

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.



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2017



OIL CREEK STATE PARK

Oil Creek Valley is the site of the world's first commercial oil well. Oil Creek State Park tells the story of the early petroleum industry by interpreting oil boomtowns, oil wells, and early transportation. Scenic Oil Creek carves a valley of deep hollows, steep hillsides, and wetlands.

Reservations

Make online reservations at 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.

Directions

Between Drake Well Museum and Titusville to the north, and Oil City four miles to the south, the main entrance to the park is off PA 8, one mile north of the Borough of Rouseville.



RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

BICYCLING: A 9.7-mile paved bicycle trail through scenic Oil Creek Valley is a major park attraction. Trailheads are at Petroleum Centre in the south and Drake Well Museum and Park in the north. Trail users may rent bicycles at the park office.

Picnic tables, benches, rain shelters, and restrooms are at key points along the trail. Historical markers detail special events of the 1860s oil boom era.



Charlene Reinhart

The trail is open to two-way bicycle traffic. Stay to the right while riding. When passing another cyclist, first ensure that there are no oncoming riders, then call out to the cyclist that you are passing. Bicycles should be parked off of the trail to avoid obstructing traffic. Bicycles are only permitted on paved trail, and roadways. Bicycles are prohibited on hiking trails.

Caution: Park maintenance and emergency vehicles may be on the trail.

HUNTING AND FIREARMS: About 6,800 acres are open to hunting, trapping, and the training of dogs during established seasons. Common game species are rabbit, deer, squirrel, turkey, black bear, and ruffed grouse.

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.

FISHING: Oil Creek is known for its bass and trout. Boughton Run, Toy Run, and Jones Run provide brook trout fishing. Two delayed harvest, artificial lures only areas cover 2.5 miles of Oil Creek. Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission regulations and laws apply.

CANOEING AND KAYAKING: Oil Creek offers a scenic float and is classed as a beginner's creek under normal conditions. Water levels can change rapidly and boaters should call the park office for current water conditions. Generally, the boating season is from March to early June.

Non-powered boats launched in the park must display one of the following: boat registration; 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.

CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING: A cross-country ski trail complex located between Petroleum Centre and Plumer can be accessed on SR 1004. A network of 11.5 miles of groomed trails offers beginner and intermediate skiers a variety of skiing experiences. The area includes a large parking area, warming hut, and restrooms. Track is set on all trails in the complex. A fee is charged for a ski pass, which is required in the complex. Mountain bikes are prohibited on ski trails.

The 9.7-mile bicycle trail is open to skiers without a pass. Check at the park office for trail conditions.

PICNICKING: Blood Farm Day Use Area and Egbert Farm Day Use Area are on the southern side of the park and are ideal settings for an enjoyable outing. The day use areas have picnic tables, charcoal grills, restrooms, playfields, and picnic pavilions that may be reserved up to 11 months in advance for a fee. Unreserved picnic pavilions are free on a first-come, first-served basis. A playground is in the Egbert Farm Day Use Area.

ORGANIZED GROUP TENTING: Organized groups can rent a rustic camping area in Wildcat Hollow or McCrea Farm. Each area has nearby parking, picnic tables, fire circle, composting toilets, and seasonal water, but no showers. Each camp can accommodate up to 25 people. Call the park office for accommodations for larger groups. Advance reservations are required.

WATERFALLS: Oil Creek is home to four beautiful waterfalls. The best time to view the falls is early to late spring. For safety reasons, visitors are encouraged to stay on the trails while viewing the falls. Additional information can be obtained at the park office.

HIKING: 52 miles of trails

Blood Farm Interpretive Trail: Spend 30 minutes walking a 0.5-mile trail through the 440-acre Blood Farm oil lease. This farm produced more oil than all of the other farms in the oil region in 1861 and 1862. Learn about 15 years of frantic drilling, gushing oil, and devastating fires. Interpretive signs guide the tour.

Petroleum Centre Walking Tour: Petroleum Centre flourished from 1863 to 1870 on its twin livelihoods of oil and entertainment. This company town had no government, law enforcement, sanitation, or public works. It was reputed to be the "wickedest town east of the Mississippi!" Start at the Petroleum Centre Amphitheater for this 45-minute self-guiding tour.

Wildcat Hollow Trails: Hike the "wickedest hollow east of the Mississippi!" on these short, easy hiking trails. Geology Trail is 1 mile. Forestry Trail is 0.8 mile. Oil History Trail is 0.25 mile. Wetland Trail is 0.8 mile.

Gerard Hiking Trail: This 36-mile long trail encompasses the entire park. The main trail is marked with yellow paint blazes. For shorter day hikes, use the five connecting loops blazed in white. Parking areas are available at several access points. Scenic vistas, waterfalls, and historic sites are prevalent along the trail.

