



The Oasis

The Seasonal Newsletter of Prince William Forest Park

Springtime Wildland Fire Wrap-up.

From March 27 - April 4th, over 70 wildland firefighters from across the country fought and eventually controlled a 318-acre wildland fire that began near the B-loop of Oak Ridge Campground. Though no buildings were destroyed and no serious injuries occurred, the Oak Ridge Campground amphitheatre, where ranger-led talks take place, was damaged and the screen and stage needed to be replaced. In total the fire cost approximately \$125,000.

The 318 acre “B-loop” fire was human-caused and cost approximately \$125,000.

As we move further and further into the summer camping season, a look back on this fire may shed some light on the importance of fire safety during your visit to Prince William Forest Park and other outdoor areas.

In the late afternoon of March 27th, Jim Pieper, a biological technician at Prince William Forest Park reported the fire to law enforcement personnel. National Park Service firefighters immediately established incident command and began an initial phase of attack on the fire.



The stage and screen at Oak Ridge Campground Amphitheatre were the only park structures burned by the fire. Photo courtesy: NPS.



Over 70 firefighters from various federal and local agencies battled the 318 acre fire. Here, Park Ranger Chris Derman is raking a fire line to stop the spread of the blaze. Photo courtesy: NPS.

They aggressively fought the fire late into the night of the 27th, with the primary objective of containing the fire. Early the next day, regional National Park Service firefighters and California-based National Forest Service crews arrived. These federal firefighters began building a fire line along the southern edge of the fire on Scenic Drive with help from Prince William County Fire and Rescue.

The goal over the next two days was to deprive the fire of fuel to prevent it from spreading. A fire line (a path cleared of combustible materials) was cut through the forest to act as a “road block” to the fire. Thanks to quick and thorough work by firefighters, this task was completed and the fire was officially “contained,” or surrounded by a fire line, on March 30th. It was another week before officials officially declared the fire completely extinguished.

Due to the extremely dry conditions of late March 2006, this fire burned hotter and faster than expected, showing far more active behavior than firefighters typically expect to see in the east.

Due to the extremely dry conditions, this fire burned hotter and faster than expected.

In western states it is common to see fire jump to the tops of trees, “torching out” as firefighters will call it, yet this is seldom seen in eastern hardwood forests such as those at Prince William Forest Park. In eastern hardwood forests, fires typically tend to “creep” through leaf litter on the forest floor. During the “B-Loop” fire, however, it was common to see Holly, Mountain Laurel, and even some

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Updates and Highlights...

Rt. 234 Environmental Assessment

An Environmental Assessment (EA) was released for comment on June 1. The purpose of the EA is to examine alternatives for providing access to the park from the Rte. 234 corridor. Each of the alternatives is evaluated on a range of subject areas including environmental, historical, and visitor experience impacts.

Based on analysis of the trail impacts, the National Park Service (NPS) environmentally-preferred alternative is for a bicycle/pedestrian access from Rte. 234 at Waterway Drive. This would provide an entrance to a parking lot, accommodating 50 – 100 vehicles at a trail head. An improved surface trail would then connect to the existing Spriggs Lane Fire Road and Burma Fire Road, providing bicycle and pedestrian access to Park Scenic Drive.

The public comment period for the EA closed on July 15. The NPS will now evaluate and analyze all of the comments. A final EA will be issued pending a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). The NPS will then seek funding to begin the design and construction processes. These design and construction phases may still be several years away.

If you would like to receive notifications of public comment periods in the future, contact the visitor center from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at 703-221-7181.



The current park entrance, located off of Rt. 619 - Joplin Road. Photo courtesy: NPS.

National Parks America Tour 2006

On Saturday, June 17th, 2006, Prince William Forest Park staff joined 83 volunteers for the 2006 National Parks America Tour. Volunteers put together recycled plastic picnic tables, rehabilitated two campsites at Turkey Run Ridge Campground, cleaned fire rings in two cabin camps, performed hazard fuel reduction, cleaned-up brush around a historic CCC structure, and rehabilitated a social trail.



Volunteers from the US Marine Corps do some heavy lifting to rehabilitate Turkey Run Ridge Group Campground. Photo courtesy: NPS.

The park received a \$3000.00 donation from the Wal-Mart Foundation for the event. Thank you to all of our volunteers who help make this event a true success!



A volunteer group helps construct recycled-plastic picnic tables. Photo courtesy: NPS.

