near the Train Station/Visitor Center. The trailhead is at the back of the Middle Youghiogheny Take-out Parking Area, to the right of the Youghiogheny River Trail. The trail climbs 800 feet in elevation in two steep sections. The trail connects to the main trail bike area near Sugarloaf Knob.

Sugar Run Trail: 1.6-mile **moderate**, - This trail connects Old Mitchell Trail to Jonathan Run Trail.

Youghiogheny River Trail: 27 miles, **easy** - See the Biking section on the text side.

Laurel Highlands Hiking Trail

This 70-mile, very difficult, year-round backpacking trail has its southern end in Ohiopyle and its northern end near Johnstown. The trail traverses state parks, state forests, state game lands, other public lands and private lands. An overnight shelter area is located every 8-10 miles along the trail and has five adirondack-type shelters with fireplaces, non-flush toilets, a water supply and spaces for 30 tents.

The Ohiopyle section of the trail is 6.3 miles of very strenuous and rocky hiking. There are beautiful overlooks and creeks along the way. Reservations for backpack camping are required and must be made by contacting: Laurel Ridge State Park, 1117 Jim Mountain Road, Rockwood, PA 15557, 724-455-3744.