



60 HIKES WITHIN 60 MILES

PHILADELPHIA

**Including Surrounding Counties and
Nearby Areas of New Jersey and Delaware**

Lori Litchman



MENASHA RIDGE PRESS

Your Guide to the Outdoors Since 1982

60 HIKES
WITHIN 60 MILES
3rd Edition

PHILADELPHIA

60 HIKES WITHIN 60 MILES: Philadelphia

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SAFETY NOTICE Though the author and publisher have made every effort to ensure that the information in this book is accurate at press time, they are not responsible for any loss, damage, injury, or inconvenience that may occur while using this book—you are responsible for your own safety and health on the trail. The fact that a hike is described in this book does not mean that it will be safe for you. Always check local conditions (which can change from day to day), know your own limitations, and consult a map.

For information about trail and other closures due to the coronavirus, check the “Contacts” listings in the hike profiles.

Dedication

This book is dedicated to all of the helpers and healers. May you find peace on the trail.

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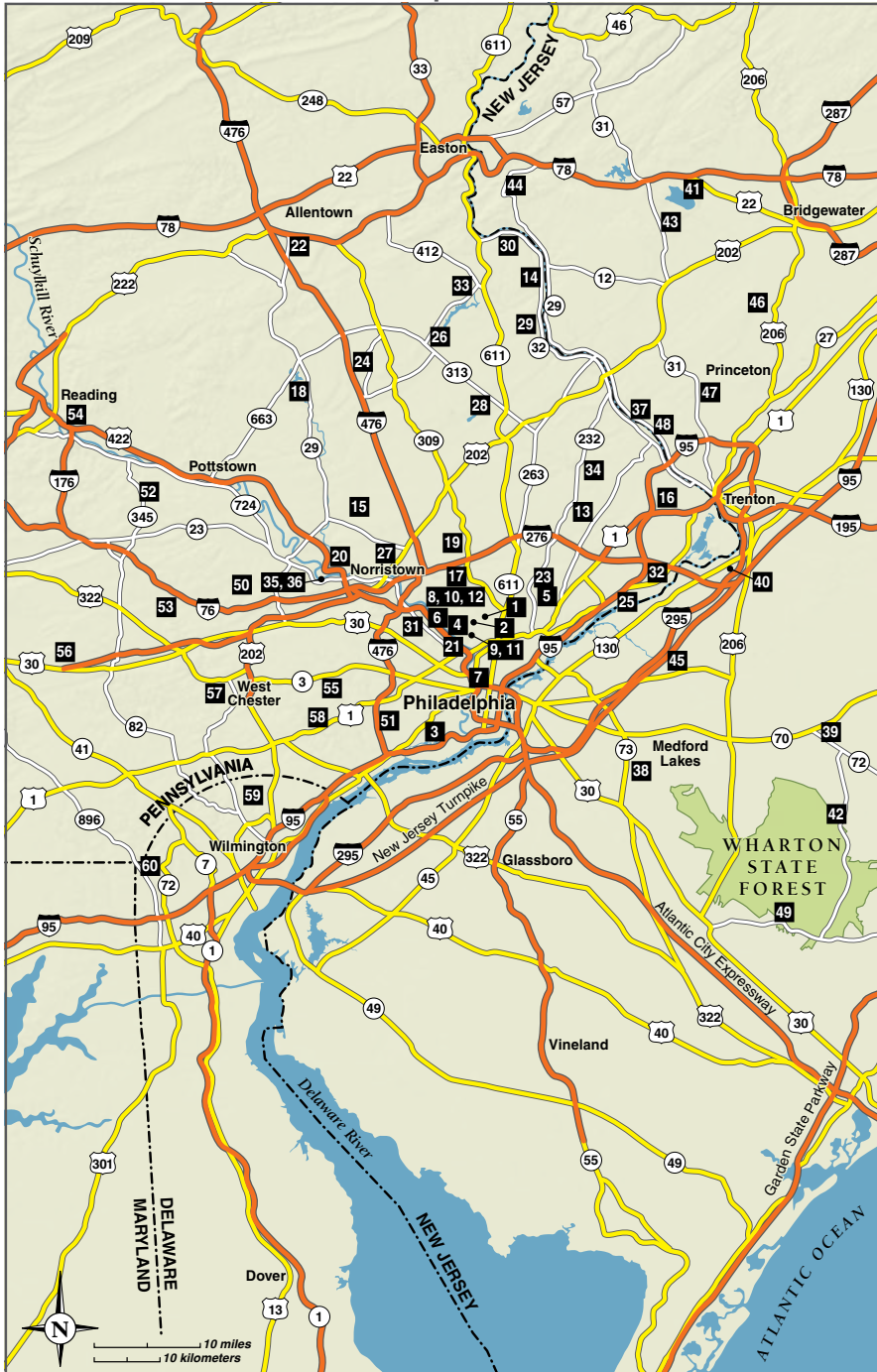


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Awbury Arboretum is a quiet urban retreat. (See *Hike 1*, page 18.)



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This book entailed quite a journey, both literally and figuratively. Special thanks go to Tim Jackson, who set me on the journey to take over writing it, starting with the second edition. Thanks also to all the folks at AdventureKEEN and Menasha Ridge Press for publishing such a fun series of hiking books, especially the project editor, Holly Cross.

I'm forever grateful to the master of fine arts in creative nonfiction program at Goucher College.

Special shout-out to members of my tribe who accompanied me on numerous scouting and photography treks: Jen K., Shelly, John, Eamonn, Lori, Dominic, Max, Chad, and Amy. Thanks, too, to Aaron Greenberg, for helping me find my “tree eyes.” I will never look at trees the same again.

I'm also grateful for all the helpers in my community, especially those who have helped my own wayfinding.

Much love to my husband, Dave Tavani, who wrangles our wily basset hound on as many hikes as possible.

I also honor the native people who tended the land I call home now; I live and work in the unceded, ancestral Indigenous territory of the Lenape people, called *Lenapehoking*.

—Lori Litchman

FOREWORD

Welcome to Menasha Ridge Press's *60 Hikes Within 60 Miles*, a series designed to provide hikers with the information they need to find and hike the very best trails surrounding metropolitan areas.

Our strategy is simple: First, find a hiker who knows the area and loves to hike. Second, ask that person to spend a year researching the most popular and very best trails around. And third, have that person describe each trail in terms of difficulty, scenery, condition, elevation change, and other categories of information that are important to hikers. "Pretend you've just completed a hike and met up with other hikers at the trailhead," we tell each author. "Imagine their questions; be clear in your answers."

An experienced hiker and writer, author Lori Litchman has selected 60 of the best hikes in and around the Philadelphia metropolitan area. This third edition includes new hikes, as well as additional sections and new routes for some of the existing hikes. Lori provides hikers (and walkers) with a great variety of hikes—all within roughly 60 miles of Philadelphia—from urban strolls on city sidewalks to boulder climbing in Quakertown.

You'll get more out of this book if you take a moment to read the introduction, which explains how to read the trail listings. The "Topographic Maps" section on page 5 will help you understand how useful topos are on a hike and will also tell you where to get them. And though this is a where-to, not a how-to, guide, readers who have not hiked extensively will find the introduction of particular value.

As much for the opportunity to free the spirit as to free the body, let these hikes elevate you above the urban hurry.

*All the best,
The Editors at Menasha Ridge Press*

PREFACE

I grew up in the Pocono Mountains region of Pennsylvania in a house surrounded by trees on a little dirt road, so I have always loved being in the woods. When I moved to Philadelphia for college, I didn't get out in the woods all that often. Soon after college, though, I discovered the forest and trails surrounding Wissahickon Creek in Philadelphia's Fairmount Park and found myself visiting the area frequently. In fact, I loved the Wissahickon so much that I decided to buy a house nearby so I could get there within minutes.

Hiking is therapeutic. Just walking in the woods calms my mind and soothes my soul. American writer and naturalist Henry David Thoreau once wrote, "What in other men is religion is in me love of nature." Being in nature, to me, is more than exercise. It's a way for me to be more connected to the universe and life in general. Writing this book offered me a way to get out and see all the different kinds of trails available in the Philadelphia area. And there are so many to choose from that I couldn't fit them all in this book.

There is something for everyone, from urban treks through the middle of the city to rugged hikes that require you to clamber up and over boulders. There are kid-friendly hikes, dog-friendly hikes, short strolls, and strenuous climbs. All the hikes are within 60 miles of Philadelphia, as the crow flies.

I have chosen a variety of environments for these hikes. Luckily, the Philadelphia area has so many diverse settings that it's easy to change things up. There are

The rolling hills at Laurel Hill West Cemetery provide a unique hike. (See *Hike 21*, page 102.)



hikes around lakes, near creeks, and through boulder fields, as well as sandy hikes surrounded by pine barrens and even those leading to a waterfall or two.

For the third edition, I tried to locate new places to check out and even added a few more hikes closer to the city proper. Many of us sought solace on the trail during the early days of the pandemic, and trail traffic increased everywhere. That increased traffic remained steady, even after more places opened back up. I also tried to find some unique places that might not be the first thing you think of when planning a hike, such as a cemetery. In addition, I tried to update the guide with suggestions for off-season hiking, for those days when you just need to get out of the house to soak up some winter sun. I also spent some time researching historic trees and fell so in love with them that I included photos and information about how you, too, can meet these amazing old trees; they exude resilience.

Here are some things you should know as you are reading through the book and using it as your guide.

- **I used a Garmin eTrex Touch 25 to generate the GPS data and provide trail distances.** All GPS devices are a little different (gauging from my hiking companions, who also used devices on our treks), so the distance your GPS device or application provides might be slightly different from mine.
- **Many people in Philadelphia don't own a car,** so I purposely tried to find several hikes that were accessible by public transportation. See the table beginning on page xiii.
- **All but two of the hikes (those in Delaware) are free,** which was incredibly important to me because I believe nature should be accessible to everyone.

And here are some general guidelines to keep in mind while you are out on the trail:

- **Social Trails:** These paths look like legitimate parts of the trail but are really just routes people have used over and over, tramping vegetation enough to make them look like trails. It's important for the health of the environment that you always stay on designated trails.
- **Dogs:** Most of the hikes in this book are dog-friendly. However, all the parks included here require that your dog be leashed the entire time you are on the trail and that you pick up after your dog. Dog poop carries bacteria that can be harmful to other animals and can get into the water supply near creeks and rivers.
- **Safety:** Always remember that hiking can be dangerous. Proper footwear and clothing are important, as are sufficient water and snacks. Make sure to always watch your footing, especially along trails that have protruding rocks and roots. You are always hiking at your own risk, and no guidebook can prepare you for all the dangers you might encounter during your adventure.

Nature abounds in Philadelphia and its surrounding areas. Prior to European arrival, the Lenape tended the lands in Philadelphia and surrounding areas and called

their home *Lenapehoking*. Philadelphia’s official founder, William Penn, arrived in 1682 after King Charles II gifted him 28 million acres of land. Penn dubbed Philadelphia his “greene country towne.” And Pennsylvania, which translates to Penn’s Woods, was so named because of the area’s lush forest. This area was the birthplace of our nation for so many reasons, but one was the proximity to rivers (modes of transportation back then) and natural resources. And because of Philadelphia’s rich history in the creation and development of our country, several hikes offer historical features along the way.

Philadelphia lies between the Atlantic Coastal Plain, which is flat with sandy soil, and the Piedmont Plateau, which is rockier, with more elevation change. At least one hike takes you through both types of land. Philadelphia also falls along the Atlantic Flyway, which is the route migrating birds take as they travel north and south during the change of seasons. Because of this, I recommend bringing binoculars on your hikes for bird-watching, particularly at the John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge, right next to Philadelphia International Airport.

This book can serve as a step-by-step guide as you hike, or it can be used as your jumping-off point. Every hike in this book has more to explore than is written on the page. Some hikes are part of bigger parks with a huge network of trails. Other hikes offer you the opportunity to simply discover nature as you stroll along. Check out phillyhiking.com for more photos, as well as a map with dropped pins for all of the trails, which you can easily open and connect to while you’re out exploring. Most importantly, enjoy yourself and the natural world around you!

DIFFICULTY RATINGS		
E = Easy	M = Moderate	S = Strenuous

60 HIKES BY CATEGORY

REGION Hike Number/Hike Name		Page #	Mileage	Difficulty*	Biking	Running	Kid-Friendly	Dog-Friendly	Less Busy
PHILADELPHIA COUNTY									
1	Awbury Arboretum	18	0.7	E		✓	✓	✓	✓
2	Carpenter's Woods	23	0.7	E			✓	✓	
3	John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge at Tinicum	27	3.7	E	✓	✓	✓	✓	
4	Manayunk Bridge Trail	31	2.0	E	✓	✓	✓	✓	
5	Pennypack Park	35	3.4	E	✓	✓	✓	✓	
6	The Schuylkill Center for Environmental Education	39	1.5	E			✓		
7	Schuylkill River Trail: <i>Schuylkill Banks, Center City</i>	43	4.0	E	✓	✓	✓	✓	
8	Wissahickon Valley Park: <i>Andorra Natural Area</i>	47	1.9	E		✓	✓	✓	✓
9	Wissahickon Valley Park: <i>Hermit Lane Trail</i>	52	2.3	M		✓	✓	✓	✓
10	Wissahickon Valley Park: <i>Lavender and Orange Trails</i>	56	1.5	E			✓	✓	✓
11	Wissahickon Valley Park: <i>Lower Trails</i>	60	5.2	M-D	✓	✓	✓	✓	
12	Wissahickon Valley Park: <i>Upper Trails</i>	64	5.0	M-D	✓	✓	✓	✓	
NORTHERN SUBURBS									
13	Churchville Nature Center	70	1.0	E		✓	✓		✓
14	Delaware Canal State Park: <i>Delaware Canal Towpath</i>	74	2.0	E	✓	✓	✓	✓	
15	Evansburg State Park: <i>Skipack Loop Trail</i>	78	2.6	M			✓	✓	
16	Five Mile Woods Nature Preserve	82	3.0	E			✓		✓
17	Fort Washington State Park: <i>Green Ribbon Trail</i>	86	3.3	E		✓	✓	✓	
18	Green Lane Park	90	3.6	M	✓	✓	✓	✓	
19	Green Ribbon Trail: <i>Wissahickon Valley Watershed</i>	94	1.5	E-M			✓	✓	
20	John James Audubon Center at Mill Grove	98	1.7	E		✓	✓		✓
21	Laurel Hill West Cemetery	102	2.1	M	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
22	Lehigh Parkway Trail	107	6.3	M-D	✓	✓	✓	✓	
23	Lorimer Park	111	1.5	E		✓	✓	✓	
24	Manderfield Preserve	115	2.0	E			✓		✓
25	Neshaminy State Park: <i>River Walk</i>	119	2.4	E		✓	✓	✓	
26	Nockamixon State Park: <i>Quarry Trail</i>	123	2.8	E-M			✓	✓	✓
27	Norristown Farm Park	127	2.5	E	✓	✓	✓	✓	
28	Peace Valley Nature Center	131	1.6	E			✓		✓
29	Ralph Stover State Park: <i>High Rocks</i>	135	1.0	E			✓	✓	
30	Ringneck County Park	139	1.0	E			✓	✓	
31	Saunders Woods Preserve	142	0.7	E		✓	✓	✓	✓
32	Silver Lake Nature Center	146	1.2	E			✓		
33	Top Rock Trail at Haycock Mountain	150	1.7	D				✓	✓

60 Hikes by Category (continued)

REGION Hike Number/Hike Name		Page #	Mileage	Difficulty*	Biking	Running	Kid-Friendly	Dog-Friendly	Less Busy
NORTHERN SUBURBS (continued)									
34	Tyler State Park: <i>Covered Bridge</i>	154	2.0	E	✓	✓	✓	✓	
35	Valley Forge National Historical Park: <i>Chapel Trail</i>	158	4.5	M		✓	✓	✓	✓
36	Valley Forge National Historical Park: <i>Horse-Shoe Trail/Mount Misery</i>	162	3.2	D				✓	✓
NEW JERSEY									
37	Baldpate Mountain: <i>Ted Stiles Preserve</i>	168	3.8	E			✓	✓	
38	Black Run Preserve	172	1.5	E			✓	✓	✓
39	Brendan T. Byrne State Forest	176	6.9	M-D	✓	✓	✓	✓	
40	Crystal Lake Park	181	2.0	M			✓	✓	
41	Cushetunk Mountain Preserve	185	2.4	D				✓	
42	Franklin Parker Preserve	189	3.0	E			✓	✓	✓
43	Hunterdon County Arboretum	193	1.4	E			✓	✓	
44	Musconetcong Gorge Preserve	197	3.2	D				✓	✓
45	Rancocas State Park	201	2.9	E	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
46	Sourland Mountain Preserve	205	2.7	D				✓	
47	Washington Crossing State Park	209	2.6	E	✓		✓	✓	
48	The Watershed Reserve	213	5.0	E-M		✓	✓	✓	
49	Wharton State Forest: <i>Batsto Lake Trail</i>	218	4.3	E			✓	✓	
WESTERN SUBURBS									
50	Binky Lee Preserve	224	1.7	E			✓	✓	
51	Crum Woods	228	1.7	M		✓	✓	✓	
52	French Creek State Park	232	4.2	M-D			✓	✓	
53	Marsh Creek State Park	236	3.0	M			✓	✓	
54	Neversink Mountain	240	3.2	D				✓	
55	Ridley Creek State Park	244	2.0	M				✓	
56	Sadsbury Woods Preserve	248	3.0	E			✓	✓	
57	Stroud Preserve	252	3.0	E			✓	✓	✓
58	Wawa Preserve: <i>Rocky Run Trail</i>	256	1.8	E			✓	✓	✓
DELAWARE									
59	Brandywine Creek State Park	262	2.1	M	✓	✓	✓	✓	
60	White Clay Creek State Park: <i>Twin Valley Trail</i>	266	2.6	M			✓	✓	

