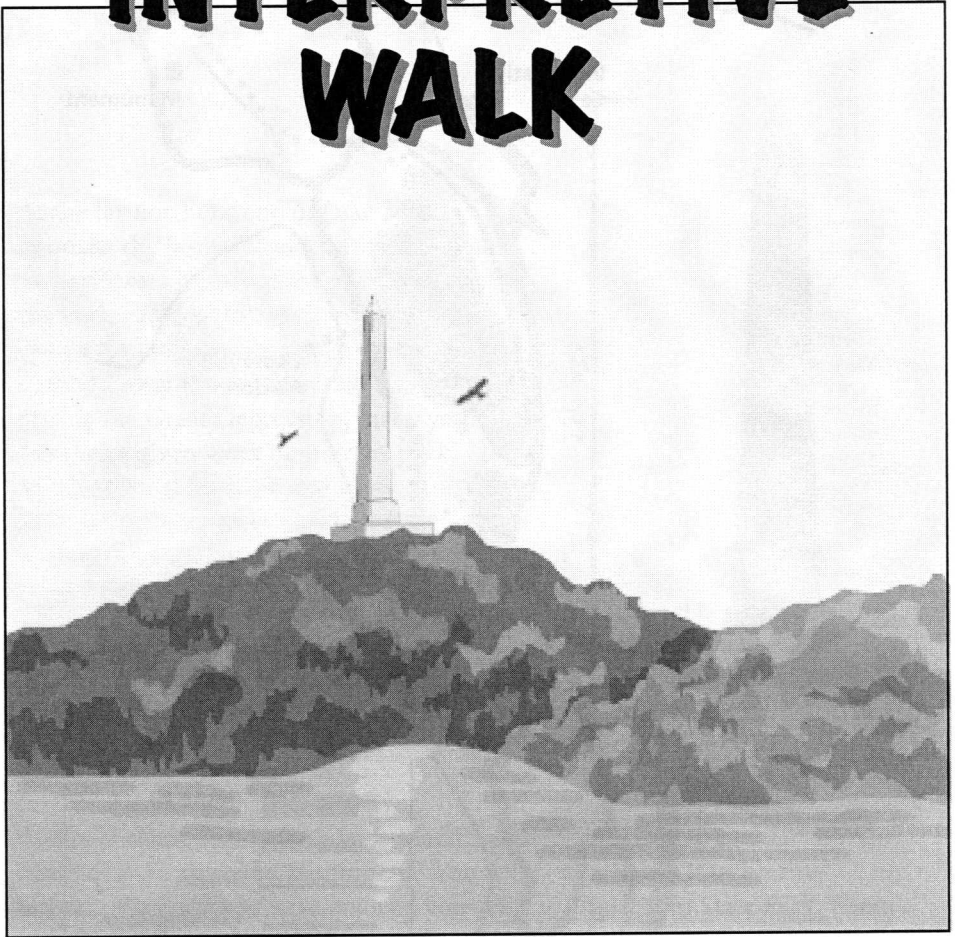


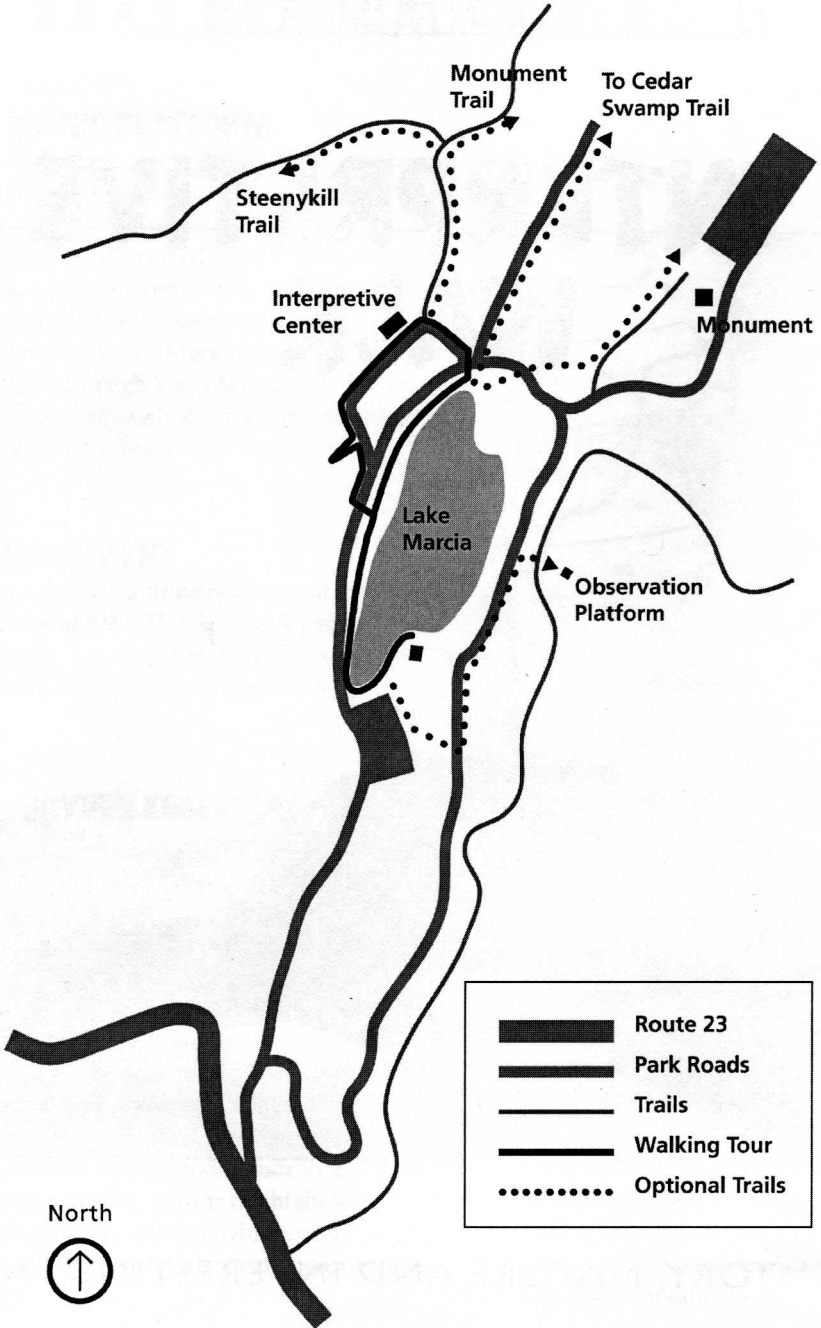
HIGH POINT STATE PARK

INTERPRETIVE WALK



HISTORY, NATURE AND INTERESTING FACTS

HIGH POINT STATE PARK





WELCOME TO HIGH POINT STATE PARK

This interpretive walk will cover some the historical and natural features of the park. In 1996, this area was placed on the state and national registers of Historic Places. The Interpretive Walk is less than one mile and is an easy walk. There are some optional hiking trails that vary in length and difficulty. Take your time along the way and enjoy the year-round surrounding beauty. High Point State Park claims the highest elevation in New Jersey at 1,803 feet above sea level. It is part of the Kittatiny Range of the Appalachian Mountains.

