

Sizerville Nature Trail

Explore a Working Forest



Enjoy your day in the Elk State Forest as you hike this 3-mile trail.

The trail begins at the parking area at the base of the mountain. A new set of stairs leads from the campground for those starting from the park. Proceed up the hill to your left. The trail is marked with yellow blazes and is open to foot travel only.

You will find numbered stops that correspond to text in this brochure. The hike up the old logging road and descent down Arnold Hollow make this trail more difficult than other nearby park trails. Plan to spend two and a half to three hours to complete the trail. Allow twice as much time if traveling with small children. You will follow an old logging road to the top of the mountain. Then a foot trail takes you across the top before descending along Arnold Hollow. Along the way, you will discover that forests serve as a home to a variety of plants and animals and provide many benefits and values to people.

Parking is found just north of the Sizerville State Park campground entrance. Look for the signs along SR155.

Sizerville State Park offers water and restrooms. The park also provides fee-based camping for weary hikers visiting the area for extended stays.

Plan ahead by bringing boots, long pants and bug spray because you will encounter some rugged terrain, stinging nettles and insects.



1 - Eastern Hemlock - PA's State Tree

Settlers depended on the goods and values they received from the forest for survival. Tannic acid found in hemlock bark made tanning leather possible. The settlers recovered and used the logs for lumber later.

We still depend on our forests for numerous products and values. The types of trees that make up today's forest differ greatly from those found here by settlers.



2 - Sugar Maple

What do this tree and a stack of pancakes have in common?

Maple syrup comes from the sap collected from this tree every spring. Various methods exist to tap and store sap. Boiling sap to evaporate the water turns it into syrup.

Also known as, hard maple, this tree's hard and light colored lumber make it perfect for producing flooring and furniture.

3 - Best Management Practices

This road was designed by foresters and built by loggers.

Best Management Practices (BMP's), such as culvert pipes and diversion ditches, allow for the proper flow of water and reduced erosion. Properly constructed roads require ditching and drainage.



4 - Northern Red Oak

Northern red oak's shape makes it an ideal shade tree. Look for it growing around your neighborhood. You may have furniture or flooring made from its lumber in your home. Its strength and reddish color make it a popular choice.

Acorns from red oak provide a valuable food source for wildlife.

5 - Dead and Downed Trees

Look for dead trees lying on the ground.

Forests produce many unseen benefits. As these fallen giants decay and decompose, they serve as homes to many insects, mosses, birds, mammals and various wood rotting fungi.

New soil forms from the carbon, minerals and nutrients released as the wood rots.

6 - Red Maple

People visit forested roads, vistas, and trails to view Autumn's leaf color. Red maple's common name comes from its bright red leaves and reddish flowers.



You can find red maple throughout Pennsylvania.

7 -Clearcut

Why are these trees smaller on this southwest facing hill?

This area in Ames Hollow was clearcut nearly 40 years ago. Most of our current forests started 100 years ago from unsustainable cutting. Forests of the same age set the stage for insects, diseases or some other catastrophe to destroy large areas. Clearcutting establishes a young forest with a variety of different aged areas in the forest. This lessens the chance that insects, diseases or other disturbances will affect large areas of the forest. Clearcuts mimic natural disturbances, but on a much smaller scale and in a controlled manner. They also benefit wildlife.

8 - Vista

The town of Sizerville once occupied the valley below and grew with the logging boom of the era. The forested hillside below continues to filter water that recharges an aquifer. While drilling for oil, E.D. Sizer struck water. The "mineral water" from this well supposedly had therapeutic qualities. This made Sizerville a common destination for many seeking the water's therapeutic properties. At one time, you could find a hotel, post office, general store, bathhouse and bottling plant here. With the virgin timber long gone, Sizerville faded into the pages of history shortly after the mineral spring's operators sold the rights to the water in 1920.



9 - American Beech

American beech produces beechnuts, highly sought after by wildlife. Its high density and good burning qualities make for excellent firewood. The smooth gray bark often tempts people to carve their name into it. Please follow the principles of Leave No Trace and refrain from harming trees.

Later, you will see evidence of an insect and disease that act together to attack and kill beech.

10 - Black Cherry

This tree does more than produce a fruit favored by wildlife. Furniture makers use lumber from this tree to make some of the most valuable furniture in the world. The finest quality black cherry grows in this area.

#11 - Civilian Conservation Corp

On this side trail, you will find a few remaining red pine trees planted by the Civilian Conservation Corps (C.C.C.).

President Franklin D Roosevelt proposed a number of programs designed to lift the country out of the Great Depression. The CCC program offered work for unemployed men ages 18-25. The U.S. Army ran the camps, but foresters, carpenters and other people directed the work. The CCC fought forest fires, planted trees, built roads, buildings, picnic areas, swimming areas, campgrounds and created many state parks.



To see more quality C.C.C. work, visit Sizerville State Park.

#12 - Rocks/Geology

These rocks appear to have grown out of the ground. Melting water from the last ice age uncovered them when it formed our current ridge tops, hills, and valleys. Geologically speaking, this occurred in a relatively short time.

