

My Favorite Trail

By Ralph Seeley

This hike is not long, being only about four miles in length, but it is interesting and moderately strenuous. It takes place in the Quehanna Wild Area, on the orange-blazed Quehanna Trail. It makes use of a relocation done by the KTA trail crew in November 2008. It would help to have a Quehanna Trail map, obtainable free from the Forestry District Office at 814-765-0821.

From the start point at the Caledonia Pike, walk north a few hundred yards on a muddy road to where the road suddenly bears right down a hill. This steep, rocky, narrow road was the supply road for the logging splash dam at the bottom. As you go down, think about braking hard on a team and wagon filled with people food and feed for the draft animals at the bottom; then later there would be the long hard pull back up the hill, with now an empty wagon. Local people do drive down this road, and some have been stranded in trying to get back up.

The splash dam at the bottom, called the Corporation Dam, was built in 1870 and was one of the two largest of such dams within a 60 mile range. It took about three years for the bulk of the logging to be done in the area, and the dam then went out of use. The dam was a large all-wood structure. It was built by a combination of Lock Haven and Williamsport lumbermen, joining their money and warrant holdings, thus accounting for the name. At the bottom walk over to the right and look across to the opposite side. The dam was built at the junction of three streams: Mosquito Creek, Gifford Run, and Twelvemile Run. Now turn and look upstream. You will note the relatively high silt banks that the streams have cut through. Apparently the water level was that high in floods, and dumped its silt behind the dam when that still existed.

Trout fishing in these parts has been severely impacted by acid rain. Due to sporadic liming efforts on Gifford Run and Mosquito Creek, a few brook trout now exist. The application of limestone chips to all the forest roads must have also had an effect in bringing back some stream life.

Walk upstream a short distance on a jeep track to a wet crossing of Gifford Run. If the stream is too high, search on up Gifford another hundred yards to a hunter-built swinging bridge. Across Gifford, turn right on the orange-blazed Quehanna Trail and walk a short distance to the 72 foot bridge over Mosquito Creek. This bridge was carried by a PA Army National Guard helicopter in 2007 to this site, and placed with considerable difficulty as it waded around in the helicopter prop wash, while four large For-

estry employees hung onto ropes attached to each corner of the bridge, trying to guide it. This is a fiberglass bridge, and replaces a swinging bridge that was hunter-built, and of the type that I call "cable-supported, flimsy-decked." It probably had the thinnest deck I have ever seen, with the boards wired at their ends onto the supporting cable underneath. It was provided with a slack cable on one side for hanging onto. People sometimes crawled across. The new fiberglass bridge was assembled by volunteers from the Quehanna Area Trails Club. The cost was \$37,000 for the bridge and \$5000 for preparation of the abutments.

After checking out the new bridge, turn around and head west past a hunting camp and up the hill between Gifford Run and Mosquito Creek. The side-hill construction here could be better, but it is only a couple hundred feet of elevation change. The trail levels out and turns right onto new location. The previous location climbed again through rocks.

The trail now runs along on the level, on the outer edge of a sloping bench, partway down from the top of the hill up to the left. The footing starts out rather rocky but becomes better. You will pass several sets of large rocks, evidently slid down long ago from the top of the hill above. The forest here is mature, with patches of rhododendron, and otherwise clear of undergrowth. Mosquito Creek at the bottom of the hill can be heard but generally not seen. When the leaves are off you can look at the hillside opposite, where the local hunters say they used to see deer moseying along in the old days. There is evidence that the top of one of the large boulders was a permanent deer stand.

Finally the trail starts trending upward, first gradually, then steeply. In a climb of a little over a hundred feet, you emerge at a high-voltage power line. Now you are at the original trail location. [The previous location, which you have now bypassed, went through heavy laurel hard to maintain.] Take the time to cross under the power line and follow the trail for a few yards north, up onto a boulder that has a memorial stone on top. This is Wildcat Rock. In about 1946 a hunter "killed three wildcats from this rock," as the monument states. This would have been a female bobcat and two kits, I think. The hunter was very proud of this achievement.

At this point you could continue on the Quehanna Trail, which is flat and easy in this part, but the end of the hike as I conceive it is to head west under the power line for a 10 minute walk out to Lost Run Road, where you have left your shuttle car.

How to get there: Get onto the Quehanna Highway, either from the direction of Karthaus to the southwest, or from the direction of Medix Run on PA 555 to the northwest. Drive to Reactor Road, which is about a mile northwest of the intersection of the Quehanna Highway with Wykoff Run Road. Drive in on Reactor Road for about a mile, and then bear off to the right onto Lost Run Road. Drive about 3.5 miles to the second high-voltage power line. This is the access to Wildcat Rock. Park a car here.

