

About Union Furnace

This 170-acre wooded preserve bordering Spruce Run Reservoir is named for the colonial ironworks that flourished here from 1742 to 1781. Established by William Allen and Joseph Turner for the production of horseshoes, farm implements, and chimney firebacks, the ironworks could produce 500 to 1,000 tons of iron a year. In order to melt the impurities in the iron at 3,000 degrees, slaves and immigrants cut down an acre of forest each day to fuel the furnace. During the Revolution, the ironworks' superintendent, Robert Taylor, cast military hardware such as cannonballs and rifle barrels. Allen and Turner were British loyalists and fled the area. When the forests were depleted of fuel, the furnace ceased operation. Taylor resumed operations at another foundry in High Bridge until his death in 1821. This facility, considered the oldest in the country, became known as the Taylor-Wharton Iron & Steel Company in 1912. In 1811, the Union Furnace site was sold to Hugh Exton, who built a three-story gristmill called "Union Mill." The County acquired most of the property in 1980, and purchased additional acreage in 2017. Today, this hilly terrain includes young and mature forest, a stretch of the Spruce Run, and the standing chimney of a slaves' quarters.



Chimney

With the exception of park properties with reservable facilities, all properties are "carry in / carry out" and trash/recycling receptacles are not provided. Please plan accordingly and do not leave any trash/recyclables behind.

The Hunterdon County Division of Parks & Recreation is dedicated to preserving open space and natural resources, providing safe parks and facilities, and offering educational and recreational opportunities, all contributing to an enhanced quality of life for present and future generations.

Union Furnace Preserve

Location: Union Furnace Preserve is located on Van Syckles Road in Union Township. The park is open from sunrise to sunset. *No restroom facilities are available.* Parking is located at Spruce Run's Fishing Access, 15 Van Syckles Road, Clinton 08809.

Directions from the Flemington Area: From the Flemington Circle, take Route 31 north 12.4 miles to Van Syckles Road. Turn left and go a short distance to Spruce Run's Fishing Access on the left. The Union Furnace entrance is located across Van Syckles Road.

Directions from I - 78 Westbound: Take exit 17 (Clinton-Washington Exit) to Route 31 north. Travel 6.6 miles to Van Syckles Road. Proceed as above.

Directions from I - 78 Eastbound: Take exit 16 (Washington Exit) to Route 31 north and travel 6.6 miles to Van Syckles Road. Proceed as above.



Spruce Run Inlet

Spruce Run Recreation Area

Spruce Run Recreation Area, which borders Union Furnace, is maintained by New Jersey's Division of Parks and Forestry and the Division of Fish and Wildlife. The state park provides a variety of recreational activities including boating, swimming, hiking, and camping. The area managed by the Division of Fish and Wildlife permits hunting to control wildlife populations. Contact the Spruce Run Recreation Area for more information at (908) 638-8572.

It is the policy of the County to provide reasonable accommodations to persons with disabilities upon advance notice of need. Persons requiring accommodations should make a request at least two weeks prior to program attendance.

Recreational Opportunities

A single hiking trail runs through Union Furnace. The trailhead is located across from the Spruce Run Parking Area. Part of the trail follows a historic mill race which used to supply water to the nearby Union Mill. Then it climbs up the hill and emerges onto Serpentine Drive. The trail is part of the Highlands Trail which extends over 100 miles from the Hudson River in New York south to Riegelsville on the Delaware River in New Jersey. Blazed with teal-colored diamonds, the trail combines established trails, new trails, and road walking, and displays the scenic beauty of the Highlands region.

The Spruce Run cuts through the property and is seasonally stocked with trout. Fishermen must display a state fishing license.

Wildlife

Union Furnace and Spruce Run offer a rich diversity of wildlife. Shorebirds are common along the edge of the reservoir and the Spruce Run. Common Yellowlegs and Least Sandpipers have been observed at these locations. Herring and Ring-billed Gulls are also common sightings. Other birds that have been reported within the preserve include Baltimore Orioles, Blue Jays, and Cedar Waxwings. Union Furnace is also home to other wildlife including raccoons, skunks, opossums, and jumping mice.

Hunting

Hunting is permitted to control the deer population. Hunters must obtain a special permit issued by the Division in order to hunt in the park. Visitors between September and February are strongly encouraged to wear blaze orange or confine visits to Sundays.

