

Trail Notes for the Patuxent River Park Hike

Description: The Patuxent River Park/Jug Bay Natural Area maintains over 7,000 acres of forest and wet lands. Approximately 12 miles of well maintained and signed trails reaches all corners of the park. Trails are marked with white fiberglass markers with color coded diamonds and arrows directing the hiker. Most trails are easy.

Described here is an easy 6.4 mile circuit with hardly any elevation gain. One important note, there is a tendency for a portion of the red trail to flood due to construction of a beaver dam further down stream. Ask the folks about its status prior to setting out or bring some water crossing shoes with you. The water is usually no deeper than 12 inches and the trail underneath is made of firm material.

Description: From the Visitor Center hike back down the park road for 0.40 miles. Turn right onto the violet trail. The grade here is very slight. In 0.59 miles come to the edge of an open meadow. Bear left onto an old road, following its edge blocked now by thickets of small saplings. In another 0.24 miles turn left, re-entering the woods. In a couple of steps turn right onto another old road. In 0.22 miles arrive at another old road. Turn sharply left, almost back on yourself, onto a blue blazed footpath. In 0.86 miles cross the park road. In 0.40 miles come to another old road. Turning left is a short cut and by-pass should you not want to attempt crossing the beaver pond. Turn right to continue. In 0.27 miles turn left onto the yellow trail. At one point you will descend from a hill on a set of steps. In 0.57 miles from leaving the blue trail arrive at the old airport road. Turn left and in a few steps turn left onto the red trail. In 0.15 miles arrive at the potentially flooded area. Change to your water crossing shoes if necessary and cross over to the other side. You should be able to follow the submerged trail. Its base is sand and gravel and very stable. Be sure to use the bridge as there is a drop off into the stream. In 0.71 miles pass an old cement mixer on the right and arrive at the green trail. Turn right here and enjoy a 0.45 mile hike through some towering Tulip Poplars. Continue straight at a trail split and in 0.14 miles turn left and begin to parallel the river. In 0.37 miles turn right and then right again on the brown nature trail. The trail descends to a river side bench and turns left. In 0.16 miles arrive at a boardwalk that leads to a viewing platform. Besides getting a panoramic view of Jug Bay you also get a chance to observe osprey and water birds.

In 0.21 miles by-pass a trail to the left and arrive at a split in the boardwalk. Bear left. In 0.23 miles there is another viewing platform

to your left. This is not so much for a view as it is for checking out the Black Walnut Marsh ecosystem. Cross the stream on a bridge and continue straight up a hill to check out the Rural Living Museum including a 1800s log cabin and a mail order house from Sears and Roebucks. Follow a gravel road back to the Visitor Center.