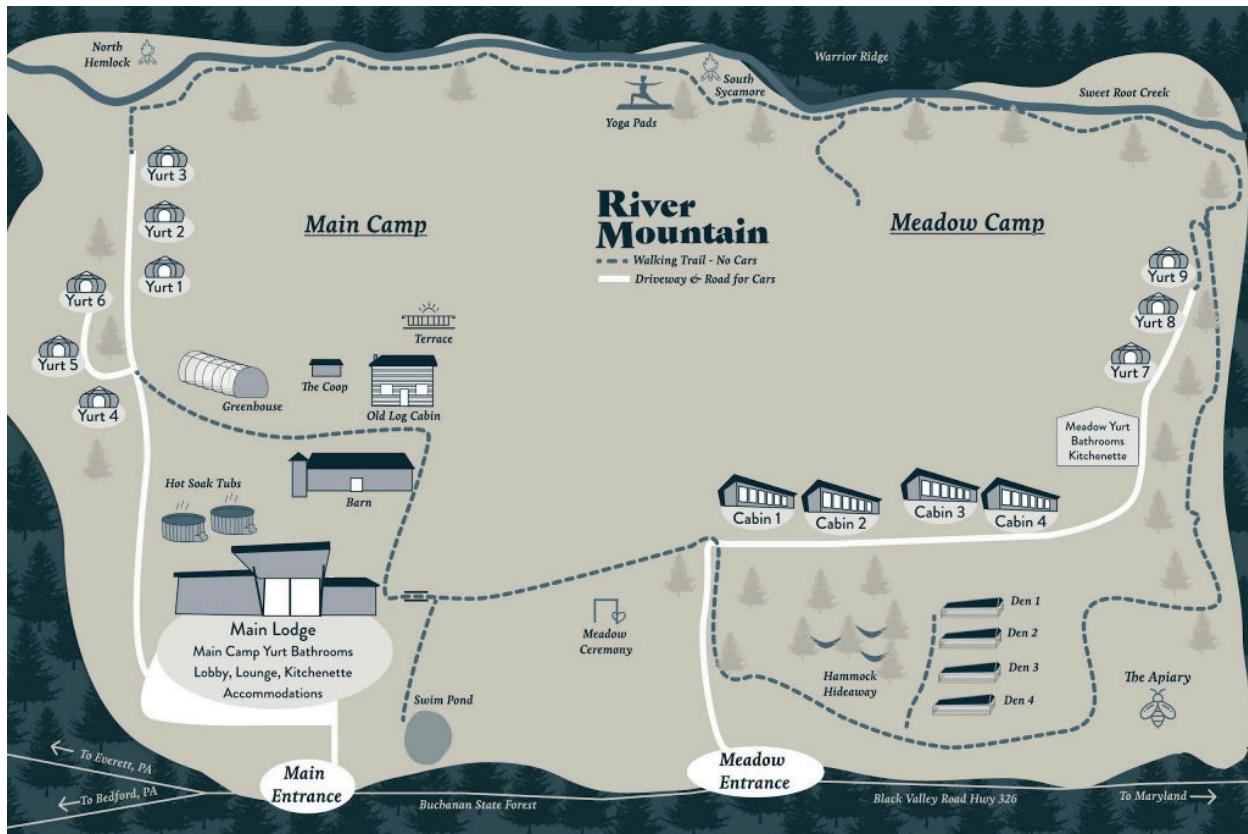


Hike River Mountain Loop

The 1.45 mile River Mountain Loop is a MUST for all guests – kids, families, and beginner hikers as well! You'll see accommodations and spaces from most of the trail, so you won't get lost and can always turn back when you want.

The trail is marked on the map below with dotted lines. The trail can be accessed from a number of different areas on the property. Make sure you hike the section along Sweet Root Creek – it's absolutely beautiful and there are plenty of spots along the creek to splash around, cool off, and enjoy the flowing sounds of the water.



Hammock Hideaway - Forest Bathing

Relax and hang from the trees in Hammock Hideaway – located in the woods just behind the cabins.

Turn off your devices to give yourself the best chance of relaxing and enjoying a sensory, forest-based experience. Let your breathing slow and deepen – you might count to four as you inhale, and to six as you exhale.

Pause to take in your surroundings – notice the temperature, the play of light, the scents in the air. Take in your surroundings using all of your senses.

Engage All Your Senses:

- Sight: Notice colors, shapes, and movement – from canopy leaves to tiny moss patches.
- Hearing: Listen for layers of sound – wind through leaves, bird calls, distant water.
- Smell: Inhale deeply – resin, earth, damp leaves, wildflowers.
- Touch: Run your hand along bark, feel the texture of a leaf.

