

INTRODUCTION

Bass River State Forest encompasses more than 30,000 acres nestled within the pristine Pine Barrens of Burlington and Ocean counties. The forest is within the Pineland National Reserve, a one million acre ecologically sensitive area that is home to many rare plants and animals, including the globally-rare pine plains plant community with pitch pine trees that in many places are no taller than the average adult.

The Batona Trail winds through the western portion of the forest. This popular 53-mile-long trail stretches from Brendan T. Byrne State Forest, through Wharton State Forest to Bass River State Forest. Batona Trail maps are available at the forest office.

HISTORY

Established in 1905 for public recreation, water conservation, wildlife and timber management, Bass River State Forest is New Jersey's first state forest. From 1933 to 1942, the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) Camp S-55 (formerly Camp 7) developed much of the infrastructure within the forest. Company 225 (1933-1937) and Company 2201-V (1937-1942) planted 4,500 acres of timber, provided fire-fighting services, made forest stand improvements, surveyed forest boundaries and built pedestrian and vehicle bridges. In addition, the CCC constructed Lake Absegami which became the center of recreational activities, by impounding two streams flowing through the forest. The CCC also constructed cabins, shelters, a bath house, roads and other recreational structures. A CCC history brochure is available at the forest office.

Lake Absegami Day Use Area was open to the public by 1943 and in the 1950s the Garden State Parkway was built, making the forest more accessible to visitors.

FEATURES AND ACTIVITIES

Natural Areas

Bass River State Forest has two State Natural Areas that were designated to protect the native plants, animals and ecosystems of the forest. The 3,881-acre West Plains Natural Area supports a globally-rare pine plains habitat, a stunted forest ecosystem of pitch pine trees that in many places are no taller than the average adult as a result of decades of significant fire disturbance and unique fire ecology. The area is home to numerous plants and animals, including several rare species of moths and butterflies as well as broom crowberry, a state-endangered plant.

A half-mile-long nature trail loops through the 127-acre Absegami Natural Area, which includes a wetland forest of Atlantic white cedars, red maples and magnolias. This natural area also supports the federally-threatened and state-endangered wetlands plant, swamp pink.

A seasonally-operated Interpretive Center, located in the South Shore camping area, serves as a contact point for interpretive programming. Advance reservations for programming can be made by contacting the forest office.



Hunting and Fishing

Hunting is permitted in large parts of the forest and is subject to New Jersey DEP Fish & Wildlife regulations. Game found in the forest include deer, rabbit and grouse. Contact the forest office for further details. A hunting map is available on our website.

Fishing is permitted subject to New Jersey DEP Fish & Wildlife regulations. Freshwater species are mainly pickerel, sunfish and catfish.



Hiking, Horseback Riding, Biking and Motorized Vehicles

The forest has miles of sand and gravel roads open for year-round hiking, biking and horseback riding. The use of forest roads by properly registered and licensed motorized vehicles is permitted. Certain portions of the road network are closed to all motor vehicles. Contact the forest office for further details. Hiking trails are also located in the Lake Absegami Day Use Area, trail maps are available at the forest office.



Swimming

The forest has a swimming area located on the eastern shore of Lake Absegami. Swimming is permitted, while lifeguards are on duty, from mid-June to Labor Day. The beach area includes changing rooms, restrooms, outdoor shower towers, a first-aid station and a concession building where food and beach supplies may be purchased. Inner tubes, rafts and other flotation devices are not permitted in the swimming area. Only U.S. Coast Guard approved life jackets are allowed.



Picnicking

Picnic facilities are provided for family outings in attractive settings adjoining the swimming beach. An open area for games and playground equipment is nearby. Charcoal grills are available, but grills also may be brought by the visitor subject to approval by forest personnel. A reservable group picnic pavilion is available.



Boating and Canoeing

Lake Absegami offers a tranquil boating, canoeing or kayaking location. A boat concession operates from Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day. Power boats are limited to electric motors only. A U.S. Coast Guard approved personal flotation device (PFD) is required for each person on board a watercraft. Canoes and kayaks are available for rental nearby. Visit the forest office for information.

Camping

There are 176 well-spaced family campsites in a wooded environment near the lake. Each site has a picnic table, fire ring and a graded space for a tent or recreational vehicle. Dumping stations for trailers are nearby, but there are no water, electric or sewer connections.

Drinking water, flush toilets and hot showers are within walking distance of all family sites. Some pet-friendly campsites are available, pet vaccination paperwork is required. Pets are not permitted inside any camping structures.

There are six group campsites located east of the lake. Each site can accommodate up to 25 campers. A non-flush toilet is available at each group site.

Cabins, Shelters and Lean-Tos

Six rustic cabins are located along the secluded, wooded shore of Lake Absegami. The cabins, which accommodate six people each, have a living room with fireplace, bathroom, two bunkrooms, full kitchen, a screened porch and electricity.

