



Location: Venango Township, Erie County

Size: Non-contiguous parcels total 992 acres

Dates acquired: 1996-2019

Recreational activities: Hiking, wildlife observation, picnicking, hunting, fishing (details inside)

Directions: The primary access is along the east side of Route 8, near the village of Lowville, approximately 4 miles north of Wattsburg. Look for a gravel and asphalt pull-off located a short distance off the road. Other portions of the conservation area may be accessed from Phillipsville Road, Page Road, Half Moon Road, and Wildman Road.

Please note: a portion of the Wildman Road parcel is leased to a local farmer, and is closed to public access.



West Branch French Creek Conservation Area is part of the **Let's Move Outside! Erie County Recreational Passport** program, which promotes healthy living and physical activity through the use of public art, local history, and outdoor recreation. A Let's Move Outside! trail marker is located along the main trail.

For more information, visit:
www.letsmoveoutside.org



West Branch French Creek Conservation Area



For more information about Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, please contact

Western Pennsylvania Conservancy
800 Waterfront Dr.
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

toll-free: 1-866-564-6972
fax: 412-231-1414
WaterLandLife.org
info@paconserve.org



November 2019

Recreational activities: From the parking area off Route 8, a short, paved, **universal access trail** leads to a covered pavilion containing tables and grills. Also from the parking area, a 1.1-mile **loop unpaved hiking trail** leads north to a series of picturesque beaver ponds. A log boardwalk, or puncheon, traverses a wetland located just below a beaver dam. The trail then turns to circle an old Christmas tree plantation, and skirts along the edge of the West Branch French Creek floodplain. Depending on the season and beaver activity, portions of the trail may be quite wet.

From Half Moon Road, visitors can walk along an old farm road through old fields and a reclaimed gravel mine to reach the edge of the floodplain forest. At the end of the trail, a stone bench overlooks a small pond and wetland.

Hunting and fishing are permitted, though all hunting is prohibited on Sundays. Please exercise caution and wear blaze orange during hunting season. Trapping is prohibited.



West Branch French Creek Conservation Area

French Creek is one of the most biodiverse stream systems in the northeastern U.S., providing habitat for several species of endangered freshwater mussel, and numerous fish species of special concern.

Within the conservation area is a unique ecosystem known as **Lowville Fen**. Fens are permanent wetlands fed by groundwater high in calcium, which creates habitat for many rare plants. In Pennsylvania, fens are found only in the northwestern region.



When visiting West Branch French Creek Conservation Area, please remember:

- Vehicles are permitted only in designated parking areas.
- Camping and campfires are prohibited.
- Trapping is prohibited.
- Hunting is prohibited on Sundays.
- If you carry it in, carry it out.
- Dogs must be on a leash or otherwise kept under control at all times.
- Collecting (animals, plants, rocks, etc.) without WPC permission is prohibited.
- Only non-motorized boats are permitted.
- To avoid spreading aquatic invasives, thoroughly clean and dry boats and other gear before entering the property.

