

# Dundee-Saltpeter Trail

## A Self-Guided Nature Trail



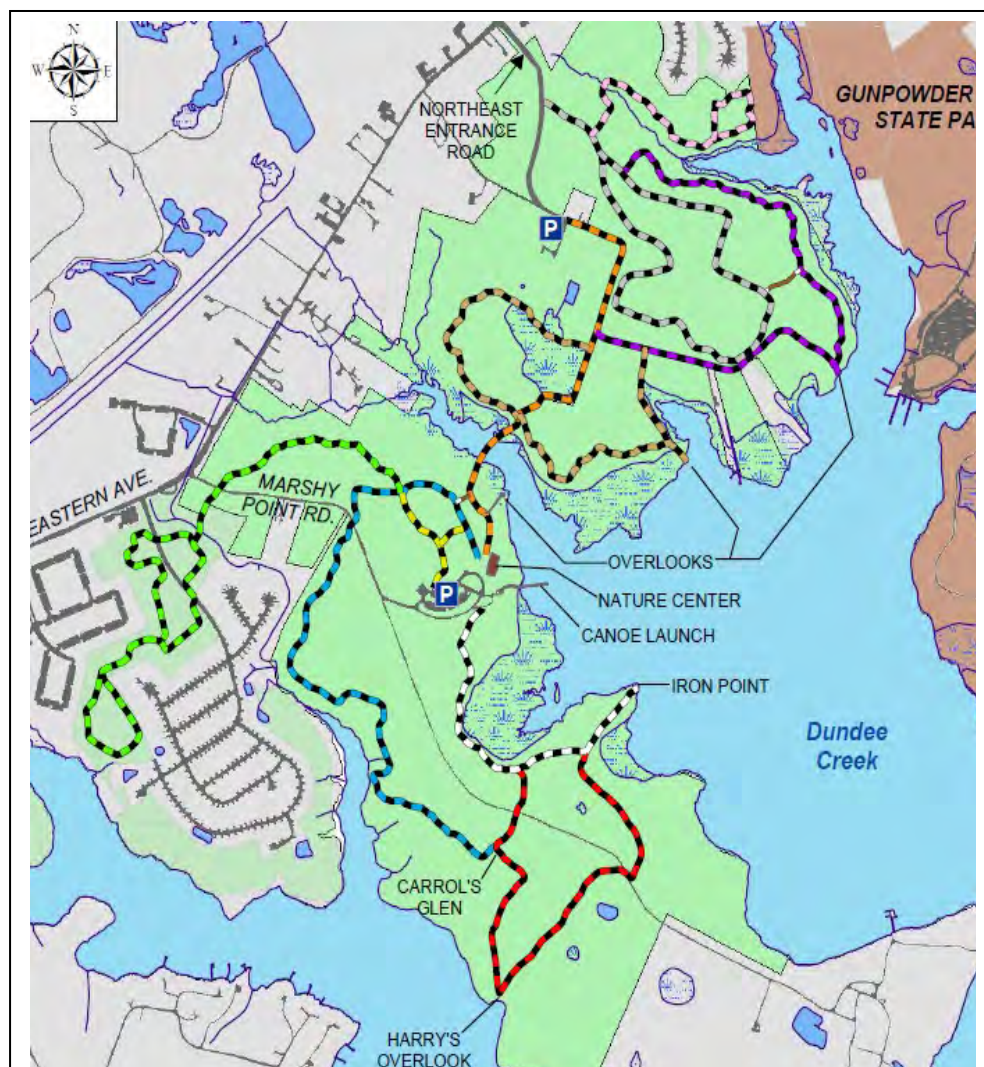
## Marshy Point Nature Center















Department of  
Recreation and Parks

This map includes the Dundee Saltpeter Trail (The Blue Trail). It is 1 mile long, so prepare for a medium-long hike. During periods of prolonged wet weather, sections of the trail may require water proof boots.

There are 15 points of interest that are marked along the trail. Follow the number markers throughout the trail to find out what makes Marshy Point a sanctuary for wildlife.



