

Appendix C – History and Timeline of Allegany State Park

Late 1700's to early 1900's

- Until 1797, western New York was the domain of the Seneca Indians.
- Quaker missionaries first arrived in the area in 1798 at the invitation of Seneca Chief Cornplanter. In 1803 the Quakers purchased land and established a farm at Tunesassa, later known as Quaker Run. They first established a formal school in this area around 1816 and established the Friends Boarding School for Indian Children here in 1848.
- Lumbering and its associated industries were the primary occupations of the first settlers in the park.
- Between 1825 and 1835, sawmills were built on Tunungwant Creek, Quaker Run, and Wolf Run.
- By the 1850's there were sawmills on every major stream in the park and farms on most of them.
- The advent of the steam engine in the 1860's allowed operations to expand to more remote drainage basins and move from place to place as the areas were harvested of usable timber.
- The 1860's saw the beginning of the second most important industry in this region - oil and gas.
- In 1865 Job Moses completed the first commercial oil well in New York State on lands which are now part of Allegany State Park (near Limestone).
- The late 19th century and early 20th century witnessed the beginning of a change in the way people from outside the park perceived the area. Greater accessibility by rail and later by car began to bring people from the surrounding area for recreation and rest.

1920's

- The movement for Allegany State Park was launched and financially supported by the Buffalo Society of Natural Sciences, the Erie County Society for the Protection of Birds, Fish and Game, and other regional organizations.
- Allegany State Park established by the New York State Legislature in 1921. Chapter 468 of the Laws of 1921 authorized acquisition of approximately 67,000 acres for the creation of the Park (May 2, 1921) which would be “forever reserved and maintained for the use of all the people.”
- The law specifically stated that the lands would not constitute a part of the Forest Preserve and that the commissioners should provide for the protection and propagation of fish and game and for the reforestation of the park.
- The park fulfilled the need for a large forest recreational area in western New York.
- Chapter 468 also established a Commission (board of 5 commissioners) to oversee land acquisition for Allegany State Park. The Commission had the power to build roads, trails and bridges and to provide and operate facilities to make the lands acquired available for use as a public park.
- Governor Nathan Miller appoints Senator Albert Fancher to head a five member commission to develop the park.
- Following the enactment of Chapter 468, the Commissioners began acquiring lands within the legislated boundaries of the park.

- 7150 acre tract of land purchased in Quaker Run
- Park formally dedicated on July 30, 1921
- First State Park Bond Issue passed in 1924. This bond issue provided funds for the development of the park.
- A converted schoolhouse served as the park's first administrative building and World War I surplus tents on wooden platforms were primarily used until the creation of the first permanent cabins in 1925.
- From 1925 into the 30's camping received considerable attention, as tent platforms were replaced with cabin facilities. To this day, cabin camping on the twenty-nine cabin trails in the Red House and Quaker areas remains extremely popular.
- Science Lake Dam built in 1926, forming Science Lake and the first swimming area in the park. Adjoining the lake was the Allegany School of Natural History, a group of 42 cabins, and a main building housing a library, several science laboratories, and an assembly room developed by the Buffalo Society of Natural Sciences and the State Museum.
- The Summit Fire Tower was completed in 1926.
- Two other fire towers were built in the 1920's, Mt. Tuscarora and Mt. Irvine.
- Red House area began to be developed in 1927 with the construction of the current Administration Building and the Red House Dam (1929) which formed Red House Lake.

1930's and 1940's

- The park was developed extensively between 1933 and 1942 when the Civilian Conservation Corps(CCC) and the Works Progress Administration (WPA) took on the project of building roads, bridges, camping areas, trails, and picnic areas. The CCC was also responsible for numerous conservation projects from reforestation to stream bank retention and wildlife improvements.

1960's

- Quaker Lake was formed in 1968 through the impoundment of Quaker Run. The lake supplies fishing and swimming to the Quaker Area of the park.

1970's

- In December 1976, 795 acres within the Park's legislated boundary were transferred to the Seneca Nation of Indians in lieu of Seneca lands being utilized for the Southern Tier Expressway (N.Y.S. Route 17) corridor which is partially adjacent to Park lands.
- In order to mitigate the conversion of recreation lands to non-recreation uses, the New York State Department of Transportation and New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation entered into a "Memorandum of Understanding."
- Under the terms of the memorandum, the New York State Department of Transportation was to acquire for New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation a minimum of 795 acres of the privately held lands within the Park's original legislated boundary.
- A total of approximately 1,300 acres were acquired.

Currently

- Through the years, the park was developed further with the addition of winterized cabins and full service cottages, hiking and snowmobile trails, picnic and recreation areas, bike and horse paths, and better roads enabling people to access the park.
- Approximately 64,700 acres of the 67,000 acres within the legislated boundary have been acquired in title by the State of New York and are managed by the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation.
- The balance is in privately held in-holdings. The majority of the in-holdings are within the northern and eastern quadrants of the park.
- 830 acres are owned by the United States Government. This acreage was acquired for the construction and shoreline preservation of the Kinzua Reservoir.
- In 1975 OPRHP entered into a license “For Use and Control of Government Owned Land in the Kinzua Dam and Allegheny Reservoir Area” This license will expire September 30, 2025.