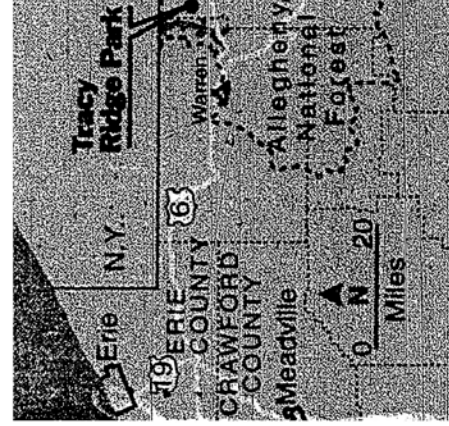


Erie Times-News

ESCAPE TO: TRACY RIDGE

Why go: This is the largest area without roads open to vehicles on the Allegheny National Forest, about 9,500 acres stretching from Route 321 on the east to the Allegheny Reservoir on the west, and from Willow-Bay Recreation Area on the north to Sugar Bay on the south. It is one of the areas proposed for wilderness designation by Friends of Allegheny Wilderness. Terrain is rugged, with elevations varying from about 2,245 feet near the campground to 1,328 feet at the reservoir. The forest is maturing second-growth hardwoods with a mix of hemlock and pine. Huge rock structures protrude from steep slopes. Well-marked trails pass through, including a 9-mile segment of the North Country National Scenic Trail. The Johnnycake/Tracy Ridge Trail forms an 8.7-mile loop that includes a



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portion of the North Country Trail. It is a vigorous hike with an elevation change of about 900 feet. Off these trails, the land is seldom seen except by deer hunters, even then not much in the interior. This is truly the most exciting area of northwestern Pennsylvania for adventurous spirits

seeking solitude in a wild place. Developed camp sites are available at the Tracy Ridge Recreation Area, Hopewell and Handsome Lake. The latter two, located on the shore of the reservoir, are accessible only by hiking or by boat.

Directions: Take I-90 to I-86 East. Exit at the Quaker Area of Allegheny State Park, just after crossing the head of the Allegheny Reservoir. Follow Route 280 South to the Pennsylvania line, where the road becomes Route 346. Turn right onto Route 321 to Tracy Ridge.

Don't forget: map, compass, survival gear

Don't miss: Rock outcrops along the interpretive trail that circles Tracy Ridge Recreation Area

Information: Bratford Ranger District, 814-362-4613

www.fs.fed.us/r9/forests/allegheny/