

Natural HERITAGE SITES

Winchester
Frederick County
Clarke County



18. STATE ARBORETUM OF VIRGINIA AT BLANDY EXPERIMENTAL FARM



The Arboretum is a peaceful place to stroll through tree and garden plantings, walk the Native Plant Trail, drive through scenic forests and fields, and enjoy bird watching. Open daily, dawn to dusk, with

free admission. From I-81 Exit 313 near Winchester, go 9 miles east on Route 50. Entrance is about 1.5 miles past the Route 340 intersection.

19. SHENANDOAH RIVER



The famed Shenandoah River is the major waterway of the Shenandoah Valley. It is ideal for canoeing, kayaking, fishing and observing nature.

Locke's Landing access from Route 7. 1.9 miles east of Berryville, turn right (south) onto Route 608 (Parshall Rd.). Follow 608 for 3.3 miles to Locke's Mill Rd. and river access on right. Boat ramps and parking also available at Route 7 and Route 50 bridge crossings.

20. SHENANDOAH RIVER CAMPUS AT COOL SPRING BATTLEFIELD



Open to the public and managed by Shenandoah University, the 195-acre River Campus provides paved and mowed paths beside the river through meadows and forests, leading to a view west across the

Valley. Herons and eagles nest along the Shenandoah River, and wildflowers bloom in spring and summer. Picnic tables, but no restrooms or boat access.

From I-81 Exit 315 near Winchester, take Route 7 east for 15 miles. Turn left immediately after crossing the Shenandoah River. River Campus is 1.4 miles ahead on Parker Lane.

21. APPALACHIAN TRAIL



The Appalachian National Scenic Trail (A.T.) runs more than 2,000 miles from Maine to Georgia. In our area, it follows the Blue Ridge Mountains from Harper's Ferry, West Virginia, south to Shenandoah National Park. A.T. guidebooks and maps are available at local outfitters.

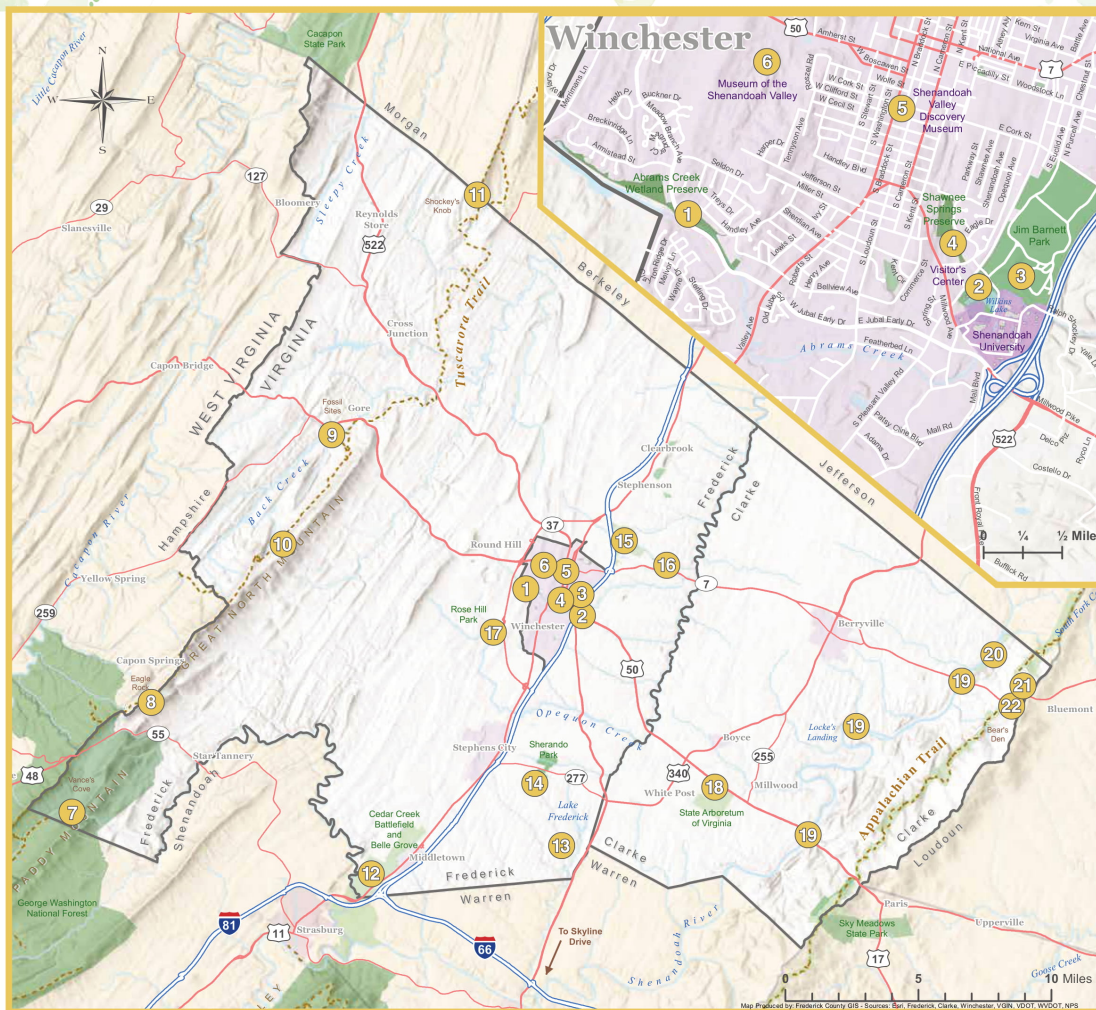
The closest access points from Berryville and Winchester are at the crest of the Blue Ridge at Ashby Gap (Route 50) and Snickers Gap (see below).

