Before I start the day tripping article for May, I want to mention 3 other places that are located in Delaware Water Gap. I have never been to them, but I have seen reviews and they seem to be interesting places. 1. Asparagus Sunshine opened in 2018. They carry a mix of vintage and new items that are unique and quality. It is located at 6 Delaware Ave. www.asparagussunshine.com/ 2. Sycamore Grill was built as a boarding house in 1895, and rebuilt and renamed with an opening in 2004. The present owners started in 2016 and serve lunches and dinners. www.sycamoregrille.com/about-us-contact-us 3. The Castle Inn was built by Dimmick Drake in 1906 and then perched by Fred Waring, of Waring and the Pennsylvanians in 1952. There are some small unique shops to visit and a Victorian era ice cream parlor. www.castleinnpa.com/

So onto *May's Day Tripping*. Other than Hickory Run State Park, there are many other State Parks very close to us. Most have lakes with beautiful scenery to explore.

1. **Locust Lake State Park** is in Burnsville, just south of us off of I81, Exit 131A. The 52 acre Locust Lake is mostly known for camping, however, there are bicycle and walking trails around the lake and into the forests. There is a sand beach for swimming. Locust lake is a warm-water fishery.

2. **Tuscarora State Park** is very close to Locust Lake using the same I81 exit 131A. Tuscarora has camping cottages and yurts. It also has a sand beach and many hiking trails around the lake and throughout the park. Fishing at Tuscarora is warm-water. Night fishing is permitted. There is also an ADA accessible fishing pier. We really like to go down to the lake and sit and watch the fishing and boats. The forested slopes coming down to the lake is wonderful.

3. **Beltzville State Park** is also south of us, just 5 miles south of Lehighton off of US 209. Beltzville is extremely crowded on weekends and summers, so best to go weekdays in the spring or fall. Beltzville has a 949 acre lake that is stocked with warm-water and cold-water fish and panfish. The are 15 miles of hiking trails along the Lake and woodlands. Saw Mill Trail, west of the dam breast, is a historical trail. There is a sand beach with a bathhouse. A covered bridge built in 1841 by Jacob Buck has been relocated between the picnic areas and the beach for pedestrian use.

4. **Big Pocono State Park** is located on the rugged terrain on the summit and slopes of Camelback Mountain. You can get there from Exit 299 of I80. At the summit there is a paved, scenic 1.4 mile drive that encircles the mountaintop, allowing the vistas from all directions to be enjoyed. There are picnic tables and we have enjoyed having a lunch and taking it all in. There are 8.5 miles of hiking trails, most with steep grades. On the grounds is the Cattell Cabin that belonged to the original owner of the land. For many years the cabin was left unlocked to be used as a shelter by anyone who wished and at one time served as the park office and nature museum. Today you can only view the outside of the cabin.

5. **Gouldsboro State Park** is to our east just 2 miles north of the I380 Exit 13. They have a 250 acre lake with an ADA fishing pier. The terrain is rugged so hiking is challenging but rewarding. The park is in the Pocono plateau so there is a diversity of animals and plants. Black bear are very common in the park.

6. **Tobyhanna State Park** is very near Gouldsboro being only 2.5 miles north of the I380 Exit 8. Tobyhanna is very similar to Gouldsboro with the rugged terrain and a lake with fishing. They both have beaches for swimming and picnic areas.

7. **Promised Land State Park** is north of here and and located 10 miles north of Canadensis, along PA 390. It can also be reached from I84. Promised land has 2 lakes and

several small streams that add to its beauty. There are 50 miles of hiking trails to many scenic places. You can hike to a natural glacial lake, little waterfalls or a Conservation Island. They also have fishing. Promised Land is part of the Pocono Plateau with its rugged, rocky soil and thus has a diversity of animals and plants. The National Audubon Society has designated Promised Land as an important Bird Area. There is a wildlife observation station where we have often see waterfowl and other animals. The bald eagles have nested in the park for several years and the nest can be seen across the lake from this observation station.

8. **Lackawanna State Park** is north of Scranton, 3 miles west on PA 524 from Exit 199 of I81. The park has picnicking and fishing of cold and warm water fish. There are 18 miles of looping trails throughout the park.

9. **Frances Slocum State Park** is just 10 miles north of Wilkes Barre from Rt 309N. Frances Slocum has warm-water fishing. It is a nice spot of a picnic lunch. They have 13 miles of trails throughout the park. They have an environmental interpretive center that features exhibits on American Indians and ecological topics.

10. **Nescopeck State Park** is on Honeyhole Road in Drums, but we can easily reach it by going up Rt 437 and turning left onto Honeyhole Road. Nescopeck Creek meanders through the park. Hiking trails follow the creek, passing through quiet forest and past wetlands. The walk around Lake Frances is very easy and beautiful.The environmental center has some great programs. They offer many walks during the year for various age groups. Check their Facebook page for many of these. Near the center is a Nature Discovery Area. It is by the butterfly garden and is designed to nurture children's sense of wonder by play. Our grandkids love all that it has to offer. The lake and creek offer fishing opportunities. The visitor center has a loaner program of fishing poles, but PA regulations and laws still apply.

Bill and I have visited all of these parks. One of the first summers after we moved up here, we took one day a week throughout the summer and visited the state parks. We were amazed how many there were and the beauty of the area. Hope this encourages you to get out and enjoy them, even if it is just to drive through or stop in a parking lot and gaze at the beautiful place we live near.