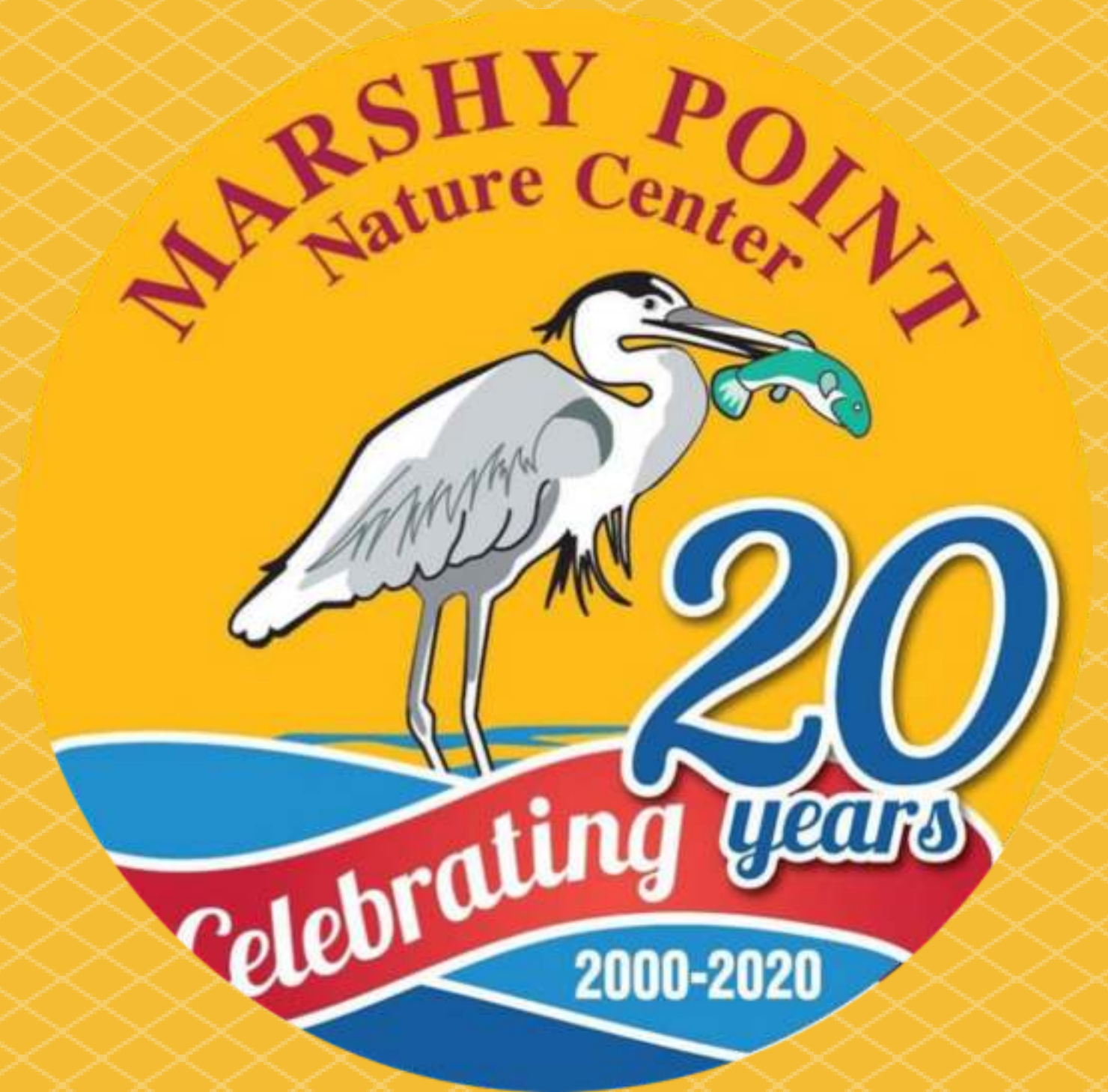


**Marshy Point Nature Center**



**Self-Guided Tour of  
Katie & Wil's Trail**





# Welcome to Katie & Wil's Trail

Our orange-blazed trail is more commonly known as Katie & Wil's Trail. Dedicated in honor of **Katie and Wil Brady**, this trail contains 0.6 miles of blacktop trail that provides an accessible and accommodating experience of some of Marshy Point's most exciting landmarks and habitats.





# The Coastal Plain



You've probably already noticed that Marshy Point lays on mostly flat land. That's because here at Marshy Point, we are in Maryland's **coastal plain** region. This is one of three major geographical regions of Maryland, the others including the **piedmont plateau**, and the **Appalachian mountain** range of Maryland that spans into West Virginia and Pennsylvania.

Image via MD Secretary of State

# The Eastern Deciduous Forest

As you begin your exploration of Katie & Wil's Trail, you'll first enter one of Marshy Point's most exciting habitats - an **eastern deciduous forest**.

