

Park Hours

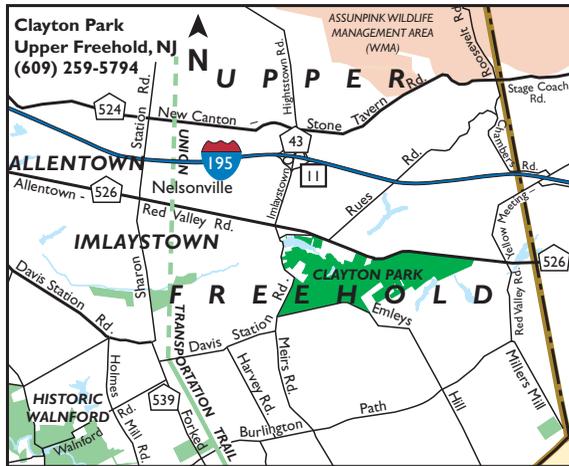
Clayton Park is open every day of the year from 7am to dusk. The park is maintained by uniformed Park Rangers.

Information Lyme Disease

To avoid contact with the tick that may carry Lyme Disease, stay away from tall grass and shrubby areas; wear long, light-colored pants tucked into your socks; and check yourself for ticks during and after each visit to the parks.

For More Information

Call (732) 842-4000 if you would like more information about Monmouth County's 40 parks open spaces, recreation areas and golf courses. Or, visit us online at www.monmouthcountyparks.com.



From the Garden State Parkway (North or South): Exit 98 to Interstate 195 West.

From Interstate 195 East or West: Take Exit 11 (Imlaystown/Cox's Corner). Westbound, turn left; Eastbound, turn right onto Route 43 (Imlaystown/ Hightstown Road). At first intersection, turn left onto Route 526, then immediately right to continue on Route 43 (Davis Station Road). Follow for 1 mile. Turn left onto Emley's Hill Road and follow to park on left.

From Northern Points: Follow Route 34, 79, 18 or 9 South to Route 537 West to Interstate 195 West. Follow directions above.



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Monmouth County
Board of Chosen Freeholders
Board of Recreation Commissioners

Monmouth County Park System

Clayton Park

Upper Freehold, NJ



www.monmouthcountyparks.com

Welcome to Clayton Park

This scenic 438-acre tract in Upper Freehold is located amidst the rolling farmland of western Monmouth County. A tranquil, wooded property, Clayton Park is known for its stately stands of oak, beech, ash and birch trees. The meadows and Doctor's Creek add another dimension of natural interest to the park. Nearly 6 miles of forested trails are a popular destination for bicyclists, hikers, and equestrians.

The area surrounding Clayton Park retains its historic charm with older buildings and rural landscape. Pass through the winding main street of quaint Imlaystown nearby to glimpse an authentic 18th-19th century New Jersey mill village with its narrow roads, closely spaced houses, and old-fashioned landmarks located alongside Imlaystown Lake.

History of the Park

The Park System purchased the first 176 acres of this park in 1978 from farmer Paul Clayton



and his daughter Thelma. Mr. Clayton avoided modern farming methods and worked the fields by hand with his five horses growing potatoes, tomatoes, grain and corn until 1971 when he retired at age 87. After resisting offers from people interested in purchasing the property to harvest the trees, he sold his farm to the Park System for a price below market value. The remaining acres were added through the years as the Park System acquired adjacent property from local landowners.

Facilities

Clayton Park offers rustic appeal and the following limited facilities: an informational kiosk at the trailhead, marked trails, portable toilets, and a gravel parking lot.

Activities

The most outstanding feature of Clayton Park is the natural setting—the trails, creek, pond, fields and forest. As such, it is best suited for outdoor recreational pursuits such as fishing, bicycling, walking, horseback riding, hiking and nature activities such as birding or tree and flower appreciation.



