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Recreation

Prince William Forest Park

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PRINCE WILLIAM FOREST PARK
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VIRGINIA

Nearly the entire watershed of Quantico Creek lies within the park. Erosion by this creek has removed much of the Coastal Plain sediments, exposing the underlying ancient rocks of the Piedmont province. The Coastal Plain formations are of sand, gravel, and clay, while the Piedmont rocks are typically granite, schist, and quartzite. Prior to 1920, pyrite, containing iron and sulfur, was mined at the Cabin Branch Mine near the confluence of the north and south branches of Quantico Creek.

The park's wildlife community has a variety of habitats—stream valleys, old fields and borders of field and woodland, and ridges covered with evergreen or deciduous trees. Among the resident wildlife are white-tailed deer, red fox, beaver, raccoon, opossum, flying squirrel, gray squirrel, and woodchuck; wild turkey, ruffed grouse, and red-tailed hawk; and many kinds of fishes, reptiles, and amphibians. Humans are visitors here, and nature is the host. Help protect the plants and animals and the environment they occupy.

Interpretive Service

A park naturalist is on duty all year to assist visitors to enjoy and understand the park's forests and wildlife. He is available for conducted trips and illustrated talks. In addition, he maintains labeled nature trails and informal exhibits at the nature center building. Groups are invited to contact him for appointments by calling park headquarters.

Recreational Use

The park is primarily used by organized groups of campers. For the general public, there are 45 miles of trails and fire roads for hiking, a picnic area near headquarters, and a campground for tent camping.

Organized-group camps. The park was established in 1935, primarily to provide camping for health and character-building organizations. Five camps, located on inland lakes, operate from April 1 to November 1. Short-term permits (for 2 weeks or less) are granted to organized groups from April 1 to June 14 and from September 1 to November 1. Seasonal permits are granted from June 15 to August 31 to welfare and civic-sponsored organizations that provide camping opportunities for children of the Washington metropolitan area.

Each camp contains a central unit, with kitchen-dining hall, washhouse, helps' quarters, infirmary, nature lodge, and administration building. From this central group extend the camp units, consisting of cabins, latrine, and, in most camps, a lodge.

Public campground. Six tent sites, which will accommodate from 20 to 100 persons each and which are provided with fireplaces, have been established on Turkey Run Ridge for

year-round overnight group camping. The campground is equipped with a centrally located comfort station and water supply. Permits are required for group campers. At Turkey Run Ridge Campground, there are also six family-sized sites. Permits for these campsites are not issued.

Hiking Trails. Forty-five miles of trails and fire roads afford access to the wilder regions of the park. A large trail map at the Pine Grove Picnic Area provides a convenient starting point for hikes. Trails are generally well maintained, but hikers must be alert for tree roots, loose stones, and other trail hazards that constantly recur. While organized-group camps are accessible by spur trail from the main trail system, admittance to these camps is by permit only.

Public picnic areas. The Pine Grove Picnic Area, open throughout the year to the general public, is situated near park headquarters. Fireplaces, tables, a shelter, playfield, water supply, and comfort station are provided. A self-guiding nature trail begins at the large trail map and ends at the cable bridge. From the cable bridge, you may return to the picnic area, or you may wish to hike further into the scenic back country. All picnicking is on a first-come, first-served basis.

Fees and Permits

Short-term or weekend use of organized-group camps. The fee is 50 cents per person per night. Single cots and mat-

Cabin units in one of the organized-group camps.



esses are furnished, but camping groups must provide bed linen, blankets, dishes, silverware, and cooking utensils. Minimum number of campers is 30. Permittees can check in and out at any time between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m.

Day-use (any period between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m.). The fee is 25 cents per person.

THIS IS YOUR PARK! PLEASE HELP PROTECT IT

You are urged to observe National Park Service regulations, which prohibit the running at large of dogs or other pets; the carrying of firearms; building of fires except in designated places; hunting, trapping, and seining; damaging, marring, or defacing any structure or natural feature; cutting, breaking, or destroying any trees, shrubs, or bushes; picking of flowers or fruits; driving in excess of posted speed limits.

Fire is the park's greatest peril. Extinguish matches, cigarettes, and campfires thoroughly. Never leave a campfire unattended.

Please help keep the park clean by placing trash in proper receptacles, burning it in your campfire, or carrying it out of the park.

VA ROOM

Mission 66

Mission 66 is a program designed to be completed by 1966 which will assure the maximum protection of the scenic, scientific, wilderness, and historic resources of the National Park System in such ways and by such means as will make them available for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.

Administration

Prince William Forest Park is a unit of the National Capital Park System, which is administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior.

If you would like additional general information or applications for organized-group camping facility permits, call at park headquarters or write the Manager, Prince William Forest Park, Triangle, Va.

COVER: A NATURE HIKE
Courtesy, the Washington Evening Star (photo by F. Rount)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fred A. Seaton, Secretary
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Conrad L. Wirth, Director



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Prince William

FOREST PARK

THIRTY-TWO miles south of the Nation's Capital is this beautiful park named for the Virginia county in which it is located. It is bounded on the north by State Route 234, on the east by U.S. 1, and on the south and southwest by State Routes 626 and 619. The main park entrance is on the south-bound lane of U.S. 1, midway between Dumfries and Triangle, Va. This southernmost unit of National Capital Parks is a haven of shade and quiet. From Triangle and Dumfries on the east, the park's 12,215 acres extend northwesterly 9 miles to Independent Hill.

Natural Features

Beginning with the arrival of the land's first settlers in the late 17th century, the forests were cut and the land was put to the plow. Lumber and fur, tobacco and grain—the products of virgin forests and fertile soils—were carried to distant countries from the port of Dumfries at the mouth of Quantico Creek. In an era of plenty when few conservation practices were observed, the soil soon lost its fertility. Light and erodible, it was washed away by rains and carried downstream to silt up the Dumfries harbor. The decline of the port of Dumfries, and the local area it served, was primarily caused by abuse of the land. Before the start of the 20th century, the unproductive farmland had begun to revert once more to the forest.

Whereas a few years ago a patchwork of abandoned farms and woodlands, in various stages of natural succession, formed the landscape of the park, those abandoned farms have since gradually given way to pure stands of Virginia pine, hardwoods (hickory, oak, beech, and yellow-poplar), and a green understorey of mountain-laurel, holly, and dogwood. In many areas along the streams, the forest once again appears primeval.

The National Park System, of which the National Capital Parks are a unit, is dedicated to conserving the scenic, scientific, and historic heritage of the United States for the benefit and enjoyment of its people.

