

Prince William Forest Park

Prince William Forest Park
Virginia

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Valerie Haase McIntyre



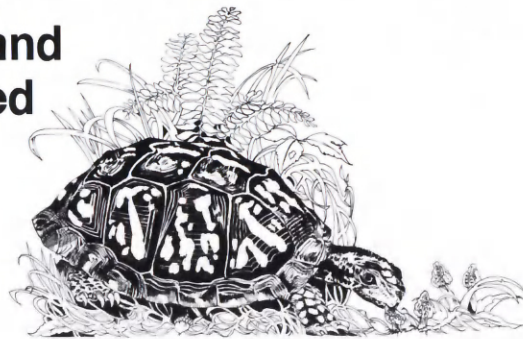
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A Woodland Watershed



Betty Fraser

The Piedmont forest of the Quantico Creek watershed, most of which lies within the park's boundaries, serves as a sanctuary for plants and animals in the rapidly expanding urban environment of Northern Virginia. Stands of Virginia pine mark the locations of old farm fields. White and red oak trees are found on the ridges and in the hollows, while beech and yellow poplar grow in the rich, damp soils of the creek valleys. The waterfalls and rock outcroppings mark the transition between two geologic provinces, the rolling foothills of the Piedmont and lowlands of the Coastal Plain. The woodlands and creeks of the park are home to a complex variety of ecosystems where whitetail deer, wild turkey, beaver, and numerous smaller animals live. Along with a resident population of birds, migratory waterfowl stop seasonally at park ponds and creeks.

Prince William Forest Park has a long history of human use and habitation. By the time Europeans arrived, Algonquin-speaking Native Americans had long farmed, hunted, and gathered food in this area. In 1749, Scottish merchants and Virginia planters established the Potomac River port town of Dumfries to export tobacco. Intensive cultivation and subsequent erosion depleted the soil and silted the port shut. Many farms were abandoned. A brief reversal of this downward spiral took place when the Cabin Branch Pyrite Mine opened and gave the area an economic boost from 1889 to 1920. By 1900 the few remaining small farms operated at a subsistence level while abandoned farmland slowly returned to forest. In 1933 an area around the Quantico and Chopawamsic Creek watersheds was selected as one of 46 recreational land use projects to reclaim marginal farm lands during the Great Depression. Three Civilian Conservation Corps

(CCC) camps were built here and occupied in the spring of 1935. By 1939 the CCC had constructed five fully equipped cabin camps for youth groups; many of these rustic camp buildings are still in use today. During World War II, the park became a top secret military installation used to train radio operators and agents to gather wartime intelligence in Europe and the Far East.

In 1948 the area returned to public use and was named Prince William Forest Park after the county in which it is located. It is the greatest expanse of a Piedmont forest in the National Park System and the largest natural park area in the metropolitan Washington area, offering outdoor solitude, refreshment from urban life, mental and physical challenges, observation of the natural world, and scientific study.

Suggested Activities

The Visitor Center

The park's visitor center offers information services, interpretive exhibits, and illustrated programs to help you explore and enjoy the park. Books, maps, and other materials are for sale. The visitor center is open daily except January 1 and December 25.

Naturalist Activities

Park rangers lead walks and hikes and give evening talks and demonstrations throughout the year. Check the park activity schedule, *The Turkey Caller*, park bulletin boards, or the visitor center for program times and locations. Organized groups such as scouts and school classes may schedule activities by calling the visitor center at 703-221-7181.

Hiking

A 35-mile network of trails winds through the park and provides a variety of opportunities for quiet reflection, nature study, and

physical challenge. The major trails are marked with color blazes; see the map on the reverse side. Nature trails with self-guiding signs or brochures begin at three different locations in the park. They are the Pine Grove Forest trail, the Farms to Forest trail, and the Crossing trail. The Pine Grove Forest trail is accessible for both wheelchairs and baby strollers. Check the park map and watch for signs along the park road to find these and other trails.

Wildlife and Birdwatching

Wildlife abounds in the park. The twilight hours of early morning and evening are best for seeing deer, squirrels, wild turkeys, beaver, or other forest creatures. Migratory birds are best seen during the spring and fall. Please obey park regulations, which prohibit the feeding or harassment of wildlife.

Winter Activities

Winter is an excellent time to hike in the park, for the lack of leaves affords long views along ridges and into ravines. Animals are more easily spotted as they move along the winter landscape. Snow offers opportunities for crosscountry skiing and snowshoeing.

Picnicking

Both the Pine Grove and Telegraph Road picnic areas are located near the visitor center and within a mile of I-95. Each area has tables, cooking grills, trash containers, water, and restrooms. Pine Grove has a shelter for use on a first-come, first-served basis.

