

GREAT FALLS PARK



JUNIOR RANGER HANDBOOK



For ages 5-7





Welcome to Great Falls Park!



You are invited to become a member of a very special group of people:
The Junior Rangers.

What is a Junior Ranger?

Junior Rangers are people like you who care about our National Parks. Did you know that the National Park Service protects and preserves these unique places for everyone to enjoy? By becoming a Junior Ranger, you can help the National Park Service take care of over 390 of these wonderful places in the United States and its territories.

How can I earn a Junior Ranger badge?

- First, attend either the slide show in the Visitor Center Auditorium or a Ranger program.
- Then make sure you have this book, a pencil, and an adult with you. Read about the Junior Ranger motto on the following page.
- Follow the Junior Ranger Trail to complete all of the activities in the book. A map is included in this booklet. Remember, for some questions there are no right or wrong answers. You will be challenged to think and use all of your senses. Park Rangers and Volunteers are here to help! They can give you clues and tell you about Great Falls Park.
- After you have finished the activities, show a Park Ranger your answers. Talk with the Ranger about what you saw, heard, and learned today. Be sure that you mention your favorite things about Great Falls Park
- You may write the answers yourself, or tell an adult your answer and ask them to help you write. At the end of this booklet is a special page for your notes and sketches.



Be on the lookout for this symbol in the book. It means that there is something that YOU can do as a Junior Ranger to help Great Falls Park.

Explore, Learn, Protect

The Junior Ranger Motto



Explore

Pick up a trail map and go for a hike, discover new things, and explore your National Park.

Learn

About the plants, animals, and history of our National Parks by becoming a Junior Ranger.

Protect

Your National Parks by learning about them, sharing what you know with friends and family, and finding ways to protect the parks for future visitors.

Name:

Signature:

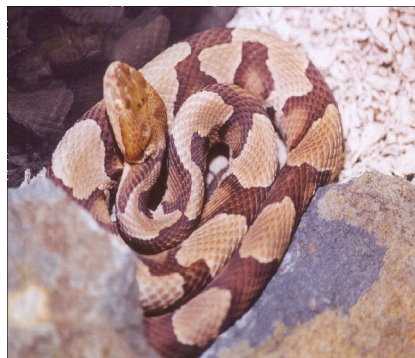
Important Tips on Staying Safe

As a Junior Ranger, you can help yourself and your family stay safe during visits to Great Falls Park. Here is a list of things to know about how to stay safe during your visit. Go over the list with an adult before you start on the Junior Ranger Trail.

1. Know how to recognize poison ivy. It can cause an itchy rash if you touch it. Be careful! Here is a picture:



2. If you see any wildlife, such as squirrels, birds, snakes, or insects, make sure you stay a safe distance away. Do not try to feed, pet, or pick up wildlife— both of you could get hurt. Great Falls Park has one type of venomous snake, the Copperhead. It is pictured below. Be alert!



