



Explore NORTHWEST PA!

by *Linda Stager*

The nine counties of northwest Pennsylvania are havens for water lovers. From the majestic expanse of Lake Erie to hidden rivers and serene lakes, the region offers a variety of activities to quench your thirst for adventure and relaxation.

Presque Isle State Park, a sandy peninsula jutting into Lake Erie, is a paddler's paradise. Here, calm, protected waters are ideal for beginners, while the peninsula's outer reaches offer gentle waves for a more exhilarating experience. For those who crave adrenaline, motorboating and sailing are popular options on Lake Erie.

Anglers also have much to explore. Northwest Pennsylvania boasts some of the best freshwater fishing in the state. Whether fishing for Rock Bass or other Great Lake species, boating for bass on the region's many lakes or fly fishing in the quiet waters of the Allegheny National Forest, anglers will be delighted.

And, beyond the grandeur of Lake Erie, the rest of the region offers fun for every family member.

Treasured trail

Clarion River Water Trail: The nationally recognized "wild and scenic" Clarion River is the 2019 Pennsylvania River of the Year. This 110-mile trail winds through the

Allegheny Mountains of western Pennsylvania and is both recreational (the river is easily accessible by road) and primitive (the shorelines are largely undeveloped). There is a section of the water trail for everyone, but it's important to research and choose a section that matches your skill level.

The section that runs from the north through Cook Forest State Park, Clarion, Forest and Jefferson counties, suits the whole family. Known for its old-growth white pine and hemlock forests, this part of the trail offers easy canoe access and good fishing and picnicking spots. Paddle to Cooksburg, Clarion and Forest counties, where the gentlest section of the river trail ends. Further south, the river trail eventually flows into the calm, deep waters of Piney Reservoir, Clarion County, where paddlers join power boaters and anglers.

This river is a Pennsylvania conservation success story. Once declared the state's most polluted river, through the efforts of the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat





*The Erie Harbor
North Pier Light,
Presque Isle State
Park, Erie County.*

photos-Linda Stager



A father and daughter fishing at Bayfront Landing on Lake Erie, Erie County.

Commission and partnership groups, it's now a pristine water for everyone to enjoy.

Popular waterways

Lake Erie: This is one of the Great Lakes, and it's perhaps the crown jewel of waters in northwest PA. It's massive, dwarfing other regional lakes and rivers, and a fishing paradise.

Walleye and steelhead fishing rule here—the two big fish of the lake's shallower waters.

Anglers have many options, from shore fishing to charter fishing and personal boat fishing. Charter

guide companies provide all the gear and expertise needed for a fun day on the water. Of course, having your own boat opens up a whole world of possibilities for exploring different lakes and targeting specific fish.

Lake Erie visitors should remember safe boating practices. Awareness of changing weather conditions and the use of life jackets are of utmost importance.

Pymatuning Reservoir: This 17,088-acre manmade lake, on the Pennsylvania-Ohio border, offers diverse fishing and boating opportunities,



Clarion River and Piney Reservoir



Adaptive kayak launch, Pymatuning State Park, Crawford County



Allegheny Reservoir, Warren County

photos-Linda Stager

making it a popular destination in Crawford County for seasoned anglers and casual boaters. It's a warm-water fishery, boasting good populations of Channel Catfish, Largemouth Bass, Muskellunge, Smallmouth Bass, Walleyes, Yellow Perch and crappies. Both shore fishing and fishing from a boat are permitted and offer unique advantages.

Boats on the lake range from pontoon boats and jet skis to fishing boats, kayaks and canoes. Pymatuning State Park has multiple campgrounds around the lake, offering opportunities for hiking, biking and picnicking. The Jamestown Marina features an adaptive kayak launch.

Lake Wilhelm: Located in Maurice K. Goddard State Park, Lake Wilhelm, Mercer County, is a smaller lake and hidden gem for those who want a peaceful, relaxing escape. This state park offers easy access to a 12-mile multi-use trail that circles the lake. Wildlife viewing opportunities are plentiful.

