

EASTERN CONTINENTAL DIVIDE LOOP

Smethport, Emporium, Sizerville, Port Allegany



A loop from Smethport through Emporium, Sizerville and Port Allegany passes through some of the most rugged terrain in the Allegheny Highlands and the Pennsylvania elk range.

Start this loop by heading east from Smethport on **Route 6**, then turn south onto **Route 46** in East Smethport. For the first few miles, this road follows Potato Creek, which flows northward into the Allegheny River and eventually into the Gulf of Mexico by way of the Ohio and Mississippi rivers.

Close to the McKean County/Cameron County border, in State Game Land No. 30, you crest the Eastern Continental Divide. You can see the land dropping very steeply ahead. Past here, streams flow southward and eventually into the Atlantic Ocean by way of the Susquehanna River and Chesapeake Bay.

Turn left onto **Route 120 East** into Emporium, and then at the east side of Emporium, turn left again onto **Route 155 North**. In this area, you are on the edge of the Pennsylvania elk range.

Plan a side trip to the Elk Country Visitors Center by taking **Route 120** past **Route 155**, then west on **Route 555** at Driftwood to Benezette. The elk center offers interpretive displays and an outdoor wildlife observation area.

Heading north on **Route 155**, you pass Sizerville State Park about seven miles from Emporium. This is an excellent area for viewing mountain laurel and wildflowers during the spring and summer, and flaming foliage during the fall. Majestic white pines in the park were planted during the 1930s by the Civilian Conservation Corps to replace trees cut during the logging boom. There are four hiking trails in the park, one of which climbs a 1,900-foot slope.

The East Branch of Cowley Run, which flows through the park, was the site of the first reintroduction of beavers to Pennsylvania after they had been eliminated by the early settlers. **Route 155** continues north over the Eastern Continental Divide to Port Allegany. Turn left here onto **Route 6** and return to Victorian Smethport.

