



THE OASIS

A Seasonal Newsletter of Prince William Forest Park

Greening the Park: Environmental Leadership

Although Kermit the Frog sang, “it’s not easy being green,” Prince William Forest Park is seeing green and smiling. And we’re not the only ones. It seems that more and more people appreciate the value of being green, of looking for recycled products to buy and ways of reducing waste. Visitors to Prince William Forest Park are asked to carry out what they carry in. In doing so, visitors support this “Trash Free Park” and make it a cleaner, greener place for all to enjoy. It also means maintenance crews can spend more time caring for historic buildings and beautiful trails than hauling trash. We at Prince William Forest Park have discovered that *being* is believing. Park officials support federal requirements to purchase recycled-content products and to promote waste prevention and recycling programs in the park. But, park staff has also found environmental thinking doesn’t just make sense, it “makes” money. By spending more for things like recycled plastic lumber now, the park is realizing savings in the long run because of reduced maintenance and replacement costs.

Prince William Forest Park is proud of being a leader in creating an area that is environmentally conscientious. Visitors can find examples of recycled products throughout the park, including; recycled paper and paper products, recycled plastic lumber benches, picnic tables and boardwalks, and



An aerial view of Prince William Forest Park, which is the largest natural area in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan region at over 15,000 acres.

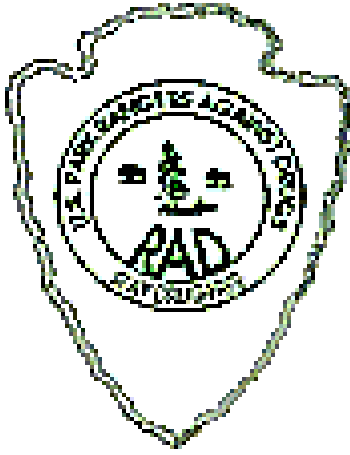
even environmentally friendly cleaning products. Additionally, by recycling 90% of the materials from a land reclamation project, over 170 tons of concrete and rebar did not end up in the landfill.

Kermit sang his song about how hard it is being green, but in the end he changed his tune singing, “When green is all there is to be it could make you wonder why, but why wonder why? ...I am green and it’ll do fine, it’s beautiful! And I think it’s what I want to be.”

If you want to know more about being green and environmentally friendly products, just give us a call at 703- 221- 2758.

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RADical Dude: Seven Years Drug Free!

Rangers have completed their 7th year at Graham Park Middle School in Triangle instructing the Rangers Against Drugs (RAD) program. The program is taught to sixth grade students over an eight- week period.

Lessons cover the National Park Service, the “gateway” drugs, marijuana, tobacco, and alcohol, self-esteem, decision making, and ways to refuse drug offers. Rangers reach over 350 students every year with this program.

What are students saying about RAD?

“RAD has been very educational and fun. I have confidence in myself to stay away from drugs.”

“RAD...is a class that teaches you how to live life the way it should be.” “...once I started hearing and understanding what was being taught I was happy.”

Through this outreach program, Rangers introduce the National Park Service to students who may not have the opportunity to visit a park in person. The RAD program provides another opportunity to make a positive impact on a young life and future generations.

READY. SET. SAFE!

Whether you plan to hike, bike or picnic, check- out these safety tips to keep your activities safe as the summer turns to fall:

1. *Protect Yourself From Heat Stress.* Drink plenty of water to replace fluids and minerals (don't wait until you are thirsty!). In the heat you should drink 5- 7 ounces every 15- 20 minutes. Dress lightly. Take frequent breaks. Eat light, cool meals. If you begin to feel dizzy and lightheaded as if you are going to faint, or have a headache, take cover in a shaded area, drink some water, and rest. These could be warning signs of heat exhaustion.

2. *Protect Your Skin.* Apply waterproof or sweat-resistant sunscreen 15- 30 minutes before exposure to the sun. Be sure the sunscreen has a sun protection factor (SPF) of 15 or greater. Reapply as needed. Limit direct exposure between 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. (UV rays are more intense

when the sun is high in the sky). If you are unsure, take the shadow test: If your shadow is shorter than you, the sun's rays are the strongest! (FACT: THERE ARE MORE THAN 500,000 NEW CASES OF SKIN CANCER REPORTED EACH YEAR). Don't be fooled by cloudy days!

3. *Protect Your Eyes.* Wear sunglasses that block 99% of the sun's ultra- violet rays. Expensive sunglasses are not necessarily the BEST! Be sure to check the UV blockage.

4. *Protect Your Children and Pets.* Never leave children or pets in a hot car. On a hot day, temperatures can reach 130 degrees or more when the windows are rolled up.

Following these simple safety tips will help you to enjoy this season and many more to come in the park!



Just a little bit of planning can go a long way in keeping you and your family safe this season.



A Refuge In Your Own Backyard!