#### MAP KEY

- |  |   |
|--|---|
|  Marshy Point Park (including Tidewater Village Open Space) |  (tan) Vernal Pond Trail, 0.9 miles          |
|  (blue) Dundee-Saltpeter Trail, 1.0 mile                    |  (purple) Brinkmans Trail, 1.0 mile          |
|  (red) Weiskittel Trail, 0.9 miles                          |  (gray) Bluebird Loop Trail, 1.2 miles       |
|  (orange) Katie and Wil's Trail, 0.6 miles                  |  (pink) Skunk Cabbage Loop Trail, 0.75 miles |
|  (white) White Tail Trail, 0.5 miles                        |  Shortcut Path                               |
|  (yellow) Kassandor Hamilton Trail, 0.2 miles total         |   |
|  (green) Greenway Trail, 1.5 miles                          |   |



## The Old Ag Field

If you look closely you will notice that all the trees around you are about the same size. Look at the ground as well and you can still see faint plow lines in the soil.

This was once a farmer's field where crops were grown. When the Baltimore County Department of Recreation and Parks purchased the land in 1983 the surrounding forest seeded the field. The plowed landscape became frozen in time by the forest that began to surround it.

This natural change in the landscape with one species of plant paving the way for the next group is called succession.





## Cassandor Hamilton

Born 1752, died 1794.

To have an 18th Century Grave site in a County park is rare indeed. Cassandor Hamilton was born a few years before the French and Indian war (1754-1763). Little is known about him, but if he lived here in the Chesapeake area he would have been old enough to have fought in the Revolutionary War.

His grave is nearly completely buried under 200 years worth of forest debris. You are standing about forty yards from his grave site.





# Four Vine Tree

This Sweet Gum tree has four woody partners. See if you can spot all four.

## **Japanese Honeysuckle** (*Lonicera japonica*)



A woody vine that invades a variety of habitats introduced as a cultivated plant and is now invasive. The twining vine is able to climb up (33 ft) high or more in trees. The flowers are double-tongued, opening white and fading to yellow, and sweetly vanilla scented. The fruit is a dark blue berry containing numerous seeds.

## **Poison Ivy** (*Toxicodendron radicans*)



This poisonous plant is well known for its production of urushiol, a clear liquid compound found within the sap of the plant that causes an itching, or sometimes painful rash in most people who touch it. "Raggy rope, don't be a dope!" Poison ivy vines on trees have a furry "raggy" appearance. This rhyme warns vine climbers to be wary.

## **Virginia Creeper** (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*)



Five-leaved ivy or five-finger is a native woody vine. It is a prolific climber reaching heights of 20 to 30 m. The flowers are small and greenish, produced in clusters in late spring and mature in late summer or early fall. They form small hard purplish-black berries. These berries are moderately toxic to humans and other mammals, but provide an important winter food source for birds.

## **Grape Vine** (*Vitis spp.*)



Wild grapes are native climbing or trailing vines. Distinguishing characteristics include large leaves with veins extending like fingers. Wild grapes flower in late spring to early summer. Fruit is produced from August until frost. Birds and other animals eat the fruits and disperse the seeds.



## Flooded Forest Coastal Plain



This seasonally flooded forest is composed of moist soils and wet-tolerant plants. It provides a home and breeding ground for amphibians, birds, and mammals.

Common tree species include willow oak, pin oak, swamp chestnut oak, green ash, red maple, and black and sweet gum. In the understory, shrubs and vines are common.

Be on the lookout and you may see one of the several species that are found in this habitat type: white-tailed deer, eastern gray squirrel, red and gray fox, coyote, raccoon, opossum, long-tailed weasel, and even minks.



# High Bush Blueberry

*(Vaccinium corymbosum)*



Highbush Blueberry is a shrub with many stems. It grows to 10 feet tall and has clusters of small, bell-shaped, white flowers. The shrub has simple, green leaves which are one to two inches long.

Its leaves turn bright red in the fall. Highbush Blueberry is best known for its fruit, which is eaten by many animals, including humans.

Some of the animals that eat Highbush Blueberry fruit include: Eastern Bluebird, Northern Cardinal, Gray Catbird, Wild Turkey, Northern Mockingbird, Brown Thrasher, Mourning Dove, American Robin, Red Fox, White-footed Mouse, Striped Skunk and Eastern Chipmunk. White-tailed Deer and Eastern Cottontails eat the leaves and twigs of this shrub.



