

Raccoon Creek State Park

by Dennis Tubbs



photo-Dennis Tubbs

Located in southern Beaver County, Raccoon Creek State Park is a western Pennsylvania jewel. Conveniently found only a short drive from downtown Pittsburgh on PA Route 18 just north of U.S. Route 22, the park encompasses 7,572 magnificent acres. Raccoon Lake encompasses 101 acres.

In the 1930s, the National Park Service created the Raccoon Creek National Recreation Demonstration Area. Workers from the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and the Works Progress Administration (WPA) built the park's recreation facilities and began conservation work on park lands.

In 1945, the site officially became Raccoon Creek State Park.

Raccoon Lake, a main attraction of the park, provides many opportunities for boating and fishing. Regulations permit only electric-motored powerboats and non-powered boats, but the lake is easily accessible with two boat launches and 42 mooring spaces. Motorized boats must display a current boat registration. Non-powered boats must display one of the following: PA boat registration, Fish & Boat Commission launch permit, or a mooring permit from the Bureau of State Parks.

Raccoon Park Road is the main road through the park from U.S. Route 30. Shortly after entering the park, Lake Side Lodge Road is located on your right and leads to the boat ramp near the dam breast, where there is a moderate amount of parking. The second boat access is located just off Raccoon Park Road in a small, protected cove to the right of the road. This access has limited roadside parking but is adjacent to the boat mooring area.

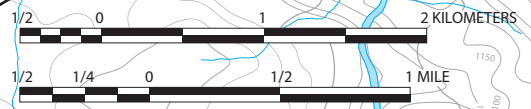
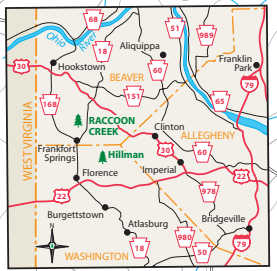
Both ramps have adequate space for launching trailerable boats. Although both of these launch points are suitable for canoes and kayaks,

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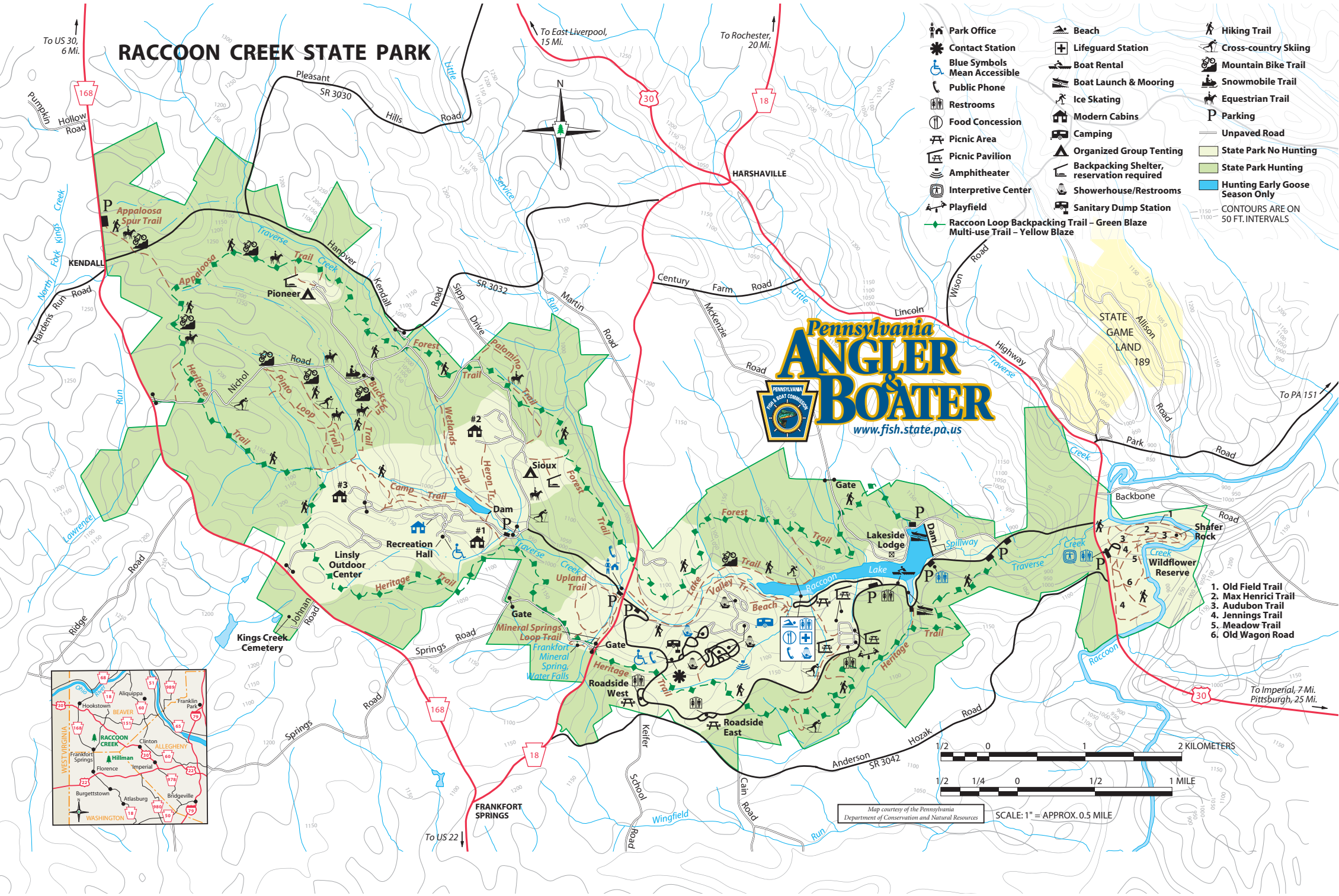
RACCOON CREEK STATE PARK



