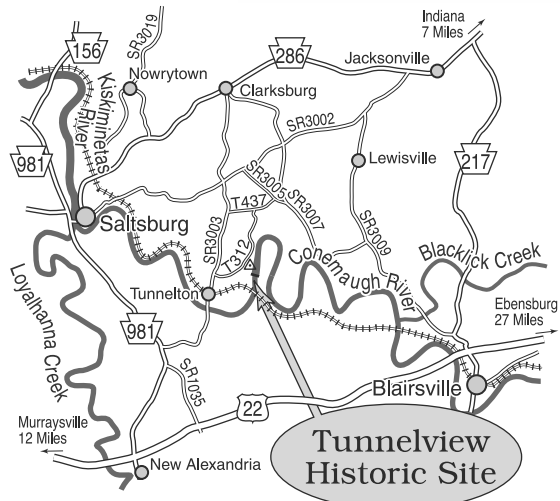
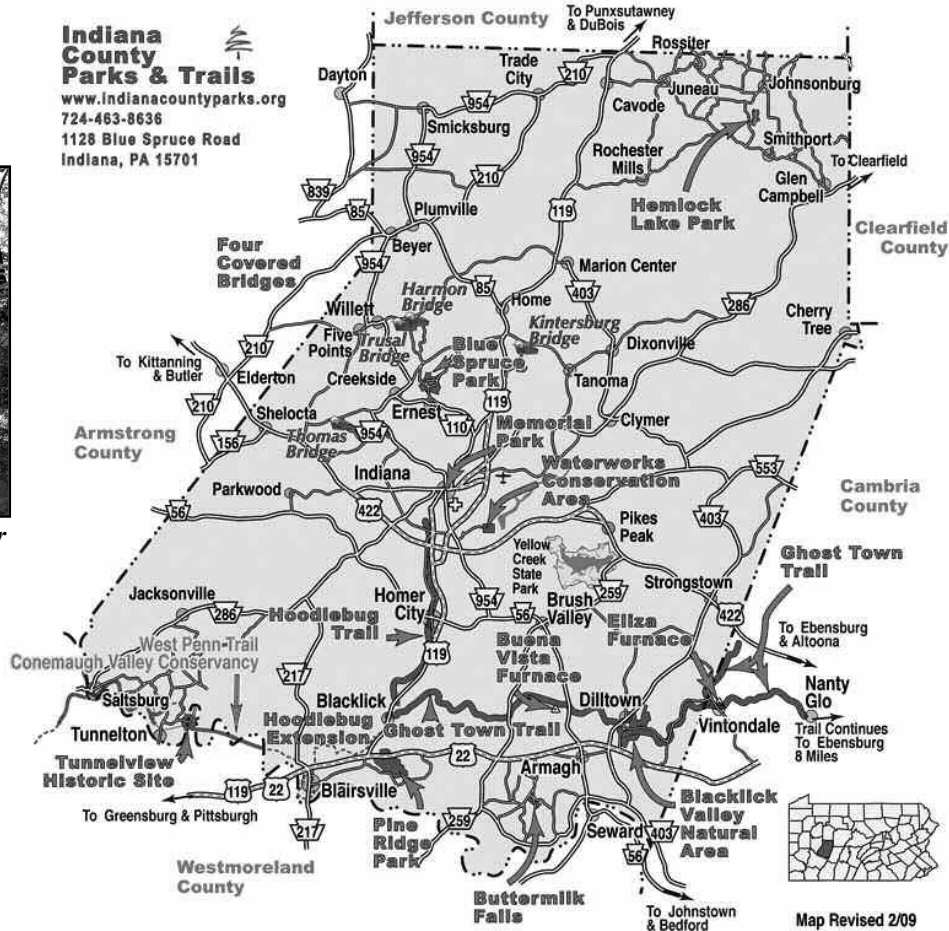


**Indiana County Parks & Trails**  
 www.indianacountyparks.org  
 724-463-8636  
 1128 Blue Spruce Road  
 Indiana, PA 15701