# Three Giants

Sweet Gum, White Oak and Red Oak

**These three giants are approximately ninety – one hundred years old.**

## **Sweet Gum** (*Liquidambar styraciflua*)



The bark of the Sweet Gum tree was peeled in pioneer days to obtain a gum-like sap used medicinally and as chewing gum. Local colonists made eating utensils and bowls out of the wood because of its ability to be carved effortlessly. The spiny, ball-like woody fruits contain hundreds of seeds making Sweet Gum the most common tree in the park.

## **White Oak** (*Quercus alba*)



In 1941, the White Oak was designated as the Maryland State Tree. Native Americans once ate the acorns and used the bark as an antiseptic and astringent for burns, rashes, bruises and sores. Today the acorns are eaten more by wildlife than by humans. The wood was also used for shipbuilding, whiskey barrels, as well as furniture.

## **Red Oak** (*Quercus rubra*)



The Northern Red Oak is a very valuable tree; nearly every part can be used. Mulch made from the leaves repels slugs and grubs, while a reddish-brown dye can be obtained from the bark. The wood is used in flooring, mine timbers and fine furniture. When prepared correctly the acorns are edible and were a valuable food source to local Native Americans.

**Please be careful as you cross the road to continue the trail.**



# American Holly

*(Ilex opaca)*



The American holly is a popular ornamental tree because of its attractive red fruit and dark green leaves. The red berries and prickly leaves of the holly tree are symbolic of Christmas in the United States.

The flowers are pollinated by insects, including bees, wasp, ants, and night-flying moths. The berries are poisonous to humans, but are important survival food for birds, which will eat the berries after other food sources are exhausted.

The tree also forms a thick canopy which offers protection for birds from predators and storms. Songbirds including thrushes, mockingbirds, catbirds, bluebirds and thrashers frequently feed on the berries.



## Life In A Dead Tree

For more than 80 years, it has successfully weathered storms and other whims of nature. It seemed invincible, like a massive pillar supporting the forest canopy. Now it seems decrepit, its trunk is stripped of bark. It is dead, really and truly dead! Yet in spite of its dismal appearance, this dead tree is indispensable to a multitude of organisms.



Did you know that dead trees bring life to the forest? Rotting wood provides both a home and a source of food and water for countless plants, insects, and animals.

Mushrooms, molds and toadstools are plants that lack chlorophyll, the chemical that permits most plants to produce food from sunlight. They find a warehouse of energy in the loose, moist and decaying wood. In return, the dead tree is recycled back into soil.

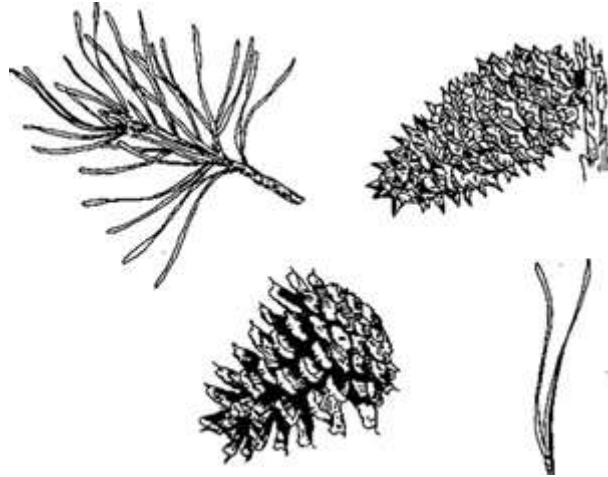


# Virginia Pine

(*Pinus virginiana*)

Virginia Pines are good pioneer plants, meaning they are some of the first trees to take over a field.

The two needles form the letter “V” so remember “V” is for Virginia Pine.



Although it is often referred to as "forest weed," in the south, Virginia pines are typically used as Christmas trees. It is one of the fastest growing pine trees in existence and requires full sunlight to grow and thrive at its best. The tree can reach impressive heights of 60 feet or taller.

