



# The Oasis

The seasonal newsletter of Prince William Forest Park • Volume 1, Issue 10

## Prince William Forest Park Is Going To The Dogs!

From 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on April 28th Prince William Forest Park and the Friends of Prince William Forest Park will host the first annual "Paws in the Park" event. The event takes place during National Parks Week and will include a special edition "Bark Ranger" Junior Ranger activity booklet for ages 7-12.

"Thanks to our responsible visitors, dog attacks and negative wildlife encounters are relatively rare in Prince William Forest Park."

Paws in the Park will reach out to the many dog owners who consider Prince William Forest Park their backyard. The park is a great place for canines and their owners to enjoy a long hike, a short stroll, or picnic in the sun. Paws in the Park will reward our devoted dog lovers with fun and interesting demonstrations, speakers, and exhibits. The event will also encourage responsible dog use in the park. McGruff, the crime fighting dog, will be there to celebrate the day.

To celebrate the wonderful ways dogs contribute to our communities and quality of life, Paws in the Park will host working dog demonstrations by the Virginia Search and Rescue Dog Association, Town of Dumfries Police Department K-9 Unit, United States Park Ranger K-9 Unit, U.S. Park Police Patrol Dog Unit and the United States Marine Corps Security Battalion MP Company K-9 Section. Capital Tails, a non-profit, pet-centric magazine for the DC area, will join the event to take pictures and distribute copies of their free magazine - <http://www.tailsinc.com/>.



United States Park Police K9 unit will be one of the many police and search dog participants in Paws in the Park. Photo Courtesy: USPP.

In preparation for the summertime tick season, Dr. Roger Nichols, Veterinarian from Dumfries Animal Hospital, will speak about ways to help prevent Lyme disease in dogs. Robin Bennett, professional trainer for All About Dogs, along with other area dog professionals will host a ½ hour leash walking workshop. This workshop will give park visitors the tools they need to enjoy a relaxing walk in the park without their dogs pulling on a leash.

In units of the National Park Service, such as Prince William Forest Park, the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR 2.15 (a) (2)) says that all pets, where allowed in national park sites, are to be crated, caged or restrained at all times. For many dog owners seeing their dog sprint through the woods free of restraint is a pleasure, but for park wildlife and other park visitors it can be a very hazardous thing to do. In the United States, 4.7 million people are bitten by dogs every year.

For park wildlife, times of drought, limited forage, pregnancy, or new-born rearing are especially sensitive times when park wildlife (including coyote, deer, black bear, and bob-cat) will react negatively to roaming dogs and possibly attack. A female bear with cubs is more prone to attack the dog, and therefore the owner, to protect her cubs.

Thanks to our responsible visitors, dog attacks and negative wildlife encounters are rare in Prince William Forest Park. In an effort to continue this trend, Paws in the Park will both celebrate what we are doing right and encourage visitors to correct wrongdoings. Join park staff and the Friends of Prince William Forest Park from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. for Paws in the Park. For more information, visit our website at [www.nps.gov/prwi](http://www.nps.gov/prwi) or call the visitor center at 703-221-7181.

# Updates and Highlights...



The historic stable. Photo Courtesy: NPS.

## *Historic CCC Stable Undergoing Stabilization and Rehabilitation in 2007*

The historic stable and tack room housed horses and equipment for the Civilian Conservation Corp during the 1930s. The stable was built in 1938 and is located in what is now the maintenance yard of the park. Given its history, its two-story construction, and vertical round log exterior, the stable remains a unique resource of Prince William Forest Park. This spring, park maintenance staff began a restoration and stabilization of this building.

As part of the stabilization effort, several layers of old roofing have been removed and new shingles installed. The back wall of the stable, which was leaning out from the roof, has been drawn back into place with the use of cables and hydraulic jacks. Work continues on the structure with plans to repair or replace stable doors, windows, and any deteriorated siding.

The stable and tack room is one of 49 contributing buildings and structures in the Orenda/SP-26 Historic Cabin Camp 3 District.

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## *Park Acquires New Land*

The park recently acquired approximately 31 acres of land. Over 22 acres were added in the Mine Road area with the acquisition of a twenty-one acre parcel and a separate one acre parcel, and over three acres along Van Buren Road. The National Park Service (NPS) was able to acquire these lands from

owners who were interested in helping the NPS ensure further protection of Prince William Forest Park. The NPS appreciates the opportunity to acquire these lands, not only for the park, but also for the American public. The NPS extends its sincere gratitude to the Williams, Whiting, Turlington, Garrison, and Matthew families.



