

# GEORGE WASHINGTON NATIONAL FOREST

## OUTDOOR PATTERNS

More than 30 years ago a brochure described the George Washington National Forest as . . . "a place to relax and rest and regain the vital nerve force so necessary in our modern age of intense competition." It's still true today. You can enjoy such outdoor activities as hiking, picnicking, swimming, camping, hunting, fishing, canoeing or photography.

We hope you enjoy the beauty of the Forest, protect it, and make use of its resources.

## GEORGE WASHINGTON LAND

The George Washington National Forest is in a picturesque mountain and valley region steeped in American history and tradition. It was treacherous for Indians, passageway for pioneers, and the battleground of two great wars.

Today, the Forest is the hub of a public mountain playground which includes the Jefferson National Forest on the north, the Monongahela National Forest on the west and the Shenandoah National Park to the north and east. The first 100 miles of the Blue Ridge Parkway go through parts of the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests.

The Forest Service, U. S. Department of Agriculture, administers the George Washington National Forest. The Forest resources—wood, water, wildlife and recreation—are managed so that their benefits may be enjoyed by Americans—now and in the future.

## MORE LAND FOR RECREATION

An entrance fee is charged at certain developed recreation sites on the George Washington National Forest. The fee, levied under the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act, is used to help local, State and Federal agencies acquire land needed for recreation. You may use the annual permit, or pay a daily charge for use of the area. All charge areas are marked with signs.

## OUTDOOR PROGRAMS

Adding interest to the visitor's stay at Shenandoah Lake (N-1) and Elizabeth Furnace (N-2) Recreation Areas are the Visitor Interpretation Services (VIS) Programs. These include outdoor exhibits, conducted trips, movies, illustrated talks, campfire songs, and trails. The programs on Forest plants, wildlife, local history, and work of the Forest Service are quite informal, and of interest to all age groups.

## FAMILY CAMPING

The Forest Service welcomes campers. National Forests, such as the George Washington, provide about half the public campgrounds in the United States.

Each campsite has a table, fireplace, garbage container, and space for a car and tent (or small trailer). Water and sanitary facilities are centrally located. The boundaries of each campsite are clearly defined and campers must confine their equipment to this area. Additional information about campgrounds may be obtained from any of the District Rangers or from the Forest Supervisor in Harrisonburg, Virginia.

## GROUP CAMPING

Special areas are available for organized groups, such as Scouts or church organizations. Facilities are minimum, generally being limited to access roads, basic sanitary facilities, and a few fireplaces and tables. Reservations are not required or accepted but the District Ranger usually knows whom group camping sites are going to be used. It is always a good idea to check with the Ranger ahead of time.

## HUNTING AND HIKING

**HUNTING**  
The million-acre Forest is well known to hunters of wild turkey, white-tail deer, ruffed grouse, black bear, and squirrel. Thirty years of cooperative wildlife management by the Forest Service and the States of Virginia and West Virginia have improved the habitat and the supplies of game. The Forest Service encourages hunting as a sound and wise use of a renewable natural resource.

**HIKING**  
Let's walk in the woods. In the George Washington National Forest, there are level trails beside mountain lakes, old woods roads, self-guiding forest walks, and the famous Appalachian Trail. Forest Rangers can usually suggest a hiking adventure suited to you, and point out observation practices or special features you might otherwise miss. Here are several suggestions to start you off on the trail.

**FAMILY-TYPE WALKS**—Easy to follow trails that may take an hour or less round trip.

**Pig Iron Trail (N-3)**—A story trail with exhibits and self-guiding booklet describing the history of Elizabeth Furnace. Located near picnic ground designated as a U. S. Fee Area.

**Ramsey's Draft (G-4)**—Turn off Route 250 near Mountain House picnic ground; trail begins on right just beyond the first stream (ford) crossing. A primitive Forest treasure worth several visits.

**Woodstock Tower (M-2)**—One of America's finest views is of the Seven-Bends-of-the-Shenandoah River from the observation tower. Approach by car on Route 758 from Part Valley side to avoid steep, crooked mountain road.

**Elkhorn Lake Dam (H-4)**—Follow service road along the shore of a mountain lake to the top of a man-made dam. Wildlife, fishing, and scenery.

**Chubtree Falls (G-7)**—Trail from spur road off Highway 58 leads to base of waterfall. **LEG STRETCHERS**—Mountain trails leading to rewarding scenic viewing points or forest attractions. Bring a snack and allow at least one-half day for round trip of 3 to 5 miles.

**Big Splash (L-1)** via the Mill Mountain Trail. Start at Wolf Gap. First half-mile is a climb, then trail follows crest of ridge to a rock outcropping. Returns is by same route.