If you have received the Prince William Forest Park Newsletter in the past, you may have noticed the new layout and title, “The Oasis.” This reflects what many of us feel about this special national park area – that it provides a place for us in this busy world to get away from the trappings of civilization for as little as an hour, or as much as two weeks.

Located just 32 miles south of Washington D.C. in Prince William County, Virginia, this National Park Service unit is the largest natural area in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan region. At over 15,000 acres, the park serves as the largest protected example of a Piedmont forest ecosystem in United States. As a result, visitors are given a rare glimpse of what most of the East Coast once looked like before the first European settlers arrived in the early 1600s.

There are many ways for visitors to enjoy this oasis. The park offers a variety of recreational opportunities, including wildlife viewing, 37 miles of hiking trails and 21 miles of bicycle- accessible roads and trails. The park’s scenic drive meanders through the park for 12 miles allowing for a very pleasant driving experience. Several tent camping options, including family, group and backcountry camping, are available. Or enjoy rustic cabin camping or the full- service, concessionaire-operated RV campground.

The Visitor Center is open every day from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Staff are available to provide park and local area information, maps, descriptions of camping opportunities, and guides on picnicking, hiking, biking, and fishing. Visitors are also invited to enjoy the center’s exhibits and a short orientation film.

Ranger programs and evening campfire programs are available at varying times throughout the year. Please call the visitor center at 703-221- 7181 for additional information. Ranger availability for programs depends on staffing levels that vary throughout the year.

Does your pet need a vacation too? Prince William Forest Park is a great place to walk your pet, which are allowed on park trails. Park rules and regulations require visitors to have their pet on a leash of six feet in length, or less, at all times. Keeping your pet in control by always having it on a leash keeps people, wildlife and your pet safe. Others may not appreciate your pet’s company. Pets are prohibited in the following areas: (except for pets aiding persons with disabilities) Chopawamsic Backcountry Area, Turkey Run Ridge Campground and in any public building or in any Cabin Camp. Pet owners shall be responsible for removing pet excrement from campsites, picnic areas, parking lots, and other public use areas.

Doggie Dos & Please Don’ts

Why do I have to leash my dog?

We know you love your dog and think that letting him run will be fun for both you and him but:

- A leash prevents your dog from running away and becoming lost.
- Leashes restrain territorial and protective dogs from other dogs.
- Unleashed dogs can intimidate other hikers and their dogs on the trail.
- Unleashed dogs can harass, injure, and kill wildlife, which are protected in all national parks.
- A leash can prevent your dog from being attacked by diseased animals, bitten by cornered wildlife, and sprayed by defensive skunks.
- A leashed dog’s keen senses can draw your attention to nearby wildlife that you might not otherwise see.
- Failure to leash your dog can result in a substantial fine.

For the benefit of your dog, other people, wildlife, and other dogs....

PLEASE KEEP YOUR DOG LEASHED!





The 10th annual National Public Lands Day (NPLD) is Saturday, September 20, 2003. Prince William Forest Park is sponsoring several volunteer projects from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. To celebrate the day, entrance fees will be waived.

National Public Lands Day is an annual event that brings volunteers together to improve the country's largest natural resource - our public lands. Volunteers gather at the end of September to help improve public lands used for recreation, education, and enjoyment all over the country. Based on past participation, over 70,000 volunteers are expected to give their service to approximately 500 public spaces throughout all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.

Projects scheduled to be held at Prince William Forest Park include:

- re- establishing a section of South Valley Trail
- trash and tire removal
- cleaning waysides near Pine Grove picnic area and the visitor center
- Turkey Run Ridge campsite restoration

For more information, call Karen Brantner at 703- 221- 2391 or Kay Shively at 703- 221- 2366.

Volunteers will help with projects from 9:00 a.m. to noon and will then join together for a park sponsored lunch. Join us in preserving one of the nation's special places.

**Saturday
September 20th**

No Lions or Tigers or *Bears*?

Is it true there are no American Black Bears (*Ursus americanus*) in Prince William Forest Park? Well, sort of.... Though it is not likely that you would see one, park neighbors have sighted black bears on the western boundary of the park.

The American Black Bear inhabits wooded areas throughout North America. With the continuing disappearance of critical habitats, many animals, including the black bear, have to travel further and more often for food. Prince William County is no exception. Wildlife are looking for food and shelter further afield and Prince William Forest Park may provide needed habitat.

