

## **Cedarville State Forest**

Amongst Maryland's underappreciated public places are many of its State Forests. These, often large tracts, tend to lie in obscurity possibly because of their locations or sparse amenities. Many of them are un-congested places to get away to. The Cedarville State Forest, straddles the line between Prince Georges County and Charles County in southern Maryland. Within it are plenty of trails built by the Civilian Conservation Corps during the Great Depression that are today popular with scouts, mountainbike cyclists, and hunters. Scout organizations and other volunteers help to maintain the trails and build the bridges in-use today. Many of these trails were re-designed and connected into loops during the late 1990's. Call ahead (1-800-784-5380 or 301 888-2423) to check on closings due to hunting season or other reasons. A nominal self-pay fee is charged for entry.

Cedarville has plenty of forest, many streams, a fish hatchery, one 4 acre lake, and the beginnings of the Zekiah Swamp that ends 20 miles away. The Zekiah Swamp was part of the escape route that John Wilkes Booth used after shooting Abraham Lincoln. The trails and mostly unpaved roads in Cedarville Forest are good for running and bicycling. State history also records the area as the former winter campgrounds of the Piscataway Indians.

### **Getting There**

From the Capital Beltway (I-495), take Branch Avenue, Rte. 5, south toward Waldorf. After Route 301 and Branch Avenue merge, turn left onto Cedarville Rd. Turn right about 2 miles later, onto Bee Oak Rd. Pay your fee in the self-pay box, then proceed on. Turn right on Forest Rd. 0.7 miles from the pay box. Park in the lot on the right after 0.2 miles.

### **Area Routes**

#### Orange Trail (5.0 miles, IV)

The Orange Trail, like most of the trails in Cedarville Forest, is wooded, ideal for hiking and pretty good for running. Mountain bikers are coming more frequently to the area but so far only share the trails in modest numbers. The Orange Trail is one the trails most changed from the old trail system. As a result, many multi-hued blazes for it range from red to yellow. Starting out, the trail is on a grassy double-track as it goes around the campground. The blazes don't stand out well as you follow them after reaching the dirt road. After passing the maintenance area on Forest Rd., it becomes single-track that's easier to follow. It crosses Bee Oak Rd. three times. The turns start to become a bit too numerous to remember as you get further. Many unofficial trails intersect. Rely on the blazes and red flags to guide the way. The trail rolls across and along stream valleys after Hidden Spring Rd. Just before returning to the parking lot, the Orange and Blue trail concurrently use the same path.

### Blue Trail (3.95 or 3.3 or 4.2 miles, III)

This counter-clockwise loop starts easy by going south down a stream valley. After crossing Sunset Rd., several streams must be crossed without bridges and some of the trail may be muddy. Quickly climbing out of the stream valley, you reach the turn-off for the short route on Cross Rd. Cross Rd. is an easy, mostly flat dirt road. The Blue Trail continues down to Zekiah Swamp Run and crosses Forest Rd. An option to lengthen the route is to take Mistletoe Rd. The regular route goes over some small ridges on single-track. Mistletoe Rd. is well graded and has a good surface for running or riding faster. The short, regular and long variations all join together on the Cross Rd. The route back from there continues up and down a bit before hitting the Orange Trail near the campgrounds. Turn left at this point as both Blue and Orange Trails coexist on the same path (errant blue blazes may mislead you to go straight into the campground; if so turn left to Forest Rd. and left again to Bee Oak Rd.).

### Forest Road (5, 4.1 or 4.25 miles, IV or III)

The Forest Road is a very pleasant and straight gravel road leading to a parking lot at Cedarville Pond. It drops, climbs and drops again to get there over the space of less than one-and-a-quarter miles. Continuing straight, up a hill past the parking on the left, you follow the Green and Brown Trails which are initially concurrent on the same path. Notice the difference between the sickly almost pencil thin scrub pines as you pass the pond on the left, and the tall healthy loblolly pines on your right just before a T-intersection. The loblollies were planted by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930's as part of the original demonstration purpose of the forest.

One option is to go left following the Brown Trail. It skirts the forest border, past some houses before dropping down to a wetland area. The wetland you see is actually only the head of a vast mile wide and many mile long wetland. Small wooden bridges get you across to make a counter-clockwise loop back to the parking lot and Forest Road.