Spend a while walking the paths, enjoying the breeze, and learn some of the reasons why High Point State Park has been such a special place, both in the past and the present.

Written by: Lynn Panico

Edited by: Ronald DuPont, Kate Foord, John Keator

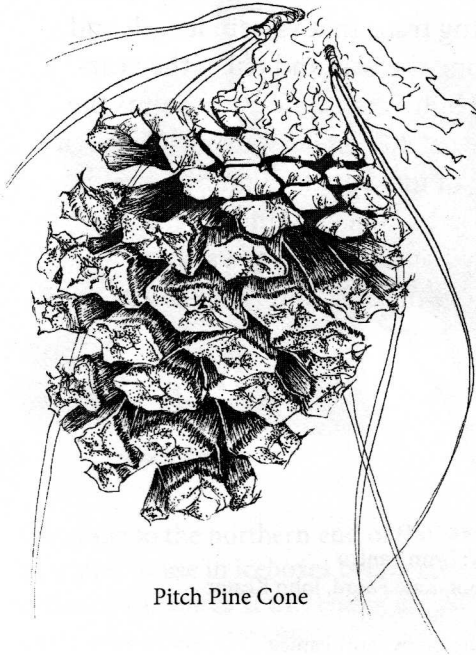
Map by: Kate Foord

Illustration and Design by: Lori Panico

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Begin at High Point State Park's Interpretive Center. The Center has many interpretive panels of the park's history. Natural items of interest and historical artifacts can be found on display inside. This building was once a restaurant known as The Grey Rock Inn. It was built in 1931. It was closed during World War II and reopened during the summer months in the late 1940s. The stone for the walls was quarried from within the park.

