DUTCH GAP CONSERVATION AREA

Explore the 809-acre conservation area which is part of the Virginia Birding and Wildlife Trail, an Important Bird Area, and part of the Chesapeake Bay Gateways and Watertrails Network. Watch wildlife from two observation decks overlooking Aiken Swamp. Launch a kayak or canoe from the new boardwalk that provides access to the James River and the Tidal Lagoon Water Trail. Hike, bike, or horseback ride the 4.5-mile long Dutch Gap Trail.

Directions: From I-95, take exit 61 (Route 10, Hopewell) east to first traffic signal. Turn left onto Old Stage Road (Route 732), travel two miles to stop sign at Coxendale and follow to park entrance on right, Henricus Park Road.

For more information, call Noel Losen, 804-748-1129 or Mark Battista, 804-318-8735.

FAMILIES IN THE OUTDOORS

Unplug from the digital world and join us for a series of outings to explore our local environments. Each program is designed to encourage families to get outside, get exercise and enjoy the wild outdoors.

Night Ride and Campfire

Explore the Dutch Gap Conservation Area by bike – at night. Start your bike trek before sunset and pedal an easy two miles to the Peninsula. Enjoy a light meal by the lagoon, some activities and a campfire with s’mores. Turn on your headlights and ride back 2.5 miles to the parking lot. This is an easy bike ride with minimal elevation gain. Trail is suitable for bikes hauling trailers. Mountain bikes and hybrid bikes are necessary. Helmets and bike lights are required. Bring a light meal and drink. We’ll provide the s’mores.

Henricus Visitor Center, 251 Henricus Park Road
Saturday, Oct. 17, 6-8 p.m. $5 Course 37508

Explore the Appomattox River Valley

Start your journey at the Radcliffe Conservation Area. Hike the bluff trail, scramble across rock outcroppings, roam along the wetlands while looking for beaver lodges and dams and explore tumbling streams. Reunite with the river trail and continue downriver for lunch at the abutment dam. Return along the River Trail. This will be an adventurous 2.5 to 3-mile hike.

Radcliffe Conservation Area, 21501 Chesdin Road
Saturday, Nov. 14, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. $4 Course 37507

Winter Bird Count Primer

Joining a winter bird count this season? This two-hour walk will review the winter birds. Head to the wetlands to observe gadwall, pintail, and other waterfowl. Then head down the trail in search of eastern bluebirds, eastern meadowlarks, hermit thrush, yellow-rumped warblers and more. Bring your binoculars and bird book. Some binoculars will be available.

Dutch Gap Conservation Area, 341 Henricus Park Road
Saturday, Dec 5, 8:30-10:30 a.m.
Free, but call 804-318-8735 to register

Bushwhacking the Brown & Williamson Conservation Area

Bushwhack and explore the 500-acre conservation area along the James River. Find the eagle nest, clues that reveal the story of the land, skunk cabbage and vernal pools. Have lunch in the hollow, then trek to the bluff that overlooks the James River. This will be an adventurous three-mile hike involving lots of bushwhacking and some stream crossings. Minimum age is 8. Children must be accompanied by an adult. NOTE: We will caravan from Henricus Park to the Brown & Williamson Conservation Area.

Henricus Visitor Center, 251 Henricus Park Road
Saturday, Dec. 12, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. $4 Course 37506

First Day Hike at Dutch Gap

Spend the first day of January hiking and exploring the Dutch Gap Conservation Area. This will be an easy three-mile hike along bottomlands, wetlands, and the old river channel. Find out how nature reclaimed a landscape changed by humans.

Henricus Park Visitor Center, 251 Henricus Park Road
Friday, Jan. 1, 10 a.m.-noon

Free, but register online at www.chesterfield.gov/parks

Register at www.chesterfield.gov/parks • 804-748-1623
Explore and learn about the rich and diverse resources of Virginia. Each trip will reveal the natural and cultural history of the various sites. All programs include a naturalist, transportation and admission fees (if required).