Allegheny Reservoir (also known as Kinzua Lake): This is another massive lake near the New York border, Warren County.

The impressive 27-mile reservoir offers plenty of places to explore calm coves along the lake or head out for a full-out powerboating experience. The dam



forms the lake, an impressive feat of engineering. Learn more about the dam at the Big Bend Visitor Center.

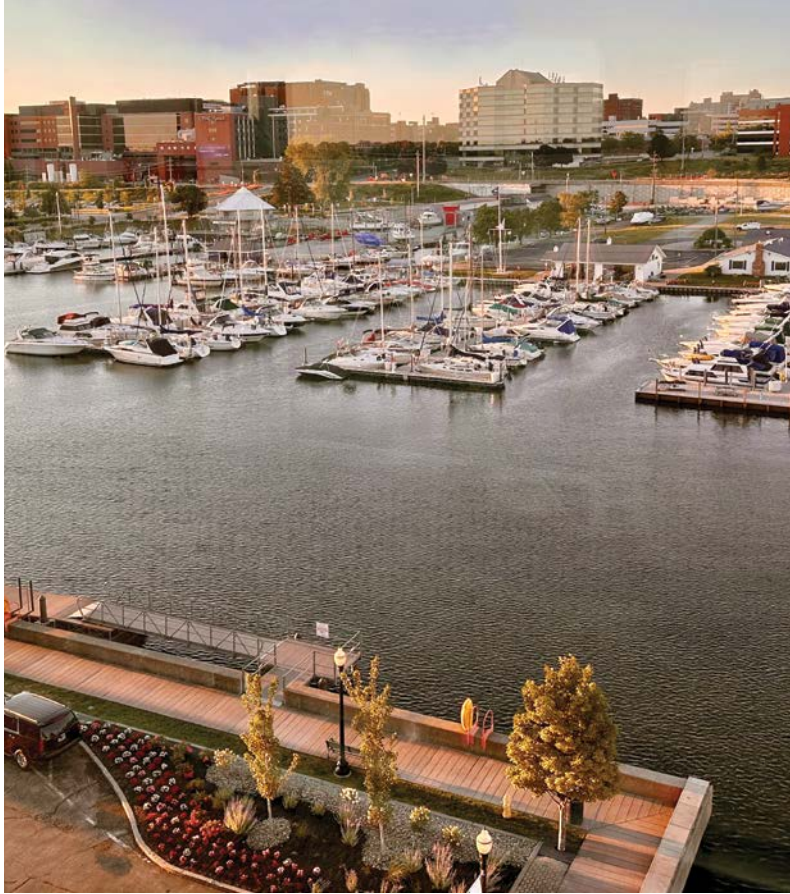
And, be sure to drive through nearby historic Warren, PA. The Warren Historic District is on the National Register of Historic Places and includes 587 contributing buildings. The ages of the buildings range from the late 1800s to the early 1900s.

Best-loved adventures

- **Erie and Presque Isle State Park:** Bring the family to see what this charming city has to offer. The lakefront has stunning views and hosts a variety of boat tours, scenic attractions and festivals. The landmark Bicentennial Tower offers panoramic views of the city. Visit the Erie Maritime Museum, catch a performance at the Erie Playhouse all year