Newly acquired land in eastern portion of park. Map Courtesy: NPS.

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## *Follow-Up on Arson Fire:*

The investigation into the cause of the B-Loop Fire at Prince William Forest Park ended on January 18th when the primary suspect pled guilty in federal district court.



Evidence of the B-loop fire. Photo Courtesy: NPS.

The fire, which started on March 27, 2006 near Oak Ridge Campground, burned 318 acres and destroyed one structure. The fire was suppressed by 70 firefighters at a cost of \$175,000. NPS Special Agent Chris Smith of the Investigative Services Branch Division of Law Enforcement, Security and Emergency Services, working out of Shenandoah National Park, headed a joint investigation by Prince William

Forest Park rangers and personnel from the Virginia Department of Forestry. A suspect was identified and eventually brought to court. Through a plea agreement he pled guilty to discarding a smoldering item (a misdemeanor) and was sentenced to a one year probation. He also agreed to pay restitution in the amount of \$7,977.55 for the replacement of a structure lost in the blaze. Suspicious wildland fires can often be difficult to investigate with traditional law enforcement techniques. By requesting a wildland fire cause and origin investigator from the Investigative Services Branch and through diligence and hard work, this investigation was brought to a successful conclusion.

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## *Get away to the Hickory Ridge Guest House!*

Do you have friends or family that plan to vacation near the Washington, D.C. area and need accommodations? Are you looking for a comfortable place for friends or family to stay when they come to visit? Or, would you simply like to get away and enjoy a quiet weekend in a local deluxe accommodation? If you answered yes to any of these questions, then you need to get in touch with us! This fall, Prince William Forest Park will be offering an upscale overnight rental getaway unit that comes completely furnished. Situated nicely on the boundary of the park, this comfy rambler unit features 3 bedrooms, 2 baths, a kitchen and dining area, and living space. The outside features a large yard, and is quiet and serene. It is a great place to find rest and relaxation, and is truly a home away from home. Daily, weekend, or week-long rentals will be available. For more information, please contact us at 703-221-5843.



Hickory Ridge House. Photo Courtesy: NPS.

# Extreme Makeover: Pyrite Mine Edition

This spring one of the most intriguing cultural landmarks in the park will be getting a makeover! The abandoned pyrite mine site, familiar to many North Valley Trail hikers, will undergo another phase in its restoration.

The Cabin Branch Pyrite Mine began operations in 1889 only to be abandoned in 1920 due to decreased demand and labor disputes. Pyrite, or "Fool's Gold", was an important resource because of the sulfur contained in the ore. Sulfur was needed to make gunpowder, glass, soap, bleach, textiles, paper, dye, medicine, sugar, rubber, starch, and fertilizer.

Efforts to reclaim the site started in the 1970s, but full-scale reclamation did not begin until the early 1990s. The mine shafts were sealed, lime caps added, and numerous soil and water studies were performed, creating a safe environment for wildlife and visitors.

The restoration project was almost complete by the turn of the millennium, except for one problem. This once rich piedmont forested site was missing something - the trees. The culprit is *Lespedeza cuneata*, an invasive perennial weed. The invasive grass has taken over nearly 3.2 acres of the site. Attempts were made in the late 1990's to remediate the area with hardwoods, but with no success due to acidic soil conditions.

Yet, all is not lost! One species, the early successional *Pinus Virginia* (Virginia Pine) has out-competed the lespedeza, colonizing the site from one side.

Late this spring and early summer field technicians will be supervising the planting of around 2,000 Virginia Pine saplings. To preserve the historic integrity of the site, the trees will be planted the old fashion way with dibble bars and elbow grease.

Already volunteer groups have been organized to help with the effort. Paul Petersen, Acting Chief of Resource Management, says, "This is a great opportunity for volunteers to learn about our park's natural and cultural resources. It gives volunteers an outdoor experience and instills a sense of resource stewardship."

So the next time you walk the North Valley Trail, look across the stream and you may see an entire new colony of Virginia Pines eager to sprout into a forest. They will be living proof of continued efforts to return this damaged land back to its original condition.



