

## NATIVE LANDS COUNTY PARK VISITOR INFORMATION

Native Lands County Park—one of eleven York County Parks—is part of the Susquehanna Heritage Park system of recreation areas and open space along the river managed by a coalition of public and non-profit partners. The Susquehanna Heritage Park network also includes the Wilton Meadows Nature Preserve, Highpoint Scenic Vista, Klines Run Park, and the Zimmerman Center for Heritage. These sites are showcase attractions within the Susquehanna Riverlands—the ribbon of scenic landscapes, parks, preserves and historic river towns located at the heart of the Susquehanna Gateway Heritage Area.



This guide is published by the Susquehanna Gateway Heritage Area. Explore more of the Susquehanna River's rich cultural and natural heritage at: [www.SusquehannaHeritage.org](http://www.SusquehannaHeritage.org) Visit us at The Zimmerman Center for Heritage 1706 Long Level Rd. Wrightsville, PA 717-252-0229

(continued from reverse side)

### WAYSTOP 4

The remains of an 1800's-era farmstead, located behind the fence line to the southwest, is the most visible reminder of this land's rich agricultural heritage. A spring flows very nearby—a feature that has attracted people for centuries. This land's farming legacy likely dates back 500 or more years. Growing food was part of Susquehannock life, and of the Shenks Ferry people before them. Patches of paw paws, a native tree cultivated for its fruit, still grow here.



In 1731, fifty years after the Susquehannock departed, Marylander Stephen Onion received a patent for 600 acres around this site, which he called "Canhodah", the Iroquois word for "town". Over the next two centuries, the land was developed into a traditional Pennsylvania farmstead.

From the 1930s through the 1960s, the Leibhart family farmed most of what is now the park, cultivating apples, corn, cantaloupes, berries, asparagus and hay. Remnants of their extensive complex of farm buildings, orchards and fields are still hidden in the landscape today.

### WAYSTOP 5

A trail leads from here to the Dritt Family Cemetery. The Tritt family came to America from Switzerland in 1739, moving here from Lancaster County about 1750. Johann (Jacob) Tritt, born in 1746, later took the name 'Dritt' and married Elizabeth Boyer. Jacob served as a captain in the local militia when the Revolutionary War began, spent two years as a British prisoner, and was later a Major General in Pennsylvania's militia. Jacob was a farmer, miller, sawyer, wine merchant and ferry operator. He also laid out the original lots for the village of Washington Boro.



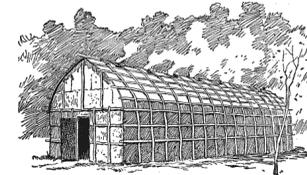
In 1783 Jacob bought the stone house and property known as "Pleasant Garden", originally settled by Marylander Thomas Cresap. When Jacob drowned in the river in 1817, his daughter Margaret (Dritt) Bonham bought the home. It remained in the family until 1851.

The earliest known grave in the cemetery dates to 1824, the last to 1879. Jacob Dritt is not buried in the cemetery, but his wife and some descendants were laid to rest here.

### WAYSTOP 6

The last known village of the Susquehannock Indians once stood at this site from about 1676 to 1680. Listed in the National Register of Historic Places as the Byrd Leibhart site, the National Park Service recognizes it as worthy of nomination for National Historic Landmark status—America's highest heritage honor.

When first settled, war with other Native groups and diseases brought here by Europeans had reduced the Susquehannock to only about 900 people—down from 3,000 just 20 years earlier. A log stockade wall enclosed the four-acre village, protecting about 16 ninety-foot longhouses, each housing 50 or so family members. The site demonstrates how Native life had been dramatically altered after Europeans arrived just seventy years before. In this short time, the Indians of the area would go from self-sufficiency to inextricable involvement with the land's new inhabitants.



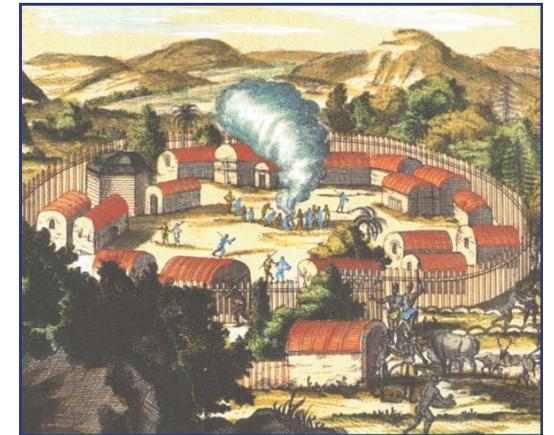
It is believed that the Seneca Indians drove the last of the Susquehannock south into Maryland around 1680. They returned to their homeland in Lancaster County several years later, becoming known as the Conestoga Indians.