Protect Your Parks

The Park System preserves and manages natural and cultural resources on more than 15,000 acres of land in Monmouth County. Protecting water quality, eliminating invasive plant species, and promoting healthy wildlife populations are just a few objectives. Please help protect the park by leaving flowers, plants, animals, and other features as you found them; adhering to the posted park rules; using designated containers for trash, recyclables, and pet waste; and keeping your pets leashed. Possessing or consuming alcohol beverages is not permitted.

An overabundance of white-tailed deer in and around the parks is threatening the health of native plant and animal species. Portions of Clayton Park may be open for deer hunting during some or all of the State regulated hunting seasons. All areas open for hunting are clearly posted. For more information, visit www.monmouthcountyparks.com or call (732) 842-4000, ext. 4237.

Environment & Wildlife

Clayton Park protects a “high quality” forest with a good structure of herbs, shrubs and trees, and a highly diverse assembly of plants and animals. Notable tree species include the large American beech, black oak, and tulip poplar. Many ferns such as grape, Christmas and hay-scented line the trails under spicebush and viburnums in the shrub layer.

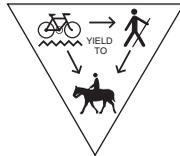
Clayton Park is one of the best spring wildflower sites in the Park System. Look for jack-in-the-pulpit (photo right), trout lily, spring beauty, wild geranium and the rarer trillium and wild ginger during April and May. The bright hepatica flower (*Hepatica nobilis*) pictured on the cover is a welcome contrast to the forest floor colors of early spring.



Also, note how the plant life changes on trails near the creek, keep your eyes peeled for bird species (such as the wood thrush and red-tailed hawk), and experience the beauty of the park’s meadows – a natural habitat that is quickly disappearing from the county’s suburban landscape.

Trails

A favorite spot for all-terrain bicyclists, Clayton Park offers approximately 6 miles of rugged, mostly moderate trails for outdoor enthusiasts. Please obey the rules of protocol for right of way on the trails: bicyclists yield to all other trail users, and pedestrians yield to equestrians. Stay on the marked trails, plan your route and take a trail map with you.



NOTE: At a brisk pace, it takes approximately 20 minutes to walk 1.0 mile.



Clayton Park



161 Emley's Hill Road,
Upper Freehold (Imlaystown), NJ
(732) 842-400, General Info (M-F, 8am-4:30pm)
(609) 259-5794, Ranger Station
(732) 577-8700, County Communications
www.monmouthcountyparks.com

LEGEND

- | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| ■ Building/Office | — Paved Road |
| ■ Wooded Area | — Bridge |
| ■ Field/Clearing | — Boardwalk |
| ■ Lake/Pond | Ⓟ Parking |
| ■ Wetlands | 🚻 Portable Toilet |
| — Property Line | ❓ Information |
| — River/Stream | 🏠 Picnic Tables |
| — Easy Trail | 🎣 Fishing |
| — Moderate Trail | |
| — Paved Trail | |

Trail Key

- **Glen Trail** - An Easy 0.7 mile (1.1 km) loop trail through the solitude of Clayton Forest.
- **Bridges Trail** - Moderate 1.8 mile (2.6 km) diverse hike through forest and fields.

Access to the following trails requires traveling some distance along Bridges Trail.

- **Doctor's Creek** - This Moderate 1.6 mile (2.6 km) trail provides great wetland views from the forest as it winds along Doctor's Creek, which drains into the Delaware River.
- **Old Forge Trail** - A Moderate 1.5 mile (2.4 km) trail that explores the core of Clayton forest. It takes its name from an old forge previously located on the property.

Trail Standards

- **Easy:** short, well-maintained trails intended for casual walking
- **Moderate:** longer trails with some grades/obstructions intended for hiking, equestrians and all-terrain bicycles (may be suitable for some walkers and runners)
- ◆ **Challenging:** long, more primitive trails, with steep grades or obstructions; intended for hardy experienced hikers, equestrians, and all-terrain cyclists (none at this site)