

Welcome to Rocky Knob Trail.

This loop trail is about four miles long and blazed in orange.

Station #1 Rocky Knob Trail

The road portion of this trail was constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corp (CCC) in 1937. They attempted to build a road connecting Ridge Road with Birch Run Road, but were thwarted the area's rugged geology. In 1976 the Youth Conservation Corp (YCC) constructed a trail beginning along the northern portion of the abandoned CCC project. The loop traverses a variety of scenic areas including Rocky Knob and reconnects to the southern end of the CCC road. During the summer of 1977, a YCC crew developed numbered stations highlighting points of interest for hikers.

Station #2 Forest Strata

The ridge tops of Michaux State Forest have generally poor sandy and rocky soils. The poor soil quality is reflected in the stunted forest growth and open canopy. The dominant trees are chestnut oak, black gum and pitch pine with an understory of sassafras, mountain-laurel and blueberry.

Station #3 Tree Growth

Notice that all trees around you are approximately the same size. The combination of poor soils, repeated fires and over-browsing by deer results in stunted growth. While small in size, most of these trees are over 90 years old.

Station #4 The Valley Below

From this point you can look across Birch Run Hollow toward East Big Flat Ridge. Beyond the ridge, in the next valley is Pa. Route 233.

Station #5 Phototropism

Tropisms are the responses of plants to their environment. An example of tropism is the chestnut oak in front of you. The tree's sprouts and limbs continue to grow towards the sunlight causing a "leaning" effect.

Station #6 Sier Hill

You are standing on the east slope of Sier Hill. Further east (your left) is the southern end of East Big Flat Ridge. To its immediate right is Long Pine Dam, then from left to right you can see Rocky Knob, Wolf Hill, and Mitten Hill.

Station #7 Allegheny Mound Building Ants

★Please Do Not Disturb Ant Mounds★

Allegheny mound building ants build their community in elevated mounds which can be as large as four feet high and 20 feet in diameter. A colony will sometimes occupy more than one mound. They are almost always found in small forest openings which provide cool shade during summer and the sun's warmth in winter.

Station #8 Boulder Field

From this point you can view Rocky Knob. The quartzite rock forming the knob is weathering into a boulder field which crowns the hill.

Station #9 Tree Skeleton

Along the trail, you may have noticed the skeletal remains of dead trees such as the example at this station.

A major forest fire in 1964 charred several pitch pines on this slope. The tree's outer bark was transformed into charcoal. The tree died but the charcoaled bark prevented a major portion of the trunk from decomposing. This process and dense, rot-resistant knots preserved the pine "skeletons" while other trees decayed completely.

Station #10 Trail Meets Old Road

This station marks the intersection of the more recently constructed loop of Rocky Knob Trail and the dead end road that was constructed by the CCC in 1937.

★Caution—spring water not tested for water purity

Station #11 The Last Mile

You're almost there! One mile left until you are back to the trail head on Ridge Road.

Station #12 The American Chestnut

American chestnut once dominated many Pennsylvania forests. The fungus disease "chestnut blight" reduced this prominent tree to an understory shrub. The disease was imported from Asia in the early 1900s. The fungus eventually girdles the trunk killing the upper stems but leaving live roots and stumps for regeneration. Sprouts emerge from the stump and feed the roots until they succumb to disease.

The chestnut blight has destroyed a valuable source of fine quality wood and impoverished the habitat of many species of wildlife. Research and tests have produced a cross between American and Chinese chestnuts which retains the majestic form of the American species while inheriting resistance to the blight from the Chinese species. The prospects for a reintroduction of American chestnut into our forests seem promising.

From station 12 the trail continues north returning to station #1. By the time you reach Ridge Road, you will have hiked approximately four miles. The YCC crew of 1977 hope you have enjoyed the walk.

Care for the Land

State forests belong to all Pennsylvanians. Take time to enjoy them, but know the rules and regulations designed to protect the forests and you. Please be careful with fire, keep our forests litter free and don't damage trees and other plants.

Certified "Well Managed"

Pennsylvania state forests are certified to FSC® standards. The Forest Stewardship Council® is an independent organization supporting environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial, and economically viable management of the world's forests.



The mark of responsible forestry

iConservePA

To learn more about the state's natural resources and what you can do to help protect and enjoy them, log onto iConservePA.org.