Six fully-enclosed shelters are available beside the lake. Each contain a small living room with a wood-burning stove for heat, bunk accommodations for four people, a table and benches. Each shelter has an outdoor charcoal grill for cooking, a fire ring and a picnic table, but there is no running water or electricity. Flush toilets are available nearby.

Nine fully-enclosed lean-tos, also situated near the lake, are available for year-round camping. Each lean-to consists of one unfurnished room (with a wood floor) accommodating up to six people. There is a small wood stove for heat. Each site has a picnic table, charcoal grill and fire ring. All lean-tos are accessible to people with disabilities. Reservations for camping, cabins, shelters and lean-tos can be made at camping.nj.gov.



Access For People With Disabilities

Bass River State Forest facilities are partially accessible to persons with disabilities. Please contact the forest office for further information regarding disability access needs. Text telephone (TTY) users, call the NJ Relay & CapTel Service at 711 or 1-800-852-7897 for English or 1-866-658-7714 for Spanish.



Pets

Pets must always be on a leash no longer than six feet in length and under the control of the owner at all times. Please clean up after your pets. Pets are permitted in designated pet-friendly campsites.



Keep It Clean and Green

Bring a bag or two and carry your trash out with you. Trash cans are not provided. Don't forget to recycle!

NOT PERMITTED

ATVs, alcoholic beverages and smoking and vaping* are NOT permitted in this state forest.



*Smoking and vaping permitted only inside your personal vehicle.

To report an emergency or suspicious activity, call 1-877-WARN-DEP (1-877-927-6337) or 911.



BASS RIVER STATE FOREST
762 Stage Road
Bass River Twp, NJ 08224
609-296-1114

Mailing Address
762 Stage Rd
Tuckerton, NJ 08087

Directions: Bass River State Forest is about 25 miles north of Atlantic City and six miles west of Tuckerton. From GSP South take Exit 52 and follow signs. From GSP North take Exit 50 and follow signs.



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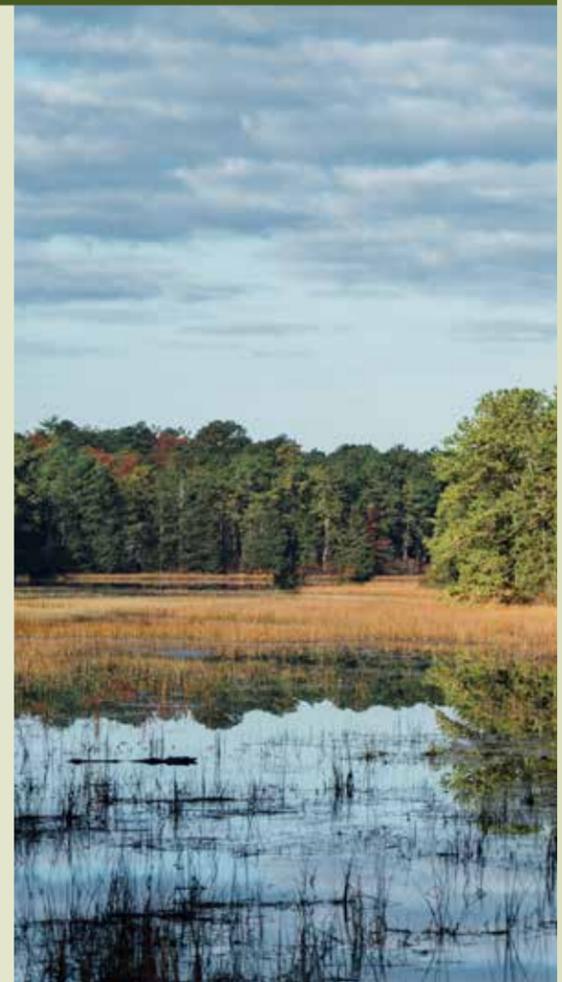
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Bass River State Forest



State of New Jersey
Department of Environmental Protection
State Park Service

BASS RIVER State Forest



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| Open Field or Grass | Wetland | Absegami Trail (0.4 mi) | Joe's Trail (0.65 mi) | South Shore Trail (0.6 mi) | Trail Connector | Canoeing | Fishing | Laundry | Picnic Shelter | Shower |
| Forest | Cranberry Bog | Batona Trail (7 mi) | Nisky Trail (1.7 mi) | Field (Loop) Trail (0.4 mi) | Boat Launch | Concession | Forest Office | Lean-to | Playground | Swimming |
| Developed Area | Improved Road | CCC Trail (4 mi) | North Shore Trail (0.6 mi) | Creek (Loop) Trail (1 mi) | Cabins | Drinking Water | Group Campground | Parking Lot | Restrooms | Trailer Sanitary Station |
| Water | Unimproved Road | Falkinburg Trail (3 mi) | Poppy Allen Trail (3.1 mi) | Forest (Loop) Trail (0.6 mi) | Campground | First Aid | Interpretive Center | Picnic Area | Shelter | Visitor Contact Station |