Two overnight hike-in shelter areas (Cow Run and Wolfkiel Run) are along the trail. Each area contains tent sites, six Adirondack-style shelters with fireplaces, restrooms, and seasonal water supply. A fee and reservations are mandatory for use of these areas and overnight usage is limited to one night per shelter site. Fires are only permitted in camp stoves, fireplaces, or designated locations and must be extinguished when unattended. Standing timber and shrubs must not be defaced. Camping is permitted in shelter areas only. Other special regulations pertain to these areas. Contact the park office for further information.

Pets are permitted at the shelter areas. Please contact the park office for guidelines for pets.

Tell us about your hike at: www.exploretrails.com

HISTORY



Along Oil Creek, just south of Titusville, Colonel Edwin Drake struck oil at a depth of 69.5 feet in August 1859. Three words—"They've struck oil!" thundered triumphantly throughout the valley. This statement changed the world forever and marks the birth of the world's oil industry. The New York Tribune stated, "The excitement attendant on the discovery of this vast source of oil was fully equal to what I saw in California when a large lump of gold was accidentally turned out. When California 49ers came into the valley they claimed conditions here were crazier than any they'd ever seen."

Drake's discovery caused thousands of people to pour into the valley in search of liquid gold. Boomtowns sprang up instantly as derricks replaced trees and the valley filled with people. "The boomtowns spring up as if from the touch of a magician's wand, are swept away by fire, or disappear only to reappear miles in advance of their last location."

Oil and mud soon mixed together throughout the valley. Roads were impassable. When J.H.A. Bone got off the train at Petroleum Centre he wrote: "...pull up your legs when they disappear from sight, remembering that if you descend deep enough, you may strike oil." Others wrote: "The creek was covered with oil, the air was full of oil... we could see, hear, smell, nothing but oil." "Mud divided our attention with oil, wagons, men and animals were submerged in mud."

By 1871, production in most boomtowns was dwindling. Drillers, speculators, and others went to other areas in their endless search for oil as "black as a stack of ebony cats," and the valley was allowed to return slowly to the state it is today. Scattered

ruins dot the landscape of Oil Creek Valley. Remnants of old refineries can still be seen, old wells abound, and crumbling stone walls that once protected wells still stick up in the middle of Oil Creek.

The wooded hills of Oil Creek Valley look almost as they did before the boom. A few wells are still active in the park, pulling the last bits of oil and natural gas from the earth which nature laid down millions of years ago.

"The oil rush changed the pace of the world, and greased the wheels of the machine age. It lit up the future, fueled wars, speeded peace and is still flowing strong."

Reference: Unless stated otherwise, the above quotes are from Paul Gidden's book, "Early Days of Oil."



HISTORICAL OPPORTUNITIES

The primary purpose of Oil Creek State Park is to tell the story of the changing landscape. The early petroleum industry's oil boom towns and important oil well sites are in contrast with clean trout streams and forested hillsides seen today throughout the park. The events of the exciting 1860s, the time of the original oil boom, receive special emphasis.

Historical Tableaus



Train Station Visitor Center

Historical displays and an exciting diorama provide a glimpse into oil history. A train still chugs through the valley and stops at the Train Station in Petroleum Centre, just as it did over 100 years ago! The train station is open noon to 5:00 PM, Saturdays and Sundays, June through October.



These full-scale, three-dimensional landscapes contain buildings, machinery, equipment, and materials that replicate the historic landscape. Similar to a movie set, the buildings are empty and the machinery does not work, but the tableaus give an idea of historic periods at Oil Creek.

HUNT FARM TABLEAU: This site has an engine house, various pumping jacks, and stock tanks. From the 1940s to the 1960s, Ma-and-Pa oil operations drilled and pumped oil using a gas engine to pump several wells, with the wells supplying gas to run the

engine. The long rod lines carried the power from the central engine to the distant wells.

BENNINGHOFF FARM TABLEAU: This site has six 35-foot tall oil derricks, an oil barge, and an engine house. The first oil operators thought that oil could only be drilled on flat, level terrain. In the autumn of 1865, the famous Ocean Well was sunk on the steep hillside. When the well began producing 300 barrels of oil a day, oil opportunists flocked to lease part of the farm and soon Mr. Benninghoff earned about \$6,000 a day.

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. First aid is available at the park office in Petroleum Centre and at Drake Well Museum and Park.

NEAREST HOSPITALS

UPMC Northwest 100 Fairfield Drive Seneca, PA 16346 814-676-7600	Titusville Area Hospital 406 West Oak Street Titusville, PA 16354 814-827-1851
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Information and Reservations

For More Information Contact
 Oil Creek State Park
 305 State Park Road
 Oil City, PA 16301-9733
 814-676-5915
 email: oilcreeksp@pa.gov
 GPS DD: Lat. 41.51544 Long. -79.68097
 An Equal Opportunity Employer
www.visitPAparks.com

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ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND INTERPRETATION

The park offers a wide variety of environmental education, recreational, 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.

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 park office.

Programs are offered early spring through late fall. For more detailed information contact the park office.

