

## **Ricketts Glen – Old Bulldozer Road Tr/Falls Tr Loop**

**Description:** Ricketts Glen State park is comprised of over 13,000 acres of mature and recovering forest. It provides 120 meticulously maintained campsites with all amenities, 10 modern rental cabins and the 245 acre multipurpose Lake Jean. Visit [their site](#) for more information. For our enjoyment there are also 26 miles of trails to explore. Needless to say, the focal point of the park is the Glens Natural Area boasting 22 named waterfalls. Sizes range from the most diminutive Cayuga at 11 ft in height to the mother of all falls, the Ganoga, at 94 feet in height.

The hike described here utilizes the Highlands, Mountain Spring, Old Bulldozer Road and Falls trails to create an 8.45 mile loop. You'll walk through an interesting rock formation called the Midway Crevice, pass all that remains of dry Lake Leigh and her ruptured concrete dam, visit the forgotten falls just below the dry lake, perhaps catch a view of the Kitchen Creek Valley at a small vista and observe 15 of the 22 waterfalls.

The DCNR brochure rates some of these trails as moderate or strenuous but, in general, the route should be fairly easy to accomplish if you are in moderate to good physical conditions. The most difficult part comes at the end when you have to climb out of the Glen. It looks steep but actually you'll climb at a rate of 800 feet in 2 miles. You'll be making frequent stops to take in the falls if you have any kind of appreciation of the natural beauty of the falls. Wear good hiking boots as many of the steeper ascents are on wet and slippery rock steps. All water crossings are either on rock or stone bridges.

### **Directions from I-81 between Hazelton and Wilkes-Barre:**

1. Take PA Rt29 north and cross the Susquehanna River.
2. In 5.2 miles PA Rt29 merges into US11 South. Follow this for 1.2 miles and then turn right to stay on PA Rt29.
3. After 10.5 miles turn left onto PA Rt118.
4. In 11.2 miles turn right onto PA Rt487.
5. In 3.4 miles turn right into Park. Pass the Visitor Center (Stop and check in if you're camping.) on the left and cross the Lake Jean Dam.
6. Immediately turn right onto a service road. This soon becomes a gravel road. Follow it to the end to reach the trailhead.

**Trail Notes:** Most of the trails, except the highland and Falls Trails, are old woods roads. The Highland and Falls trails are not blazed but are well marked and obvious. From the kiosk descend on the main trail. At the junction of the Highland Tr and the west terminus of the Falls Tr bear left onto the Highland Tr. In 0.56 miles pass through the Midway Crevice.

In another 0.3 miles pass the F. L. Ricketts Falls short-cut on the right and soon arrive at the east terminus of the Falls trail w/kiosk and some benches at a small set of rapids. Continue on the Highland Tr. It soon bears left and climbs a slight hill on a woods road. At the top of the hill arrive at another junction. The route to the lake and beach is to the left. Turn right and follow the white blazes to dry Lake Leigh and her breeched dam.

**Orange blazed with yellow diamonds Cherry Run Trail continues straight but you want to turn right onto orange blazed Mountain Spring Tr. Soon pass the Forgotten Falls on the right.**

**In 0.63 miles the Mountain Spring Tr forks to the left. Bear to the right onto red blazed Old Bulldozer Road Tr. (There are distance signs to Rt118 but no sign naming the trail.) You'll pick up a few faint red blazes eventually.**

**In 1.79 miles from the last junction arrive at the junction of an old spur trail on the left. We think this used to lead to a vista. A new sign directing you down the hill to the road is on the right. Follow it. In another 0.29 miles come to the Valley View Vista on the right. Continue downhill on a steep but well maintained woods road.**

**In 0.74 miles a spur trail that comes from the Falls Trail comes in sharply from the right. You can turn here to shorten the loop but you'll miss a particularly pretty part of Kitchen Creek and a picnic area shaded by Hemlocks. There are latrines there and, in season, a concession stand. I recommend going straight for another 0.27 miles to the picnic area. Turn right onto the drive until you reach the kiosk. Turn right here to join the Falls Tr.**

**The trail soon crosses the creek on a wooden bridge. To the left is a footpath that leads to the concession stand. Continue up Kitchen Creek. You'll cross it two more times. On the east side you'll pass a short, high water trail and the northern terminus of the spur that leads to the Bulldozer Tr that you encountered on your descent earlier.**

**At 0.38 miles from this spur the Falls Tr splits. The left fork is supposed to be easier than the right fork. Both take you to the first falls where they again become one. The lower trail has more rocks, a little hill or 2 and one short stretch where you might have to splash along the bank of the creek. The lower trail is more scenic.**

**At the junction of these two trails observe Murray Reynolds Falls (16 ft, the first of 15 that you'll see today. Continuing up the creek, pass Sheldon Reynolds Falls (36 ft) and then Harrison Wright Falls (27 ft).**

**At 0.37 miles from the first falls arrive at the area commonly referred to as "Waters Meet". Ganoga Glenn bears to the left and Glen Leigh goes to the right. If you look up Glen Leigh you will see Wyandot (15 ft) and B. Reynolds (36 ft) Falls.**

**Do not cross the bridge (unless you want to do an out and back to see more of Glen Leigh) but stay on course up Ganoga Glen. Immediately pass 47 ft Erie Falls and later on Tuscarora Falls (also 47 ft).**

**The next falls is more of a chute than a falls but is named Conestoga (17 ft). In quick succession comes Mohican (39 ft), Delaware (37 ft) and Seneca (12 ft) Falls.**

**Now it's time for the coup de grace`. Before you will be 94 foot tall Ganoga Falls. There is a little spur trail that allows you to walk near the base of the**

**falls. I recommend you take it so you can look up in amazement. Continue up the Falls Tr on a steep set of rock steps imbedded into the cliff. Take your time but watch your step. Halfway up the trail flattens out and there is another spur that leads to an area just below the top of the falls. Return to the main trail and switchback up to the top of the falls. You'll pass a white blazed spur trail on the left. This would take you to the Ganoga Falls View Tr. At this point it's probably the long way back to the cars. Besides, there are 3 more falls to visit.**

**Continue up the Falls Tr and visit 2 baby falls, Cayuga (11 ft) and Oneida (13 ft) before you pass the last falls, Mohawk (37 ft). You will soon find yourself at the junction of the Highland Tr that you hiked at the beginning of the trek. Turn left and retrace your steps back to the car.**