

Many take high road on Pennsylvania trail

Laurel Highlands Trail, running 70 miles along ridge in southwest part of the state, is popular year-round, offers great vistas, close-up scenery

OHIO-PYLE, PA.: The beloved Laurel Highlands Trail stretches 70 miles along a ridge top in southwest Pennsylvania.

The trail - it is the No. 2 most-used trail in Pennsylvania, behind only the Appalachian Trail - has its southern terminus at Ohio-pyle State Park.

The yellow-blazed trail runs to the northeast to the village of Seward on the Conemaugh River near historic Johnstown, the site of the famed 1889 flood.

The state-managed trail follows forest-covered Laurel Ridge and serves up a healthy dose of wild and rugged back country for hikers and backpackers.

It is also used throughout the winter by cross-country skiers and snowshoers.

Much of the trail lies in Laurel Ridge State Park with its 13,625 acres in five coun-

ties: Cambria, Fayette, Somerset, Westmoreland and Indiana.

The park, mainly a green corridor atop the mountain, is maintained as a natural area with limited development only where roads cross the ridge.

Hiking is generally easy to moderate since the trail follows the ridge top.

Side trails are marked with blue blazes.

No horses, mountain bikes or all-terrain vehicles are permitted on the trail.

The trail is heavily used and well marked and well maintained. There are obelisk mile markers along the trail, which can be crowded with scout groups in the spring and summer. The trail's mileage runs from zero in the south to 70 in the north.

Great scenery

The scenery is outstanding, with high-altitude vistas of the white-water Youghio-



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DOWNING**

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