

Girl Scouts Love Virginia State Parks

Self Guided Patch Program

Sept. 13-15, 2024



Present this booklet to park staff at the entrance or leave a copy on your dashboard for free parking.

The admission fee for Natural Bridge is not included but parking at the Children's Discovery Area and Track Trail on Golf Course Road is.

Know before you go!

When visiting the park, come prepared for the weather and for exploring by wearing appropriate clothes and shoes.

To be safe and to complete the activities, bring:

- water and snacks
- something to write with
- crayons or colored pencils
- a notebook or scrap paper
- sunscreen and bug repellant

Visit VirginiaStateParks.gov to learn about your park before your visit. Discover the park's history, print a trail guide or access the map through the Avenza app, and review any important announcements.

**VIRGINIA
STATE PARKS**

Welcome, Girl Scouts and Scout Families to Virginia State Parks!

Our natural world is full of fascinating plants, animals and water all in different landscapes. These create ecosystems where everything lives and thrives. When you learn about what's supposed to be there, you'll know if something is missing and what you can do about it. It all starts with observations!





As part of this year's national Girl Scouts Love State Parks Weekend, we invite you to use these activity pages to explore a park near you, find your nature connection, and earn a Girl Scouts Love Virginia State Parks patch ** while also meeting the requirements to earn the Daisy "Animal Observer", Brownie Legacy Badge "Bugs", Junior "Flower" or Cadette "Trees". You can also work towards the Ambassador "Water" and Senior "Sky" badges.

How it works:

- Print or download this booklet.
- Present this booklet to park staff at the entrance or leave a copy of this page on your dashboard for free parking in any Virginia State Park from Friday, Sept. 13 through Sunday, Sept. 15, 2024. The free parking is for a Virginia State Park only.
- Complete all the activities in your age category, choose and complete a "Take Action" option and discuss the Leave No Trace principles with your adult.
- By Sept. 30, 2024, log your visit here: forms.office.com/g/k2ETg8Wxkt.



- While you are at it, sign up for our VSP Adventure Programs including Trail Quest and Wandering Waters Paddle Quest. For more information visit www.dcr.virginia.gov/state-parks/contest.
- Patches will be ordered and mailed after all entries are in and will take a while to process.

**** You can also earn a patch by participating in any ranger led or volunteer program or stewardship opportunity offered during the GS Love State Parks Weekend. Just log your visit in the same way. Virginia State Parks will only provide the Virginia State Parks specific patch, not the GS badges—you'll need to purchase badges from your council shop.**

Daisy - Animal Observer



When scientists observe nature, they learn about things by using their eyes to watch, ears to listen, nose to smell and hands to touch. Now you can put your senses to work, too, as you observe and learn about animals. With the Daisy Animal Observer badge, you'll get a chance to:

1. Be an animal observer. Do you see any animals? How about signs that animals are around? What animal is it? What do you like about the animal? What makes it different than all the rest of the animals? **Draw or write what you see here.**

2. Play "I Spy an Animal" observation game.

Don't just use color; use other descriptive words, like tall, short, furry, squarish, hairy, smooth, etc.

3. Focus on one animal. What was your favorite animal of today? Draw a picture of it. Where would it live? What would it eat? Can you find a footprint or track it made in a muddy spot? Can you move like the animal? **Have someone video you acting like that animal!**

When you've earned this badge, you will know more about observing animals. **Supplies: Something to write with.**

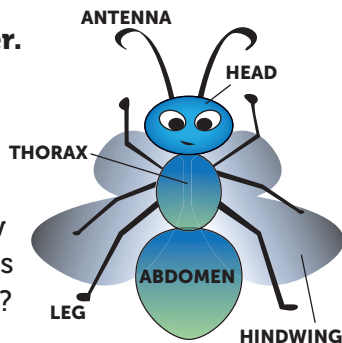
Brownie - Bugs



Bugs, insects and other crawlies are our friends. They help us in many different ways. Use these activities to understand the bugs that share your world with you. Bugs, insects, worms, spiders, and other things that fly and crawl can be found all over the park. They are delicate and it's best to look and not touch.

1. Create a bug poster.

What do you want people to know about bugs? How many shapes can you count here on this bug? How long do you think bugs live? What do they eat? What eats bugs?



2. Try a bug craft. You don't need fancy materials. Look for leaves, twigs, and rocks and see if you can form them in the shape of different bugs. Take a picture of your creation, then leave it for others to enjoy along the trail. How many tiny twigs do you need for legs? What shapes of leaves do you need for wings? Don't pick anything still growing!

3. See bugs in action. Scout around for bugs! Watch them. Is there more than one type of bug in one area? Do they look alike or different? What are they doing? Why are they doing what they are doing? Write down what you notice.

