

This Booklet Belongs to:

Completed On:



Douthat State Park Spring Explorations



Spring is a time where life blossoms all across the Allegheny Highlands and waterfalls shine. Follow the adventures in this activity booklet to fully immerse yourself in the happenings of spring.



Springtime Search:

There is a lot to see during the spring, from plants popping up to animals and humans out and about. Many are taking advantage of the warming air, so let's warm up for the rest of the activities in this booklet with a little search. Check them off as you see them!



- Flowers Blooming** – While flowers don't just bloom in spring, there are a lot of them that do. Try to find one ready to bloom but hasn't just yet.
- Frog Eggs** - Wander down by the water and you might spot an egg mass. Take a close look and see if you can spot tadpoles forming, but please leave them in the water and don't touch!
- Fawn** – While you drive around the park and enjoy the open areas, keep an eye out for deer and you might just spot a fawn among them.
- Red Spotted Newt** – As we edge closer to summer, keep your eyes peeled for a bright orange salamander with red spots down its back. When in this color phase and on land, they are commonly called red efts.
- Fishermen** – The first weekend of April kicks off trout stocking season at Douthat, and you'll find many lined up along the banks of Wilson Creek to try to take one home.
- Trout** – Whether in the creek, the lake, or someone's hand, see if you can spot a trout. You might even get lucky and see one take a ride down the trout tube.
- Bird's Nest with Eggs** – Bird's nests come in all sorts of shapes and sizes and are made with a lot of different materials. Can you spot one with eggs or chicks inside?

What's Worth Preserving?

Douthat is one of the oldest parks in Virginia! Everyday our rangers work hard to preserve it for people like you to enjoy! Sit down with a friend (or make one if you came alone) and answer the following.

Name 3 things you discovered and enjoyed in the park.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Ask someone what 3 things they enjoy MOST about Douthat.

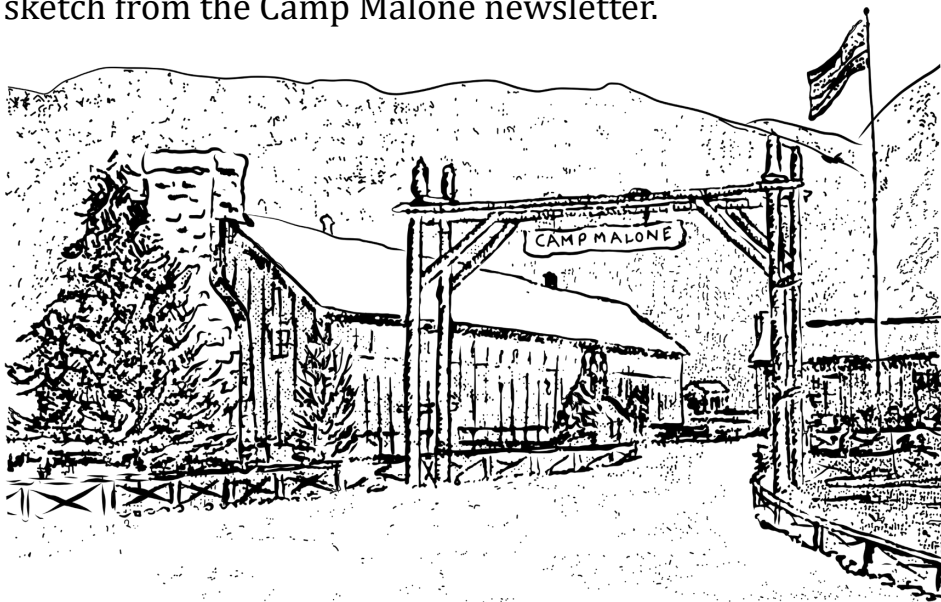
- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Are they the same or different from the items you discovered?

Why do you think these are things worth preserving?

Time Traveling









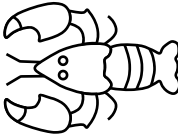

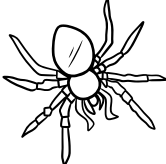


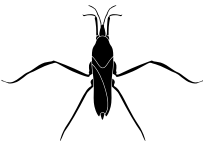


The Civilian Conservation Corps camps that housed the young men who built this park are almost completely gone. The only signs left of the camps are flat, open areas and a chimney at the Wilson Creek trailhead near Creasy Lodge. Head there and compare what you see to this sketch from the Camp Malone newsletter.



List 3 main differences you see

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

BINGO

 Squirrel	 Pinecone	 Dogwood Flower	 Caterpillar
 Feather	 Animal Prints	 Woodpecker	 Snail or Slug
 Crayfish	 Berries	 Spider	 Pine Needles
 Cardinal	 Water Strider	 Shelf/Bracket Fungi	 Ant

Can you get bingo?