(Revised 6/2021)

Union Furnace Preserve

Trail Map and Guide



The remains of the old Union Furnace as it appeared in the early 1900s.

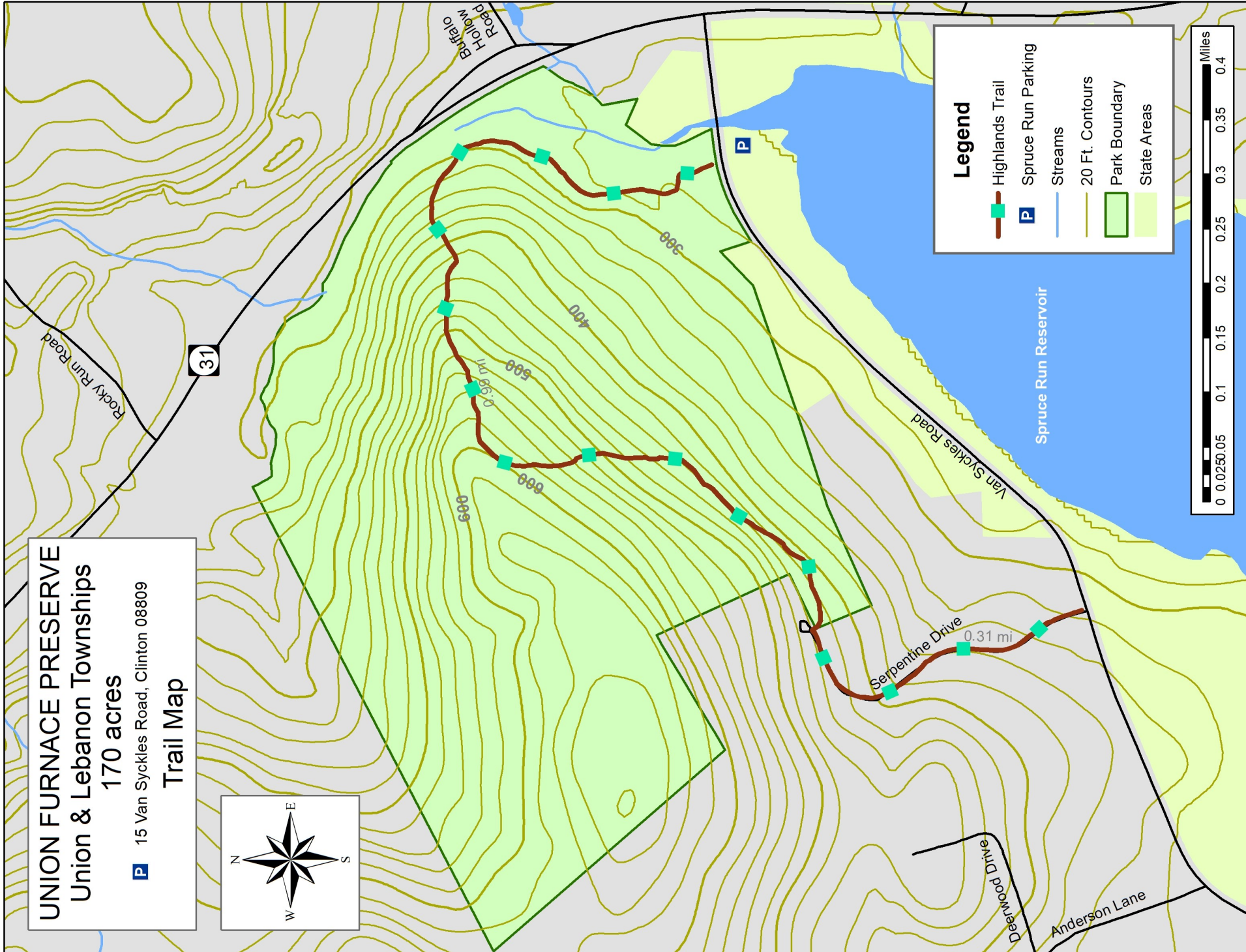


Hunterdon County
Division of Parks & Recreation
PO Box 2900, Flemington, NJ 08822-2900
1020 State Route 31, Lebanon, NJ 08833
Telephone (908) 782-1158
Fax (908) 806-4057

