



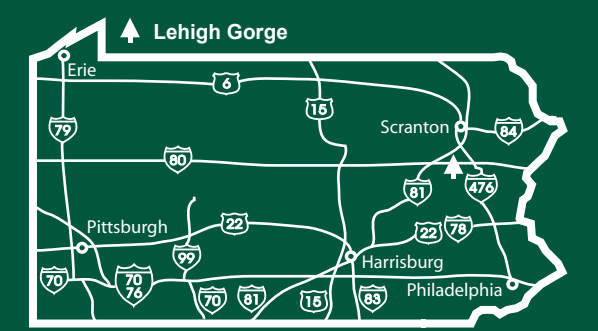
# Lehigh Gorge State Park



Department of Conservation & Natural Resources



Michael DiBerardinis, Secretary  
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
Edward G. Rendell, Governor



### For More Information Contact:

Lehigh Gorge State Park  
c/o Hickory Run State Park  
RR #1, Box 81  
White Haven, PA 18661-9712  
570-443-0400  
e-mail: hickoryrunsp@state.pa.us  
An Equal Opportunity Employer  
www.visitPAparks.com

### Information and Reservations

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

### 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 is your responsibility.
- Alcoholic beverages are prohibited.
- Please camp only in designated areas and try to minimize your impact on the campsite.
- Pets must be controlled and attended at all times and on a leash or otherwise safely restrained.
- Do your part to keep wildlife wild! Enjoy wildlife from a safe distance and do not feed or approach wild animals.
- Prevent forest fires by having a fire in proper facilities and properly disposing of hot coals. Do not leave a fire unattended.
- 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.

## Lehigh Gorge State Park

A deep, steep-walled gorge, thick vegetation, rock outcroppings and many waterfalls characterize Lehigh Gorge State Park. In Luzerne and Carbon Counties in eastern Pennsylvania, the park follows the Lehigh River from the outlet of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Francis E. Walter Dam at the northern end, to the town of Jim Thorpe at the southern end of the park. Whitewater boating and biking are popular activities.



### Delaware and Lehigh National Heritage Corridor

Lehigh Gorge State Park is in the Audubon's Lehigh Reach of the Delaware and Lehigh National Heritage Corridor. The Corridor stretches more than 150 miles from Wilkes-Barre to Bristol, in eastern Pennsylvania, and follows the historic routes of the Lehigh & Susquehanna Railroad, the Lehigh Navigation, and the Delaware Canal.

The Corridor showcases the extraordinary natural, cultural and recreational resources and works in partnership to conserve the heritage and enhance the quality of life for its many residents. Corridor landings (visitor centers) are available throughout the region to direct visitors to many opportunities that tell the stories that make the region so nationally significant.

### Whitewater Boating

A major attraction of the park is whitewater boating. This section of the Lehigh River is Class III whitewater and is popular for rafting, kayaking and canoeing. All boaters must enter and leave the Lehigh River at designated sites. River flow is controlled by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers at the Francis E. Walter Dam and by streams flowing into the river throughout the park. Flow rates from the dam and scheduled water release dates are available at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Web site: [www.nap.usace.army.mil/](http://www.nap.usace.army.mil/). Look in the section called "Dams and Water Releases" or call the Hickory Run State Park office.

**FLOW RATES:** At flows below 250 cubic feet per second (cfs), the river is very low and many parts are not deep enough for boating. From 250 to 1,000 cfs, the river becomes better for boating. Above 1,000 cfs, the level of difficulty becomes progressively greater and higher levels of skill and better equipment are necessary. At levels above 5,000 cfs, only expert boaters, in kayaks, closed canoes or very large rafts should attempt the river.



### Recreational Opportunities

The 4,548 acres of park land follow the river from Francis E. Walter Dam in the north to Jim Thorpe in the south. The Lehigh Gorge Trail follows over 20 miles of abandoned railroad grade along the river, providing opportunities for hiking, bicycling, sightseeing and photography. The trail is closed to motor vehicles.

