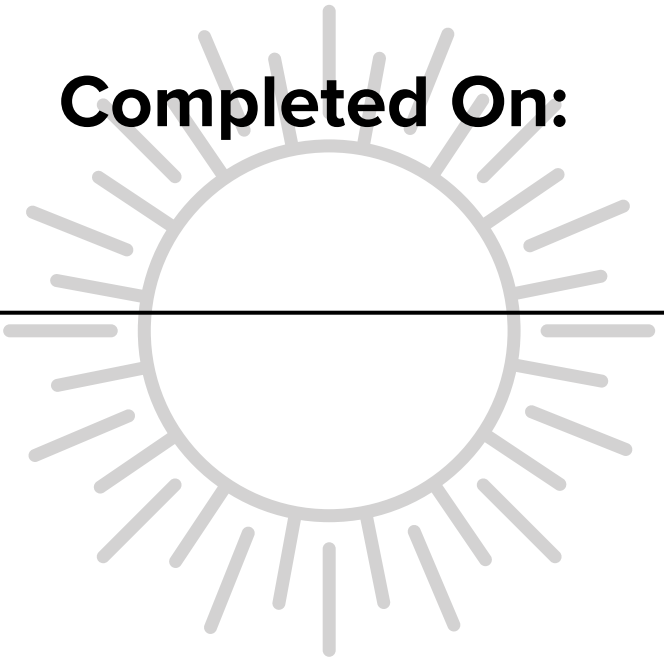


This Booklet Belongs to:

Completed On:



Douthat State Park Summer Explorations



Summer skies bring warmth and a wealth of discovery to the Allegheny Highlands. With the longer days there is plenty of time to explore every nook and cranny, and a whole other world to see after dark. Follow the adventures inside to make the most of every moment here at the park.

Summer Search:

Life is everywhere in the summertime, from the thousands of visitors passing through the park to the wildlife that calls it home. Take some time while you're at the park to see if you can spot these things:



- Deer** – Like most animals this time of year you're most likely to spot them in the morning and evening.
- Wildflower** – Even though spring has passed, there are still some flowers out, see if you can spot one.
- Goose** – Canada Geese love open grassy areas by water, which makes golf courses and other recreational areas some of their favorite spots. For a challenge, see if you can find a nest!
- Kids fishing** – Many come to Douthat to fish, but it is always nice to watch it be passed down to the next generation.
- Two different tree species** – or leaf shapes. For an additional challenge see if you can find two tree species growing intertwined or grab a leaf rubbing booklet at the Park Office.
- Water bike** – And no, not just one tied up, but see if you can spot someone riding one on the lake.
- Park Ranger “in the wild”** – Whether cleaning a building, making a repair, working on a trail, or educating at a program, see if you can spot a park ranger out and about.

Want to recognize them for their hard work? Stop by the park office or scan the “Recognize a Ranger” QR code at a kiosk or, if a guest, on the green paper in your welcome packet.

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 things you discovered?**Why do you think these are things worth preserving?**

Time Traveling








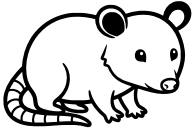


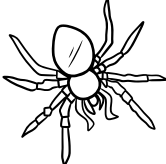


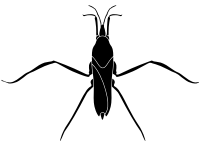


The Beach House is the only two-story structure in the park and was complete in 1938 by the Civilian Conservation Corps. Originally built as a bathhouse, the structure has taken on different roles throughout the years. Below is how it appeared in 1938:



List 3 main differences you see

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

BINGO

 Squirrel	 Pinecone	 Raccoon	 Snake
 Feather	 Scratches on Log	 Woodpecker	 Opossum
 Bat	 Fox	 Spider	 Y-Shape Stick
 Great Blue Heron	 Water Strider	 Rock w/Lichen	 Ant

Can you get bingo?

In summer, Douthat is filled with people, but also wildlife. See if you can get a bingo!

*Tip: Wildlife viewing is best at dawn and dusk

Black Bears

When the weather is warm, people flock to the park and so do some other fuzzy critters. Despite being crepuscular – most active during dusk and dawn – it isn't uncommon to see black bears in the park during the day, especially when the berries are nice and ripe.

BEAR SIGNS

We hope you don't see a bear, but here are some signs one may have been around: *Cross off any you see.*

Scat – Take a stick and poke around to see if you can figure out what it's eaten



Scratch marks on trees and moved or broken apart logs



Prints or trails carved out through thickets



STAYING SAFE IN BEAR COUNTRY

1. **NEVER** run from a bear
2. Talk while hiking to avoid startling a bear, especially near dense vegetation
3. **If you encounter a bear:** make yourself big, make noise, and slowly back away. *Do not* approach cubs.
4. Put up food at night inside, in a locked car, or bear box
5. Take all trash to a bear safe dumpster

DID YOU SPOT A BEAR?

