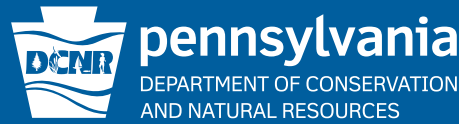




# Cook Forest



## 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.



Cover photograph by Anthony Cook

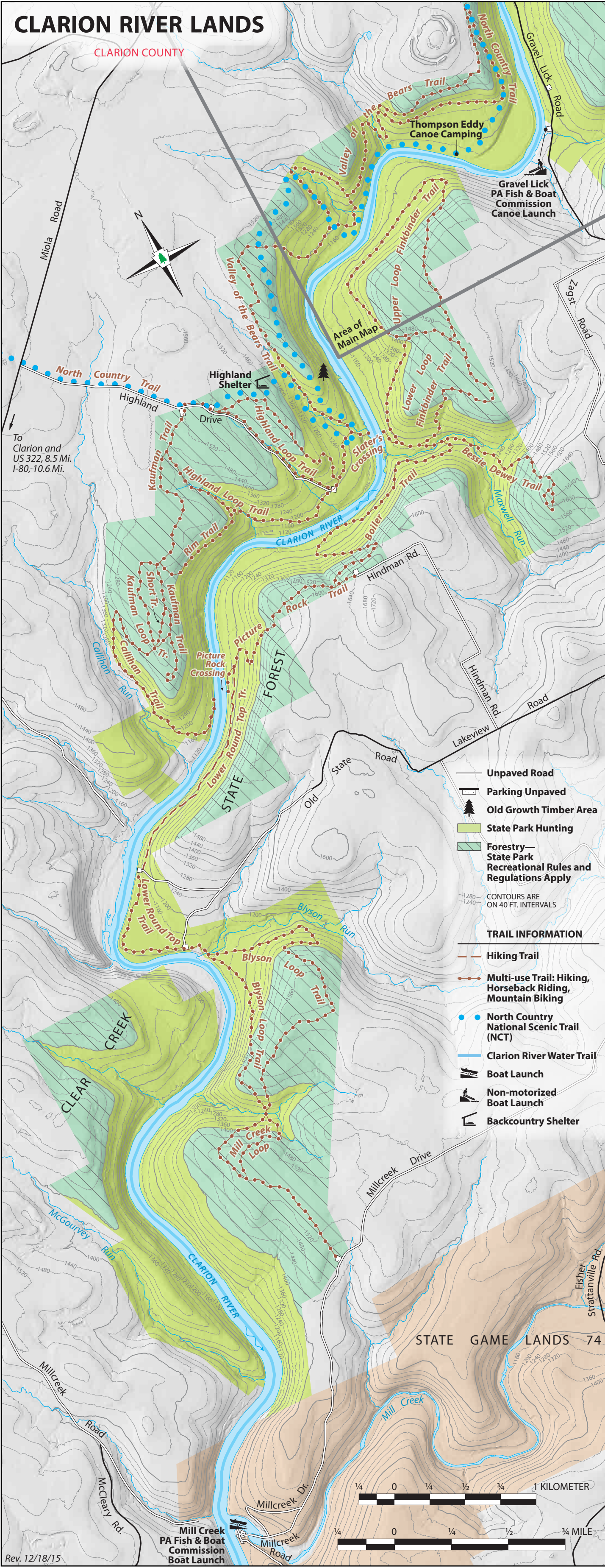
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## EXPLORE PENNSYLVANIA WILDS



Pennsylvania Wilds is two million acres of public lands for hiking, biking, fishing, boating, hunting and exploration in northcentral Pennsylvania. Within the twelve-county region are: 29 state parks, including Sinnemahoning; eight state forest districts (1.3 million acres); 50 state game lands, and Allegheny National Forest (500,000 acres). Highlights of the area are: elk watching, scenic PA 6, Pine Creek Gorge (PA Grand Canyon), the darkest skies in the east at Cherry Springs State Park, and hundreds of miles of trails, bike paths, and trout fishing streams. For the more adventurous, whitewater rafting through Pine Creek Gorge and hang-gliding at Hyner View State Park offer exciting challenges.



## COOK FOREST

The 8,500-acre Cook Forest State Park and 3,136 acre Clarion River Lands lie in scenic northwestern Pennsylvania. Known for its stands of old growth forest, the park's Forest Cathedral of towering white pines and hemlocks is a National Natural Landmark. A scenic 13-mile stretch of the Clarion River flows through Cook Forest State Park and is popular for canoeing, kayaking, and tubing.