### WAYSTOP 7

You've reached the Zimmerman Center for Heritage, home of the Susquehanna Gateway Heritage Area, one of twelve Pennsylvania Heritage Areas. This 1740-era home, listed in the National Register of Historic Places, is known as "Pleasant Garden" and the "Dritt Mansion", after its longest occupants. This land was first granted by Lord Baltimore to Thomas Cresap in 1729, who operated a ferry here and claimed the area for Maryland. Cresap was arrested in 1736 and driven away after skirmishes known as "Cresap's War—a dispute finally resolved in 1784 when the Mason-Dixon line was established.



Today the home plays host to Heritage Area offices and programs and the *Visions of the Susquehanna River Art Collection*.



SUSQUEHANNA HERITAGE PARK

## NATIVE LANDS COUNTY PARK HERITAGE TRAIL GUIDE

*"Treat the earth well.  
It was not given to you by  
your parents, it was loaned  
to you by your children."*

*Ancient Indian Proverb*

Published by:

**SUSQUEHANNA GATEWAY  
HERITAGE AREA**



# NATIVE LANDS COUNTY PARK & Adjacent Parks, Trails & Heritage Sites

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## NATIVE LANDS HERITAGE TRAIL WAYSTOP GUIDE

Welcome to Native Lands Heritage Trail—a scenic journey through Susquehanna history. This is a special landscape where diverse cultural stories come together—a place that many people have called their Native Land.

The one-mile-long packed earth and grass Heritage Trail provides public access and interpretation for Native Lands County Park. The route follows part of the Mason-Dixon Trail (Blue Blazes) and the Pleasant Garden Trail (Yellow Blazes), to connect trailheads at Klines Run Park and the Zimmerman Center for Heritage. The trail's seven numbered waystops are linked to the information below and provide places for viewing and learning about this historic area. Other trails lead to the Dritt Family Cemetery and around the Susquehannock Indian village historic site.

### WAYSTOP 1

The trail begins at Klines Run Park, which was created in the 1930s as part of the Safe Harbor Dam project, located a few miles to the south. At that time, this site was farmland. The dam also created Conejohela Flats, the islands and mudflats across the river. Over 17,000 migratory shorebirds – up to 38 species—stop at the flats each year on their way to breeding grounds in the Arctic and wintering grounds in South America.



Archaeology has documented human settlement along the river dating back over 12,000 years. More than 50,000 American Indians lived their lives here before the first Europeans ever arrived. Native people still live here today, evidenced by local powwows and festivals held each year. The historic sites of two of the last Susquehannock Indian settlements are now preserved. A site to the north dates to 1665 and is owned and managed by the Archaeological Conservancy. The site to the south dates to 1676 and is now part of Native Lands County Park. Although most of this history is invisible to us, the images that Native people carved on river rocks to the south of here, known as petroglyphs, still exist—the only place on the Susquehanna where such extensive rock art sites have been found.

### WAYSTOP 2

As you leave the forest here, the trail becomes a grass path through rolling meadows. A peaceful scene today, this land has seen much controversy. Battles for possession between the Seneca and Susquehannock, long border conflicts between the Penns and the Calverts, and more recent public debates about development versus preservation have all been part of its history. Today this scenic and historic landscape offers a place for sharing a common heritage. The land's healing nature was demonstrated by volunteers from the Mason-Dixon Trail System, York Hiking Club, Lancaster-York Native Heritage Advisory Council and the Dritt family, who worked with York County parks staff to prepare the site for public use.



### WAYSTOP 3

Visible to the north are the Lauxmont Farms dairy complex and Highpoint Scenic Vista, both of which were originally part of S. Forry Laucks's 1920's-era country farm estate, as was most of Native Lands park. The 40th parallel, which Maryland originally claimed as its northern border, runs just below Highpoint.

Although Native people likely made seasonal visits to this land up to 8,000 years ago, it is most associated with the Susquehannock Indian Nation, the last Native group to live here before Europeans arrived. The Susquehannock settled in the area about 1575, building the first of several successive stockaded communities on the Lancaster County side of the river. The three largest towns were near present-day Washington Boro. In 1608, when Captain John Smith first met the Susquehannock to the south, along the river in Maryland, nearly 2,000 people lived in their Washington Boro community.

Perhaps due to pressure from other Native groups and encroachment from traders and settlers, the Susquehannock moved to the western side of the river about 1665, establishing a village at the Upper Leibhart site. Their last village was 800 yards down this trail, at what is known as the Byrd-Leibhart site.



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