

RAIL-TRAILS OF

KITTATINNY VALLEY STATE PARK

Passing through the Highlands and Ridge and Valley regions of northern New Jersey are remnants of once thriving railroads. From the late-1800s through mid-1900s, these historic railways connected agriculture and industry with nearby cities and towns. Today, these corridors cross landscapes of mostly farmlands, forests, streams and towns in Sussex and Warren counties. This network of rail-trails offers miles of walking and biking opportunities as part of Kittatinny Valley State Park and the New Jersey State Park Service trails system.



Paulinskill Valley Trail

Paulinskill Valley Trail extends 26.5 miles from Knowlton in Warren County eastward through Blairstown, Frelinghuysen, Hardwick, Stillwater, Fredon, Hampton and Lafayette to its terminus at Sparta Junction in Sussex County. Rock outcroppings, farmlands, small towns, forests and wetlands are among the diverse landscape features found along the trail.



New York, Susquehanna & Western Railroad former logo

Paulinskill Valley Trail was once part of the right-of-way of the New York, Susquehanna and Western Railroad (NYS&W). The route closely followed the Paulins Kill, a tributary of the Delaware River, and was originally used to transport agricultural products and Pennsylvania coal to the cities and towns of eastern New Jersey and New York City. Freight transport of locally produced goods such as dairy products and Portland cement, in addition to some passenger service, were also major parts of the railroad's business. The original portion of the line was built in 1886 and, over time, continued to expand. Railroad operation ceased in 1962. Local citizens organized a long-term effort to save the corridor as a recreational trail. The Green Acres Program ultimately purchased the property for non-motorized recreational trail use in 1992. Historic artifacts associated with the rail line, such as mile markers, depot foundations and railroad bridges, are still in evidence along the trail.

Fishing

Lake Aeroflex, Gardners Pond, Whites Pond and Twin Lakes offer excellent fishing opportunities. Paulinskill Valley Trail follows the Paulins Kill, a popular trout stream of northern New Jersey. Although the trail provides access points to this stream, much of the land that lies between the stream and the trail is privately owned and trespassing is prohibited. Fishing is subject to New Jersey DEP Fish & Wildlife regulations.

Volunteers

Individuals and groups have the opportunity to assist park staff in maintaining and monitoring the trails. To help with these tasks, volunteers remove litter, help install signs and advise park staff on trail conditions.

The "Volunteers in Parks Program" is available for those who are interested in volunteer opportunities along the trails. Please contact Kittatinny Valley State Park for information.

Kittatinny Valley State Park

Kittatinny Valley State Park administers these regional rail-trails. Kittatinny Valley State Park also includes Aeroflex-Andover Airport, which is operated by the New Jersey Forest Fire Service.

The park's lands are primarily located in Andover Township, Sussex County. Forests filled with oak, sugar maple, tulip poplar and hemlock cover glacially formed valleys and limestone ridges. Sussex Branch Trail passes through the Aeroflex section of the park and connects with the park's network of multiuse trails.



Explore Trail Tracker
The Interactive Trails
Map of NJ State Parks



spstrailtracker.nj.gov

This brochure was funded by the Federal Highway Administration's Recreational Trails Program through the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection.

Sussex Branch Trail

Located in Sussex County, **Sussex Branch Trail** follows a 19-mile route beginning from the north at the Frankford Township-Branchville Borough boundary, and continues south through Lafayette Township, Andover Township and Andover Borough to its southern terminus in Byram Township at Waterloo Road. The trail passes through rural and forested landscapes in addition to swamps, lakes and small communities.



Delaware, Lackawanna & Western Railroad former logo

Sussex Branch Trail follows a section of the route of the former Sussex Branch line of the Delaware, Lackawanna and Western Railroad (DL&W) that extends through Sussex County from Byram Township in the south to Branchville Borough. Providing service from 1848, the Sussex Branch evolved from the former Sussex Mine Railroad, which was used to transport high-grade iron ore from mines in Andover to the Morris Canal in Morris County where it was loaded onto barges and transported for processing. As iron mining faded away and towns and industries grew, the railroad began to transport farm products, freight and passengers. In the late 1800s, Cranberry Lake became a popular resort and day-trip area for passengers traveling from eastern cities. The railroad ceased operations on the Sussex Branch line in stages during the late 1950s and early 1960s. The last train ran in 1966. The state acquired the right-of-way in two sections in 1979 and 1982, converting it to a rail-trail.