Details: Mark Battista, 318-8735

Fall Wildflowers
See and revel in the brilliant explosion of fall wildflowers. Enjoy the colorful array of wildflowers in the tidal marsh and the meadow. Total hiking distance will be approximately 2.5 miles.
Dodd Park at Point of Rocks, 201 Enon Church Road
Thursday, Sept. 17, 9:30-11:30 a.m. $8 Course 37512

Tree Identification Class
Ramble through the conservation area to learn common trees of the wetlands, forests and fields. This class will introduce participants to basic tree terminology and explain how to use a tree key. Also learn why trees are important to wildlife and us. Fee includes naturalist and the 120-page Common Native Trees of Virginia guide. This will be an easy, two-mile walk.
Henricus Park Visitor Center, 251 Henricus Park Road
Thursday, Sept. 24, 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. $15 Course 37518

Discovering the Lower Appomattox River
Take a three-mile hike (1.5 miles up and back) along the Appomattox River Heritage Trail. Find stone arches and old canals that reveal the rich history of this area while enjoying the views of this state-designated scenic river and the natural history.
Parking lot at the end of Campbells Bridge, Petersburg (directions will be provided)
Thursday, Oct. 1, 9 a.m.-noon $10 Course 37515

Exploring the James River City Park
Stroll an easy three miles to explore Richmond’s James River Park. This loop will include the Potterfield Walkway, the Belle Isle pedestrian bridge, and Belle Isle.
James River City Park, 22nd Street Parking Lot
Thursday, Oct 8, 9 a.m.-noon $10 Course 37516

Ancarrow’s Landing
Venture on an easy three-mile walk to discover some of the history and natural beauty of this bottomland park set along the tidal section of the James River.
Ancarrow’s Landing, 1400 Brander St., Richmond
Thursday, Oct. 15, 9 a.m.-noon $10 Course 37523

Pocahontas State Park – Forgotten Camp 7
Hike through the southern forest of Pocahontas State Park for a quiet ramble to see the lake and site of the CCC Camp 7. This will an out-and-back hike of approximately 3.5 miles. State park parking fee is required. Bright Hope Horse Complex Parking Area, Pocahontas State Park (directions will be provided)
Thursday, Oct. 22, 9 a.m.-noon $10 Course 37524

Radcliffe Conservation Area
Journey on a three-mile trek to explore the varied terrain of Radcliffe Conservation Area. Hike along the Bluff Trail have lunch at the abutment dam, then return along the River Trail.
Radcliffe Conservation Area, 21501 Chesdin Road
Thursday, Oct. 29, 9 a.m.-noon $10 Course 37519

Powhatan State Park
Roam the varied trails for a 3.2-mile hike that incorporates Cabin, Pine, and the Big Woods Trails. Hike through pine and hardwood forests and some bottomlands. State park parking fee is required.
Powhatan State Park, 4616 Powhatan State Park Road, Powhatan
(meet at parking lot with playground)
Thursday, Nov. 5, 9 a.m.-noon $10 Course 37514

Dutch Gap Conservation Area
Discover a landscape shaped by nature and humans during an easy three-mile hike that will take us along bottomlands, to the Cypress Swamp, and the old river channel. This will be an out-and-back hike.
Henricus Park Visitor Center, 251 Henricus Park Road
Thursday, Nov. 12, 9 a.m.-noon $10 Course 37856

Bushwhacking through Mary B. Stratton Park
Explore a park not yet open to the public and without trails. Venture through forested uplands, meadows, floodplains and along Falling Creek. Discover an old roadbed, the beaver dam, and Trampling Run. Bring a lunch to enjoy by the river. NOTE: We will caravan to Stratton Park.
Rockwood Nature Center, 3401 Courthouse Road
Thursday, Nov. 19, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. $10 Course 37525