DIFFICULTY RATINGS		
E = Easy	M = Moderate	S = Strenuous

REGION	Page #	Heavily Traveled	Accessible by Public Transport	Urban	Lake	Scenic Views	Historical Interest	Wildlife	Wildflowers
Hike Number/Hike Name									
PHILADELPHIA COUNTY									
1 Awbury Arboretum	18		✓	✓		✓	✓		✓
2 Carpenter's Woods	23		✓	✓		✓			
3 John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge at Tinicum	27	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓
4 Manayunk Bridge Trail	31	✓	✓	✓					
5 Pennypack Park	35	✓		✓		✓		✓	
6 The Schuylkill Center for Environmental Education	39					✓		✓	✓
7 Schuylkill River Trail: <i>Schuylkill Banks, Center City</i>	43	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		
8 Wissahickon Valley Park: <i>Andorra Natural Area</i>	47			✓			✓	✓	✓
9 Wissahickon Valley Park: <i>Hermit Lane Trail</i>	52		✓	✓		✓	✓		
10 Wissahickon Valley Park: <i>Lavender and Orange Trails</i>	56			✓		✓			
11 Wissahickon Valley Park: <i>Lower Trails</i>	60	✓				✓	✓		
12 Wissahickon Valley Park: <i>Upper Trails</i>	64	✓				✓	✓		
NORTHERN SUBURBS									
13 Churchville Nature Center	70					✓			
14 Delaware Canal State Park: <i>Delaware Canal Towpath</i>	74	✓				✓			
15 Evansburg State Park: <i>Skipack Loop Trail</i>	78					✓			
16 Five Mile Woods Nature Preserve	82					✓		✓	
17 Fort Washington State Park: <i>Green Ribbon Trail</i>	86					✓			
18 Green Lane Park	90				✓	✓		✓	✓
19 Green Ribbon Trail: <i>Wissahickon Valley Watershed</i>	94					✓	✓		
20 John James Audubon Center at Mill Grove	98					✓	✓	✓	
21 Laurel Hill West Cemetery	102						✓	✓	
22 Lehigh Parkway Trail	107	✓		✓		✓	✓		
23 Lorimer Park	111					✓		✓	
24 Manderfield Preserve	115					✓			
25 Neshaminy State Park: <i>River Walk</i>	119	✓		✓		✓			
26 Nockamixon State Park: <i>Quarry Trail</i>	123				✓	✓			
27 Norristown Farm Park	127	✓				✓	✓		
28 Peace Valley Nature Center	131				✓	✓		✓	✓
29 Ralph Stover State Park: <i>High Rocks</i>	135	✓				✓			
30 Ringing Rocks County Park	139	✓				✓			
31 Saunders Woods Preserve	142							✓	✓
32 Silver Lake Nature Center	146				✓	✓		✓	
33 Top Rock Trail at Haycock Mountain	150					✓			✓
34 Tyler State Park: <i>Covered Bridge</i>	154					✓			

60 Hikes by Category (continued)

REGION Hike Number/Hike Name		Page #	Heavily Traveled	Accessible by Public Transport	Urban	Lake	Scenic Views	Historical Interest	Wildlife	Wildflowers
NORTHERN SUBURBS (continued)										
35	Valley Forge National Historical Park: <i>Chapel Trail</i>	158					✓	✓		
36	Valley Forge National Historical Park: <i>Horse-Shoe Trail/Mount Misery</i>	162					✓	✓		
NEW JERSEY										
37	Baldpate Mountain: <i>Ted Stiles Preserve</i>	168					✓			
38	Black Run Preserve	172				✓	✓			
39	Brendan T. Byrne State Forest	176				✓	✓		✓	✓
40	Crystal Lake Park	181				✓	✓			✓
41	Cushetunk Mountain Preserve	185					✓			
42	Franklin Parker Preserve	189					✓			✓
43	Hunterdon County Arboretum	193					✓	✓		✓
44	Musconetcong Gorge Preserve	197					✓			
45	Rancocas State Park	201					✓		✓	✓
46	Sourland Mountain Preserve	205	✓				✓			
47	Washington Crossing State Park	209	✓				✓	✓		
48	The Watershed Reserve	213							✓	✓
49	Wharton State Forest: <i>Batsto Lake Trail</i>	218	✓				✓	✓		
WESTERN SUBURBS										
50	Binky Lee Preserve	224	✓				✓			✓
51	Crum Woods	228					✓		✓	✓
52	French Creek State Park	232	✓				✓			
53	Marsh Creek State Park	236	✓			✓				
54	Neversink Mountain	240			✓		✓	✓		
55	Ridley Creek State Park	244	✓				✓			
56	Sadsbury Woods Preserve	248					✓			
57	Stroud Preserve	252					✓			✓
58	Wawa Preserve: <i>Rocky Run Trail</i>	256					✓			
DELAWARE										
59	Brandywine Creek State Park	262	✓				✓			
60	White Clay Creek State Park: <i>Twin Valley Trail</i>	266					✓	✓		

DIFFICULTY RATINGS

E = Easy

M = Moderate

S = Strenuous

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to 60 Hikes Within 60 Miles: Philadelphia! If you're new to hiking or even if you're a seasoned trekker, take a few minutes to read the following introduction. We'll explain how this book is organized and how to get the best use of it.

About This Book

Philadelphia proper is home to more than 1.5 million people, according to the 2020 census. Add in all the folks who call the suburbs their home, and the total rises to about 6 million. Philadelphia is a city constantly on the move. This book is about how to move, but in a different way—it's about how to step away from the crowds and spend some time in nature.

Geographically, the Philadelphia area is at the intersection of the Atlantic Coastal Plain and the Piedmont Plateau. That means some hikes are very flat and even sandy (especially in New Jersey), while others have more elevation gain. One of the best features of living in Philadelphia is its access to so many different kinds of recreational opportunities—you can find yourself in the mountains or on the beach, all within about a 2-hour drive.

This book is divided into five regions: Philadelphia County, Northern Suburbs, New Jersey, Western Suburbs, and Delaware. The hikes within county limits range from urban treks to hikes in Philadelphia's sprawling Fairmount Park. The northern suburbs are all about variety; the selections there range from lovely strolls along creeks to hikes up and over boulders. New Jersey has some mountains but is probably best known for its pine barrens, which have sandy soil and pine trees galore. The western suburbs tend to be more rural and pastoral. The hikes in Delaware are relatively moderate with some rolling hills.

As I selected hikes for the book, I started with my favorites, mostly along Philadelphia's Wissahickon Creek. I then did hours of research to find out where the best hikes were all throughout the Philadelphia area. I was careful to include hikes that would be family-friendly, as well as hikes that could really get your blood pumping. I also wanted to include hikes that had some historical value, and I tried to find a variety of scenery. The resulting selection will keep you busy for a long time. Get outside and enjoy all the beauty the Philadelphia area has to offer!

How To Use This Guidebook

The following information walks you through this guidebook's organization to make it easy and convenient for planning great hikes.


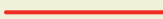





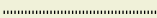
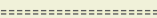
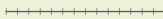


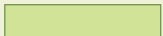




































OVERVIEW MAP AND MAP LEGEND

Use the overview map on page iv to assess the general location of each hike's primary trailhead. Each hike's number appears on the overview map and in the table of

contents facing the overview map. As you flip through the book, a hike’s full profile is easy to locate by watching for the hike number at the top of each left-hand profile page. The book is organized by region, as indicated in the table of contents. A map legend that details the symbols found on trail maps appears below.

REGIONAL MAPS

The book is divided into regions, each prefaced by a regional map. These maps provide more detail than the overview map, bringing you closer to the hikes.

		
Directional arrows	Featured trail	Alternate trail
		
Freeway	Highway with bridge	Minor road
		
Boardwalk	Stairs	Unpaved road
		
Railroad	Boundary line	Power line
		
Park/forest	Water body	River/creek/ intermittent stream
		
Airport	Footbridge	Picnic area
		
Amphitheater	Garden	Picnic shelter
		
Bench	Gate	Playground
		
Bicycle path	General point of interest	Radio tower
		
Boat launch	Golf course	Restroom
		
Canoe launch	Information/visitor center	Ruins
		
Cemetery	Marsh/bog	Scenic view
		
Dam	Mine/quarry	Spring
		
Drinking water	Park office	Trailhead
		
Equestrian trail	Parking	Viewing platform
		
Fee station	Peak/hill	Waterfall/cascades
		
Fishing		

TRAIL MAPS

A detailed map of each hike’s route appears with its profile. On each of these maps, symbols indicate the trailhead, the complete route, significant features, facilities, and topographic landmarks such as creeks, overlooks, and peaks.

To produce the highly accurate maps in this book, the author used a handheld GPS unit to gather data while hiking each route, then sent that data to the publisher's expert cartographers. However, your GPS is not really a substitute for sound, sensible navigation that takes into account the conditions you observe while hiking.

Further, despite the high quality of the maps in this guidebook, the publisher and author strongly recommend that you always carry an additional map, such as the ones noted in each entry's listing for "Maps."

ELEVATION PROFILES (DIAGRAM)

For trails with significant elevation changes, the hike description will include this graph. Entries for routes with 100 feet of elevation gain or less will *not* display an elevation profile.

For hike descriptions that include an elevation profile, the diagram represents the rises and falls of the trail as viewed from the side, over the complete distance (in miles) of that trail. On the vertical axis, or height scale, the number of feet indicated between each tick mark lets you visualize the climb. To avoid making flat hikes look steep and steep hikes appear flat, varying height scales provide an accurate image of each hike's climbing challenge. For example, one hike's scale might rise to 600 feet, while another goes to 1,100 feet.

THE HIKE PROFILE

Each hike contains a brief overview of the trail, a description of the route from start to finish, key at-a-glance information—from the trail's distance and configuration to contacts for local information—GPS coordinates for the trailhead, directions for driving to the trailhead area, and notes on nearby activities. Each profile also includes a map (see "Trail Maps," page 2) and an elevation profile (if applicable).

KEY INFORMATION

The information in this box gives you a quick idea of the specifics of each hike.

DISTANCE & CONFIGURATION *Distance* notes the length of the hike, round-trip, from start to finish. If the hike description includes options to shorten or extend the hike, those round-trip distances will also be factored in here. *Configuration* defines the trail as a loop, an out-and-back (taking you in and out via the same route), a figure eight, or a balloon (a loop with an out-and-back portion).

DIFFICULTY The degree of effort that a typical hiker should expect on a given route. For simplicity, the trails are rated as easy, moderate, or difficult.

SCENERY A short summary of the attractions offered by the hike and what to expect in terms of plant life, wildlife, natural wonders, and historical features.

EXPOSURE A quick check of how much sun you can expect on your shoulders during the hike.

TRAFFIC Indicates how busy the trail might be on an average day. Trail traffic, of course, varies from day to day and season to season. Weekend days typically see the most visitors.

TRAIL SURFACE Indicates whether the trail surface is paved, rocky, gravel, dirt, boardwalk, or a mixture of elements.

HIKING TIME How long it takes to hike the trail. A slow but steady hiker will average 2–3 miles an hour, depending on the terrain.

DRIVING DISTANCE Listed in miles, using Philadelphia City Hall as a starting point.

ELEVATION CHANGE Lists elevation at the trailhead and at the highest and lowest points on each hike.

ACCESS Trail-access hours are shown here. No fees or permits are required to hike any of the trails in this book, except the two trails in Delaware, which require an admission fee.

MAPS Resources for maps other than those in this guidebook are listed here. (As previously noted, the publisher and author recommend that you carry more than one map—and that you consult those maps before heading out on the trail to resolve any confusion or discrepancy.)

WHEELCHAIR TRAVERSABLE At a glance, you'll see if there are paved sections or other areas for safely using a wheelchair.

FACILITIES This item alerts you to restrooms, water, picnic tables, and other basics at or near the trailhead. During the pandemic, many facilities closed, so it's always a good idea to check ahead of time whether a destination is still restricting access to facilities, though nearly all have reopened.

CONTACT Listed here are phone numbers and websites for checking trail conditions and other day-to-day information.

LOCATION The address for the trail.

COMMENTS Here you will find assorted nuggets of information, such as whether dogs are allowed on the trails.

IN BRIEF

Think of this section as a taste of the trail, a snapshot focused on the historical landmarks, beautiful vistas, and other sights you might encounter on the hike.

DESCRIPTION

This is the heart of each hike. Here, the author provides a summary of the trail's essence and highlights any special traits the hike has to offer. The route is clearly outlined, including landmarks, side trips, and possible alternate routes. Ultimately, the hike description will help you choose which hikes are best for you.

NEARBY ACTIVITIES

Look here for information on things to do or points of interest, such as nearby parks, museums, and restaurants.

DIRECTIONS

Used in conjunction with the GPS coordinates, the driving directions will help you locate each trailhead. If using a mapping app, such as Google Maps, note that its

directions may vary depending on current traffic conditions. Before you set out, always confirm that the app is taking you to the correct location, and consult the directions in this book should you lose cell service. Once at the trailhead, park only in designated areas.

TRAILHEAD GPS COORDINATES

As noted in “Trail Maps,” page 2, the author used a handheld GPS unit to obtain geographic data and sent the information to our cartographers. The trailhead coordinates—the intersection of the latitude (north) and longitude (west)—will orient you from the trailhead. In some cases, you can drive within viewing distance of a trailhead. Other hiking routes require a short walk to the trailhead from a parking area.

Also note that this guidebook uses the degree–decimal minute format for presenting the latitude and longitude GPS coordinates:

● ●

N40° 03.073' W75° 10.309'

The latitude and longitude grid system is likely quite familiar to you, but here is a refresher, pertinent to visualizing the GPS coordinates:

Imaginary lines of latitude—called parallels and approximately 69 miles apart from each other—run horizontally around the globe. The equator is established to be 0°, and each parallel is indicated by degrees from the equator: up to 90°N at the North Pole and down to 90°S at the South Pole.

Imaginary lines of longitude—called meridians—run perpendicular to latitude lines. Longitude lines are likewise indicated by degrees. Starting from 0° at the Prime Meridian in Greenwich, England, they continue to the east and west until they meet 180° later at the International Date Line in the Pacific Ocean. At the equator, longitude lines are approximately 69 miles apart, but that distance narrows as the meridians converge toward the North and South Poles.

To convert GPS coordinates given in degrees, minutes, and seconds to the degree–decimal minute format shown above, divide the seconds by 60. For more on GPS technology, visit usgs.gov.

TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS

The maps in this book have been produced with great care and, used with the hike text, will direct you to the trail and help you stay on course. However, you'll find superior detail and valuable information in the U.S. Geological Survey's 7.5-minute-series topographic maps. At mytopo.com, for example, you can view and print free USGS topos of the entire United States. Online services such as Trails.com charge annual fees for additional features such as shaded relief, which makes the topography stand

out more. If you expect to print out many topo maps each year, it might be worth paying for such extras. The downside to USGS maps is that most are outdated, having been created 20–30 years ago; nevertheless, they provide excellent topographic detail. Of course, Google Earth (earth.google.com) does away with topo maps and their inaccuracies . . . replacing them with satellite imagery and its inaccuracies. Regardless, what one lacks, the other augments. Google Earth is an excellent tool whether you have difficulty with topos or not.

If you’re new to hiking, you might be wondering, “What’s a topo map?” In short, a topographic map indicates not only linear distance but elevation as well, using contour lines. These lines spread across the map like dozens of intricate spiderwebs. Each line represents a particular elevation, and at the base of each topo map, a contour’s interval designation is given. If, for example, the contour interval is 20 feet, then the distance between each contour line is 20 feet. Follow five contour lines up on the same map, and the elevation has increased by 100 feet. In addition to the sources listed previously, you’ll find topos at major universities, outdoors shops, and some public libraries, as well as online at nationalmap.gov and store.usgs.gov.

Weather

The weather in the area surrounding Philadelphia is typical for a deciduous forest biome, with relatively warm to hot summers and cold winters. Both spring and fall are usually temperate. The heat in the summer months is often humid and sticky, while significant snowfall is not uncommon during winter. Summer thunderstorms can bring heavy downfalls and, sometimes, flooding. Be mindful of the weather when preparing for your hike, and make sure to wear appropriate clothing and bring

AVERAGE DAILY TEMPERATURES						
	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
HIGH	40°F	44°F	53°F	64°F	74°F	83°F
LOW	26°F	28°F	34°F	44°F	54°F	64°F
	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
MIN	87°F	85°F	78°F	67°F	56°F	45°F
MAX	69°F	68°F	60°F	48°F	39°F	30°F

AVERAGE PRECIPITATION						
	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
inches	3.0"	2.7"	3.8"	3.6"	3.7"	3.4
	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
inches	4.4"	3.5"	3.8"	3.2"	3.0"	3.6"

Source: usclimatedata.com

sufficient water to keep you hydrated throughout your adventure. In addition, be mindful of any potential extreme weather events: the Philadelphia area has been seeing an increase in severe storms that bring damaging tornados and flooding. Always check for potential weather events before heading out to hike anywhere.

Water

How much is enough? Well, one simple physiological fact should convince you to err on the side of excess when deciding how much water to pack: a hiker walking steadily in 90° heat needs approximately 10 quarts of fluid per day. That's 2.5 gallons. A good rule of thumb is to hydrate prior to your hike, carry (and drink) 16 ounces of water for every mile you plan to hike, and hydrate again after the hike. For most people, the pleasures of hiking make carrying water a relatively minor price to pay to remain safe and healthy. So pack more water than you anticipate needing, even for short hikes.

If you are tempted to drink found water, do so with extreme caution. Many ponds and lakes encountered by hikers are fairly stagnant and the water tastes terrible. Drinking such water presents inherent risks for thirsty trekkers. Giardia parasites contaminate many water sources and cause the dreaded intestinal giardiasis that can last for weeks after ingestion. For information, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's website: cdc.gov/parasites/giardia.

In any case, effective treatment is essential before using any water source found along the trail. Boiling water for 2–3 minutes is always a safe measure for camping, but day hikers can consider iodine tablets, approved chemical mixes, filtration units rated for giardia, and UV filtration. Some of these methods (for example, filtration with an added carbon filter) remove bad tastes typical in stagnant water, while others add their own taste. As a precaution, carry a means of water purification to help in a pinch, if you realize you have underestimated your consumption needs.

Clothing

Weather, unexpected trail conditions, fatigue, extended hiking duration, and wrong turns can individually or collectively turn a great outing into a very uncomfortable one at best and a life-threatening one at worst. Thus, proper attire plays a key role in staying comfortable and, sometimes, in staying alive. Here are some helpful guidelines:

- **Choose silk, wool, or synthetics** for maximum comfort in all of your hiking attire—from hats to socks and in between. Cotton is fine if the weather remains dry and stable, but you won't be happy if that material gets wet, as it does not dry quickly.
- **Always wear a hat,** or at least tuck one into your day pack or hitch it to your belt. Hats offer all-weather sun and wind protection as well as warmth if it turns cold.

- **Be ready to layer up or down** as the day progresses and the mercury rises or falls. Today's outdoor wear makes layering easy, with such designs as jackets that convert to vests and zip-off or button-up legs.
- **Wear hiking boots** or sturdy hiking sandals with toe protection. Flip-flopping along a paved urban greenway is one thing, but never hike a trail in open sandals or casual sneakers. Your bones and arches need support, and your skin needs protection.
- **Pair that footwear with good socks!** If you prefer not to sheathe your feet when wearing hiking sandals, tuck the socks into your day pack; you may need them if the weather plummets or if you hit rocky turf and pebbles begin to irritate your feet. And, in an emergency, if you have lost your gloves, you can use the socks as mittens.
- **Don't leave rainwear behind,** even if the day dawns clear and sunny. Tuck into your day pack, or tie around your waist, a jacket that is breathable and either water-resistant or waterproof. Investigate different choices at your local outdoors retailer. If you are a frequent hiker, ideally you'll have more than one rainwear weight, material, and style in your closet to protect you in all seasons.

