

## Trail Notes for the Tuckahoe SP Dumbbell Circuit

Description: Tuckahoe SP, on the MD eastern shore, boasts of a small stocked lake, campground, picnic area, water trails for canoers and kayakers and an equestrian center. What most of the public doesn't know about is its highly under-utilized but well maintained trail system. The trails, for the most part, are remarkably dry for a sea level venue, the sandy soil offering better than average drainage. The few really wet spots have either by-pass trails or boardwalks to traverse them. All major water crossings are via well constructed bridges. The canopy is tall and thick except in a couple of areas. The forest is comprised of Maple, Beech, Oak, Pine, Poplar and, along what was once a road, Cedar. The trails are lined in spring wildflowers in May, the most prominent of which is May Apple with its single, hidden white blossom. There is also a fair number of violets and Spring Beauties as well as Wild Geranium, Iris, False Solomon Seal, Hispid Buttercups and Star of Bethlehem.

Described here is a 9.2 mile moderate "dumbbell" circuit using the middle "bar" to join two loops. If you wish to do a shorter, easier hike just do the first loop. Note that a 0.6 mile road walk at the end is required to close the loop.

The hike starts at a small gravel parking area across the road from the picnic tables in the pines just south of the lake.

Trail Notes: All trails are blazed and all but one intersection well signed.

From the parking area walk south on the shoulder of the road (away from the lake) and soon turn right onto the blue blazed Valley trail. Enter Adkins Arboretum in about 0.61 miles. In 0.39 more miles its trail system comes in from the left. This labyrinth of gravel trails is an adventure in itself with different plants and trees signed with a description of the different native plants and trees found there. It's an easy way to get a quick education about the local flora. Pass through this area, making right turns at every trail junction, including the trail that takes you on the "Creek-side Walk". After a brief visit to the creek the trail will rejoin the Valley Trail. In 0.26 miles from leaving the "Creek-side Walk" Trail come to a 4X trail junction. To the left is the Arboretum Spur Trail, straight ahead is a high water trail and to the right is the continuation of the blue blazed Valley Trail. Turn right and descend to Tuckahoe Creek and a metal and wood bridge. If doing the short 5 mile version turn right, crossing the bridge 0.43 miles after the last trail intersection and then follow the remaining instructions below marked by an (\*).

To complete the long version continue on the Valley trail for 0.31 miles and arrive at a 3X blue blazed trail junction. To the left is the high water trail you turned away from earlier. Bear right here and soon arrive at the State Park Visitor Center Spur and the Cut-off Trails, both to the left. In 0.52 miles after the Visitor Center Spur arrive at a 4X trail junction. There is no good sign here. Red blazed Turkey Hill Trail is to the right. Yellow blazed Creek-side Cliff Trail is straight ahead and the continuation of the Valley Trail is to the left. Continue on the Valley Trail. In 0.35 miles the trail turns right following what appears to be an old road lined with cedar trees. In 0.69 more miles join a boardwalk for a few yards before turning right onto a power line right of way and yellow blazed Creek-side Cliff Trail. In about 50 yards turn right into the woods. In 1.25 miles from the power line return to the previous 4X trail junction. Continue straight through the junction and retrace your steps to the wood and steel bridge over Tuckahoe Creek. Turn left and cross it.

Turn right onto the orange blazed Pee Wee trail. For the most part this stays in the woods following the bank of the creek but follows the edge of a large open pasture for a little bit, a nice change in scenery. In 1.85 miles arrive at Crouse Mill Road. Turn right and follow its shoulder for 0.6 miles, bearing right at the intersection, to return to your car. You'll pass the lake on the left as you go.