Continue driving south on Lost Run Road about 2.5 miles to the intersection with the Caledonia Pike. Here turn left and drive east for a measured half mile until you see on your left the identification sign for two hunting camps. There may also be a sign saying "Corporation Dam." Park here at the intersection of this forest track and the Caledonia Pike.



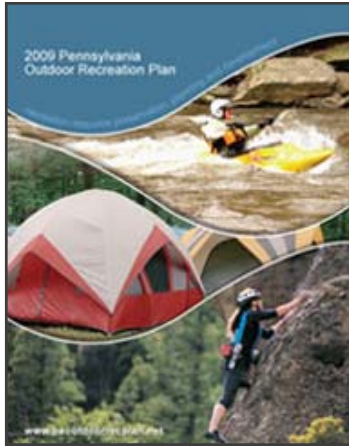
The 72 foot Corporation Dam Bridge.
Photo courtesy of Ralph Seeley.

DCNR News

PA Outdoor Recreation Plan

The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources has posted the draft of the PA Outdoor Recreation Plan at www.paoutdoorrecplan.com. The 2009 Pennsylvania Outdoor Recreation Plan will serve as a status report and as an overall guideline for recreation resource preservation, planning and development through the year 2013.

DCNR has identified four major themes for its draft recommendations in the plan:



- Align planning efforts to provide more integrated outdoor recreation opportunities;
- Connect outdoor recreation and conservation to Pennsylvania's economy and the health and quality of life of its residents;
- Reconnect people to the natural environment and develop an environmental stewardship ethic in all segments of the population; and
- Develop a statewide trail network including addressing priority trail gaps.

PA State Parks Are National Gold Medal Award Finalist

Pennsylvania's state park system is one of four finalists for the 2009 National Gold Medal Awards for Excellence in Park and Recreation Management, given by the American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration and the National Recreation and Park Association. The winner will be announced at the NRPA annual meeting in Utah in October. The other finalists are the state park systems in Georgia, Michigan and North Carolina.

The award honors excellence in long-range planning, resource management, volunteerism, environmental stewardship, program development and professional development. Pennsylvania has 117 state parks and three conservation areas. The system's nearly 300,000 acres and 1,800 full- and part-time employees play host to more than 35 million visitors each year.

For more information about the Gold Medal program, go to www.nrpa.org/awards.

DCNR Combating Invasive Species

Penn State's College of Agricultural Sciences and DCNR have extended for 18 months a collaborative effort to stop the spread of invasive plant species in state parks. Plants such as Japanese stiltgrass, mile-a-minute weed and multiflora rose have been taking over the ecosystems of many state parks in recent years.

Invasive species are making parks less biologically diverse, according to Art Gover, a research support associate in the university's Department of Horticulture. Losing plant diversity means losing the species-specific insects that eat those plants and, in turn, losing the birds that eat the insects.

Even though the forest looks healthy, a seemingly innocent shift in the plant population can have impacts on the food chain. To the

untrained eye, Japanese stiltgrass creates a nice carpet of green in a forest understory, but that carpet of green also inhibits forest regeneration.

The state parks project follows the model established by the Vegetation Management Project's 24-year affiliation with the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, addressing invasive plants and problem vegetation along highways. Penn State provides training, operational demonstrations and research to the transportation department to deal with invasive plant species.

The joint project between Penn State and DCNR is aimed at assessing invasive species conditions and developing park-specific management plans. Under the contract, researchers select parks from different regions across the state for evaluation, target high-priority areas, and train park staff in the most effective management techniques.

WRCP's Keystone WildNotes! Goes Digital

In order to better serve its readers with more in-depth stories and to take advantage of the interactive capabilities of the internet, the Wild Resource Conservation Program will no longer be printing *Keystone WILD!Notes*. Pennsylvania's only non-game and wild plant news magazine will now be available online. Current subscribers—along with those interesting in signing up for the quarterly newsletter for the first time—can enter an email address at <http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/wrcf/subscribe.html> to subscribe.



PCN Tours State Parks

DCNR and the Pennsylvania Cable Network have joined forces for a third summer of programs showcasing the unique features of state parks. This year the summer series is focusing on green initiatives as well as the beauty and recreational versatility of the state's parks. Upcoming programs will feature Codorus, Parker Dam, Little Buffalo, Keystone, Worlds End and Frances Slocum. Programs air on Sundays at 7:30 PM.