Bicycling

Bicycle riding is permitted on all public park roads and fire roads. Bicycles are not permitted on hiking trails. Bicyclists and motorists share equal legal responsibilities for traffic safety.

Fishing

Bass, bluegill, perch, pickerel, crappie, and catfish are found in the park's lakes. A Virginia fishing license is required. The visitor center does not sell fishing licenses, but does have the current state and national park fishing regulations.

Environmental Education

The Turkey Run Environmental Education Center is a facility available to school groups and others to explore the unique natural and historic resources of the park. Its classroom contains a broad array of instructional equipment and lesson plans. It is available for use by advance reservation.

Camping

The park offers a variety of camping opportunities for those seeking a backcountry experience, a family campground with basic facilities, or the full services of a recreational vehicle campground.

Oak Ridge Campground has 78 camp-

has a paved parking slip, campfire grill, and picnic table. The campground has potable water, restrooms, firewood, and trash containers. There are no hookups or showers.

The Prince William Travel Trailer Village is operated by a National



sites on a first-come, first-served basis. The campground can accommodate tents and recreational vehicles or vehicle/trailer lengths to a maximum of 28 feet. Each site

Park Service concessioner and has sites for recreational vehicles and trailers only. Facilities include showers, a coin-operated laundry, dump station, and

swimming pool. Call 703-221-2474 for information and reservations.

For the challenge of primitive camping, Chopawamsic Backcountry Area is located south of the main park. Open from February 1 to October 15, the ten campsites are located 0.5 to 1.5 miles from the trailhead. Everything needed for camping, including drinking water, must be packed in. All cooking must be done on portable cookstoves, for campfires are prohibited. All trash must be carried out.

Camping in the backcountry is by permit only. Call or write the park for an application; telephone reservations are not accepted. Permits may be picked up at the visitor center during business hours.

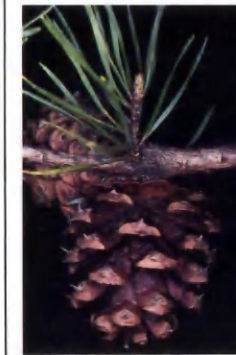
Group camping

The park's five Civilian Conservation Corps-era camps ranging in capacity from 104 to 211 people, have primitive sleeping cabins, a modern, central kitchen and dining hall, restrooms, and showers. Groups must bring their own utensils and linens. Reservations for spring and summer seasons are due in mid-February; in mid-June for the fall season. For further information write the park, or call 703-221-4706.

Tent camping is available for groups at Turkey Run Ridge campground. There are six sites with capacities of 20 to 40 people. Sites have picnic tables and fire grills. The campground has potable water, restroom, firewood and trash containers. There are no hookups or showers. Advance reservations are required. Call the visitor center at 703-221-7181, or write the park for an application.

Park Regulations and Safety

- Help protect the park by leaving all natural and historic features undisturbed. Their destruction, defacement, injury, or removal is prohibited and is a violation of federal law. Leave the features of the park as you find them so that those who come after you may also enjoy them.



Gretchen S. Kotsrud

- The park is closed at dark except for campers.
- Report emergencies or suspicious activities as soon as possible to a park ranger, the visitor center, or call 911.

Secure your property and park in designated areas.

- Do not drive or park vehicles off paved surfaces. Please observe posted speed limits.
- Wood fires are permitted only at established picnic areas and campgrounds in the campfire grills provided. Fires built on the ground can sterilize the soil and cause forest fires. Extinguish all discarded smoking materials. Firewood is not provided at the picnic areas. Gathering of dead and downed wood is not permitted. Extinguish fires in grills before leaving, even for a short time.
- Hunting is prohibited. Firearms, fireworks, archery equipment, slingshots, and other weapons are not allowed in the park unless adequately cased, broken down, or otherwise packed to prevent their use.
- Pets must be on a leash at all times. Pets are prohibited in the Chopawamsic Back-

country Area, Turkey Run Ridge Campground, the Pine Grove Forest trail, and the cabin camps.

- Consumption of alcoholic beverages is prohibited except at individual campsites in the Oak Ridge Campground.
- Lost and found items should be reported to or turned in at the visitor center.
- Swimming in the park's lakes and ponds is prohibited.
- Rangers are here to protect the park and to provide for your safety. Report all injuries, motor vehicle accidents, or violations of the law to them immediately.

