

Camping places (campsites and cabins)

With Carderock Springs as the center of the universe, here are a variety of camping locations in Maryland, Virginia, Pennsylvania, West Virginia and Delaware. A big round of applause to Carderock's Eric Nothman for putting this list together, doing a lot of research so the rest of us can spend more time camping!

CAMPING in Maryland

1) Marsden Tract - 5 mins - (National Park Service) - C&O canal Mile 11 (1/2 mile above Carderock) three beautiful group campsites on the Potomac.

Reservations/permit required. Max 20 to 30 people each.

C&O canal - hiker/biker campsites (no permit needed - all are free!) about every five miles starting from Swains Lock to Cumberland. Campsites all the way to Paw Paw, WV (about 23 sites) are within 2 hrs drive. Three private campgrounds (along the canal) have cabins. Some sections could be traveled by canoe on the Potomac (canoe camping).

Closest: Swains Lock - 10 mins - 5 individual tent only sites (one isolated - take path up river) - all close to

parking lot. First come/first serve only. Parking fills up on weekends by 8am.

Group Campsites are located at McCoy's Ferry, Fifteen Mile Creek, Paw Paw Tunnel, and Spring Gap. They are \$20 per site, per night with a maximum of 35 people.

Six restored Lock-houses - (several within a few miles of Carderock) - C&O Canal Trust manages six restored Canal Lock-houses for nightly rental (some with heat, water, A/C).

2) Cabin John Regional Park - 10 mins - 7 primitive walk-in sites. Pit toilets, running water. Miniature train and big playground. May be possible to get a key to open gate to drive gear to campsite.

3) Brunswick Family Campground - (1 hr) - run by city of Brunswick, on Potomac river. Campsites (no cabins). Canoeing, bike riding on canal, canoeing on river. Has a group campsite, too. Note: active train tracks very close by/trains go by at night interrupting sleep. Ear plugs required!

4) Maple Tree Campground (commercial) - (1 hr) - "treehouse" (really cabins on stilts), teepee, and tent campsites

5) Cunningham Falls (1 hr 15 mins), hike to falls, campsites, camper cabins, small 44 acre lake (Hunting Creek Lake) with sandy beach swimming, fishing, and Kayak/canoe rentals. Must arrive before mid-morning on weekends to get a picnic table near the lake since the park fills up. People are turned away on Memorial Day, Fourth of July weekends because the lake area reaches max capacity. See four separate camp grounds (listed below).

- Owens Creek Campground- Catoctin Mountain National Park - Spacious campsites, some along creek. Near Hunting Creek Lake and Cunningham Falls State Park.

- Cunningham Falls State Park - William Houck Campground - is just above Hunting Creek Lake (about 1/2 mile) and has campsites, and 13 camper cabins 9 four person, and 4 six person).

- Camp Misty Mount - Catoctin Mountain National Park - National Park Service (NPS) - 2 miles from lake, no campsites, only cabins - Civilian Conservation Corps cabins (CCC). Ranger station: [1-301-271-3140](tel:1-301-271-3140)

- Gambrill State Park (1hr) - top of Catoctin mountain - campsites and camper cabins. Less crowded. 25 mins drive from Cunningham Falls State Park

6) Smallwood State Park - 1.25 hrs on tributary to the Bay, fishing, walking, marina, boating, campsites, camper cabins (17&18 have a water view - all have heating/air conditioning).

7) Susquehanna State Park (under 1 hrs 40 mins) - on the river, canoeing, hiking, campsites, camper cabins

8) Eastern Shore general area (under 2hrs):

- Tuckahoe State Park (1 hr 30 mins) - w/60 acre lake, creeks, fishing, canoeing, zip line, campsites, camper cabins (w/air conditioning!)

- Martinak State Park (1hr 45 mins), Choptank river and Watts Creek, w/water, fishing, canoeing, campsites, 1 full service cabin, plus 4 camper cabins

- Elk Neck State Park - (1 hr 50 mins), large sandy swimming beach on Chesapeake, canoeing, crabbing/fishing, campsites, 11 full service rustic cabins (except no AC, heat, hot water or shower), 4 more w/AC/heat. Hike to a Light House on a 100ft bluff.

9) Rocky Gap State Park - (2 hrs) (near Cumberland) - 243 acre lake, canoe/kayak rentals, campsites, cabins

(including a 8 person cabin, fully equipped kitchen overlooking the lake)

10) Green Ridge State Forest - 2hrs - more secluded primitive camping (100 primitive camp sites). Bear canisters required for primitive camping. Also, shelters available on some hikes every 5-7 miles. Bring water and bug repellent!

<http://bigtaste-t.blogspot.com/2012/08/marylands-green-ridge-state-forest.html>

- Nice primitive campsite noted along Long Pond Trail on 15 Mile Creek (swimming too).

