

# Poe Valley State Park

by Kelly Houghton



Photo-courtesy of DCNR

Lying in a rugged mountain valley near the middle of the state is Poe Valley State Park. This nature enthusiast's paradise is located in Centre County and consists of more than 620 acres of endless forests. Nestled in the state park's foliage is Poe Lake, a 25-acre haven for boaters and anglers.

Named after Big Poe Creek, Poe Valley State Park began as a Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) project in the mid-1930s, during the Great Depression. Many of the roads and the dam, completed in 1937, were built by the CCC men who lived several miles upstream from the park.

Today, those roads carry visitors to and from the many recreational activities available in the park's secluded setting. Poe Lake, known for its solitude and peaceful surroundings, is an electric-motors-only lake, making it a popular choice for those who enjoy the lake's tranquility. Kayakers and canoeists also enjoy paddling in the pristine mountain lake's calm waters.

In addition, a swimming beach and many shaded picnic areas, including two pavilions with 100-person capacities, are available for use.

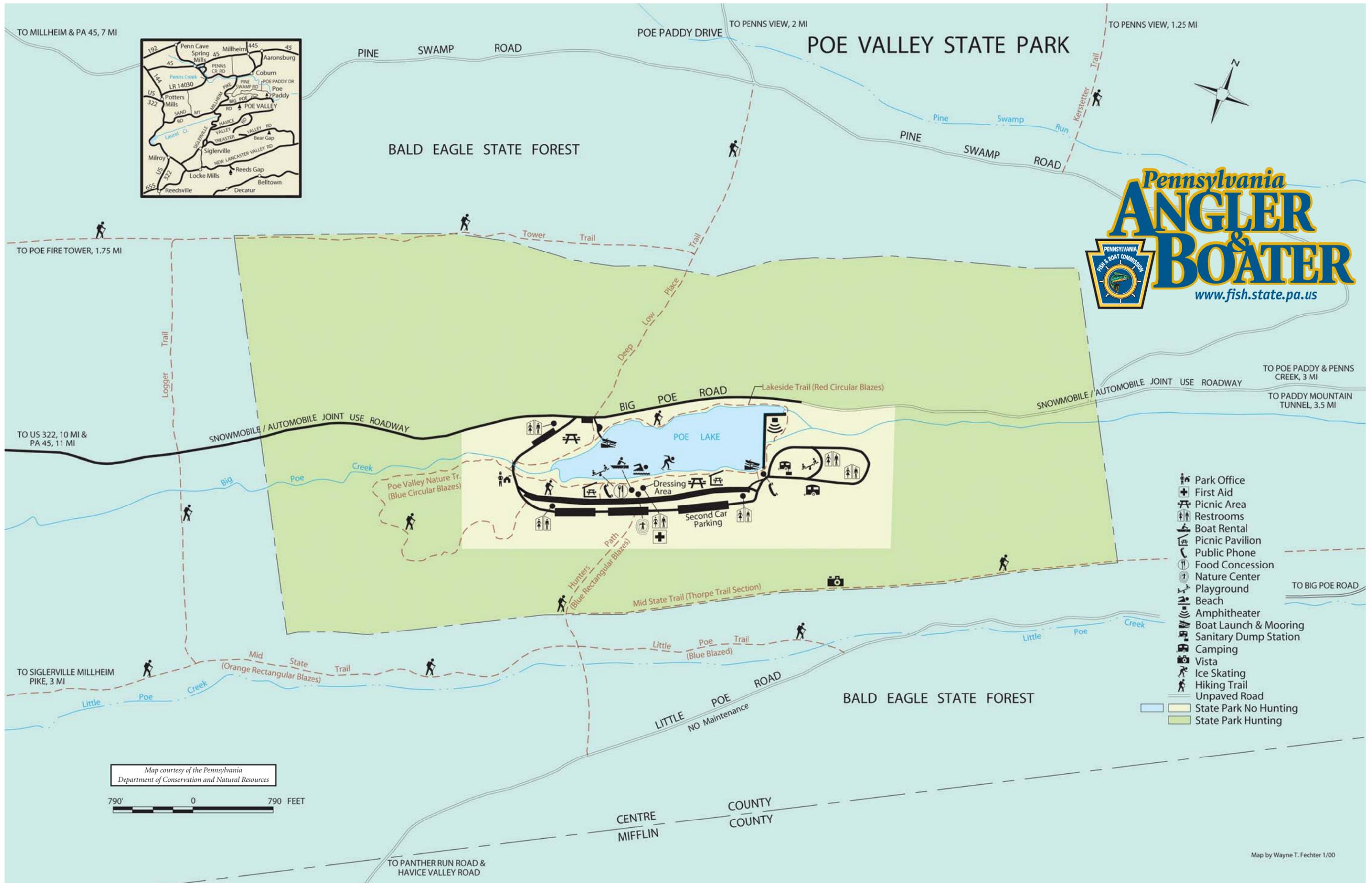
Hiking is another popular activity at Poe Valley. Three miles of trails

exist within the state park, ranging from easy to very rugged and steep. The 206-mile Mid-State Trail system also passes through the state park and is popular with day hikers and backpackers.

