



Newsletter



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Carvers Creek State Park

March 1, 2023

This month we will explore the Cypress Point Loop Trail. Although it is only a three-quarter mile loop, along the way you will find links to much of the history of Long Valley Farm and a wide range of nature to enjoy. The trail begins by the Rockefeller House, so to start this hike you must first walk the half-mile from the parking lot and look for the Cypress Point Loop sign at the start of the trail. This trail is blazed with a blue circle, which you'll see as you turn off the Rockefeller Loop Trail to begin your exploration.

To your front you'll see two buildings, a picnic area and the boat shed. To your right is the Rockefeller house, with several sweetgum and cypress trees around the water and in front of the house fence. Take a second to walk that way and find an unusual pairing of a sweetgum and cypress tree. They grew up with their trunks close together, and over time the cypress grew into the sweetgum, making two completely different trees that share one trunk at the bottom!



Cypress and Sweetgum

Back on the trail, you'll follow it around the water's edge until you come to the next set of picnic tables in a cleared area. As you walk up to the water, take a look across to the dam. This dam was completed in 2019, after the old dam was destroyed by excessive rain in 2016. On the right side you can see the old Rockefeller pavilion, and on the left is the old grist mill ("grist" is grain used for grinding). In the water, a rectangle of orange barriers mark where the water flows over the edge of the spillway.

If you are getting tired, you can take a seat in one of the Adirondack-style chairs near the water. The chairs were made by park staff for your use, so please enjoy them. As you sit, look toward the right side of the pond and you will see several young cypress trees growing out of the water. Here in the park we have both pond cypress and bald cypress. For more information about the cypress trees, see our September 2022 newsletter at <https://www.ncparks.gov/blog/2022/09/01/year-tree-bald-cypress-or-pond-cypress>

Back on the trail, continue to your right. You'll see a narrow path that winds down to the water, a popular spot for fishing. Continue on the main path as it slightly rises through the woods and stay right at the "Y". Look for the tall longleaf pine tree with the "L" shaped iron spikes that Mr. Rockefeller used to climb when he lived here. Although the tree has grown and the spikes are too far apart for climbing, it's fun to imagine being able to scurry up the tree like a squirrel and enjoy the sun as the tree swayed in the breeze.

In the springtime, this area has many beautiful iris plants with blue/purple flowers growing in the shade near the water. Now, let's continue down the path toward Cypress Point. The cypress and oak trees grow close around you as you walk, the water of the millpond lapping gently against the grass hummocks. It is peaceful and quiet, the far sounds of Fort Bragg and Spring Lake receding in the distance.

As you walk, you'll pass back over a small creek. In the summertime, look in the water for small yellow flowers growing a few inches above the water. That's bladderwort, a floating, carnivorous plant. Bladderwort doesn't root in the soil. Instead, it uses underwater bladders filled with air to keep afloat and to trap prey, getting the nutrients it needs while drift-

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ing with the slow-moving creek. As you reach the point, you'll see a picnic table and trash can, and the remains of the old observation deck that used to stretch out into the lake. Unfortunately, it burned down when the dam was being repaired, but we hope to have a new one in place soon.



Step out onto the concrete pad and look across the water. You can see the far side of the lake, and if you approach quietly enough and the weather is warm, you may see a couple of turtles napping in the sun on the logs that peek above the water, although this time of year it's rare to find them basking. To your left, the pond stretches into the beginning of the cypress swamp and Jumping Run Creek that continues for miles to the northwest.

As you get back to the "Y", follow the trail to the right. On your left, look for the different varieties of pine tree that are present in the park, including Loblolly, Shortleaf and Longleaf pine. The Longleaf pines are easy to identify by their large sprays of pine needles at the end of their branches. Needles don't grow along the longleaf branches themselves. The Loblolly has needles that aren't as long as the Longleaf, and grow at the ends and along the branches. The Shortleaf pine has much shorter needles, and much smaller pine cones than either the Loblolly or Longleaf. Hidden among the tall grass, look for a plant with thick, grayish brown oval leaves growing 8-12 inches tall.



