

### Stop 3

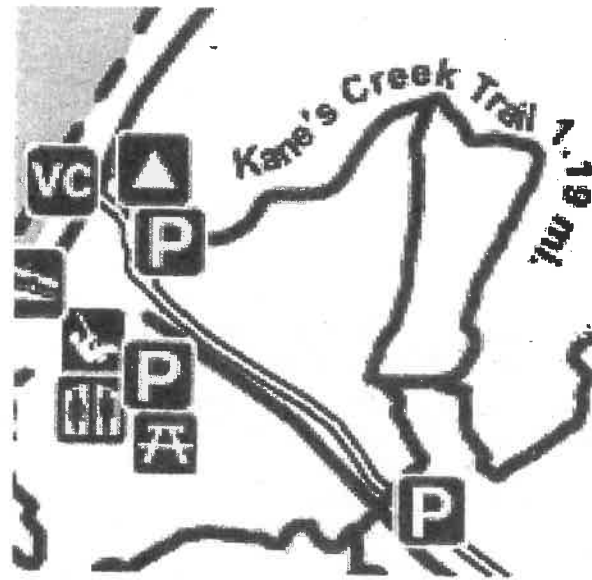
#### Fungi

At first you might not notice this fungi, but take a closer look at the logs. Fungi come in all different shapes, sizes & colors. There are some that look like jelly, or mushrooms, and others like steps on a tree. They live in many different environments. Some live on trees or rotting logs. Others create alcohol & penicillin! There are even fungi that cause athlete's foot. People eat truffles and other mushrooms. However, they can also find mold (another type of fungi) on other foods. Mycorrhizal fungi live in the roots of trees. These fungi are very important, because in exchange for a place to live and some of the nutrients, they help extend the tree root's reach and allow them to take in more water. Orchids even need a special type of fungi to germinate! Many animals eat fungi, and several species of ants even farm them. So take a look around while you're hiking and see how many different types of fungi you can find!

### Stop 4

#### Hickory Tree

Take a look at this Hickory Tree. Look at how shaggy the bark is. If you look around the path near it, you might even find a Hickory nut. There are five native species of Hickory trees in Virginia. These trees, along with other nut-producing trees, are very important for wildlife in the forest. Squirrels, White-Tailed Deer, White-breasted Nuthatches & many other animals eat these nuts. Without these, many would not make it through the winter. Many people also enjoy certain types of Hickory nuts or Hickory-smoked food. The wood is also used in furniture, drumsticks, bows & golf clubs.



#### Trail Information

The Kane's Creek Trail is a 1.20 mile easy trail that is accessible from the Visitor Center, and the Wilson Spring Trail. The trail is a lollipop trail with a stem and a loop that passes through hardwood forest as it makes a loop, bringing hikers to the Eagle Spur Trail and offering unlimited opportunities for bird-watching.

#### Kane's Creek Trail Self Guided Tour

Tour stops 1 through 4 are marked by numbers along the trail.



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Virginia State Parks

Mason Neck State Park

Kane's Creek Trail  
Self Guided Tour



www.virginiastateparks.gov

# Mason Neck State Park

## KANES CREEK TRAIL SELF GUIDED TOUR



### History of Mason Neck

Mason Neck State Park is steeped in natural and cultural history, encompassing 1,825 acres. The park shares 'The Neck' with Elizabeth Hartwell Mason Neck National Wildlife Refuge, Pohick Bay Regional Park, Gunston Hall and BLM's Meadowood Special Recreation Area. Combined, these areas provide over 6,400 acres dedicated to recreation, preservation and wildlife management.

The first recorded history of Mason Neck was by Captain John Smith in 1608. He wrote of his meeting with the Dogue Indians and charted the chief's village of Tauxenent on his map of Virginia. The area was referred to as Doggs Island and Doeg Neck originally. Later, this peninsula received its current name from the Mason family.



During the 1800's and early 1900's, logging was the area's primary industry. The removal of mature pine, hardwood and the use of the pesticide DDT, led to the decline of the American Bald Eagle in the region.

In 1965 the Conservation Committee for Mason Neck formed to preserve the area from increasing development pressures. In July 1967, the Nature Conservancy made its first purchase of land to protect areas of Mason Neck. Later, funds were appropriated to federal, state and local agencies to begin buying land parcels from private land owners and the Nature Conservancy.

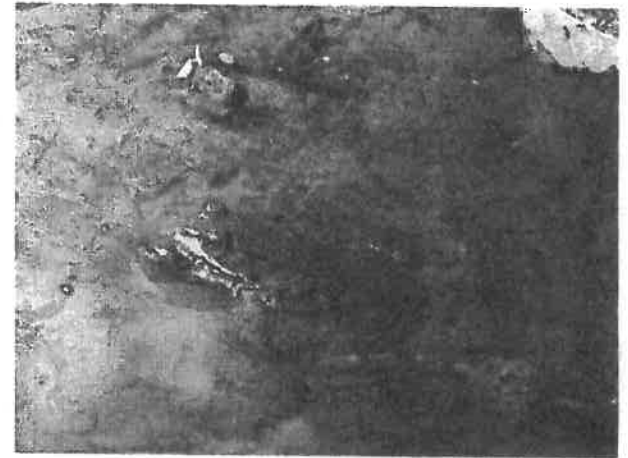
The park is now managed for passive recreation, environmental education and the protection and preservation of habitat for the American Bald Eagle and other animals in the area. Animals that frequent Mason Neck include: bald eagles, hawks, white-tailed deer, fox, beavers and over 200 species of birds.



### Stop 1

#### The Elevated Platform

This small bridge may not look like much, but depending on the time of year, you will appreciate it. During the spring and summer, this area can get a lot of water. This makes it a good place to look for frogs such as the Green Frog and the Southern Leopard Frog. Many amphibians use vernal pools (temporary or seasonal pools of water) for their eggs. It is also a safer place for young amphibians to grow up. If you get too close, you may hear the croak & splash of a startled frog. However, most of the frogs will freeze and hope you don't see them, so look carefully.



### Stop 2

#### Cut Logs

Throughout this trail, there are a few spots where you can see cut logs on either side of the trail. These are spots where a tree has fallen across the trail and needed to be cut. The pieces are then moved into the forest to decompose. It is important to keep these trees in the forest as they are needed to provide soil & nutrients when they decompose. They also provide food and homes for many animals from termites to worms. These small animals then become food for other animals like frogs and birds. They also become good hiding places for toads and snakes. So, these trees become just as important to the ecosystem in death as they were when they were alive.