- Point Lookout - one of the best views in Maryland

- Canoe camping - 2 hrs 15 min drive - Bond's Landing campsite reachable only from the Potomac - Class 1 rapids - start at Paw Paw, WV to Bonds Landing - 5 hrs paddling - (Maryland Green Ridge State Forest - river campsite - first come/first served); then 3 hrs paddling to 15 Mile Creek campsite (NPS drive-in fee campground on Canal/River - No RV hookups - located next to Little Orleans). Steve (owner Little Orleans Lodge - 1/2 mile from river) may help with shuttles! Swimming hole (rope swing) where 15 Mile

Creek enters the Potomac. Commercial campground next door (Little Orleans Campground) has showers.

11) New Germany State Park - 2hrs 30 mins
w/swimming, 13 acre lake, 11 full service cabins,
campsites, and cross country skiing warming hut w/ski
rentals

12) Big Run State Park - 3hrs - w/ lake,
boating, campsites, (non-flush toilets, no potable
water), some more private forested campsites

13) Janes Island State Park - 3hrs 15 mins -
w/canoeing/kayaking marsh, campsites, 4 full service
cabins, 4 camper cabins.

14) Herrington Manor State Park - (3hrs 15 mins) -
Swimming beach, canoe/kayak rentals (Memorial day
to Labor day), winter cross country ski rentals.
Campsites, 20 full service rustic cabins (shower, toilet,
kitchen, fireplace).

15) Snaggy Mountain - 3hrs 15 mins - Garret County-
primitive site in bear country (bear canisters required).
Can drive up to spacious sites 1/4 mile apart from one
another. Site 2 is gorgeous covered in pine needles and

flat in a circle of pines. Also, camping nearby in Piney Mountain area similar but more remote.

CAMPING in Virginia

1) Fairfax Lake Park - 22 mins - (Fairfax County Park) - 18 acre lake - Tents and RV family and group campsites. Hot showers, bath house, camp store. Fishing, Water Park, Carousel, Skateboard Park, pedal boat rentals.

Best tent campsites: C17-C23 (Group site G4) with beautiful rocks and a creek. Other group sites: G1 , G10, G9 (these three are secluded and overlook the lake - but, can hear road traffic at night and only have port-o-potty).

2) Burke Lake Park - 36 mins - (Fairfax County Park) - 218 acre lake - Tents (best tent sites: B22-B24 closer to lake) & RV (no hookups) family and group campsites. Can not reserve specific group or individual sites in advance. Hot showers, bath house, camp store. Fishing (bait available), Canoe (\$16 8hrs!), row boat rentals/electric motor. Miniature train, Carousel, mini-golf. Wilderness camping available.

3) Pohick Bay Regional park - 40 mins- (Northern VA regional park) - on Potomac 20 miles south of DC - Tents and RV family campsites, rustic cabins. Group sites (youth groups only) require a 1 mile hike. Hot showers, bath house, camp store. Paddle board, Canoe, Kayak, Jon boat boat rentals, mini-golf, Water Park. Group 'Marsh Tour' canoe trip available. [703-339-6104](tel:703-339-6104)

Greenville Farm Family Campground - Working farm, fishing, mixed reviews. Haymarket [703-754-7944](tel:703-754-7944)

Bull Run Regional Park

4) Prince William Forest Park - 45 mins - Small swimming lake (certified lifeguard must be part of the group), hiking, camping, 8 walk-in tent sites, Cabins (CCC).

5) Harpers Ferry Adventure Center - 55 mins - commercial campground - Tent sites on the river (get site #10 - best view/more secluded), camping cabins. Port-o-jon/shuttle required from tents to car. Fishing, kayaking, canoeing, rafting, zip line, horse back riding, etc. all near by. Can be pricy!

6) Andy Guest State Park - 1.5 hrs- on Shenendoah River - camper cabins (no heat or AC), and walk-in camp sites!

7) George Washington National Forest -
- Elizabeth Furnace Recreation Area - 1.5 hrs - hiking, large creek, 35 campsites (family camping area) Flush toilets & hot showers May-Sept.

Campsites 10, 11, 13, 15 near Passage Creek. Bring bug spray.

- Camp Roosevelt Recreation Area - 2hrs - hiking, 10 campsites

- Little Fort Camp ground - 2hrs 20 mins - OHV area, no water, 11 campsites

8) Lake Anna State Park - 1 hr 45 mins - giant lake (w/motorized boats), swimming beach, canoeing, full service modern cabins, campsites. Summer weekends beach area very crowded with people.

Note: Lake created to provide cooling water for nuclear plant.

9) Westmoreland State Park - 2 hrs - on the Bay - has a pool - Kayak rental, cabins and campsites

----- Day use and/or special considerations

10) Sky Meadows - 1hr 12 mins - walk-in tent only campsites (walk under 1 mile to campsites in woods). Stay out of the meadows due to ticks (very bad tick infestation, search carefully to avoid tick born illnesses like Lyme disease)!