Research shows benefits kick in even after 20 minutes, but an hour or more deepens the effect. If possible, linger until you feel noticeably calmer or more grounded. Before leaving, take a moment to thank the forest – silently or aloud – for the space and experience. On your way out, walk slowly and notice how your body feels compared to when you arrived.

How to Build a Campfire



1. Grab all of your campfire kit items - the lighter, the firestarter, kindling (small wood pieces), and dry firewood.



2. These are firestarters, we've given you a few. You'll need one to start a fire - grab one and set aside for a moment.



3. Build a log cabin with 4 pieces of dry firewood. Stuff the log cabin with kindling (small wood pieces). Make sure you don't "overstuff" the log cabin, oxygen and air flow are essential for a fire.



4. Grab your firestarter cup and place it in the center of your log cabin with the kindling. Light your firestarter cup.



5. Make sure the firestarter cup continues to burn. It should then ignite the kindling and then the firewood. Once your fire is burning and strong, add another piece of dry firewood. Again, don't overload your fire - fire needs oxygen and air flow!

S'mores by the Fire

A timeless tradition! Gather around your accommodation's private campfire pit to enjoy the classic sweet treat – s'mores! S'more kits are available for purchase in our guest kitchenettes in the Main Lodge and Meadow.

Burning Questions - Campfire Conversations

Some fun questions for around the campfire together!

- If you could have any superpower for a day, what would it be and how would you use it?
- What's the funniest thing that's ever happened to you on a trip or adventure?
- If you could teleport to any place in the world right now, where would you go and why?
- What's your favorite animal, and what would you do if you could talk to it for an hour?
- What's the best dream you've ever had that felt like a real adventure?
- If you could invent a new holiday, what would it be called and how would we celebrate it?
- What's your most treasured memory from a family gathering or outdoor fun?
- If you found a magic lamp with three wishes, what would they be (no wishing for more wishes!)?
- What's a hidden talent you have, or one you wish you had?

Stargazing

Stargazing at River Mountain is unlike anywhere else! One great gazing spot are the benches at the Meadow Ceremony space, right off the trail between Meadow Camp and Main Camp.

Start by Looking Up

The first step to stargazing is a simple one: look up. Take the time to gaze up at the sky. Notice the position of the sun or the moon or try to find the brightest stars or planets such as Venus, which is so bright it is occasionally visible in the daytime. You don't need any equipment, just your eyes.

Locate the Big Dipper

Most of us know how to find the Big Dipper, a bright star pattern that's easily recognizable in the Northern Hemisphere and is found within the constellation Ursa Major (Big Bear). You can find the Big Dipper in the northern sky pretty much year-round. The Big Dipper (handle and bowl) helps point you to the Little Dipper (aka Ursa Minor). Follow the two stars on the outer edge of the bowl and trace a line up to find the North Star, or Polaris.

Locate Other Bright Star Patterns

Next, try looking for Cassiopeia, a bright W-shaped star formation in the northern sky. Both the Big Dipper and the Cassiopeia circle around the North Star (on opposite sides) and you're likely to see them year-round. For Cassiopeia, trace a line from the last star in the Big Dipper's handle through and past Polaris.

Another formation to look for is the Summer Triangle-three bright stars that are almost as bright as planets and the first you'll see after sunset. Deneb, Vega and Altair are part of what's called an asterism, a group of bright stars that aren't an official constellation. You can locate the Summer Triangle most times of the year, but it is most prominent in summer. Spotting the Summer Triangle can lead you to other stars. For example, Deneb, Vega and Altair are the brightest stars in their own constellations.

Stargazing Apps

A stargazing app is also another great way to locate stars and constellations for beginner stargazers. You can hold your phone up and these apps will know where you are. Stargazing apps include Stellarium Mobile Sky Map, [Distant Suns](#), [Star Walk](#), SkyMap and [SkySafari](#).

Mushroom Foraging

With over 1,000 mushroom species in the state Pennsylvania offers prime foraging opportunities. This guide highlights a few popular mushrooms, their seasons, and identification. Do NOT touch, take, or eat any of the mushrooms - just appreciate seeing them, if you do.

Morels (*Morchella* spp.)

- Season: Mid-April to mid-May (peak by Mother's Day)
- Where: Deciduous woodlands, near elm, ash, apple, or tulip poplar trees; prefer moist, well-drained soil.
- Identification: Honeycomb-like, pitted cap; hollow inside; colors range from gray to yellow or black.

Chanterelles (*Cantharellus* spp.)

- Season: Late June to September
- Where: Hardwood forests, near oaks or conifers; moist, humid areas (e.g., Weiser State Forest).
- Identification: Golden-yellow, trumpet-shaped; false gills run down the stem; apricot-like smell.

