

Oil Creek State Park Cross-Country Ski Area

History: Oil Creek State Park is one of the five state parks established through the efforts of the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy. The 7,300 acre tract of land preserves 12 miles of the winding gorge, which stretches south into Venango County from the Crawford County line, created approximately 10,000 years ago by the draining of an ice-dammed glacial lake. The discovery of oil in the valley on August 27, 1859 marked the birth of the world's oil industry. Throughout the park, expect to see cultural and natural resources; a physical reminder of nature's ability to reclaim the landscape. As the second growth forest health improves habitat is provided for wildlife including a large population of White-tailed Deer, Turkey, Bear, Ruffed Grouse, squirrels and various winter birds. Located in northwestern Pennsylvania generally ensures sufficient lake effect snow cover for cross-country skiing throughout much of the winter. During the winter of '84-'85 Oil Creek State Park developed the cross-country ski area which includes a 11.1-mile network of marked trails on the plateau of the gorge's east rim, a parking lot, warming hut and restrooms; thereby providing plenty of opportunities for skiers to enjoy and explore.

Skier Responsibilities: There are elements of risk in skiing that common sense and personal awareness can help reduce.

1. Maintain control of your speed and direction at all times.
2. Ski in a manner that does not endanger others.
3. Do not stop where you obstruct a trail or are not visible by others
4. Obey all signs and posted warnings.
5. Keep off closed trails.
6. Report all accidents

BE SAFETY CONSCIOUS!

Special Activities: The Friends of Oil Creek State Park sponsor several night skiing events throughout the winter. Other educational programs may also be offered. Contact park office for schedule of events.

Trail Descriptions: The Park's cross-country ski area features three main trails, **Red, Blue, Green** with six **White** connecting trails. Most of the trails utilize old oil lease and lumber roads and are generally about 10 feet wide. At the parking lot you will notice a warming hut at the trail head and restrooms on the west side. These are available from 8 AM till sunset. Inside the hut you will find a wood burning stove and several picnic tables.

The **Green** and **Blue** Loops are suitable for beginning skiers. The **Blue** Loop (2.6 mi.) is relatively flat with one steep section and is longer than the **Green** Loop (0.6 mi.). The **Red** Loop (5.8 mi.) is very challenging due to its distance, several steep hills and some sharp turns, it also leads to a very impressive scenic view. If you would follow the trail 1.5 miles westward or clockwise from the warming hut you will see the Benninghoff Tableau Site and the railroad bridge at Pioneer and six derricks with oil related buildings, machinery, equipment and materials. Though this is not a working site, it can give you a feel for what the area was like in the 1860's and 70's. During this period, John Benninghoff had a 240 acre farm; he rented out small parcels to oil opportunists, soon making an estimated income of \$6,000 a day. *The Birth of the Oil Industry*, by Giddens 1938.

Beyond the scenic vista the trail merges with the Gerard Hiking Trail (Yellow blazing) several times for short distances. You will want to stay with the red blazing to stay on the **Red** Loop.

By utilizing the **Red, Blue, Green** loops and six **White** connector trails the skiing possibilities are almost endless making some very unique, exciting and challenging combinations.

Mapping expertise provided by William Edmiston.



Brochure Sponsors:
Robert M. Woods, MD
Orthopedic & Sports Medicine Associates
44 Circle St.
Franklin, PA 814/437-2191 and
Friends of Oil Creek State Park

Brochure provided by

Sun Valley Nordic and

Friends of Oil Creek State Park

305 State Park Road
Oil City, PA 16301-9733
Phone: 814-676-5915

Email: friendsocsp@gmail.com
<http://www.orgsites.com/PA/focsp>



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DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION
AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Oil Creek State Park Cross Country Skiing