Many of these trails also connect to Bald Eagle State Forest. The forest offers a wide variety of recreational activities, 13 streams and five Pennsylvania state parks within its approximate 200,000 acres: Poe Valley, Poe Paddy, R.B. Winter, Reeds Gap, and Sand Bridge.

Even when the weather turns and winter sweeps through the valley,

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cross-country skiers and those operating snowmobiles and four-wheelers profit from Poe Valley's minimally plowed roads. Although there is no specific area cleared for ice skating, it's also a popular wintertime activity.

Regardless of how you choose to spend your days at the state park, a wooded campground is heavily used in all seasons. Specific hunting seasons typically draw large numbers, while boaters and fishermen crowd the camp in the warmer months. Not only is a launch on site, but boaters and anglers also benefit from having the option to moor their vessels by the dam during their stay. The campground, which is just below the dam breast, has some 70 campsites, 30 of which have electricity. The campground is also in the process of being modernized, and on completion it will be upgraded to a class "A" campground. Drinking water, rustic toilets and a sanitary dump station are all available.

Although outdoor people are drawn to the park for different reasons, Poe Valley is primarily recognized for its outstanding fishing. The park attracts anglers in each of the four seasons. The lake's most common game species include brown and rainbow trout, catfish, pickerel, sunfish and perch.

Anglers are successful in winter months when they ice fish the deeper sections along the northern shore as well as the channel outside the swimming area. Panfish are typically pulled through the ice at this time. During the summer, anglers seeking panfish visit the lake and typically reel in sunfish, perch and crappies. The shallow southern shores, especially the dock areas, are panfish hotspots.

However, if judging by park attendance, the spring season is definitely the most popular. Spring season is trout season and Pennsylvania trout fishing is productive in the park. As the streams and rivers begin to warm in the spring, hatches become frequent and trout are plentiful.

Poe Lake is approved trout water, and the Commission stocks the lake

two to three times a year with rainbow, golden rainbow, and brown trout. Trout stocked each year include prime holdovers from season to season.

This year's season begins on April 12. However, after the first few weeks of the season, crowds will more than likely thin, and May will become the month delivering the Keystone State's best trout fishing. Early in the season, trout fishermen spread around the entire perimeter of the lake. Then, as the water temperature rises, the mouth of Poe Creek, as well as the deeper water along the northern shore, become popular. Water along the northern shore reaches a depth of 15 feet, while Poe Lake's average water depth is 11 feet.

Although the most popular approach to hook a trout is bobber fishing from the shoreline, the most effective approach is angling by boat because fishermen can access the deeper areas. Anglers choosing not to cast their lines from shore may trailer and launch their boats at one of the state park's two launches. Boat rentals are also typically available during the summer at the food and boat rental concession, which is open from Memorial Day until Labor Day. Fifteen seasonal (April 1 to November 15) mooring spaces are also available.

Although the trout fishing at Poe Valley State Park is good, anglers traveling to the park also have the advantage of being near another outstanding trout fishery, Poe Paddy State Park. Poe Paddy, located where Big Poe Creek and Penn's Creek meet, is only four miles to the east of Poe Valley and is widely recognized for its wild brook and brown trout. Intense sulphur, caddis and green drake hatches in May and early June are responsible for the world-class fly-fishing. In fact, Poe Paddy is nationally recognized for the green drake mayfly hatch in June.



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If you're searching for outstanding stream fishing, Penn's Creek and Big Poe Creek are also a short distance from Poe Valley State Park. Penn's Creek, located 3 miles from Poe Valley State Park, has outstanding fly hatches of green drakes with big browns, and it's a prime natural habitat for Pennsylvania trout.

Whether casting for a golden rainbow trout or kayaking on Poe Lake along its peaceful shores, Poe Valley State Park certainly has something for every angler and boater. Poe Valley may be hidden in the middle of the state, but those who have discovered the recreation available in the park's serenity visit time and time again.

Poe Valley State Park has been performing renovations and upgrades to park facilities since 2007. These renovations will continue throughout 2008. The construction of the sewage treatment plant at the northeast end of the park will continue into the spring of 2008. However, this construction won't interfere with fishing or stocking, but the campground will be closed until this project is complete. Call the park office or check the DCNR web site for details if you're planning to visit: [www.dcnr.state.pa.us](http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us), 717-667-3622. ☐