

Hiking

Cowans Gap Trail Information Only

10 miles of trails

Cameron Trail: 0.5-mile, difficult hiking

This very steep, precipitous boundary trail is on the south end of the park and ends atop Cove Mountain.

Geyer Trail: 0.5-mile, difficult hiking

This rather steep boundary trail passes through lots of mountain laurel. The trail starts along Aughwick Road then climbs Tuscarora Mountain to Tuscarora Trail.

Logging Road Trail: 1.7-mile, easy hiking

This old logging road can be walked from one end of the park to the other and is a good trail to use to make loop hikes with other trails on the side of Cove Mountain.

Horseshoe Trail: 0.6-mile, very difficult hiking

This very steep and very rugged trail passes over a lot of loose stone on steep slopes. This trail starts along Aughwick Road below the park dam, crosses the creek and climbs to the top of Cove Mountain ending on the Knobsville Road Trail. Experienced hikers only!

Knobsville Road Trail: 1.3-miles, moderate hiking

This old road climbs to the top of Cove Mountain, passed the park's landslide interpretive exhibit, the old Civilian Conservation Corps camp incinerator and the park overlook. Cresting Cove Mountain, you enter state forest land and can walk down to the intersection of Horseshoe Trail or to the boundary of the state forest before retracing your walk to the park. Please respect private property by not following the old road onto private ground.

Lakeside Trail: 1.5-mile, easy hiking

This very pleasant, nearly level, scenic trail encompasses Cowans Gap Lake. This is the most popular trail in the park.

One Mile Trail: 0.4-mile, easy hiking

This mountain laurel shaded trail begins along Aughwick Road just above the park office, then winds along the bottom of Tuscarora Mountain to join the Three Mile Trail. You can then follow Three Mile Trail to the left returning to Aughwick Road across from Parking Lot #3, follow Aughwick Road back to the beginning of One Mile trail and you will have walked about one mile.

Plessinger Trail: 1.1-mile, moderate hiking

This rocky, streamside trail meanders alongside Aughwick Creek and is a great access trail for anglers and a pleasant walk for wildlife watchers.

Ski Trail: 0.2-mile, easy hiking

This short spur trail connects Parking Lot #7 with Logging Road Trail above Camping Area B.

Three Mile Trail: 1.1-mile, moderate hiking

This trail begins along Aughwick Road across from the upper end of Camping Area A. This trail wanders through mountain laurel on the side of Tuscarora Mountain and is a nice trail to walk in June when the mountain laurel is in bloom.

Tuscarora Trail: 2-mile section in the park, moderate hiking

Tuscarora Trail is a spur trail to the [Appalachian Trail](#). The more popular section to walk is a 1.5-mile section beginning across Aughwick Road from Parking Lot #3, climbing along Tuscarora Mountain to the junction with Geyer Trail. Once at the junction with Geyer Trail, you can return to the day use area, retracing your walk from Parking Lot #3, or follow Geyer Trail to Cameron Trail then to Plessinger Trail returning to the day use area, or take the Tuscarora Trail another 2.4 miles south to the top of Big Mountain and a spectacular overlook of the Path Valley and Franklin County. From the Big Mountain Overlook, you will have a 3.9-mile return hike back to the park. The Cowans Gap section of the trail is renowned for its unusual rock outcroppings and rock fields.

Forbes Trail: Carlisle to Pittsburgh

This backpacking trail traces portions of the Forbes Trail and road. Near the park, the trail passes through Cowans Gap State Park on the berm of Stumpy Lane and Aughwick Road and is not a suggested walk while at the park.

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