### Directions

From the east, take Exit 78 off of I-80, then PA 36 north directly to the park in Cooksburg.  
From the west, take Exit 60 off of I-80, then take PA 66 north to Leeper. From Leeper, follow PA 36 south, seven miles to the park.

### Reservations

Make online reservations at [www.visitPAparks.com](http://www.visitPAparks.com) or call toll-free 888-PA-PARKS (888-727-2757), 7:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Monday to Saturday, for state park information and reservations.

## RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

### Spend the Day

**HIKING:** There are over 47 miles of hiking trails and 4.3 miles of multi-use trails within Cook Forest State Park. An additional 24 miles of multi-use trails and 8 miles of hiking trails are located within the Clarion River Lands. A brochure of trail descriptions is available online and in the park office.

**BIKING:** Bikes are permitted on all one-way, dirt roads within the park. A 13-mile bicycle route follows lightly traveled roads within the park and a portion of Hefren Run Trail. Biking on hiking trails is prohibited except on the bicycle route portion of Hefren Run Trail.

**HORSEBACK RIDING:** A loop trail begins at a small parking lot on Forest Drive, connects to Old Logging Road, and winds through beautiful pine plantations. Twenty-four miles of additional trails are located downstream of Gravel Lick Bridge in the Clarion River Lands.

**PICNICKING:** Picnic tables and charcoal grills are available throughout the park. 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. Pavilions 1 and 2 are ADA accessible.

**FISHING:** The Clarion River provides fishing for trout, warmwater game fish, and panfish. Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission regulations and laws apply.

About 2.5 miles of Toms Run is stocked with trout. A special fishing pond stocked

with trout is located by the park office and is available for use by children ages 12 and younger and people with disabilities. An ADA accessible pier provides access.

**BOATING:** The Class 1 Clarion River provides excellent canoeing and kayaking, especially during the spring and fall. The average downward flow is four miles per hour. Two popular paddling trips are four and 10 miles in length. Rental canoes are available from businesses outside of the park. There are public boat launches at both Cook Forest and Clear Creek state parks.

**HUNTING AND FIREARMS:** Over 12,000 acres of Cook Forest State Park and Clarion River Lands are open to hunting, trapping, and the training of dogs during established seasons. Common game species are deer, squirrel, bear, and turkey. Over 10,000 acres of adjacent state forests and over 500,000 acres of Allegheny National Forest are also open to hunting.

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.

### Stay the Night

Visitors can stay the night in the campground and cabins from the second Friday in April to the third Friday in December.

**CAMPING:** full service hook up, electric, and non-electric  
The park has 210 campsites each with a picnic table and fire ring. Full hook-up campsites also have on site water, 50 amp electric, and sewage hook up. Electric only sites are available with either 30 or 50 amp hook ups. Modern restrooms with showers are available late May through early October. There is a sanitary dump station

and coin-operated laundry facilities. Pets are permitted at designated sites for a fee. Access is not guaranteed during severe winter weather.  
**CABINS:** Two cabin colonies provide rustic, minimally furnished cabins that sleep 4, 6, or 8 people. Occupants must provide their own bedding, cookware, and tableware. Frost-free water faucets are outside. A shower house is nearby. Two cabins are ADA accessible. Dogs are permitted at designated cabins for a fee.

### Enjoy the Winter

**ICE SKATING:** A lighted ice skating area is located along River Road. **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.

**SNOWSHOEING AND CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING:** Snowshoeing is permitted on all trails. Cross-country skiing is recommended on selected trails on the maps. The park has snowshoes for rent.  
Curriculum-based environmental education programs are available to schools and youth groups. Teacher workshops are available. Group programs must be scheduled in advance by calling the park office.

## NATURAL RESOURCES

**OLD GROWTH TIMBER AREAS**  
There are eleven old growth areas in the park, totaling over 2,300 acres. Most stands are dominated by ancient hemlock and white pine, but also contain ancient understory trees like white and chestnut oak, black cherry, red maple, and cucumber tree. Many white pine and hemlock trees in these areas approach 350 years old. Scientists believe these old growth areas began

growing following a large forest fire in 1644. Some trees survived the fire and date back to the early 1500s.  
**FOREST CATHEDRAL NATURAL AREA**  
The Forest Cathedral Natural Area is home to the finest stand of tall white pine and hemlock in the entire Northeastern U.S. Many of these magnificent pine and hemlock trees exceed three feet in diameter with

## CLARION RIVER

Thirteen miles of the Clarion River flows through the park. The river corridor contains plants such as cardinal flower, rhododendron, mountain laurel, and many species of old growth trees. Possible wildlife sightings include deer, wild turkey, ruffed grouse, river otter, muskrat, porcupine, and

black bear. Great blue heron, mergansers, kingfisher, and bald eagle are also common. The Clarion River is designated a National Wild and Scenic River for its scenic beauty, water quality, and archaeological significance.

