



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.

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.

WEEKDAY WANDERERS

Join our trips to explore and learn about the rich and diverse resources of Virginia. Each trip will reveal the natural and cultural history of the various sites.

Petersburg National Park

Take a winter walk along an easy 3.3-mile trail through pine groves, hardwood forest, along creeks, and through a landscape where a pivotal battle forced the retreat of General Lee.

Meet at Petersburg National Battlefield Park Trailhead on Mahone Avenue

Thursday, Jan. 21, 10 a.m.-noon \$8 Course 38462

Discover the Ettrick Canal (Ettrick/VSU Trail)

Bushwhack and explore the uncharted reaches beyond the paved trail. See and examine the craftsmanship of the Ettrick Canal, look for gems along a narrow gulley, and other signs of a hidden history along the Appomattox River.

Ettrick/VSU Trailhead (directions provided)

Thursday, Feb. 4, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. \$10 Course 38463

Atkins Acres

Hike one of the county's conservation easements and hear stories about the Atkins and discover the land they called home. Roam along uplands and descend along the streams that feed a small wetland along the southern border. This will be an easy 2.5-mile bushwhack. NOTE: Meet at Rockwood Nature Center, then caravan to Atkins Acres.

Rockwood Nature Center, 3401 Courthouse Road

Thursday, Feb. 18, 10 a.m.-noon \$8 Course 38452

Bushwhacking Radcliffe Conservation Area

Head back down to the Radcliffe Conservation Area to roam and discover the newest addition to this scenic area along the Appomattox River. We'll start our journey along the Discovery Trail, then veer off to explore the northern uplands and ravines. This will be an intermediate hike with about three miles of hiking.

John J. Radcliffe Conservation Area, 21501 Chesdin Road

Thursday, March 4, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. \$10 Course 38464

Spring Hike along the Appomattox River I

Venture along the Discovery Trail and River Trail to search for wildflowers and other signs of spring. This will be about a three-mile hike along designated trails.

John J. Radcliffe Conservation Area; 21501 Chesdin Road

Thursday, March 18, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. \$10 Course 38465

Spring Hike along the Appomattox River II

Head down to Ferndale Park to search for wildflowers and other signs of spring. This will be about a three-mile hike along designated trails along the bottomlands.

Appomattox River Park, 24909 Ferndale Rd. Petersburg, VA 23803

Thursday, April 1, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. \$10 Course 38466

The Great Dismal Swamp

Hike and van tour through one of Virginia's most spectacular ecosystems, the Great Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge. Tour six miles by van to Lake Drummond, in the heart of the wildlife refuge. The swamp is a haven for black bears, bobcats and over 200 species of birds. It also supports unique plants such as Atlantic white cedar, dwarf trillium and silky camellia.

Rockwood Nature Center, 3401 Courthouse Road

Thursday, April 15, 7 a.m.-4 p.m. \$32 Course 38456

Rapidan and Staunton Rivers Hike

Stroll along the Rapidan and Staunton Rivers to imbibe in the mountain streams and reap the beauty of spring wildflowers. See plunging pools, check water quality by observing stream organisms and enjoy the colorful wildflowers such as showy orchids, golden ragwort, Solomon's seal, trillium, and lady's slippers. This will be a slow, easy hike along the Rapidan and Staunton Rivers. Hike will be about three miles.

Rockwood Nature Center, 3401 Courthouse Road

Thursday, April 22, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. \$30 Course 38455

Roslyn Landing

Start your hike at Roslyn Landing in Colonial Heights then walk along the paved Appomattox River Trail System that shadows the Appomattox River. Enjoy the riparian habitat and discover the old Atlantic Coast Line Railroad and the diversion channel. Continue across the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Bridge, and then walk into downtown Petersburg for lunch. After lunch, return along the same route. This is a very easy four-mile hike.

Rockwood Nature Center, 3401 Courthouse Road

Thursday, April 29, 9 a.m.-2 p.m. \$15 Course 38467

Maritime Forest Hike

Traverse the southern landscape of First Landing State Park, formerly called Seashore State Park. Roam through maritime forests, old dunes, cypress ponds and the shoreline of Broad Bay. Walk through shrines of Cypress trees cloaked in Spanish moss, observe fiddler crabs in the tidal creeks and marshes and enjoy a lunch under the spreading and welcoming branches of a live oak perched along broad bay. Hike is approximately 5.5 miles.