Great Valley Trail

The Lehigh and New England Railroad (L&NE) (1895-1961) is perhaps the least known of the great anthracite coal carriers of the Northeast. In June 1882, the Pennsylvania, Slatington & New England Railroad - later the Pennsylvania, Poughkeepsie and Boston Railroad (PP&B), aka the "Pickles, Pork and Beans" Line - reached an agreement with the New York, Susquehanna & Western Railroad (NYS&W), allowing shared use of 19 miles of NYS&W track between Hainesburg Junction and Swartwood Junction. On April 2, 1895, the Lehigh and New England Railroad (L&NE) became PP&B's successor. By the late 1950s, the demand for coal was declining, so L&NE's ownership called it quits on October 31, 1961. The railroad was dismantled by the following year. In February 2010, the Green Acres Program purchased part of the right-of-way to connect Paulinskill Valley Trail with Sussex Branch Trail. This 5.5-mile connector was renamed **Great Valley Trail** in 2012.



Lehigh & New England Railroad former logo



13.5 mile loop

A 13.5-mile rail-trail loop using all three trails is marked with this logo.

Pequest Rail Trail



Lehigh & Hudson River Railroad former logo

Currently, the **Pequest Rail Trail** is an intermittent patchwork of state and municipal owned lands with the goal of extending to Allamuchy Mountain State Park and beyond. The trail follows the right-of-way of the Lehigh and Hudson River Railway (L&HR) which merged into Conrail in 1976. It traversed northwestern New Jersey, connecting to the Poughkeepsie Bridge at Maybrook, NY and to Easton, PA.



Trail Uses

Rail-trails are multiple-use trails with a flat, cinder base and are suitable for hiking, mountain biking, running and horseback riding. When snow is adequate, cross-country skiing and dog sledding are permitted. All types of motorized vehicles, such as dirt bikes, ATVs, snowmobiles, cars, SUVs and trucks, are prohibited on the trails. Individuals with wheelchairs or other mobility devices should contact the park office for conditions and access areas. The trails are open for use during daylight hours only. No camping is allowed along these trails.



Top: Snapping turtle on the trail.
Middle top: Whistle marker used by conductors to alert oncoming traffic.
Middle bottom: Jersey City mile marker
Bottom: Eastern newt

Hunting

During the fall, winter and spring various hunting seasons are open. While not permitted on rail-trails, hunting may occur on adjacent private and public lands. The Aeroflex section of Kittatinny Valley State Park is open for hunting and provides favorable habitat for deer, turkey and small game. Trail users should consider wearing fluorescent orange clothing to increase their visibility. Hunting is subject to New Jersey DEP Fish & Wildlife regulations.

TRAIL SENSE AND SAFETY

Trail Markings: Official trails are marked by colored blazes on posts and trees. For your safety and habitat protection, please stay on the trails and don't alter trail markings or create new trails. Trail users should also recognize and respect the private property that surrounds the trail corridor.

Be Prepared: Consider bringing water, snacks, sunscreen, wear insect repellent and a hat. Dress for the weather. Tell someone where you plan to go and when you expect to return. Be aware of changing trail conditions. Helmets are required by law for all cyclists under 17.

Trail Courtesy: The trail corridors are wide enough to accommodate a variety of trail activities. Practice trail courtesy and yield appropriately to ensure that all trail users have an enjoyable trail experience. Be cautious when crossing the many roads that both trails intersect. Large groups planning an organized trail activity should contact the park office to determine if a special use permit is necessary.

Pets: Pets must always be on a leash no longer than six feet in length and under the control of the owner at all times. Please clean up after your pets and take the waste with you.

Bear Aware: Black bears are found throughout New Jersey. Do not approach or attract bears by making food available. Feeding bears is dangerous and illegal. Never run from a bear! To report an aggressive bear, call 1-877-WARN-DEP (1-877-927-6337) immediately. Please report any damage or nuisance behavior to the Park Office. Visit the New Jersey DEP Fish & Wildlife at njfishandwildlife.com/bears for additional information on bear safety.

Keep It Clean and Green: Bring a bag or two and carry your trash out with you. Trash cans are not provided. Don't forget to recycle!

Tick Protection: Wear insect repellent, wear light-colored clothing, tuck pants into socks, stay on trails, check yourself thoroughly, shower and launder clothes immediately.

Park Office Phone: 973-786-6445

Emergency numbers: 1-877-WARN-DEP (1-877-927-6337), or 911



KITTATINNY VALLEY STATE PARK
199 Goodale Road
Newton, NJ 07860
973-786-6445



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TRAILS

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State of New Jersey
Department of Environmental Protection
State Park Service