Essential Gear

Today you can buy outdoor vests that have up to 20 pockets shaped and sized to carry everything from toothpicks to binoculars. Or, if you don't aspire to feel like a burro, you can neatly stow all of these items in your day pack or backpack. The following list showcases never-hike-without-them items, in alphabetical order, as all are important:

- **Extra clothes** (Raingear, warm hat, gloves, and change of socks and shirt)
- **Extra food** (Trail mix, granola bars, or other high-energy foods)
- **Flashlight** or headlamp with extra bulb and batteries
- **Insect repellent** (For some areas and seasons, this is vital.)
- **Maps and a high-quality compass** (Even if you know the terrain from previous hikes, don't leave home without these tools. And, as previously noted, bring maps in addition to those in this guidebook, and consult your maps prior to the hike. If you are versed in GPS usage, bring that device, too, but don't rely on it as your sole navigational tool, as battery life can dwindle or die, and be sure to compare its guidance with that of your maps.)
- **Pocketknife** and/or multitool
- **Sunscreen** (Note the expiration date.)
- **Water** (As emphasized more than once in this book, bring more than you think you will drink. Depending on your destination, you may want to bring a container and iodine or a filter for purifying water in case you run out.)
- **Whistle** (This little gadget is more effective than your voice in the event of an emergency.)
- **Windproof, waterproof matches** and/or a lighter, as well as a fire starter

FIRST AID KIT

In addition to the aforementioned items, those below may appear overwhelming for a day hike. But any paramedic will tell you that the products listed here—in alphabetical order, because all are important—are just the basics. The reality of hiking is that you can be out for a week of backpacking and acquire only a mosquito bite. Or you can hike for an hour, slip, and suffer a bleeding abrasion or broken bone. Fortunately, the listed items collapse into a very small space. You can also purchase convenient, prepackaged kits at your pharmacy or online.

- **Adhesive bandages** (Band-Aid or the generic equivalent)
- **Antibiotic ointment** (Neosporin or the generic equivalent)
- **Antihistamine** (Benadryl or the generic equivalent, for allergic reactions)
- **Athletic tape**
- **Blister dressing** (such as Moleskin/Spenco 2nd Skin)
- **Butterfly-closure bandages**
- **Elastic bandages or joint wraps**
- **Epinephrine** in a prefilled syringe (typically by prescription only, for people known to have severe allergic reactions to bee stings)
- **Gauze** (one roll and a half dozen 4-by-4-inch pads)
- **Hydrogen peroxide or iodine**
- **Ibuprofen or acetaminophen**

Note: Consider your intended terrain and the number of hikers in your party before you exclude any article listed above. A botanical garden stroll may not inspire you to carry a complete kit, but anything beyond that warrants precaution. When hiking alone, always be prepared for a medical need. And if you are a twosome or with a group, one or more people in your party should be equipped with first aid material.

General Safety

The following tips may have the familiar ring of your mother's voice.

- **Always let someone know where you will be hiking and how long you expect to be gone.** It's a good idea to give that person a copy of your route, particularly if you are headed into any isolated area. Let them know when you return.
- **Always sign in and out of any trail registers.** Don't hesitate to comment on the trail condition if space is provided; that's your opportunity to alert others to any problems you encounter.
- **Do not count on a cell phone for your safety.** Reception may be spotty or nonexistent on the trail, even on an urban walk—especially if it's embraced by towering trees.

- **Always carry food and water, even for a short hike.** And bring more water than you think you will need. (It cannot be said often enough!)
- **Ask questions.** State forest and park employees are there to help. It's a lot easier to solicit advice before a problem occurs, and it will help you avoid a mishap away from civilization, when it's too late to amend an error.
- **Stay on designated trails.** Even on the most clearly marked trails, there is usually a point where you have to stop and consider which way to go. If you become disoriented, don't panic. As soon as you think you may be off track, stop, assess your current direction, and then retrace your steps to the point where you went astray. Using a map, a compass, and this book, and keeping in mind what you have passed thus far, reorient yourself, and trust your judgment on which way to proceed. If you become absolutely unsure, return to your vehicle the way you came in. Should you become completely lost and have no idea how to find the trailhead, remaining in place along the trail and waiting for help is most often the best option for adults and always the best option for children.
- **Always carry a whistle,** another precaution that cannot be overemphasized. It may be a lifesaver if you do become lost or sustain an injury.
- **Be especially careful when crossing streams.** Whether you are fording the stream or crossing on a log, make every step count. If you have any doubt about maintaining your balance on a log, ford the stream instead: use a trekking pole or stout stick for balance, and face upstream as you cross. If a stream seems too deep to ford, turn back. Whatever is on the other side is not worth risking your life for.
- **Be careful at overlooks.** While these areas may provide spectacular views, they are potentially hazardous. Stay back from the edge of outcrops, and make absolutely sure of your footing; a misstep can mean a nasty and possibly fatal fall.
- **Standing dead trees and storm-damaged living trees pose a significant hazard to hikers.** These trees may have loose or broken limbs that could fall at any time. While walking beneath trees and when choosing a spot to rest or enjoy your snack, look up!
- **Know the symptoms of subnormal body temperature, known as hypothermia.** Shivering and forgetfulness are the two most common indicators of this stealthy killer. Hypothermia can occur at any elevation, even in the summer, especially when the hiker is wearing lightweight cotton clothing that gets wet. If symptoms present themselves, get to shelter, hot liquids, and dry clothes as soon as possible.
- **Know the symptoms of heat exhaustion (hyperthermia).** Light-headedness and loss of energy are the first two indicators. If you feel these symptoms, find some shade, drink your water, remove as many layers of clothing as practical, and stay put until you cool down. Marching through heat exhaustion leads to heatstroke, which can be fatal. If you should be sweating and you're not, that's the signature warning sign. Your hike is over at that point—heatstroke is a

serious condition that can cause seizures, convulsions, and eventually death. If you or a companion reach that point, do whatever can be done to cool the victim down, and seek medical attention immediately.

- **Take along your brain.** A cool, calculating mind is the most important asset on the trail. It allows you to think before you act.
- **In summary:** Plan ahead. Watch your step. Avoid accidents before they happen. Enjoy a rewarding and relaxing hike.

Watchwords for Flora & Fauna

Hikers should remain aware of the following concerns regarding plants and wildlife, described in alphabetical order.

BLACK BEARS

Though attacks by black bears are extremely uncommon, there have been occasional sightings in the greater Philadelphia area. The sight or approach of a bear can give anyone a start. If you encounter a bear while hiking, remain calm, and avoid running in any direction. Make loud noises to scare off the bear, and back away slowly. Most encounters are food related, as bears have an exceptional sense of smell and not particularly discriminating tastes. While this is of greater concern to backpackers and campers, day hikers may plan a lunchtime picnic or munch on an energy bar or other snack from time to time, so remain aware and alert.

POISON IVY, OAK, AND SUMAC

Poison oak and poison sumac are extremely uncommon in the Northeast, but poison ivy is ubiquitous on these hikes. The best way to identify poison ivy, which can occur as a vine or as ground cover, is to look for its three leaves (“leaves of three, let it be”). This native plant provides food for animals. The best way to avoid it is to wear long pants; if your clothing comes in contact with poison ivy, remove and wash the clothing

as soon as possible. If your skin comes in contact with poison ivy, wash the affected area with a soap like Tecnu to try to remove as much of the plant’s oil from your skin as possible. Your four-legged friend (and even your hiking gear) can also spread the oils to you, so wash your pup down with Tecnu if you are in an area with a lot of poison ivy.

Urushiol, the oil in the sap of these plants, is responsible for the rash. Within 14 hours of



Poison ivy *Tom Watson*

exposure, raised lines and/or blisters will appear on the affected area, accompanied by a terrible itch. Refrain from scratching because bacteria under your fingernails can cause an infection. Wash and dry the affected area thoroughly, applying a calamine lotion to help dry out the rash. If itching or blistering is severe, seek medical attention.

SNAKES

The area within 60 miles of Philadelphia has only two venomous snakes to look out for: the timber rattlesnake and the copperhead. Timber rattlesnakes are most common in hilly, wooded areas with rock outcrops. Copperheads are more common throughout the state and can be found in a variety of habitats. Both snakes are pit vipers, meaning they have pits on each side of the head to detect when prey is close. They have slitlike pupils and triangular heads. The good news is that venomous snakebites are not common in this area, and both of these snakes tend to avoid humans.

The snakes you're most likely to see while hiking will be nonvenomous species and subspecies. The best rule is to leave all snakes alone, give them a wide berth as you hike past, and make sure any hiking companions (including dogs) do the same.

When hiking, stick to well-used trails, and wear over-the-ankle boots and loose-fitting long pants. Rattlesnakes like to bask in the sun and won't bite unless threatened. Do not step or put your hands where you cannot see, and avoid wandering around in the dark. Step *onto* logs and rocks, never *over* them, and be especially careful when climbing rocks.

TICKS

Ticks are often found on brush and tall grass, where they seem to be waiting to hitch a ride on a warm-blooded passerby. Pennsylvania, unfortunately, has more tick-caused Lyme disease cases than any other state. Adult ticks are most active April–May and again October–November. Deer ticks, also known as black-legged ticks, are about the size of a sesame seed and carry Lyme disease in both humans and animals. The best way to avoid getting tick bites is to wear long pants and sleeves. You should also try to avoid walking in tall grass or brushing against shrubs or tree branches. But, because you are hiking, it might be hard to avoid doing that. Wear light-colored clothing, so ticks can be spotted before they make it to the skin. Be sure to visually check your hair, the back of your neck, your armpits, and your socks at the end of the hike. Also check any dogs you brought with you on the trail. If you find a tick before it attaches itself, simply brush it off of your clothing or skin. During your posthike shower, take a moment to do a more complete body check. For ticks that are already embedded, removal with tweezers is best. Grasp the tick close to your skin, and remove it by pulling straight out firmly. Do your best to remove the head, but do not twist. Use disinfectant solution on the wound.

Hunting

Several hikes in this book pass through land where hunting is permitted. I tried to be mindful of that while writing the book, but it's always best to check before you enter a trail. Hikers may wish to avoid hiking during the big-game seasons, when the woods suddenly seem filled with orange and camouflage. Deer hunting season usually has the most traffic, so use caution and consider wearing blaze orange if you are hiking mid-September–late January. As of this writing, hunting is prohibited on Sundays—except for foxes, crows, and coyotes (before you go, check the website for the trail you plan to hike to confirm)—so if you are concerned about trails where hunting is permitted, plan to hike on Sundays.

Trail Etiquette

Always treat the trail, wildlife, and fellow hikers with respect. Here are some helpful reminders.

- **Plan ahead in order to be self-sufficient at all times.** For example, carry necessary supplies for changes in weather or other conditions. A well-planned trip brings satisfaction to you and to others.
- **Hike on open trails only.**
- **In seasons or construction areas** where road or trail closures may be a possibility, use the website addresses or phone numbers shown in the “Contact” line for each of this guidebook’s hikes to check conditions prior to heading out for your hike. Do not attempt to circumvent such closures.
- **Avoid trespassing on private land**, and obtain all permits and authorization as required. Also, leave gates as you find them or as directed by signage.
- **Be courteous to other hikers, bikers, equestrians**, and others you encounter on the trails.
- **Never spook wild animals or pets.** An unannounced approach, a sudden movement, or a loud noise startles most critters, and a surprised animal can be dangerous to you, to others, and to itself. Give animals plenty of space.
- **Observe the YIELD signs** around the region’s trailheads and backcountry. They typically advise hikers to yield to horses, and bikers to yield to both horses and hikers. Common courtesy on hills dictates that hikers and bikers yield to any uphill traffic. When encountering mounted riders or horsepackers, hikers can courteously step off the trail, on the downhill side if possible. So that the horses can see and hear you, calmly greet the riders before they reach you and do not dart behind trees. Also resist the urge to pet horses unless you are invited to do so.
- **Stay on the existing trail** and do not blaze any new trails.
- **Pack out what you pack in**, leaving only your footprints. No one likes to see the trash someone else has left behind.

A Love of Old Trees

While many Americans took up bread baking and interior decorating during the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, I found myself on the hunt for old trees. There is something so grounding about these old giants. And I live in the birthplace of America, so you'd think we'd have tons of historic trees. Alas, Philadelphia has more concrete than trees these days, and if the wave of development continues at its current pace, I fear there will be fewer and fewer old trees remaining.

The more I researched historic trees, the more I discovered about the smattering of them that have dodged the chainsaw. These amazing trees are hiding in plain sight throughout the Philadelphia area. I now know how and where to look for them, and I pass that knowledge on to you, dear reader.

You may wonder why I care so much about old trees. I'm glad you asked. Trees are gorgeous. And humans share 50% of our DNA with trees. Through photosynthesis, trees also provide all living things with copious amounts of oxygen to breathe. On top of all that, trees give humans added benefits that we might not even realize.

I consulted with Aaron Greenberg, arboretum manager at Laurel Hill East and West Cemeteries, to learn more about the benefits of old trees. Aaron gives seasonal walking tours of the 265-acre arboretum that represents the combined grounds at the two cemeteries. He also volunteers his time to oversee the PA Champion Tree Program, an online repository of information about the largest trees across the Keystone State. On the website (pabigtrees.com), anyone can locate information about the largest trees of every species of tree growing in Pennsylvania. If you happen to be lucky enough to know a large tree that isn't on the list, you can nominate it for inclusion on the Big Trees of Pennsylvania Register. The largest tree of each species is considered the state champion.

According to Aaron, old trees naturally provide more shade than their younger counterparts. And more shade means cooler temperatures, especially in densely populated places with lots of impervious surfaces (streets, sidewalks, buildings). In fact, the City of Philadelphia is in the process of strategically planning how to increase the city's urban forest canopy, particularly in neighborhoods with sweltering summer heat and few trees. Another huge benefit of big trees is carbon sequestration: keeping carbon stored reduces the amount of this greenhouse gas in the atmosphere, where it traps heat. Every part of a tree stores carbon, from roots to shoots; the bigger the tree, the more carbon stored.

Why else do we care about these big, old trees? They're integral in stormwater mitigation. One of the looming problems that climate change presents for Philadelphia is the challenge of stormwater management: storms are getting stronger and dumping more and more rain in single events. Philadelphia's dirty little secret is that early city planners thought an effective way to manage water was to combine rainwater runoff, domestic sewage, and industrial wastewater into one pipe to be

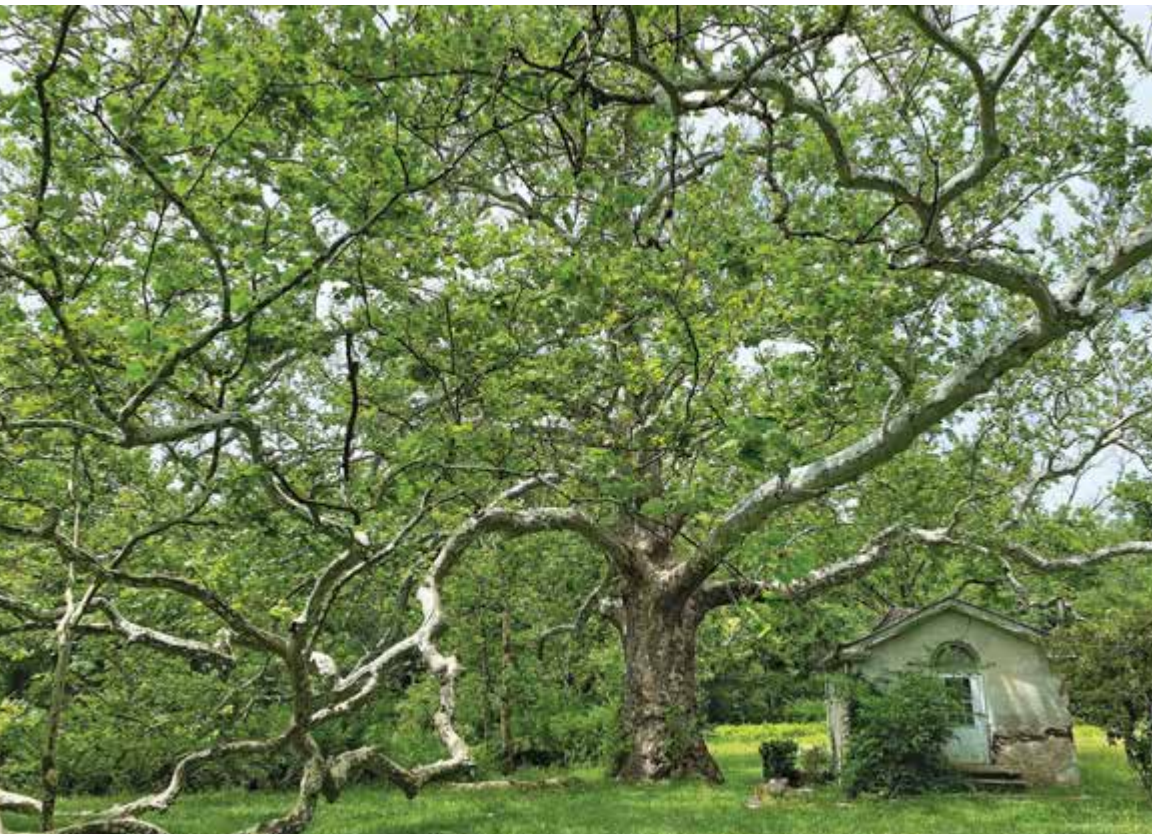
transported for treatment. At the time, it was hailed as a fantastic idea, and hundreds of other cities across the country followed suit. Unfortunately, during heavy rains, the volume of wastewater can exceed the capacity of the sewer system or treatment plant, causing untreated storm- and wastewater to be discharged directly into nearby water bodies. These days, the EPA wants any municipality with combined sewer overflows (CSOs) to figure out ways to better manage stormwater. Big trees with extensive root systems help hold water in soil, preventing it from entering an overburdened water-management system.

Additionally, established trees provide more food and shelter to animals and other organisms. Aaron says that historic, veteran trees can provide up to 200 times the ecological benefit of smaller trees.

Countless studies have shown that being around trees improves our mental health as well. When you are in the presence of these mighty trees, it's hard to not feel complete awe.

For this new edition of *60 Hikes Within 60 Miles: Philadelphia*, I hunted down some old trees you can visit and featured them throughout the book so you can begin to appreciate their glory. But photos can never do these majestic trees justice—you need to go out and meet them. They have so many stories to tell!

The Pawling Sycamore is one of the most magical trees I've ever met. It is believed to have been alive when George Washington camped at Valley Forge in 1777–78.