Virginia pine trees are also great cover for many species of animals. Barred and Horned Owls roost in them. Woodpeckers also love this variety of tree due to its soft wood; they can make roosting holes in them easily.

Native Americans used the Virginia Pine as a medicine! They used it to treat:

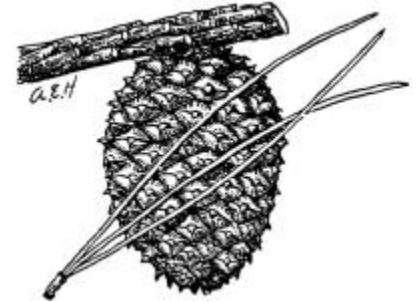
- \* Tuberculosis
- \* Fever
- \* Cold remedy
- \* Hemorrhoids
- \* Rheumatism



# Pitch Pine

*(Pinus rigida)*

Pitch pine is a medium to large tree that grows in poor, sandy soils in dry areas. The bark is rough, reddish-brown to gray and in scaly plates. The 3-5 inch long needles are stout and stiff. This is the only native pine that will produce “sprout” growth when apparently killed by such factors as fire.



Pitch pine reaches a height of 30-40 feet with a trunk diameter of 1-2 feet. The trunk tapers rapidly and is somewhat straight.

The cones are often produced in clusters. They are egg-shaped and 1 ½ - 3 ½ inches long with a sharp, curved prickle on the tip of each scale. The base of the cone is flat when the cone is completely opened. The cones take 2 years to mature and then open one winter and disperse seeds over several years.

The pitch pine is the only 3-needled pine found in the North. Needles are usually twisted and grow at right angles to the branches. Needles can also grow in tufts from the trunk.

The wood is used to produce lumber, wood pulp and kindling, but only fair as firewood. Early in our history, tar and turpentine were obtained from this tree.

Pitch pine provides an excellent habitat for wildlife and songbirds. Seeds are eaten by small mammals and birds. Rabbits and deer browse on young sprouts and seedlings.



# Tulip Tree

*(Liriodendron tulipifera)*

The Tulip Poplar grows tall and straight with tulip shaped leaves. Native Americans and pioneers used this tree to make canoes. Native Americans also boiled the bark to treat indigestion, coughs, fevers and as a wash for wounds.

It can grow to more than (165 feet) and often with no limbs until it reaches (80–100 feet) in height, making it a very valuable timber tree. It is fast-growing, without the common problems of weak wood strength and short lifespan often seen in other fast-growing species.



April marks the start of the flowering period in the southern USA. Trees at the northern limit of their range begin to flower in June.

The flowers are pale green or yellow (rarely white), with an orange band on the sepals; they yield large quantities of nectar.

The tulip tree is a major nectar crop for Maryland's bee keepers; it produces a dark robust flavored honey.



## Fox Den

Your nose will tell you this is a fox den -- fox urine takes on a pungent, skunk like odor during courtship.

Foxes are family-oriented critters, often forming lifetime attachments when it comes time to raise young ones. During the rest of the year, however, the male (dog) fox and the female (vixen) live separately, mostly at the insistence of the highly territorial female.



Foxes breed only once a year, most mating occurring in January or early February. Courting foxes can be heard barking or uttering unearthly screams; the dog and vixen hunt and travel together for about three weeks before mating. The vixen looks for a suitable den; she may dig one under tree roots, or find a groundhog hole to enlarge.

A litter of four or five cubs is born after a period of 53 days in March or April. They are blind, have round faces and short ears, and are covered with dark, chocolate brown fur.

The vixen stays with her cubs in the earth until they are two weeks old, relying on the dog fox to bring her food. The cubs grow quickly, their eyes opening when 10-14 days old. At around 4-5 weeks they begin to come out of the earth and their dark fur starts to change to red-brown. As the cubs grow up they play, squabble and fight amongst themselves and in this way they establish their social position.

In October and November most of the young dog foxes and some of the vixens leave the home territory to try and establish territories of their own. At this time of year many young foxes are killed by cars, dogs etc., or die of starvation or cold during a hard winter. About 55% of foxes die in their first year without having had a chance to breed and 80% die before they are three years old.

The short life-span of a fox means that females will breed only two or three times on average, while males usually only mate once.



