

This is a screenshot of the original WV State Parks “Where People and Nature Meet” webpage that is now deactivated.



Where people and nature meet

West Virginia State Parks and Forests

...to “promote conservation by preserving and protecting natural areas of unique or exceptional scenic, scientific, cultural, archaeological, or historical significance and to provide outdoor recreational opportunities for the citizens of this state and its visitors.” This mission statement, embodied in state law, has been the guiding principal for operating the West Virginia State Park system since its inception in the late 1920s. Additionally, state parks and state forests continue to serve as major tourist attractions and travel destinations to bolster the fame, economy and positive image of the state of West Virginia.

The West Virginia State Park system is composed of 35 state parks, seven state forests, five wildlife management areas, the Greenbrier River Trail, and the North Bend Rail Trail.

From vintage Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC)-era facilities with minimal development such as Seneca State Forest to massive modern resorts like Pipestem, there are many special places to discover. Cass Scenic Railroad features a restored logging railroad and company town. Two Civil War battlefields, Droop Mountain and Carnifex Ferry, represent two sites that ultimately saw a new state born from a torn nation. From natural areas (Beartown and Pinnacle Rock) to areas that are primarily day-use local recreational facilities (Valley Falls), the system as a whole offers tremendous variety and fulfills a number of roles.

For a West Virginian, parks are sources not only of pride, but also of employment and recreation that might not otherwise be available, particularly in rural areas of the Mountain State. Park and forest facilities offer high-quality, reasonably-priced vacation opportunities and outdoor recreational experiences. Both tourists visiting West Virginia and state residents visiting other parts of the United States upon return consistently rate the West Virginia State Park system as among the finest state parks anywhere.

State parks and forests play host to numerous church picnics, retreats, and get-togethers; lodge parks offer conference facilities. Many parks also offer restaurants. Parks provide a safe environment for senior citizens or young families where children can safely learn how to swim and enjoy outdoor activities. Family values are nurtured through recreation of the body and spirit that comes with quality time spent together.

Not to be overlooked are the contributions that parks and forests make to enhancing and protecting environmental values, in turn contributing to the overall quality of life found in West Virginia. State parks and state forests protect watersheds, provide quality wildlife habitat, hunting and fishing opportunities, nature programming and events, and numerous other environmental benefits.

Lastly, and very importantly, state parks and forests serve as a cornerstone of tourism in West Virginia. Surveys by West Virginia’s Division of Tourism consistently reveal parks as the single biggest attraction drawing visitors to West Virginia. Tax dollars appropriated to support the system yield dividends several times over in economic benefits, preservation of heritage, and special places for generations to visit ‘where people and nature meet.’