**Kennedy Peak (M-3)** via Massanutten Mtn. Trail. Start at Virginia Route 675. Outstanding panoramas of Shenandoah and Fort Valleys, and the Blue Ridge, Massanutten, and Shenandoah Mountains.

**Jerry Run (G-4)** from Ramsey's Draft to Sexton Shelter location. A hike beside a mountain stream through the quiet beauty of the forest.

There are also many full-day and even week-long hiking opportunities available. Hiking experience and careful planning are advised for these longer trips through isolated wilderness-like portions of the Forest. Seven National Forest trail-ride shuttles are spaced along the 70-mile portion of the Appalachian Trail through the Pedlar Ranger District.

## HELPFUL HINTS

**SEASONS:** Summer evenings can be cool in the mountains. Include blankets and extra clothing in your gear. Temperatures drop sharply by November, and freezing weather often continues until mid-April. See map side for recreation area seasons.

**SWIMMING:** Best between early June and late August.

**CRICKETS, SUPPLIES, AND SERVICES:** Within a half-hour drive of all recreation areas.

**MOTEL, HOTELS, AND RESTAURANTS:** Mostly located along the major travel routes in the Valley.

**SNAKES, BEES, AND "BUGS":** Usually only a minor problem but they do exist and should be avoided. Bring insect repellent.

**WILD FLOWERS, TREES, SHRUBS, FERNS, AND MOSSES:** Part of the living forest; to be seen and enjoyed, not picked or destroyed. Beware of poison ivy.

**HUNTING AND FISHING LICENSES:** You will need State licenses and a National Forest Stamp to hunt or fish in the George Washington. Licenses are available at most sporting goods stores and at County courthouses. State regulations apply.

**TRAIL BIKES:** Forest Development Roads, make enjoyable rides. Riders and bikes must be licensed. Bikes are not allowed on the Appalachian Trail, foot trails, or roads closed to motor vehicles.

**FIREWOOD:** Campers and picnickers are encouraged to use charcoal or camp stoves for cooking. However, for that first love—the campfire—firewood is available in most areas at a central woodyard. You will need a small saw or a good ax (hatchets are dangerous).

**QUADRANGLE MAPS:** The U. S. Geological Survey, 1200 South Eighth Street, Arlington, Virginia 22202, sells topographic maps that are excellent aids to the hiker, hiker, or others wandering off the beaten track. An index and price list for Virginia and for West Virginia may be obtained free at the same address.

**PLANNING:** Beware of planning your time too closely, for there is magic worked by these mountains and valleys; and, like so many others, you may want to postpone your departure.

## A MOUNTAIN YEAR

To start you to learn National Forest sounds instead of noises, aromas instead of smells, and highlights of the parade of natural color, we offer A MOUNTAIN YEAR.

**SPRING**  
Wild turkeys gobble . . . the ruffed grouse drum. The wind sings in the pines and sounds of water are everywhere. Small the moist earth and leaves . . . the mayflowers, spicelash and pink azaleas.

Note the early blue ridges across the valley or the red maple and serviceberry above the April flowering hepatica, bloodroot, and mayapple. There will be flowering dogwood, redbud, and woodland wildflowers and ferns.

As you cannot quietly toward a drinking deer, watch the reverse fly, drive the humpy mountain roads, or study a freshly caught trout, you will sense the value of this National Forest that you own.

**SUMMER**  
The mountains of the Virginia offer a cool refreshing retreat. Mountain-lured hikers open in early June in the foothills and continue blossoming until July on mountaintops. Flame azaleas, rhododendron, and fringe trees color the woodlands. Young wild mammals and birds are easier to see.

Songbirds will announce the dawn. Sweet wild strawberries and other wild fruits and nuts are plentiful in their season but—be sure you know what you are sampling! Bear and catfish fishing is best now.

**AUTUMN**  
From the time the blackgum and Virginia creeper turn a brilliant red in September until the oaks reach their color peak in November, the forest is a thing of beauty. If you come early, the flowering asters, goldenrod, and boneset add additional color. Mountain holly berries and the yellow flowers of the witch-hazel add late color. The sounds of crickets and katydids and the smell of wild grape welcome the visitor.

**WINTER**  
A hardy few experience the winter mood of these mountains. Cold weather makes sense more alert. Sounds such as ice falling or the taste and smell of hot coffee take on a new meaning. Careful preparation is essential for safety and comfort.



PREVENT FOREST FIRES!



PICNICING • CAMPING  
SWIMMING • SIGHTSEEING  
FISHING • BOATING



Scenes of quiet beauty lie in every direction . . . their beauty changing with the seasons.



A fishing stream offers fine recreation.



Special programs introduce the visitor to the Forest.

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The Forest, a thing of beauty.

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