

Experience SOUTHCENTRAL PA!

by Linda Stager

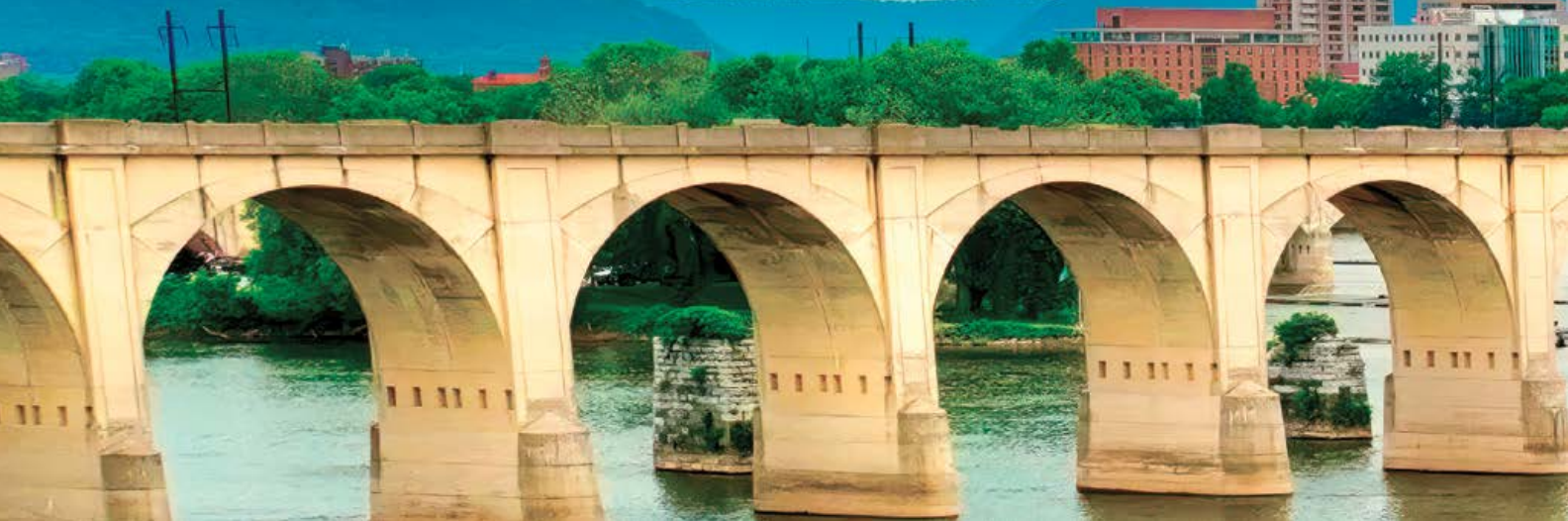


photo-Linda Stager

Rooted in history, thriving in diversity—the southcentral region of Pennsylvania has something for every visitor. Part of the Allegheny Mountains, this 13-county area is known for its quaint towns, farmlands, narrow ridges and rolling hills. Peaceful rural scenes and exquisite farms line the historic Lincoln Highway that traverses the southern part of the state. Yet, the region's cities offer not only a similarly rich heritage, but a vibrant, culturally diverse environment. Galleries, theaters and cultural events showcase a wide variety of activities.

And, for the angler or waterway lover? This region surely has everything one wants.

Come experience our region. Visitors are sure to find scenes from the old and the new; it's a chance to create the perfect adventure for the entire family.

Treasured trail

Mid State Trail: Pennsylvania's own long distance trail covers 327 miles of the state from north to south. Called Pennsylvania's "longest and wildest footpath", hikers can section or through hike the trail.

With plenty of natural fishing opportunities along the way, pack a lightweight rod. There is nothing quite like cooking trout over a campfire.

The Mid State Trail Association, a hearty cadre of volunteers, maintains the trail and provides guidebooks and maps. The trail crosses parts of Bedford, Blair and Huntington counties in this region as it heads to the northern border of Pennsylvania.

Popular waterways

The major rivers of southcentral Pennsylvania are conservation success stories. Once barren of fish, these rivers are clean and healthy now, due to the efforts of federal, state, local and private partnerships.