Here are some of the "bear" facts. Adults average five feet in length and weigh between 125 and 400 pounds. The black bear is typically a solitary animal unless it is breeding or caring for its young. Mating occurs in the spring and the cubs are born in January or February during hibernation. Young cubs stay with their mother until their second winter. Black bears prefer berries, nuts, and other plants, but will also eat small animals and fish which are plentiful in the park. They are

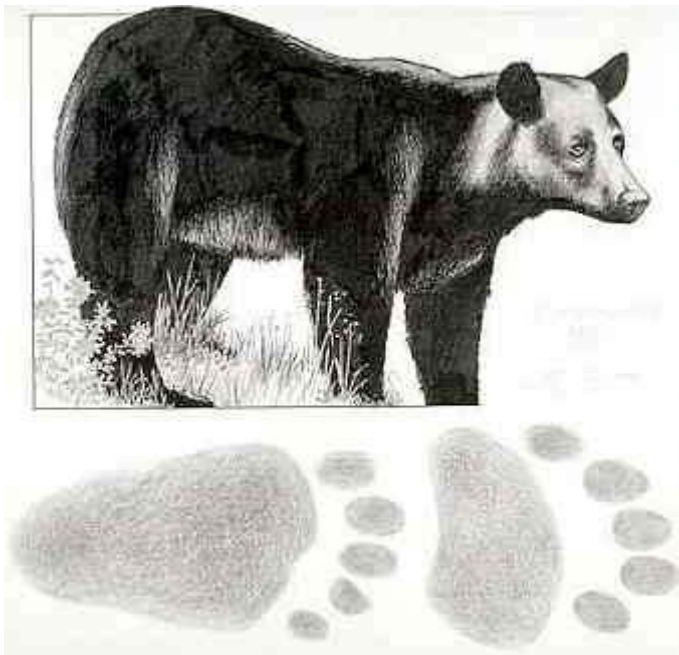
relatively non- aggressive, but will attack if injured, or if they feel that they or their cubs are in danger. Black bears are most active in the spring and early summer, and in the late evening or early morning when it is cool. They rarely travel in open spaces, but are attracted to bird feeders, unsecured trash, and other sources of food.

Here are a few things you can do to avoid negative black bear encounters in your yard or at your campsite:

- Do not leave any food outside, including pet food.
- Store garbage in sealed containers.
- Clean barbecue grills after each use.
- Periodically clean trash cans to eliminate odors.
- Fill bird feeders from late fall until early spring when bears are hibernating or bring them in at night.

If you come in contact with a black bear:

- Stay calm.
- Face the bear and back away slowly - do not make any sudden movements.
- Give the bear plenty of space to leave the area.
- Do not climb a tree or run, he's faster than you are.
- And, if you have to...fight back.



Encounters with a black bear can be exhilarating, but there are some things you should know to make it safer for both you and the bear.

Who You Gonna Call?!

Ever wanted a quick way to find out about your favorite part of the park? Well, here's a fast and easy contact list for Prince William Forest Park.

General Park Information 703-221-7181
Visitor Center - Open daily 8:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

Camping 703-221-7181
Including family, group and backcountry.

Cabin Camps 703-221-5843
Including group cabins and individual rentals, please leave a message.

Travel Trailer Village 800-737-5730
Camping area 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 more about how you can help.

Park Website www.nps.gov/prwi
Updated regularly.



The self-registration station at Oak Ridge Campground.



A member of the Friends of Prince William Forest Park telling people about the park during Founder's Day.

Being a Friend of the Park

The Friends of Prince William Forest Park (FPWFP) will host a Recruitment and Membership Meeting on October 18, 2003 from 4:00 pm - 6:00 pm. Current members will provide a variety of presentations giving potential members greater insight into the park and the benefits of being a Friend. "We are looking for both corporate and individual members," said Susan Bond, FPWFP Treasurer. "The ideal member is someone who has a personal connection to the park, someone who enjoys nature and has a commitment to protecting Prince William Forest Park for future generations!"

Members of FPWFP help support park activities and the conservation of park resources. Here are some things that make this park special:

- Over 15,000 acres of natural beauty, wildlife and recreational opportunities, including miles hiking & bicycle trails, & tent, cabin & RV sites.
- Rangers lead interpretive walks, give evening programs, and provide educational outreach to the local community throughout the year.
- Five rustic cabin camps, built by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), have been used for decades for recreation and military purposes. These camps, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, are used today for public recreation.

The FPWFP Membership meeting is on October 18th from 4:00 pm - 6:30pm and is open to all. Dinner will be provided. The menu will be typical CCC fair, served in the Cabin Camp 3 dining hall. Since food and beverages will be provided, please **RSVP to Kathy Wentworth Drahosz at 703- 551- 0734 by October 13, 2003.** For information, visit: www.fpwfp.org.





National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Prince William Forest Park
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EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA

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Family Fun for the Fall

Enjoy an evening outdoors surrounded by fall foliage. You can rent a cabin in our individual camping unit for as little as \$30 per night. Our historic cabins were built in the 1930s by the Civilian Conservation Corps. Modern conveniences include ceiling fans, outdoor grills, and a picnic table at each cabin. Metal bed frames with cots are provided inside the cabin for sleeping. Bathrooms are centrally located.



If you would like to spend an evening getting back to nature with your family or friends, we have the place for you.

Enjoy an evening or two with your family or friends roasting marshmallows over a campfire, taking in a ranger-guided program or simply just relaxing and enjoying the great outdoors. Our family camping season ends mid-October, so reserve your spot now by calling 703- 221- 5843.