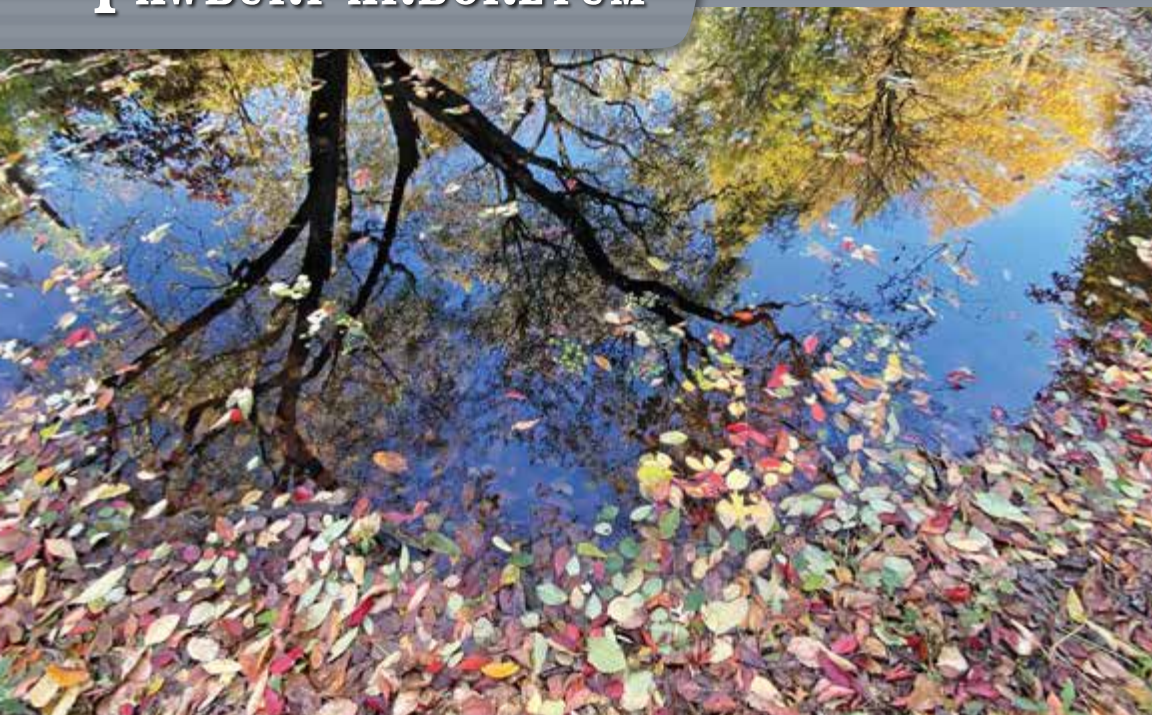




PHILADELPHIA COUNTY

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1 AWBURY ARBORETUM



Autumn at Awbury is stunning.

TOUR A HISTORIC PROPERTY on an easy path that winds through a wildflower meadow, a historic watercourse, and towering old trees.

DESCRIPTION

Awbury Arboretum is a green oasis in a dense urban neighborhood. The property was once the summer estate for the wealthy Cope family, who were Quakers. Henry Cope was a shipping merchant, and when he bought the land in 1852, he named it after his ancestral village of Avebury, England. In 1916, members of the Cope family established the arboretum to preserve the natural area. Today, Awbury boasts 56 acres of green space in the historic Germantown section of Philadelphia.

The arboretum's headquarters are in the centrally located Francis Cope House, which is near where our hike will take us. According to Awbury's website, horticulturist William Saunders advised that the landscape be laid out in the English garden tradition, so there are many rolling hills and great old trees to guide your stroll.

The trail starts close to the SEPTA station that abuts the property. There is a parking area off of Washington Lane for folks who are taking the train. There are usually several spots available, but if there is no space, parking on Washington Lane is free and easy. If you are taking the train, just hop off and look for the entrance sign for the arboretum.

DISTANCE & CONFIGURATION: 0.7-mile loop

DIFFICULTY: Easy

SCENERY: Ponds, arboretum, historic trees, witch hazel garden

EXPOSURE: Partial shade to full sun

TRAFFIC: Light

TRAIL SURFACE: Blacktop, packed dirt, wood chips, grass

HIKING TIME: 35 minutes

DRIVING DISTANCE FROM CENTER CITY:
10 miles

ELEVATION CHANGE: Trailhead: 260'
Lowest: 251' Highest: 295'

ACCESS: Trails: daily, sunrise–sunset

MAPS: USGS *Germantown*

WHEELCHAIR ACCESS: Some parts

DOG FRIENDLY: Yes

FACILITIES: Portable restrooms in parking lot near Cope House and across the street in the Agricultural Village

CONTACT: 215-849-2855, awbury.org

LOCATION: 1 Awbury Road, Philadelphia, PA

COMMENTS: Awbury Arboretum is a great place to take children and a great spot for a quick hike.

The hike starts on a blacktop path. You can peek to your left to see the gorgeous meadow habitat and pond. Fret not—our hike will bring us back to and through the fields.

Awbury tends to be a pretty quiet place. As you stroll along the road, you'll see some beautiful stone remnants and towering old trees.

Soon you'll notice to the right an area that is a little bit lower than the path you're on. Called McNabtown Field, this low, flat, open area once contained an entire neighborhood of small houses, which was representative of working-class Germantown in the 19th century. The Cope family eventually incorporated the area into the landscape, and it remains the only level part of the property.

These days, Awbury Arboretum embraces the low, flat landscape by holding community events such as festivals and craft fairs. As you walk past McNabtown, take a gander at the honey locust trees along the way. You'll know them by the gnarly spikes poking from their trunks and the long, beanlike seedpods strewn on the ground.

Continue on the blacktop path for a bit more of an uphill. When you get to the top of the hill, you'll come to what looks to be an intersection. If you were to cross the road and continue straight through the fields, you'd be greeted by two copses with a variety of trees, including a gorgeous linden tree.

At this intersection, be mindful of the slight possibility of motor vehicles. Turn left and walk a few paces before you start the loop back. (Ahead and to the right is the Cope House, where there are public restrooms.) Turn left onto the Beech Hollow Trail. At the time of this writing, a fresh layer of wood chips covered the trail. You'll pass a lovely rain garden installed to manage excess water.

Throughout the hike, there is definitely competition between city noise and birdsong, but the birds usually win out. You'll surely hear the trills of red-winged blackbirds along the way.

Awbury Arboretum



There is some signage throughout this part of the trail. Here, you can read about Awbury's woodlands, including native species like towering tulip poplar and eastern redbud trees, as well as stands of European beech trees. You'll recognize beech trees by their smooth gray bark, which people often feel compelled to carve initials into.

When you come to what looks like a fork in the trail, continue straight. You'll soon see the rolling hills and pond, which you will now loop around.

Head straight ahead toward the field, and you'll see the path to the right. This trail is often mowed to allow folks to walk through the meadow. Follow the path

uphill and enjoy the majesty of the few old trees dotting the former farmland. You'll also see that there are several private properties on and surrounding the grounds.

You'll see a lovely meadow of witch hazel off to your right. If you are visiting in fall or winter, be sure to look at and smell the lovely yellow flowers.

Continue your loop around the field on the mowed, grassy path; you'll see some bird boxes throughout. You are headed to the section Awbury refers to as its historic watercourse.

This part gets a little confusing. You're going to loop all the way around to the edge of the field. And you'll come to somewhat of a crossroads where you'll see a bench up ahead. Turn right and enjoy some of the amazing trees that are part of this section, including dawn redwood, bald cypress, and some old river birches.

As you walk toward Washington Lane, you'll notice a giant river birch tree with a sign indicating it is a champion (see page 14). Behind it are the remnants of an old spring house made of sparkly Wissahickon schist. If you spend any time in Philadelphia, you will notice this special schist in the construction of homes, bridges, and gardens. It is a gorgeous rock and one you will see everywhere in the Wissahickon Valley Park. This schist is a metamorphic rock that was once at the bottom of an ancient ocean.

Take a few more steps toward Washington Lane and you'll see a concrete slab. Turn left onto the path here, and then follow the stream as it trickles down through two ponds.

This part of the trail is a little damp because it's a lower area and more of a wetland. When you come to the first pond, you'll see another enormous river birch on its banks. I love this part of the hike because it's almost always bustling with busy birds.

When you get to the larger pond at the bottom of the hill, you'll notice a giant log that's a popular sitting spot. You'll see our starting point slightly uphill and off to the right.

NEARBY ACTIVITIES

Awbury Arboretum is a member of **Historic Germantown**, a consortium of historic homes, gardens, cemeteries, and other properties. Head to historicgermantownpa.org for more information and events. Across the street from Awbury's main location is the **Awbury Arboretum Agricultural Village**, which hosts activities and space for other nonprofits, including the Philly Goat Project (phillygoatproject.org). Awbury also has a wooded play area called **AdventureWoods**; see the website for hours.



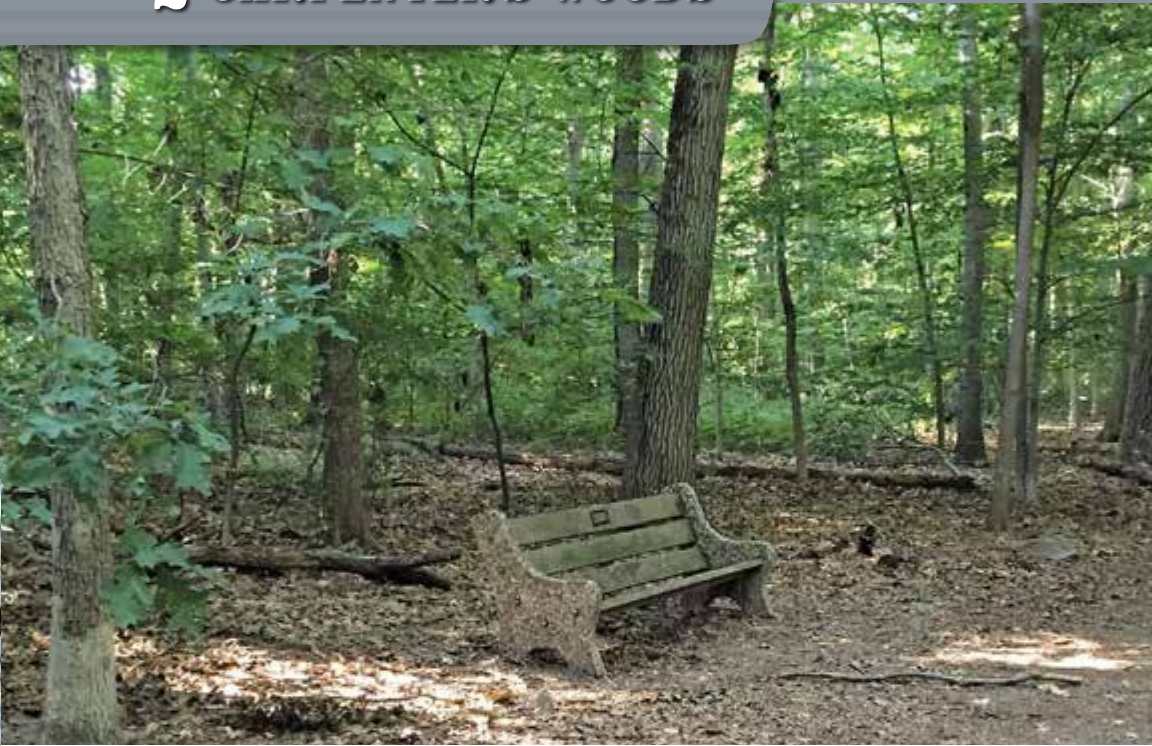
TRAILHEAD GPS COORDINATES: N40° 03.073' W75° 10.309'

DIRECTIONS From Center City, take I-76 West 4.8 miles to Exit 340A. Merge onto City Avenue and follow signs to Lincoln Drive. Take Lincoln Drive 2.1 miles, then turn right on West Johnson Street. At the next light, turn right on Wayne Avenue. In two blocks, turn left onto Washington Lane. Follow Washington Lane for 1.3 miles. After you pass the gas station and go under the bridge, you'll see parking for SEPTA. You can also park for free on Washington Lane.

Once thought extinct, the dawn redwood is a living fossil.



2 CARPENTER'S WOODS



Carpenter's Woods offers a short hike with benches along the way.

THIS IS A SHORT, quick retreat within Philadelphia and is accessible by public transportation.

DESCRIPTION

Although this hike is short in both time and distance, it is definitely worth checking out. Carpenter's Woods is an easy afternoon stroll and a popular spot for folks walking their dogs. And, as it is a haven for migrating birds, the National Audubon Society has deemed it an Important Bird Area. In fact, the Friends of Carpenter's Woods call the park Philadelphia's First Bird Sanctuary.

This hike is also easily accessible via public transportation: a SEPTA bus stop (the 53 bus) is directly in front of the trailhead. Check SEPTA's website (septa.org) for the best way to get to the park from your starting point. If you are driving, street parking is readily available.

This section of Fairmount Park was originally part of the estate of a wealthy Philadelphian, George Washington Carpenter. The land was saved from development in 1916 and became a bird sanctuary in the 1920s. Carpenter's Woods is a great spot to take a break; keep an eye out for birds, from warblers to woodpeckers. This hike is also a great place to see some gorgeous old trees. My favorites are the fallen ones covered

DISTANCE & CONFIGURATION: 0.7-mile loop

DIFFICULTY: Easy

SCENERY: Woods, meadow

EXPOSURE: Mostly shaded

TRAFFIC: Moderate

TRAIL SURFACE: Dirt

HIKING TIME: 40 minutes

DRIVING DISTANCE FROM CENTER CITY:
10 miles

ELEVATION CHANGE: Trailhead: 270'
Lowest: 230' Highest: 294'

ACCESS: Daily, sunrise–sunset

MAPS: USGS *Germantown*

WHEELCHAIR ACCESS: No

DOG FRIENDLY: Yes

FACILITIES: None

CONTACT: 929-239-8158, focw.org

LOCATION: Wayne Ave. and W. Sedgwick St.,
Philadelphia, PA

COMMENTS: Many people walk their dogs off leash here, even though park rules say dogs should be leashed at all times. The Friends of Carpenter's Woods group publishes a great map of the entire park (tinyurl.com/carpenterswoodsmmap).

in mushrooms. This small park is the only area in Philadelphia recognized by the Old-Growth Forest Network as containing old-growth trees.

According to area bird enthusiasts, spring is the peak birding season here; that's when you have the best chance of spotting migrating species, particularly warblers. The starting point of this hike is also the best place to start for birding, and the best time is right after sunrise. At that time of day, the bugs start buzzing, which means breakfast for the birds. Birders have identified more than 100 species of birds that either live here or stop by during migration.

From the trailhead, turn left (west) and follow the well-worn Grove Trail. Watch out for abundant poison ivy on the path during the warmer months. After about 0.1 mile, you come to a junction. Continue straight, now on the Moffett Trail, down a small incline. Keep following the path, and soon you'll come to an area that's part of a meadow restoration project. At the meadow, bear right, with the meadow to your left.

Meadows are extremely important to the health of an environment because they provide open space and habitat for species that thrive in those conditions. Wild-flowers provide nourishment for insects, which in turn become food for birds. In a woody area, meadows also offer the opportunity for more biodiversity.

Past the meadow restoration area, you'll continue on the Moffett Trail until you come to a fork in the trail. At that fork, head right (west), now on the Spring Trail. At the next junction, bear right (southwest) again onto Jada's Loop, and take the loglike steps upward. Continue straight when you see some makeshift fencing. Keep following Jada's Loop until you reach a trail marker. Bear right onto the Ellet Trail, and walk southwest until you reach another crossroads. Turn left (southeast) onto the Wayne Trail, and make your way back to the bus stop or parking area.

The Friends of Carpenter's Woods group helps keep this part of Fairmount Park beautiful. If you fall in love with the area while walking there, visit the organization's website, focw.org, to get more involved.

Carpenter's Woods



NEARBY ACTIVITIES

Historic Germantown is a consortium of historic homes, gardens, cemeteries, and other historic properties. Head to historicgermantownnpa.org for more information and events.

Morris Arboretum is the state arboretum and is open daily for an entrance fee. Visit morrisarboretum.org for more information.



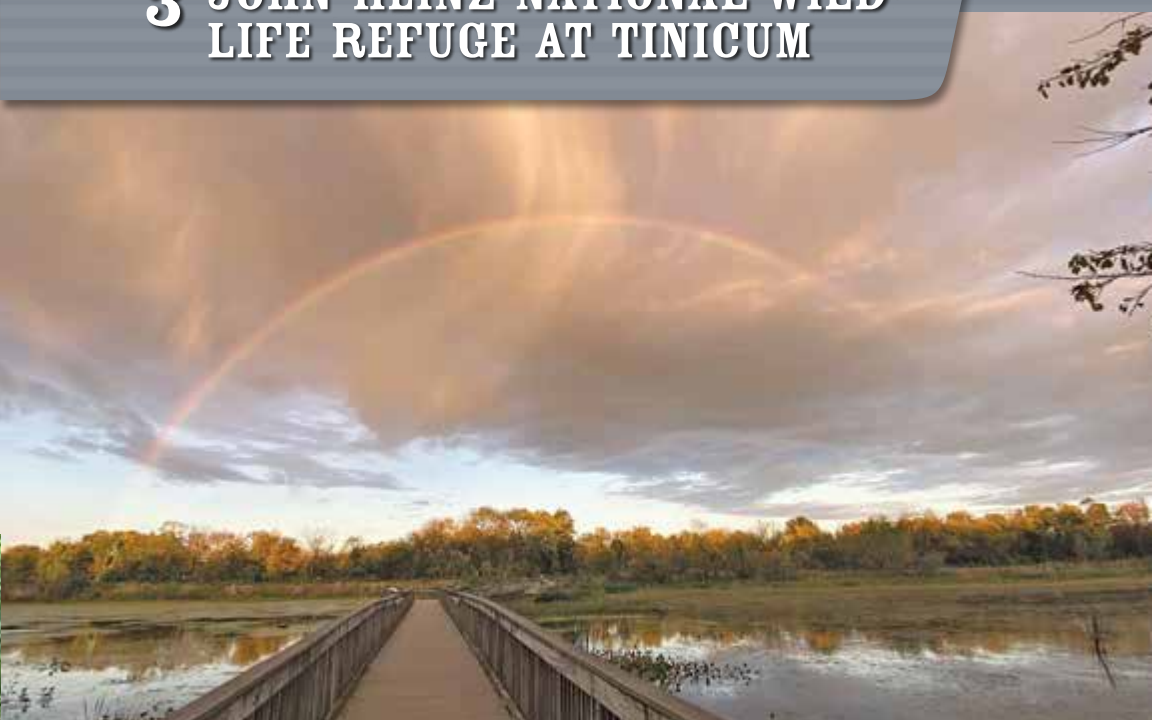
TRAILHEAD GPS COORDINATES: N40° 02.656' W75° 12.019'

DIRECTIONS From Center City, take I-76 West 4.8 miles to Exit 340A. Merge onto City Avenue and follow signs to Lincoln Drive. Take Lincoln Drive 2.2 miles to Wayne Avenue. Turn left onto Wayne Avenue and follow it 0.6 mile to West Sedgwick Street. Parking is available at Wayne Avenue and Sedgwick Street.

Carpenter's Woods is rich in mushrooms.



3 JOHN HEINZ NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE AT TINICUM



Even rainy days are beautiful at the refuge.

THIS HIKE IS a bird lover's dream, as it goes around the impoundment at John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge at Tinicum. The refuge is a major stop on the Atlantic Flyway for migrating birds.

DESCRIPTION

Every day, thousands of people zip by a hidden natural gem in the City of Brotherly Love. Nestled near Philadelphia International Airport and I-95 are about 1,000 acres of natural space. The John Heinz Wildlife Refuge at Tinicum boasts 10 miles of trails and an abundance of wildlife to enjoy while hiking.

