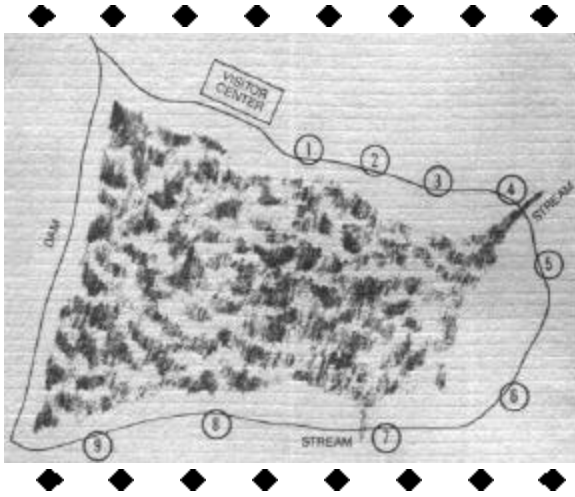


The Virginia State Park system is proud to preserve this area for Virginia's citizens and guests. Please enjoy your walk, preserve the natural beauty of the site as you found it, and explore the wonders of a small part of nature.

Your trail includes special stops designated by the numbered posts which correspond to the numbers in this brochure.



1. The small pond from which this trail takes its name was built by a former landowner. Once completed, the pond established a new environment for plants and animals.

2. One of the most prevalent flora members around the pond is hazel or common alder, which is the only type alder native to the southeastern United States. This member of the birch family grows to a height of twenty feet and often forms dense thickets. The greenish yellow flower or "catkin" is so named because it resembles a cat's tail. The small woody cones are its fruit. This fast growing tree is preferred by many birds and wildlife species as a food source and shelter.

3. While walking this trail you will pass through several stages of forest succession. For example, the area where you are standing was once cleared for a field.

Left unattended, a reversion took place and the environment has reclaimed her own. Pioneer species such as red cedars and Virginia pines have begun to take over. But, with time, the understory hardwoods will mature and become the dominant species.

4. In the vicinity of the bridge are sweet-gums and hornbeams. Both of these species represent members of the mature hardwood stage in forest development.



The sweetgum (before the bridge and to the left of the creek) is identified by the corky wings on the twigs, its star-shaped leaves, and its round, prickly fruit. Pioneers used the sap found beneath the bark in medicines and chewing gum.

Across the bridge and to the left of the path is the American hornbeam or ironwood. This tree gets its name for its muscular appearance and extremely hard wood. The wood is used in tool-handles and the charred wood is used in gunpowder.



5. Here again, you enter a reclaimed field. Before you is a fine example of a tree typical to this environment—the loblolly pine. This pine is one of the fastest growing southern pines and does well in moist areas. The pinecone seeds provide food for songbirds, squirrels, and turkeys. When this area is eventually taken over by hardwoods, the tree will continue to serve as a home for woodpeckers, songbirds, and flying squirrels.



6. To the left of the path is a notable expanse of ground pine or running cedar. This creeping evergreen in the clubmoss family has become endangered in many areas of the country.

7. To the left of the bridge is a yellow poplar also known as a tulip poplar.



This tall, massive tree, actually a member of the magnolia family, gets its name from

the greenish yellow blossoms that resemble a tulip. One of the tallest eastern hardwoods, this tree is used in making furniture and musical instruments. Indians used the trunks to make dugout canoes.

Another dominant tree (to your immediate left before crossing the bridge) is the sycamore, easily recognized by the smooth whitish bark that peels off in large flakes exposing patches of brown, green, and gray. The sycamore is the most massive tree in the Eastern United States. The wood is often used in boxes, cabinets, and furniture.

8. One of the most notable members of a pond community is the beaver. The beaver is a nocturnal creature and most beaver activity takes place at night.

Beavers are vegetarians and enjoy a diet that includes cattails, waterlily roots, arrowhead, and a variety of tree barks.

Beavers mate for life and the young, called kits, are usually born between April and July. The family stays together for two years, then the kits are driven away as the adults prepare for a new family.

Other nocturnal creatures that visit the pond include raccoons and opossums. The footprints they leave in the mud are often the only evidence of their visits. Note the persimmon tree on the bank of the pond; it provides food for them.

9. As you have now seen, this pond hosts a variety of life. Each member plays a vital role in the total balance of this small area.

The rich, moist soil provides nutrition for both aquatic and terrestrial plants. The plants, in turn, offer food and shelter for the animals. The animals help keep the natural balance by consuming smaller animals, thus preventing overpopulation.

This stop brings you to a trail junction. To your left is the trail to Glenora. Straight ahead is the Railroad Ford Trail. A right turn will take you back to the Visitor Center.

There are maps at the Visitor Center for each of the other trails at Lake Anna State Park.

**We hope you enjoyed the Old Pond Trail.
Please come again!!!**

Brochure compliments of
**Friends of Lake
Anna State Park**



Department of Conservation and Recreation
600 E. Main St., 24th Floor
Richmond, VA 23219-2094
(804) 786-1712
<http://www.dcr.state.va.us>

OLD POND TRAIL

LAKE ANNA STATE PARK

