



NATURE PROGRAMS

For more information on these programs,
call Mark Battista at 804-318-8735 or
battistam@chesterfield.gov.
Register at least one week before programs.

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 a kayak or canoe from the 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, 804-748-1129 or Mark Battista, 804-318-8735.

Presquile Island Boat Tour

Take a pontoon boat tour around Presquile National Wildlife Refuge to learn about this important resource in the James River. Participants will also have an opportunity to explore the extensive trail system and visit the Menenak Discovery Center. Join Chesterfield County and US Fish and Wildlife Service naturalists as they search for bald eagles, great blue herons, egrets and the federally endangered Atlantic sturgeon. Children under 10 must bring their own PFD.

Tuesday, Sept. 28, 8:30-11:30 a.m.

Meet: End of Bermuda Hundred Road (directions will be provided)

Free, but register online at www.chesterfield.gov/parks **Course 39527**

After School Program - Exploring the Outdoors

Sad that summer is over? Itching to have more river, nature, and outdoor fun? Then this after-school program is for you! Paddle and explore the Tidal Lagoon, paddle flat-water on the James River, test your archery skills, bike, take a nature walk, and challenge yourself to solve obstacles with a team and walk across high ropes. For kids ages 11-14. All equipment, except bicycles, is provided. Parents are responsible for transporting participants to and from the various locations.

Wednesdays, 3-5:30 p.m. \$79 (8 weeks)

Course 39553

Sept. 8: Dutch Gap Conservation Area - Paddle on sit-on-top kayaks to explore the lagoon, search for sunken treasure and find your way through the maze. Snack on wild edible fruits.

Sept. 15: Robious Landing Park - Journey on sit-on-top kayaks from Watkins Landing to Robious Landing on the James River. This will be a 3.5-mile paddle with plenty of dips in the river and games.

Sept. 22: Robious Landing Park - Try your hand, or your feet, at Stand-Up-Paddle Boarding. Paddle upstream, play Ruler of the SUP, float down and cool off.

Sept. 29: Dutch Gap Conservation Area - Bring your hybrid or mountain bike to Dutch Gap to ride around the lagoon, see the leaves starting to change, and take a dip in the lagoon.

Oct. 6: Challenge Course - Check out our Challenge Course for a series of fun low-element obstacles – see how well you work together to solve a series of puzzles and challenges.

Oct. 13: Challenge Course - Come enjoy a view from above – challenge yourself at the Challenge Course with some high rope adventures.

Oct. 20: Robious Landing Park - Embark on a nature walk, hunt for critters in the streams, bring a journal to sketch or write your journaling thoughts.

Oct. 27: Rockwood Park - Try your hand, and your aim, at archery at our archery range at Rockwood Nature Center.

Nov. 3: Rain date – location TBD

First Day Hike at Dutch Gap

Spend the first day of January hiking and exploring the Dutch Gap Conservation Area. This will be an easy three-mile hike along bottomlands, wetlands, and the old river channel. Find out how nature reclaimed a landscape changed by humans.

Henricus Park Visitor Center, 251 Henricus Park Road

Saturday, Jan. 1, 10 a.m.-noon

Course 39528

Free, but register online at www.chesterfield.gov/parks

FAMILIES IN THE OUTDOORS

Unplug from the digital world and join us for a series of outings to explore our local environments. Each program is designed to encourage families to get outdoors, get exercise and enjoy the wild outdoors.

Sky Watch

Join the Richmond Astronomical Society to roam the night sky in search of star clusters, planets, and other sky objects. View the cosmos with various telescopes. Programs last about one hour.

Woodlake Athletic Complex, 5700 Woodlake Village Parkway (located behind Clover Hill Elementary School)

Program 1: Friday, Sept. 10, 7:30-8:30 p.m.

Course 39529

Program 2: Friday, Oct. 8, 7-8 p.m.

Course 39530

Free, but register online at www.chesterfield.gov/parks

Night Ride and Campfire

Explore the Dutch Gap Conservation Area by bike – at night. Start your bike trek before sunset and pedal an easy two miles to the Peninsula. Enjoy a light meal by the lagoon, some activities and a campfire with s'mores. Turn on your headlights and ride back 2.5 miles to the parking lot. This is an easy bike ride with minimal elevation gain. Trail is suitable for bikes hauling trailers. Mountain bikes and hybrid bikes are necessary. Helmets and bike lights are required. Bring a light meal and drink. We'll provide the s'mores.

Henricus Visitor Center, 251 Henricus Park Road

Saturday, Oct. 16, 6-8 p.m.

\$5

Course 39531

Explore the Appomattox River Valley

Start your journey at the Radcliffe Conservation Area. Hike the bluff trail, scramble across rock outcroppings, roam along the wetlands while looking for beaver lodges and dams and explore tumbling streams. Reunite with the river trail and continue downriver for lunch at the abutment dam. Return along the River Trail. This will be an adventurous 2.5 to 3-mile hike.

