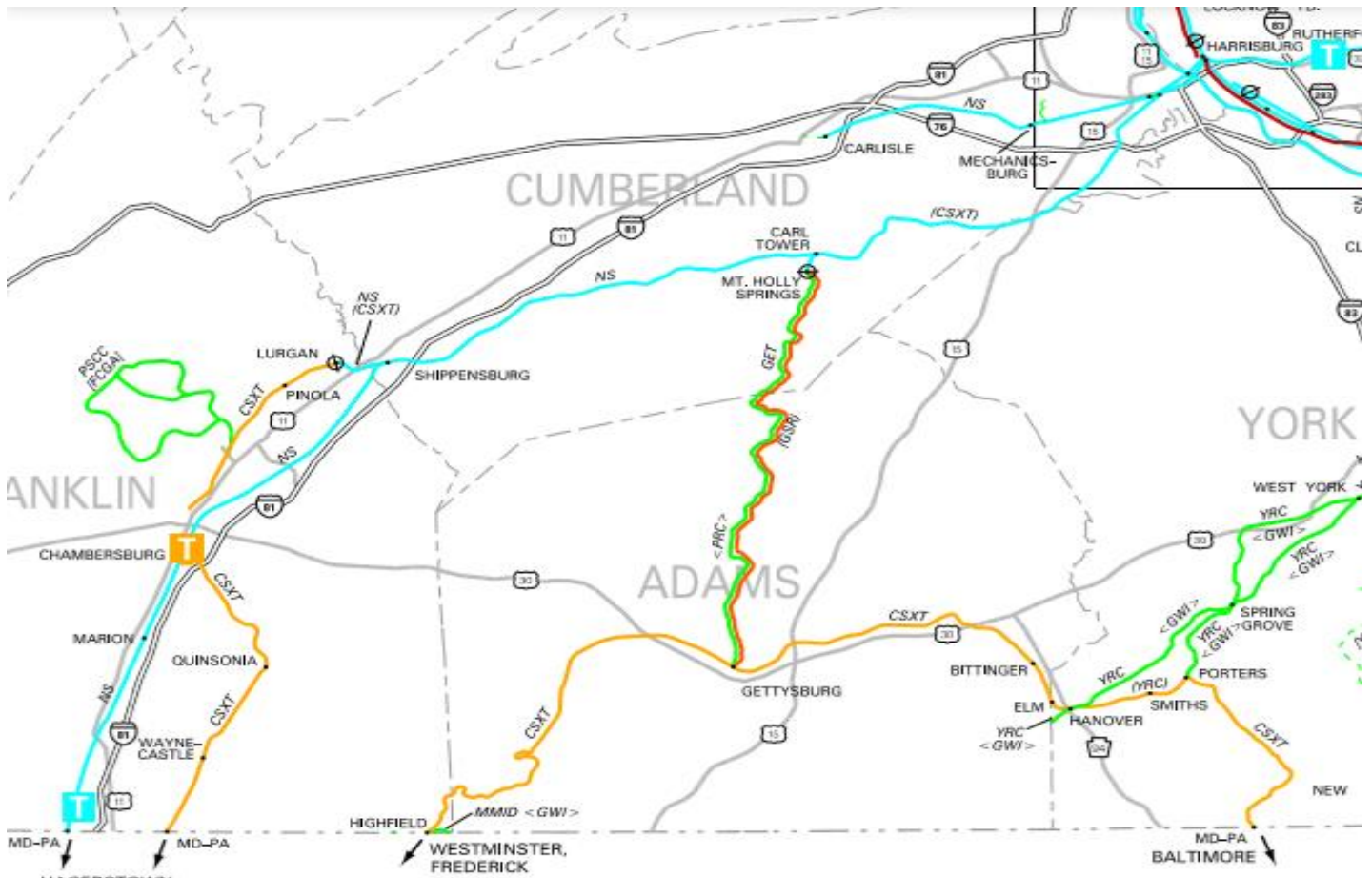


Lurgan Branch Leidigh Park

1400 Leidigh Drive, Boiling Springs, PA 17007

by Frank C. Mellott

All photos by the author.
Map is from PennDOT.



Picture 1(above) Pennsylvania 2019 Rail Map cutout.

The Norfolk Southern Lurgan Branch begins at CP Capital in Harrisburg, PA and proceeds down the ex-Conrail, nee Reading, trackage to Shippensburg, PA. At Shippensburg, the Reading ended and the Conrail line followed the ex-Pennsylvania Railroad, (PRR) ex-Cumberland Valley Railroad (CVR) to Hagerstown, Maryland. The line ends at Vardo Yard. South of that point the operation is on the former Norfolk & Western (NW) to Roanoke, Virginia.

From Harrisburg the Reading crossed the river and ran around Lemoyne and essentially through open country. The Cumberland Valley (PRR) was built forty years earlier and served Mechanicsburg and Lemoyne with ~~town~~ stations. The Reading was primarily a fast freight route moving traffic off the western Maryland and B&O at Hagerstown to northeast markets. When the Reading fell into bankruptcy and was absorbed into Conrail in 1976, the line was in better shape than the neighboring PRR line and the Shippensburg to Harrisburg portion was retained by Conrail. It runs through mostly flat territory and railfans were rarely able to find good photo spots.

Sometime in the 2000s, Leidigh Park was built. It sits along the Yellow Bridges by the railroad bridge at PM 15.4. From there, with a scanner or ham radio tuned to 168.980 MHz, you can hear the defect detector at PM 6.8 in Camp Hill, which gives you about a 10-15 minute notice to get in position for westbound. Eastbounds have several grade crossings around Boiling Springs, so the horns give notice even if you do not hear them calling the signals at CARL or SPRINGS. Many eastbounds are held at Red Tank or at CARL for westbounds. While an eastbound can cover the 19 miles from Lees Crossroads in 30 minutes, it can take 45 minutes to an hour or more if held at CARL.

While the park would be an ideal spot for a railfan viewing platform, there is none. The soccer field is very popular. There are many bikers and the grade crossing on Leidigh Road is very busy. Finding angles free of obstructions can be difficult, but you can be rewarded with nice photos of the train crossing the bridge if you have a good spot to wait an hour or so.

Traffic seems busiest in the early morning, and late afternoon. Due to the line being largely single tracked, trains tend to be ~~fleeted~~ two or more travelling the same direction fairly close together.

The hotshot intermodals: 203 and 202 can be seen often in the 1100 to 1400 window.

15T is often around supper time, allowing for good summer photos. The 16T tends to be a morning train. 11R and 12R and 11Z and 12Z seem to appear any time. Anything in the 200 series is an intermodal train. 11R etc are all mixed freight.

The 747 and 777 coal trains and the 746 and 776 empties can pass at any time.

900 series trains are company service, usually ballast or maintenance of way equipment moves.

Depending on markets, there may be loaded grain trains to the Shenandoah Valley.



be loaded grain trains to the



Have fun and remember: Always expect a train to be on any track in any direction.
And, stay off the property.