Sections of the river provide a glimpse into the past. The river was used as a transportation route and signs of settlements are located along the river banks. The most prevalent signs that can be seen are bracket dams and log landings from the logging era.

## HISTORY

John Cook was the first permanent American settler to the area. He arrived in 1826 to determine the feasibility of building an east to west canal along the Clarion River for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. John purchased 765 acres and settled here with his wife and 10 children in 1828. At the mouth of Toms Run, present day Cooksburg, John built his one-story cabin and the first of many water-driven sawmills. He worked his mills, logged with oxen, rafted logs to Pittsburgh, and also engaged in flatboat building through the years.

One of John's sons, Anthony, bought 36 acres from his father and then gained the rest of his acreage when his father died in 1858. Anthony erected three sawmills, one flouring mill, one planing mill, a boat scaffold, several dwellings, and a store. About 1870, he built the Cook Homestead, now known as the Inn at Cook Forest, at the corner of land where PA 36 and River Road intersect.

Many of the large homes on River Road are still maintained by the Cook Family and descendants. After Anthony's death, the business was managed under A. Cook Sons Company.

The Cook Forest Association formed in the 1920s to save the few areas of surviving old growth timber. Endorsed by national natural resource groups and Governor Gifford Pinchot, the association raised \$200,000, which helped the commonwealth purchase 6,055 acres from A. Cook Sons Company in 1927 for \$640,000. Cook Forest became the first Pennsylvania state park acquired to preserve a natural area. It was later designated a National Natural Landmark.

## CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORPS

On March 31, 1933, President Franklin D. Roosevelt created the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). The purpose of the CCC was to provide employment and restore our nation's natural resources.

In 1934, CCC Camp SP-2 was built in the present-day River Cabins Area along River

Road. This camp with barracks, mess hall, and bathhouses served 200 enrollees and staff until it closed in 1937. The buildings were razed in 1937 and used to construct CCC Camp SP-6 at Raccoon Creek State Park in Beaver County.

Work of the CCC in Cook Forest still remains. Indian and River cabins were built, trails and roads constructed and forest resources preserved by these hard-working men.

## HISTORIC AREAS

**LOG CABIN ENVIRONMENTAL LEARNING CLASSROOM:** This large log building was built in 1934 by the Civilian Conservation Corps. It was used as living quarters and then as a restaurant. The building is currently the environmental learning classroom with displays, taxidermy animals, and logging tools from early lumbering days.

**RIVER AND INDIAN CABINS:** In the 1930s, the CCC constructed these buildings from salvaged American chestnut killed by blight. These buildings were added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1987.

**MEMORIAL FOUNTAIN:** Built in 1950 on Longfellow Trail, the fountain was dedicated to the original members of the Cook Forest Association who were

instrumental in raising additional funds needed to purchase the land from the A. Cook Sons Company.

**COOK FOREST FIRE TOWER/ SENECA POINT OVERLOOK:** The 87.5-foot fire tower, built in 1929 by the commonwealth's Department of Forest and Waters gave firefighters a 15-to 20-mile view of the area. The tower was retired from service in 1966. Periodically, the observation cabin on top of the tower is open during programs.

Look for bowl shaped depressions in the stone, known as "Indian Mills." They are believed to be made by predecessors of the Seneca Indians to grind seeds and grain. Cook Forest State Park is home to six known sites of American Indian significance. These sites contain petroglyphs and stone carvings.