Gov. Rendell Nominates John Quigley For DCNR Secretary

John Quigley is Gov. Rendell's choice for DCNR Secretary. He would replace Michael DeBernardinis, who resigned in April. Quigley has worked for DCNR for four years, most recently as the chief of staff and prior to that as director of Legislation and Strategic Initiatives and of Operations. Prior to joining DCNR, Quigley served as government relations manager with PennFuture, a statewide public interest organization.



Plants and Animals

Seasonal Pool Registry

The Pennsylvania Seasonal Pools Registry is an effort by the Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program to document locations of, and collect preliminary biological data on, seasonal pool habitats throughout Pennsylvania. The Natural Heritage Program hopes to facilitate this project with the help of volunteers and landowners. Information collected will be used to create a database of seasonal pools in Pennsylvania.

The Seasonal Pools website www.waterlandlife.org/54 provides information on how to register and study seasonal pools, general information about seasonal pool ecology, pictures and field guides for species that use seasonal pools, outreach ideas, information for educators, and a list of additional resources.

Watershed Forestry Resource Guide Available

A *Watershed Forestry Resource Guide* with information and resources for managing urban forests for watershed health has been issued online by the Center for Watershed Protection with funding from the USDA Forest Service—Northeastern Area State and Private Forestry, and The Home Depot Foundation. The web site covers four areas: forest planning and assessment; reducing storm water runoff; forest friendly development; and planting and maintaining trees. There are also links to other resources. See the web site www.forestsforwatersheds.org.

State's First Private Wild Plant Sanctuary

Pennsylvania has its first private wild plant sanctuary, the Panther Creek Private Wild Plant Sanctuary, a 7.6 acre property in Lackawanna and Wayne Counties. The landowners, Michael and Barbara Yavorosky, will preserve the site in perpetuity, and welcome the public to visit the sanctuary.

The Private Wild Plant Sanctuary Program was established through the Wild Resource Conservation Act of 1982 to establish a voluntary statewide network of native plant sanctuaries on private lands. Landowners agree to protect the area and educate others about the importance of native and wild plants and habitats. In return, they receive assistance with a management plan if needed, and have access to technical assistance and ecological check ups.

For more information about the Private Wild Plant Sanctuary Program, contact DCNR's Bureau of Forestry at 717-787-3444 or send email to: RA-PAPlandSanctuary@state.pa.us.

Black Fly Control

Black flies are a real nuisance to outdoor enthusiasts. They swarm around you, bite, and suck your blood. On the good side, the flies live only a short time and don't bite at night.



In the past, to control the flies, agencies poured diesel oil and gasoline into rivers and sprayed chemical insecticides like methoxychlor and Dibrom. But it was pollution and sewage that really limited fly reproduction in the 1970s, since the fly eggs need pristine water to hatch. The return of cleaner rivers has resulted in an explosion of black flies.

The new weapon to combat black flies is Bti, bacillus thuringiensis israelensis, a natural soil bacteria and "biopesticide". Microscopic crystals of Bti are broadcast onto moving water where female black flies lay their eggs. The larvae ingest the crystals, the crystal dissolves, becomes toxic, and kills the insects.

Bti is not toxic to other aquatic life, making it one of the safest insect control agents known. In Pennsylvania, Bti application is an annual six million dollar business.

Great Sunflower Project



The Great Sunflower Project was designed to help determine the health of bee populations by watching and recording the presence of bees at sunflowers in homes, businesses and schools. The project provides free "Lemon Queen" sunflower seeds and complete instructions on the survey process and bee identification. Interested parties can learn more or sign up online at www.greatsunflower.org.

Feral Swine

The Game Commission has declared that feral swine are an injurious, non-native, invasive species of concern in Pennsylvania and pose a significant, imminent and unacceptable threat to the state's natural resources, including wildlife and its habitats; the agricultural industry, including crop and livestock production; the forest products industry; and human health and safety.

It is suspected that the swine were introduced into the wilds of the Commonwealth through a variety of means, including both intentional and unintentional releases.

The Game Commission has determined that the eradication of feral swine from Pennsylvania is necessary to prevent further harm to public and private property, threats to native wildlife and disease risks for wildlife and the state's pork industry. The agency is not seeking to establish a hunting season, but is committed to rid Pennsylvania of this invasive species.



The Game Commission has launched a "Feral Swine" section on its website www.pgc.state.pa.us.

Trees for PA Parks

Take a minute to plant a virtual tree, and Pennsylvania could end up a big winner again this year with real trees in the Odwalla Plant A Tree program. Eleven state park systems are competing for \$100,000 in tree planting money. The more votes, the more money a state park system will get for planting trees. Last year, Pennsylvania blew away the competition with more than 19,000 votes. Cast your vote for Pennsylvania at www.parkvisitor.com/odwalla and tell a friend!