*Historic marker*



*The Tunnelview Historic Site is adjacent to Conemaugh Dam.*

### About Indiana County Parks & Trails

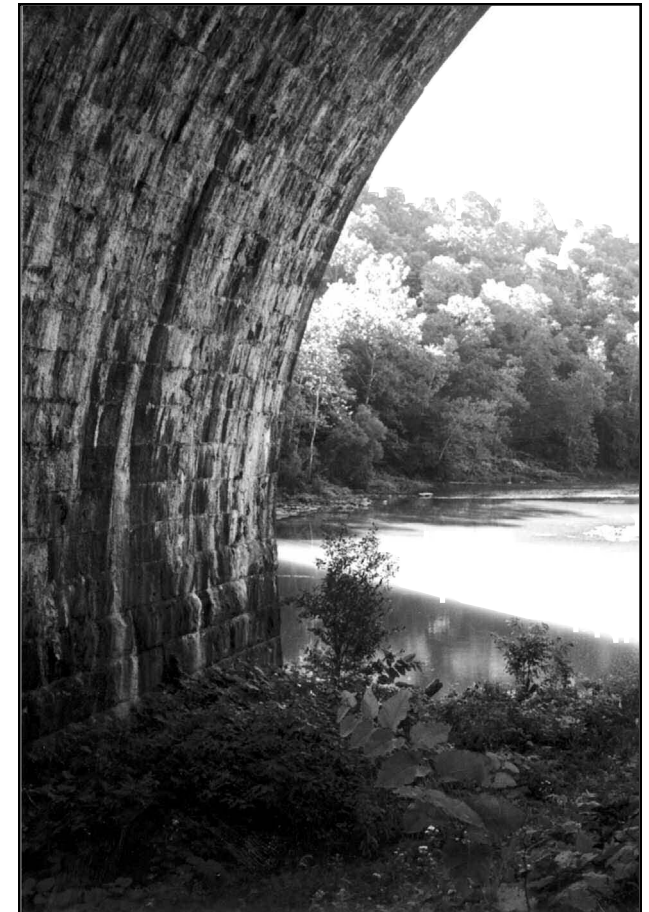
Indiana County Parks & Trails offers one of Pennsylvania's most progressive park systems. Since 1967 Indiana County citizens have enjoyed an exceptional variety of natural resources at our county parks. The park system includes three regional parks, four historic sites, three natural areas, four covered bridges and two rail-trails. County parks are open year round, providing picnic areas, playfields, nature trails, streams, forests, historic sites, and fishing areas.



**For additional information, contact:**

Indiana County Parks & Trails  
 1128 Blue Spruce Road  
 Indiana, PA 15701  
 Phone: (724) 463-8636  
 Fax: (724) 463-8740

website: [www.indianacountyparks.org](http://www.indianacountyparks.org)



# Tunnelview Historic Site

Indiana County Parks & Trails

**Welcome** to the Tunnelview Historic Site. This location features a fascinating glimpse into Pennsylvania's transportation history.

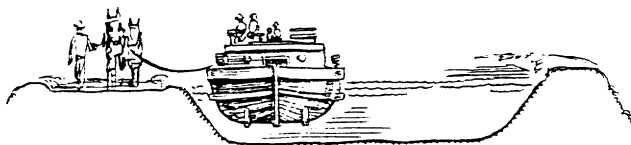
## A Tale of Four Tunnels

### *The Canal Era*

The Tunnelview tale begins with the Pennsylvania Mainline Canal. The portion of the canal visible at Tunnelview was part of the canal's Western Division. This route extended from Pittsburgh to Johnstown, where the Allegheny Portage Railroad began. Once over the Alleghenies, passengers would continue their trip to Harrisburg and Philadelphia. The canal was constructed in the 1820's and 30's to compete with the Erie Canal, portions of which had been open since 1819. Philadelphia, already losing commerce to Baltimore because of the National Road, was losing even more to New York City due to the completion of the Erie Canal in 1825. The Pennsylvania Canal also would maintain Pittsburgh's importance as "gateway to the West."

Constructing a canal through the rugged terrain of western Pennsylvania was a monumental undertaking. The Tunnelview site reflects the challenges canal engineers and laborers confronted. Faced with steep terrain and a sharp bend in the Conemaugh River, engineer Alonzo Livermore routed the canal through Bow Ridge, the narrow strip of land within the riverbend. Once through the tunnel, the canal would continue on a stone-arch aqueduct across the river. This would be the only site on the canal with an aqueduct and tunnel next to one another.