The refuge is part of the National Wildlife Refuge System and is managed by the U.S. Department of Fish & Wildlife. It was established in 1972 to preserve the area known as Tinicum Marsh. In 1991, the refuge was renamed after Senator John Heinz in honor of his support of preserving the open space in the face of burgeoning development.

Today, approximately 1.7 million people live within 10 miles of the refuge. It's a birder's paradise, providing ample nourishment for birds migrating along the Atlantic Flyway. The trail also provides respite for weary urbanites.

This hike centers on the part of the refuge known as the impoundment, a 145-acre shallow wetland that refuge staff manage in order to meet the needs of migratory

DISTANCE & CONFIGURATION:

3.7-mile balloon

DIFFICULTY: Easy**SCENERY:** Impoundment wetland, waterfowl, birds, woods**EXPOSURE:** Full sun to partial shade**TRAFFIC:** Moderate to heavy**TRAIL SURFACE:** Packed gravel**HIKING TIME:** 2 hours**DRIVING DISTANCE FROM CENTER CITY:**

11 miles

ELEVATION CHANGE: Trailhead: 6'*Lowest: 0' Highest: 10'***ACCESS:** Trails: daily, sunrise–sunset; visitor center: Wednesday–Saturday, 8:30 a.m.–4 p.m.**MAPS:** USGS *Lansdowne***WHEELCHAIR ACCESS:** Most parts**DOG FRIENDLY:** Yes**FACILITIES:** Portable toilets on the trail, modern restrooms in the visitor center**CONTACT:** 215-365-3118, fws.gov/refuge/john-heinz-tinicum**LOCATION:** 8601 Lindbergh Blvd., Philadelphia, PA**COMMENTS:** John Heinz is an amazing place to go bird-watching. Bring your binoculars.

fowl. Numerous birds call the refuge home year-round, but most are just passing by on their journey elsewhere.

Park in the lot near the park office. The trail proceeds west from the parking lot. Feel free to stop at the visitor center before or after your walk. Head inside first to pick up a map or check out the displays to see what kinds of flora and fauna call the refuge home. Afterward, you can add your wildlife sightings to the list at the ranger's desk. Portable toilets are located along the trail, and the visitor center has modern restrooms.

This hike follows the recently renamed Wetland Loop Trail (formerly the Dike Trail). Follow the gravel path straight ahead. On your right you can see Darby Creek, a tidal waterway. Depending on the time of day, it may be mudflats or a flowing stream.

Shortly you'll come to a wooden boardwalk to the left. This boardwalk is one of the best opportunities in Philadelphia to get up close with nature; you'll no doubt see countless birds. And if you look in the water, you'll likely see numerous turtles swimming and sunning. Cross the boardwalk, and you'll see a narrow dirt path to your right and a paved path to your left. Follow signs for the Wetland Loop Trail by taking the dirt path on the right to start the loop. You are walking among a stand of sweet gum trees, which produce the spiky seedpods likely covering the trail.

This part of the trail is shaded. At the end of the short dirt trail through the woods, you'll see a tiny wooden bridge; cross it. After crossing another small wood-plank bridge, you'll come to a wider trail, which is rock and dirt. Turn right.

After you've walked through the woods for a little while, you'll again see the impoundment off to your right. As you approach the highway, the trail turns left, then right, then right again to parallel the highway. At the next junction, a trail marker points toward the visitor center. Turn right to continue the loop.

When you come to a T in the trail, go right on the Wetland Loop Trail, which will lead you back to the visitor center and parking area. A relatively new boardwalk off to the left allows you to take a short trip off the trail and look out over another

John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge at Tinicum



part of the refuge. This part of the hike is in full sun, with only a few small pockets of shade along the way.

Keep following the gravel path all the way back around the impoundment, and in a short while, you'll see a viewing platform where you can stop to take a break and enjoy the wildlife. You can usually see plenty of wading birds, egrets, and turtles. After this, you'll have about 0.25 mile left in the hike.

Pass the first boardwalk, now on your right, and soon you'll see the parking area ahead.

NEARBY ACTIVITIES

Bartram’s Garden (bartramsgarden.org) is the former estate and gardens of the Bartram family, who gained renown in the 18th and 19th centuries for their work collecting, propagating, and describing many species of native American plants. Admission to the gardens is free, and the park is closed only on city-observed holidays.

With 348 acres of recreational space, **FDR Park** is part of the sprawling Fairmount Park System. For more information, go to myphillypark.org/explore/parks/fdr-park.



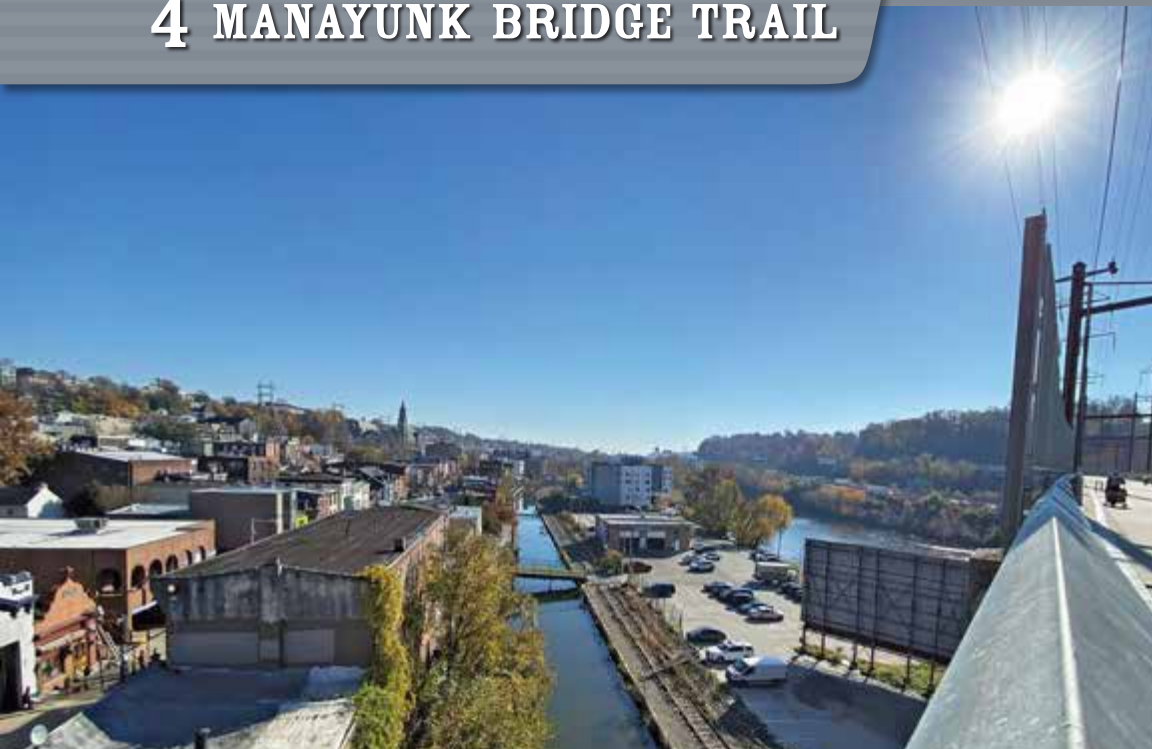
TRAILHEAD GPS COORDINATES: N39° 53.587' W75° 15.446'

DIRECTIONS From Center City, take I-95 South 7.3 miles to Exit 14 (Bartram Avenue). Continue straight onto Bartram Avenue and drive about 1 mile to South 84th Street. Turn right onto South 84th Street. After 0.7 mile, turn left onto Lindbergh Boulevard. Follow Lindbergh Boulevard to the first stop sign; the refuge entrance is on the right.

This hike has great views of wetlands.



4 MANAYUNK BRIDGE TRAIL



A view from the Manayunk Bridge

THIS URBAN HIKE offers a bird's-eye view above the Schuylkill River.

DESCRIPTION

The Manayunk Bridge Trail is mostly an urban hike, but it has great views of the Schuylkill River and the Schuylkill Expressway. It's better to be walking above I-76 than stuck in traffic below.

The bridge is iconic, and if you've driven on I-76, you've probably passed underneath it. A remnant of Philadelphia's industrial days, it lived its first life as a railroad bridge. Its second life is one of leisure, though; the bridge now serves as a trail that connects the northwest Philadelphia neighborhood of Manayunk and the nearby Schuylkill River Trail (see Hike 7, page 43) with the Cynwyd Heritage Trail in Lower Merion. This hike takes you across the bridge and on a bit of the Cynwyd Heritage Trail.

The bridge also serves as a major connecting trail in the Circuit Trails network, which is a hiker/walker/biker's dream come true: the proposed circuit will connect more than 750 miles of trails across nine counties in southeastern Pennsylvania and New Jersey. As of 2022, more than 370 miles have been built. You can check out the progress at circuittrails.org. Other Circuit Trails included in this book are Penny-pack Park (see Hike 5, page 35) and the Schuylkill River Trail, mentioned above.

DISTANCE & CONFIGURATION:

2-mile balloon

DIFFICULTY: Easy

SCENERY: Schuylkill River

EXPOSURE: Full sun

TRAFFIC: Moderate to heavy

TRAIL SURFACE: Concrete bridge, dirt

HIKING TIME: 1 hour

DRIVING DISTANCE FROM CENTER CITY:

8 miles

ELEVATION CHANGE: Trailhead: 85'

Lowest: 20' Highest: 194'

ACCESS: Daily, sunrise–sunset

MAPS: USGS *Germantown*

WHEELCHAIR ACCESS: Yes

DOG FRIENDLY: Yes

FACILITIES: None on the trail

CONTACT: None

LOCATION: Dupont St. and High St.,
Philadelphia, PA

The circuit also connects to the East Coast Greenway, which will ultimately create a system of trails from Maine to Florida.

The small parking lot for the Manayunk Bridge Trail is at High and Dupont Streets, tucked away in the mazelike section of Manayunk. It has about 20–30 spots. You'll see the entrance to the trail right next to the parking area.

Stay to the right (south) and follow the pedestrian signs marked on the concrete pathway, being mindful of bikes. About halfway across the bridge, you'll notice the division between Philadelphia and Montgomery Counties.

When you cross into Lower Merion, you'll need to switch from the right side to the left side to follow the pedestrian walkway.

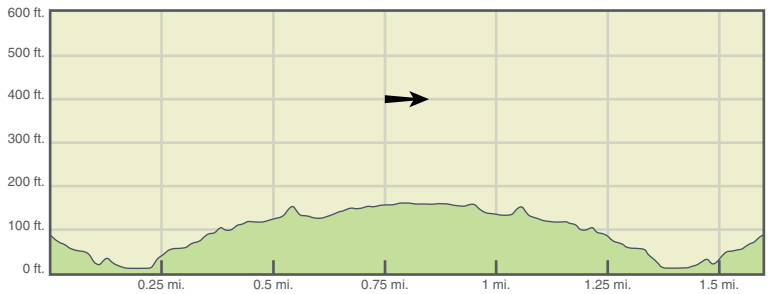
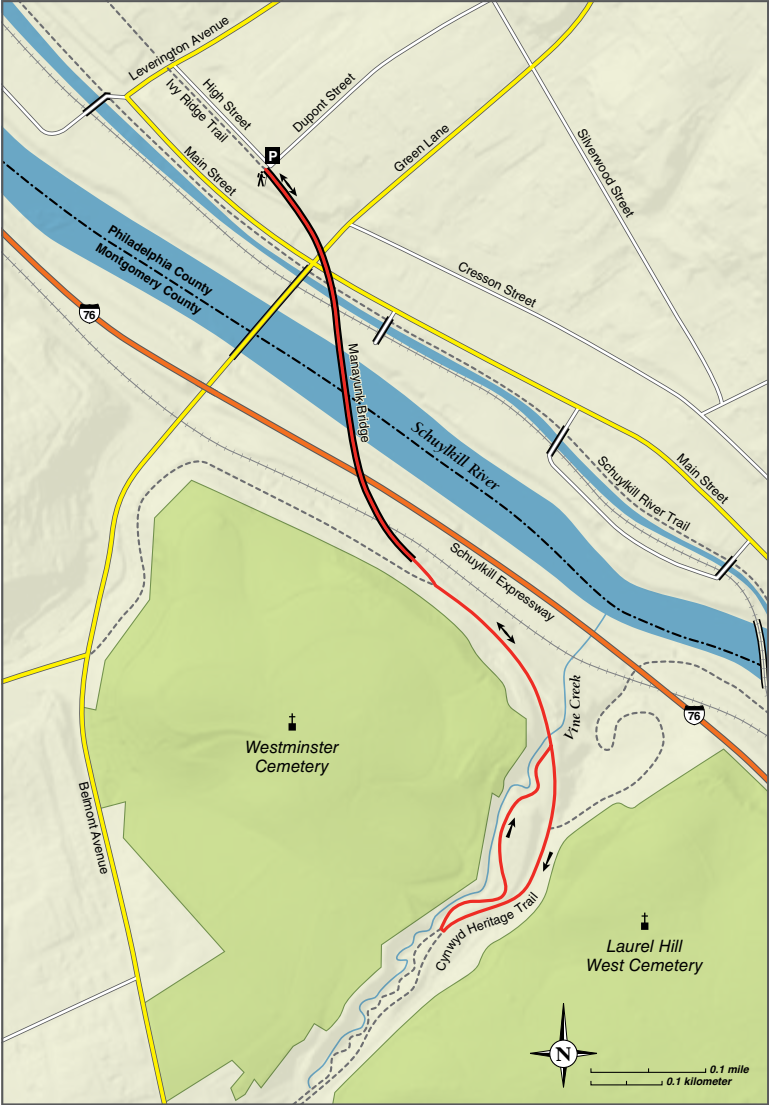
When you reach the end of the bridge, continue straight (south) onto the Cynwyd Heritage Trail. To your right, you'll see a sign that shows the entire trail system, so you can see where you're headed. The Cynwyd Heritage Trail follows the Schuylkill River and the Schuylkill Expressway, so it's a little noisy at first, but the scenery and sounds change quickly. After a few minutes of walking, you'll leave the noise of the expressway largely behind and start to hear birds chirping as you're surrounded by trees.

Take time to stop and look at the signs posted throughout the trail; these are provided by the Lower Merion Historical Society and Lower Merion Township. You'll reach a point that opens up a little bit and see a dirt path to the right of the paved trail.

Take a moment to read the sign about Vine Creek and look at the historic bridge over the creek. At this point, make a hard right (north) to start the loop back. This portion of the loop follows Vine Creek.

If you look northwest up to the left, you'll see Westminster cemetery peeking through the trees, and to the northeast, depending on the time of year, you may see Laurel Hill West Cemetery. Laurel Hill West is a new addition to the book (see page 102). Keep following the dirt path along Vine Creek and you'll see some interesting things, including an antiquated stone structure to the left across the creek.

Manayunk Bridge Trail



The dirt path will eventually lead you back to the paved trail, at which point you are headed back toward the Manayunk Bridge Trail and your destination. Be sure to switch back to the left side of the bridge when you cross the county line.

NEARBY ACTIVITIES

In the Manayunk neighborhood, **Main Street** contains numerous shops and restaurants. For more information, visit manayunk.com.

Laurel Hill West Cemetery is a historic garden cemetery with historic trees. Visit laurelhillphl.com for visitor information.



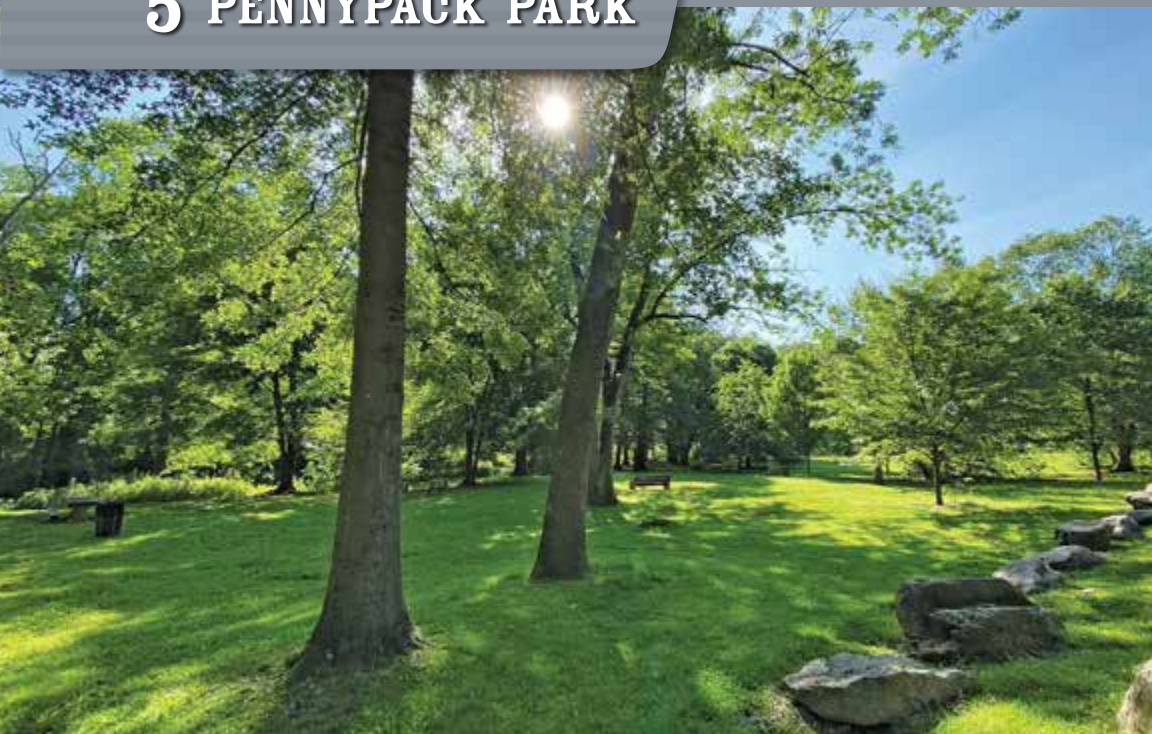
TRAILHEAD GPS COORDINATES: N40° 01.674' W75° 13.656'

DIRECTIONS From Center City, take I-76 West 6.7 miles to Exit 338 (Green Lane). Turn right onto Green Lane. In 0.2 mile, turn left onto Baker Street. From Baker Street, take the first left onto Dupont Street. Parking is available straight ahead, at Dupont and High Streets.

See Philadelphia from an iconic bridge on this urban hike.



5 PENNYPACK PARK



Pennypack Park is a green oasis.

THIS IS A great quick hike if you just need to get away from the grind of the city. Even though you'll technically still be within the city limits, the bird sounds and babbling creek will calm your mind.

DESCRIPTION

This 1,600-acre public park follows Pennypack Creek's journey as it winds its way to the Delaware River. Part of the city's sprawling Fairmount Park system, Pennypack is what the city refers to as a "watershed park," meaning the land is kept natural to preserve the health of the city's water supply. After the industrial revolution dumped heaps of pollution into waterways, the city realized that the best way to keep drinking water clean and safe was to preserve land along the waterways that ultimately become Philadelphia's drinking water. Wissahickon Valley Park (Hikes 8–12) is another watershed park. The city began acquiring and preserving Pennypack in 1905. The name is derived from the Lenape word *pēnēpèkw*, which means "downward-flowing water"—appropriate, given that the creek is a tributary of the Delaware River.