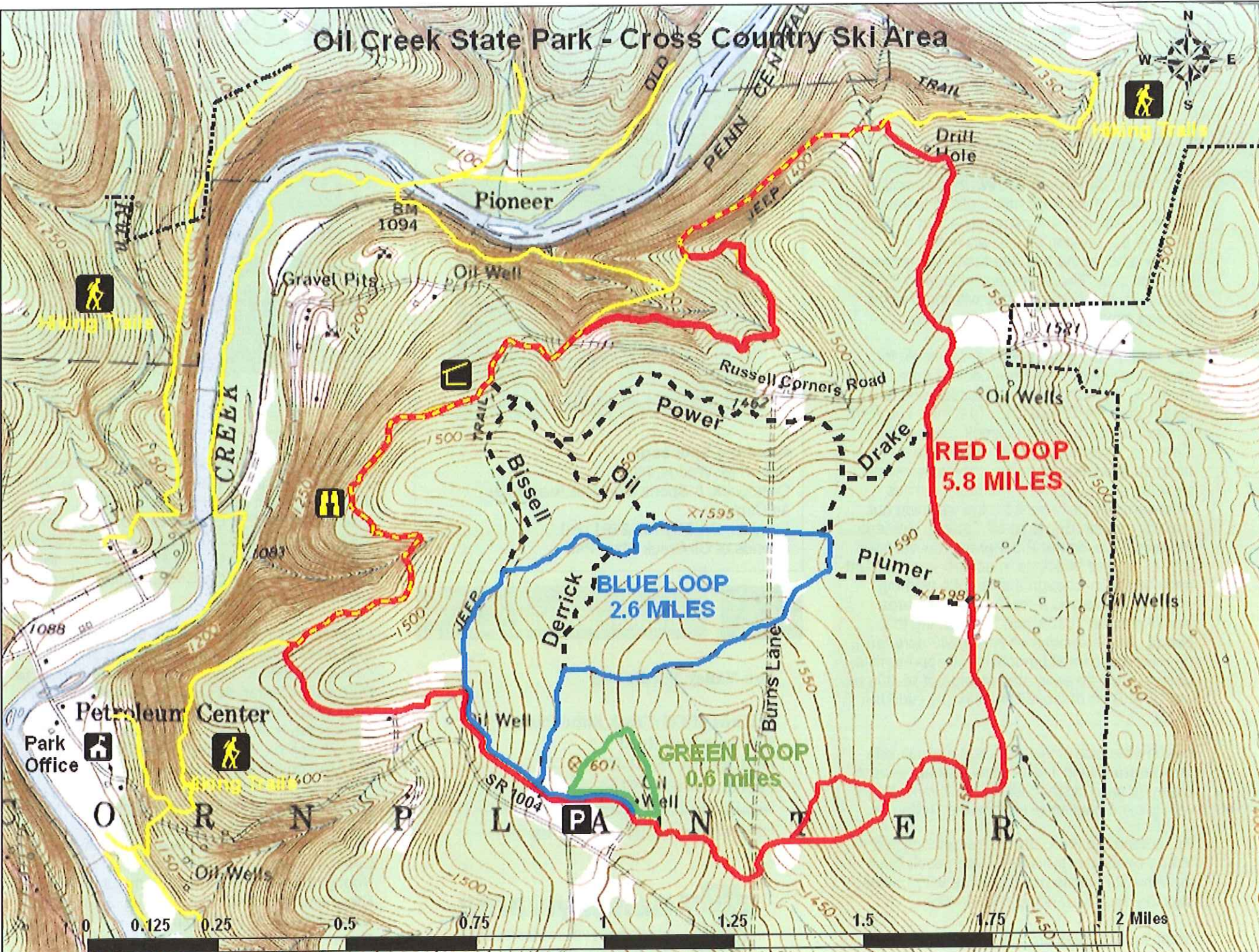
Directions and Distances: From South: Take Rt. 8 North thru Oil City to Rouseville. At the red light turn right on to Rt. 227 East. Proceed on Rt. 227 East for approx. 2.8 miles to the village of Plumer. Turn Left at a sign Marked "Oil Creek State Park" onto Petroleum Center Rd. and continue to the Cross Country Ski Area which on the right.

From North: Take Rt. 8 South thru Titusville. Five miles south of Titusville turn left at the "Oil Creek State Park" sign. Take this road 4 miles to Petroleum Center. At stop sign turn left onto SR 1004 towards Plumer. Cross the old metal bridge, go past the Park Office and proceed to the top of the hill, approx. 1.2 miles to the Cross Country Ski Area on the left.

Distances from major Cities:

Pittsburgh- 98 miles, 1 hour, 57 minutes
Buffalo, NY- 129 miles, 2 hours, 33 minutes
Erie- 56 miles, 1 hour, 22 minutes
Youngstown, OH- 72 miles, 25 minutes
Cleveland, OH- 140 miles, 2hours, 32 minutes
Meadville- 43 miles, 58 minutes
State College- 140 miles, 3 hours, 9 minutes

Oil Creek State Park - Cross Country Ski Area



P Parking / Warming Hut / Restrooms

Hiking Trails

Cross-Country Ski Trails (by level of difficulty)

Most Difficult **Red Loop 5.8 miles**
Elevation Range: 1330' to 1595'

More Difficult **Blue Loop 2.6 miles**
Elevation Range: 1500' to 1590'

Easiest **Green Loop 0.6 miles**
Elevation Range: 1550' to 1600'

Dual Use Trail

Connecting Trails (miles): Power (0.9), Oil (0.34), Bissell (0.4), Drake (0.31), Plumer (0.9)

Shelter Vista

Coordinates for Parking Lot:
 North Latitude: 41 degrees 30.767 minutes
 W. Longitude: 079 degrees 39.684 minutes
 Website Link: www.orgsites.com/PA/focsp/

