

Pine Creek (Pennsylvania)

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Pine Creek is a tributary of the West Branch Susquehanna River in Potter, Tioga, Lycoming, and Clinton counties in Pennsylvania in the United States. The creek is 86.5 mi (139 km) long. Within Tioga County, 23.25 river miles of Pine Creek are designated as a Pennsylvania Scenic River.

Pine Creek is the largest tributary of the West Branch Susquehanna River and has the largest watershed of all the West Branch's tributaries.

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Name

Pine Creek is named for the many pine trees that lined (and now again line) much of its banks.^[1] The Iroquois called Pine Creek "Tiadaghton", which according to Owlett, either meant "The River of Pines" or "The Lost or Bewildered River." Pine Creek is the largest "creek" in the United States.^[2]

Geography

Pine Creek's source is in Potter County, 5 mi (8 km) southeast of Ulysses. It flows southeast 16 mi (25.7 km) to Galeton, where it receives its first major tributary, the West Branch Pine Creek. It then flows east 12 mi (19.3 km) to Tioga County and the village of Ansonia. Here it and receives its second major tributary, Marsh Creek and turns south again for 16 mi (25.7 km). This stretch is the start of the Pine Creek Gorge, which is about 1000 feet (305 meters) deep in places.

At the village of Blackwell, Pine Creek receives its third major tributary, Babb Creek. It continues

Pine Creek	
Origin	Ulysses Township, Potter County
Mouth	West Branch Susquehanna River between the boroughs of Avis and Jersey Shore
Basin countries	Potter, Tioga, Lycoming and Clinton counties in Pennsylvania, United States
Length	86.5 mi (139 km)
Source elevation	2420 ft (730 m)
Basin area	979 mi ² (2536 km ²)



Map of the West Branch Susquehanna River (dark blue Streams in Lycoming County, Pennsylvania. Pine Cree first major stream to enter the river in the county. Key t tributaries: 1 = West Branch Pine Creek; 2 = Marsh Creek; 4 = Little Pine Creek / Blockhouse Cr

southwest 14 mi (22.5 km) and enters Lycoming County, where it turns southeast for 28 mi (45.0 km) to its mouth. At Waterville it receives its fourth major tributary, Little Pine Creek. Pine Creek continues south and forms part of the border between Lycoming and Clinton Counties.

Its confluence with the West Branch Susquehanna River is at this border, between the boroughs of Avis (in Clinton County, to the west) and Jersey Shore (in Lycoming County, to the east).



Pine Creek

The elevation at the source of Pine Creek is 2420 ft (738 m), while the mouth is at an elevation of 520 ft (158 m). The difference in elevation (1900 ft or 580 m) divided by the length of the creek of (86.5 mi or 139 km) gives the average drop in elevation per unit length of creek or relief ratio of 22.0 ft/mi (4.2 m/km). The meander ratio is 1.08, so the creek is fairly straight in its bed.^[3]

Watershed

Pine Creek's watershed covers 979 mi² (2536 km²), the largest watershed of all tributaries of the West Branch Susquehanna River.

Recreation

Pine Creek and its gorge are a popular outdoor recreation destination known as the Grand Canyon of Pennsylvania. The West Rim Trail is a 30 mi (50 km) hiking trail along the west rim of the Pine Creek Gorge.

The Pine Creek Rail Trail runs beside the creek through the gorge from Ansonia to Jersey Shore. The railroad through the gorge opened in 1883 as the Jersey Shore, Pine Creek and Buffalo Railway, passing into the control of the Fall Brook Coal Company in 1884, and the New York Central Railroad via a lease in 1899, with full integration into the NYC in 1914. Conrail took over the line in 1976 and the last train ran through the gorge on October 7, 1988.



Pine Creek Gorge Panorama from the West Rim Trail in Tioga County, Pennsylvania

History

The Fair Play Men were illegal settlers, (squatters) who established their own system of self-rule from 1773 to 1785 in the West Branch Susquehanna River valley of Pennsylvania in what is now the United States. Because they settled in territory claimed by Native Americans, they had no recourse to the

Pennsylvania colonial government. Accordingly they established what was known as the Fair Play System, with three elected commissioners who ruled on land claims and other issues for the group. In a remarkable coincidence, the Fair Play Men made their own Declaration of Independence from Britain on July 4, 1776 beneath the "Tiadaghton Elm" on the west bank of Pine Creek, very near the mouth.

See also

- List of Pennsylvania rivers

References

- [^] Meginness, John Franklin. "Chapter II.". *History of Lycoming County, Pennsylvania: including its aboriginal history; the colonial and revolutionary periods; early settlement and subsequent growth; organization and civil administration; the legal and medical professions; internal improvement; past and present history of Williamsport; manufacturing and lumber interests; religious, educational, and social development; geology and agriculture; military record; sketches of boroughs, townships, and villages; portraits and biographies of pioneers and representative citizens, etc. etc.* (1st Edition ed.). Chicago, IL: Brown, Runk & Co.. ISBN 0-7884-0428-8.
<http://www.usgennet.org/usa/pa/county/lycoming/history/Chapter-02.html>. Retrieved 2006-03-16. "(Note: ISBN refers to Heritage Books July 1996 reprint. URL is to a scan of the 1892 version with some OCR typos)."
- [^] Owlett, Steven E.. *Seasons Along The Tiadaghton: An Environmental History of the Pine Creek Gorge* (1st Edition ed.). Petaluma, CA: Interprint. ISBN 0-9635905-0-2.
- [^] Shaw, Lewis C.. *Pennsylvania Gazetteer of Streams Part II (Water Resources Bulletin No. 16)*. Prepared in Cooperation with the United States Department of the Interior Geological Survey (1st Edition ed.). Harrisburg, PA: Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Department of Environmental Resources (no ISBN).

External links

- U.S. Geological Survey: PA stream gaging stations
- Pine Creek Gorge official website
- The Columbia Gazetteer of North America, 2000, entry on Pine Creek

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