

# Swatara State Park

## Schuylkill & Lebanon Counties

**BACKGROUND:** American Indians originally used the land along the Swatara Creek as a transportation route. In the 1820s, the Swatara Creek was part of the Union Canal that was constructed to connect the Schuylkill and Susquehanna rivers to transport lumber and coal to market. In 1971, the Commonwealth began acquiring the land along the upper reaches of the Swatara Creek for a park. The 3,250 acre park consists of rolling fields and woodlands situated in the Swatara Valley between Second and Blue mountains. It is an undeveloped, day-use only park and there are few signs and no facilities.



**INFORMATION:** There are several multi-use trails in the park. Hikers, cyclists, equestrians, and pets are

welcome. Six trails are designated as mountain bike trails. During the winter months the park is a great place for cross-country skiing. Boating, hunting, and fishing are also available.

Swatara Rail Trail is ten miles in length from the Lickdale Interchange (Exit 90) of I-81 to the Pine Grove Interchange (Exit 100) of I-81. The trail grade is relatively flat with variable surfaces. Bear Hole Trail runs along the eastern side of Swatara State Park and is a rolling trail for hiking and biking. A ten-mile loop can be completed by using Swatara Rail Trail and Bear Hole Trail and crossing the creek at the Waterville Bridge and the Swopes Valley Road.

**CONTACT:** For more information contact Swatara State Park at 717-865-6470 or go to [www.dcnr.state.pa.us/stateparks](http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/stateparks).



**AREA ATTRACTIONS:** There is a fossil pit located in Swatara State Park where the state fossil, *Phacops rana*, can be found. The park is close to Pine Grove Theater, Conrad Richter House, Nutting Hall, Sweet Arrow Lake County Park, Swatara Furnace and Twin Grove Park. The Appalachian Trail crosses the Swatara Creek at the Waterville Bridge just across the Schuylkill/Lebanon county line. The second largest McDonald's Playland on the east coast is located at the Pine Grove Interchange (Exit 100) of I-81.

**GPS COORDINATES:** Suedberg parking and trail access via SR 443: Lat 40°31'25.07" N Lon 76°27'08.24" W

**RECOMMENDED GEAR:** Hiking boots are recommended for the hiking trails. Helmets and safety equipment should be used on the mountain bike trails. If you plan to stay the entire day, carry water and snacks.