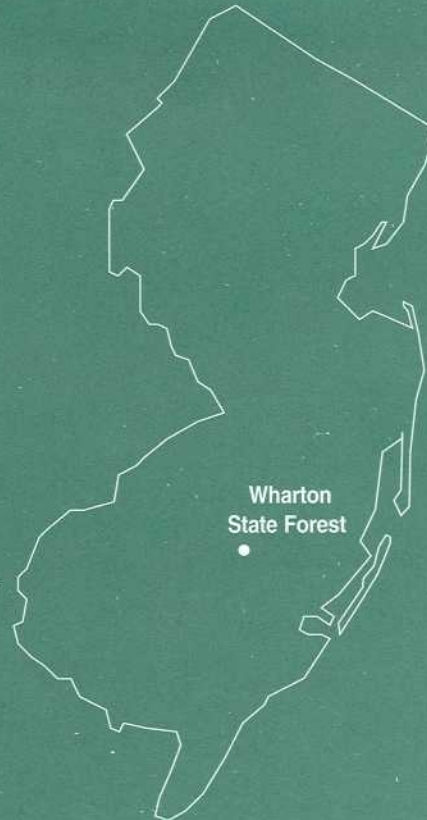


Wharton State Forest

New Jersey
Division of Parks and Forestry
State Park Service



New Jersey Department
of Environmental Protection



INTRODUCTION

Wharton State Forest is the largest single tract of land within the New Jersey State Park System. It contains in excess of 110,000 acres in Atlantic, Burlington and Camden Counties. Located in the heart of the Pine Barrens, about 20 miles northwest of Atlantic City and approximately 40 miles southeast of Philadelphia, the area is conveniently accessible from the Atlantic City Expressway, the Garden State Parkway and U.S. Routes 30 and 206.

HISTORY

While the Lenni-Lenape Indians hunted and fished in the area, the first permanent settlers were primarily wood cutters and sawmill operators. With the discovery of bog ore, iron furnaces were built, bringing more people of varied skills and related occupations into the Pine Barrens.

During the late 1700's and early 1800's towns and villages developed along rivers and streams, which were easily impounded and utilized as a source of power for the mills, furnaces and forges. These industries, and the later ones of glass and paper production, are now significant in the interpretation of the industrial heritage and development of South Jersey.

Much of the historical interest centers on the iron industry which flourished in the Pine Barrens at the time of the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812. The iron to make munitions and supplies for these conflicts was obtained from bog ore found along the streams and in the swamps of the area and supplied to the local furnaces and forges.

By the mid-19th century, however, the iron furnaces were silent. The decline of this industry, and later those of glass and paper, marked the decline and eventual disappearance of the towns and villages which had sprung up around them.

Batsto survived, in part, because Joseph Wharton, a Philadelphia industrialist and financier, purchased it in 1876 and developed it as a gentleman's farm. He also continued to amass his South Jersey properties with the intent of damming the streams and selling the water to Camden and Philadelphia. This plan was never realized, and when Wharton died in 1909, his South Jersey lands comprised approximately 96,000 acres.

The estate remained intact, and when the State of New Jersey purchased it in 1954 and 1955 as a watershed and recreation area, it ensured the survival of this unique natural and cultural environment. Wharton State Forest is named for Joseph Wharton whose original 96,000 acres comprise its core.

The majority of the area has remained undeveloped in order to preserve the forest's natural habitat. However, recreational development has occurred at Atsion, Batsto and Crowley Landing and campsites can be found throughout the forest.

FEATURES AND ACTIVITIES

HISTORIC BATSTO VILLAGE

Batsto Village is the site of a former bog iron and glassmaking industrial center (1766-1867) that now reflects the agricultural and commercial enterprises of Joseph Wharton during the years 1876-1909. Visitors to this 19th century Pine Barrens village can learn about the industry, commerce and agriculture that once thrived here. The Village consists of 33 historic buildings and structures, including a gristmill, sawmill, general store and mansion. A Visitor Center contains exhibits and a museum shop.

Historic trades are demonstrated Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day.

Batsto Village is partially accessible to persons with disabilities. Please contact the forest office at Batsto for further information.



NATURAL AREAS AND INTERPRETIVE CENTER

Two Natural Areas have been designated within Wharton State Forest: Batsto Natural Area and Oswego River Natural Area. These natural areas demonstrate a wide variety of pinelands habitats, especially southern swamps and floodplains. Rare plant and animal species are contained in these areas, as well as points of cultural and historical interest.

Nature trails have been established in the Batsto Natural Area. A nature trail guide is available at the Interpretive Center at Batsto. Other interpretive nature programs are available upon request.

A booklet entitled "*Plant Life of Wharton State Forest*" lists native plants that have been found in the forest. Copies may be obtained at either the Batsto Visitor Center or the Atsion office.