Presque Isle State Park, Erie County



Lake Erie, Erie County

photos-Linda Stager

Points of interest

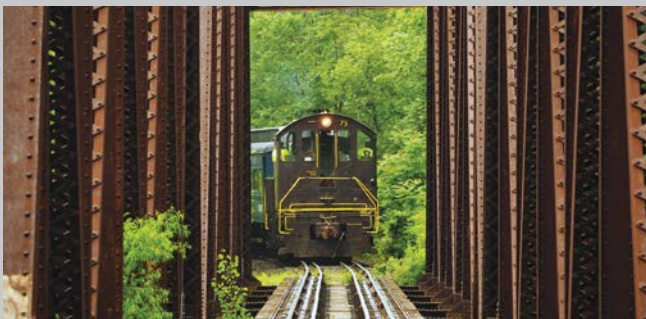
- Cascade Park, New Castle, Lawrence County (waterfalls, wildflowers and boulders)
- Hunter's Station Bridge Overlook, Tionesta and Forest counties (history, archaeology and endangered mussel relocation)—More than 100,000 mussels were salvaged and moved during the bridge replacement project for purposes of species recovery.
- Keystone Safari, Grove City, Mercer County (interactive animal and adventure park)
- Linesville State Fish Hatchery, Linesville, Crawford County
- Samuel Justus Recreation Trail, Venango County (7-mile trail segment connecting Oil City and Franklin)
- Sandy Creek Trail, Venango County (12-mile trail)

long and sample Erie's cuisine including fresh perch, a local favorite. While visiting, throw a fishing line in at the bayfront, just like the locals do. Some great locations are Holland Street Fishing Pier and Lampe Marina Fish Cleaning Station. Nearby Presque Isle State Park offers sandy beaches, beautiful views, extensive bike paths, freshwater coves, wildlife watching and two lighthouses. On the way into the state park, stop at the Tom Ridge Environmental Center to learn about the



different forms of life that live in Erie. Climb the 75-foot tower; then, watch a movie in the Big Green Screen theater, the first of its kind in a state park. Across the street is Waldameer & Water World.

- **Tionesta Lake and Kellettsville:** Tucked into the deep forests of Forest County, this off-the-grid camping and boating experience is known for its beautiful scenery and its isolation. Also, magic happens at night in this area. Kellettsville is in the heart of a rare natural phenomenon: the synchronous firefly. Every June, these lightning bugs show off their beauty in one of the only spots in the country that plays host to them. The PA Firefly Festival is in June, giving visitors a chance to experience a first-hand look at these rare nocturnal bugs.



Oil Creek & Titusville Railroad, Crawford County



A firefly in Kellettsville, Forest County.

There's so much to explore in northwest Pennsylvania. So, pack your swimsuit, sunscreen and sense of adventure. This watery wonderland awaits, promising unforgettable experiences for every kind of water enthusiast while giving the land lover plenty to explore, too. ☐

Teachable moments

Learn the basics (and more) about fishing and boating through a series of free educational events.

Events and Programs:



explorepawaters.com/events-programs

Questions? Find answers to your fishing and paddling questions.

FAQS:



explorepawaters.com/faqs

Common fishes of PA

The most common gamefish in Pennsylvania are bass, catfish, panfish and trout. Muskellunge, Walleye, carp and pike are also popular with anglers.

Catch a PA fish:



fishandboat.com/Fishing/All-About-Fish/Catch-PA-Fish/Pages/default.aspx

Be safe anytime day or night

- Be familiar with the waterway and shoreline you're fishing.
- Take a friend along.
- Use a headlamp at night.
- Wear a life jacket anytime you're on the water and take a wading staff for safety, especially if you're in a new area or moving water.
- Leave a float plan if you're on a boat.
- Pack sunscreen and insect repellent.



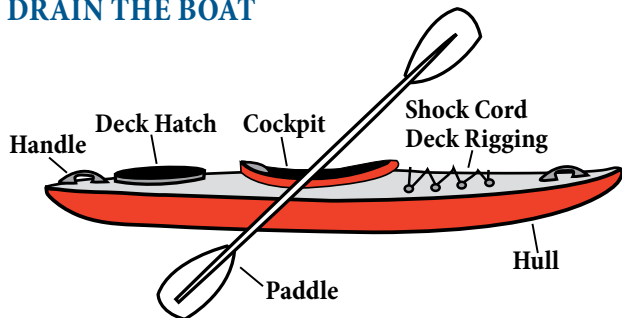
WEAR IT
National Safe Boating Council
Pennsylvania
¡Póntelo!