Chicken of the Woods (*Laetiporus sulphureus*)

- Season: Late spring to early fall
- Where: On dead or dying hardwood trees (e.g., oaks); never in fields.
- Identification: Bright orange-yellow, shelf-like growth; no stem, fan-like clusters.

Hen of the Woods (*Grifola frondosa*)

- Season: Late summer to November
- Where: Base of oak trees or stumps in forests (e.g., Susquehannock State Forest).
- Identification: Large, brownish-gray, petal-shaped clusters; can weigh 10–30 pounds.

Oyster Mushrooms (*Pleurotus ostreatus*)

- Season: Spring to fall, especially after rain
- Where: On deciduous trees (beech, aspen) or fallen logs.
- Identification: White to light brown, shelf-like; decurrent gills; licorice-like smell.

Trees Find + Seek

Pennsylvania's diverse forests are home to a rich variety of trees, each with unique characteristics and ecological importance. This guide highlights six iconic trees found at River Mountain. See if you can spot these trees throughout your explorations.

Sugar Maple (*Acer saccharum*): Deciduous, 60–100 ft tall; broad, rounded crown; 5-lobed leaves with vibrant red/orange fall color.

- Ecological Role: Provides shade, supports wildlife (e.g., squirrels eat seeds); key for maple syrup production.
- Uses: Sap for syrup; wood for furniture, flooring; iconic in PA forests.

Tulip Poplar (*Liriodendron tulipifera*): Deciduous, 80–120 ft tall; straight trunk; tulip-shaped, 4-lobed leaves; yellow-green tulip-like flowers in spring.

- Ecological Role: Nectar for pollinators; seeds for birds; fast-growing, supports forest regeneration.
- Uses: Lightweight wood for furniture, pulp; ornamental tree.

White Oak (*Quercus alba*): Deciduous, 60–100 ft tall; wide-spreading crown; rounded, lobed leaves; acorns in fall.

- Ecological Role: Acorns feed deer, squirrels, and birds; long-lived, stabilizes soil.
- Uses: Durable wood for barrels, furniture; historically used for shipbuilding.

Cedar (Eastern Red Cedar, *Juniperus virginiana*): Evergreen, 30–65 ft tall; conical shape; scale-like, blue-green needles; small blue berries (cones).

- Ecological Role: Berries feed birds; dense foliage provides wildlife cover.
- Uses: Aromatic wood for chests, fence posts; essential oil; ornamental.

Sycamore (*Platanus occidentalis*): Deciduous, 75–100 ft tall; massive trunk; mottled, peeling bark (white/gray); broad, lobed leaves; round seed balls.

- Ecological Role: Thrives in wet areas; seeds for birds; stabilizes riverbanks.
- Uses: Wood for furniture, boxes; ornamental for shade.

Hemlock (Eastern Hemlock, *Tsuga canadensis*): Evergreen, 40–70 ft tall; conical crown; soft, short needles; small, hanging cones.

- Ecological Role: Shades streams, supporting fish; cover for deer, birds.
- Uses: Wood for construction, pulp; ornamental in landscapes.

Hot Soaking Tubs

Soak in our hot soaking tubs located just outside of the Main Lodge. Available from 7am-9pm, daily.

Please open the cover and close the cover after use.

There are hot tub towels located outside along the Main Lodge building in the alcove.

Swim at Dewey's Pond

Dewey's Pond is a great spot for swimming on a hot day (or a cold plunge in late fall and winter!). The pond has a dock with a ladder so you can jump in and out as much as you'd like.

Dewey's Pond is located just across the bridge from the main lodge and up the hill to the right! Swim at your own risk, there is no lifeguard on duty.

Cool Off at Sweet Root Creek

Cool off and chill sitting along Sweet Root Creek. Sweet Root runs along our River Mountain trail, throughout the property and at the base of Warrior Ridge.

Mountain Mornings Coffee + Tea

Enjoy morning coffee and tea with a view of the sun rising over Warrior Ridge. We have comfy sofas, chairs, and picnic tables to settle into located right behind the Old Log Cabin.

Evening Happy Hour

Join us for complimentary happy hour including draft beer and Sweet Root Sangria from 5-6pm in the Old Log Cabin.

Bean Bag Toss - Cornhole

Gather and play together! Bean bag/cornhole boards and bags are available for guests at The Terrace behind the Old Log Cabin (stored under the walkway) and under every cabin in the Meadow.

Board Games

Play games in the Old Log Cabin next to the cozy fireplace and handcrafted tables.

Snowshoe

If the snow hits, we have snowshoes available for our guests to use. They are located in the "The Coop" between the barn and the greenhouse. Please bring boots to wear with them and warm layers. They are all the same size: adult, one-size fits most.