## NEARBY ATTRACTIONS

Information on nearby attractions is available from the Pennsylvania's Great Outdoors Visitors Bureau, 800-348-9393. [www.pagreatoutdoors.com](http://www.pagreatoutdoors.com)

Cook Forest Area Vacation Bureau, 814-927-6628. [www.cookforest.org](http://www.cookforest.org)  
**Clear Creek State Park** encompasses 1,901 acres in Jefferson County. The

park occupies a scenic portion of the Clear Creek Valley from PA 949 downstream to the Clarion River and offers camping, swimming, hiking, fishing, cabins, yurts, canoeing, hunting, and picnicking. 814- 752-2368

**Clear Creek State Forest** covers 14,431 acres and provides hunting, fishing, camping,

and hiking. Much of the state forest is located along the Clarion and Allegheny rivers. 814-226-1901  
**Allegheny National Forest,** Pennsylvania's only National Forest, is approximately 517,000 acres and includes land in Elk, Forest, McKean, and Warren counties. 814-728-6100

## FOR YOUR INFORMATION

### 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 Hospital**  
Clarion Hospital  
1 Hospital Drive  
Clarion, PA 16214  
814-226-9500

### Information and Reservations

**For More Information Contact**  
Cook Forest State Park  
113 River Road  
Cooksburg, PA 16217  
814-744-8407  
email: [cookforestsp@pa.gov](mailto:cookforestsp@pa.gov)  
GPS DD: Lat. 41.332583  
Long. -79.207979  
An Equal Opportunity Employer  
[www.visitPAparks.com](http://www.visitPAparks.com)

**Information and Reservations**  
Make online reservations at [www.visitPAparks.com](http://www.visitPAparks.com) or call toll-free 888-PA-PARKS (888-727-2757), 7:00 AM to 5:00 PM Monday to Saturday, for state park information and reservations.

