

## Trail Notes for Cedarville State Forest-Blue and White Loops

**Description:** Cedarville State Forest is composed of 3,510 acres of land at the headwaters of the Zekiah Swamp. It is literally minutes from the Capital Beltway and being such makes for a quick fix getaway from the hectic urban life style. Forest type varies from mixed hardwoods to large groves of Loblolly and White Pine both with a understory of American Holly, Low Bush Blueberry and an occasional Mountain Laurel. The 19 mile trail system is comprised of 5 loops that can be combined to form longer treks. It is well maintained and signed. Each loop is marked with color coded hiking stakes (some with mileage) and arrows making it very difficult to get lost, especially if you have a map. Being in a lowland forest/swamp there is very little elevation gain. For the same reason parts of the trail can be pretty wet. Wear waterproof hiking boots. Described here are the combined Blue and White Loop Trails as a near figure 8. Do both or one lobe. It is also possible to shorten the hike by using the Cross Road described in the following Trail Notes. If you want to add about 5 miles to the hike add the main portion of the Orange Loop. We highly recommend the short out and back on Forest Road to visit Cedarville Pond. There are two more loop trails around it that we have yet to explore. It is a great hike to take the kids and/or Fido on.

The trailhead is at the Old Charcoal Hearth Parking lot on Forest Road. There is a \$3.00 park use fee to be paid at the Forest Office.

**Trail Notes:** From the parking lot hike down the spur trail and turn right on the Blue Trail. It will parallel Forest Road for 0.24 miles before veering right and crossing the road. Walk around the orange gate and join an old road. In another -.12 miles pass a water tower on the left and in another 0.11 miles arrive at the junction with the Orange Trail. Turn right here and follow the combined blazes for 0.17 miles and then turn left, leaving the Orange Trail behind. Shortly pass a deluxe double seater outhouse abandoned many years ago. A sign marks the Mistletoe Trail but this portion has been obliterated over the years. In 0.48 miles from leaving the Orange Trail cross the Cross Road for the first time. To shorten the hike you can turn right onto it and pick up the Blue Trail again above the archery range discussed later. To complete the hike as described continue straight on the Blue Trail. In 0.73 miles cross the Mistletoe Trail, an old road at this point. Cross it and soon arrive at Forest Road. To visit Cedarville Pond turn right onto it and follow the signs for 0.16 miles to its parking lot.

To continue the hike return to the Blue Trail and turn left onto it following Zekiah Swamp Run for a bit before turning hard right to follow one of its tributaries. In 0.24 miles from crossing Forest Road walk through a Competition Archery Range. In another 0.19 miles cross Cross Road again and hike through a recently planted pine grove. In 0.43 miles from the Cross Road crossing the trail will make a right turn and parallel Wolf Den Branch for 0.76 miles before crossing it on a bridge. When we did this hike in January, 2010 the section of the Blue Trail between the bridge and Sunset Road, including a short section of the road, was slightly flooded due to a very efficient beaver that lives upstream. If this persists and you are wearing high waterproof boots you should be able to splash along without getting your feet wet. (An alternative is to turn right without crossing the bridge and bushwhacking along its east bank until you join the Orange Trail.

**Turn left onto it and follow it back to the junction of the White and Blue Trails.)**

**Whichever your route continue on the White Trail as it shares its tread with Sunset Road for a handful of yards before veering left onto an old haul road as you parallel the west bank of Wolf Den Branch. Here the forest is mostly pine with an understory of dense Green Brier. In 0.76 miles the trail makes a sharp right and climbs gradually for 0.35 miles to the junction of the old Hidden Spring Trail straight ahead (Now part of the White Trail.) and the old South Trail to the left. Neither carry their old designations. If you look closely over your left shoulder you'll see the obscured remnants of the southern portion of the old Hidden Spring Trail.**

**Continue along the White Trail for 0.16 miles and turn right onto a footpath. In 0.51 miles arrive, once again, at Sunset Road. Turn right onto it but in a mere 0.09 miles turn left off of the road. Shortly after leaving Sunset Road arrive at the junction with the Orange Trail. Turn right here following the combined white and orange blazes. In 0.84 miles turn left onto the joint Blue and White Trails. In a few steps arrive back at the spur trail you started on. Turn right here and return to your vehicle.**