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 your 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, 748-1129 or Mark Battista, 318-8735.

FAMILY PADDLES

Attention Moms and Dads: Bring your kids (minimum age 7) to the Dutch Gap Conservation Area to experience kayaking and explore nature. Single and tandem sit-on-top kayaks are available. This program will review basic paddling skills and give you a chance to paddle and explore the tidal lagoon. An adult must accompany children 7-14 years of age. Paddling time is approximately two hours. All programs meet at the Henricus Visitor Center.

Fridays, $13/person

Paddle for the Prothonotary
Each year, the golden swamp warbler or prothonotary warbler, returns to the tidal lagoon. Paddle the lagoon as we search, listen and learn about this special warbler.
June 14, 5-8 p.m. Course 35158

Abandoned Barges
Paddle to the graveyard and labyrinth at low tide to explore the abandoned, wooden barges. How were they used? Why were they abandoned? Find out how they have become important habitat for wildlife.
Friday, June 28, 5:30 – 8:30 p.m. Course 35176

Graveyard Paddle
Explore and learn how the tidal lagoon was formed by padding to the old sunken tugboat and the “skeletons” of wooden barges.
July 5, 5:30-8:30 p.m. Course 35156 Course 35157

Evening Paddle
Start your paddle as the sun starts to drop in the western sky and conclude after the sun sinks below the horizon. Learn about the wildlife and plants unique to the tidal lagoon.
July 19, 5:30-8:30 p.m. Course 35154

Exploring Island
Which island is home to the herons? Which one is a haven for young deer? Which island is home for osprey? Paddle the tidal lagoon and explore the various islands to learn more.
Aug. 2, 5 - 8 p.m. Course 35155

Muscadine, Tuckahoe, and Rice (Oh My!)
Paddle through wetlands and around islands to find and reap the fruits of the growing season. Learn some of the plants that provide food for wildlife and people.
Friday, Aug. 30, 5 – 8 p.m. Course 35177

DAWN DISCOVERIES

Start your morning at the Dutch Gap Conservation Area and join the naturalists to explore the forest, wetlands, meadows, lagoon, vernal pool or river. All programs are $5 per child, unless otherwise noted, and begin at 9 a.m. at the Henricus Visitor Center. Unless noted, all programs are about 90 minutes in length and are for children ages 5-12. Register at least one week before program.

Exploring Dutch Gap by Bike and Boat
Ride your fat-tire bike (or hybrid bike) and paddle our kayaks to explore the Dutch Gap Conservation Area. Bike an easy two miles to the Peninsula, then hop in our kayaks to explore the lagoon and cool off. Paddle will be about 45 minutes and total bike trip will be about four miles. This program will last about three hours in total. For children ages 9-12. Participants must bring their own bikes, bathing suit, towel, water and snack. Helmets are required. $13 per child
June 25 Course 35149
Aug. 20 Course 35150

Swamp Walk
Explore the new boardwalk that reaches into Aiken Swamp. Discover the wildlife and plants that thrive in this mysterious environ.
July 16 Course 35152

Butterflies and Dragonflies
Roam the fields and waterways with the naturalist to discover the colorful world of butterflies and dragonflies. Look for eastern tiger and zebra swallowtails, skippers, whitetails and eastern pond hawks. Nets and cages will be provided.
July 23 Course 35151

Tremendous Trees
Take a short hike to find and learn common trees. Find the honey locust armed with two-inch thorns. Find the tree that gives us sweet maple syrup or the tree that’s called paw-paw.
Aug. 13 Course 35153

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

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

PADDLES

Join the naturalist staff to paddle and explore our varied waterways. All trips include transportation, kayaks, life vest, paddle, paddling instructions, and guides. Unless noted, minimum age is 8. An adult must accompany children ages 8-14.

Swift Creek Conservation Area
Paddle and explore one of the county’s conservation areas 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.
Henricus Visitor Center, 251 Henricus Park Road
Saturday, June 1, 2 - 7 p.m.  $21  Course 35050

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 ages 10-14. Paddling time is approximately two hours.
Henricus Visitor Center, 251 Henricus Park Road
Saturday, June 8, 6-9 p.m.  $16  Course 35049

Tidal Lagoon Paddle
Paddle with the naturalist to explore and discover the Dutch Gap Conservation Area. Paddle to the graveyard, islands and the labyrinth. Search for great blues, bald eagles, osprey and other denizens of the tidal lagoon. Paddling time is approximately two hours.
Henricus Visitor Center, 251 Henricus Park Road
Saturday, June 22, 5:30-8:30 p.m.  $16  Course 35165