Radcliffe Conservation Area, 21501 Chesdin Road

Saturday, Nov. 13, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.

\$5

Course 39532

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Full Moon Hike

Hike under the glow of a full moon (the beaver moon) in the Dutch Gap Conservation Area. Hear tales about the moon and winter constellations. Call owls and learn what other creatures lurk in the night. This will be an easy two-mile walk.

Henricus Visitor Center, 251 Henricus Park Road
Friday, Nov. 19, 5:30 -7:30 p.m. \$4/person **Course 39533**

Winter Bird Count Primer

Joining a winter bird count this season? This two-hour walk will review the winter birds. Head to the wetlands to observe gadwall, pintail, and other waterfowl. Then head down the trail in search of eastern bluebirds, eastern meadowlarks, hermit thrush, yellow-rumped warblers and more. Bring your binoculars and bird book. Some binoculars will be available.

Dutch Gap Conservation Area, 341 Henricus Park Road
Saturday, Dec. 4, 8:30-10:30 a.m. **Course 39534**
Free, but register online at www.chesterfield.gov/parks

Bushwhacking the Brown & Williamson Conservation Area

Bushwhack and explore the 500-acre conservation area along the James River. Find the eagle nest, clues that reveal the story of the land, skunk cabbage and vernal pools. Have lunch in the hollow, then trek to the bluff that overlooks the James River. This will be an adventurous three-mile hike involving lots of bushwhacking and some stream crossings. Minimum age is 8. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

Henricus Visitor Center, 251 Henricus Park Road
Saturday, Dec. 11, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. \$5 **Course 39555**

WEEKDAY WANDERERS

Join our trips to explore and learn about the rich and diverse resources of Virginia. Each trip will reveal the natural and cultural history of the various sites. All programs include a naturalist, transportation and admission fees (if required). Details: Mark Battista, 804-318-8735

Fall Wildflowers

Start atop the bluff at Point of Rocks, then descend along an easy trail to the vibrant wetland and meadow. Check out some of the lingering wildflowers in the forest, then see the explosion of wildflowers in the freshwater wetlands and lower meadow. See pickerel weed, wild rice, turtlehead, rattlesnake master, partridge pea, swamp milkweed and other fall wildflowers. Total hiking distance will be approximately two miles.

R. Garland Dodd Park at Point of Rocks Park, 201 Enon Church Road
Thursday, Sept. 16, 9-11 a.m. \$8 **Course 39536**

Tree Identification Class

Ramble through the conservation area to learn common trees of the wetlands, forests and fields. This class will introduce participants to basic tree terminology and explain how to use a tree key. Also learn why trees are important to wildlife and us. Fee includes naturalist and the 120-page Common Native Trees of Virginia guide. This will be an easy, two-mile walk.

Henricus Park Visitor Center, 251 Henricus Park Road
Thursday, Sept. 23, 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. \$15 **Course 39537**

The Blue Ridge Tunnel

Spanning 4,273 feet through the Blue Ridge Mountains, the Blue Ridge Tunnel "was the longest tunnel in the United States and one of the longest in the world" when completed in 1858. Explore this historic, engineering landmark by embarking on a three-mile hike that will take you through the tunnel from the east portal. Afterwards, head for a late-lunch at the Blue Mountain Brewery at the foot of the Blue Ridge Mountains

Rockwood Nature Center, 3401 Courthouse Road
Thursday, Sept. 30, 8 a.m.-3 p.m. \$25 **Course 39538**

Machicomoco State Park

An Algonquian word meaning "special meeting place," Machicomoco spans 643 acres and is bounded by the York River, Timberneck Creek, and Cedar Bush Creek. Visit Virginia's newest state park in Gloucester County which tells the story of the tribes who call this region home. Explore and hike through forests, meadows and to Timberneck Creek. Hike will be about 2.4 miles.

Rockwood Nature Center, 3401 Courthouse Road
Thursday, Oct. 7, 8 a.m.-3 p.m. \$25 **Course 39539**

Rockfish Valley Trails

Cavort and roam sections of the Rockfish Valley Trails that wind along pastures, bogs, Rockfish River and Reids Creek. Experience this bucolic setting staged at the foot of the Blue Ridge Mountains.

The field and river habitats provide ideal viewing of herons, kingfishers, meadowlarks, orioles, swallows, vireos and various warblers. Afterwards, enjoy lunch at the Bold Rock Cider Barn. Hiking distance is a leisurely and gentle three miles.

Rockwood Nature Center, 3401 Courthouse Road
Thursday, Oct. 14, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. \$30 **Course 39540**

James River State Park – Hiking the River Trail

Head to James River State Park to hike along the rolling James River. This easy, five-mile hike starts at the new visitor center, descends past meadows and accompanies the James River. Return along the Cabell Trail. Enjoy lunch on the banks of the James.