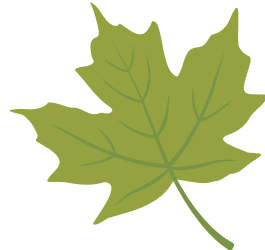
Spring is filled with life, but if you're not paying attention, you could miss clues and critters. See if you can get a bingo!

Spring Buddies

Can you match the buds to their tree?



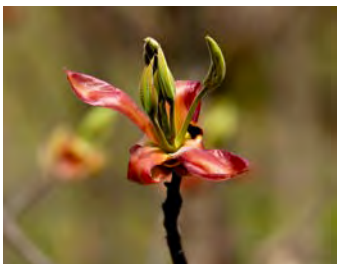
Shagbark Hickory



Maple



Tulip Tree



Sweet Birch

Wonderful Wetlands

Vernal pools not only provide habitat but also play another role in the ecosystem, acting as a wetland. Wetlands are like sponges that help slow down and clean the water as it passes through. Complete the maze below to find out what all wetlands filter out.



CAN THERE BE TOO MUCH OF A GOOD THING?

One might think of cattails as a staple in wetlands, helping filter water and control erosion, however, an increase in run-off containing fertilizers and hybridization with more aggressive, non-native, cattail species, has led to a cattail takeover in many wetlands. This actually causes habitats loss as the cattails crowd in and reduce space for other species. Check out the spillway to see a takeover in-person.

How many cattails do you think there are?



Vernal Pools

Vernal pools are low lying areas that fill up seasonally with water, usually during late winter and early spring, providing the perfect spot for amphibians, like salamanders and frogs, to lay their eggs. Since vernal pools dry up in the heat of the summer, they cannot support fish who would otherwise feast on the amphibians' eggs and offspring. This creates a haven for tadpoles and salamander larvae to grow and metamorphize, with reduced risk of predation. *We have a vernal pool in the park, can you find it?*

Where is it? _____

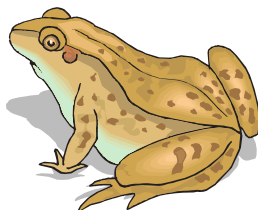
COMMON VERNAL POOL CRITTERS



Mole Salamander



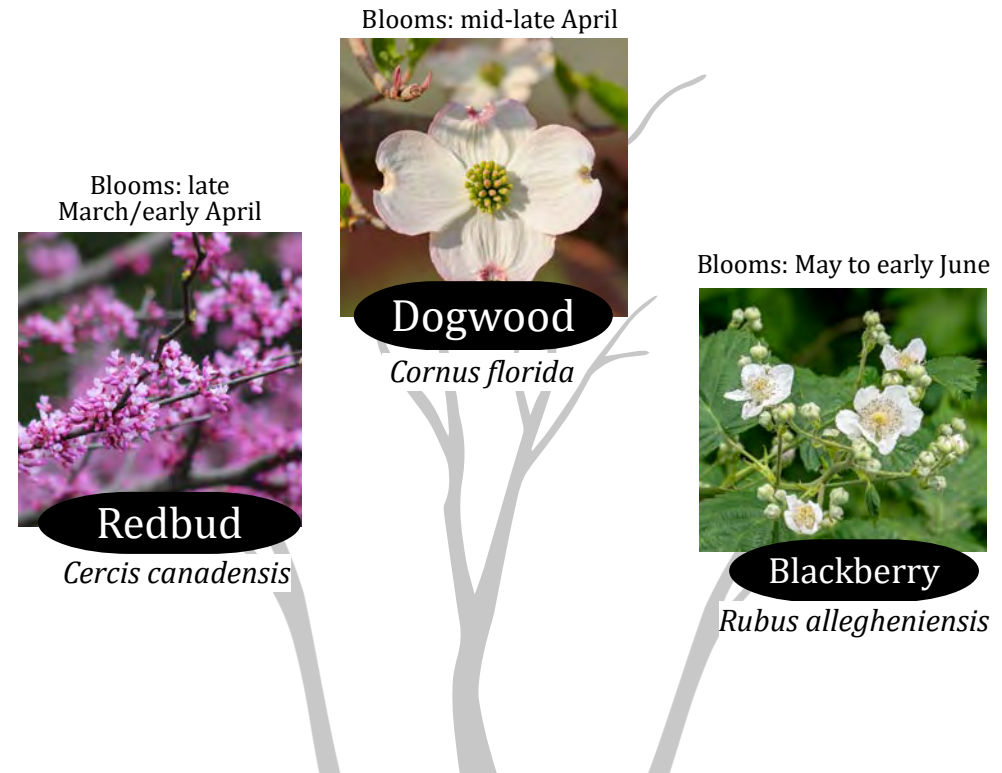
Fairy Shrimp



Wood Frog



When exploring near the vernal pool, please do not disturb the leaf litter, amphibians or eggs. Amphibian populations are declining worldwide, and the southern Appalachian Mountains are a global hotspot for salamander diversity, making it crucial to protect their habitat here. Join a ranger-led vernal pool program to dive in further.