E-mail: parks@co.hunterdon.nj.us
Website: www.co.hunterdon.nj.us
(click on "Parks & Recreation")

Office Hours:
Monday to Friday 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM

SUMMARY OF RULES AND REGULATIONS



The rules and regulations governing use of facilities or properties administered by the Hunterdon County Division of Parks and Recreation are promulgated in accordance with provisions of the N.J. Statutes Title 40:32-7.12, which reads as follows:

"The Board of Chosen Freeholders may by resolution make, alter, amend, and repeal rules and regulations for the supervision, regulation and control of all activities carried on, conducted, sponsored, arranged, or provided for in connection with a public golf course or other county recreational, playground, or public entertainment facility, and for the protection of property, and may prescribe and enforce fines and penalties for the violation of any such rule or regulation."

These rules and regulations have been promulgated for the protection of our patrons and for the facilities and natural resources administered by the Hunterdon County Division of Parks and Recreation.

Permits: A fully executed Facility Use Permit, issued by the County of Hunterdon for any activity, shall authorize the activity only insofar as it may be performed in strict accordance with the terms and conditions thereof. The State of NJ, County of Hunterdon, or the local municipality may require additional permits.

Prohibited Acts: The violation of any Municipal, State, or Federal law. Advertising, solicitation, ice skating, ice fishing, any other on-ice activities, downhill skiing, bathing, fuel-powered modeled aircraft, the release of any animal, explosives of any kind, poisons of any kind, after-hours use, alcohol without a permit in a non-designated area, controlled dangerous substances, weapons, posting of signage, inappropriate attire, and climbing on, or rappelling from any cliff, rock face, or boulder, with or without the use of specialized equipment.

Regulated Activity: The sale of merchandise, aviation, boating, cross-country skiing, bicycling, and sledding. Battery-powered modeled aircraft and horses must be in designated areas, dogs must be restrained with a leash not exceeding six feet, pet waste must be removed, camping/fires are by permit only. All groups of 15 or more must obtain a permit for use of any Park area.

Prohibited Acts for the Protection of Property: No person shall make, excavate on, destroy, paint, fill in, cut, remove or tamper with any property, organic or inorganic.

Prohibited Acts for the Protection of Natural Resources: No person shall disturb wildlife or vegetation in any manner. No person shall pollute waters, litter, dump debris, or release helium balloons in any property. It is illegal to remove any natural resource from, or introduce any plant material, bulbs, or seeds to any property without a proper permit or license.

Prohibited Acts for the Protection of People: No person shall obstruct a county employee/official, interfere with a visitor, conduct any unsafe act, or cause a hazardous condition.

Vehicles: All the provisions of the NJ State Motor Vehicle Act apply. Vehicles are not allowed in unauthorized areas. Parking is allowed in designated areas only. **ATVs, dirt bikes, and snowmobiles are prohibited on County Park lands.**

Enforcement: The rules and regulations of the County shall be enforced by duly authorized Rangers or representatives of the County under the provision of N.J.S.A. 40:32-2, thru 40:32-7.13. Any person who enters into a County Park for any purpose whatsoever has a duty and is presumed to be aware of the provisions of these rules and regulations governing the use of the facilities and properties administered by the Hunterdon County Division of Parks & Recreation.

Penalties: Any person violating any of the provisions of these regulations shall, upon conviction before a court or other adjudicative body of jurisdiction, be liable for the replacement, repair or restoration of damaged property, if any, and shall pay a penalty of not more than one thousand dollars (\$1,000.00) or other amount in the discretion of the court or other adjudicative body, or may be sentenced to imprisonment in the County jail for the term not exceeding ninety (90) days, or both, provided that this section shall not supersede any applicable penalty provision for specific offenses, which may be set forth in the New Jersey Code of Criminal Justice, N.J.S.A. 2C:1-1, et seq., or in any other applicable state or federal law.

NOTE: County Park Rangers of the Division of Parks and Recreation have the authority to issue summons and make arrests for violations of rules and regulations governing the use of facilities and properties administered by the Division of Parks and Recreation. This is only a summary of the rules and regulations. Rules applying to special conditions, activities, or situations may be supplemental to these rules and regulations. When special rules apply, they will be posted at affected areas. The complete text of regulations is available for inspection at the Park administration office in Clinton Township during regular business hours.