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A dry spring and heavy leaf-litter led to a quick-moving blaze. Photo courtesy: NPS.

hardwood trees “torching out.” This indicates a very hot fire, which we will see evidence of in blackened trees for years to come.

Within the few months since the fire, the area is already demonstrating that fire is often responsible for “rebirth” in the forest. It cleans out underbrush and dead organic matter and enriches the soil. This can lead to positive and negative effects.

For example, a 50 -acre stand of white pine trees was engulfed by the fire. Though some damage may have been done to the standing trees, white pine seeds are serotinous – they germinate after fire. Park staff will monitor this stand of trees in the upcoming years to study the effects of the fire.

Today most of the understory of the burn area, now open to more sunlight and rain, is green with the new growth of trees, shrubs, and flowers. However, despite some of its positive effects, the “B-loop” fire was a costly and dangerous situation for the National Park Service and the firefighters who fought the blaze. An investigation into the fire by National Park Service Law Enforcement Officials determined that the fire was human-caused, and a criminal case is still pending. To prevent such fires in the future, please obey all signs and ensure that your fire is always “dead-out” before you leave your campsite.

Regional Directors and Park Staff Celebrate Completion of \$6,000,000 Waterline Project

It's completed! Approximately 14 miles of new waterline has been installed throughout the park. Maybe you have noticed a difference?

The new waterline system delivers more water pressure than the previous park system. The previous system was installed in the 1930s by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). That system served us well for many years, but was showing its age with frequent breakdowns and troubles. The new system will be a reliable water source for many years to come.

This project was accomplished with assistance from all of the 12 greater Washington National Parks. A portion of the fee dollars taken in at all National Park Service sites are disseminated for larger, more expensive improvement projects. Terry Carlstrom, former Director of the National Capital Region, approved the use of 6 million dollars to complete this project. Under the leadership of the current director of the National Capital Region, Joe Lawler, this project has come to a successful completion.



Current NPS National Capital Regional Director, Joe Lawler, Retired National Capital Regional Director, Terry Carlstrom, and Superintendent Bob Hickman at the waterline completion celebration. NPS Photo.

Park staff would also like to extend our thanks to the Steve Smith, NPS Project Coordinator and to the project contractor, W.C. Spratt of Fredericksburg, VA, for their efforts and dedication.



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Prince William Forest Park is an oasis of natural beauty and human history located only 35 miles south of Washington, D.C. This 15,000 piedmont forest is crisscrossed by 37 miles of hiking trails, 21 miles of bicycle accessible trails, and countless miles of the meandering Quantico Creek.

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The National Park Service cares for the special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

New items added to park store

The most recent addition to the park store is a new display for the National Audubon Society and Wild Republic plush birds. When squeezed, these stuffed animals make the actual call of the birds they represent, making them the perfect gift for the young birder. Another new bookstore addition is our camp store. Campers in need of tent pegs, tent repair kits, ponchos, and batteries no longer have to leave the park.

Hikers can also pick up quality hiking staffs from Hike America. Each staff is handcrafted and will provide years of use. A hiking staff can reduce the stress on knees and backs, increase traction and allow hikers to test uncertain terrain while hiking.

Updated topographic maps are also now available for purchase. The previous maps were created in 1984. The new maps were produced in 1997 and reflect the changes in the park over 13 years. In addition to these new items we are always adding new books. Stop by the visitor center and check out the new and improved Eastern National bookstore.



Reader's Voice!

Dear Ranger Laura,
My husband John and I took a walk through the park on Sunday 7 May for his birthday with our miniature schnauzer, Charlie. We parked at the lot at the Mawavi Road, and took the road to the South Lake Trail toward the CCC bridge.

Coming up one of the hills near the lake, on the right side of the trail, I spotted a lady's slipper growing along the side of the path. I had not seen one since I was a child in Vermont. My mother was the one who showed me my first lady slipper, because it was growing in our back yard and she wanted my friends and I to be careful not to trample it.



The Pink Lady Slipper, *Cypripedium acaule*.
Photo courtesy: Colleen Borley.

My husband and I love the park and we both agree that the park is a gem and we are lucky to have it so near our home.