Laborers completed the tunnel, the third-ever built in the U.S., in 1830. The Western Division operated until about 1852, when maintenance problems, financial

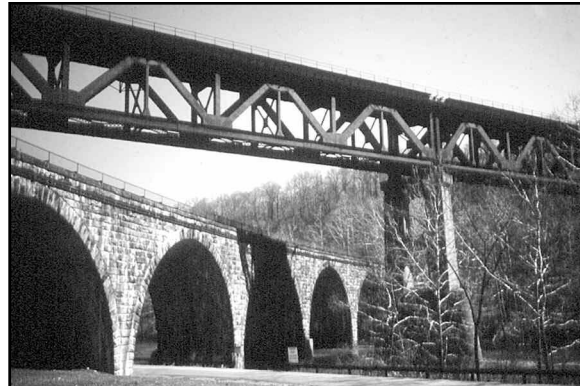


*Canal cross-section*

insolvency, and competition from the railroads brought an end to the brief canal era in Pennsylvania. The Pennsylvania Railroad (PRR) purchased the canal right-of-way in 1857. Today, the only visible remains of the aqueduct are the foundations for the piers. The canal tunnel was eventually sealed off as part of the Conemaugh flood control project in 1952.

### *Railroad Development*

By 1864, the PRR had constructed a new tunnel and stone arch bridge here for its subsidiary, the North West Railroad. Stones for this bridge probably were taken from the aqueduct. Railroad officials intended this route to serve as the main line between Philadelphia and Chicago. The city of Pittsburgh was almost bypassed because of a dispute between local businessmen and the



*Railroad bridges*

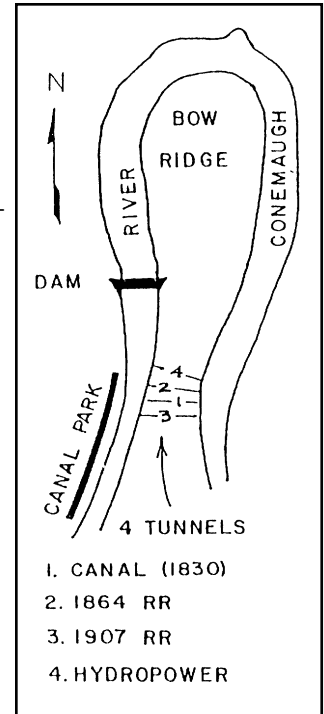
PRR. The historical marker at the bridge abutment provides an explanation of this interesting dilemma.

The PRR completed construction of yet another tunnel here in 1907 when the former North West Railroad, now a low-grade freight bypass around Pittsburgh, was realigned. This realignment required the construction of another stone arch bridge, which still stands. This bridge withstood the 1936 Johnstown Flood. A sign on the bridge shows the high-water mark. Today, this bridge provides access to the east side of the dam.

In 1952, PRR re-aligned its track again, and constructed the high-level iron bridge standing today.

This bridge still carries trains, and is owned by the Norfolk Southern Railway.

A fourth tunnel was built in 1989 to deliver water to a nearby hydro-electric power station. Of these four tunnels, only the portals of the railroad tunnels from 1864 and 1907 are visible from the park. Three interpretive markers provide additional historical information about the site.



### **Facilities**

A pavilion, restroom, canoe & kayak launch are available for visitors at Tunnelview. The Army Corps of Engineers also maintains extensive public recreation facilities at their Conemaugh Lake site. Contact the Corps of Engineers at (724) 459-7240 for more information concerning their facilities. The **West Penn Trail** is a 17-mile rail-trail located between Saltsburg and the Newport Road Trailhead near Blairsville. A portion of the trail passes through the Tunnelview Historic Site. The trail is owned and operated by the Conemaugh Valley Conservancy (CVC). To learn more about this trail, visit the CVC website at: [www.conemaughvalleyconservancy.org](http://www.conemaughvalleyconservancy.org).



*Reconstructed tow-path bridge*