# Tidal Creek

The Chesapeake Bay is North America's largest estuary (an area where fresh and salt water mix) and the third largest estuary in the world.

Chesapeake is derived from the Native American word "Tschiswapeki," meaning "great shellfish bay."

The Bay supports 3,600 species of plant and animal life, including more than 300 fish species and 2,700 plant types.

The magic of the Chesapeake resides in its 8000 miles of shore line. Tidal creeks such as this one are part of that vast shoreline.



The Chesapeake's tidal freshwater tributaries provide spawning and nursery sites for several important species of fish, such as white and yellow perch, striped bass (also known as 'rockfish'), herring, and shad.

Turtles and snakes are the most common reptiles in the Bay watershed. Species include the diamondback terrapin, loggerhead turtles, and more than 40 types of snakes. The watershed also is home to numerous varieties of frogs, toads, salamanders, and newts.

Waterfowl and other birds migrating along the Atlantic Flyway stop here, finding food and shelter in small coves and marshes. The Chesapeake is the winter home for tundra swans, Canada geese, and a variety of ducks including canvasbacks, pintails, scoters, eiders, and ruddy ducks.

On average, nearly one million waterfowl winter each year on the Bay. It is also a major nesting area for the threatened bald eagle and home to the world's largest population of another raptor, the osprey, with more than 2,000 nesting pairs.



## Ground Pine

*Lycopodium*, from the Greek, (*lukos*) "wolf", and (*podos*) "foot"; "wolf's foot", a reference to the resemblance of the branch tips to a wolf's paw print.

This tiny pine is not a pine at all, it is a club moss. Club-mosses have been boiled in water to make a medicinal tea that was cooled and used as an eye wash. At one time, fresh plants were put on the head to cure headaches and worn on clothing to ward off illness.

Ground-pines stay green all winter, and they are often used in Christmas decorations.

The ground-pine gets its name from its resemblance to a miniature pine tree.





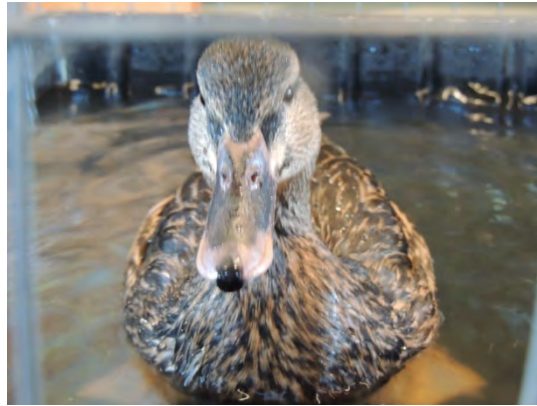
## Carol's Glenn

This green oasis in the woods harbors vernal ponds, Lady Ferns and Va. Creeper Vines. Believe it or not this was at one time the old dumping sight for the Weiskittel family, before the property was sold to the county. You are about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile from where their house stands. This site was named after Mrs. Carol Weiskittel.

A vernal pond is a fresh water pond; formed of rain water in low areas, it will eventually dry up. While it lasts, it is a fish free habitat for frogs, turtles, tadpoles, fairy shrimp and other flying insects.



**Lady Fern, *Athyrium filix-femina***, have yellow-green to medium green fronds with feathery blade pairs. The upper blades of the Lady Fern are long-tapering and ascending. Plants spread slowly to form dense clumps. Under the right conditions *lady ferns* will continue to send up new fronds well into the summer months.



**Please proceed straight to the red trail (use caution crossing the driveway) as you follow it towards the White Tail Trail. To return to the Nature Center you would make a left at the White Tail Trail and follow the signs back to the center.**

**If you would like to keep this brochure at the end of the trail feel free to do so, otherwise please deposit it in the trail box at the end of the White Tail Trail. Thank You.**



**Now that you have reached the end of the nature trail you may ask yourself if you have learned anything new about nature and what makes Marshy Point a sanctuary for wildlife?**



**If you would like to discover more about nature and protecting our environment for future generations, be sure to visit the Marshy Point Nature Center before you leave, or go to [www.marshypoint.org](http://www.marshypoint.org)**

# Special Thanks To:

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