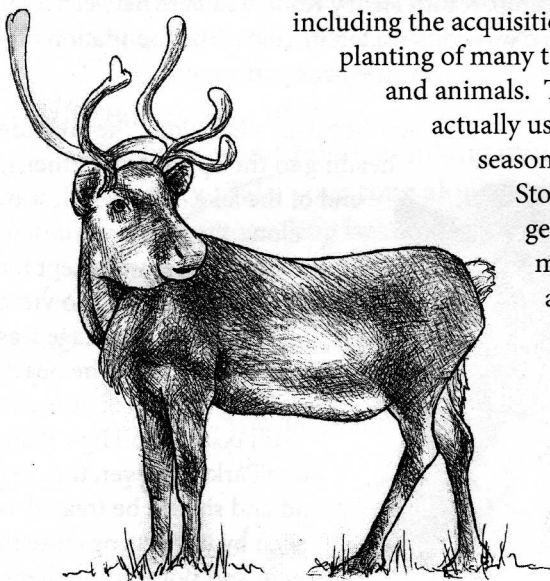
Outside, with your back facing the front doors, look to your left and notice the large interesting rock that was deposited here by the Wisconsin Glacier that advanced and retreated over this area 15,000 years ago. This is called glacial erratic. This mountain is composed of a very hard rock called Shawangunk Conglomerate. The valleys on either side of the mountain were created from water or fluvial erosion.



Pitch Pine Cone

Again with your back to the front doors of the Interpretive Center, walk to your right. Follow the narrow road past the pitch pines toward the parking lot area. Notice the bend and shape of the trunks of the trees, the result of the severe ice loading that can occur on the mountain. On a warm, sunny day the aroma of pine is strong and sweet. The area was called Evergreen Park by the Kuser family. As you enter the parking lot, notice to your left a large rock with a plaque on it. The plaque is made of solid zinc and was donated by the New Jersey Zinc Company in 1925 to honor the park.

Continue up the grassy hill. This is the location where the High Point Inn stood from 1890 to 1910. It was an Adirondack-style Victorian hotel, owned by Charles St. John. Open from June 15 to September 30 each year, it accommodated about 150 guests. After declaring bankruptcy, Charles St. John closed the High Point Inn. Colonel Anthony R. Kuser and his brother John L. Kuser purchased the property in 1909. In 1910, John Kuser sold his half of the property to his brother Anthony Kuser and his wife, Susie. They opened the High Point Inn for its final season and then remodeled it as a private summer residence. In 1911, John Dryden, founder of Prudential Insurance and Susie's father, purchased 7,000 acres on the south side of Route 23 intending to retire there and create a nature preserve, but he died that same year and Susie inherited the property.



The Kusers' interest in wildlife brought many changes including the acquisition of additional property, the planting of many trees, and herds of wild game and animals. The reindeer kept here were actually used during the Christmas season at Bamberger's Department Store in Newark. The Kusers generously donated their mountain estate, over 10,000 acres, to the people of New Jersey in 1922. High Point State Park was dedicated on May 23, 1923. For many years, the Kuser Mansion housed park administrative offices, museum displays, public overnight lodging and was the site of many local civic events. From 1937 to

the mid 1940s it was also used as a ski lodge with many trails emanating from it. The offices were moved in 1969 to their present location on Rt. 23 and Kuser mansion was closed to the public in 1977. The mansion fell into disrepair and was demolished in 1995.

Walk down the hill and follow the road to your right until you see the staircase on your right. Cross the road at this point and walk toward the lake. It was named by William Kitchell, a geological surveyor of this area in 1855. In a poem that he wrote to his fiancée Marcia Smith, Kitchell names the body of water, Lake Marcia. The authentic pronunciation is “Mar-see-ah,” not “Marsha.” William Kitchell is also credited for the name of the park. On his map, the summit was labeled with the word “high” and therefore named High Point State Park.

Stroll along the lake toward the beach area to your left. Take notice of the stone steps leading to the water. This area was once the original public beach including a boardwalk that graced the water’s edge.

Continue to the present day beach that was developed in 1957. In 1926, this area of the park was a Girl Scout Camp, Kamp Kalmia, which later moved to another part of the park. A Boy Scout Camp, Kamp Henry Kohl, was here between 1930 and 1951. The present bathhouse was constructed in 1995. The foundation of the camp mess hall was preserved and forms the back patio walls.

***SEE OPTIONAL TRAIL 1

Retrace your steps along the lakeside heading to the opposite (northern) end of the lake. About half way, along the lake on your left, caged bears were kept for many years for visitors to view.

In later years the cage was located across from the beach parking lot. Black bear can still be seen in High Point State Park; however, they are wild and should be treated as such by not getting close to them and not feeding them.



