

April 11, 2011



## Lehigh Mountain Park

Nestled between Allentown and Bethlehem one finds Lehigh Mountain Park teeming with history, wildlife and lush vegetation. Comprised of Walking Purchase Park, Lehigh Uplands Preserve and land from the Bethlehem Water Authority the parklands together total approximately 530 acres, making it one of the largest forested public spaces between the Blue and South Mountains.

The northern portion of the park borders the Lehigh River and was acquired in 1989 by the Wildlands Conservancy. This 156-acre parcel was procured from Bethlehem Steel and became known as Walking Purchase Park. That same year, Wildlands Conservancy purchased the southwest 232-acre portion of the park which was subsequently sold to the combined ownership of the City of Allentown, Lehigh County and Salisbury Township and became known as the Lehigh Uplands Preserve. The southeastern portion of the park was acquired in 2006 when Lehigh County purchased a 141-acre parcel formerly owned by the Bethlehem Water Authority. These latter two parcels together are commonly referred to as "the Uplands." The Walking Purchase Park parcel is referred to as "the Lowlands."

The Lehigh Mountain Uplands area likely represents the most ecologically intact forested land in the Lehigh Valley with an astounding diversity of native trees, shrubs and herbaceous plants. It contains an important natural feature—the Lehigh Mountain Seeps and the plant and animal communities they support. The Lowlands region with nearly 2.5 miles of protected riparian corridor to the Lehigh River contains remnants of historical structures dating from some of the earliest Native American inhabitants to the first European settlers.

The Park provides opportunities to walk, run, bike, hike or simply enjoy nature. History buffs may find the historical structures of particular interest. In 1843 Franz Heinrich Oppelt, a German physician, came to Bethlehem and created a hospital based on water therapy and homeopathic practices. The ruins of the hospital can still be seen directly behind the present St. Luke's Hospital. A stone fish trap built by the Lenape Indians is still visible in the Lehigh River at Sterner's Island. The Solomon Jennings homestead has been reduced to rubble but is still present within the park. The ruins of the Geissinger farmstead are clearly definable in the park as well. Perhaps the Park's most impressive historical landmark is the Works Progress Administration (WPA) park site, referred to as the Lehigh Valley's first theme park, and the area surrounding the water reservoirs on the former Bethlehem Water Authority land.

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## PARK PICKS

by

## FRIENDS OF THE ALLENTOWN PARKS



*Join us today! Become a member and help make Allentown's great park system even better.*



### Cedar Creek Parkway Volunteer Event April 10, 2011

If you were strolling through Cedar Creek Parkway near Ott St. and Broadway you probably noticed individuals working diligently in that area's

riparian buffer zone collecting branches, removing dead vegetation and invasive plant species.

**Friends of the Allentown Parks** thanks the members of Muhlenberg College's Environmental Action Team (EnAct) as well as botanist Claudia Steckel, Allentown Environmental Advisory Council members David McGuire and

Andrew Kleiner as well as employees of the Allentown Parks Dept. for their time, energy and enthusiasm in furthering this important environmental initiative.



**Lehigh Mountain Park** as it exists today is a true conservation success story. Wildlands Conservancy, the County of Lehigh, the City of Allentown, and Salisbury Township have worked together over the past 20 years to protect Lehigh Mountain from development, but there is still much work to be done. For more information on this wonderful park as well as anticipated future developments, please visit [www.allentownpa.gov/parks](http://www.allentownpa.gov/parks) for details of the recently approved Lehigh Mountain Park Master Plan.

Article source: Lehigh Mountain Park Master Plan

### Volunteers Needed for Clean-Up Event April 30 at Lehigh Mountain Park

The Lowlands area of Lehigh Mountain Park is plagued by the rampant spread of invasive/exotic plants, extensive illegal dumping, and disallowed motorized vehicle use. Please join Friends of the Allentown Parks on April 30 from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. as we work with other organizations to clean-up sections of the park. Partners for this event include: Wildlands Conservancy, Lehigh Valley Mountain Bikers, the County of Lehigh, City of Allentown, Salisbury Township and Waste Management. For additional information and to register please contact Virginia Savage at 610-782-3809 or e-mail [virginiasavage@lehighcounty.org](mailto:virginiasavage@lehighcounty.org). Meeting location is along Constitution Drive at park entrance.