

Mountain Laurel Tour - Coudersport Pike, Clinton County, PA

An approximate two-hour, 60-mile back road scenic drive that gives you plenty of opportunities to view Pennsylvania's state flower, the Mountain Laurel. Recommended for mid- to late June, when the Laurel is in full bloom.

This tour involves travel on state and municipal roads as well as state forestry roads. While the route is suitable for most sturdy vehicles, slow speeds are encouraged, especially on the forestry roads. So, grab your camera, some water and snacks, gas up your vehicle (gas not readily available on this route), turn off your cell phone (you won't have service most of the time anyway), and get ready to enjoy a few hours in the mountains of Clinton County!



START: in Lock Haven, by crossing Veterans Bridge (Jay Street) over the West Branch Susquehanna River and turning **right onto Route 664 North**, known as the Coudersport Pike. SET YOUR ODOMETER TO ZERO to help gauge mileage. Take it slow up this winding, mountain road and be on the lookout for wildlife!

Continue straight on Route 664, through the village of Swissdale. At about 10 miles, you'll pass a sign indicating you've entered Sproul State Forest, Pennsylvania's largest state forest. You'll pass the Peoples Church of Caldwell, a quaint little church, on the right, before coming to the community of Haneyville. You'll see signs for Tiadaghton State Forest, which adjoins Sproul State Forest.

On the left is the Mountain Top Inn (friendly service, good food and drink, restrooms, rustic rooms for rent). At about 18 miles, **Route 664 turns into Route 44 North**. On the right is a general store, Fin Fur & Feather, where you can purchase food and gas.

Continuing on, you'll soon start to see Mountain Laurel on both sides of the road. You'll be passing in and out of both Sproul and Tiadaghton State Forests.

(At about 25 miles, you could turn left onto State Route 1014, known as Hyner Mountain Road and travel to Hyner View State Park, one of the most breathtaking overlooks in the state.

Or, continue straight on Route 44 North and save Hyner View for another day)!

About six miles past the intersection of State Route 1014, you'll see Pat Reeder's Tavern on the right, another great stopping point if you need food, drink or a restroom.

There's Mountain Laurel on both sides of the road, intermixed with White Pine trees. Also note the snowmobile trail cut out along the right side of the road, as well as a deer enclosure on the right side of the road – fencing that allows forest regeneration to grow unimpeded.

At about 28 miles into your trip (approximate driving time of 45 minutes), it's time to go off-road! Leave Route 44 and **turn left onto Benson Road**, a gravel, state forestry road. Caution: you may see some truck traffic along this road.

(If you continue straight on Route 44 North, there's a pull-off on the right where you can get out, stretch your legs, and enjoy a vista view looking down toward the Pine Creek Valley. After your stretch, turn around and make the turn onto Benson Road for the rest of the tour).

Benson Road is thick with Mountain Laurel. The state-recommended speed limit is 25 mph, or slower, depending on road conditions. Take your time -- this road has a lot of bumps.

About four-tenths of a mile down Benson Road, **veer left onto Dry Run Road**. You should be seeing Mountain Laurel on both sides of the road, for as far as the eye can see! Remember, take it slow, due to road conditions and the possibility of gas drilling or logging traffic.

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Travel straight, past the intersections with 7 Mile and 6 Mile Roads. This territory is textbook Mountain Laurel, intermixed with White Pine and hardwood forest (mainly oaks and maple trees). You'll also see pipeline areas, as well as food plots that benefit wildlife. There are a number of pull-off areas where you can stop, stretch, and take a few photos. CAUTION: With the warmer weather, be on the lookout for snakes, and use repellent to ward off ticks.

About 4 miles in, **turn left at the small sign for Abes Fork Road**. This is a good, gravel forestry road, but take it slow; the road is two-way, but narrow.

(Note: if you don't turn here, Dry Run Road becomes very steep coming down the mountain. It eventually comes out onto State Route 120).

On Abes Fork Road, you'll travel through a thick forest of mainly hemlock trees. About 2.4 miles in, **turn right onto Hyner Road** (another narrow, two-way road). You'll see some camps. About a mile down, you'll enter Hyner Run State Park land. Turn left into the parking area to use the restroom facilities. There are also picnic tables, a pavilion, grills and fire pits, and a marker commemorates the location of what once was the Hyner Run Civilian Conservation Corps Camp. The trailhead for both the Long Fork Loop Hiking Trail and the well-known Donut Hole Hiking Trail, are indicated on the right. At the Park, there is primitive and RV camping available, a public swimming pool and bathhouse, playground equipment, and, of course, the Park Office features all types of informational brochures on the area.

Leaving the Park, **turn right at the stop sign onto Hyner Mountain Road**. A short distance down the road is the entrance to Hyner View State Park (veering to the left), which features the scenic overlook, and several historical monuments. This is a great place for a picnic lunch.

Continuing down Hyner Mountain Road about a mile, you'll come to the intersection of Route 120. A left turn will bring you back to Lock Haven (22 miles), or a right turn will take you in to Renovo (6 miles). We hope you enjoyed the trip!

NOTE: Miles are approximate. Information compiled by the DCNR Bureau of Forestry's Sproul District Office and the Clinton County Visitors Bureau.

For more information:

Clinton County Visitors Bureau
212 North Jay Street
Lock Haven, PA 17745
570-748-5782
www.ClintonCountyInfo.com

Sproul State Forestry Office
15187 Renovo Road
Renovo, PA 17764
570-923-6011
www.dcnr.pa.gov/StateForests/FindAForest/Sproul