The Pyrite Mine site; yesterday and today. Photo Courtesy: NPS

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## Cabin Camps Opening for Season

It's that time of year again! You can hear the peaceful sounds of spring: the birds singing their morning songs, the creeks gently flowing, the crickets chirping. That means it's time for Prince William Forest Park to open the doors of its rustic cabin camps for the 2007 Spring/Summer camping season. Prince William Forest Park is the home of five separate cabin camps with structures dating back to the 1930's.

All five camps have a large dining hall with commercial appliances and a dining area for large groups to come together and share the exciting stories of their day in the outdoors

at Prince William Forest Park. There are also individual cabins for rent that sleep four, six, or ten people. Individual cabins do not have a central dining area, but each cabin comes with a picnic table and grill.



The Infirmary in Cabin Camp 5. Photo Courtesy: NPS.

After a delicious meal and some games on the large grass field, groups can head off to the fire ring to roast marshmallows and sing campfire songs, or perhaps tell some chilling ghost stories!

If you would like more information on renting one of our cabin camps or are interested in volunteering with our spring cleaning, please contact 703-221-5843 or email [megan\\_e\\_mcfadden@nps.gov](mailto:megan_e_mcfadden@nps.gov).

# Spring Into Safety!

At least 55,000 people each year sustain injuries from trimmers, edgers, pruners, and power saws. Over 60,000 people are treated in emergency rooms each year for lawn-mower injuries and another 145,000 people will visit the emergency room for ladder mishaps. Don't let this be you.

With warmer weather and longer days approaching we will soon be emerging from our winter cocoons. Many of us will be lacing up our shoes for our first outdoor walk or jog of the season. Others are itching to get started on spring cleaning, home repairs, and yes, yard work! No matter what the warmer weather beckons for you, we encourage you to work and play safe. Here are a few safety tips that can help to spruce up your spring:

- Limber up. Overdue walks & yard chores may seem easy, but they involve muscles you probably haven't used in a while.
- Keep your skin, eyes and ears protected – they are invaluable!
- Before you do any “hands-on” weed removal, be sure you know how to identify poison ivy, sumac, oak, and similar toxic plants.
- Keep all household and garage chemicals, paints, cleaning fluids, gasoline, medicines, etc. labeled and stored properly. Properly dispose of any that are leaking or expired. And, as always, keep them out of reach of children.
- Check your BBQ grill for leaks and cracks, and be sure to store any propane tanks away from your house or garage.
- Always read the manufacturer's instructions on tools, powered equipment, and ladders.
- Choose nontoxic products for your spring cleaning. Vinegar and water is an inexpensive and effective window cleaning solution.



Poison Ivy can appear in leaf and hairy vine form. Photo courtesy: NPS.

These are just a few precautions to consider during the spring.

- Replace smoke detector batteries and make sure your fire extinguishers are in good condition. Develop and practice a family fire escape plan in case of emergencies.
- It's a good idea to keep a working flashlight and a battery powered radio available for spring storms.

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## Be On The Lookout For These Pests!

As spring quickly approaches resource managers in the park are asking everyone to be on the look-out for these three pests.

1. Gypsy Moth - The gypsy moth is native to Europe and Asia and was originally introduced in the United States through Medford, Massachusetts in 1869. Despite control efforts, the gypsy moth has persisted and extended its range. In the United States, the gypsy moth has rapidly moved north to Canada, west to Wisconsin, and south to North Carolina. Gypsy moth caterpillars defoliate millions of acres of trees annually in the United States.

The gypsy moth feeds on oaks, crabapple, linden, willow, birch, aspen, and more than 250

other species of trees. The caterpillars hatch in May and feed through early July. During an outbreak they can strip trees, seemingly overnight.

The gypsy moth has five pairs of blue dots followed by six pairs of red dots down the length of its back during its caterpillar stage. For more information on the gypsy moth, contact the visitor center at (703) 221-7181.



Gypsy Moth Caterpillar. Photo courtesy: NPS.

2. Emerald Ash Borer – The emerald ash borer was discovered in southeastern Michigan in the summer of 2002, and by 2004 it had killed more than 20 million ash trees in the region. Recently, trees carrying the insect were delivered from Michigan to Prince Georges County Maryland, and were later discovered by a Maryland Department of Agriculture inspector. This insect can reap havoc on green and white ash species. Where it is found, managers must remove and destroy all ash trees within a half-mile radius.

