



Elevation: 952 ft. During the late 1800's, Big Gem was the site of one of the largest pig iron furnace in the valley. At one time The Big Gem Cast Iron Furnace produced over 32,000 tons a year of pig iron that were then shipped from Shenandoah Iron Works via the Shenandoah Valley Railroad. The golden age of iron came to an end in the early 1900's and the land lay fallow for many years. In 1995, Luken's Steel Company donated the land to the Town of Shenandoah where it became known as The Big Gem.



Plans for this area include a mix of developed and natural areas to provide a range of recreational opportunities for residents and visitors alike. Currently the lake and trail system provide a wonderful opportunity to watch birds like indigo buntings, Carolina wrens, and American goldfinches. During early morning and late evening hours, keep your eyes open for white-tailed deer grazing the edges of the trails. Pay particular attention to the area below the gazebo. Here native plants are being planted to highlight the habitats of the local area. This area and the less maintained areas up the trail provide excellent opportunities for viewing a host of native butterfly species and ruby-throated hummingbirds. If you have an afternoon to spend, fishing in the pond is a great past-time. The local belted kingfisher will come by to show you the best way to do it. The pond also serves as a great place to watch dragonflies which dart and dash all around you as you walk along the trail by the pond. Wood duck and heron have been

seen visiting here as well.

Future master plans include a baseball field and an outdoor amphitheater. Some foundations of the Big Gem Iron Ore Furnace remain in place today. Visitors will truly enjoy this unique park experience, which is also a geo-cache location as well.

There are plans to also build a picnic pavilion. Donations are welcome. The Bicycle Pump Track is open and the Green Trail is open for mountain bikes and nature walks. Work has started on the Intermediate Track.

New Recreation Office is now located at 565 Long Avenue.

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