### Pocket Ranger™ App by Parks by Nature

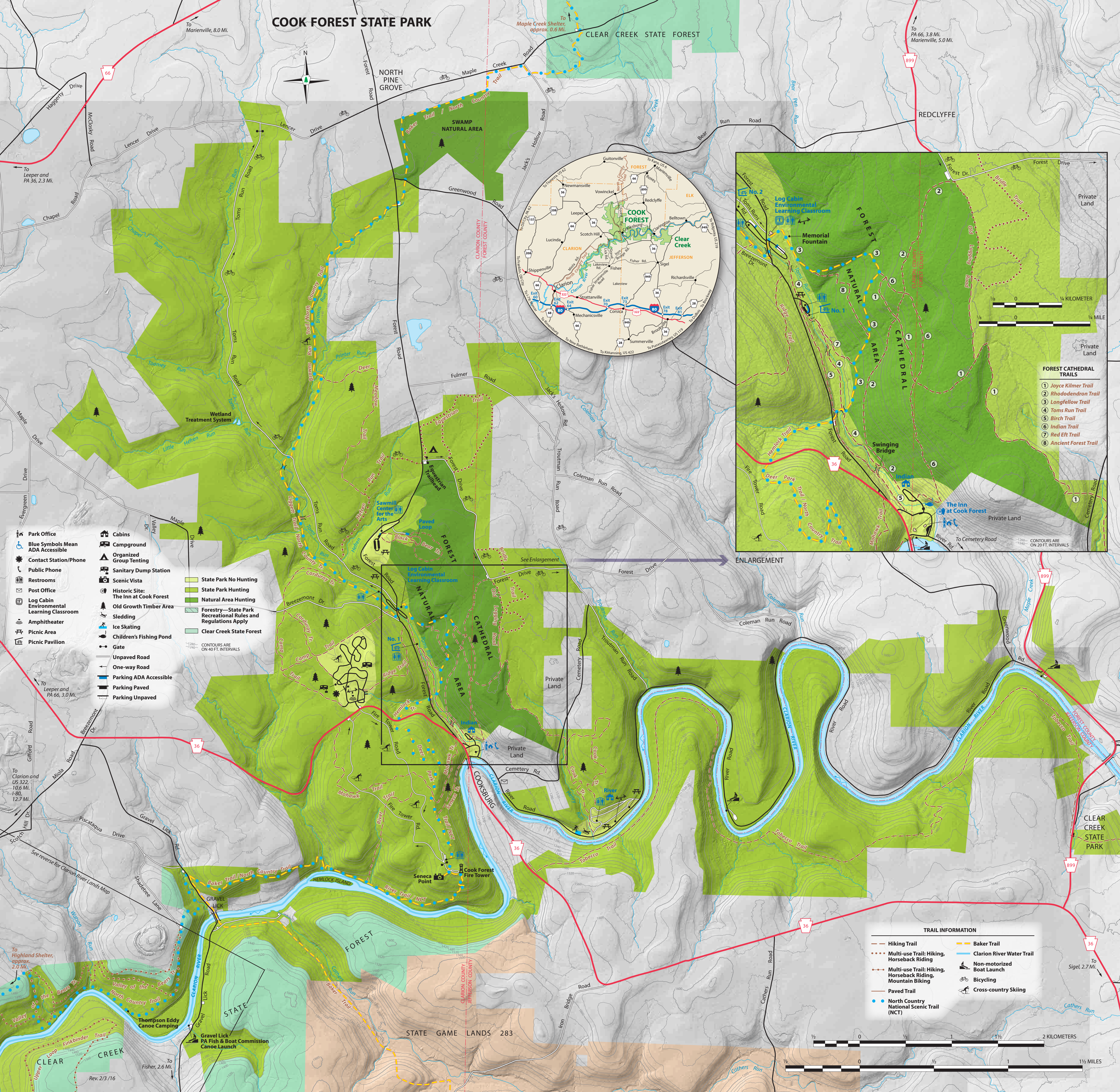


### Protect and Preserve our Parks

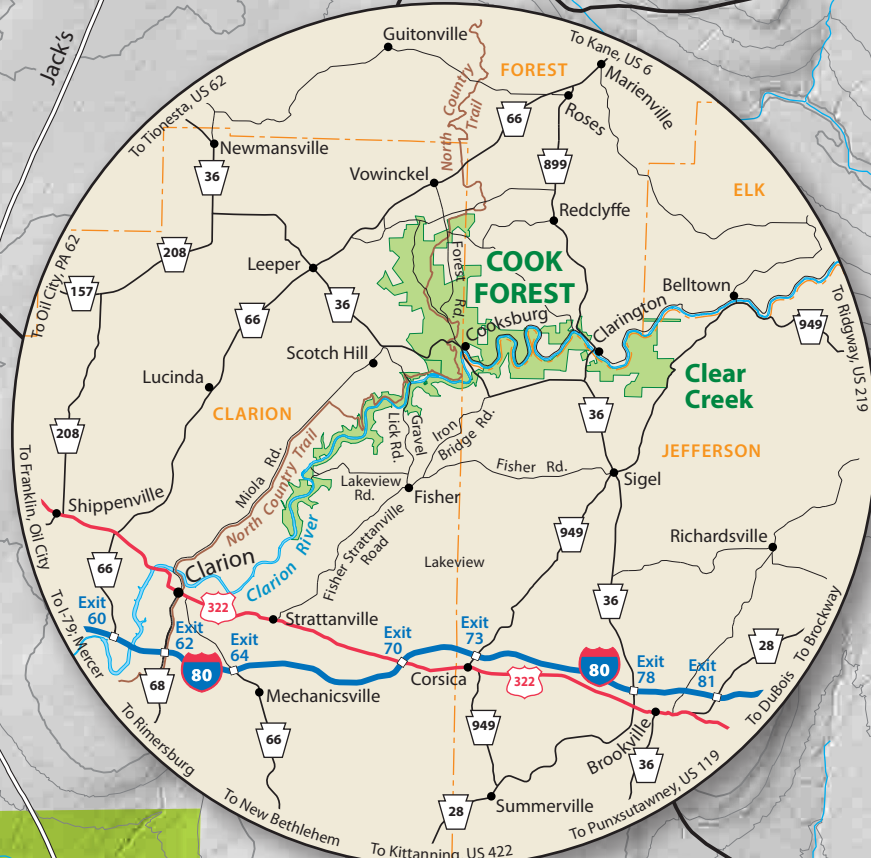
Please make your visit safe and enjoyable. Obey all posted rules and regulations and respect fellow visitors and the resources of the park.

- 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 try to 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. Campers should 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 and attended at all times and on a leash, caged, or crated. Electronic fences and leashes are prohibited.
- 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.





# COOK FOREST STATE PARK



- FOREST CATHEDRAL TRAILS**
- 1 Joyce Kilmer Trail
  - 2 Rhododendron Trail
  - 3 Longfellow Trail
  - 4 Toms Run Trail
  - 5 Birch Trail
  - 6 Indian Trail
  - 7 Red Eft Trail
  - 8 Ancient Forest Trail

## TRAIL INFORMATION

- Hiking Trail
- Multi-use Trail: Hiking, Horseback Riding
- Multi-use Trail: Hiking, Horseback Riding, Mountain Biking
- Paved Trail
- North Country National Scenic Trail (NCT)
- Baker Trail
- Clarion River Water Trail
- Non-motorized Boat Launch
- Bicycling
- Cross-country Skiing