Distinctive markings: Adult beetles are metallic green and about half an inch long with rounded abdomens and flat backs. It leaves a D-shaped hole in the bark of the tree when they emerge in spring.

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# New Volunteer Opportunity!



For information on any of our volunteer opportunities, please contact Park Ranger Jenn Kays at 703-221-5004.

Job Title: "Impromptu Interpreters"

Dates: Summer, 2007 - flexible hours

Duties: Volunteer will provide interpretation to the visitors of Prince William Forest Park by meeting them where they are - out in the park. Volunteer will be stationed, during the summer months in various locations around the park. The goal is to intercept visitors while they are out in the park to provide short "interpretive moments." Those volunteers doing historical interpretation will be in period dress. Topics include: natural history, geology, Native American, Revolutionary War, Civilian Conservation Corps, and pyrite mine history.

An extensive training period and a commitment of at least 4 hours per month is required.

Skills: Public speaking skills are required, teaching or tour guide experience is desirable and prior knowledge of specific time periods or park history is desirable.

Special requirements: "Impromptu Interpretation" volunteers must have their programs evaluated by NPS staff before they can go into the field. A one-time videotaping of each program will occur to keep for future training purposes.

Compensation: Volunteer will receive training in National Park Service interpretation competencies. The skills acquired in the program will provide excellent experience for future tour guides or interpreters.

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## Friends of Prince William Forest Park

The Friends of Prince William Forest Park is a dynamic group that is vital to the mission of Prince William Forest Park. Members have many reasons for joining, but the common thread is a passion for Prince William Forest Park and a desire to make a difference in the community. Members are advocates for cultural, environmental, and recreational resources in the park. The diversity of the group mirrors the diversity of the park, and everyone brings something to the table.

"Friends" events are as varied as their members and are open to all park visitors. In March, the group took a two-mile family and friend scavenger hike on the Laurel Loop Trail. The Spring Forward Hike was an excellent opportunity to see the forest in a bare state – right before the awakening of spring. It also gave everyone a chance to network while enjoying the rolling hills and chilly streams on a warm winter day. The next event will be Paws in the Park on April 28th, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Pine Grove Picnic Area near the visitor center. Paws in the Park is co-sponsored by the National Park Service. If you are interested in participating as an exhibitor, volunteer, or for more information, please call the Prince William Forest Park visitor center at 703-221-7181.



Friends group on the Spring Forward Hike.  
Photo Courtesy: NPS.

The Friends group welcomes all guests and park enthusiasts to participate in Friends activities and events. The Chopawamsic Cycling Challenge, a road and mountain bike event, will be coming up in September, and anyone who would like to help with, or ride in the challenge is encouraged to contact the Friends Group. The event is open to all ages and skill levels.

Other events taking place this year include a May bike ride and the annual Friends picnic and trail clinic on June 2nd.

The Friends of Prince William Forest Park was formed in 1989 to help conserve and enhance the park's natural and cultural resources, monitor activities that affect the park ecosystem, and provide citizens a forum to discuss issues and decisions affecting the park.

Membership is open to anyone who has an interest in Prince William Forest Park. For more information please visit the Friends website at [www.fwfp.org](http://www.fwfp.org).



Emerald Ash Borer  
Photo: <http://www.michigan.gov/mda/>

3. Asian Long-Horned Beetle (ALB) - ALB is native to parts of Asia. The beetle has since been introduced to the United States through the shipping industry. Infestations have been found in New York, New Jersey, Illinois, and Toronto, Canada.

In order to eradicate this pest, quarantines have been established around infested areas. Any tree with signs of ALB is immediately removed and destroyed. Most of the initial ALB infestations have been found by the public, not pest specialists. So be on the look-out!

These beetles range in size from 0.75 - 1.25 inches long. Their antennae are long with black and white coloring. Their bodies are glossy black with irregular white spots.



Asian Long-Horned Beetle (ALB). [http://www.invasivepeciesinfo.gov/animals/asianbeetle\\_child.shtml](http://www.invasivepeciesinfo.gov/animals/asianbeetle_child.shtml)

If you see any of these insects while visiting the park, please contact the visitor center at (703) 221-7181, or stop by to fill out a "wildlife sighting" card. It is also important to check your shoes, firewood and camping gear for these pests so as to not accidentally bring them into the park.

