

# Welcome to Highpoint

Highpoint Scenic Vista—one of eleven York County Parks—is part of a network of public open spaces along the York County shore of the Susquehanna River. These sites showcase attractions within the Susquehanna Riverlands — the ribbon of scenic landscapes, parks, preserves and historic river towns located in the heart of the Susquehanna Heritage Area.



Published by:

**SUSQUEHANNA HERITAGE**

Susquehanna Heritage is a non-profit organization and Pennsylvania Heritage Area advancing a vision for the Susquehanna Riverlands as a national destination for outdoor fun and cultural discovery.

Visit us online to learn more:

[www.SusquehannaHeritage.org](http://www.SusquehannaHeritage.org)

Find us on

SHC 1-19

# Discover History & Nature



Highpoint Scenic Vista & Recreation Area is owned and managed by the York County Department of Parks & Recreation  
[www.yorkcountyparks.org](http://www.yorkcountyparks.org)  
 717-840-7440 Emergency: Call 911



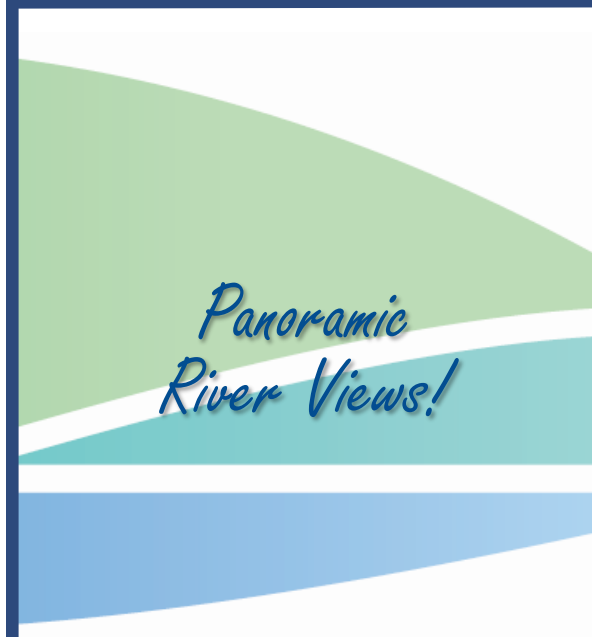
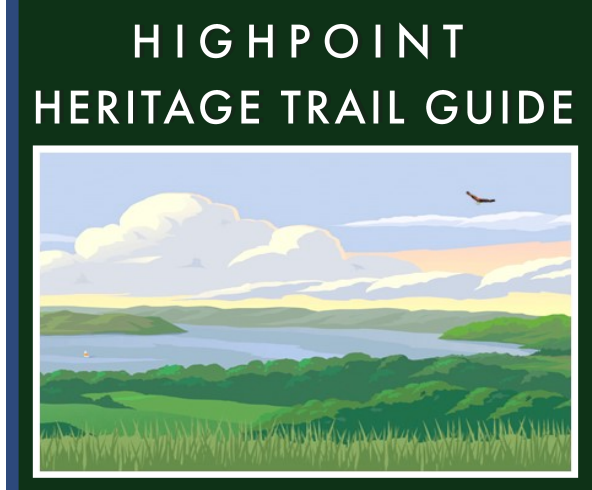
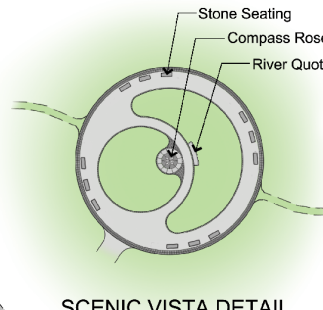
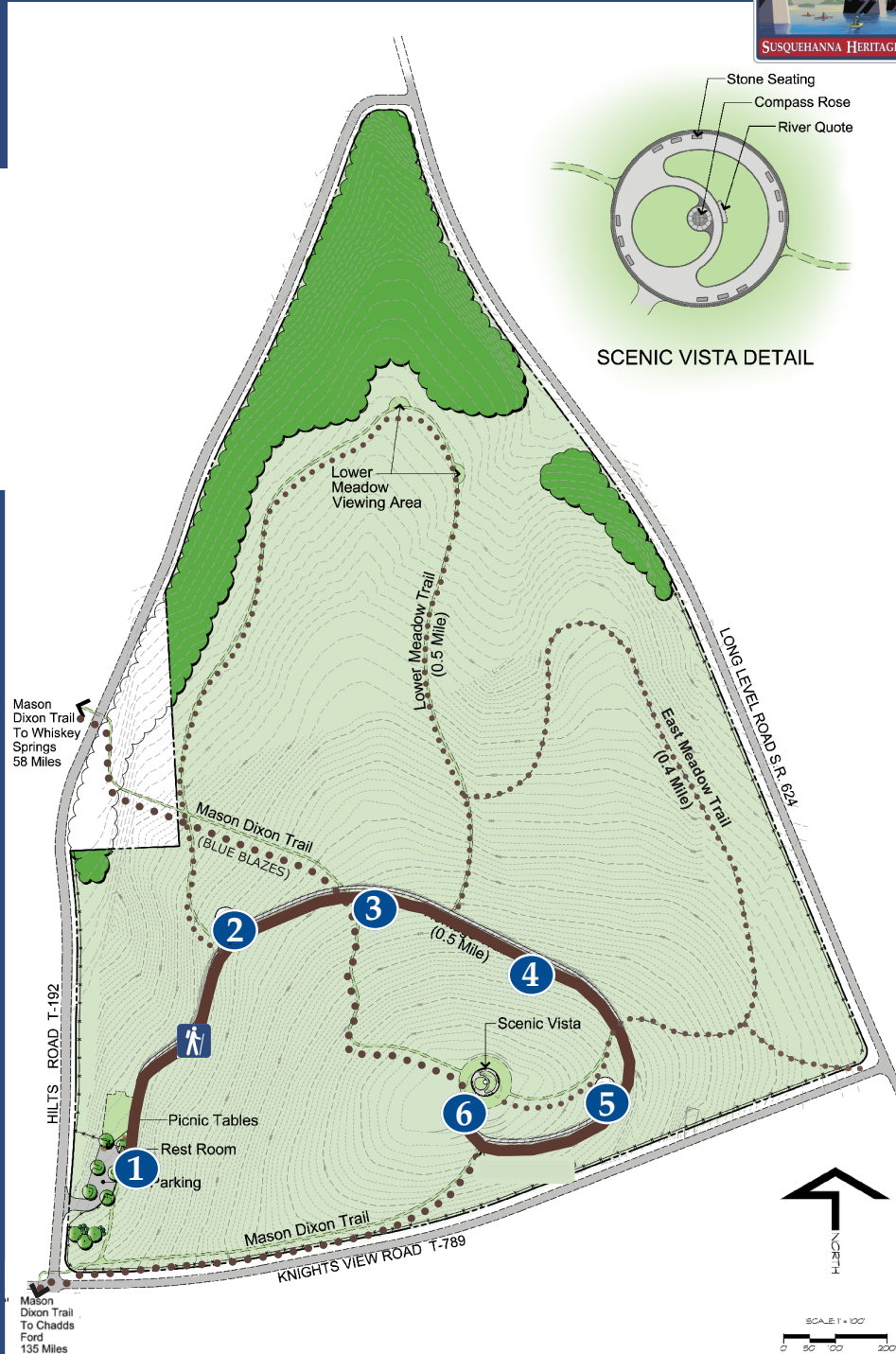
## Highpoint Heritage Trail Guide