Cypress Swamp and Oxbow Paddle
Paddle into the Cypress Swamp, through open marsh and return along the oxbow. Observe the eagle and osprey nests and discover the wonders of the wetlands. Paddling time is approximately three hours. Minimum age is 10. An adult must accompany children ages 10-14.
Henricus Visitor Center, 251 Henricus Park Road
Saturday, June 29, 1 - 5 p.m.  $19  Course 35178

James River Float
Take a beautiful float trip from Bent Creek to James River State Park. This six-mile float will run through gentle rapids and along rolling mountain sides. Enjoy lunch along the river, dip into the refreshing water and learn about some of the wildlife that thrives in this watery world. Kayaks and transportation provided. Minimum age is 12. An adult must accompany children ages 12-16. Paddling time is about four hours.
Parks Maintenance Office, 9201 Public Works Road
Saturday, July 13, 8 a.m.-6 p.m.  $35  Course 35159

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.
Henricus Visitor Center, 251 Henricus Park Road
Saturday, July 27, 5:30-8:30 p.m.  $16  Course 35162

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 ages 10-14. Paddling time is approximately two hours.
Henricus Visitor Center, 251 Henricus Park Road
Saturday, August 17, 5:30-8:30 p.m.  $16  Course 35163

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 ages 13-15 must be accompanied by an actively participating adult. Formal kayak instruction strongly recommended. Paddling time is approximately 3.5 hours.
Parks Maintenance Office, 9201 Public Works Road
Friday, Aug. 23, 9 a.m.-7 p.m.  $55  Course 35160

Tidal Lagoon Paddle
Paddle with the naturalist to explore and discover the Dutch Gap Conservation Area. Paddle to the graveyard, islands and the labyrinth. Search for great blues, bald eagles, osprey and other denizens of the tidal lagoon. Paddling time is approximately two hours.
Henricus Visitor Center, 251 Henricus Park Road
Saturday, Aug. 31, 4:30-7:30 p.m.  $16  Course 35166

Swift Creek Paddle
Paddle the lower reaches of Swift Creek. Explore part of the conservation area, and then venture upstream to bottomlands and swamps. For ages 10 and older. An adult must accompany children 10-14 years of age. Paddling time is approximately three hours.
Henricus Visitor Center, 251 Henricus Park Road
Saturday, Sept. 7, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.  $21  Course 35164

Oxbow Journey – The Story of the James River
Paddle the Dutch Gap Conservation Area to explore the river oxbow. Paddle along floodplains, swamps and high bluffs. Read stories in the river cliffs, see cypress knees in the swamps and hear stories of naval warfare and the first English Settlers. Minimum age is 12. An adult must accompany children aged 12-14. Paddling time is approximately three hours.
Henricus Visitor Center, 251 Henricus Park Road
Saturday, Sept. 14, 1-5 p.m.  $21  Course 35161
Presquile Island Boat Tour
Take a pontoon boat tour around Presquile National Wildlife Refuge to learn about this important resource on the James River. Participants will have an opportunity to explore the extensive trail system and visit the Menenak Discovery Center. Join Chesterfield County and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service naturalists as they search for bald eagles, great blue herons, egrets and the federally endangered Atlantic sturgeon. Children under age 10 must bring their own personal flotation device. Meet at the end of Bermuda Hundred Road. (Directions will be provided.)
Friday, May 24, 8:30-11:30 a.m.       Course 35167
Free; but register online at www.chesterfield.gov/parks

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 canoe and/or 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 318-8735.

Beginner Adult Sailing
June 22 - 23
July 13 - 14
Aug. 10 – 11
Course 35482
Course 35484
Course 35485

Intermediate Adult Sailing
Sept. 7 - 8
Course 35483

PARK PATROL
It is your park system and we need your help. As you enjoy the parks, we need you to report any issues that you encounter. Be on the lookout for issues on the trails, safety concerns on equipment, maintenance issues with restrooms, vandalism, criminal activity or other concerns. The parks exist for your enjoyment, and we want the amenities kept in excellent working order.

In addition if you encounter great conditions in the parks, we want to hear about that too. Feel free to contact us anytime.

Emergencies 911
Police – non-emergency: 748-1251
Parks and Recreation – main office: 748-1623
Parks and Recreation – after hours assistance: 748-1624, parksrec@chesterfield.gov

Find us on Facebook: @chesterfieldvaparksrec and Twitter @CCPRVA

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