Meadows can be avoided by using trails that head up the foothills towards the Appalachian trail (nice circuit hike). Nice winery nearby.

11) Mason Neck - 1 hr (across from Woodbridge) on the Potomac - Quiet park, not too many people. Canoe/Kayak rentals. No camping or cabins.

12) Caledon - 1hr 52 mins - on Potomac/Bay - No boating. Group camping can be arranged with special permit. Otherwise no campsites, no cabins.

13) Leesylvania - boat launch. Group campsite only.

14) Old Rag Mountain - 2hrs 10 mins - back country camping (permit required). Best mountain to climb with awesome rocks at the top.

15) Shenandoah National Park - 2hrs to Skyline drive:

- Mathews Arm Campground at mile marker 21 (2hrs 12 mins total drive time)

Campsites. Has a generator free area. No showers.

Modern flush toilets. More privacy in some downhill campsites. Activities: hiking (many hikes).

- Big Meadows Campground - 2 hrs 7 mins - drive-in campsites, and walk-in tent only campsites! (25 to 100 yard walk to campsite).

- Lewis Mountain Campground - 2 hrs 12 mins - campsites, full service cabins (but, no refrigerator). Drive-in campsites are more private than drive-in campsites at Big Meadows Campground. Showers available (quarters needed to operate).

- Shenandoah National Park - 2hrs + - back country camping (free permit required). Many rules including minimum of 1/4 mile from roads, buildings, etc. and bear canister to hang for food.

CAMPING in Pennsylvania

Close by (within 2hrs):

1) Jellystone in Quarryville (commercial), small water park/splash park, pool, craft activities, bike go-carts, giant bounce pillow, put-put golf, w/fishing lake, cabins, campsites.

2) Gifford Pinchot State Park w/large swimming lake, cabins, campsites.

3) Pine Grove Furnace State Park w/swimming lake and campsites.

4) Cowans Gap State Park - w/swimming lake, cabins (CCC), campsites

5) Cadorus State Park - w/swimming lake (1,250 acre lake, motor boats), cabins, campsites

6) Michaux State Forest - 1 hr 30 mins - beautiful reservoir lake, back country camping. Three PATC cabins (nicest may be Hermitage Cabin - Swift Run Road, near South Mountain). Logging operations ongoing. Many hunters, so be aware of hunting season(s) before planning a trip/hiking.

7) Blue Knob State Park - 2hrs 45 mins, hiking, skiing, cabins, campsites

8) French Creek State Park - 3 hrs, cabins, campsites

5hrs drive - many more PA State Parks including:

- Promised Land (highly recommended)
- Consider using Pickerel Point campground walk-in tent sites on the lake
- Laquawana or Laquania
- Eagles Nest or Eagles point

CAMPING in West Virginia

1) Harpers Ferry Campground - 55 mins - commercial campground with tent sites on the river. Tent sites separate from RV sites. Fishing, kayaking, canoeing, water skiing, zip line, rafting all close by with rentals available (River Riders). Note: active train tracks very close by/loud frequent train noise/ear plugs required!

2) Berkley Springs State Park - (1 hr 45 mins) - hiking, horseback riding, Cabins (CCC), campsites

3) Sleepy Creek Wildlife Management Area - 1hr 45 mins - 205 acre lake, 15% oak/hickory acres, 85% pine/oak acres, fishing, hiking, canoeing/kayaking, 75 primitive campsites. Piney Point and Meyer's Place campground(s) have a few campsites on the lake! First come/first served - no reservations.

4) George Washington National Forest -
- Hawk Recreation Area - 1 hr 52 mins - 8 campsites (hunters in the fall)

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5) Lost River State Park - (2 hrs 30 mins) - hiking, horseback riding, Cabins (CCC) with heat&AC, campsites

West Virginia has the best wilderness camping near Wash. DC area. That said here are some convenient car camping campsites:

- Seneca Rocks - 3hrs 15 mins - Seneca Shadows Campground (State), at base of Seneca Rocks, great hike to top, campsites.

- Smoke Hole - 3hrs 25 mins - Big Bend State Campground (State), head waters of the Potomac

Lake Moomaw - 3hrs 50 mins - some campsites on a beautiful mountain lake. Showers. Not many people.

- Dolly Sods - 4 Hrs 15 mins - Red Creek Campground (State) - (no flush toilets, no hot water), good spot for day hikes into Dolly Sods, also inside Dolly Sods many hike-in primitive sites.

Also: CASS scenic railroad - 4 hrs 40 mins - Cass, WV. Amazing steam engine train ride up the mountain. Various campgrounds nearby.

CAMPING in Delaware

Cape Henlopen State Park - 3hrs 20 mins - campsites within walking distance to the ocean beach. Perimeter campsites are a little larger and more private, but have less shade than the ones in the center (which are all smaller and less private).