The term “**deciduous**” refers to forests that **lose their leaves** in late fall and winter, as compared to **evergreen** forests that maintain leaves and needles year-round. Our forests are considered **temperate** because they have warm, wet summers and cold winters. These forests are incredibly **biodiverse**, or containing many species of plants and animals.

Some of the common deciduous trees you can observe on this trail and throughout the park include the (1) **red maple** (*Acer rubrum*), (2) **pawpaw** (*Asimina triloba*), (3) **American sycamore** (*Platanus occidentalis*), (4) **willow oak** (*Quercus phellos*), and **sweetgum** (*Liquidambar styraciflua*).



# Common Deciduous Trees



**1. Red maple leaves**



**2. Grove of Pawpaw trees**



**3. Sycamore leaves**



**4. Willow oak leaves**





Bat box

Barred owl nest box

Attracting Forest  
Wildlife

# Minnow Branch of Dundee Creek

Marshy Point is situated between **Dundee and Saltpeter Creeks**, which are two **tidal creeks** that connect to the **Gunpowder River**, and eventually the **Chesapeake Bay**.

The water in both of these creeks, the Gunpowder, and the Chesapeake is **brackish**, meaning it is a mix of both **freshwater** from upland streams and rivers as well as **saltwater** from the Atlantic Ocean.

The section of Dundee Creek you are viewing from this trail is called **Minnow Branch**. From both our observation deck and bridge on the Katie & Wil's trail, you can observe the unique **wildlife** and **plant species** that call Minnow Branch home. This area is a great spot to **birdwatch** for waterfowl and osprey.



# Birds of Minnow Branch



**Osprey**  
(*Pandion haliaetus*)



**Mallard**  
(*Anas platyrhynchos*)



**Great blue heron**  
(*Ardea herodias*)



**Female**

**Male**

**Wood duck**  
(*Aix sponsa*)



# The Vernal Pond Loop Trails

The loop of the Vernal Pond Trail **immediately to your right** as you descend from the Minnow Branch bridge leads to a variety of amazing spots in Marshy Point Park, including some of our **largest vernal ponds** and our **Pratt Point overlook and campsite**.





# The Restored Wetlands of Marshy Point

If you continue straight on Katie & Wil's Trail past the Vernal Pond Loop Trails, you will soon find yourself at one of the largest and most accessible **freshwater wetland** habitats at Marshy Point. This area of **restored habitat** includes a plethora of plant and animal species that are easily identifiable.

Depending on the season and the recent **precipitation** (rain or snowfall), this area can be anywhere from a dried mud patch to a pond reaching depths of over three feet.

In the spring and summer, the wetlands are a fantastic spot to observe **frogs** as well as many types of **emergent aquatic vegetation** (EAV's), which are with roots submerged in wetlands and creeks.



# Common Frogs of Marshy Point



**American bullfrog**  
(*Rana catesbeiana*)



**Southern leopard frog**  
(*Lithobates sphenoccephalus*)



**Green frog**  
(*Rana clamitans melanota*)



**American toad**  
(*Anaxyrus americanus*)



# Common Plants of the Wetlands



**Buttonbush**  
(*Cephalanthus occidentalis*)



**Pickerelweed**  
(*Pontederia cordata*)



**Sensitive ferns**  
(*Onoclea sensibilis*)



**Narrow-leaved cattails**  
(*Typha angustifolia*)



# The Bluebird Loop Trail

Finally, as you near the end of Katie and Wil's Trail, you will see a large field open up as the path becomes gravel. This expansive field is carved out by our **Bluebird Loop Trail**, where naturalists and volunteers work hard every year to study and preserve our native populations of **Eastern bluebirds** (*Sialia sialis*).

Eastern bluebirds are a striking blue and orange songbird in the **Thrush family** that can be found year-round in the Eastern United States. These birds are **cavity-nesters**, meaning that they make their small nests in the hollows of old, dead trees or fence posts. The native bluebird has faced threats from habitat loss, development and urban sprawl, and competition from invasive species like **European starlings** (*Sturnus vulgaris*) and **English sparrows** (*Passer domesticus*), which are more aggressive cavity-nesters.



# The Bluebird Loop Trail

Across the park, and specifically in this field, **bluebird nest boxes** have been installed to encourage the breeding and expanding of our native bluebird populations. The boxes have had massive success in recent years, and the results of such can be seen as bluebirds are easily spotted darting through the open fields to catch insects.





# What's Next?

Before you finish your day at the park, make sure you check out the **nature center's indoor and outdoor exhibits**. We are open every day of the week from **9 am to 5 pm** with the exception of federal and local holidays.

Follow Marshy Point on **Facebook** and **Instagram** ([@marshypointnaturecenter](https://www.instagram.com/marshypointnaturecenter)) for updates from the park and the Nature Center Council.

Check out our **website**, [marshypoint.org](http://marshypoint.org), for our **schedule of programs** and more information regarding the park's **group visits, special events, and summer camps**.

***Thank you for visiting Marshy Point, we look forward to seeing you again soon!***

**Guide designed by James Duffy, Summer Camp Director**  
**Photography by Benjamin Porter, Director**