- | | | |
|--|---|----------------------------------|
| Park Office | Beach | Hiking Trail |
| Contact Station | Lifeguard Station | Cross-country Skiing |
| Blue Symbols Mean Accessible | Boat Rental | Mountain Bike Trail |
| Public Phone | Boat Launch & Mooring | Snowmobile Trail |
| Restrooms | Ice Skating | Equestrian Trail |
| Food Concession | Modern Cabins | Parking |
| Picnic Area | Camping | Unpaved Road |
| Picnic Pavilion | Organized Group Tenting | State Park No Hunting |
| Amphitheater | Backpacking Shelter, reservation required | State Park Hunting |
| Interpretive Center | Showerhouse/Restrooms | Hunting Early Goose Season Only |
| Playfield | Sanitary Dump Station | CONTOURS ARE ON 50 FT. INTERVALS |
| Raccoon Loop Backpacking Trail - Green Blaze | | |
| Multi-use Trail - Yellow Blaze | | |



Map courtesy of the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources



1. Old Field Trail
2. Max Henrici Trail
3. Audubon Trail
4. Jennings Trail
5. Meadow Trail
6. Old Wagon Road



Photos: Art Michaels

many people launch their non-powered boats at the beach area where a small, grassy section separates a large parking lot from the water's edge.

Some of Raccoon Lake's best fishing is found at the mouth of the cove just after launching from the access point on Raccoon Park Road. The shoreline to the right after leaving the cove is the location of a series of habitat structures that were placed several years ago. These structures continue to hold fish. Habitat structures were also placed directly across the lake from the mouth of the cove. There you'll also find an ample population of fish that makes for excellent angling. This location is a short distance from the Lake Side Lodge Road access point. It's also the spot where a 7- to 8-pound largemouth bass was caught and released in 2006.

Shoreline fishing is found just off Raccoon Park Road between the boat ramp and the beach area. An easy walking path follows the shoreline in this area.

The largemouth bass caught last season was an unusual catch for Raccoon Lake, but that might be attributed to a relocation of fish from Dutch Fork Lake, Green County. When Dutch Fork Lake was drained because of difficulties with the dam, Commission staff transported some 1,000 displaced bass to Raccoon Lake that were estimated to weigh between 4 and 6 pounds.

Raccoon Lake is a great fishing spot for both boaters and shoreline

fishermen with a handicapped-accessible fishing pier near the beach area. There are many sport fish at Raccoon Lake. The Fish & Boat Commission stocks coldwater fish such as brook and rainbow trout in the main lake and in

feeder streams. The lake is stocked with trout five times annually, but Raccoon Lake is most noted for excellent year-round catches of crappies.

Among the many Raccoon Lake amenities is a boat rental located near the entrance to the beach. Parking is to the right of the entrance to the beach in the area of the main park. The facility offers various types of boats for rent including rowboats, canoes, kayaks and paddleboats. They also provide fishing tackle, bait, camping supplies, refreshments and firewood for sale. Discounts are available for groups, organizations, Scouts, campers, seniors, students and frequent renters. The boat rental opens on the first day of trout season and operates until mid-October.

For more information about boat rentals, call 724-899-4130.

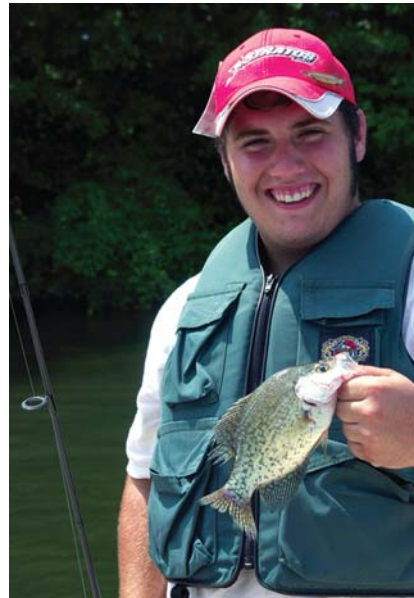
There are 172 modern and trailer campsites in the park. Campsites are open the second Friday in April to mid-October. Rustic sites are available from mid-October to mid-April. Several campsites offer a playground

and restrooms with hot showers. There are also sites available for rent with modern cabins that include a furnished living area, kitchen/dining room, and toilet/shower room. The park's pristine beauty and simple comfort of the modern cabins make an excellent combination for pleasant getaways or inexpensive vacations for those families who want to experience Pennsylvania's wonderful fishing, wildlife and nature. The park includes 45 miles of hiking trails, 17 miles of biking trails and 16 miles of horseback riding trails.

Adjacent to the boat rental and beach swimming area is a food concession that is open from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. seven days a week from Memorial Day weekend until Labor Day. For a current menu and operating times, call 724-899-4177. Inclement weather may affect business hours.

Raccoon Creek State Park is a legacy, created by a society experiencing a great depression and preserved by decades of dedicated people. It is a gift of opportunity from people of the past to any who wish to experience the nature and beauty of

Pennsylvania in the present. ☐



Dennis Tubbs is the Fish & Boat Commission's Southwest Region aquatic resources program specialist.

More Information

Visit these web sites to find directions to the park and to learn more about Raccoon Lake:

- www.dcnr.state.pa.us/state_parks/parks/raccooncreek.aspx.
- http://sites.state.pa.us/PA_Exec/Fish_Boat/map/pfbc_maps/beavermain.htm.