22. SNICKERS GAP & BEAR'S DEN ROCKS



Hawk watchers gather here in October. From the parking lot on Route 7, a blue-blazed trail leads south to the A.T. Follow the A.T. left for 0.5 miles to Bear's Den Rocks, with extensive views of the Shenandoah Valley.

From Winchester, take Route 7 east 17 miles to the crest of the Blue Ridge. The Snickers Gap parking lot is on the right.



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Eagle Rock and the Allegheny Mountains



1. ABRAMS CREEK WETLANDS PRESERVE

This natural area offers a pleasant mile-long stroll or bicycle ride. A paved path crosses wetlands that are home to over 100 bird species and more than 15 plants on Virginia's Rare Plants List. Watch for green herons, great blue herons, kingfishers, red-winged blackbirds, muskrats, milk, painted turtles and other marsh residents. From Route 11 a mile south of downtown Winchester, turn right (west) onto Jubal Early Drive. In 0.3 miles, park at the Abrams Crossing commercial center on the left. Follow paved path beside the swamp.

2. VISITORS CENTER AND SHENANDOAH UNIVERSITY

Open daily, the Winchester-Frederick County Visitors Center provides maps, changing exhibits, an orientation video and views of nearby Rouss Spring ponds. At Shenandoah University's Main Campus, enjoy the landscaped grounds of Sarah's Glen and native plantings on the Main Quadrangle, or watch birds along Abrams Creek. The Green Circle walking-cycling path connects to Shawnee Springs Preserve and downtown Winchester. From I-81, take Exit 313 toward Winchester. Follow signs to Shenandoah University (0.4 miles). Turn right just beyond onto Pleasant Valley Rd. for the Visitors Center.

3. JIM BARNETT PARK AND WILKINS LAKE

Jim Barnett Park has playgrounds, a fitness trail, walking-biking paths, picnic tables, dog park, mini golf, and both indoor and outdoor swimming pools. You can catch trout and bass in Wilkins Lake. In winter, the lake attracts migrating birds including buffleheads, mergansers, red-headed ducks and an occasional tundra swan. Open all year. From I-81, take Exit 313 toward Winchester. Turn right (north) onto Pleasant Valley Rd. in 0.5 miles. Watch for park entrance on right.