Parking areas are provided in White Haven, Rockport and Glen Onoko. Very limited parking is available at Lehigh Tannery but no boat launching is permitted.

**FISHING:** Fishing in the river and streams is permitted during seasons established by the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission. The northern section from the Francis E. Walter Dam to Sandy Run is stocked with trout and is most popular with anglers. Whitewater boating between the Francis E. Walter Dam and White Haven is discouraged to promote this section for fishing activities.



**HUNTING AND FIREARMS:** Most of the park is open to hunting, trapping and the training of dogs during established seasons. Common game species are deer, turkey, bear and small game. The park also provides access to state game lands 40, 141 and 149, which adjoin the park.

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 accessible hunting information.

Use extreme caution with firearms at all times. Other visitors use the park during hunting seasons. Firearms and archery equipment 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 must be kept in the owner's car, trailer or camp.

**All boaters are required to wear a U.S. Coast Guard approved personal flotation device. Type I, III or V vests designed for whitewater use are required.**

### LICENSED COMMERCIAL OUTFITTERS:

Inexperienced boaters should not attempt the Lehigh River without qualified guides. Outfitted trips are available from concessionaires that provide rafts, guides, all necessary safety equipment, and transportation to and from the river.

The following is a list of licensed, commercial outfitters currently operating on the Lehigh River.

**Jim Thorpe River Adventures**  
1 Adventure Lane  
Jim Thorpe, PA 18229  
800-424-7238  
[www.jtraft.com](http://www.jtraft.com)



**Pocono Whitewater**  
1519 State Route 903  
Jim Thorpe, PA 18229  
800-WHITEWATER  
[www.whitewaterrafting.com](http://www.whitewaterrafting.com)



**Whitewater Challengers Inc.**  
288 North Stagecoach Road  
Weatherly, PA 18255  
800-443-8554  
[www.whitewaterchallengers.com](http://www.whitewaterchallengers.com)



**Whitewater Rafting Adventures Inc.**  
PO Box 65  
Nesquehoning, PA 18240  
800-876-0285  
[www.adventurerafting.com](http://www.adventurerafting.com)



**BICYCLING:** The Lehigh Gorge Trail is open for biking. Wide tires are recommended. Bicycle rentals and shuttle service are available throughout the area.



**PROPOSED RECREATIONAL DEVELOPMENT:** Future recreational development in Lehigh Gorge State Park will improve opportunities for public access to the Gorge and Lehigh River while protecting the natural resources and maintaining a high quality recreational experience.

Trailhead facilities such as parking and comfort stations will be upgraded in the vicinity of White Haven, Rockport and Glen Onoko, providing support for the park's recreational activities.

**HIKING:** Hikers need to be aware that the Gorge is a natural area that possesses natural hazards like steep and treacherous terrain and fast-moving water. Hikers must protect themselves from life-threatening accidents. You are responsible for your safety and that of your family. Wear proper hiking shoes and use extreme caution when hiking in the gorge.

**WINTER ACTIVITIES:** The Lehigh Gorge Trail on the west side of the river from White Haven to Glen Onoko is open to cross-country skiing. The 15-mile section from White Haven to Penn Haven Junction is also open to snowmobiles. Parking for snowmobiling is at the White Haven access area under the I-80 bridge.

### Environmental Education and Interpretation

A wide variety of environmental education and interpretive programs are offered year-round. Through hands-on activities and guided walks participants gain appreciation, understanding and develop a sense of stewardship toward natural and cultural resources.

### WHITEWATER REGULATIONS AND SAFETY:

To protect the natural resources and the unspoiled natural beauty of the river and its environment, the Bureau of State Parks has developed maximum boating capacities on the Lehigh River and controls the number of boaters. Controls have been placed on the outfitters which provide commercial guided river trips. These controls are designed to cover the safety equipment, type of flotation devices used and level of skill of guides. Persons in canoes and kayaks should wear helmets and are required to add sufficient flotation to their watercraft for the displacement of water. Wetsuits or drysuits are often necessary because the best water levels for boating occur when air and water temperatures are low.



