

The Grand Canyon of Pennsylvania

Leonard Harrison and Colton Point state parks are on opposite sides of the Pine Creek Gorge, called the Grand Canyon of Pennsylvania. Many scenic vistas offer spectacular views into the 800-foot deep, glacially carved canyon. The scenery at these parks is superb in every season of the year and is especially stunning in late September through mid-October. The large abundance of deciduous hardwood trees display beautiful autumn shades of yellow, orange, red and purple. Pockets of evergreen trees provide a dash of green year-round.

The "Grand Canyon of Pennsylvania" begins just south of Ansonia, along US 6 and continues south for about 47 miles. At its deepest point, Pine Creek Gorge is 1450 feet deep and nearly one mile wide. At Leonard Harrison and Colton Point state parks, the depth of the canyon is about 800 feet and these parks have the most spectacular scenic overlooks.

Many recreational opportunities are available in the Canyon. Some of these activities are regulated by the Bureau of State Parks or by the Bureau of Forestry, which have slightly different rules and regulations. Visitors can hike, mountain bike, horseback

Colton Point State Park

On the west rim of the canyon, the 368-acre Colton Point State Park resonates with the rustic charm of the Civilian Conservation Corps era of the 1930s. The rugged overlooks offer great views of the canyon.

Directions

The 368-acre Colton Point State Park is five miles south of US 6 at Ansonia.

Recreational Opportunities

Camping: rustic sites

The campground is open from the second

ride, fish, seasonally whitewater boat, hunt, primitive camp and birdwatch.

Formation of the Canyon

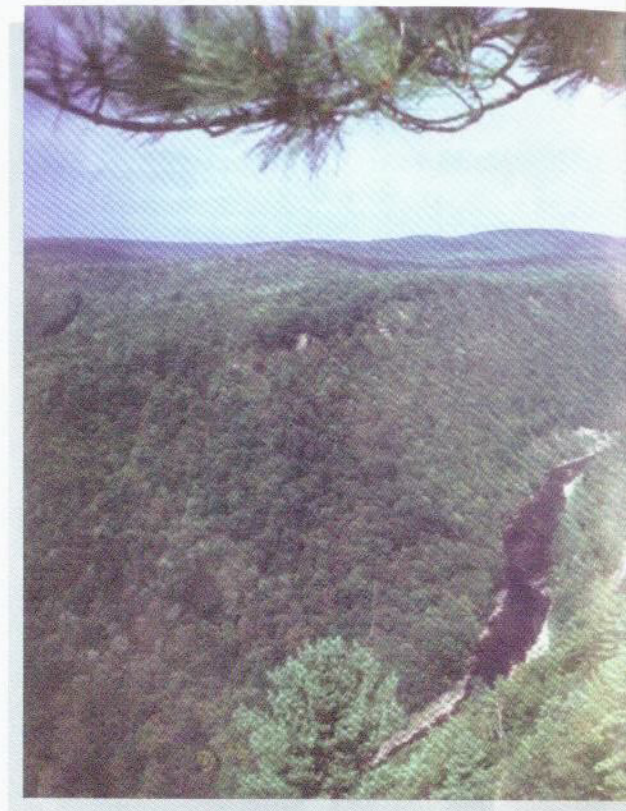
Until about 20,000 years ago, Pine Creek flowed northeasterly. Then, the Laurentide Continental Glacier, which covered most of northern North America, moved into the area, pushing rocks, soil and other debris, which dammed Pine Creek, forming a lake near Ansonia.

The abundant glacial meltwater eventually overflowed the debris dam, reversing the flow of Pine Creek to its current southerly flow. The abundant meltwater of the glacier swiftly carved a deep channel. Thousands of years of erosion by Pine Creek has carved the spectacular Grand Canyon of Pennsylvania.

Human Influence on the Canyon

American Indians used the Pine Creek Gorge as a major travel route. Pine Creek Trail follows the same general route as the original path. Just north of the park at Ansonia, an American Indian word that means "big meadow," was a seasonal hunting camp.

The lumbering of the native white pine and later, the hemlock and assorted hardwoods, led to the settlement of this area. Logs were floated in huge rafts each spring to mills at Williamsport. Lumber from this area helped to make Williamsport the lumber capital of the



world in the 1880s. Hemlock bark was peeled and hauled to several local tanneries to turn hides into leather. By the 1900s, only a few small areas of native forest were untouched in all of Pennsylvania.

Due to the mass deforestation, massive

Recreational Opportunities at Both Parks

Fishing: Fishing is available to those visitors who wish to make the long, steep hike to the bottom of the canyon to Pine Creek. Species include trout, smallmouth bass and panfish. Nearby trout streams include Marsh Creek, Stoney Fork Creek, Asaph Run, Straight Run and Four-Mile Run, which is along the Turkey Path Trail. Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission regulations apply.

Hunting and Firearms: About 250 acres of Leonard Harrison and 100 acres of Colton Point are open to hunting, trapping and the training of dogs during established seasons.