- Heritage Trail
- Hiking Trail
- Heritage Trail Waystop (see inside)

### Visitor Notes

- The Heritage Trail is accessible to persons with disabilities.
- The Mason Dixon Trail is marked with blue blazes.
- Park is open down to dusk every day, year round.

Funded in part through a grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Bureau of Recreation and Conservation, PA Heritage Areas Program.



**SUSQUEHANNA RIVERLANDS**  
 PLAY. EXPLORE. EXPERIENCE.  
[www.SusquehannaRiverlands.com](http://www.SusquehannaRiverlands.com)

# Highpoint Heritage Trail—Waystop Guide

## WAYSTOP 1

Welcome to Highpoint Heritage Trail, a 1/2 mile walking path rising 110 vertical feet on its way to the summit. This 80-acre park was established by the County of York and state and regional partners as a scenic gateway to the Susquehanna Riverlands.

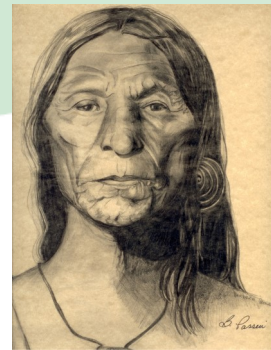


Acquisition of Highpoint's land for a public park began in 2004. The site was soon to become

a luxury home subdivision. Most of the land's natural features have since been restored. Creating the park inspired a lively community dialogue about land stewardship, property rights, public financing, and preservation of the river landscape. Preserving Highpoint as a heritage and outdoor recreation attraction helps balance economic growth and development through tourism with conservation and environmental protection.

## WAYSTOP 2

This landscape has hosted centuries of human history, with settlements of the region's first inhabitants reaching back 12,000 years. As many as 50,000 Native Americans have lived their lives on the landscape visible from Highpoint.