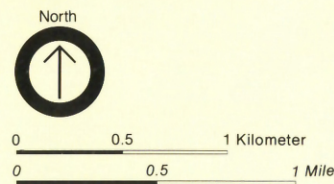
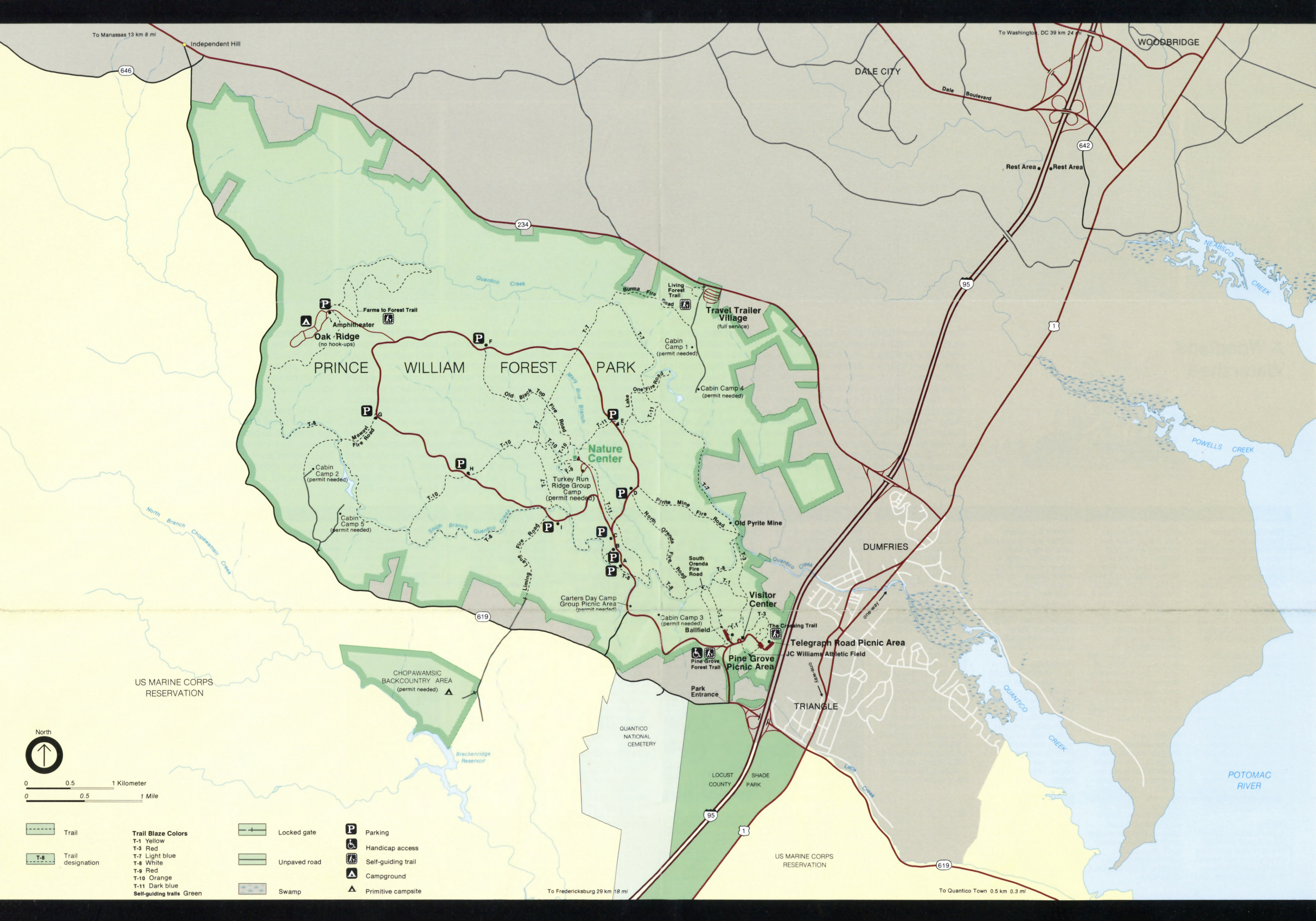
Further Information

Getting Here

The park is located at exit 150 of I-95, 32 miles south of Washington, D.C., and 22 miles north of Fredericksburg, Va., on Va. 619 west. Other nearby national park areas include Manassas National Battlefield, 24 miles west, and Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania County Battlefields Memorial National Military Park to the south.

Administration

Prince William Forest Park is a unit of the National Park System, which consists of more than 360 parks representing important examples of our country's natural and cultural heritage. The park is administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. For more information, write to: Superintendent, Prince William Forest Park, P.O. Box 209, Triangle, VA 22172-0209.



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|---------------------------|--------------|--------------------|
| Trail | Locked gate | Parking |
| Trail designation | Unpaved road | Handicap access |
| Trail Blaze Colors | Swamp | Self-guiding trail |
| T-1 Yellow | | Campground |
| T-3 Red | | Primitive campsite |
| T-7 Light blue | | |
| T-8 White | | |
| T-9 Red | | |
| T-10 Orange | | |
| T-11 Dark blue | | |
| Self-guiding trails Green | | |

To Fredericksburg 29 km 18 mi

To Quantico Town 0.5 km 0.3 mi