

# Susquehannock State Park

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Part of the canal is still accessible to the public directly above the Holtwood dambreast which can also be seen from the lookout at the park. The Holtwood Dam is owned by Pennsylvania Power and Light and is a hydro-electric steam generated plant.

Just below the dam on the Lancaster County shoreline is another electric generating site, the Muddy Run plant. Water is pumped from the river, by turbines which run backwards, into the Muddy Run Lake. The lake is then drawn down when water flows through the same turbines to generate electricity. This generating facility is the most recent one in the area. Conowingo and Holtwood date back several decades.

Although the river area in close view of the overlook at the park proves to hold several energy-generating facilities devised to meet modern, industrial needs, the State in sharp contrast maintains only basic necessities at the Susquehannock State Park.

Drinking water is provided throughout the park by hand pumping from wells. The pump nearest the overlook draws its water, according to Sheaffer, from a well in excess of three hundred feet down. One toddler became somewhat impatient waiting through twenty-odd pumps of the handle for a drink. There was no stepping on a foot pedal and instant water at that pump.

Several picnic areas spread throughout the park grounds provide a total of 150 picnic tables, drinking water and comfort stations. Many stationary grills

also provide safe places for cooking picnic foods. A baseball field and play area are located near the park office at the entrance to the park.

Sheaffer said that the State can now have proper insurance coverage to allow many more recreational swings and slides and the like. The park hopes to reach the local clubs and civic organizations for donations of these types of equipment. Recently several benches were erected in memory of the late Drumore Township supervisor, Wilbur Stauffer.

Many trails throughout the park and adjoining grounds of Conrail and the Philadelphia Electric Company offer beautiful settings for horseback riding in the river hills.

Non-profit adult and youth groups may reserve space in the organized group tenting area for overnight use. The site can be used for as many as three hundred people. Sheaffer said the camping area has been used the past few weekends by middle school youths and scouts. There is no plan to allow campers into the park. Tenting is the only camping allowed by groups.

For those who prefer to walk after a picnic, there are a number of trails throughout the park. The self-guiding natural trail is very popular. A guide book which explains various spots along the trail designated by numbered posts points out such facets of nature as a tree once struck by lightning, the growth of a forest where once a meadow lay, the decaying of old trees for new growth, and many plants and tree types abounding in the area. The self-guided trail



This view is toward the Peach Bottom Atomic Power Plant on the York County side of the Susquehanna River.

takes about thirty minutes to complete.

Two trails, the Pine Tree and Plate's Eddy, named for an inn which was used by raftsmen during the 1870's, are steep and rocky.

Sheaffer said the Rhododendron Trail is especially nice this time of year. Many native Holly and dogwood trees as well as large growths of rhododendron can be found along these many trails.

In the next few months, additional expansion of facilities to meet the needs of more visitors, but also in keeping with the more primitive setting as compared to commercial recreational parks, will be installed according to Sheaffer. These include a pavilion, another ball field, and

more swings for smaller visitors.

Sheaffer said the park is the only state park in Lancaster County and it only costs the residents of the county about fifteen or sixteen cents each to maintain it.

"It really should be used by the residents," he added. "It is a good bargain, a nice place for them to come to."

He added that many more groups are taking the opportunity to come. The park is within short driving distance of several surrounding metropolitan areas which constantly seek out recreational facilities. Susquehannock Park is under the administration of the Department of Environmental Resources Bureau of State Parks, which is responsible to develop, maintain,

police and preserve public lands for the purpose of promoting healthful outdoor recreation and education.

During this busy spring season, set aside a day for the family to leave the homestead and go to a state park, if not Susquehannock State Park, one of those close to you. Farm families sometimes complain they don't need to relax out of doors; they work there all the time. But a special day set aside for recreation and education could be the spring tonic weary farm families need.

For more information on the park, write to Susquehannock State Park, Department of Environmental Resources, Rt. 1, Elverson, PA, 19520 Phone 215-562-1514

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