Some bugs and insects can bite or sting. Ticks, mosquitos, yellow jackets and wasps are common in our parks. Wear bug spray and observe from a distance. Remember, we are in their homes when we are at the park.

4. Explore bug homes. Where do they go to sleep or hide? Spiders have webs, bees have hives, some wasps have a nest. Some live in and under logs. Once you've found a few bugs, watch them and see if they have a home. **Draw what you see.** At home you can build a bug snug – a home for a bug! Just gather a bunch of sticks, and tie them together, then leave them in a safe place on the ground near your home. Soon a bug will move in!

5. Take a bug field trip. Now that you know a lot about bugs where they live, what they look like, what they are doing go hike a trail here at the park and be on the lookout for bugs. Count how many different types of bugs you see on the trail. Make sure you point them out to your friends or family.

Supplies: A piece of paper and crayons or markers to make your poster. Something to write with. Optional: magnifying glasses.

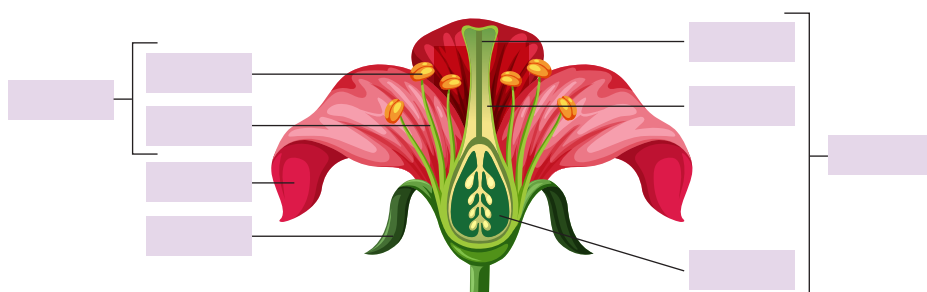
Junior - Flower



Flowers are more than just a pretty face – they make seeds and fruit and feed wildlife, too. Discover flower secrets here at the park!

1. Go on a flower hunt.

Get up close and observe five different flowers. Flowers can be on trees too! Write or sketch your observations in a notebook. Look for petal shapes and colors. See if you can identify other parts of the flower.

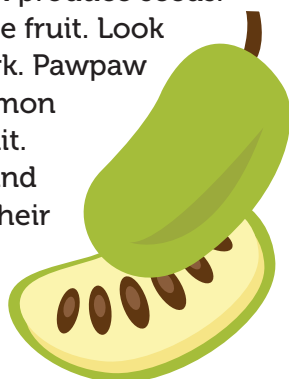


ANTHER	FILAMENT	STYLE
PETAL	OVARY	STIGMA
SEPAL	PISTAL	STAMEN

Use these words to fill in the blanks.

2. Look closely at the flower shapes, colors and styles. Flowers have special designs to attract pollinators. While you are observing flowers, look to see if there are any pollinators on them (animals that help move pollen from one flower to another). What are the pollinators doing?

3. Find out how flowers help people: Flowers have one job, to be attractive to pollinators so that they can produce seeds. Some flowers even produce fruit. Look for any wild fruit in the park. Pawpaw trees, blackberries, persimmon trees and roses all have fruit. Animals will eat the fruit, and then deposit the seeds in their scat in another location so another tree or plant can grow!



4. Have fun with flowers: This is a crafty activity! You can do this in the park if you have materials with you, or do it at home. Make flowers out of paper by cutting out flower shapes. Use a stick you found as the stem.

5. Send a message in flower code. Some flowers have special meanings to people. What about the five flowers you observed before? Think of what they make you feel and write it next to the flower picture you drew in step one.

Supplies: Something to write with. If you are doing the flower craft bring different kinds of paper and scissors. These are fun to make with recycled wrapping paper, tissue paper, or flyers or extra calendars that came in the mail.

Flower illustration, Vecteezy.com.

Cadette - Trees



Trees are the strong, silent type, but they hold tremendous super powers. They absorb greenhouse gasses, boost our mental and physical health, clean and cool the air we breathe, provide homes for wildlife and for us, and filter our water. Thank the trees by learning more about them.

At the park:

1. Try some tree fun. Take a hike at the park and discover the types of trees that are there. Use a book, your phone or find out from a park ranger the different ways people use these trees. What happens when a tree falls in the park?

2. Dig into the amazing science of trees. Be a naturalist and identify five trees you find here using a field guide or an app on your phone. Explore the life cycle of the trees. Do some research and discover how long they live, what kind of seed or fruit they produce, and what animals rely on them.

3. Make a creative project starring trees. Honor a tree with art. Make leaf and bark rubbings, sketch a tree from an interesting perspective, or write a poem about trees.