Normally, we do not notice erosion occurring, because it is such a slow process. Erosion washed away many of the soil's nutrients, leaving us with soils best suited for growing forests.

#13 - Eastern White Pine & Old Growth Forests

These large white pines, downed logs and standing snags resemble the "old growth" forests encountered by early settlers. Lumbermen cut the pines from the hillsides and floated the logs downstream to sawmills. Very little "old growth" forest remains.



DCNR manages areas with the intention of someday providing "old growth"-like conditions. These areas provide conditions suitable for plants and animals that depend on "old growth" forests.

14 - Forest types and vertical diversity

Serviceberry (gray bark) and striped maple (green bark with white stripes) generally grow well together. Foresters call trees commonly grouped together with similar needs, forest types. Climate, geology, topography and shading can influence forest types and single trees.



Small trees and shrubs serve an important role by adding a layer of vegetation for wildlife that makes their homes in them.

#15 - Insects and Disease

What caused this tree to die? Was the site too dry for beech? Did wood rotting fungi kill it leaving a hole in the stump and log?

All good questions, but none of the questions posed provide a clue to the correct answer.

First, a scale, which is a type of insect, fed on its bark. Then a fungus invaded the tiny holes left by the scale. After that, the tree begins to form a canker around the fungus. Over time, many cankers combine and kill the tree. Very few beech trees survive these attacks.

#16 - Forest Disturbances

Because of its strength, we use white ash lumber to make things like baseball bats, hammer handles and shovel handles.

Disturbance, in one form or another, poses a threat to forests. Wind, fire, ice and flooding have had an impact on today's forests. Notice the downed white ash trees on the opposite hillside. Wind blew these trees over. Trees growing in shallow, sandy or wet soils or trees on steep hillsides risk strong winds toppling them.

17 - Hayscented Fern

At previous stops, we saw how trees tolerate varying levels of light. The hayscented fern seen here blocks so much sunlight that new flowers, shrubs or trees are not able to grow.



Other ferns, herbs, shrubs and even certain species of trees can also out-compete small trees by shading. By controlling these competing plants, foresters allow trees, shrubs and plants that are more desirable to grow.

#18- Invasive Species

At your feet, you will notice a Japanese barberry plant. Watch out for its thorns. Land managers planted this invasive shrub for wildlife not knowing that it would spread and out-compete many native plants, trees, and shrubs. Find out how you can help combat invasive species by visiting iConservePA.org.



#19 - Yellow Birch / Wood Byproducts

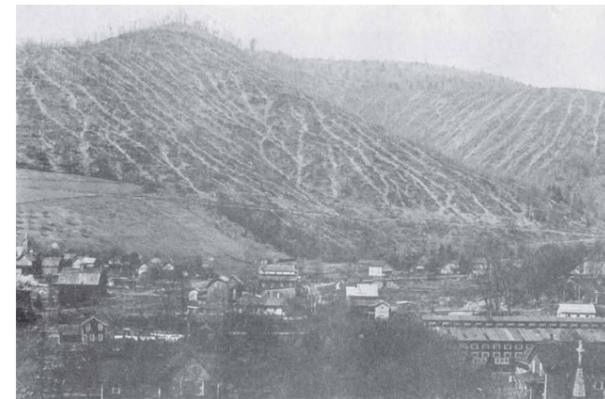
Yellow birch grows well in shady damp areas. Seeds produced by yellow birch grow on disturbed soil, mossy logs, rotten stumps, wind thrown tree roots or cracks in boulders.

We use yellow birch lumber for plywood, paneling, cabinets and flooring. Oils from this tree, add flavor to poor tasting medicines. Thousands of items in your home, such as ice cream, perfumes and even medicine, need wood by-products to be manufactured.

#20 - Arnold Hollow

Forests buffer small perennial and intermittent streams.

These buffers filter out sediment that washes off plateaus, ridges and sidehills. Without forests, sediment would choke our streams and rivers turning them into muddy, chocolate-colored water. Imagine trying to use this water to cook, clean, bathe or even drink!



Logging practices of the late 1800's and early 1900's left hillsides with little or no forest cover and soil susceptible to widespread erosion. Early conservationists acted to protect our water supplies through forest protection and restoration. As a result, Forest Reserves were established. These reserves became the state forests and state parks that we have today.

From here, you will turn right and follow the road to your vehicle. We hope you enjoyed your visit to the Sizerville Nature Trail. A day filled with exercise and quiet reflection allows most of us to forget about the hustle and bustle of everyday life.

During the course of the day, we discovered some fun and fascinating facts about certain types of trees. We saw the effects of climate, geology and topography on our forests. We found out that people depend on available natural resources for survival and growth. Last, but not least, you now should know that by managing forests in a sustainable manner, managers can create, enhance or maintain existing benefits and values that we obtain from our forests.

Consider that our forests provide a home for a variety of plants and animals as well as many benefits for us.

Leave No Trace

If you are off on another adventure, please observe the following principles of Leave No Trace (www.LNT.org):

- Plan ahead and Prepare
- Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces
- Dispose of Waste Properly
- Leave What You Find
- Minimize Campfire Impacts
- Respect Wildlife
- Be Considerate of Other Visitors

