

Wildflower Weekend 2011 Program Schedule

Saturday, May 7

Birds and Blossoms of Pocosin

8:30 to 10 a.m.

Look for tanagers, warblers and many more birds as you identify wildflowers near Pocosin Cabin and spring. ½ mile. Meet at Pocosin parking area (mile 59.5), **unmarked**, east side of Skyline Drive. **Limited parking.**

Diane Holsinger, Volunteer Naturalist

Big Meadows Stroll

9:30 to 11 a.m.

Learn about the effects of fire, deer, livestock and people on plant life in this globally rare meadow habitat. ½ mile. Meet in front of Byrd Visitor Center (milepost 51).

John Manka, Park Ranger

***Appalachian Trail Discovery Hike**

9:30 a.m. to noon. (Repeats on Sunday)

See what's blooming as we explore the shoulder of Bush Mountain. Meet at Bearfence parking area (mile 56.4). 1½ mile, **one-way** hike. Van will take drivers back to cars. Total climb: at beginning, about 140 ft.; then descend about 200 ft.

Mara Meisel, Park Ranger

Gravel Springs Adventure

9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Explore different habitats in search of wild ginger, showy orchids and more. Mostly gentle with some short, very steep places. ½-mile loop. Meet at Gravel Springs Gap (mile 17.6). **Limited parking.** Bring lunch or snack.

Wendy Cass, Park Botanist

Featured Program

"Nature Photography: Simply Beautiful" Workshop

10 to 11 a.m. in auditorium; optional walk, 11:15 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. (Repeats on Sunday)

Digital or film camera users, learn to transform ordinary shots into amazing ones. Bring your cameras and questions. Meet at Byrd Visitor Center (milepost 51).

Ann and Rob Simpson, Professional Photographers and Naturalists

South River Falls Hike

10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Violets, trilliums and more flowers greet hikers on this trail to a viewpoint overlooking an 83-ft. waterfall. Strenuous but lovely. 3.3-miles. Total climb: about 910 ft. Meet at trailhead in South River picnic area (milepost 62.8). Bring lunch or snack.

Doug Coleman, Executive Director, The Wintergreen Nature Foundation

***Featured Program**

"Fronds & Allies: Shenandoah's Amazing Ferns"

1 to 2 p.m. Slide program.

Learn about the fascinating lifestyles of ferns and fern allies from the man who wrote the book. Byrd Visitor Center auditorium (Milepost 51).

Peter Mazzeo, Retired Botanist, The National Arboretum

Bugs and Blooms

1 to 2 p.m. Children's program, designed for ages 7-12.

Through fun-filled activities, find out how plants and insects rely on each other in the meadow. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Meet in front of Byrd Visitor Center (milepost 51).

John Manka, Park Ranger

Cultural Connections

2:30 to 5 p.m.

On a gentle hike along the Appalachian Trail, discover fascinating ways that people have traditionally used plants found in the Blue Ridge. 2 miles. Meet at Milam Gap parking area (mile 52.8).

Sue Schaefer and Mara Meisel, Park Rangers

***Discovery Hike with Peter Mazzeo**

3 to 4:30 p.m. (Repeats on Sunday)

Explore some favorite haunts of the hike leader to see what's blooming. Meet at Byrd Visitor Center (milepost 51); car caravan to nearby destination TBA.

Peter Mazzeo, Retired Botanist, The National Arboretum

***Featured Program**

"Shenandoah Wildflowers ~ Kaleidoscope of Color"

7:30 to 8:30 p.m. (Doors open at 7:15 p.m.) Slide program.

Shenandoah's long growing season and varied habitats support more than 1,300 plants of many families and colors. Get a close look at some of the wildflowers that are waiting to astound you! Byrd Visitor Center auditorium (milepost 51).

Peter Mazzeo, Retired Botanist, The National Arboretum

Sunday, May 8

***Early Birds**

7:30 to 8:30 a.m.

Join master birders for an easy stroll in search of vireos, warblers and perhaps a surprise or two. ½ mile. Meet in front of Skyland Conference Hall, lower level (mile 41.7 and 42.5).

Ann and Rob Simpson, Volunteer Naturalists

Spring Birds

9:30 to 11:30 a.m.

Look for wood thrushes, warblers and other migratory birds that are attracted to the springs and surrounding forest. Mostly gentle with some short, very steep places. ½-mile loop. Meet at Gravel Springs Gap (mile 17.6). **Limited parking.**

Alan Williams, Park Ecologist

***Appalachian Trail Discovery Hike**

9:30 a.m. to noon. (See Saturday's description)

Mara Meisel, Park Ranger

Wonders of the Mill Prong

9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Birds, wildflowers and a splashing stream make this one of the most enchanting trails to explore. 2 miles. Total climb: about 400 ft. Meet at Milam Gap parking area (mile 52.8).

Tom Dierauf, Volunteer Naturalist

Featured Program

"Nature Photography: Simply Beautiful" Workshop

10 to 11 a.m. auditorium; optional walk, 11:15 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. (See Saturday's description)

Ann and Rob Simpson, Professional Photographers and Naturalists

***Discovery Hike with Peter Mazzeo**

10 to 11:30 a.m. (See Saturday's description)

Peter Mazzeo, Retired Botanist, The National Arboretum

Marvelous Millers Head

1:30 to 4 p.m.

Look for uncommon plants as you hike down a rocky ridge to an observation platform and view of the Shenandoah Valley. Very steep in places, with uphill return. 1.5 miles. Total climb: about 250 ft. Meet at Millers Head trailhead: from Skyline Drive, turn into **south** entrance of Skyland (mile 42.5), pass stables, and keep to left when road forks. Park at top of hill, near new amphitheater.

Mara Meisel, Park Ranger

****Denotes new program this year***

Length of trail listed is for entire hike. Elevation changes of less than 70 feet are not included.

Reminders

- Wear sturdy shoes and bring water on all hikes.
- Evaluate your personal fitness and health to choose an appropriate program.
- Pets are not permitted on Wildflower Weekend walks.
- Come prepared for wet weather. Walks may be conducted in light rain, but will be canceled in case of thunderstorms.
- Learn more about Shenandoah's wildflowers at the park's website: www.nps.gov/shen