I've hiked different parts of Pennypack over the years, and the section I like most is the one that uses Pine Road as a starting point. It's gorgeous, and the entire hike is wheelchair and stroller accessible. Although there are dirt-packed trails that

DISTANCE & CONFIGURATION:

3.4-mile out-and-back

DIFFICULTY: Easy**SCENERY:** Forest, creek**EXPOSURE:** Mostly shaded**TRAFFIC:** Moderate to heavy**TRAIL SURFACE:** Blacktop**HIKING TIME:** 2 hours**DRIVING DISTANCE FROM CENTER CITY:**

12 miles

ELEVATION CHANGE: Trailhead: 89'*Lowest: 81' Highest: 89'***ACCESS:** Trails: daily, sunrise–sunset**MAPS:** USGS *Frankford***WHEELCHAIR ACCESS:** Yes**DOG FRIENDLY:** Yes**FACILITIES:** Portable restrooms near parking area**CONTACT:** None**LOCATION:** 8500 Pine Road, Philadelphia, PA**COMMENTS:** This hike offers an abundance of bird-watching opportunities.

wind through this section of the park, this hike follows the paved path along the creek due to its size and accessibility.

Pennypack Park is a great place to meet up with friends and family. Near the parking lot there's a lovely grassy area with benches and picnic tables that overlooks the creek, so keep that in mind if you want to pack a lunch. And don't be surprised if you see folks mushroom hunting or foraging for wild edibles. This section of the trail is usually busy no matter when you visit, which is great in terms of safety but not so much if you are looking for intense quiet. The huge parking lot actually fills up on the weekends.

The park is also a great place for bird-watching. In fact, a rare harlequin duck that was courting a native wood duck drew out tons of birders and photographers. Alas, the harlequin duck met an untimely demise. But you never know what birds might find their way here. The best times to find the most birds are usually around dawn and dusk. Always be kind and respectful to wildlife, and always view from a safe distance.

The trailhead is at the end of the parking area to the right; you can't miss it. After parking, walk to the end of the parking lot right next to a beautiful, towering sycamore, which you'll recognize by its gray-and-white mottled bark. A small path leads you to the paved path, which you'll see about 100 feet ahead of you. This will be your trailhead. Take the dirt path to the paved trail, and turn left.

Note that this path you are on is heavily traveled, often by people riding bicycles, so be mindful that riders may come whizzing by at any time. The path is wide enough to accommodate everyone, but awareness is always important.

After a short time, there is a picnic area to the right of the path. You'll be greeted with shade under the towering white pine trees.

It's also important to note that there are occasional trails that shoot off to the side from the main paved trail. Ignore them for this hike, but they are definitely worth checking out at some point.

Pennypack Park



When you start hearing loud traffic noise, you are nearing Verree Road. You'll soon see the street ahead and the bridge over the creek. Stay on the path that veers to the left, so you can safely go under the bridge. (The path does continue over the street, too, but use extreme caution if you decide not to go under the bridge.)

After walking under the bridge, continue straight on the path. You'll see sparse signage throughout. When you come to the small wooden bridge crossing the path, use that as your turnaround point, and retrace your steps. Continue on the paved

path until you see the parking lot ahead. Pennypack Creek has some beautiful bends around the trailhead, making for lovely vistas, so make sure you look out over the creek to enjoy the view. I have done this hike both as a slow, meandering walk and at a heavy clip. The rolling hills make for a nice workout either way.

NEARBY ACTIVITIES

Fox Chase Farm (foxchasefarm.org) is a working educational farm that is not regularly open to the public but offers numerous public events and activities. Visit its website and click on “Events.”

Pennypack Trail connects to the same parking area as **Lorimer Park**, which is a former rail line and a great place to run, walk, and bike. See montcopa.org/922/pennypack-trail for more info.



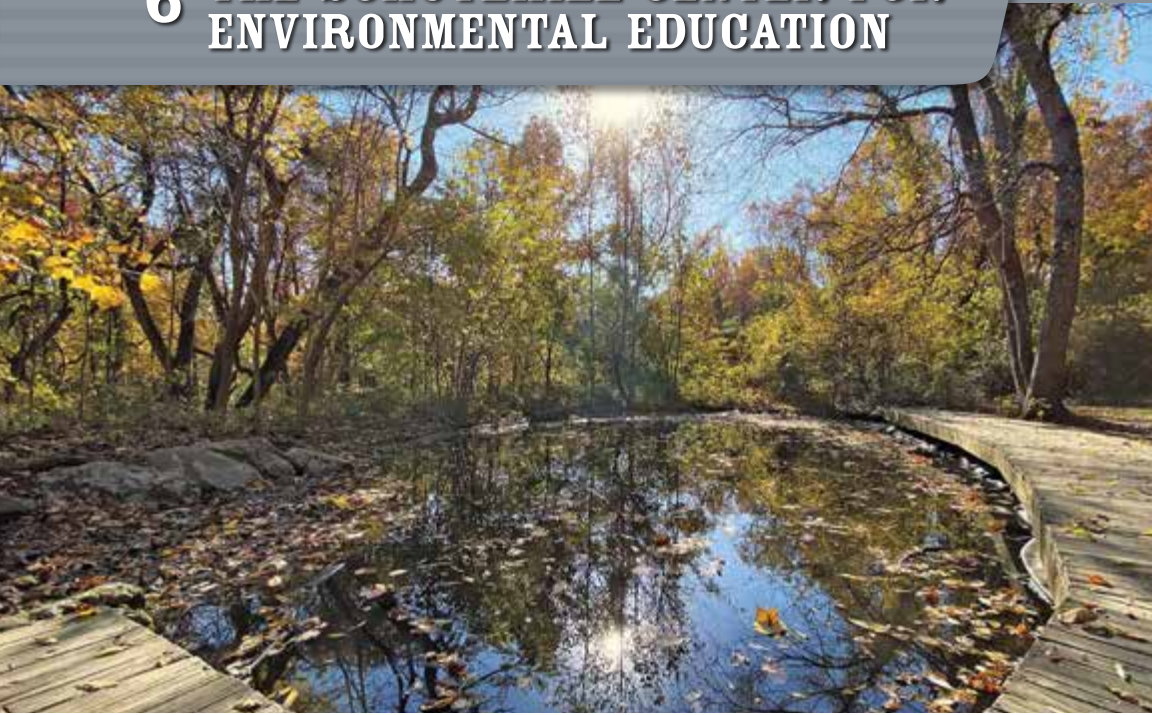
TRAILHEAD GPS COORDINATES: N40° 05.324' W75° 04.109'

DIRECTIONS From Center City, take I-95 North 7.3 miles to Exit 30 (Cottman Avenue). Continue on Cottman 4.9 miles. Turn right onto Oxford Avenue. In 1.2 miles you'll make a slight right onto Pine Road. Turn right into the Pennypack Park lot.

Pennypack's rolling hills make for a good workout.



6 THE SCHUYLKILL CENTER FOR ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION



A pond offers a setting for educational opportunities.

THE SCHUYLKILL CENTER for Environmental Education is a hidden gem in the northwestern part of the city. It's a green oasis within the city limits.

DESCRIPTION

The Schuylkill Center for Environmental Education was founded in 1965 and inhabits its former farmland. What is now 340 acres of land started as a mere 11 acres gifted for preservation and education. It is now the largest privately owned open space within Philadelphia. And it's free and open to the public!

The center is almost always bursting with children, as its main goal is to educate visitors about the natural world. It is a great place to introduce children to hiking and nature. From woods to meadows, ponds, and wetlands, the Schuylkill Center has it all, including 4 miles of trails to hike. You can grab a trail map inside the visitor center or outside its main entrance.

From the visitor parking area, you can enter the trail one of two ways: to the right of the last building or a little farther to the right past the dumpsters. Basically, find your way to the back side of the visitor center and look for signs that say **HABITAT LOOP**.

The trail starts off on what is now called the Habitat Loop. Walk a few feet, and when you see the greenhouse, turn right, heading southwest. The trail starts off in

DISTANCE & CONFIGURATION:

1.5-mile loop

DIFFICULTY: Easy

SCENERY: Woods, wetlands, stream, ponds, artwork

EXPOSURE: Mostly shaded, parts with full sun

TRAFFIC: Moderate

TRAIL SURFACE: Dirt, grass, rock

HIKING TIME: 45 minutes

DRIVING DISTANCE FROM CENTER CITY: 12 miles

ELEVATION CHANGE: Trailhead: 344'

Lowest: 100' Highest: 344'

ACCESS: Trails: daily, sunrise–sunset; education center: Monday–Saturday, 9 a.m.–5 p.m.

MAPS: USGS *Germantown*

WHEELCHAIR ACCESS: No, but there is a wheelchair-accessible trail in the park.

DOG FRIENDLY: No

FACILITIES: Restrooms at visitor center during open hours

CONTACT: 215-482-7300, schuylkillcenter.org

LOCATION: 8480 Hagys Mill Road, Philadelphia, PA

full sun for just a few feet and then enters a more wooded and shady area. The path is grassy and wide.

Stay straight through the first junction, and when you reach a more heavily wooded area, you'll soon see some trail markers and the fencing that makes up a deer enclosure. This part of the path is narrower and in full shade—more of a dirt and leaf-litter trail now. You'll see a path off to the left, but ignore it and keep going straight, continuing southwest.

As you continue your descent and get closer to the deer fencing, you'll see a marker for the Ravine Loop. It's a closed loop, so you can go either way, but for this hike, you'll start off to the right (southwest) to follow the Ravine Loop as it circles around beside the fencing. The trail is in full shade, sometimes grassy and sometimes dirt, but fairly wide.

At the next junction, you'll see trails to the right and left. The Wildflower Loop goes to the left, while the connector trail to the right takes you to the Schuylkill River Trail. Stay straight (south) to remain on the Ravine Loop.

Much of the trail from this point forward is a downhill slope. Some stone outcrops act as steps but can get slippery, so watch your footing.

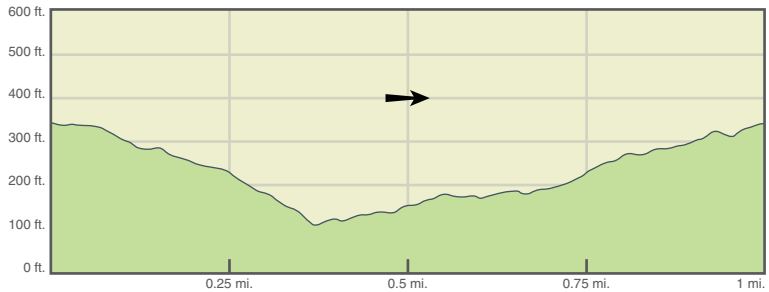
You'll soon cross a tiny stone bridge with metal grating and hear the sound of a trickling stream. You'll walk alongside the stream for a little while, guided by its lovely sounds. This section of the hike begins a slow, gradual ascent.

Soon a small wooden bridge takes you across the stream again. Several benches along the way offer you a chance to stop and take a break or just kick back and enjoy nature.

After another stream crossing on a wooden bridge, stay straight (northeast) to remain on the path. You'll soon pass a little pond off to your right.

You'll continue uphill, cross another wooden bridge, and find another little pond off to your right. This pond has lovely stone edging and new signage about

The Schuylkill Center for Environmental Education



the importance of the lentic (still water) ecosystem. After the pond, you'll hop over some tree cookie steps and then some stone steps.

After a short uphill, you'll come to the entrance of the deer enclosure. Let yourself in, making sure to close the gate behind you. You'll see another small pond and some old ruins before heading back out of the enclosure off to your left (northeast).

Note: There are two deer enclosure exits at this pond, so if you spend some time at the pond, be sure to orient yourself and take the deer enclosure exit to the left. This one has several stone steps to guide you.

Go up the steps and stay on the trail as it wraps around almost 180 degrees. After a short uphill, a trail marker indicates that the Ravine Loop continues to the left, so stay left (southwest). This part of the trail has a lot more sun in some patches and is grassy and wide.

You'll come to another trail marker that indicates the Ravine Loop continues straight ahead. After you pass the pond on the left with the wooden boardwalk edge, turn right (north), returning to the Habitat Loop.

The trail passes an art installation called *Bird/Seed Shelter*, by New York artists Julia Molloy and Taka Sarui. This part of the route is grassy and partially shaded.

When you come to an intersecting trail on the right, stay straight (southwest). When you are over the art exhibit below, the trail turns to the right (northwest) and heads back toward the rear of the visitor center. Stop in to check out the many educational exhibits inside before heading home.

NEARBY ACTIVITIES

Manayunk is a neighborhood in northwest Philadelphia. Main Street contains numerous shops and restaurants. For more information, visit manayunk.com.

The **Andorra Natural Area of Wissahickon Valley Park** is nearby and is a new hike in this edition (see page 47).



TRAILHEAD GPS COORDINATES: N40° 03.297' W75° 15.210'

DIRECTIONS From Center City, take I-76 West 6.4 miles to Exit 338 (Belmont Avenue/Green Lane). Turn right onto Green Lane, and after 0.1 mile, turn left onto Main Street. Drive 0.2 mile on Main Street and then turn right onto Leverington Avenue. Almost immediately, turn left onto Umbria Street. Continue on Umbria Street about 1.6 miles. Merge onto Shawmont Avenue and continue about 0.6 mile to Eva Street. Turn left onto Eva Street; drive 0.4 mile to Port Royal Avenue. Turn right onto Port Royal Avenue, and then take the first left onto Hagys Mill Road. Take the first left, which is the entrance to the center.

7 SCHUYLKILL RIVER TRAIL: Schuylkill Banks, Center City



The name Schuylkill means “hidden river.”

THIS URBAN TRAIL gives you amazing views of Philadelphia’s beautiful skyline and takes you above the Schuylkill River.

DESCRIPTION

Schuylkill Banks is an amazing newer addition to Philadelphia’s open space. This trail is part of the Schuylkill River Trail (SRT), a proposed 120-mile trail along the Schuylkill River that will eventually connect a series of trails, starting in Frackville in Schuylkill County and traversing Berks, Chester, Montgomery, and Philadelphia Counties. Early settlers thought the confluence of the Schuylkill River with the Delaware River was hidden, hence the name Schuylkill, which is Dutch for “hidden river.”

The Schuylkill River Trail originally stopped short in Center City because the area between the railroad tracks and the river was too narrow for a trail. So the City of Philadelphia and the Schuylkill River Development Corporation partnered to build a 2,000-foot-long boardwalk that takes you out over the river. The views are amazing, and you actually feel like you are on top of the river.

Parking is at Lloyd Hall, at the beginning of Boathouse Row, and the trail goes right along the parking area toward the river. Next to the parking area is the newish Fairmount Water Works Trail and Boardwalk. You can get a bird’s-eye view of the Fairmount Dam and maybe even spot the resident beaver.

DISTANCE & CONFIGURATION:

4-mile out-and-back

DIFFICULTY: Easy**SCENERY:** Urban hike, historic Fairmount Water Works, skyline views, Schuylkill River**EXPOSURE:** Full sun**TRAFFIC:** Heavy**TRAIL SURFACE:** Paved**HIKING TIME:** 1.5 hours**DRIVING DISTANCE FROM CENTER CITY:**

3.3 miles

ELEVATION CHANGE: Trailhead: 22'

Lowest: 2' Highest: 43'

ACCESS: Daily, sunrise–sunset**MAPS:** USGS *Philadelphia***WHEELCHAIR ACCESS:** Yes**DOG FRIENDLY:** Yes**FACILITIES:** Restrooms at Lloyd Hall and Walnut Lane**CONTACT:** Schuylkill River Greenways National Heritage Area: 484-945-0200, schuylkillriver.org; Schuylkill River Development Corporation: 215-309-5523, schuylkillbanks.org**LOCATION:** Kelly Dr. and Waterworks Dr., Philadelphia, PA

As the trail weaves its way toward the river, you'll pass behind the Philadelphia Museum of Art and in front of the Fairmount Water Works, a stunning relic from the 1800s, when it was the only pumping station for the entire city. Now it's an environmental education center that offers regular programming and educational opportunities. When you see Fairmount Water Works, you'll cross the road and pick up the trail on your left.

This is a heavily used trail, so it's best to stay to the right at all times and keep dogs on a short leash.

Continue following the path as it winds its way along the river. You'll eventually cross under Spring Garden Street and West River Drive/Martin Luther King Jr. Drive. The rest of the trail runs beside the scenic Schuylkill River.

Benches offer places to stop and relax if you would like to do so. The trail also follows active train tracks, so you might see a train during your hike. Just after you go under the Market Street Bridge, you'll come to a fork in the path; take the right-hand path. Both paths end up in the same place, but the one to the right seems to have fewer bikes on it and is closer to the river.

Booths provide information along the way, and you can even find out how to kayak the Schuylkill River. There is a bathroom stop at Walnut Street, and there's also a water fountain if you need a drink.

When you see South Street Bridge ahead, stay straight (south) on the path. Before you get to the bridge, you'll see a ramp off to the left at Locust Street that leads to the Schuylkill River Park and the Schuylkill River Park Dog Run, if you are interested in checking those out. For this hike, continue on the boardwalk.

The South Street Bridge is the hike's turnaround point, so snap some photos and then head back the way you came. You'll follow the same path you took to get back to the parking area at Lloyd Hall, enjoying the sights along the way. Just before you get to the Fairmount Water Works, there's a water fountain for humans, with a low fountain for dogs.

Schuylkill River Trail: Schuylkill Banks, Center City



This hike is absolutely gorgeous at sunset, when the skies boast pink cotton candy clouds and the skyline glimmers with the sun's reflections.

NEARBY ACTIVITIES

The world-renowned **Philadelphia Museum of Art** is right next to the trail. Hours and admission vary. Visit philamuseum.org for details.

Two of Philadelphia's science museums are also nearby: **The Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University** (ansp.org) and **The Franklin Institute** (fi.edu).