Inflatable devices (rafts, canoes and kayaks) must be designed for whitewater use and be constructed of durable materials with strong fabric backing. Crafts made from vinyl or PVC are prohibited. At flow rates less than 250 cubic feet per second (cfs), inflatable rafts must be at least seven feet long and have at least two separate air chambers. At flow rates between 250 - 1000 cfs, inflatable rafts must be at least eight feet in length, have three separate air chambers and

### History

Settlement was sparse during the 19th century until loggers arrived and began felling trees and building sawmills. Famed naturalist and painter John James Audubon visited the area in 1829 and spent six weeks painting birds. He was distressed at how quickly trees were cut and shipped down river. The industrial revolution was just beginning in the area.

The discovery of anthracite coal at Summit Hill in 1791 caused intensive development and settlement of the upper Lehigh Valley. In the early 1800s, the need to transport increasingly large quantities of coal to markets down river led to the intensive development of canals. Between 1835 and 1838, a series of dams, locks, and canals was constructed by Josiah White and the Lehigh Coal and Navigation Company. White constructed 20 dams and 29 locks over the 26 miles between Mauch Chunk (now Jim Thorpe) and White Haven. Five and one-half miles of canal were also built. It was called the Upper Grand Section of the Lehigh Canal because the locks and dams were larger and far more impressive than the locks of other canals.

When severe flooding in the mid-1800s destroyed the canal system, it was replaced with the new technology of railroads. Remains of locks, dams and towpath are still evident in the Lehigh River Gorge.

Loggers continued to clearcut the huge white pine and hemlock trees for lumber and for the bark, which was used to tan hides. In the 1860s, the second largest tannery in the United States sat on the banks of the Lehigh River at the small town of Lehigh Tannery.

A terrible forest fire swept through the Lehigh Gorge area in 1875, burning the remaining standing timber, many sawmills and stockpiles of lumber. The sawmills closed and the loggers departed.



This is an historic photograph of the White Haven dam, which pooled up the water for the slack-water canal, and supplied water for the lock, which is the stone wall in the foreground.

have an outside tube diameter of at least 13 inches. At flow rates between 1,000 cfs and 5,000 cfs, inflatable rafts must be at least 11 feet long, contain three separate air chambers and have an outside tube diameter of at least 15 inches. At flow rates above 5,000 cfs, inflatable rafts must be at least 12.5 feet long, contain at least three separate air chambers and have an outside tube diameter of at least 17 inches.

**TRIP LENGTHS:** River trips may be of three lengths:

- White Haven to Rockport: 8.7 miles
- Rockport to Glen Onoko: 12.2 miles
- White Haven to Glen Onoko: 20.9 miles.

The White Haven to Glen Onoko trip by raft may take from 10 to 12 hours at lower water levels. Be sure to allow enough time to complete your trip before dark.



### Nearby Attractions

For information on nearby attractions contact:  
Pocono Mountains Visitors Bureau, 800-POCONOS,  
[www.800poconos.com](http://www.800poconos.com)  
Luzerne County Visitors Bureau, 888-905-2872,  
[www.tournepa.com](http://www.tournepa.com)

At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, railroads popularized the southern end of the park as a resort called Glen Onoko. Hotel Wahnetah boasted 47 rooms, a dance pavilion, tennis courts, fresh air and hikes to the scenic Glen Onoko Falls. A fire in 1911 closed the hotel and a fire in 1917 ended the resort era.

In the 1970s, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania began purchasing park lands and in 1980 the land was turned over to the Bureau of State Parks.



Lukes Falls near Rockport

### Watching Wildlife

River corridors are natural transportation routes and so the Gorge has a great diversity of plants and animals. Great blue herons, mergansers, kingfishers and beavers are common river residents. In summer, the Lehigh Gorge Trail is a great place to see snakes, fence lizards and warblers, especially black-and-white and magnolia warblers.