SWIMMING

The forest has one designated swimming area with lifeguard supervision at the Atsion Recreation Area. This facility includes a bathhouse, food concession, first aid room, office and 280 vehicle parking lot. During the summer season, Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day, an entrance fee is charged. Atsion Recreation Area is partially accessible to persons with disabilities. For further information contact the Atsion office.



CAMPING

Camping in Wharton State Forest is available year-round. Facilities range from campsites with picnic tables, flush toilets and hot showers to wilderness sites accessible only by hiking, horseback or canoe. Developed camping areas are located at Atsion and Godfrey Bridge. Each campsite in these areas may accommodate up to six persons. There are 50 campsites at Atsion and

49 sites at Godfrey Bridge available for tent or trailer, with picnic tables and located near water. Restrooms with flush toilets and hot showers and a trailer/RV dumping station are available only at Atsion.

Those individuals, families or groups who wish to camp in a more remote area with limited facilities may choose one of the seven primitive camping areas located in Wharton. These include: Buttonwood Hill, Bodine Field, Hawkins Bridge, Batona Campsite, Mullica River Wilderness Campsite, Lower Forge Wilderness Campsite and Goshen Pond. With the exception of Lower Forge and Buttonwood Hill, all these areas have hand pumps for drinking water and pit toilets. Campers at Lower Forge and Buttonwood Hill must carry in drinking water. Mullica River and Lower Forge are designated wilderness sites and motor vehicles are not permitted. All other areas are accessible by motor vehicle.

All camping in Wharton State Forest must be in designated campsites with a valid permit. Pets and alcoholic beverages are not permitted in campsites. The camping facilities at the Atsion area are partially accessible to persons with disabilities. For further information about the camping facilities at Wharton State Forest, please contact one of the forest offices.



CABINS

Nine cabins are situated along the north shore of Atsion Lake. They accommodate from 4 to 8 people, and have indoor toilets and showers with hot and cold water, bunk beds, rustic furnishings and a kitchen. Eating and cooking utensils and bedding are not provided. Two cabins are partially accessible to persons with disabilities. Pets and alcoholic beverages are not permitted in cabins. Reservation information may be obtained from the Atsion office.



PICNICKING

Picnic facilities are attractively placed at Batsto, Crowley Landing, Green Bank and in the Atsion Recreation Area. Picnic tables and sanitary facilities are provided at each picnic area. Grills are provided at Crowley Landing and Atsion Recreation Areas and fires are permitted only at these picnic facilities. Playground equipment and a playfield are available at Atsion. Picnic facilities at Batsto, Crowley Landing & Atsion are partially accessible to persons with disabilities. Alcoholic beverages are not permitted in the forest. For further information contact either forest office.



HUNTING AND FISHING

Hunting is permitted in Wharton State Forest and is subject to New Jersey's Fish and Wildlife laws. Wildlife regularly hunted include deer, squirrel, rabbit and pheasant.

Fishing is permitted, except where specifically prohibited, and is subject to New Jersey's Fish and Wildlife laws. Bass, pickerel, catfish, perch and sunfish may be caught. Consult the forest offices for further information about the hunting and fishing opportunities in Wharton State Forest.



HORSEBACK RIDING AND HIKING TRAILS

Nearly 500 miles of sand roads are open year-round for hiking and horseback riding. The 50-mile Batona Trail connects Lebanon, Wharton and Bass River State Forests. On Wharton, it is serviced by two camping areas: Batona Campsite and Lower Forge Wilderness Campsite. The marking and maintenance of the Batona Trail are provided by volunteers from the Batona Hiking Club. The Batona Trail is open for hiking only.



MOTORIZED VEHICLES

The use of forest roads by properly registered and licensed motorized vehicles is permitted. Vehicle use is not permitted on or over any other forest lands. Contact the area office for further details. ATV's are not permitted.



CANOEING AND BOATING

Four rivers flow through Wharton and provide opportunities for excellent canoeing. These include the Mullica, Batsto, West Branch of the Wading and the Oswego. Entry and exit points are conveniently situated for trips of varying lengths. Designated campsites are located on all but the Oswego River. A public launching ramp for motorized boats is located at Crowley Landing on the Mullica River. The lakes in the forest at Atsion, Batsto and Harrisville are restricted to electric powered boats under 10 horsepower. Alcoholic beverages are not permitted in the State forest.

Coast Guard approved life preservers are required for each occupant of any vessel.



ACCESS FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Wharton State Forest facilities are partially accessible to persons with disabilities. Please contact the park office at (609) 561-0024 for further information regarding disability access needs. Text telephone (TT) users, please call the New Jersey Relay Service at (800) 852-7899.



CARRY-IN/CARRY-OUT PROGRAM

The State Park Service Carry-In/Carry-Out program helps to eliminate trash by encouraging visitors to be good forest stewards by placing their trash in bags provided throughout the forest and taking it home for proper disposal. Campers are asked to place all trash in appropriate trash and recycling containers. Thank you for your cooperation and please remember to recycle.

Alcoholic beverages are not permitted in the forest.