

Lackawanna State Park

by Kelly Houghton



Lackawanna State Park is in the Pocono Mountains of northeast Pennsylvania. Amidst the mountains and in the beautiful 1,411-acre state park is an abundance of recreational activities, including its picturesque 198-acre lake. “Whether camping, viewing wildlife, swimming, picnicking, boating, fishing, or hiking, all activities center around our beautiful lake,” says Alex Stout, Lackawanna State Park manager.

Fishing

Although Lackawanna Lake offers many activities for outdoor rec-

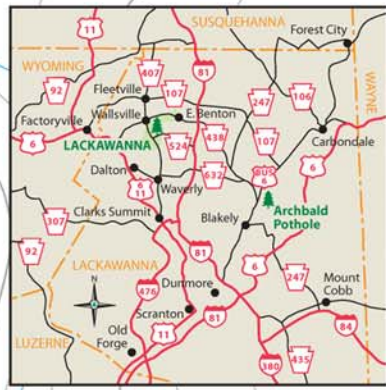
reation, the lake’s premier sport is fishing. Anglers cast lines for both coldwater and warmwater species. The lake’s warmwater population includes eight panfish species, including yellow bullheads, brown bullheads, pumpkinseeds, bluegills, green sunfish, black and white crappies and yellow perch. Two different forage fish species, white suckers and golden shiners, along with gamefish species including brook trout, chain pickerel and largemouth bass, also inhabit the lake. Largemouth bass remain the prominent and most popular fish anglers try for in the summer.

The lake is also an approved trout water with an annual trout stocking. Species the Commission stocks into the lake, as well as the streams and creeks feeding the lake, are trout, muskellunge, walleyes, channel catfish, bullhead, pickerel and largemouth bass.

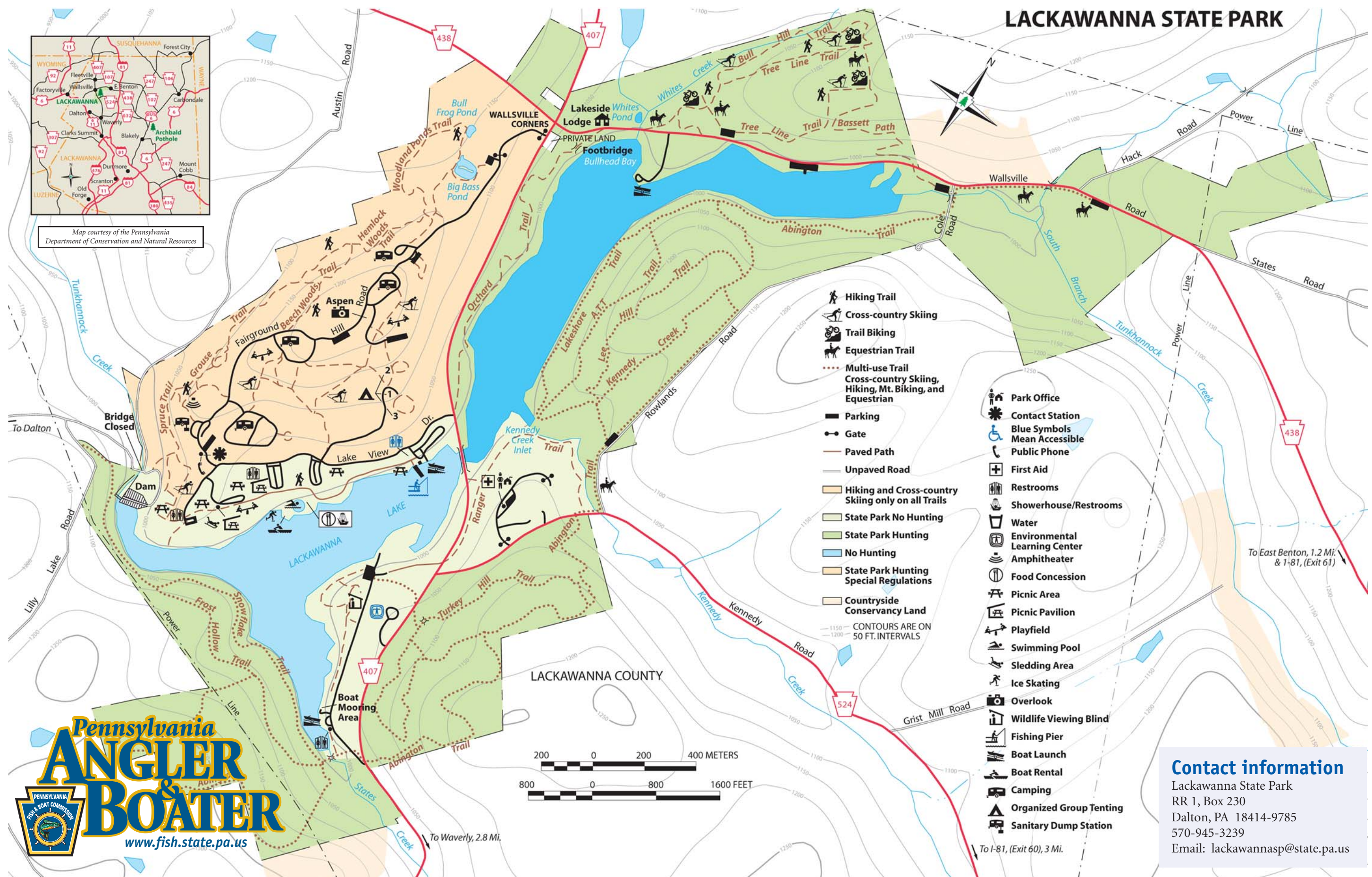
If you enjoy casting from shore, the 2.5-mile-long lake has more than 7.5 miles of shoreline. Shore fishing may be especially productive since the latest Fish & Boat Commission survey shows that five different species of aquatic vegetation cover about 24 percent of the shallow water surface.