Sincerely,
Colleen Borley

*Colleen, John and Charlie,
Thank you for sharing your encounter with the pink lady slipper. This beautiful wildflower is one of the 360 wildflower species in Prince William Forest Park. It is also one of the largest orchids native to this area.*

Your wonderful story demonstrates the important lesson to "leave only footprints and take only photographs." Keep your camera ready, and we will look for your submissions to this year's annual pass photography contest.

Sincerely,
Ranger Laura

Make your voice heard! Share your experiences in Prince William Forest Park in the Reader's Corner. Photographs and recollections can be e-mailed to Laura_Cohen@nps.gov.

Youth Conservation Corp Program Underway at Park

Prince William Forest Park is once again hosting the Youth Conservation Corp (YCC) work team. For over 25 years, youth from the local area have worked on trails, helped to rehabilitate historic cabins, constructed boardwalks, participated in environmental education programs, and much more. Participants in this program gain experience in environmental stewardship and community service. They learn teamwork, safety, leadership and resource evaluation while building organizational and decision-making skills. Employees work a standard 40-hour work week and receive a minimum wage salary. Applicants

must be citizens of the United States and 15 years of age by the start of the program, and not turn 19 years of age until the program is over.

This year's program started on June 26 and will end August 18, 2006. Six local youth were selected from over 30 applicants. This program has been, and continues to be, beneficial to Prince William Forest Park and the community. Maybe next summer you would be interested in working as a YCC in the National Park Service? Information will be on our website in March.

Inventory of 153 Historic Structures is Complete!

From mid-March to mid-June, park Museum Technician Judy Volonoski visited, inspected, and evaluated each of the 153 historic structures in Prince William Forest Park. These structures are inventoried in the National Park Service List of Classified Structures (LCS).

The LCS is used to report to the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and the Secretary of the Interior. The reports judge the accomplishments and accountability of parks and rate how the parks are inventorying and caring for their historic properties. There are currently about 27,000 National Park Service structures on the LCS.

This year all national parks with LCS listings in the National Park Service National Capital Region are inspecting and updating their LCS records. To complete this undertaking in Prince William Forest Park, Judy updated the LCS record's 38 required fields and included photographs, GIS locations, and other pertinent information.

Prince William Forest Park has 153 structures listed on the National Register of Historic Places. These structures are also listed as the Goodwill / Cabin Camp #1; Mawavi / Cabin Camp #2; Orenda / Cabin Camp #3; Pleasant / Cabin Camp #4; and Cabin Branch Mine Historic Districts.

The four cabin camps are listed on the National Register as being "...representative of one of FDR's most successful human conservation efforts, while the rustic architecture the men constructed is representative of the rising popularity of parks, organized camping and motoring to and from natural settings that was facilitated by automobiles and the boom in park and parkway construction."

The Cabin Branch Pyrite Mine is listed on the national register under Criterion A: "Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history." "The Cabin Branch pyrite mine was the major supporting industry of the former colonial port city of Dumfries, Virginia, for about 30 years. Over this period, hundreds of local residents depended on the mine for their livelihood". Tours of both the Cabin Branch Pyrite Mine and Cabin Camps are available throughout the summer. For more information, please visit our website at www.nps.gov/prwi.



The Cabin Branch Pyrite Mine was in operation from 1889-1920. Photo: NPS.

Friends of Prince William Forest Park

The Chopawamsic Cycle Challenge

On September 10, 2006, volunteers, bicyclists and park staff will join forces to raise money in support of visitor activities and historic preservation projects in Prince William Forest Park. The Friends of Prince William Forest Park will challenge local cyclists to spend a day riding through the park on over eight miles of paved and gravel roads.

A continental breakfast and lunch will be provided. There is one rest stop along the route which will offer bathrooms, water and snacks provided by Woodbridge SDA Church.

Through the generous contributions of several local sponsors including MORE, Shirt Art, Inc., The Training Connection, Inc., Trips for Kids, Studio 13, REI, Olde Towne Bicycles, Walmart, Dynamic Enterprise Solutions, Inc., The Young Marines, Long & Foster Real Estate Inc., and RGS Title, participants will have an opportunity to win awards and door prizes. Complimentary technical support for bikes will be provided by Village Ski and Bikes, and Emergency Medical Services by New Baltimore Vol. Fire & Rescue (Fauquier County).

"This year's Chopawamsic Cycle Challenge features a new route which will start and finish at the Pine Grove Picnic area," comments Kathy Wentworth - Drahosz, President of the Friends Group, "our co-sponsors MORE (Scott Scudamore) and Trips for Kids will be serving up their signature lunch of burgers and fries!"