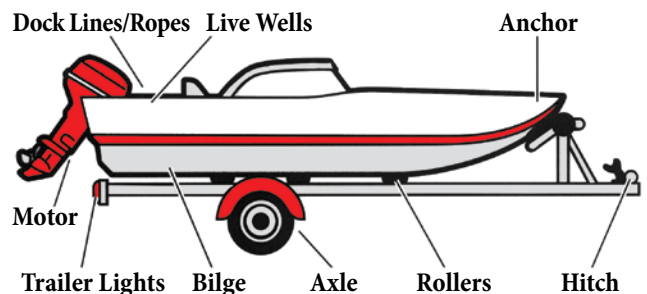
INSPECT YOUR WATERCRAFT

Boaters are required to inspect and drain boats and trailers before leaving waterways to help stop the spread of Aquatic Invasive Species.

DRAIN THE BOAT



REMOVE THE PLUG



FishandBoat.com

Popular waterways

Northwest Region:

- Allegheny Reservoir
- Lake Arthur
- Lake Erie
- Lake Wilhelm
- Neshannock Creek
- Oil Creek
- Pymatuning Reservoir
- Shenango River Lake
- Slippery Rock Creek
- Tionesta Lake



Pennsylvania state parks

Northwest Region:

- **Chapman State Park**, Warren Co. (fishing and boating)
- **Cook Forest State Park**, Clarion, Forest and Jefferson counties (fishing and paddling)
- **Erie Bluffs State Park**, Erie Co. (fishing and boating)
- **Jennings Environmental Education Center**, Butler Co.
- **Maurice K. Goddard State Park**, Mercer Co. (fishing and boating)
- **McConnells Mill State Park**, Lawrence Co. (fishing and whitewater)
- **Moraine State Park**, Butler Co. (fishing and boating)
- **Oil Creek State Park**, Venango Co. (fishing and paddling)
- **Presque Isle State Park**, Erie Co. (fishing and boating)
- **Pymatuning State Park**, Crawford Co. (fishing and boating)

Key:

fishing=fishing, no boating of any type
fishing and boating=fishing and powered and unpowered boating
paddling=unpowered boating
whitewater=whitewater paddling



McConnells Mill State Park, Lawrence County

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

artwork-Michael Kensinger

Popular State Game Lands

- **State Game Lands 330**, Clarion County: This land looked much different historically. It was mined for coal during World War I through its peak in the 1970s. As a result of mining and the reclamation process, the farm fields and woodlots of yesterday have been replaced with cool-season grasslands and shrub and pine plantings, attracting many species of wildlife and providing good hunting and trapping. Fishing opportunities are limited due to poor water quality in this area. There are several miles of hiking opportunities.



Ring-necked pheasant

- **State Game Lands 213 (Geneva Marsh)**, Crawford County: Panoramic views from Interstate 79 and Route 19 bridges reveal a glimpse of this marsh. More than 5,500 acres of the mixed wetland habitats are preserved. This extensive wetland, including emergent marsh, open water and wooded swamps, is extremely valuable to breeding and migrating birds. The wetlands offer foraging, nesting and stopover opportunities for a diversity of birds. There are several launch points to put in a canoe or kayak. Fishing and birdwatching opportunities are abundant.
- **State Game Lands 214 (Pymatuning)**, Crawford County: Known for its excellent waterfowl habitat, extensive management has produced quality fields, swamps and impoundments for ducks, geese and several other species of wildlife. Nearly 200 species of waterfowl, marsh birds, raptors, shorebirds and songbirds migrate across the Great Lakes. Eagles are another popular species to be viewed. Several outdoor recreation activities such as hiking, birdwatching, paddling and fishing are popular.
- **State Game Lands 314**, Erie County: Located in the extreme northwest corner of Pennsylvania, bordering Ohio and Lake Erie, it's often referred to as Roderick Wildlife Reserve. This site constitutes the largest undeveloped section of shoreline along Lake Erie's southern boundary. Management practices such as timber sales create and maintain vital early successional habitat. These early successional habitats are critically important for several declining migrating raptors, songbird species and the American woodcock. Hunting, birdwatching and hiking are popular.