Swift Creek Lake Hike
Venture out on new trails that follow the north shoreline of Swift Creek Lake, carves around coves and wetlands, and provides ample views of the lake. Start at the boat launch in Pocahontas State Park, cross the bridge, and then head into the mature forest. This is an easy four-mile hike on natural trails. State park parking fee is required.
Pocahontas State Park, 10301 State Park Road (meet at boat launch)
Thursday, Dec. 3, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. $10 Course 37513

Five Forks Battlefield
South of Petersburg and nestled in Dinwiddie County lies Five Forks Battlefield, a satellite of the Petersburg National Battlefield. Here, on Sunday, April 2, 1865, a decisive victory for the Federal army claimed the Southside Railroad which cut needed supplies to the Confederate army and started Lee’s retreat and ultimate surrender at the Appomattox Court House. Now, march through pine forests along easy terrain to a lake where beavers play, stroll along streams and discover a peculiar area where boulders rise through the ground. This is an easy three-mile hike.
Five Forks Battlefield, Courthouse Road, Dinwiddie (directions provided)
Thursday, Dec. 10, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. $13 Course 37526

Register at www.chesterfield.gov/parks • 804-748-1623
NATURE PROGRAMS

For more information on these programs, call Mark Battista at 804-318-8735 or battistam@chesterfield.gov. Register at least one week before programs.

WILD LANDSCAPES

Travel and explore diverse landscapes filled with natural beauty and intriguing history. Explore by kayak, bike, and by foot. All trips include guides and transportation.

Lighthouse Paddle
Launch your kayak from the southern tip of Mathews County. Next, stop at a sandy island for lunch and exploration, then continue your paddle to New Point Comfort Lighthouse, the third oldest lighthouse on the Chesapeake Bay. NOTE: Paddling destination may change due to weather or water conditions. Minimum age is 13 (youth aged 13-15 must be accompanied by an actively participating adult). Formal kayak instruction strongly recommended. Paddling time is approximately 3.5 hours.
Meet at Hardee’s in Mathews County (directions provided)
Friday, Sept. 18, 10 a.m.-3:30 p.m. $35  Course 37522

Caledon State Park Bike Tour
Take a leisurely cruise along forest roads in Caledon State Park. Head down to Caledon Marsh to look for bald eagles. Head to one of the bluffs overlooking the Potomac River for lunch. Stop at Boyd’s Hole along the shoreline, then continue to Stuarts Wharf. Total biking distance is approximately 11 miles. Bike tour is suitable for hybrid and mountain bikes.
Meet: Caledon State Park, 11617 Caledon Road, King George, VA 22485
Saturday, Oct. 10, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. $15  Course 37527

Appomattox River Hike
Hike along the fall zone of the Appomattox River, a regional treasure and designated scenic river. Start your hike at the Appomattox Riverside Park, then head downriver to Petersburg. Enjoy the sounds and views of cascading water. Ramble through meadows and forest and see the remains of a rich history of the old canals and mills. Total hiking distance is approximately four miles. Minimum age is 12. NOTE: We will caravan down to Appomattox Riverside Park.
Parks Maintenance Office, 9201 Public Works Road
Saturday, Nov. 7, 9:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. $15  Course 37520

Individual and Group Canoe/Kayak Tours
Enlist the naturalist for a nature tour to discover and explore the Dutch Gap Conservation Area. All trips include sit-on-top kayaks, paddles, personal flotation device, basic paddling instructions and guided tour. Tours can accommodate an individual, couples or groups up to 14 participants. For more information and to schedule a tour, call Mark Battista at 804-318-8735.

Changing Status of Activities
Chesterfield County is committed to ensuring the health and safety of all citizens as we respond to the changing situation surrounding COVID-19. Consistent with directives from the Virginia Governor’s Office and the Virginia Department of Health, the Chesterfield County Parks and Recreation Department realizes many of the activities listed in this guide may be cancelled or postponed. Please consult the Chesterfield Parks and Recreation website and social media sites for updated information:
• www.chesterfield.gov/parks
• Facebook: www.facebook.com/chesterfieldvaparksrec/
• Twitter: twitter.com/CCPRVA