

### Stop 3

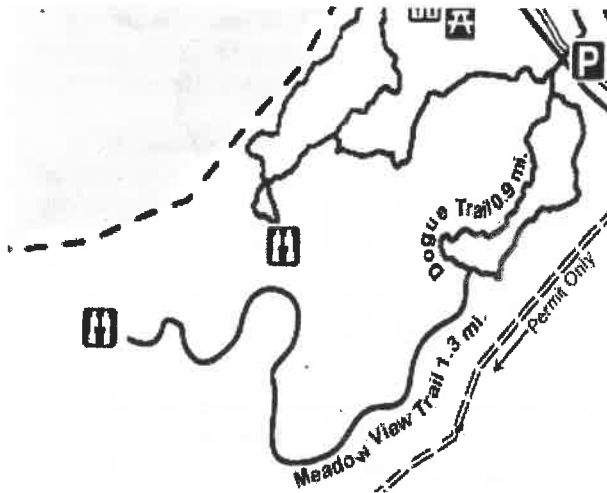
#### Face in the Tree

At first you might not notice this interesting piece of natural art, but take a closer look at these two trees & you can start to see a face appear. These are Beech trees and the knots in the trunks of these trees can look like eyes. The American Beech is a strong, and heavy wooded tree that can grow up to 80 feet tall. The Beech is used for lumber, pulpwood (for paper), furniture, and flooring. The Beech tree is often used as lumber for a container since it does not impart a taste into its contents. While these particular Beech trees stand out due to the appearance of a face, there are many other common hardwoods along the way. Look for others like the American Holly, which has sharp and pointy green leaves year round!

### Stop 4

#### The Meadow

At the end of the trail, is the Observation Blind which was built as an Eagle Scout project. The blind looks out at what used to be a part of a farm. Most of the farm was allowed to grow back naturally, but in an effort to bring back more native wildflowers & meadows, the park has been using a technique known as a prescribed burn on this field. Trained professionals burn a specified area, in order to reduce the invasive plant species population. This also allows the ground to gain nutrients, & then native species are planted. It will take a few years to become a natural meadow. Meadows are very important for many species of wildlife like Bobwhites. Look for the manmade pond which was built by Ducks Unlimited to help increase sanctuary space for waterfowl and other animals. This is a sensitive wildlife area, so any human intrusion into these fields can hurt the wildlife that calls this space home. We ask that you please stay on the trail & within the blind at all times.



#### Trail Information

The Meadow View Trail, is a moderate 1.3 mile trail that is accessible from the Wilson Spring parking lot. The trail begins midway into the Dogue Trail and takes visitors into a mature hardwood forest. The end of the trail features a blind overlooking a meadow and a pond. The blind is a great spot for viewing the American Bald Eagle!

**Please note:** this trail runs along the National Wildlife Refuge boundary and along sensitive wildlife areas, venturing off trail is strictly prohibited at all times. Once you have reached the bird blind you have reached the end of the trail. To return to the parking lot visitors must hike back along the trail towards the start point.

#### Meadow View Trail Self Guided Tour

Tour stops **1** through **4** are marked by numbers along the trail.



Mason Neck State Park  
7301 High Point Road  
Lorton, VA 22079  
Phone 703-339-2380

Virginia State Parks

Mason Neck State Park

Meadow View Trail  
Self Guided Tour



I  
LOVE  
Virginia State Parks

www.virginiastateparks.gov

# Mason Neck State Park

## MEADOW VIEW TRAIL SELF GUIDED TOUR



### History of Mason Neck

Mason Neck State Park is steeped in natural and cultural history, encompassing 1,825 acres. The park shares 'The Neck' with Elizabeth Hartwell Mason Neck National Wildlife Refuge, Pohick Bay Regional Park, Gunston Hall and BLM's Meadowood Special Recreation Area. Combined, these areas provide over 6,400 acres dedicated to recreation, preservation and wildlife management.

The first recorded history of Mason Neck was by Captain John Smith in 1608. He wrote of his meeting with the Dogue Indians and charted the chief's village of Tauxenent on his map of Virginia. The area was referred to as Doggs Island and Doeg Neck originally. Later, this peninsula received its current name from the Mason family.



During the 1800's and early 1900's, logging was the area's primary industry. The removal of mature pine, hardwood and the use of the pesticide DDT, led to the decline of the American Bald Eagle in the region.

In 1965 the Conservation Committee for Mason Neck formed to preserve the area from increasing development pressures. In July 1967, the Nature Conservancy made its first purchase of land to protect areas of Mason Neck. Later, funds were appropriated to federal, state and local agencies to begin buying land parcels from private land owners and the Nature Conservancy.

The park is now managed for passive recreation, environmental education and the protection and preservation of habitat for the American Bald Eagle and other animals in the area. Animals that frequent Mason Neck include: bald eagles, hawks, white-tailed deer, fox, beavers and over 200 species of birds.



### Stop 1

#### Eskers

Atop this small rounded hill sits our first stop. At this bench you can look out and see that you are standing on one of several finger like hills that slope up and down rapidly. These hills are a formation known as an Esker, which are narrow ridges created by deposits of coarse gravel from a water source. From this point you can see that at the bottom of each slope is a very flat plane that was left behind as the water from the bay and the Potomac river receded over time. When Mason Neck was first settled by George Mason IV in 1750's, this part of the peninsula was covered by marshes. As time went by, slowly the waters receded and left the marshes dry. Then the forest started to take over, creating these interesting looking ravines.

### Stop 2

#### The Boardwalks

Throughout this trail there are spots where we have put in boardwalks. These were built and installed by members of the Youth Conservation Corps, and Americorps. Both groups are responsible for much of the construction of the trail. These areas can sometimes flood with water from the nearby marshes. The good news is, that when it rains, the toads come out. We have three species of toads in the area. The Fowler's Toad can be grey to an olive color with darker stripes & spots. The American Toad tends to be more uniformly colored with a dark back and a lighter belly. The Eastern Spadefoot is the most vividly colored & has almost a cat's slit-eye for a pupil. If you get really lucky, you may even see a Wood Frog! These are a brown to light grey color & are easily identified by their "robber's mask." Please feel free to stop by the Visitor's Center to see posters of all of our frogs and toads.