Head to the *Park Office* to make a report. Expect to be asked: when, where, and a description on the bear.

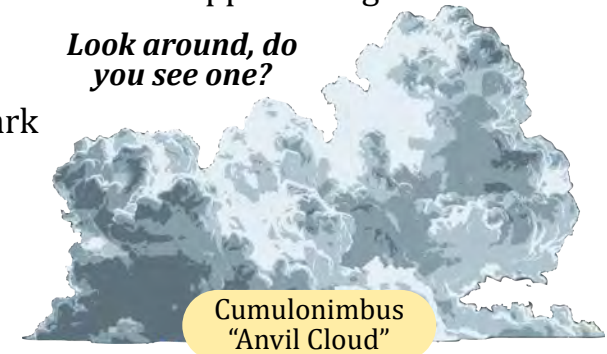
Wild Weather

In the summertime, the weather can change rapidly and with limited cell service in the park, it can be crucial to know how to read the signs of bad weather approaching and have a plan of what to do.

Signs of a storm:

1. Cumulonimbus or dark clouds approaching
2. Sudden drop in temperature
3. Increase in wind
4. Rumbles of thunder

Look around, do you see one?



WHAT TO-DO WHEN WEATHER STRIKES



Leave the water



Move away from trees and open spaces



Seek shelter, stay away from windows



Wait 30 minutes after last thunder

BEAT THE HEAT

Soaking up the sunshine isn't always a good thing, and too much heat can make you sick. Complete the following tasks to make sure you're prepared for a hot summer day outside.

Check the UV Index:

Apply Sunscreen

Reapply Sunscreen

Stay Hydrated! Locate a water fountain

Take breaks in the shade or indoors

Limit activity in the afternoon

Learn the signs of heat exhaustion

Hike Smarter!

Heading out on a hike? Follow the checklist to ensure you have a great adventure!

- **Make a plan and take a map!** Pick up a paper map or download the app
- **Avoid the heat of the day,** and go for a morning or evening stroll & check the weather forecast
- **Take plenty of water,** especially if you are planning to go on a long adventure
- **Wear protectants.** Sunscreen, sunglasses, lightweight long sleeves, pants, and bug spray will help keep you safe
- **Wear proper footwear.** Many of our trails are steep and rocky, closed-toed, study shoes are a must!

HAVING TROUBLE READING THE PAPER MAP? TRY AVENZA



GEOLOGY ROCKS! – Hike recommendation

Tobacco House Ridge trail not only offers an amazing overlook of the lake, but also a walk through a unique habitat only found in central Appalachia, known as a *shale barren*. This habitat most commonly occurs on steep south to west facing slopes and features poor soil quality making it difficult for plants to grow; however, there is still life to discover! Keep your eye out for native Wavy Hair and Little Bluestem grasses, Blueberry, Harry Wood Mint (purple flower), Western Wallflower, Shale Barren Evening-Primrose, and Smooth Sunflower (yellow flowers), Chestnut Oak, and Virginia Pine.

FEATURED SPECIES
Table Mountain Pine - Look for closed spikey cones that are meant to be opened by fire, and bundles of 2-3 needles.



Explore Smarter!

LEAVE NO TRACE

There are seven *Leave No Trace* principles to keep in mind as you explore the park and go on adventures. Read and see how many you can remember:

1. Plan ahead and prepare
2. Travel and camp on a durable surface
3. Dispose of waste properly
4. Leave what you find
5. Minimize campfire impact
6. Respect wildlife
7. Be considerate of other visitors

A GOOD "RULE OF THUMB"

When respecting wildlife, it can be hard to know how close is too close, but if you can close one eye and cover the animal with your thumb, you are far enough away!



EXPLORE INDOORS

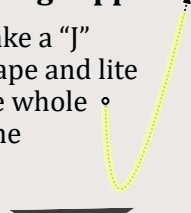


Getting too hot outside? Head to the **Nature's Outpost** or **Park Office** to learn more about Douthat State Park, cool off, and find the answers to these questions:

1. What are the names of our animal ambassadors?
2. Whose uniform is on display?
3. What date was the park opened?
4. How many animals are represented on the fur, tracks, and scat table?
5. What is your favorite frog sound?



Lighting up the Night

In late June the night comes to life with the sound of katydids, crickets, and frogs, but also an evening show. Whether you call them fireflies or lighting bugs, these beetles are on a mission to find a mate and there are several species on the hunt. Each flash and flight pattern belongs to a different species of firefly. The males take to the sky, dancing in hopes to catch the eye of the females. Take a stroll around the Discovery Center towards the dam and see how many you can spot – or catch (and release)! *Keep a tally of these three species in the outlined boxes:*

<p>“Big Dipper” Make a “J” shape and lite the whole time</p>  <p><i>Photinus pyralis</i></p>	<p>“Cattail flash-train firefly” Fly in open areas, flashes in 3's</p>  <p><i>Photinus consimilis</i></p>	<p>“Spring Tree-top flasher” Flashing rapidly in tree-tops</p>  <p><i>Pyractomena borealis</i></p>
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SHE'S A MANEATER!