Ecology

DCNR Collecting Seismic Data By Thumping Roads Looking For Sites Where Carbon Dioxide Could be Stored Underground

As part of the requirements of a 2008 state law that directed the state to investigate the viability of storing carbon dioxide underground, DCNR began collecting seismic data last month. Seismic data are generated by using vibrations to capture a two-dimensional picture of the rock layers beneath the surface. Interpretation of the data will allow scientists to estimate the type of material, its structure and its depth below the surface.

To collect this data, large trucks with “thumper” devices travel slowly along public roadways. They thump the ground, and a cable with sensing devices connected to it records the energy reflected back to the surface by the underlying geologic features.

Detailed site evaluations involving several years of advanced scientific study will need to be performed at specific locations to make a final determination about whether any site is suitable. Suitable formations have alternating layers of rocks of different types, some of which form barriers that prevent the stored carbon dioxide from moving upward.

A carbon sequestration network would involve first capturing carbon dioxide from coal-fired electricity generating plants and other industrial sources. It would then be compressed into a liquid and cooled, and transported through pipelines to a sequestration site, where it would be injected into the rock formations or other suitable geologic features deep beneath the surface.

DCNR's Bureau of Topographic and Geologic Survey will oversee the project, with the field work performed by ARM Geophysics of Hershey. The data collection will probably continue through September.

For more information, see the DCNR web site www.dcnr.state.pa.us and choose Carbon Sequestration under Hot Topics.

Global Warming

The number of Pennsylvanians who believe that global warming is a problem dropped five percent in the last year, according to the 2009 Mansfield University State Survey.

“This year, the number of firm believers in global warming declined to 65 percent,” according to Dr. Timothy Madigan, associate professor of sociology and co-director of the annual survey of adult Pennsylvanians. “Last year it was over 70 percent and had been rising steadily since 1999 when we first asked the question. At the same time, the number of people who do not believe in global warming rose to 28 percent. This matches the height of disbelief first recorded by our annual survey on this topic a decade ago.”

For complete survey results, see <http://news.mansfield.edu/archives/?i=13380>.

Mass Transit

In 1946, when the population of this country was half what it is now, Americans took 23.4 billion rides on public transportation. That amounted to about 156 rides per person. Last year, ridership hit 11 billion (about 37 uses per person), the highest total since 1956, when the Interstate Highway System was authorized.

FAW Wilderness Videos

Friends of Allegheny Wilderness, an advocate for more wilderness areas in the Allegheny National Forest, has a new sixteen minute film that highlights the areas that it hopes to protect as wilderness areas.

In order to make the video available to the widest possible audience, the film has been divided into two parts and posted to YouTube. The addresses are www.youtube.com/watch?v=3NaxaVBlEtEo and www.youtube.com/watch?v=K5_qkD6O7WY.

FAW also has other short wilderness-related videos on its YouTube page at www.youtube.com/FAWweb



New Report Spotlights Potential Wildlife, Wind Energy Conflict Areas

The Center for Rural Pennsylvania has released two new reports looking at potential conflicts between wildlife, land use and commercial wind energy farms.

Modeling Potential Wildlife-Wind Energy Conflict Areas, by Brian W. Okey and Michael J. Kuzernchak from Indiana University of Pennsylvania, highlights tools communities can use to more comprehensively address land use decisions involving wind farms.

Using PA Natural Heritage Program Data for Wind Energy Planning: A Manual for Townships by the same authors used Natural Heritage Program information to identify 235 townships in 39 counties which contain areas of outstanding importance to the state's wildlife.

The Center is a bipartisan, bicameral legislative agency which serves as a resource for rural policy within the Commonwealth.

Audubon PA Seeks Input On Waggoner's Gap Hawk Watch

Audubon Pennsylvania is seeking feedback about the use and development of the Waggoner's Gap Hawk Watch on the Cumberland-Perry county border north of Carlisle.

The survey is online at <http://pa.audubon.org/kittatinny/birdinfo/WaggonersGap.html>. Surveys are also available at the Cumberland County Planning Commission, 18 N. Hanover Street, Carlisle; the Cumberland Valley Tourist Bureau, 401 E. Louthier Street; and Cumberland County Courthouse.

Since the 1950s, volunteers have handled migration counts and submitted numbers to Audubon and the Hawk Migration Association of North America. Among the plans for the area is a trail for self-guided walks with various stops to explain what can be observed at each station, an outdoor classroom, a picnic glen, and handicapped accessible viewing areas.

The relocation of the Tuscarora Trail in Perry County will cross PA 74 at the Hawk Watch Station and negotiations with Audubon are underway to permit the trail to cross this Audubon property.