At home:

4. Explore the connection between trees and people. What do trees do for us? What products do you use every day that are made from trees? Are forest practices in other countries similar to the USA?

5. Help trees thrive. Find out where you can plant a tree in your community. Work with your troop to choose a native tree, plant it, and commit to keeping it watered and healthy.



Senior - Sky



Throughout time, people have looked to the sky for stories in the stars, the moon and the clouds. Sept. 14 is International Observe the Moon Night. Start working on your Senior Sky Badge at the park with these activities:

View the night sky. Learn parts of the telescope and five constellations. Use a star guide app on your phone to help you find different constellations. Take five photos of the sky in different colors.

Take flight. Talk about aviation and how it affects people. Make two kites that are different. Which one flies better and why?

What is light pollution? Visit a park at night. What lights do you see? How could you reduce light pollution? Make a list and offer to talk to the park manager about how to reduce light pollution.

Take the five photos from earlier and make a collage, create a mobile or some other art project with them. Then, create a tall tale about how the sky came about and share it with the younger girl scouts.



Ambassador - Water



Water is everywhere and in all of us. It can nourish us and challenge us in all its forms. Start working on your Ambassador Water Badge at the park with these activities:

Visit a water source in the park. Sit and observe. Take time to reflect on the water in front of you. How does the water reflect your life? As ocean waves crest, is something coming to a crest in your life? Do you have a big decision to make? Fast flowing streams bump against rocks, slowing it down. Do you have obstacles that are in your way of reaching a goal? Journal it!

Create a water print. Scoop some water from a lake, river or the ocean. Mix it with some dish soap and food coloring. Use this to blow bubbles onto paper and watch as a beautiful print emerges. **Supplies:** **Container to hold water, food coloring, sturdy paper.**

Know your watershed. Even water in a park can be affected by what happens upstream. Find out what watershed the park is in. What's upstream that could affect the quality of the water here? Is there something you can do to help the water of the park?

Design a water solution. Is there a water issue in your community? You might find that waterways aren't very clean or that some people in your community don't have clean drinking water. Do some research and design a solution!

Educate and inspire. Plan a water-themed party for younger scouts! Using everything you learned, plan a party for younger scouts. Create games, crafts and activities to help them understand how important water is, ways to take care of our Earth's water sources, and how they can have fun and be safe in and around water.

Take Action

Now that you've explored a park and learned different ways to be a friend to the great outdoors, what are you inspired to do? There are many wonderful ways that you can bring what you discovered out into the world:



At the Park

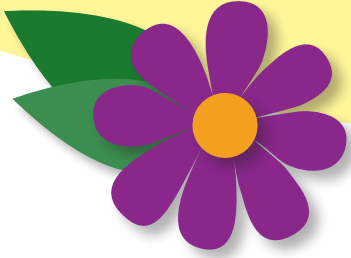
- Volunteer! There are a lot of ways to be a part of the park:
 - Create or clean up a flower bed.
 - Pick up trash.
 - Donate bird, bat or owl houses.
- Help talk to other visitors about how they can "Leave No Trace" when they visit.
- Choose a project for your Bronze, Silver or Gold Award.

At Home

- Make an outdoor-themed gift for a loved one who needs cheering up.
- Make and share a video about caring for nature.

In Your Community

- Create a collage of nature photos or your original artwork for your local library, school or senior center.
- Teach younger scouts what you learned.
- Work with your troop to create mini gardens using native plants.



Always Remember Leave No Trace

All badgework in this packet is based on these seven principles!

Plan ahead and prepare.

Travel and camp on durable surfaces.

Dispose of waste properly.

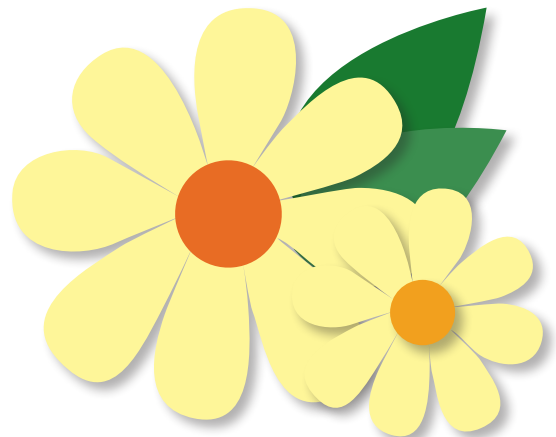
Leave what you find.

Minimize campfire impacts.

Respect wildlife.

Be considerate of other visitors.

For more information visit <https://lnt.org/>





VIRGINIA STATE PARKS

800-933-PARK (7275) | www.virginiastateparks.gov