Rockwood Nature Center, 3401 Courthouse Road

Thursday, May 6, 8 a.m.-5 p.m. \$32 Course 38453

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Virginia Blue Ridge Railway Trail

Take a leisurely hike along this unique rails-to-trail that borders Amherst and Nelson Counties. Start at Rose Mill Trailhead, and then head down river with the Piney River at your side to the confluence of the Tye River. This is an easy out-and-back 5.5-mile hike.

Rockwood Nature Center, 3401 Courthouse Road
Thursday, May 13, 9 a.m.-6 p.m. \$30 **Course 38457**

Mountain Meadow Hike

Start your hike at Hog Camp Gap, then ramble along the Appalachian Trail to the mountain meadow of Cold Mountain. The 4,000-plus-foot high meadow provides a panoramic view of the George Washington National Forest, surrounding mountains and Shenandoah Valley. This is one of the most spectacular views in the George Washington Forest. Hike will be approximately 3.5 miles and only 480 feet of elevation gain.

Rockwood Nature Center, 3401 Courthouse Road
Thursday, May 20, 8 a.m.-6 p.m. \$32 **Course 38454**

FAMILIES IN THE OUTDOORS

Unplug from the digital world in this series of outings to explore our local environments. Each program is designed to encourage families to get outdoors, get exercise and enjoy the wild outdoors.

Exploring Mary B. Stratton Park

Hike and bushwhack to explore a park not yet open to the public. Hike along old trails and bushwhack through forested uplands, meadows, floodplains and along Falling Creek. Discover an old beaver dam and the cascades of Trampling Run. Meet at Rockwood Park Nature Center, and then caravan to Stratton Park.

Rockwood Nature Center, 3401 Courthouse Road
Saturday, Jan. 30, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. \$6 **Course 38443**

Moonlight Hike



Hike under the glow of an almost-full moon in the Dutch Gap Conservation Area. Hear tales about the moon and winter constellations. Call owls and learn what other creatures lurk in the night. This will be an easy two-mile walk.

Henricus Visitor Center, 251 Henricus Park Road
Friday, Feb. 26, 6:15-8:15 p.m. \$4 **Course 38468**

Discover Vernal Pools



Explore the world of vernal pools, intriguing watery worlds that flourish and then vanish. Where are pools found? What creatures live in them? Take a short hike to the bottomlands to visit some local pools. Minimum age is 8.

Henricus Park Visitor Center, 251 Henricus Park Road
Saturday, March 6, 10 a.m.-noon \$4 **Course 38442**

Spring along the Appomattox River



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

Radcliffe Conservation Area and Canoe Launch, 21501 Chesdin Road
Saturday, March 20, 10 a.m.-noon \$4 **Course 38444**

Sky Watch

Join the Richmond Astronomical Society to roam the night sky in search of star clusters, planets, and other sky objects. View the cosmos with various telescopes. Programs last about one hour and meet at the Woodlake Athletic Complex, 5700 Woodlake Village Parkway, located behind Clover Hill Elementary School.

Friday, April 23, 8-9 p.m. **Course 38450**

Friday, May 14, 8:30-9:30 p.m. **Course 38451**

Free, but register online at www.chesterfield.gov/parks at least one week before program.

Details: Mark Battista, 804-318-8735

Bike and Paddle

Explore the conservation area by biking and paddling. Start at the visitor center, then bike 2.5 miles along bottomlands and wetlands to the Peninsula. Next, use our kayaks to explore the Graveyard and islands and find out how the Lagoon was made. After the paddle, bike two miles back to the visitor center. Minimum age is 8. Participants must provide own bikes and helmets.

Henricus Visitor Center, 251 Henricus Park Road
Saturday, April 24, 11 a.m.-2 p.m. \$13 **Course 38469**



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WILD LANDSCAPES

Travel and explore diverse landscapes filled with natural beauty and intriguing history. Explore by kayak, bike, and by foot.

Hidden History

Roam along trails and bushwhack through Pocahontas State Park to discover some of the forgotten history hidden in the sprawling, 8,000-acre park. Find cemeteries and the remains of a homestead while roaming through the winter woods. Entrance fee required to enter state park.