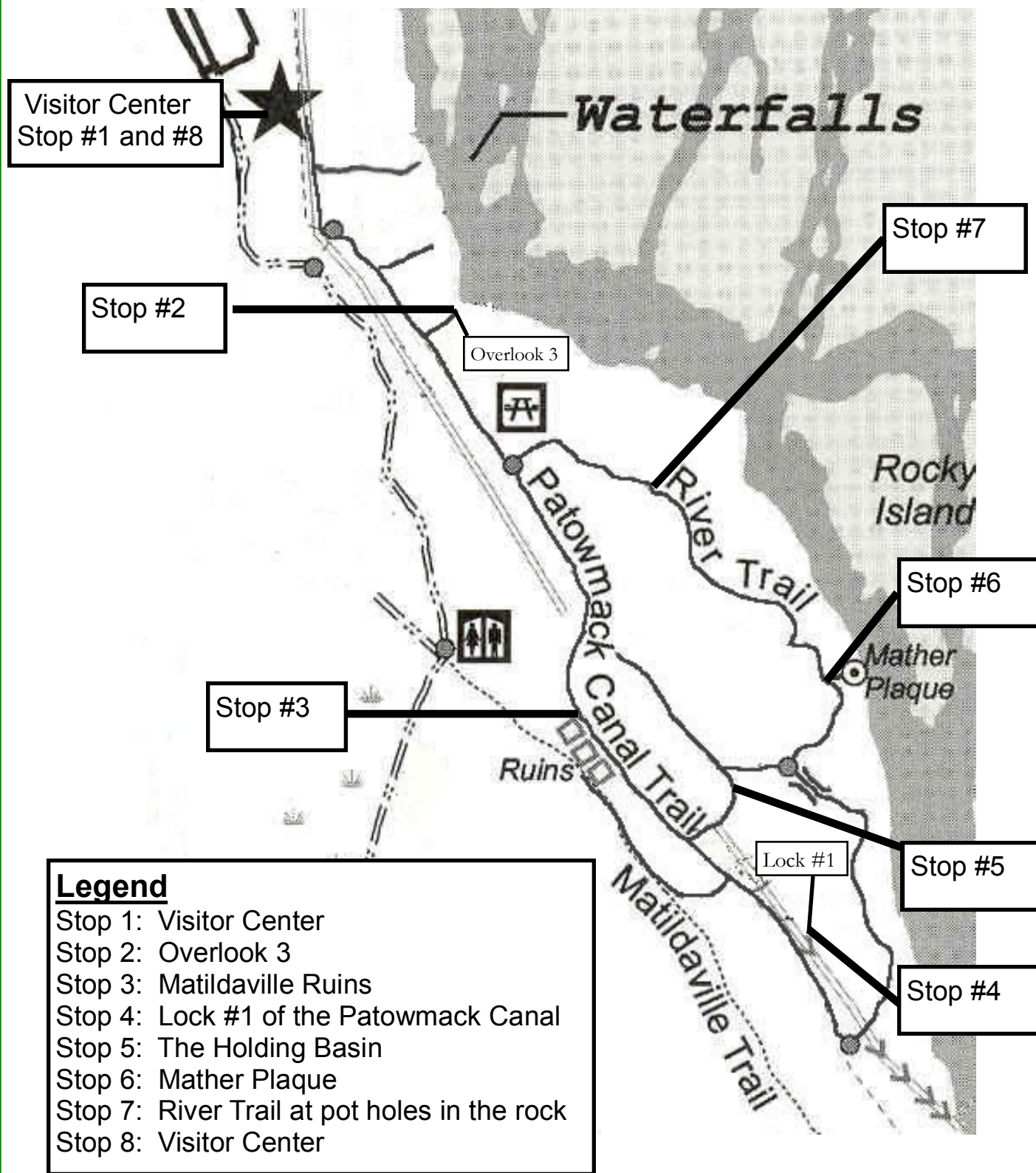
3. Use caution while climbing on rocks. There are tall cliffs here and the Potomac River has strong currents. No swimming or wading is permitted. Make sure to stay at least one body's length away from the edge of a cliff or the river. Be safe!
4. In the summer, it can get very hot. Remember to carry water with you and to make sure that everyone in your group has water. Be smart!
5. Most importantly, have fun! If you have questions, or need help, contact a Park Ranger. Great Falls Park's main phone number is 703-285-2965.



The Junior Ranger Trail



Here is the Junior Ranger Trail map. Each stop is numbered and listed in the legend at the lower left part of this page. **Make sure you also bring a Great Falls Trail map and a self-guided tour map of the Patowmack Canal with you.** You can ask for them at the Visitor Center desk.



Use Your Senses!



This activity can be done at any time during your hike. Choose a place to stop and look carefully at what is around you. Use all of your senses to fill out the lists below. At the end, write down your favorite things about the place that you chose.



Where did you go? _____



What do you see?

What do you hear?





What do you smell?

List your favorite things



Help Us Protect Great Falls Park

Did you know that each National Park was set aside for its own special reason so that all people may enjoy them now and in the future? As a Junior Ranger, you can help protect the park so that future generations can enjoy it as well.

On your way to stop #2 at Overlook 3, look for the brown regulation signs near the wooden footbridge. Draw three below and tell an adult what they mean. A sample has been done for you.



Do not feed the animals.



Talk with an adult about why you think these rules will help keep you safe. Also, think about how these rules will help protect Great Falls Park.



The Town of Matildaville



As you walk around the Holding Basin, you will find stop #3 on the Junior Ranger Trail: the remains of Matildaville. Find Matildaville on your map. This town was built to help service the Patowmack Canal. There was a springhouse, an inn, and a house for the superintendent.



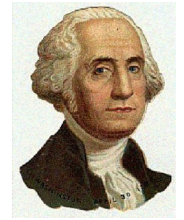
A man named Henry (Lighthorse Harry) Lee, who was a friend of George Washington and the father of Robert E. Lee, built the town. He named it Matildaville, after his wife, Matilda.

If you could name a town, what would you call it? Why would you pick that name?

Time to use your imagination! Go up the trail to the Superintendent's House. Picture what you think the town looked like 200 years ago. Imagine the town with people, houses, water in the canal, and boats loaded with cargo. Draw what you think Matildaville looked like in the space below.



The Patowmack Canal 1785-1828



Continue down the Canal Trail to stop #4 at Lock 1. Look at the self-guided map of the Patowmack Canal for some interesting facts on the Canal.

When the Patowmack Canal was built, over 200 years ago, special people called masons cut the rocks that were used to build the canal locks. As you walk through Lock 1, look for marks carved into the stones. There are ten mason's marks. How many can you find?