Susquehanna River: At almost a mile wide in Harrisburg, the mighty Susquehanna River flows south through the region on its 400-mile journey to the Atlantic Ocean. Harrisburg, home of the state capital city, is located adjacent to the Susquehanna River.





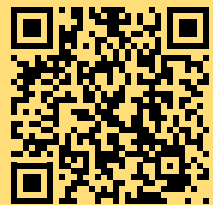
Susquehanna River, Harrisburg

Harrisburg's City Island, located in the middle of the river, not only provides panoramic views of the Harrisburg skyline, but the park also provides boat launches for private watercrafts, canoe, kayak and paddleboard rentals, and river cruise tours. Several river guides offer fishing services in the area.

Anglers can fish for a variety of gamefish. The river is well known for its Smallmouth Bass fishing. Muskellunge, Walleyes and catfish await those who like big fish. Picnic facilities, a minor league baseball field, and family-friendly hiking and biking paths can also be accessed here.

Harrisburg is also home to the State Museum of Pennsylvania and the architecturally significant Pennsylvania State Capitol Complex; both well worth a visit for those interested in history. And, while you are in town, check out the Harrisburg Mural Trail, using their mobile passport.

Harrisburg Mural Trail:



visithersheyharrisburg.org/trails/murals

photo - Karen Navagh



There are camping opportunities along the Mid State Trail.

photo - Sherri Sellers



A scenic view along the Susquehanna River.



photo-Brad Fridinger

The Juniata River provides long stretches of picturesque fishing underneath overhanging trees along the riverbanks.

Raystown Lake: Pennsylvania's largest lake, contained entirely within the state with 118 miles of shoreline, is a Huntington County gem. It is popular for all types of watercrafts, including kayaks and jet skis. The Raystown Lake marina includes boat rentals as a part of its facilities and services.



The lake is well known for its diverse and robust fish population including carp, crappies, muskies, Bluegills, Channel Catfish, Lake Trout, Largemouth Bass, Smallmouth Bass, Striped Bass, Walleyes, White Perch and Yellow Perch.

Individuals and families who want to explore beyond the lake will find many opportunities. Nearby, the oldest narrow gauge railroad in the United States, the East Broad Top Railroad offers 1-hour scenic train rides.

Rothrock State Forest and numerous state parks offer outdoor recreation activities for the whole family.

Juniata River: the beginner-friendly, 104-mile-long Juniata River flows eastward from near Hollidaysburg, Blair County, to the Susquehanna River, north of Harrisburg.

This slow-moving river drifts through rolling hills, wooded areas, farmland and along a magnificent

mountain ridge. It's an excellent warmwater fishery and provides long stretches of picturesque fishing underneath overhanging trees along the riverbanks. Experienced river guides are available to help navigate the river and its many islands and to help anglers find trophy bass. Bring a shallow drift boat, a canoe or kayak; any are a great choice. There are several boat access points along the river.

The Juniata River is a nationally recognized water trail.

Little Juniata River: Nationally known for its number of wild trout, this world-class fishery has one of the highest densities of wild trout in the state. A 2010 biologist report states that there are likely 2,900 catchable trout per mile. These wild fish provide the unique challenge of fly fishing the scenic pools and moderate



photo-Linda Stager

The East Broad Top Railroad offers 1-hour scenic train rides. It is located near Raystown Lake, Huntingdon County.



photo-Cole Johnson

Yellow Breeches Creek, Adams, Cumberland and York counties, is famous for its trout populations.

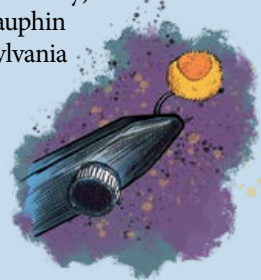
riffles below the river's limestone cliffs, giving anglers excellent results for the effort.

"Little J" as it's known is dotted with stone arch railroad bridges, which makes it extremely scenic. A popular section of the river flows through Barree Gorge in Rothrock State Forest and is only accessible by walking trails.

Yellow Breeches Creek: This stream originates in Michaux State Forest, Cumberland County, and flows 49 miles eastward to the Susquehanna River through fertile agricultural lands. Wildlife abounds in this area, from rare warbler migrants in Michaux State Forest to endangered Bog Turtles in the creek's wetlands. Yellow Breeches Creek, a cold water fishery, is famous for its trout populations, which contain wild and stocked trout in this area.