Artwork by Barbara Passeri Warfel

One of the earliest contacts between Europeans and indigenous peoples of the region occurred in 1608. Captain John Smith met the Susquehannock on the river during his exploration of the upper Chesapeake Bay. Of all Native American tribes, they were the last to occupy this area.

Two of the last Susquehannock village sites, dating to the 1670s, are now preserved as part of the nearby Native Lands County Park and Upper Leibhart Archaeological Preserve.

## WAYSTOP 3

To the north, the Wrightsville-Columbia river crossing was a strategic transportation route early in America's history and the scene of key historical events:

1730—John Wright established a ferry across the river.

1775—York militia crossed the river here on their way to join General Washington after the battle of Bunker Hill.

1777—After the British invasion of Philadelphia, the Second Continental Congress fled across the river to convene in York for nine months.



1778—Prisoners captured during the American victory at Saratoga crossed here bound for a Virginia prison camp and later returned to nearby Camp Security.

1789—Thomas Hartley, York's first Congressman, crossed here on his way to the first Congress in New York and later proposed this site for the nation's capital.

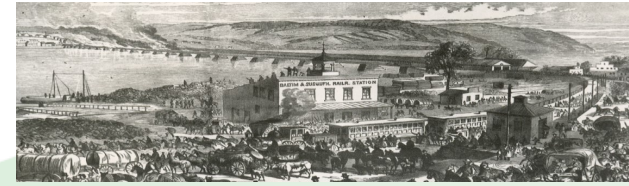
1791—Citizens escorted President Washington to the river on his way to Philadelphia. Washington crossed here several times, reportedly once getting stuck on river rocks while returning from the Whiskey Rebellion.

The first bridge was built at this crossing in 1814—the world's longest covered bridge at the time. In 1832, ice destroyed this bridge and a second covered bridge was built. Four more bridges were built over time. The 1800s saw log rafts floating timber downriver and launch of the first iron steamboat at nearby Accomac. A portion of the Pennsylvania Canal was extended south to Columbia in the 1830s, linking the state-wide canal system and delivering anthracite coal to iron furnaces along the river's east shore south of Marietta.



## WAYSTOP 4

The Susquehanna & Tidewater Canal was completed in 1840. It ran from Wrightsville to Havre de Grace, MD along the river's west shore. The second covered bridge connected the canals on each side with a two-tiered towpath. A low dam raised the water level for easier towing of canal boats across the river.



This bridge played a pivotal role in the Civil War—it was burned by Union militia on June 28, 1863, forcing Confederate troops to turn around and move west toward Gettysburg, where a defining battle was fought.

The river crossing was also an important 20th century transportation route, including development of the Lincoln Highway in 1913, America's first transcontinental roadway. The highway's impressive 6,657-foot long, multiple arch concrete bridge across the Susquehanna was completed in 1930. The bridge is a National Historic Civil Engineering Landmark and is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

## WAYSTOP 5

The Susquehanna River Gorge appears here in all of its majesty. The area that sits just above the Safe Harbor hydroelectric dam is called Lake Clarke. The islands are the Conejohela Flats Natural Area, a major stopover for migratory birds. Turkey Point rises above the Lancaster County shoreline, topped with the 262-foot high wind turbines of Lancaster County Solid Waste Management Authority. The turbines generate 25% of the annual electricity needs for the nearby Turkey Hill Dairy complex.



Long Level, named for a lock-free section of the former Susquehanna & Tidewater Canal, stretches below along the York County shoreline. This scenic riverside community is enjoyed by residents and visitors as a place for powerboating, paddling, fishing, and other water recreation.



The long ridge of pasture to the left is part of historic Lauxmont Farms. S. Forry Laucks, a York industrialist, began



purchasing local farms in 1918 and eventually acquired over 2500 acres, including Highpoint. Delano & Aldrich, a nationally known New York architectural firm, designed his French-style mansion. The farm's innovative, art deco style dairy complex was designed by the same firm in 1933. The dairy featured a round "lounge" where visitors enjoyed ice cream and light meals while viewing the scenic river to the south.

## WAYSTOP 6

You've reached the summit! The circle of seating, carved from indigenous rock by a local stonemason, provides an ideal setting for enjoying this scenic panorama. Robert Louis Stevenson wrote the words now carved in stone here as he travelled by train along the river in 1879:

*"And when I had asked the name of a river from the brakeman, and heard that it was called the Susquehanna, the beauty of the name seemed to be part and parcel of the beauty of the land. As when Adam with divine fitness named the creatures, so this word Susquehanna was at once accepted by the fancy. That was the name, as no other could be, for that shining river and desirable valley."*