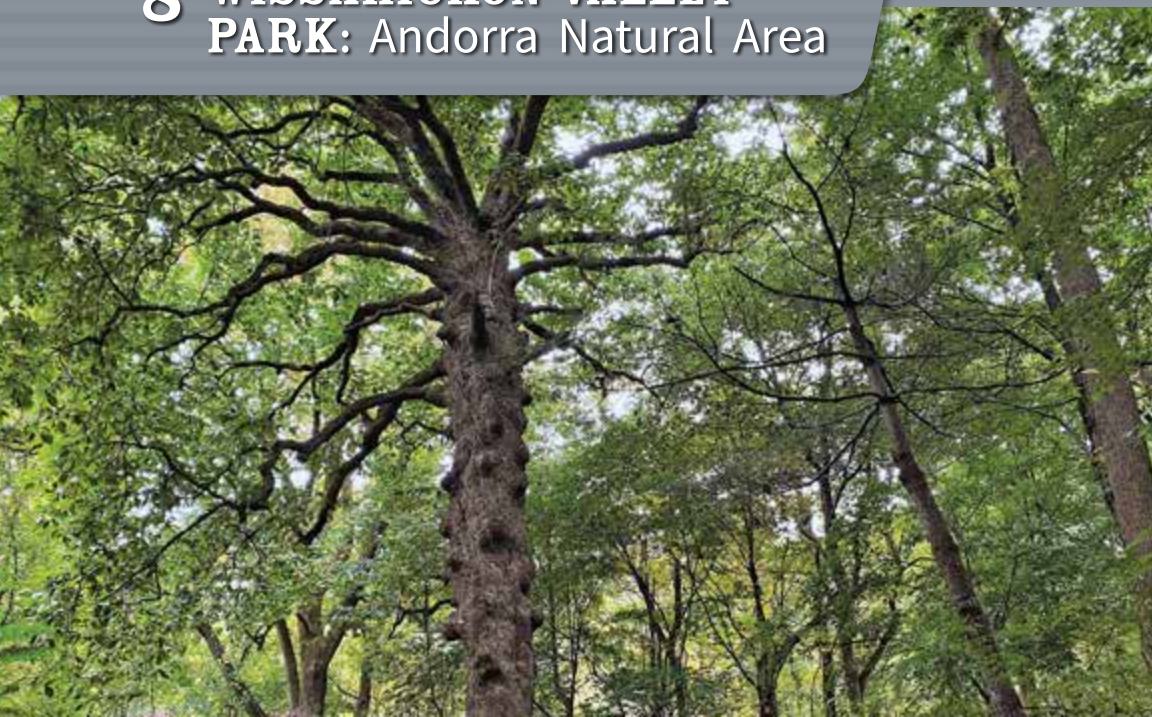
TRAILHEAD GPS COORDINATES: N39° 58.127' W75° 11.077'

DIRECTIONS From Center City, take I-76 West 1 mile to Exit 342 (Girard Avenue/Philadelphia Zoo). Turn right onto West Girard Avenue, and after 0.2 mile, turn right onto Sedgley Drive. After 0.6 mile, Sedgley Drive crosses Kelly Drive and becomes Waterworks Drive; directly to your right is Lloyd Hall.

The scenic Schuylkill River parallels the trail.



8 WISSAHICKON VALLEY PARK: Andorra Natural Area



You'll pass by this iconic cucumber magnolia tree if you are walking through the Andorra Natural Area in the Wissahickon Valley.

THIS HIKE TAKES you to the far northwest part of the vast Wissahickon Valley Park and gives you access to both a woodland and meadow.

DESCRIPTION

This relatively quiet hike offers a variety of ecosystems, including woods, wetlands, and a meadow. There are some gentle rolling hills throughout but overall not too much change in elevation. Because the trails in the Andorra Natural Area are open only to hikers and horse riders, there is usually less trail traffic. This section of the park also has the famous Tree House, home to the Wissahickon Environmental Center, which hosts moonlight hikes and other nature activities for children.

The trailhead is accessed directly from the parking area and is marked by a wooden informational kiosk. Head into the woods right behind the kiosk and go straight on the Forest Loop Trail, which is blazed red. Astute naturalists might note pretty quickly that this area has a number of nonnative trees, such as Japanese maples. That's because the Andorra Natural Area was once a tree nursery. On your right you'll see the Great Beech, a 2006 state champion tree that once stood 102 feet tall. Sadly, the tree is dying, but you can still visit what remains. The European beech was planted more than 150 years ago by prominent early Philadelphian Richard

DISTANCE & CONFIGURATION: 1.9-mile loop

DIFFICULTY: Easy

SCENERY: Forest, meadow, ruins

EXPOSURE: Part shade to full sun

TRAFFIC: Moderate

TRAIL SURFACE: Dirt, rock

HIKING TIME: 1 hour

DRIVING DISTANCE FROM CENTER CITY:
12.3 miles

ELEVATION CHANGE: Trailhead: 175'
Lowest: 145' Highest: 205'

ACCESS: Trails: daily, sunrise–sunset

MAPS: USGS *Germantown*

WHEELCHAIR ACCESS: No

DOG FRIENDLY: Yes

FACILITIES: Composting toilets near Treehouse. Friends of the Wissahickon app also lists restrooms throughout the park.

CONTACT: 215-247-0417, fow.org

LOCATION: Northwestern Ave., Philadelphia, PA

COMMENTS: This part of Wissahickon Valley Park is often quieter and less populated than the main areas of the park.

Wistar. It suffered decline for years, and in 2018, a storm took out a major limb. We'll visit another giant tree later on in the hike.

Follow the sign for the Wissahickon Environmental Center, making a left. The trail is rocky, so watch your footing. Ignore any side or social trails, remaining on the main Forest Loop Trail. As you're walking on the path, you'll see the building known as the Tree House on your left, a fence with some deer netting straight ahead, and another parking area through the forest.

Still on the Forest Loop Trail, follow signs that point toward Forbidden Drive. You won't be going on Forbidden Drive today but are simply headed in that direction. When you come to a slanted T intersection, keep following the Forest Loop Trail straight. There's a little bit of an uphill here to get your blood pumping. Watch your footing on the giant pieces of rock that act as steps.

Continue to follow arrows and markings for the Forest Loop Trail. Keep an eye out for one of my favorite trees, a towering cucumber magnolia with a small label on it. It's not a state champ, as far as I can tell, but it sure is a beauty.

Continue following the red blazes as the trail curves around and heads southwest. When you come to an intersection with the purple-blazed Meadow Loop Trail, you can decide whether or not you want to walk the meadow, which is in full sun. If you have health issues or are sensitive to Philadelphia's heat and humidity, the best time of year to do a meadow hike like this is on a cool, cloudy day in winter, spring, or fall. If you are short on time or the sun is blazing, you can veer right on the Forest Loop Trail, which will take you back to the parking area. For this hike, head left to follow the Meadow Loop Trail around the meadow; you'll rejoin the Forest Loop Trail afterward.

In ecology, the area where forest meets open space is known as the edge habitat. It is one of the best places for bird-watching. If you are looking to find the largest variety of birds, try hitting this trail around dawn or dusk because that's when the birds tend to be most active.

Wissahickon Valley Park: Andorra Natural Area



At the time of this writing, there were a number of fallen trees around this area. I actually love when trees are allowed to nourish the ecosystem after falling. A fallen tree can host millions of organisms, including numerous types of fungi, lichens, mosses, insects, birds, and other animals.

As you are following the Meadow Loop Trail, which is hard-packed dirt, you'll come across some cool ruins, from an old farmstead. There is also a gorgeous, multi-stemmed paper birch tree in the meadow, which is a real treat to see, as paper birches

PHILADELPHIA OF THE PAST

Did you know that American author Edgar Allan Poe visited the Wissahickon Creek when he lived in Philadelphia? In fact, there is a little-known essay he wrote called “Morning on the Wissahiccon.” He wrote it in 1844 as a gift for a friend. Here is a snippet of Poe’s Wissahickon.

“Now the Wissahiccon is of so remarkable a loveliness that, were it flowing in England, it would be the theme of every bard, and the common topic of every tongue . . . Its banks are generally, indeed almost universally, precipitous, and consist of high hills, clothed with noble shrubbery near the water, and crowned at a greater elevation, with some of the most magnificent forest trees of America, among which stands conspicuous the *liriodendron tulipiferum* [Tulip Poplar].”

But, if you’ve ever read Poe, you know his writing is often tinged in darkness. “The Wissahiccon, however, should be visited . . . amid the brightest glare of a noon-day sun; for the narrowness of the gorge through which it flows, the height of the hills on either hand, and the density of the foliage, conspire to produce a gloominess, if not an absolute dreariness of effect, which, unless relieved by a bright general light, detracts from the mere beauty of the scene.”

tend to be more common north of here. You’ll recognize it by its stark-white bark. Enjoy the sweeping views of the meadow as you walk. The Meadow Loop Trail will eventually lead you back into the more forested area. When you notice an increase in shrubs and trees, you are getting close to rejoining the Forest Loop Trail.

Don’t get confused by the lighter-purple Meadow Observation Loop. Feel free to check it out if you’d like, but it’s simply a much smaller version of the loop you just completed.

When the Meadow Loop Trail dead-ends back at the Forest Loop Trail, make a left to return to the parking area. If you took public transit, turn left onto Northwestern Avenue from the parking area.

NEARBY ACTIVITIES

Chestnut Hill is a small, upscale neighborhood in northwest Philadelphia. There are numerous shops and restaurants to enjoy on Germantown Avenue. Visit chestnuthillpa.com for information.

While the Wissahickon does have dense shade, I like to think of it as more of a respite from the sun.

The city's founder, William Penn, also wrote about what Philadelphia looked like upon his arrival in 1682. Here are some quotes from letters Penn wrote to friends about his city.

"The country itself, its soil, air, water, seasons, and produce, both natural and artificial, are not to be despised."

"The natural produce of the country, of vegetables, is trees, fruits, plants, flowers. The trees of most note are the black walnut, cedar, cypress, chestnut, poplar, gum-wood, hickory, sassafras, ash, beech, and oak of divers sort, as red, white, and black, Spanish, chestnut, and swamp, the most durable of all; of all which there is plenty for the use of man."

"Of living creatures, fish, fowl, and the beasts of the wood, here are divers sorts . . . the elk, as big as a small ox; deer, bigger than ours; beaver, raccoon, rabbits, squirrels; and some eat young bear and commend it. . . . The creatures . . . which are natural to these parts, are the wild cat, panther, otter, wolf, fox, fisher, minx, musk-rat. . . ."

"The woods are adorned with lovely flowers for colour, greatness, figure, and variety. I have seen the gardens of London best stored with that sort of beauty, but think they may be improved by our woods."

Woodmere Art Museum (woodmereartmuseum.org) dedicates itself to the art and artists of Philadelphia.

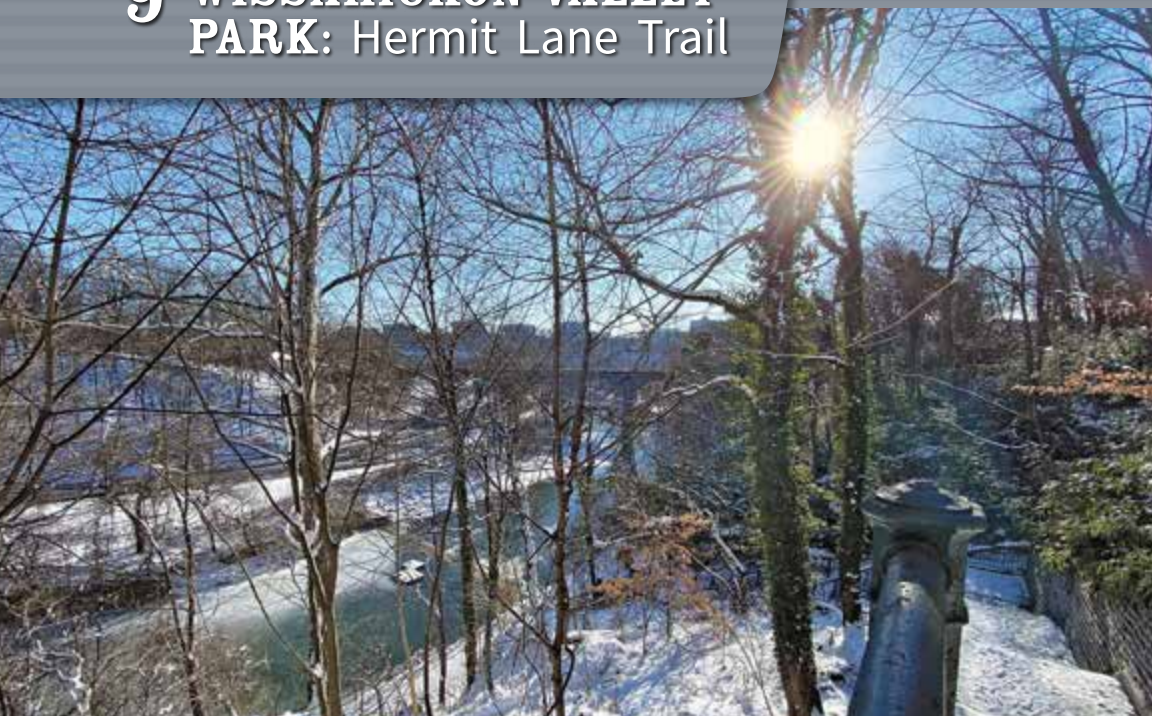


TRAILHEAD GPS COORDINATES: N40° 04.830' W75° 14.127'

DIRECTIONS From Center City, take I-76 West 4.7 miles to Exit 340A. Merge onto City Avenue and keep right at the fork, following signs for Ridge Avenue North. Turn left onto Ridge Avenue. In 0.9 mile, make a slight right onto Hermit Street, then turn left onto Henry Avenue. Stay on Henry for 3.4 miles. Henry turns into Ridge Avenue. Drive on Ridge Avenue for 0.7 mile and make a right onto Northwestern Avenue. Follow Northwestern Avenue 0.7 mile until you see the Andorra Natural Area on your right.

You can get to the Andorra Natural Area via public transit. The SEPTA 27 bus stops at the intersection of Ridge and Northwestern Avenues. From the bus stop, follow Northwestern Avenue a little over 0.5 mile, past Andorra Meadow on the right, to the parking lot on the right. The trailhead is at the edge of the parking area.

9 WISSAHICKON VALLEY PARK: Hermit Lane Trail



Use extreme caution if hiking in winter.

THIS HIKE OFFERS a special glimpse into the Philadelphia of the 1600s, taking you by a historic “cave.”

DESCRIPTION

Like the Andorra Natural Area in the previous hike, Hermit Lane is also part of Philadelphia’s vast Fairmount Park system. One of the highlights of this hike is visiting the “cave” of Johannes Kelpius, a mystic who believed the world would end in 1694. He and his followers became known as the Hermits of the Wissahickon. Of course, the world did not end, and Kelpius died in 1708, with his followers disbanding shortly thereafter. But you can visit his hovel and even go inside the tiny little space. It’s on the trail!

From street parking, you’ll notice a wooden kiosk with a map and information. The trailhead is directly behind the kiosk. Follow the path southeast down through a grove of pine trees. At the bottom of the small hill, make a right (west) onto the Yellow Trail. In 20–30 feet, come to another intersection, where you turn left (south) onto a gravel path.

When you come to the trail marker ahead in a short distance, turn right (west) to follow the trail toward Hermit’s Cave. The trail gets rocky and has many exposed

DISTANCE & CONFIGURATION: 2.3-mile balloon

DIFFICULTY: Moderate

SCENERY: Woods, historic cave

EXPOSURE: Full shade

TRAFFIC: Moderate to heavy

TRAIL SURFACE: Dirt, paved sections

HIKING TIME: 1.5 hours

DRIVING DISTANCE FROM CENTER CITY: 7.7 miles

ELEVATION CHANGE: Trailhead: 219' Lowest: 30' Highest: 219'

ACCESS: Daily, sunrise–sunset

MAPS: USGS *Germantown*

WHEELCHAIR ACCESS: No

DOG FRIENDLY: Yes

FACILITIES: None

CONTACT: 215-247-0417, fow.org

LOCATION: Henry Ave. and Hermit Ln., Philadelphia, PA

COMMENTS: The Friends of the Wissahickon group publishes a great map of the entire park. It also has a free app that's available for iOS and Android in both English and Spanish.

roots as you descend. In just a few minutes, you'll reach Hermit's Cave, where you can stop and peek inside.

After the cave, turn left to follow the trail southeast. When you reach a small Y where a social trail intersects, head left (southwest) and start your descent of the hill. Watch your footing, as there are a lot of exposed roots. After a tiny creek crossing, continue downhill. Watch your footing here too; it's very rocky. You'll see the paved trail ahead that you will follow. When you get to the bottom of the hill, turn right onto the paved path along Wissahickon Creek. Watch out for cyclists and other walkers and hikers. Try to stay to the right.

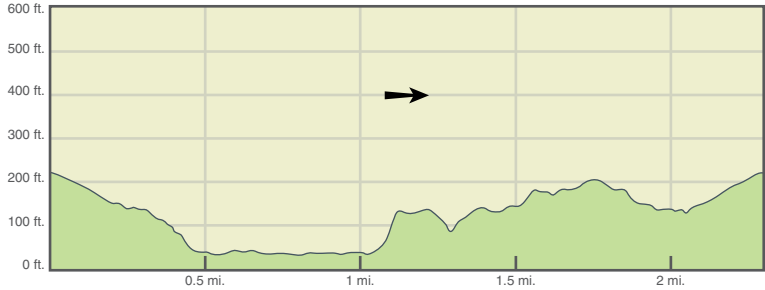
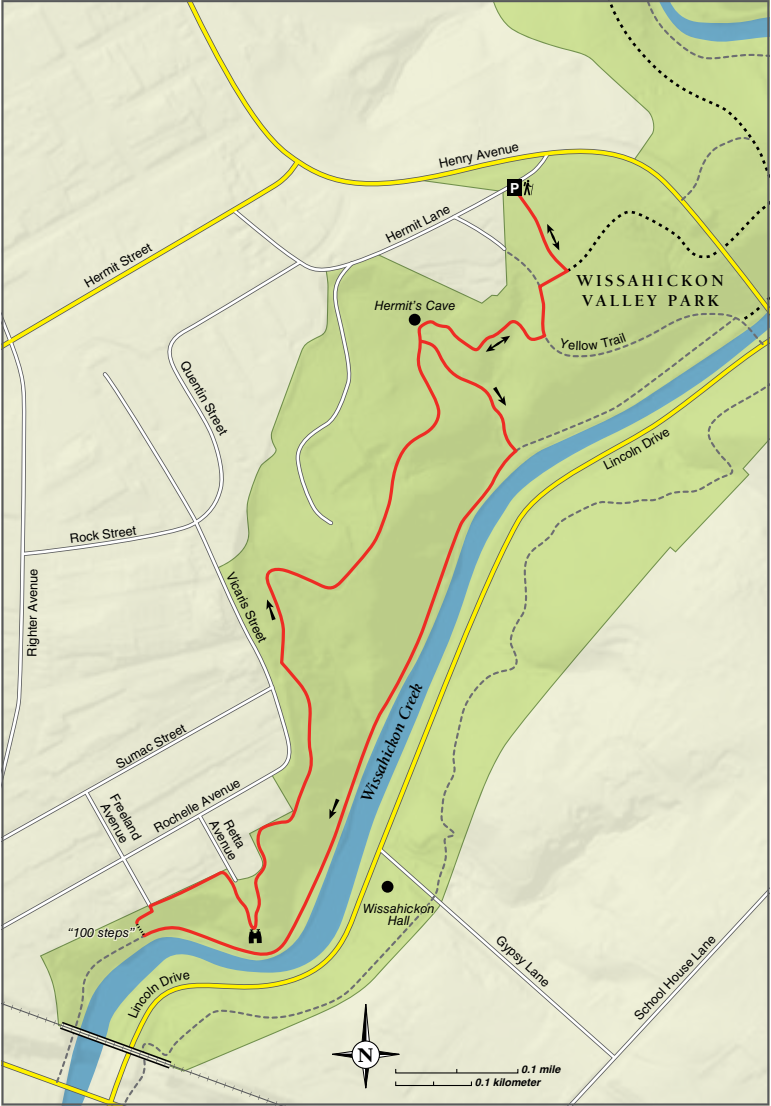
As you walk, you'll see cars traveling on Lincoln Drive. In about 0.4 mile, if you look to the left you'll see Wissahickon Hall, which used to be the headquarters for the 92nd Police District. It's one of the only remaining historic properties along Wissahickon Creek. (Another is Valley Green Inn, which you can visit along the upper trails of the Wissahickon; see page 64.)