Points of interest

- 1,000 Steps Hiking Trail, Huntingdon, Huntingdon County (built into the side of Jack's Mountain, steps were used to mine rock)
- Appalachian National Scenic Trail (enters Pennsylvania near Pen Mar, Franklin County)
- Mason Dixon Trail, Cumberland and York counties (connects the Appalachian Trail with the Brandywine Trail, passing through Gifford Pinchot State Park, York County)
- Pennsylvania Farm Show, Harrisburg, Dauphin County (held every January at the Pennsylvania Farm Show Complex & Expo Center)
- Pennsylvania Fly Fishing Museum, Carlisle, Cumberland County
- Railroaders Memorial Museum/Baker Mansion History Museum/Horseshoe Curve National Historic Landmark, Altoona, Blair County



Best-loved adventures

The southcentral region has excellent fishing and boating opportunities. But, if the family is interested in other things to do, put these activities on your "Must Do" list, too.

- **Hershey**, Dauphin County: Widely known as the "Chocolate Capital of the World", it's fun to learn about chocolate at Hershey's Chocolate World. Hershey Park, a popular amusement park, features one of the best family entertainment venues and rides for every age. View a wide variety of animals at ZooAmerica including reptiles, desert critters, grassland herbivores, carnivores, birds and nocturnal animals. Delight in 23 acres of botanical beauty at Hershey Gardens, and enjoy Hershey Theatre, a premier performing arts center.
- **York**, York County: Naturalists will delight in a visit to Kiwanis Lake, the location of



photo-Linda Sager



Gettysburg, Adams County

photo-Linda Sager



Lincoln Highway Mural on Bison Corral Barn, Bedford County

Take a better fish photo

Smartphones are commonplace items for many anglers, and the improved built-in camera technology puts the potential for quality photographs at your fingertips.

Whether practicing CPR (Catch, Photo, Release), documenting your success to share on social media or preserving the memory of a lifetime with a classic portrait for the wall, learn to take a better fish photo with these helpful tips.

1. Upon hooking up, retrieve your catch quickly to minimize stress. Avoid playing with the fish too long, and steer clear of any obstacles while reeling it in.
2. Use a rubber-coated landing net to secure the fish. Keep it underwater as you remove the hook. Gently place your rod in a secure location.
3. Be sure to wet your hands before handling the fish to avoid damaging its skin's protective coating.
4. Gently lift the fish out of the water with fingers tucked low on the belly. Tilt the fish slightly toward the camera to reduce sun glare. Remember to smile!
5. If a fishing companion is taking the shot, make sure your friend avoids casting a shadow across the frame of the photo, gets low to capture the best angle and includes some background scenery.
6. If using a self-timer, place your phone in a dry, stable location. Set the timer for a 3-second countdown before lifting the fish from the net just in time to capture your priceless memory.

Written by Tyler Frantz



Brown Trout



A covered bridge in Bedford County.

photo-Linda Stager

a large heron rookery. The whole family will enjoy the city's annual York State Fair, one of the oldest agricultural fairs in the United States and the town's historic architecture.



- **Gettysburg**, Adams County: A visit here is fun for folks who like ghost tours and battlefield monuments. A variety of tour options are available. The Visitor Center provides information and exhibits, and the Eisenhower National Historic Site provides a glimpse of 1950s life at the former president's home. There are also numerous hiking and horse trails in the area.
- **Covered Bridges**, Bedford County: Bedford County is home to 14 covered bridges. A driving guide is available. While in the area, stop at Old Bedford Village near Bedford, the amazing 1806 Old Log Church and Lincoln Highway Mural on Bison Corral Barn near Schellsburg.

Whatever pursuit your family follows, there's a lot to savor in southcentral PA for both novice and experienced anglers and boaters, as well as the rest of the family.


