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Top Ten “Kid Friendly” Activities Offered in Western PA National Parks

The kids are out of school and parents are looking for free, fun and educational activities for children. When you're planning your “staycation” or road trip, the Western PA national parks might just be your perfect destination. The following are the top ten activities that families with children won't want to miss in the Western PA Parks. Programs are free for children younger than 16, entrance fees are charged at Fort Necessity NB, Johnstown Flood NM and Allegheny Portage Railroad NHS for those 16 and over.

1. This summer at Flight 93 National Memorial near Shanksville, PA children will have the opportunity to explore the story of the brave actions of the 40 passengers and crew on Flight 93 that took place on September 11, 2001 through exploring a "Discovery Table." Park Rangers and volunteers will assist children with hands-on activities and touchable objects, kids will also learn about the healing landscape of the crash site and how the Memorial was built. The Discovery Table activity will be presented on most Sundays from 11:00 am to 2:00 pm depending on availability of staff and volunteers. Check the Park website for a current schedule: www.nps.gov/flni.
2. Children may participate in **Junior Ranger** activities at four of the Western PA Parks. Beginning on June 15 Johnstown Flood National Memorial will offer special Junior Ranger programs. Additional programs will be conducted on June 22, July 6, 13, 20 and 27. Children ages 7 – 10 will have the chance to explore nature with a Park Ranger. Booklets, activities and available ranger hats are some of the perks of becoming a Junior Ranger. For more information visit www.nps.gov/jofl. Fort Necessity NB and Friendship Hill NHS also have Junior Ranger activities children can do including completing a free activity booklet and earn a Junior Ranger patch. For more information for these programs stop at the Visitor Center Desk at both Parks.
3. At Friendship Hill NHS children and adults are encouraged to participate in “Crafty Saturdays” activities. These hands-on fun activities will be offered on June 15 and 29, July 13 and 27, and August 10 and 24 from 1:00 to 4:00. Children and their parents can make corn husk dolls, learn how to do needlework and weave baskets. All programs are free and for more information contact the park by calling 724-725-9190.
4. Visit Fort Necessity on weekends throughout the summer and encounter French and Indian War soldiers. Dressed in period clothing, these volunteers will share their stories and demonstrate the use of their weapons, including black powder muskets or artillery. Call 724-329-5811 for more information.

5. Allegheny Portage Railroad staff and volunteers will conduct Allegheny Portage Railroad Day on June 29 with lots of fun and educational activities for everyone. Activities will include a recreated railroad workers encampment and special Junior Ranger archeology activity for children; check www.nps.gov/alpo for more information on this annual special event.
6. July 3, kids of all ages will enjoy viewing the annual ceremony to commemorate the anniversary of the 1754 battle at Fort Necessity NB. As part of the special events, the V.F.W. Post 8543 will perform at 7:00 p.m. Patriotic music lovers will enjoy watching this performance on the historic battlefield weather permitting. For more information, visit www.nps.gov/fone or call 724-329-5811.
7. On July 20 and 21 Fort Necessity staff and volunteers will commemorate the 150th Anniversary of Pontiac's Rebellion by telling the story of Chief Pontiac. Children and their parents will enjoy touring an encampment of Warriors representing American Indian Nations who fought in the French and Indian War and British soldiers and watch historic weapons demonstrations.
8. August 25 the National Park Service will celebrate its birthday and families may visit the Western Pennsylvania Parks for free. National Parks across the country will commemorate the day by waiving entrance fees.
9. The Friendship Hill Association will host its annual Festifall and Market Fair weekend on September 21 and 22 at Friendship Hill NHS. Complete with period foods, games and vendors, as well as historic weapons demonstrations and living history displays, this weekend is ideal for all ages. For more information on events visit www.nps.gov/frhi or call 724-725-9190.
10. On October 4 -6, brings the kids to the Allegheny Portage Railroad NHS. Cresson Area Heritage Days and Apple Cider Fest hosted by volunteers and park staff, celebrates the culture and season with food, demonstrations, living history displays, and games. Check www.nps.gov/alpo for more information on this special event.

For general information on the five National Parks in Western PA visit our websites, Facebook pages, email WEPAinformation@NPS.gov or call MaryEllen Snyder at 724-329-8131.