When you start going up an incline and see the bridge ahead over Wissahickon Creek, begin looking to the right for the 100 steps. Climb the steps to begin the loop back to where you started. At the top of the stairs, turn right (northeast) and follow the concrete sidewalk, which will turn into a tiny dirt path. You may feel like you're in someone's backyard, but you are still in the park. After about 20–30 feet, the dirt path turns back into a sidewalk.

When you get to a street (Retta Avenue), turn right, follow the sidewalk, come around the wooden fence, and walk through the grass; you'll see where the trail begins again. Follow the path to a lookout point over Wissahickon Creek. After taking a look, turn around and follow the trail to the right. You might again feel like you are in someone's backyard, but you are on a very narrow trail with a lot of roots.

Follow the trail up and around; it will become a more well-beaten path. This part of the park follows the line of several properties, so here you are traveling

Wissahickon Valley Park: Hermit Lane Trail



behind people's backyards. You'll see a bamboo stand. There aren't a lot of markers, but if you just follow the dirt path, you will find your way.

The trail eventually begins a medium ascent. At the top of the hill, you'll see that the trail veers to the right (northeast) to head back toward where you parked. At one point you'll come to a small stream crossing and a pretty steep uphill ahead of you. At the junction, bear right (east) to take the smaller incline. You'll pass by another large bamboo stand. After you come through a grove with a downed tree, stay to the right (north) on the trail. Do not turn left. You'll recognize the path once again shortly when you come to Hermit's Cave and begin retracing your steps to the trailhead.

When you reach the gravel path, turn left and follow it until you see the trail marker; turn right and then left through the grove of pine trees to the trailhead and the parking area.

NEARBY ACTIVITIES

Kelly Drive and Martin Luther King Jr. Drive offer a 9-mile loop alongside the Schuylkill River. It's a great place to walk, run, or bike. For more information, visit schuylkillriver.org/schuylkill-river-trail.

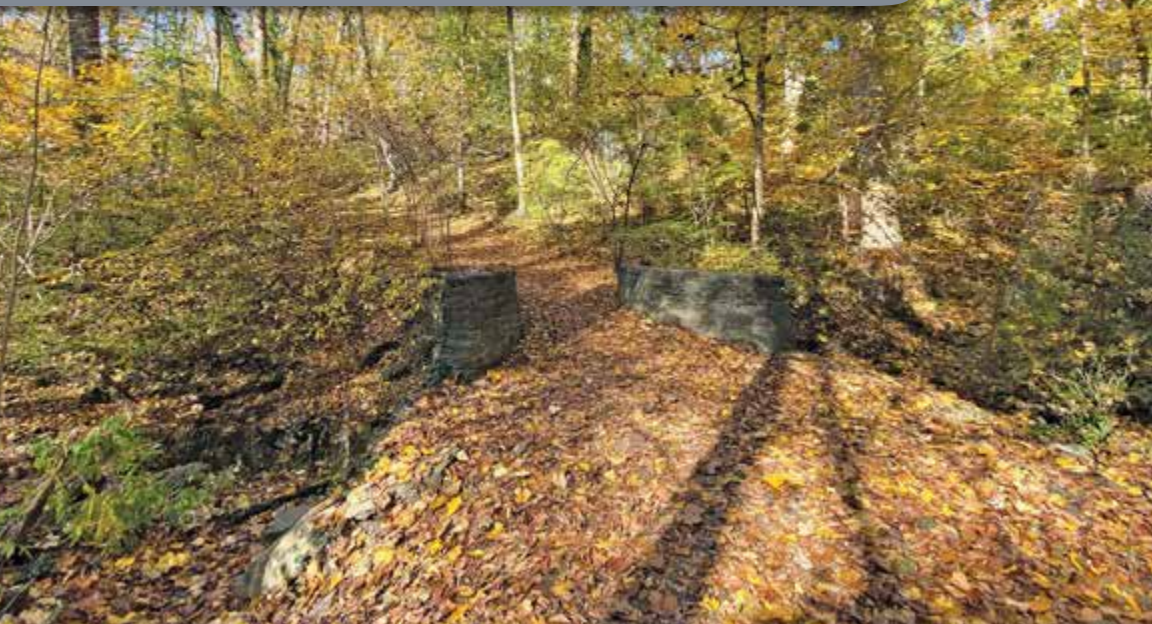
McMichael Park (3299 Midvale Avenue) is nearby and a great place to meet a friend or eat lunch.



TRAILHEAD GPS COORDINATES: N40° 01.531' W75° 11.990'

DIRECTIONS From Center City, take I-76 West 4.7 miles to Exit 340A (Lincoln Drive/Kelly Drive). Merge onto City Avenue, and keep right at the fork, following signs for Ridge Avenue. Turn left onto Ridge Avenue and follow it 0.9 mile to the five-way intersection where Ridge Avenue ends. Take a slight right onto Hermit Street and continue 0.3 mile. Turn right onto Henry Avenue, then take the second right onto Hermit Lane. Park on the street along Hermit Lane.

10 WISSAHICKON VALLEY PARK: Lavender and Orange Trails



Small stone bridges are common throughout the park.

THIS SHORT TREK with some lovely views is a bit less busy than the other trails along Wissahickon Creek.

DESCRIPTION

Wissahickon Valley Park has so many trails that it's hard to choose just one! The Lavender Trail is a bit off the beaten path and a little less traveled, and it has a small waterfall when there is enough rainfall. This trail is closed to mountain bikes, so you don't have to worry about keeping an eye out for traffic.

Street parking is available on one side of Crefeld Street. Although it might look somewhat private due to the metal fencing, I assure you it is part of the trail system. Enter the park through the metal gate and you'll see an informational kiosk. The trailhead is directly behind it. Head right (west) to start your loop hike.

The full-shade, dirt path contains many roots and rocks, so watch your step. After you go down a small hill, you'll come to an intersection. The Lavender Trail goes both ways. If you're looking for a short, quick hike, you can go to the left. But for this hike, take the longer route by heading to the right.

Cross a little footbridge and the trail continues to the left (north). This trail has some gentle, rolling hills. After you wind your way down the trail, you'll cross another footbridge. The trail again continues to the left (northwest).

DISTANCE & CONFIGURATION:

1.5-mile loop

DIFFICULTY: Easy**SCENERY:** Forest, creek, waterfall**EXPOSURE:** Full shade**TRAFFIC:** Light**TRAIL SURFACE:** Dirt**HIKING TIME:** 1 hour**DRIVING DISTANCE FROM CENTER CITY:**

12.2 miles

ELEVATION CHANGE: Trailhead: 359'

Lowest: 106' Highest: 359'

ACCESS: Daily, sunrise–sunset**MAPS:** USGS *Germantown***WHEELCHAIR ACCESS:** No**DOG FRIENDLY:** Yes**FACILITIES:** No**CONTACT:** 215-247-0417, fow.org**LOCATION:** 8982 Crefeld St., Philadelphia, PA**COMMENTS:** Depending on the amount of rain, the waterfall on the trail might be just a trickle. The Friends of the Wissahickon group publishes a great map of the entire park. It also has a free app that's available for iOS and Android in both English and Spanish.

Much of this hike thus far has been descending into the Wissahickon Creek Gorge. When you get to the bottom of the Lavender Trail, turn left (south) onto the Orange Trail, which you will only be on for a little while. The Orange Trail parallels Wissahickon Creek, a tributary of the Schuylkill River.

After you cross the stream again, you'll travel over a cement bridge, and the trail starts to go up again. Several large rocks act as steps to help you up the hill.

At the top of the steps, look back. You are essentially going to make a 180-degree turn to rejoin the Lavender Trail (east), starting your loop back.

You'll soon hear the sound of flowing water and see the stream on the left. When you come to a trail junction by the stream, turn left and go down this path for a few feet to get a nice view of the waterfall coming down the stream. After taking a look, rejoin the Lavender Trail and continue to head up (east). This part of the hike is almost entirely along the gently babbling stream.

After you pass a small stone footbridge, stay to the right to continue going up. After a couple of feet, you'll come to a Y intersection, where the Lavender Trail goes left (northeast). Wind your way back up the hill to your original starting point at the gate.

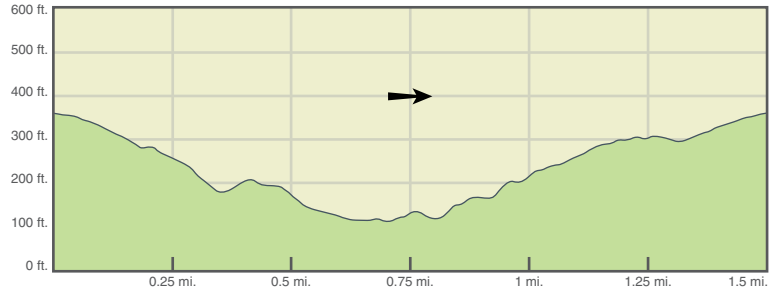
NEARBY ACTIVITIES

Woodmere Art Museum (woodmereartmuseum.org) dedicates itself to the art and artists of Philadelphia.

The **Morris Arboretum** of the University of Pennsylvania (morrisarboretum.org) is the state arboretum and is open daily for an entrance fee.

**TRAILHEAD GPS COORDINATES:** N40° 04.610' W75° 12.986'

Wissahickon Valley Park: Lavender and Orange Trails

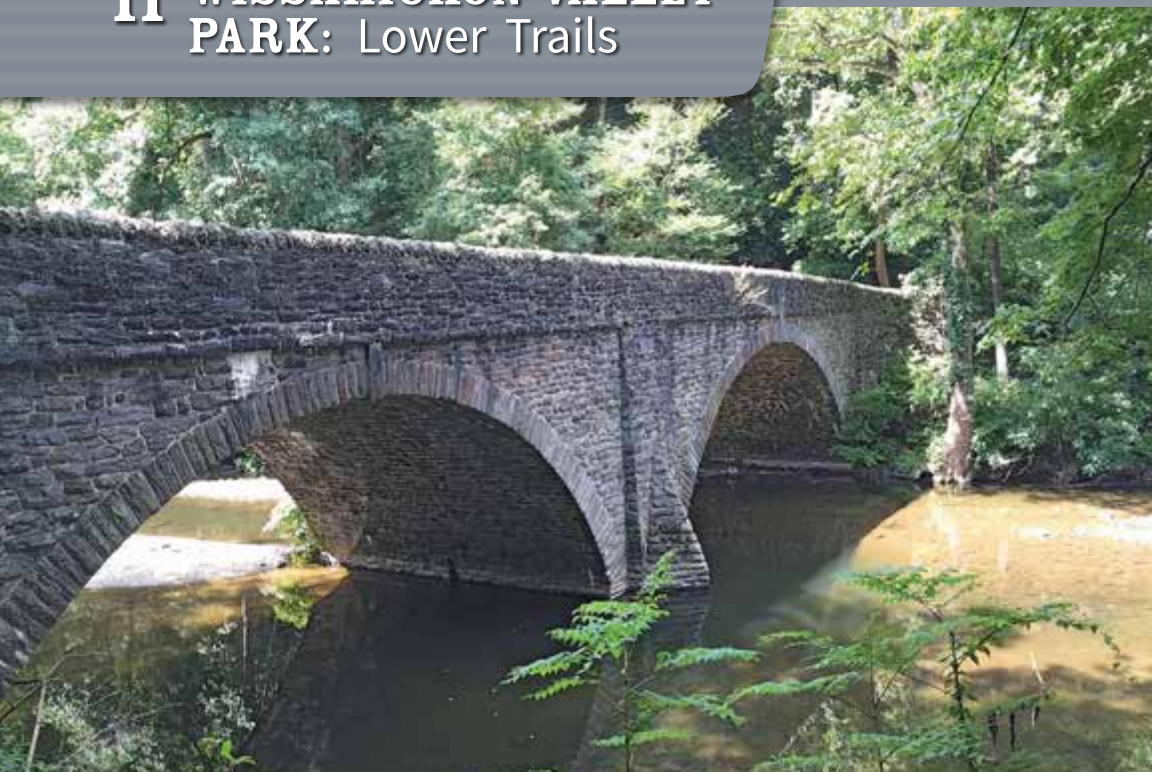


DIRECTIONS From Center City, take I-76 West 4.7 miles to Exit 340A (Lincoln Drive/Kelly Drive). Merge onto City Avenue, and keep left at the fork, following signs for Lincoln Drive. Continue onto Lincoln Drive and follow it 3.3 miles. Turn left onto Emlen Street and drive 1.0 mile (during which Emlen Street will become Cresheim Valley Drive). Turn left onto Lincoln Drive and drive 0.4 mile to West Willow Grove Avenue. Turn left onto West Willow Grove, and take the next right onto Seminole Street. In 0.7 mile, Seminole Street ends; turn right onto West Chestnut Hill Avenue. Then take the first left onto Crefeld Street. After passing Norman Lane, which leads off to the right, the road curves left—here you should begin to look for the gate in the metal fence that runs on the left side of the road; park on the street nearby.

A small footbridge



11 WISSAHICKON VALLEY PARK: Lower Trails



An old stone bridge crosses Wissahickon Creek.

THIS HIKE TAKES you through the lower portion of the Wissahickon Valley trail system and gives you a variety of views of Wissahickon Creek.

DESCRIPTION

One of the best things about Philadelphia is the sprawling urban park system known as Fairmount Park, which includes Wissahickon Valley Park, an expanse of 1,800 acres. More than 57 miles of trails exist in this area, which is mostly forested but offers lovely views of Wissahickon Creek.

The hike starts near the Saylor Grove Stormwater Wetland. Take a moment to inspect the wetland, which was designed to clean the water that enters the Monoshone Creek, a small tributary of Wissahickon Creek. Philadelphia utilizes a combined sewer overflow (CSO) stormwater-management system, which means that rainwater runoff, domestic sewage, and industrial wastewater are combined into one pipe to be transported for treatment. That means that when there is a big rainfall, sewage overflows into the city's creeks and rivers. A stormwater wetland helps to stem the flow, holding the first inch or more of rainwater. Since its creation, the Saylor Grove Stormwater Wetland has been home to numerous red-winged blackbirds,

APPENDIX A: Outdoor Retailers

AL'S SPORTING GOODS

200 N. Market St.
Wilmington, DE 19801
alssportinggoods.net

BIG BEAR GEAR

1874 River Road
Lambertville, NJ 08530
609-460-4784
bigbeargearnj.com

DICK'S SPORTING GOODS

dickssportinggoods.com

Burlington

Towne Crossing Shopping Center
2703 CR 541, Ste. 4
Burlington, NJ 08016
609-747-0400

Cherry Hill

Market Place at Garden State Park
2130 NJ 70 W
Cherry Hill, NJ 08002
856-317-8394

Collegeville

Providence Town Center
400 Front St.
Collegeville, PA 19426
610-409-9790

Deptford

1750 Deptford Center Road
Deptford, NJ 08096
856-842-5005

Franklin Mills

Liberty Plaza
20 Franklin Mills Blvd.
Philadelphia, PA 19154
215-637-3230

King of Prussia

King of Prussia Mall
160 N. Gulph Road, Ste. 4000
King of Prussia, PA 19406
484-751-0071

Montgomeryville

Montgomery Mall
113 Montgomery Mall
North Wales, PA 19454
215-368-2186

Moorestown

East Gate Square
1300 Nixon Drive
Mt. Laurel, NJ 08054
856-802-1225

Plymouth Meeting

Plymouth Meeting Mall
500 W. Germantown Pike
Plymouth Meeting, PA 19462
484-351-0045

Willow Grove

Plaza at Willow Grove
2510 Moreland Road
Willow Grove, PA 19090
215-657-8977

EASTERN MOUNTAIN SPORTS

ems.com

Princeton

3535 US 1, Ste. 100C
Princeton, NJ 08540
609-520-8310

Warrington

1700 Valley Square Blvd.
Warrington, PA 18976
215-302-0610

THE NORTH FACE

1515 Walnut St.
Philadelphia, PA 19102
215-496-0332
thenorthface.com

OUT THERE OUTFITTERS

123 N. Wayne Ave.
Wayne, PA 19087
610-688-6383
outthereoutfitters.com

REI

rei.com

Christiana

2300 Fashion Center Blvd.
Newark, DE 19702
302-369-1938

**Conshohocken/
Plymouth Meeting**

200 W. Ridge Pike, Ste. 115
Conshohocken, PA 19428
610-940-0809

King of Prussia

161 Town Square Place
King of Prussia, PA 19406
484-231-1703

Marlton

501 NJ 73 S
Marlton, NJ 08053
856-810-1938

Princeton

Mercer Mall
3371 US 1
Lawrenceville, NJ 08648
609-750-1938

Swallowtail butterflies at Brandywine Creek State Park (See Hike 59, page 262)



APPENDIX B: Hiking Clubs

APPALACHIAN MOUNTAIN CLUB, *Delaware Valley Chapter*

amcdv.org

BATONA HIKING CLUB

batona.wildapricot.org

CHESTER COUNTY TRAIL CLUB

cctrailclub.org

HIKING & BACKPACKING PENNSYLVANIA

Private Facebook group with statewide hiking info

PHILADELPHIA HIKING AND ADVENTURE MEET-UP

meetup.com/hiking-adventure

PHILADELPHIA TRAIL CLUB

philadelphiatrailclub.org

Sassafras leaves



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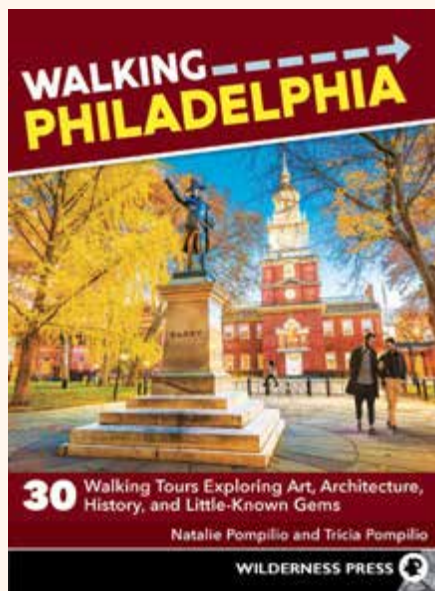
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Lori Litchman is a lifelong Pennsylvanian, calling Philadelphia her home for nearly 30 years. She holds an MFA in creative nonfiction from Goucher College. Lori tries to spend as much time as she can in nature. When she's not writing or hiking, she's usually in her garden trying to find space for more plants.



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