Create your Own Adventure here! 



photo-Linda Stager

Old Bedford Village, Bedford County

Popular waterways

Southcentral Region:

- Conococheague Creek
- Juniata River
- Lake Marburg
- Letort Spring Run
- Quittapahilla Creek
- Raystown Lake
- Susquehanna River
- Tulpehocken Creek
- Wiconisco Creek
- Yellow Breeches Creek



Pennsylvania state parks

Southcentral Region:

- **Big Spring State Park**, Perry Co.
- **Blue Knob State Park**, Bedford Co. (fishing)
- **Boyd Big Tree Preserve Conservation Area**, Dauphin Co.
- **Buchanan's Birthplace State Park**, Franklin Co. (fishing)
- **Caledonia State Park**, Adams and Franklin counties (fishing)
- **Canoe Creek State Park**, Blair Co. (fishing and boating)
- **Codorus State Park**, York Co. (fishing and boating)
- **Colonel Denning State Park**, Cumberland Co. (fishing and boating)
- **Cowans Gap State Park**, Franklin and Fulton counties (fishing and boating)
- **Fowlers Hollow State Park**, Perry Co. (fishing)
- **Gifford Pinchot State Park**, York Co. (fishing and boating)
- **Greenwood Furnace State Park**, Huntingdon Co. (fishing and paddling)
- **Joseph E. Ibberson Conservation Area**, Dauphin Co.
- **Kings Gap Environmental Education Center**, Cumberland Co.
- **Little Buffalo State Park**, Perry Co. (fishing and boating)
- **Memorial Lake State Park**, Lebanon Co. (fishing and boating)
- **Mont Alto State Park**, Franklin Co. (fishing)
- **Pine Grove Furnace State Park**, Cumberland Co. (fishing and boating)
- **Reeds Gap State Park**, Mifflin Co. (fishing)
- **Samuel S. Lewis State Park**, York Co.
- **Shawnee State Park**, Bedford Co. (fishing and boating)
- **Susquehanna Riverlands State Park**, York Co.
- **Swatara State Park**, Lebanon and Schuylkill counties (fishing and paddling)
- **Trough Creek State Park**, Huntingdon Co. (fishing)
- **Warriors Path State Park**, Bedford Co. (fishing and boating)
- **Whipple Dam State Park**, Huntingdon Co. (fishing and boating)

Regional designations are based on Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission Law Enforcement regions.

artwork-Michael Kensinger

Popular State Game Lands

- **State Game Lands (SGL) 67**, Huntingdon County: Covering 5,770 acres of mountainous, forested habitat, it is home to deer, grouse, bears, turkeys and squirrels. The Allegheny woodrat, a non-game species, is a threatened species found here. Prior to becoming SGL, it was the site of a strip-mining operation and several deep mining sites, which suffered from acid mine drainage. Kennedy, Miller and Shoup runs have been restored and now support native Brook Trout.
- **SGL 261**, Bedford County: Consisting of 3,220 acres, most of it is forested with about 150 acres of a reclaimed strip mine. Reclaimed mines offer diverse vegetation used by wildlife such as the endangered short-eared owl and declining populations of grassland birds. Hunting includes deer, grouse, bears, turkeys, small game and waterfowl. The nearby Raystown Branch Juniata River offers excellent fishing and boating.



Short-eared owl

photo-J. Dingel

- **SGL 290**, Dauphin County: With just over 1,040 acres, the largest track is Haldeman Island on the Susquehanna River. A foot bridge offers access to Haldeman Island year-round, but there are some public access restrictions. A kiosk on the island-side of the bridge provides additional information. The entire island is accessible by boat and offers fishing. Hunting, hiking and birdwatching are popular. A wildlife viewing platform offers panoramic views of wetland habitats, wildlife and remnants of a hacking tower.
- **SGL 230**, Cumberland and Perry counties: Encompassing nearly 1,300 acres, enjoy hunting, hiking, birdwatching, bike riding and horseback riding. The newest acquisition is Waggoner's Gap. Waggoner's Gap Hawk Watch, the second oldest hawk watch in the United States, sits atop Kittatinny Ridge. It is a migration corridor for at least 16 species of hawks, eagles, falcons, vultures and more than 150 species of songbirds. A public shooting range and an archery range are onsite.
- **State Game Lands 211**, Dauphin, Lebanon and Schuylkill (Southeast Region) counties: Covering an impressive 44,000 acres, this amount of land for wildlife habitat and outdoor recreation is a conservation success story. Deer, grouse, squirrels and turkeys are the primary game species. The Appalachian and Horse-Shoe trails offer hiking and wildlife viewing. A public shooting range is available.