Some fireflies from the genus *Photuris*, are known as “**Femme Fatales**” as they have a reputation of eating males fireflies. After mating, she will mimic the response flash of another species of firefly, luring the male in and consuming him, which makes them one of the few fireflies that eat into adulthood. Want to find one? Look for a constant light somewhere in the grass, this will be the male in distress as she consumes him alive! She will be significantly bigger than him. *Did you spot one?*



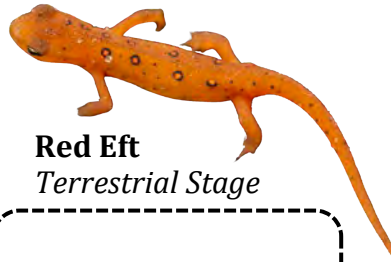
FIREFLIES IN DECLINE – While the species in Douthat State Park are not at risk of extinction, firefly populations are overall in decline due to a lack of overwintering habitat and light pollution, which makes it difficult to find a mate. *Consider changes you can make at home to help create firefly habitat in your backyard, such as leaving your leaves on the ground.*

Amphibian Adventure


Herpetology also extends to our amphibian friends, and while spring and fall are by far the best time to view frogs and salamanders there are still some out this time of year, especially at night and after a rain.


NEWTS
Red spotted newts are common in the park and can be found often in their aquatic stage in Douthat Lake and Wilson Creek. Learn more about their lifecycle in the Nature’s Outpost and see how many you can spot!

Red Eft
Terrestrial Stage



Red Spotted Newt
Aquatic Stage



 Wait...why don't the fish eat them? They are actually poisonous and their red spots are a warning.

FROGS
In the vernal pool by the Discovery Center you might spot a bullfrog or two, while behind the Park Office you may see a green frog, or at least their young!

Green Frog



Bullfrog



Scales, Tails, and Snaps

Want to go “herping” – aka looking for reptiles? We have several different species in the park hanging out and summer is the best time to spot them basking around. *See if you can spot them all:*

TURTLES

- Snapping Turtle
Look by the creek



- Box Turtle
Likes mud holes



LIZARDS & SKINKS

- Broadhead Skink



You don't even have to wonder far, these like to hang out on the rock walls near the Park Office and Beach House.

- Five-line Skink



- Fence Lizard



WHAT ABOUT SNAKES?

There are around 18 species of snakes that live in and around Douthat State Park, only two of which are venomous: *Copperheads* and *Timber Rattlesnakes*. Many of the nonvenomous snakes may try to mimic venomous ones, so it's always recommended to observe from a distance. Ask an interpretive ranger for more information.

A CASE OF MISSSSS-SNAKEN IDENTITY

One of the most common misidentifications, is confusing the Brown Watersnake for a Copperhead or Cottonmouth. Watersnakes are not venomous, but they have a very aggressive personality and may strike at you. If you are bitten by a snake assess your wound to confirm ID:

Venomous - Two holes: ● ●

Not - Mouth shape: ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●



Macroinvertebrates



There is more to a healthy stream than clear water and fish. To find out how well a stream is doing without doing a chemical test, scientists use the presence of certain macroinvertebrates to deduce stream quality. Find a spot along the creek at the Discovery Center or Wilson's Creek and see if you can find any of these common macroinvertebrates: (Or come to our “Critter Crawl” program)



Aquatic Snail



Hellgrammite



Mayfly nymph

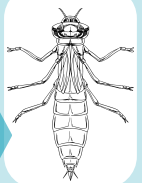
Crayfish or Crawdad



Caddisfly Incased in rocks/sticks



Dragonfly nymph



LET'S TAKE A CLOSER LOOK *Find two macroinvertebrates.*

Zoom Out: Draw the critter.

Zoom Out: Draw the critter.

Zoom In: Draw a part of the critter.

Zoom In: Draw a part of the critter.

Use Your Senses!

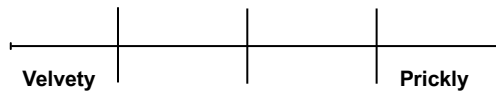
You've been using your eyes this whole time, have you used your other senses?

TOUCH

Take the time and unleash your inner child! 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? Summer is full of symphonies from many amazing critters that use their voices to attract mates. In the late summer, cicadas start singing during the day after emerging from seven or more years underground. At night you can catch at least two more insects singing. List the creatures that you hear below.



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!