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LACKAWANNA STATE PARK



Map courtesy of the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

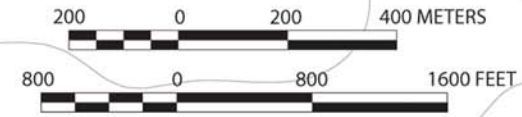


- Hiking Trail
- Cross-country Skiing
- Trail Biking
- Equestrian Trail
- Multi-use Trail
Cross-country Skiing, Hiking, Mt. Biking, and Equestrian

- Parking
- Gate
- Paved Path
- Unpaved Road
- Hiking and Cross-country Skiing only on all Trails
- State Park No Hunting
- State Park Hunting
- No Hunting
- State Park Hunting Special Regulations
- Countryside Conservancy Land

— 1150 — CONTOURS ARE ON 50 FT. INTERVALS
— 1200 —

- Park Office
- Contact Station
- Blue Symbols Mean Accessible
- Public Phone
- First Aid
- Restrooms
- Showerhouse/Restrooms
- Water
- Environmental Learning Center Amphitheater
- Food Concession
- Picnic Area
- Picnic Pavilion
- Playfield
- Swimming Pool
- Sledding Area
- Ice Skating
- Overlook
- Wildlife Viewing Blind
- Fishing Pier
- Boat Launch
- Boat Rental
- Camping
- Organized Group Tenting
- Sanitary Dump Station



Contact information
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Photo: WCO Dave Kaminski

The most common fish to pull through the ice are trout, largemouth bass, muskellunge, walleyes, pickerel and perch.

In addition to natural fish habitats, Lackawanna has an abundance of artificial habitats that rest of the lake's bottom. Roughly 100 artificial fish habitat structures dot the lake in six different sites and in depths ranging from 3 feet to 25 feet.

If pier fishing is your preference, the pier adjacent to the main boat launch offers some of the park's best fishing. Rock rubble humps and stream channel modifications were placed near the fishing pier to improve angling success. The park has reported that anglers are very happy with the results.

Boating

Lackawanna Lake is an electric-motors-only lake. The water's tranquility makes it a favorite for anglers as well as those hoping to capture the lake's serenity in rowboats, sailboats and canoes. Paddlers especially favor the lake because it's fed by Kennedy Creek.

Although a limited number of boat mooring spaces are available seasonally, three boat launches in the state park make trailering and launching

boats simple. The main boat launch is close to the fishing pier's central location on the lake's northern shore. This launch is also conveniently located near the campground and organized group camping area. Boaters can find a second launch at the southernmost tip of the lake near the boat mooring area. The third launch is in the northern part of the lake near Bullhead Bay. If you don't own a boat, a boat concession near the swimming pool area also rents various types of watercraft.

Winter activities

Although the majority of park activities are at their prime during the summer, Lackawanna still has appealing draws during the winter.

According to Stout, the attendance numbers in the winter depend on the weather, and they typically are only about a third of the summer attendance numbers. Anglers and ice skaters wait for cold days with little snow. Hikers, bikers and walkers linger for warmer winter temperatures, while cold temperatures and snow attract those who enjoy cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, ice skating and sledding.

If the angling isn't successful on a certain, snowy day, it's simple to gather the friends or family and your cross-country skis and explore some of Lackawanna's 5 miles of trails. You could also sled on the gentle slopes near pavilion number one, or dust off the skates and explore the maintained ice skating cove just south of the fishing pier.

However, of all the winter recreation, the most popular pastime is ice fishing. Ice fishing consistently draws the lake's largest crowds, and when the weather and ice are perfect, the lake can be dotted with well over 100 anglers. Winter attendance

numbers have even been comparable to summer numbers when the ice fishing is good.

The standard ice equipment of tip-ups and jigging rods tipped with live bait or small lures works well. As far as location, the majority of anglers tend to follow the deeper lake sections. Deep water can be found in the lake's main channel, which curves through varying depths of 12 to 40 feet.

The lake's three boat launch areas, as well as several nearby parking areas, are kept plowed for convenient winter access. However, Stout advises that people steer clear of the ice skating area as well as the portion of ice under the bridge. This area around the PA Route 407 bridge remains unsafe even in extreme cold temperatures.

While largemouth bass are the angling favorite in the summer, trout and panfish are sought in the winter. The most common fish to pull through the ice are trout, largemouth bass, muskellunge, walleyes, pickerel and perch. Lackawanna Lake usually receives a winter trout stocking in February.

Not only is Lackawanna a state park with something for everyone, but it's also within 10 miles of a large metropolitan area and serves as the headquarters for two state parks about one hour's drive away. East of Lackawanna is Archbald Pothole State Park and about 25 miles northwest is Salts Springs State Park. Archbald Pothole exhibits the world's largest glacial pothole, and the 400-acre Salt Springs State Park offers a nature preserve atmosphere with waterfalls and tall hemlocks.

Lackawanna State Park itself can easily be reached from I-81. The state park is located in the Lackawanna Valley and was once an important part of a Native American trail that linked the valley to the state of New York. Lackawanna, an American Indian word meaning "the meeting of two streams," was explored in the early 1800s by settlers who followed the path and built farms in the valley. □