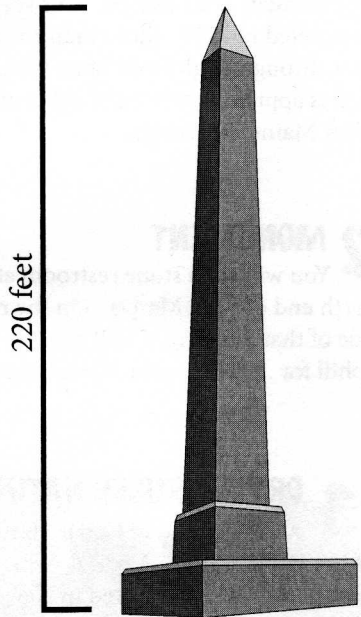
Black Bear

Continue to the northern end of the lake. Lake Marcia was used to harvest ice in winter to use in iceboxes before refrigeration. There were at least three different icehouses at this end of the lake. The icehouses were used to store the cut blocks of ice. ***SEE OPTIONAL TRAIL 2

As you look upon the summit, you will see the High Point Monument. This obelisk was funded by the Kusers and completed in 1930. It is dedicated in honor of New Jersey veterans past, present and future. The Monument is made of granite and quartzite. In the summer months when the Monument is open, you can climb the stairs up the 220-foot structure. Spectacular views can be seen from both the base of the Monument and the top.

At the far northern end of Lake Marcia, opposite the lake, a road leads to another naturally and historically significant part of the park. This is the entrance of what was once a Civilian Conservation Corps camp named Camp Kuser. From 1933 to 1942, during the Great Depression, many young men were given work here in the park. Much of the stonework and roads in this park, as in many other parks, can be attributed to the hard work of these men.

***SEE OPTIONAL TRAIL 3



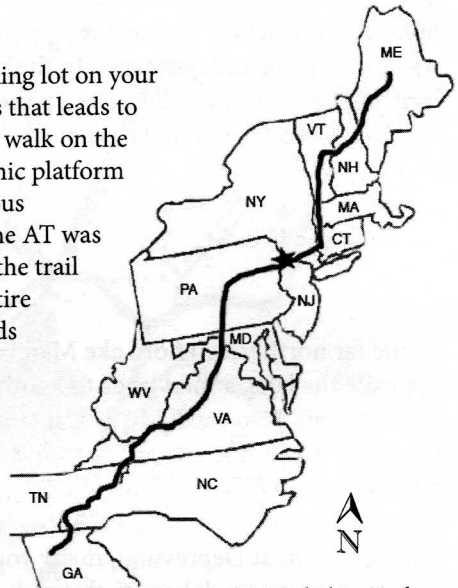
Facing the north end of the Lake Marcia, proceed up the drive to the right, heading away from the Monument. You will return to the Interpretive Center. We hope you have enjoyed your visit to High Point State Park. There are many other parts of the park and trails available for you to explore and enjoy. High Point State Park offers camping, swimming, interpretative programs, cross-country skiing, fishing, boating and more.

***SEE OPTIONAL TRAIL 4

OPTIONAL TRAILS

1 SCENIC PLATFORM

At the far end of the Beach House parking lot on your left, follow the short trail through the woods that leads to Scenic Drive. Turning to your left, carefully walk on the side of the road. You will come across a scenic platform on your right .5 miles ahead. Here the famous Appalachian Trail crosses. This section of the AT was completed in 1937. More than ten miles of the trail pass through High Point State Park. The entire trail is approximately 2,176 miles and extends from Maine to Georgia.



The Appalachian Trail

2 MONUMENT

You will see a stone restroom at the north end of Lake Marcia. On the right side of that building, a trail runs steeply uphill for .5 miles to the Monument.

3 DRYDEN KUSER NATURAL AREA

At the far end of Cedar Swamp Drive is the Dryden Kuser Natural Area. It is the first natural area protected in New Jersey. It is dedicated to the Kuser's son, Senator Dryden Kuser, an advocate for the park and conservation. The Cedar Swamp Trail guides you through this unique habitat. A 3.5 mile trail and boardwalk will lead you through the swamp allowing you to see Atlantic white cedar, hemlocks, white pine, spruce, thickets of mountain laurel, rhododendron and wild blueberry bushes. This is the highest elevation where Atlantic white cedar, normally a coastal plain species, grows in the world!

4 STEENYKILL LAKE

To the right of the Interpretive Center, you will see the Monument Trail. Follow this for .3 miles and you will come to the Steenykill Trail on your left which you will follow for .7 miles downhill until you reach Steenykill Lake. This lake was built by the CCC in 1939. Another option is to continue on the Monument Trail for 3.5 miles. This is a more strenuous hike and leads back up to the Monument.