# Here Comes the Eastern Cottontail!



Eastern Cottontail Rabbit. Photo Courtesy: NPS.

Here at Prince William Forest Park, the natural world is awakening with energy and vigor after the cold of winter. As you travel around the park, keep your eyes and ears alert for the wild inhabitants that share the forest.

Along with seeing the forest come alive in the spring, we also see stores filling shelves with chocolates, plastic eggs, baskets, fake grass, pastel colors, and of course, the Easter Bunny. We may not have the Easter Bunny or Peter Cottontail here at the park, but one popular inhabitant that can be seen hopping along roadsides and trails is the eastern cottontail rabbit.

The eastern cottontail is a small rabbit with grayish-brown fur, a reddish-brown neck, long ears, and a white fluffy tail. The park provides a buffet of plants for the cottontail including grasses, clover, and other small plants in the spring and woody brambles and twigs of birch, oak, dogwood, and maple trees in the winter.

The park also provides the rabbits with a mixed habitat of wooded areas and open space. Brush and other low-lying plants provide needed refuge from predators and other threats. Between February and September,

the eastern cottontail mates and averages three litters a year with up to nine kittens per litter!

Their nests are found on the ground and are usually covered with vegetation or brambles for protection. The park has a diverse landscape and terrain so there are many different homes to be found for not only the eastern cottontail, but for many animals.

Though you may not find the eggs painted with polka dots and pastels or filled with crème or caramel, the rabbits of Prince William Forest Park can still be an inspirational sight.



Eastern Cottontail Rabbit nest. Photo courtesy: NPS



National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

Prince William Forest Park  
18100 Park Headquarters Road  
Triangle, VA 22172-1644



## A Note From the Superintendent: Proposed Fee Increase

Dear Park Visitors;

As winter closes, park staff are working hard to ready the trails and facilities for another spring and summer season. Each year we aim to meet the highest standards in customer service and visitor satisfaction. As a unit of the National Park Service, Prince William Forest Park belongs not only to the current generation, but to those generations yet to come.

To continue to meet those high standards in the coming years, we are planning increases in two of our visitor fees in April of 2009. It is our goal to keep the park open and accessible to everyone, without imposing a financial burden.

We propose to maintain the current \$5.00 per vehicle entrance fee and \$3.00 per person walk-in fee for the foreseeable future. In April of 2009, the \$20.00 annual pass will increase to a \$30.00 pass, and the campsite fee at Oak Ridge Campground will increase from \$15.00 to \$20.00. The Interagency Senior Pass (62+) and Interagency Access Pass (for persons with disabilities) will continue to provide a 50% discount at Oak Ridge Campground.

These proposed fee changes will help the park to maintain its current standards of customer service despite rising fuel, utility, and personnel costs. Your entrance fees work to make large-scale capital improvements possible in the park such as the new waterline installed in 2006.

For 60 days we will be collecting public comment regarding this fee change. Please e-mail your comments [prwi\\_fees@nps.gov](mailto:prwi_fees@nps.gov) or call 703-221-7181.

Thank you for your interest and continued support of Prince William Forest Park.

Sincerely,  
*Bob Hickman, Superintendent*

The Oasis, the official seasonal newsletter of Prince William Forest Park, is released in spring, summer, fall, and winter.

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18100 Park Headquarters Road  
Triangle, VA 22172 - 1644

Or call: 703-221-7181

<http://www.nps.gov/prwi>

## Prince William Forest Park Information Directory

General Park Information	703-221-7181
Visitor Center - Open daily 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.	
Camping	703-221-7181
Including individual, group and backcountry.	
Cabin Camping	703-221-5843
Including group cabins and individual rentals.	
Travel Trailer Village	800-737-5730
RV/Trailer camping facility off Route 234 with full hook-ups.	
Ranger-led Programs	703-221-7181
Including regularly scheduled, special request and education programs.	
Volunteering in the Park	703-221-7181
Learn how you can help.	
Official Park Website	<a href="http://www.nps.gov/prwi">www.nps.gov/prwi</a>
For the latest information about the park, surf this website.	