Rockwood Nature Center, 3401 Courthouse Road
Thursday, Oct. 21, 9 a.m.- 5 p.m. \$32 **Course 39541**

Saunders-Monticello Trail

Stroll along a two-mile, crushed gravel and boardwalk trail that gently rises through small meadows and woodlands to Monticello. Have lunch at the Monticello Café, then return back down the trail. Take a short side trail to get a peek of Charlottesville. This is an easy four-mile hike with about 400 feet of elevation gain.

Rockwood Nature Center, 3401 Courthouse Road
Thursday, Oct. 28, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. \$20 **Course 39542**

Windsor Castle Park and Smithfield

Head south to Smithfield to hike and explore the trails of Windsor Castle Park. The 208-acre park borders Cypress Creek and the Pagan River. Hike almost four miles of trails that wind through meadows, forested areas, and over creek and marshes. Afterwards hike into downtown Smithfield for lunch. This is an easy hike.

Henricus Park Visitor Center, 251 Henricus Park Road
Thursday, Nov. 4, 9 a.m.- 4 p.m. \$25 **Course 39543**

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Shenandoah Summits

Hike to two summits in Shenandoah National Park. First, hike to Turk Mountain from Skyline Drive. This 2.2-mile round-trip (690 feet of elevation gain) will take you to the top of Turk Mountain at 2,981 feet for views of the Shenandoah Valley. Next, hike to Blackrock Summit with views of Madison Run and Dundo Hollow. This is an easy one-mile hike with only 175 feet of elevation gain. Finally, take another hike to Doyles River Cabin, a round trip of just 1.2-miles.

Rockwood Nature Center, 3401 Courthouse Road
Thursday, Nov. 11, 9 a.m.-6 p.m. \$32 **Course 39544**

Turkey Neck Trail

Ramble along Turkey Neck Trail in Westmoreland State Park. This easy hike passes through mature forests, wanders along a swampy valley, and delivers you to Horsehead Cliff along the Potomac River. Search for fossils of shark teeth and other marine life along the beach and in the cliff. Total hiking distance is approximately 3.7 miles.

Rockwood Nature Center, 3401 Courthouse Road
Thursday, Nov. 18, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. \$25 **Course 39545**

Pleasant Grove Park

Ramble along the diverse terrain which includes streams, ridgelines, meadows and the Rivanna River, a state designated scenic river. The 800-acre park land was a thriving plantation that grew tobacco, wheat, corn and oats. These products were then transported by bateaux down the Rivanna and James Rivers to the warehouses and markets in Richmond. This is an easy/moderate 3.5-mile hike with only about 300 feet of elevation gain.

Rockwood Nature Center, 3401 Courthouse Road
Thursday, Dec. 2, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. \$25 **Course 39546**

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 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 804-318-8735.

WILD LANDSCAPES

Travel and explore diverse landscapes filled with natural beauty and intriguing history. Explore by kayak, bike, and by foot. All trips include guides and transportation.

Appomattox River Float

Launch on a four-mile paddle that starts at White Bank Park on the Swift Creek and heads downstream along the Appomattox River to the Appomattox River Regional Park. Paddle along islands and wetlands and explore Ashton Creek and the sandstone cliff named Point of Rocks. Minimum age is 18. Paddling time is approximately three hours.

White Bank Park, 400 White Bank Road
Thursday, Sept. 9, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. \$25 **Course 39547**

Camp Hoover Hike

Head to Shenandoah National Park and hike to the retreat of President Herbert Hoover nestled at the confluence of the Mill Prong and Laurel Prong streams. Known as Camp Hoover or Rapidan Camp, the retreat was established in 1929, and then donated to the Commonwealth of Virginia in 1932 for inclusion into the proposed Shenandoah National Park. The hike will start at Milam Gap and follow Mill Prong stream almost two miles to the retreat. Total hiking distance is four miles with 750 feet of elevation change.

Rockwood Nature Center, 3401 Courthouse Road
Saturday, Sept. 25, 8 a.m.-6 p.m. \$32 **Course 39548**

Biking False Cape State Park

Explore and bike one of Virginia's most wild park which is accessible only by foot, bike or boat. This bike tour will travel through Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge and False Cape State Park and explain the mission of these two agencies while learning about the unique ecology of a barrier spit. Take a short hike to walk a remote beach and to visit the wash woods cemetery. This will be an easy and flat 16-20-mile bike trek. Mountain bike and/or beach cruisers will be provided.

Rockwood Nature Center, 3401 Courthouse Road
Saturday, Oct. 9, 8 a.m.-8 p.m. \$50 **Course 39549**

Ragged Mountain Natural Area

Hike a 6.6-mile trail that reaches the summit of Round Top Mountain, encircles and provides views of the reservoir, and crosses a floating pontoon bridge. This is a moderate hike with about 1100 feet of elevation gain.

Rockwood Nature Center, 3401 Courthouse Road
Saturday, Nov. 6, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. \$25 **Course 39550**