The Friends of Prince William Forest Park was formed in 1989 to help preserve and enhance the park's natural and cultural resources, monitor activities that affect the park's ecosystem, and provide citizens with a forum to discuss issues and decisions affecting the park. Meetings are held at the park on the second Sunday of the month and begin at 2:00 p.m. Along with a business meeting, the day typically includes special speakers and/or organized recreational activities. Membership is open to anyone who supports the mission of the group.



Park Ranger George Rabtzow, Jr. helps round up riders in the 2004 Chopawamsic Cycle Challenge. Photo courtesy: NPS.

For more information, about the 2006 CCC please visit the Friends web site at www.fpwfp.org.

The 2007 Annual Photo Contest

Will your photo be on the next Prince William Forest Park Annual Pass?

Friends of Prince William Forest Park is pleased to announce the 2nd annual Photography Contest for the Prince William Forest Park Annual Pass (\$20). The winning photograph will be featured on the 2007 Prince William Forest Park Annual Pass along with the name of the photographer.

The theme of this year's contest is "Honoring History." All photographs must be taken within the boundary of Prince William Forest Park and should include a historical theme that highlights one of the many historic resources within the park such as the cabin camps, cemeteries, roads and bridges.



The 2006 Prince William Forest Park Annual Pass showing last year's prize winning photograph of South Fork Quantico Creek. Photo courtesy: NPS.

For more information about the photography contest or if you are interested in learning more about the Friends of Prince William Forest Park, please call Kathy Wentworth - Drahosz at 703-551-0734 or visit their website at www.fpwfp.org.

Submissions can be dropped off at the Prince William Forest Park visitor center. The visitor center is located just one mile from Interstate 95, off of Exit 150 (VA Route 619 - Joplin Road). All entries must be received by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, October 13, 2006 and are limited to two entries per person. For a complete list of rules, visit the Friends of Prince William Forest Park website at www.fpwfp.org.

Upcoming Events/Meetings

A monthly Friends group meeting will immediately follow each event. Meetings are open to the public and newcomers are welcome.

August 13, 2006

Bike Maintenance Workshop
Meet at the visitor center.
2:00 p.m.

September 10, 2006

2006 Chopawamsic Cycle Challenge
9:00 a.m.

October 8, 2006

Wilderness Workshop
Meet at the visitor center.
2:00 p.m.

November 19, 2006

Park 70th Anniversary Celebration
Meet at the visitor center.
2:00 p.m.

December 10, 2006

No Meeting—Happy Holidays!!





National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Prince William Forest Park
18100 Park Headquarters Road
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Fight the Bite! Avoid Mosquito Bites to Avoid Infection...

Arm yourself with knowledge to “fight the bite” from the dreaded mosquito. First, limit your outdoor activity during dawn and dusk, as these are peak biting times for many species of mosquitoes. Second, when you do need to go outdoors, wear long-sleeves, long pants, and socks. Finally, apply an insect repellent on any areas of exposed skin or apply it on clothing when you go outdoors. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommends that individuals use a product containing 20-50% DEET for outdoor exposures of 3-4 hours. If you spend a shorter time outdoors, a 7-20% DEET product or all-natural lemon-eucalyptus spray offer adequate protection. When around your home and garden, prevention is often the best method of protection.

Mosquitoes lay their eggs in standing water. In fact, one mosquito can lay more than 300 eggs in a cupful of water. In your garden, frequently empty standing water from flower pots, buckets, barrels, etc. and change the water in pet dishes or bird baths weekly. You can even drill holes in backyard items, such as tire swings, so water drains out on its own. Keep your children’s wading pools empty and on their sides when not in use. In other outdoor areas, such as parks, avoid areas with standing water and prepare yourself with insect spray.

According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), the chance that any one person is going to become ill from a single mosquito bite remains low. The risk of severe illness or death is highest for people over 50 years old, although people of all ages can become ill. Fighting mosquito bites reduces your risks of contracting mosquito borne diseases. For more information visit the CDC website at www.cdc.gov.



Prince William Forest Park Information Directory

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

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Or call:
703-221-7181

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 Camps **703-221-5843**

Including group cabins and individual rentals.

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 how you can help.

Official Park Website **www.nps.gov/prwi**

For the latest information about the park, surf this way.