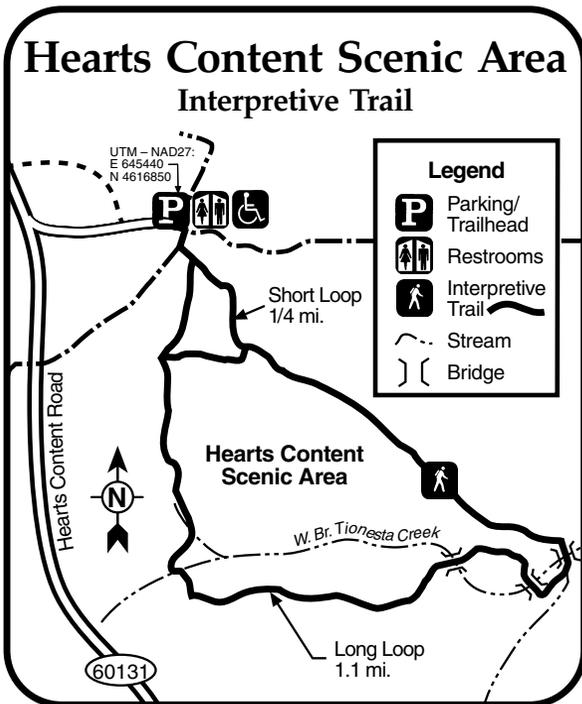


HEARTS CONTENT SCENIC AREA INTERPRETIVE TRAIL

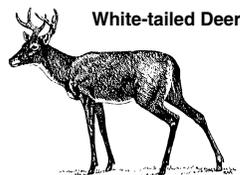
LOCATION – Hearts Content Scenic Area is located 15 miles southwest of Warren, PA. From the Mohawk exit of U.S. Route 6, take Pleasant Drive south for 11 miles. At the hard curve, proceed straight onto a gravel road; go south for four miles to Hearts Content.

COME TO THE OLD GROWTH FOREST – Although forests have covered this area for thousands of years, most have changed during the last two centuries. In most eastern forests the huge old trees are missing, having been cut down to provide building materials for an expanding nation. Now there are just a few old growth forests, sometimes called virgin forests, where timber has never been cut. The Hearts Content Scenic Area is one such place. In the mid-1800's a 20-acre parcel was protected from logging by the Wheeler and Dusenbury Lumber Company. In 1922 it was donated to

Continued inside...



VOLUNTEERS – If you, a friend, or your club are interested in volunteering to help maintain this trail area, please contact the Ranger District.



White-tailed Deer

CUSTOMER SERVICE – for more information on this and other forest opportunities, please contact:

Allegheny National Forest
222 Liberty Street
P.O. Box 847
Warren, PA 16365
814-723-5150
814-726-2710 TTY
814-726-1465 Fax

Northern Alleghenies Vacation Region
315 2nd Ave., P.O. Box 804
Warren, PA 16365
814-726-1222
800-624-7802

Bradford Ranger District
Star Route, Box 88
Bradford, PA 16701
814-362-4613
814-368-8116 TTY
814-362-2761 Fax

<http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/allegheny>

ENJOY THE TRAIL!

This brochure can be obtained in large print at the Allegheny National Forest, P.O. Box 847, Warren, PA 16365, 814-723-5150.

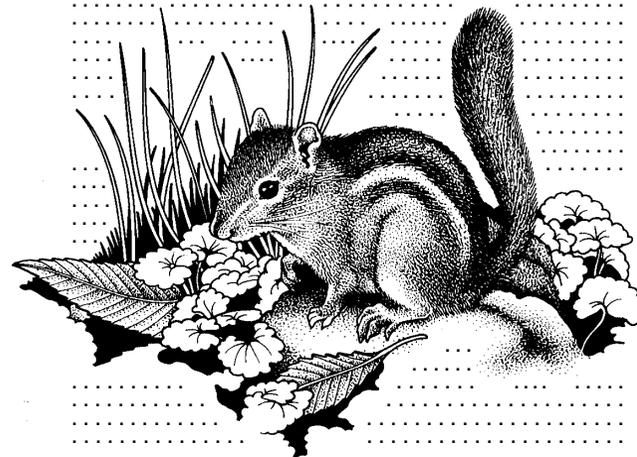
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To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 14th and Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice or TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Hearts Content Scenic Area Interpretive Trail



Allegheny National Forest

U.S. Department of Agriculture
Forest Service



the U.S. Forest Service. Later, additional land was acquired, making up the 120-acre Hearts Content Scenic Area.