Wild Indigo in winter

That's Carolina Wild Indigo, a North Carolina native plant with vibrant yellow flowers in spring and early summer.

On your right you'll see where the millpond transitions into Jumping Run Creek, with many large cypress trees growing in the water. Notice the dome shaped bottom on the cypress? It's called a buttress and is found in older trees and helps with stability of the taller trees in the marshy areas. Follow the trail as it makes a left turn, taking you back toward the Rockefeller Loop trail. This is a short trail, and you'll soon be coming to the end of it. Continue down the path and you'll cross over a branch of Jumping Run Creek again. On the right side you can find a large Tulip-Poplar Tree, although they're much easier to identify when they're in bloom due to their large yellow flowers. To learn more about the Tulip-Poplar, check out our June newsletter at <https://www.ncparks.gov/blog/2022/06/01/year-tree-tulip-tree>.



As you finish your walk, notice Ms. Mac's house on your right. Once the home of the Rockefeller's housekeeper, it is now a silent testimony to the history of this old farm, a reminder of the families that lived here, raised their children and spent their days working and walking in the fields and forests that now surround you. We are glad for the opportunity to preserve such memories.

You are now back at the Rockefeller Loop Trail. You can turn left for the half-mile walk back or turn right and continue on the Rockefeller Loop Trail. Both ways will return you to the parking lot.

Ranger Tips from Ranger Brown:

*When going out for a hike, know the **trail markers**. Each trail has a different one. They are a colored shaped nailed to the trees along each trail and the type of marker is listed in the trail guide and on the map at the trailhead. That will help you stay on the right trail! Also, remember that some trails are one-way, not a loop. To get back,*

If you would like to attend one of our upcoming programs please call 910-436-4681 to reserve your spots.

FIRST DAY HIKE

Wednesday, March 1st @ 5:00 pm

First Day (of the Month!) Hike: In honor of North Carolina celebrating the Year of the Trail, we will host a First Day of the Month hike every month this year. In March, we will hike the Cypress Point Loop Trail, which is also our newsletter topic for March. Bring your copy of the newsletter or stop by the office and get one and follow along with a Ranger to learn about the nature and history of the Cypress Point Loop trail. We'll meet at 5pm on Wednesday, March 1st outside the Long Valley Farm office. Please call (910) 436-4681 to sign up.

VOLUNTEER DAY

Saturday, March 4th @ 9:00 am– 12:00 pm

Carvers Creek State Park offers a wide variety of opportunities when you come to our Volunteer Days. Our prized volunteers help us with everything from our old farm fences, to culverts, to invasive species of plants, to leaf clean up and many others. We ask our volunteers bring gloves and water. Please come to our volunteer days in proper clothing to work. Proper clothing includes closed toed shoes, long pants, and a t-shirt you don't mind getting dirty.

To help us prepare and organize our volunteer days please let us know what volunteer day(s) you plan on attending and how many people will be with you. The easiest way to do this is to send a quick email to carvers.creek@ncparks.gov. For more information, please contact us at our main office. **Meet in front of the Welcome Center.**

ORIENTEERING

Sunday, March 12th @ 2:00 pm

Do you like navigating through a forest with a compass and map--or have never done so but would like to try? If so, join a Ranger and learn about pacing, compass reading, using a map to navigate to various points, and more around the Rockefeller House. Please wear hiking shoes, pants, and long sleeves for this event. You must sign up for this free event by calling the park office. We will plan to hike approximately 2-3 miles. **Meet in front of the Welcome Center for this event.**

CANOE HIKE

Sunday, March 19th @ 4:00 pm

Saturday, March 25th @ 3:00 pm

We will be learning the basics of canoeing and then trying out our new skills by maneuvering through the Cypress swamp. This is a slow and calm canoeing experience and great for beginners or if you want to get a closer look at the Cypress trees. **YOU MUST SIGN-UP.** You can call the park office to sign-up. **Limit is 10 visitors. Please allow approximately 15 minutes to walk from the parking lot to the Rain Shelter. Age limit is 8 years old and older.**