4. SHAWNEE SPRINGS PRESERVE

Located between downtown Winchester and Jim Barnett Park, the 14-acre site protects springs, wetlands and forests. It also contains part of the Civil War's largest Union field hospital. The Shawnee Springs Trail offers an unpaved footpath through shady forests, while the paved Green Circle path here connects to downtown Winchester and Jim Barnett Park. From I-81, take Exit 313 toward Winchester. In 0.5 miles, turn right onto Pleasant Valley Rd. At the first light, turn left onto Hollingsworth Dr.; turn left again at stop sign. Preserve is at the bottom of the hill, on the right.

5. SHENANDOAH VALLEY DISCOVERY MUSEUM

Experience nature indoors through the children's museum's programs and interactive hands-on exhibits about the Potomac River watershed, native animals, astronomy and other subjects; visit the rooftop garden. Open daily, year-round. Admission charged. Located in Old Town Winchester at 19 W. Cork St.

6. MUSEUM OF THE SHENANDOAH VALLEY

This history complex interprets art, history, culture and the natural riches that attracted the area's first settlers. It features a large regional museum and Glen Burnie, the home of Winchester's founder, Colonel James Wood. Six acres of formal gardens contain headwaters of Town Run and large native trees. Museum open year-round, Tuesday-Sunday. Admission charged. From downtown Winchester, take Amherst Street (Route 50 west) to the museum entrance on the left just before James Wood Middle School.

7. VANCE'S COVE

Situated between Paddy and Great North mountains, the Vance's Cove area offers hiking, mountain biking and trout fishing in a scenic setting along Paddy Run. From the parking area, a grassy hiking route leads left. A hiking-biking route – its lower section is suitable for street bikes – begins as a gravel road and heads uphill to the right. Take Exit 296 off I-81 near Strasburg. Follow Route 55 west for 13.6 miles to Forest Road 95 on the left. (Look for the small brown '95' sign about 0.9 miles west County Road 609.) This gravel road leads about 2.5 miles to the Cove's parking area and trailheads.

8. EAGLE ROCK

A 3.5-mile round trip hike, Eagle Rock provides commanding views of the Shenandoah Valley and Allegheny Mountains. The trail climbs an easy grade for about a mile to a junction. Turn right, more steeply uphill, to reach the rocky viewpoints. From I-81 Exit 296 near Strasburg, follow Route 55 west for 12.3 miles to County Road 609 (Capon Springs Grade) on the right. In 1 mile, 609 reaches the trailhead at Dry Gap. Trail is to the right.

9. FOSSIL SITES

In western Frederick County, fossils date back to the Devonian and Silurian periods of the Paleozoic Era, about 400 million years ago. A good collecting site is located alongside Route 50, beginning 0.1 miles west of the Hedron Baptist Church and 1.1 miles west of Winchester. Information on other sites near Hayfield and Gore is available at the Discovery Museum.

10. TUSCARORA TRAIL

This blue-blazed trail provides challenging hiking and several views. A 13.5-mile section crosses Route 55 and follows Great North Mountain northward to the town of Gore and Route 50. The trail continues north towards Shockey's Knob on county roads. Further details appear in the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club's guide to the Tuscarora Trail and Falls F and L. Access points include Route 55 (1.5 miles west of Strasburg), County Roads 751 and 853 in Gore (west of Winchester) and Shockey's Knob (directions below).

11. SHOCKEY'S KNOB

Shockey's Knob offers views and a moderate hike through an oak-hickory-pine forest to a rocky ridgeline. A 6-mile round trip, Shockey's Knob is on the blue-blazed Tuscarora Trail. From Route 522 in Gainesboro (7 miles northwest of Route 37 in Winchester), turn right onto Route 600 (Silver Rd.). Follow 600 north for 5.8 miles to County Road 690 (Howard's Chapel Rd.). Take 690 for 1.6 miles to County Road 671 (Shockeyville Rd.) and turn left. Trailhead is 1.6 miles ahead on the right.

12. CEDAR CREEK & BELLE GROVE NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

The "Morning Attack Trails" consist of three individual trails, that, when combined, total 1.7 miles in length. The trails cover an area where part of a surprise Confederate attack during the Battle of Cedar Creek occurred on the morning of October 19, 1864. This trail provides expansive views of the Blue Ridge Mountains to the east, the Massanutten Mountains to the south, and the Allegheny Mountains to the west. Open year-round from dawn to dusk. The park is 15 miles south of Winchester via Route 11 or I-81 (Exit 302). The National Park Service's Visitor Contact Station is on Route 11 at the north end of Middletown (7712 Main St.). 1.5 miles south are the Cedar Creek Battlefield Foundation Visitors Center on the left and Belle Grove on the right.