Meet: Pocahontas State Park (specific parking lot to be determined)
Saturday, Feb. 13, 10 a.m.–1 p.m. \$10 **Course 38470**

Cumberland Countryside Bike Tour

Bike through the Cumberland countryside along gravel roads, sleepy, paved roads, and forest roads through Cumberland State Forest. Have lunch at an old mill and dam, cross a swinging bridge over the Willis River, and view a historic church while biking through this bucolic landscape. This will be a 15-mile loop with about 690 feet of elevation gain. Bike tour is suitable for hybrid and mountain bikes.

Meet: Shell Service Station, 1437 Anderson Highway, Cumberland
Saturday, March 27, 9 a.m. – noon \$15 **Course 38458**

Dismal Swamp Bike Tour

Bike to Lake Drummond, the heart of the Great Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge. Cruise along flat, forest roads on this 12-mile tour. Stop and explore the boardwalks that creep into the swamp, hear tales of the Ghost of the Dismal Swamp or the Underground Railroad, and have lunch by the shoreline. Bike tour is suitable for hybrid and mountain bikes.

Meet: Great Dismal Swamp Headquarters, 3120 Desert Rd. Suffolk
Saturday, April 17, 10 a.m.–1 p.m. \$15 **Course 38459**

Floating the Nottoway River

Float and paddle the Nottoway River from Courtland to Cypress Bridge. Venture into sloughs amidst ancient, towering cypress trees stands. Relax with the gentle and somber coastal river while admiring stream banks lined with tupelos, cypress and water and overcut oaks. This will be a five-mile float. For ages 12 and older. An adult must accompany children aged 12–16.

Henricus Historical Park, 251 Henricus Park Road
Saturday, May 1, 9 a.m.–6 p.m. \$35 **Course 38447**

Community Garden Plots

Rent a garden plot at Rockwood Park. A single 20 x 20-foot plot costs \$45; a second plot costs an additional \$30. Plots are tilled, located near a water source, and are open from approximately early March to the end of November. To rent a plot, or for additional information, call Mark Battista at 804-318-8735.

PADDLING TRIPS

Paddle and explore various waterways, from sleepy, tannin waters of coastal streams to the intriguing waterscape of the Dutch Gap Conservation Area. Fee includes guides, kayaks, and accessory gear. Depart: Henricus Visitor Center, 251 Henricus Park Road.

Swift Creek Conservation Area

Paddle and explore the county's newest conservation area along the lower Swift Creek. Venture into three aquatic environments which include river, swamp, and tidal marsh in this 459-acre conservation area. For ages 10 and older. An adult must accompany children 10-14 years of age. Paddling time is approximately three hours.

White Bank Park (Directions will be provided)
Saturday, May 8, 2–6 p.m. \$21 **Course 38471**

Evening Paddle at the Heron Rookery

Embark on an evening paddle at the Dutch Gap Conservation Area. Slip quietly through the waters to observe wildlife and observe the heron rookery. Watch the changing colors as the sun sets below the horizon. For ages 10 and older. An adult must accompany children aged 10-14. Paddling time is approximately two hours.

Saturday, May 15, 5:30–8:30 p.m. \$16 **Course 38446**

Seldom Seen Island

See the Tidal Lagoon like you never seen it before. Paddle at low tide to see exposed barges and Seldom Seen Island. See what's revealed after the water drops almost four feet. Minimum age is 8. An adult must accompany children aged 8 -14. Paddling time is approximately two hours.

Saturday, May 22, 5:30–8:30 p.m. \$16 **Course 38460**

Rising Moon Paddle

Paddle and float during the evening hours at the Dutch Gap Conservation Area. Slip quietly through the waters to observe wildlife. Watch the sunset and behold the moonrise. Minimum age is 10. An adult must accompany children aged 10 -14. Paddling time is approximately two hours.

Tuesday, May 25, 5:30–8:30 p.m. \$16 **Course 38448**

Sunset Paddle

Paddle into the evening hours as the sun drifts below the horizon and the tide ebbs. Visit the graveyard, islands, and labyrinth. Minimum age is 10. An adult must accompany children 10-14 years of age. Paddling time is approximately two hours.

Saturday, May 29, 5:30–8:30 p.m. \$16 **Course 38449**

Individual and Group 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. For more information and to schedule a tour, call Mark Battista at 804-318-8735.