SPRINGTIME FOLKLORE

Before there were weather forecasts to follow, folks kept track of the slow warming and cold snaps leading up to summer through a series of "little winters" named after what was blooming at the time. This helped them know when to plant their crops and avoid late frosts. During your stay, you might hear locals or rangers talking about "Dogwood Winter," "Redbud Winter," and "Blackberry Winter." Take a look around and see if you can figure out which "little winter" is next!

Wildflowers

You don't have to wander very far to see spring blossoming at Douthat. Take a stroll around the Discovery Center or a short hike around Buck Lick Loop, and tally how many you spot:



Trout Lily



Rattlesnake Orchid



Pink Lady Slipper



Fetterbush



Bleeding Hearts



Could also be yellow

Common Violet



Columbine



Trillium



Lady Slipper

Egg-stravaganza!

Have you seen an egg and wondered who it belongs to? Test your knowledge and match the eggs below to their parent.



Word Bank: Cardinal, Hummingbird, Bluebird, Osprey, Goose, Whippoorwill

HIKE TO A HOTSPOT



Birding Virginia lists Beards Gap and Brushy Hollow trails as hotspots for bird watching. Pack a snack and have breakfast with the birds for peak activity.



Want to learn more about birds? Try Merlin!

Merlin is Bird ID app that can be used to help you learn about and identify birds by:

- Songs
- Color
- Behavior
- and more!

Scan this QR code to download Merlin!



Spring is ^{full of} Calling

We all think of birds flying south for the winter, but where do they head for the summer? During the spring, many avian species fly north to spread out and reduce competition for food and nesting locations. Douthat State Park lies in the Appalachian Mountains, a range defined by its diverse ecosystems which provide an abundance of habitat for songbirds, woodpeckers, waterfowl, and raptors alike to raise their families.



Keep an eye and *an ear* out for birds around the park as they look for a mate, defend their territory, and care for their young.

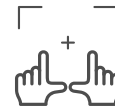


How many drums have you heard?



DID YOU HEAR A WOODPECKER DRILLING FOR A MEAL? – THINK AGAIN!

Many think that anytime a woodpecker is drilling into a tree, they make their distinct drumming or pecking noise that can be heard from far away; however, when they are searching for food, they barely make any noise at all. The drumming is specifically used as mating and territorial calls.



Flowers in Focus



WAIT, THAT'S A FLOWER?

When walking past, many mistake this flower for a cob of corn or a fungus, which is probably how it got its name – Bear Corn. This flower is non-photosynthetic and instead feeds off the nutrients from tree roots, making it a parasite. Have you seen any Bear Corn? Keep a lookout at the base of beech and oak trees, it prefers their roots.



Bear Corn
Conopholis americana

LET'S TAKE A CLOSER LOOK

Find a flower and follow the prompts below:

Zoom Out: Draw a flower where you found it

Zoom In: Try to draw the insides of the flower

Bonus: Did you see its pollinator? Draw it

Use Your Senses!

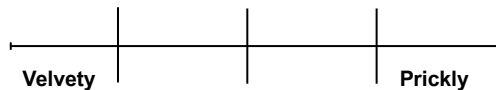
You've been using your eyes this whole time, have you used your other senses?

TOUCH

Take the time and unleash your inner child (if you aren't one already)! Try touching some moss, leaves, anything else you might find. However, be on the lookout for things you shouldn't touch like poison ivy, vines and wildlife.

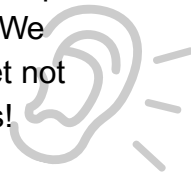


What did you feel and how did it feel? Mark the texture of your findings with an X



HEAR

Have you *really* listened today? Spring is full of symphonies from many amazing critters that use their voices to attract mates. One of those are frogs, whose lungs are attached to their eardrums to help them control the volume of incoming sounds. We aren't so lucky! Find a nice place to sit and quiet not only your body, but your mind. List 3 sounds!



1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Use Your Senses!

You've been using your eyes this whole time, have you used your other senses?

TASTE

We'd prefer if you didn't taste random plants on the trail, but we would like to make sure you stay hydrated and well fed for your trek! Take a moment to do so!



SMELL

Stop and smell the flowers. No, literally! Pleasant smells can be found all around and not just in the flowers that look pretty. You can also rub a leaf between your fingers to reveal scents hiding in plain site – look for sassafras, pawpaw and spicebush.



Draw what plant you smelled!