13. LAKE FREDERICK

This 117-acre lake offers good bird-watching opportunities as well as fishing for bass, crappie, northern pike, and channel catfish. Jon boat and kayak rentals are available on-site. A public boat launch is provided, but gasoline-powered boats and sailboats are prohibited. From Winchester, take Route 522 south. About 1.4 miles past Route 340, turn right on Lake Frederick Dr. Follow Lake Frederick signs to the public fishing site.

14. SHERANDO PARK

The 330-acre Sherando Park features wooded walking trails, an outdoor pool, playgrounds, mountain biking trails, disc golf, and a 4.5-acre fishing lake (no swimming). Open all year. Take I-81 south 6 miles from Winchester to Exit 307 (Stephens City). Follow Route 277 east 1.8 miles to the park.

15. THIRD WINCHESTER BATTLEFIELD

A 5-mile system of bicycling and walking trails meanders through sunny fields and forests where the Third Battle of Winchester occurred in 1864. The main path from Redbud Road crosses Redbud Run Marsh in about a mile. Redbud Road access: take I-81 north from Winchester to Exit 317. Turn right onto Redbud Road; follow for 0.8 miles to parking lot on right. Millbrook access: take I-81 East 315 for Route 7 east (Berryville). After about 1 mile, turn left onto Millbrook Drive; trail entrance signs posted behind Millbrook High School.

16. REDBUD RUN WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA

Redbud Run supports brook and rainbow trout, wildflowers, birds, and wildlife. Wooded paths traverse the tree-covered ravine's slopes. From I-81 Exit 315, take Route 7 east for 2.1 miles to Wood's Mill Rd. (left ramp). Parking lot is on the right in 0.2 miles.

17. ROSE HILL PARK

The site of the Civil War's 1862 First Battle of Kernstown, the park is open free of charge, 8am to dusk. It features a walking trail, valley views, restrooms, interpretive signage, and picnic shelter. From Route 37 west of Winchester, take Cedar Creek Grade west, and turn left on Jones Road. Park is 0.4 miles on the right.

Northern Shenandoah - Naturally!

MAP & GUIDE to Natural PLACES

Discovering Nature in Winchester, Frederick County, and Clarke County



PROTECTING Wild PLACES

matters to our hearts, our souls, and our physical well-being. Perhaps more importantly, our will to preserve these places says something about our relationship to the future.

-Michael Lipford, Virginia State Director, The Nature Conservancy

WELCOME TO THE SHENANDOAH VALLEY,

a region rich in nature, culture, and history. There is much that makes this area special, from apple orchards and limestone houses to mountaintop views and a storied, peaceful river.

This brochure will lead you to nearby locations that can bring you closer to our forests, wildlife, wetlands, and parks. Some places are well known as recreational or historic sites, while several areas with distinctive natural features may allow new discoveries for even longtime Shenandoah Valley residents.

Our region's history and economic development are rooted in geology. The limestone that lines Interstate 81 and Routes 7, 11, 50, and 340 formed the fertile soils that made the Shenandoah Valley the "breadbasket of the South" during the Civil War. Those same soils support today's orchards and farms. Sandstone holds up the Allegheny ridges to the west, while quartzite and other metamorphic rocks shape the Blue Ridge Mountains to the east.

The Shawnee people traversed this valley in search of its abundant plants, fish, and game animals. From eastern Pennsylvania, German and Scots-Irish farmers, merchants, and artisans traveled down the Great Philadelphia Wagon Road searching for a place where they could become independent and self-sufficient. From Tidewater Virginia came English planters. What better new home could there be than this lovely, fertile valley?

As people long ago discovered new possibilities here, we hope you will explore, discover, and enjoy the natural heritage of Winchester, Frederick County, and Clarke County.



Tuscarora Trail

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