Here you can follow a path into an old growth forest of towering hemlock and white pine. Look for gnarly, old beech snags amidst a carpet of ferns. Feel the cool dark forest. It is a rare place and a reminder of how many forests used to look. As you hike this easy trail, read the interpretive signs to learn how the forest is changing, due to a unique relationship between people, deer, and the old trees.

This is your forest and the trees in it are special. **You can help care for them by not damaging the bark, which protects the living portion of the tree just beneath it.**

THE EVOLVING FOREST – In a healthy forest, plants grow in layers - from low growing mosses and herbs, to medium height shrubs, up to tall trees. This way plants get the proper amount of sun and shade to make them grow. In this old growth forest you can see that the middle layer of shrubs and young trees is missing. This is the work of the white-tailed deer!



During the 1920's this forest looked different than it does today. Then, there were fewer deer, and many tree seedlings grew among the pines. Today, however, the deer population is high and overbrowsing has prevented new trees and shrubs from growing in many places. Since deer do not like to eat ferns, these low, dense plants grow in profusion, blocking out much of the light that other plants need to get started. If there is a high deer population, when the old pines and hemlocks die, most will not be replaced with new trees. Can you imagine this forest without the big trees?



The fences you see in the forest are one way to manage the deer so that shrubs and new tree seedlings can grow. On the Allegheny National Forest, over 100 miles of fencing have been installed to keep deer out and let new trees get started, creating habitat for many kinds of wildlife. Inside the fenced area along the trail, can you see some types of plants that are not found growing outside the fence?



The U.S. Forest Service is studying the relationship between deer and their habitat to find better ways of regenerating forests. They are also working with the

Pennsylvania Game Commission to control deer populations through hunting and habitat management. In this way, a balance can be found for deer and other things we value in the forest.

WHO LIVES IN THIS FOREST? There are many different kinds of animals that live in the Hearts Content Scenic Area. If you look closely you may find clues like these tracks shown below. Look also for trails, feathers, nests, scrapings, and droppings. You can also listen for birds and chipmunks calling to each other.



Fox



Wild Turkey

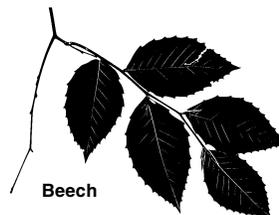


Raccoon

Tracks are 1/4 actual size.

LOOK FOR THE SECRETS OF THE FOREST – Although this is a very old forest, it is constantly changing. You can understand the changes if you know what to look for.

Look at the big Beech trees – They are the ones with the smooth bark. There are lots of big ones. But they are dying from Beech bark disease. Look closely at the trunk of a big Beech tree and you may see lots of tiny white spots. That's the beech bark scale. Within twenty years there probably won't be many large, living beech trees here.



Beech

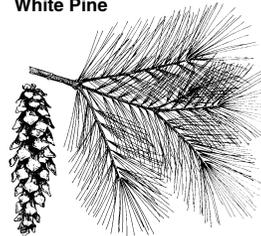
Look at the ferns – Why are there so many ferns? In some places they cover the forest floor like a thick carpet. This is because there are so many deer in this forest that eat almost all of the young plants, except the ferns, which they don't like. If the deer population can be



reduced, or the young trees can be protected, there will be a greater variety and quantity of plants here in the future.

Look at the huge White Pine and Hemlock trees – Do you see any young pine trees more than a few feet tall? Why not? It's because new pine trees need lots of sunlight to get started. Since this is a very shady forest, most of the young trees are Hemlock and Beech—the kind that can get started in the shadow of the big trees. But Hemlock seedlings are also scarce because Hemlock buds and leaves are important food for deer.

White Pine



If you want to find a little pine tree, look for places where sunlight reaches the forest floor. Some of these seedlings may survive and grow into huge pine trees.

AUDIO TAPE – You may check out an audio tape about the Hearts Content Scenic Area from the Hearts Content Campground host, or at any Allegheny National Forest office.

REGULATIONS – All dogs must be on leashes when using the trail. Forest trails policy prohibits the use of saddle, pack, or draft animals on hiking trails. Please practice the Leave No Trace! land ethic. If you pack it in, pack it out.



Hemlock

SAFETY – The area is a typical flat with few safety hazards. Please report any unsafe trail conditions directly to the Bradford Ranger District or to the Campground Hosts during the summer months.

TREAD LIGHTLY! is an educational program dedicated to increasing awareness of how to enjoy the outdoors while minimizing impacts.

TREAD LIGHTLY! PLEDGE:

- Travel and recreate with minimum impact.
- Respect the environment and the rights of others.
- Educate yourself, plan and prepare before you go.
- Allow for future use of the outdoors, leave it better than you found it.
- Discover the rewards of responsible recreation.

Land stewardship ethics courtesy of Tread Lightly! (tlinc@xmission.com)