### Exploring Audubon's Lehigh Auto Tour

Lehigh Gorge State Park and nearby Hickory Run State Park are featured in a unique auto tour entitled *Exploring Audubon's Lehigh*. The tour focuses on famed naturalist John James Audubon's 1829 visit to the Rockport area of the Lehigh River Valley and looks at the valley's natural and historical landscapes. Brochures, CDs and cassettes are available at several locations along the 53-mile route. Signs mark the route and identify tour stops. The tour begins at either Jim Thorpe at the Old Mauch Chunk Landing, or at White Haven at the Lehigh Canal Depot. For more information about the tour, visit their Web site at [www.audubonslehigh.org](http://www.audubonslehigh.org).

### Access for People with Disabilities

This symbol indicates facilities and activities that are accessible. 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 Pennsylvania Bureau of State Parks:

888-PA-PARKS (voice)  
888-537-7294 (TTY)  
711 (AT&T Relay Services)

### In an Emergency

Contact a park employee or dial 911. Look on bulletin boards for directions to the nearest hospital.

### NEAREST HOSPITALS:

**Rockport Access:**  
Hazleton General Hospital  
700 East Broad Street  
Hazleton, PA 18201 570-501-4000

**White Haven Access:**  
Hazleton General Hospital  
700 East Broad Street  
Hazleton, PA 18201 570-501-4000

**Glen Onoko Access:**  
Gnaden Huetten Memorial Hospital  
211 North 12<sup>th</sup> Street  
Lehigh, PA 18235 610-377-1300

## Directions

**White Haven** is the northern access area and can be reached off of Exit 273 of I-80. Follow PA 940 east to the White Haven Shopping Center. Turn right on Main Street and bear right to the state park access area.

**Rockport** is the central access area and can be reached from the south by following US 209 south from Jim Thorpe to PA 93 north. After six miles, turn right onto Brenckman Drive to the town of Weatherly. Continue through Weatherly then turn right onto Lehigh Gorge Drive. Turn right onto Rockport Road. Rockport is accessible from the north from Exit 273 off I-80. Follow PA 940 west for one mile then turn left onto Lehigh Gorge Drive. At the small village of Rockport, turn left onto Rockport Road.

### Driving Directions from Rockport to Glen Onoko

Leave access area on Rockport Road  
0.8 mi. At stop sign, turn left onto Lehigh Gorge Drive  
3.6 mi. In Weatherly, cross open grate bridge, then turn left at T-intersection  
2.5 mi. At stop sign, turn left onto PA 93 S  
5.9 mi. At stop sign, turn left onto US 209 N  
3.0 mi. At stop light, turn left onto PA 903 N  
0.4 mi. At stop sign, go straight (leaving PA 903 which bears to the right)  
0.3 mi. Turn left at entrance to Lehigh Gorge State Park  
1.6 mi. Enter parking area for Glen Onoko Access

### Driving Directions from Glen Onoko to Rockport

Leave Glen Onoko Access  
1.6 mi. Turn right at stop sign  
0.4 mi. At stop sign, go straight on PA 903 S  
0.4 mi. At stop light, turn rt. onto US 209 S  
2.9 mi. Turn right onto PA 93 N  
6 mi. In Hudsondale, turn right onto Brenckman Drive heading towards Weatherly  
2.4 mi. At stop sign, turn right, cross bridge  
0.1 mi. After crossing railroad tracks, turn right.  
0.1 mi. At stop sign, go straight  
0.3 mi. At T-intersection, turn left, then turn right at stop sign  
3.2 mi. Turn right onto Rockport Road  
0.8 mi. Ranger station is on the left

**Glen Onoko** is the southern access area and may be reached by taking Exit 74 of the Northeast Extension of the Pennsylvania Turnpike. Follow US 209 south to Jim Thorpe. Then take PA 903 north across the river. At the stop sign, continue straight to Coalport Road. Turn left to Glen Onoko.