For more information

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Rocky Knob Trail

Michaux State Forest

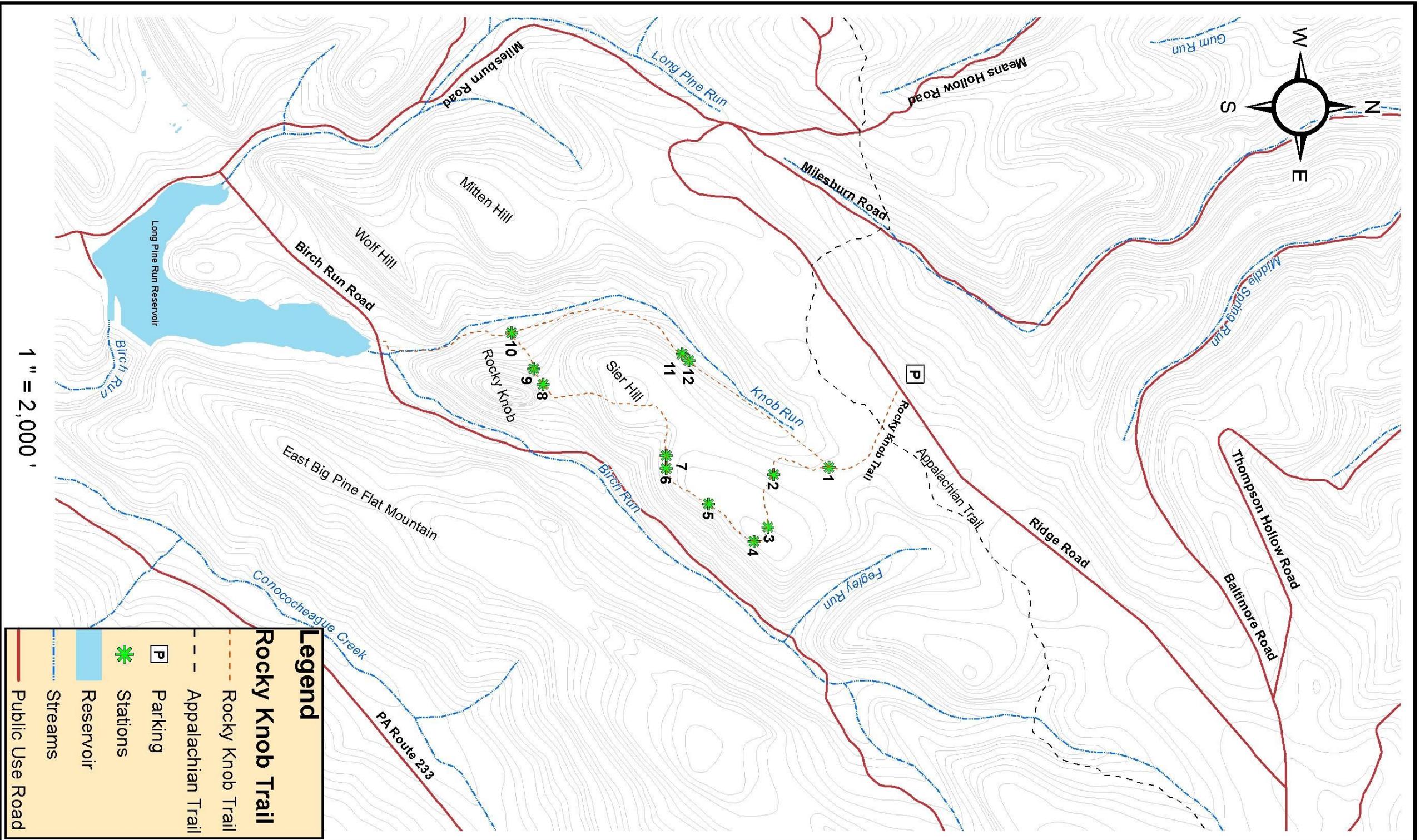
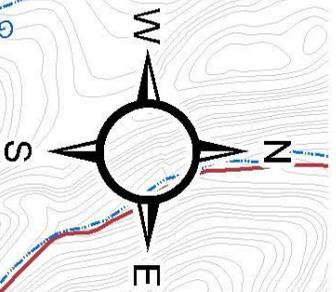


Pennsylvania's vast state forest system provides 2.2 million acres for you to use, enjoy and explore. The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources' Bureau of Forestry manages these forests to ensure their long-term health and to conserve native wild plants.

Michaux State Forest is comprised of over 85,000 acres in Franklin, Cumberland and Adams counties.



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DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION
AND NATURAL RESOURCES



Legend

- Rocky Knob Trail
- Appalachian Trail
- Parking
- Stations
- Reservoir
- Streams
- Public Use Road

1" = 2,000'