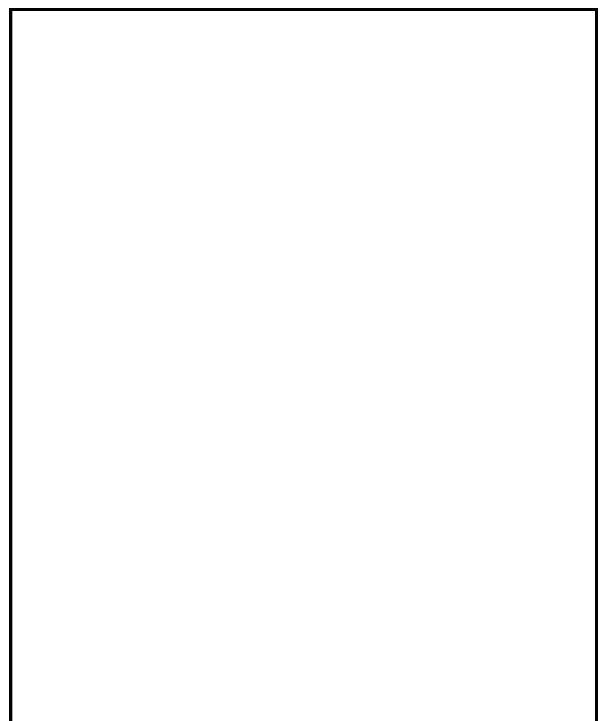
Have you ever drawn a picture that you were very proud of? What did you do to make sure everyone knew who drew the picture? Maybe you signed it. The masons used their Mason's mark for the same reason, to show who had cut each stone.

Each mason had his own mark that he designed. Now it's your turn! Design your own Mason's Mark in the box below.

A Picture of a Mason's Mark



Your Mark



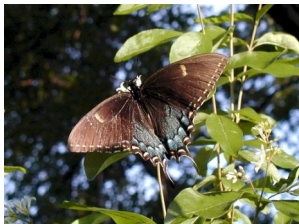
Hide and Seek in the Holding Basin



Stop #5 on the Junior Ranger Trail is at the Holding Basin. In the past, boats waited here to go down into the Locks. Today, it is home to many animals and birds. Walk around the Holding Basin. Point out places where animals and birds might like to hide, live, or look for food.

Make a list of the animals and birds that you see in the Holding Basin using the lines below. Describe to an adult or a Park Ranger one animal home that you see.







Help protect your park! Do not feed, touch, or approach any of the wildlife you see during your visits.



The Rocky River Trail



The River Trail is marked with blue blazes on the trees. Follow it upstream to stop #6 on the Junior Ranger Trail. This is Mather Plaque, a nice place to see Mather Gorge.

Do you think the river here looks different than it does at the Falls? List some of the differences you see. Why do you think it is different?

Continue on the River Trail to stop #7. As you are walking along the River Trail, look at the rocks alongside the trail. See if you can find the rock with two holes big enough to stand in. These big, round holes are called potholes and are your next stop on the Junior Ranger Trail.



Talk to an adult or a Park Ranger about how you think the hole was made. Here's a hint: you are standing where the Potomac River used to flow before the falls and Mather Gorge formed.



Your National Parks



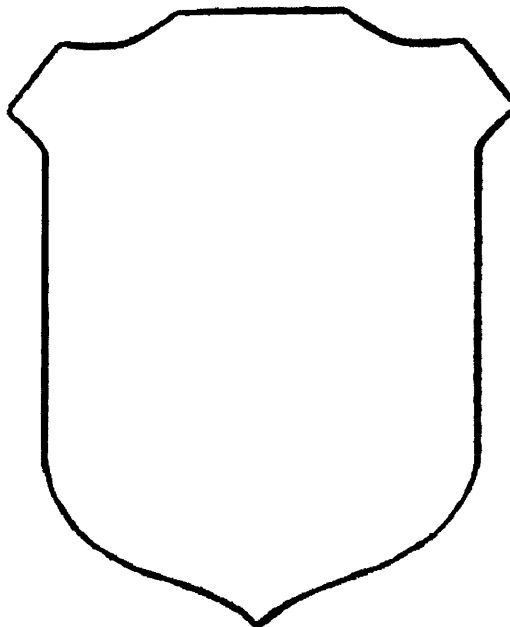
It's time to head back to the Visitor Center! This is your last stop on the Junior Ranger Trail. Once you go inside, take a look at the badges on display in the children's area.

These badges show some of the parks that Junior Rangers help to protect. Did you know that there are many ways you can help protect these special places? Let's name some of them.



One other way you can help is by learning about other parks. Look at the badges and pick one from the park you would like to visit next. Draw the park's badge below.

Write down the name of
the park you chose:



When you get home,
visit www.nps.gov to
learn more about the
park you have chosen.

Talk to a Park Ranger

1. What is the Ranger's name?

2. Tell the Ranger about your favorite thing that you saw today. You can also draw a picture of it below.

3. There is a picture of the brown patch that Rangers wear below. Each line points to a different part of the patch. Ask the Ranger what each part of the patch means.



Once you have successfully completed the activities in this handbook, ask a Park Ranger or Volunteer to go over your answers with you. Then you will be awarded the Junior Ranger badge. Congratulations!



Notes and Observations





Sketches

COLOR THE NPS PATCH

Here's a fun coloring activity for you to do at home!