The other option is to turn right at the T-intersection, following the Green Trail. The trail is nice at first however it deteriorates. First many tree roots make the going rough. It too drops down to the Zekiah Swamp. Once across a drainage ditch, the trail doubles back toward the Forest Rd. As of April 1999, your progress will be impeded when trying to stay on the Green trail (4.25 Mile Route). A somewhat wide and deep tributary creek blocks the way and there is no bridge. If you do hop across, the trail is poorly maintained but it can be followed to Forest Rd. by staying along the creek. Perhaps the scouts will fix this. Skip this mess by turning left up the steep hill to get on Cross Rd. and follow it to Forest Rd. (4.1 Mile Route). Return from there down and up Forest Rd. to the parking lot.

## **Nearby and Connecting Zones**

Louise F. Cosca Regional Park  
Patuxent River Park

## **What to do Afterward**

### Food and Drink

Spurs - country western dance club -  
301 843-9964

Blue Dog Saloon - 301 932-1740

Roadside barbeque (a seasonal specialty of  
southern Maryland)

### Entertainment and Edification

Cedarville Fish Hatchery

Wilmer's Park - concerts - 301 888-1600

## Orange Trail

Distance: 5.0 miles

Rating: IV, single and double-track blazed trails rolling easily through the woods

- 0.0 into the woods; away from the road
- R 0.05 Orange/Blue Trail (blazed)  
0.3 cross Forest Rd
- BL 0.4 on grassy double-track after the water tower on the L & trail X on R  
0.5 Blue Trail goes R after wood bridge  
1.05 double-track on L merges  
1.1 double-track Rd X on L  
1.25 gravel Rd X on L & gate; follow yellow blaze S
- L 1.45 at T; Forest Rd; pass maint garage
- R 1.5 orange blazed trail head near power poles  
1.7 wooden bridge over stream
- CR 2.2 to trail head at Bee Oak Rd  
2.25 wooden bridge over creek
- R 2.35 at trail X to stay on Orange Trail  
2.45 cross Bee Oak Rd  
2.85 cross Bee Oak Rd
- BL 3.2 to join, then soon leave power lines (blazes and red flag)  
BL 3.25 trail X (follow blazes)  
BR 3.45 as trail X on L merges (follow blazes)  
BL 3.55 as trail X on R merges (follow blazes)  
R 3.7 Hidden Springs Rd  
L 3.8 Orange Trail head (follow flag)  
BL 3.85 at fork in trail (follow orange/red)  
4.1 wooden bridge over stream  
L 4.15 sharp L at T  
4.7 wooden bridge over stream  
BL 4.9 at trail X after wooden bridge over stream; Blue Trail is concurrent  
R 4.95 to parking  
5.0 parking

# Orange Trail



## Blue Trail

Distance: 3.95 or 3.3 or 4.2 miles

Rating: III, mostly single-track blazed trails through rolling woods

### 3.95 Mile Route

		L	1.85 at T at creek; Green Trail joins
			1.9 cross Forest Rd.; Green Trail goes R
	0.0		into the woods; away from the road
		<**	
			2.0 Mistletoe Rd. (unmarked)
L	0.05		Orange/Blue Trail (blazed)
			2.1 wooden bridges over stream
			2.3 small stream crossing
L	0.1		to stay on Blue Trail as Orange Trail
			goes over wooden bridge
		2.75	Cross Rd. (unmarked)
	0.15		small wooden bridge
		>*,>**	
			3.1 wooden bridge over stream
			3.2 trail X before stream crossing
R/L	0.3		cross creek on Sunset Rd.
			(unmarked)
	0.4	BR	at trail X after wooden bridge over
			creek
			3.35 wooden bridge over stream
	0.65		steam crossing (no bridge)
	0.75		steam crossing (no bridge)
		L	3.45 at trail X to wooden bridge; Blue &
			Orange Trail are concurrent
L	1.0		after stream crossing to stay on Blue
			Trail; White Trail goes S
	1.1		wooden bridge
		L	3.5 trail X on R to water tower
			3.65 cross Forest Rd.
<*			
	1.4	L	3.9 trail X on L to parking
			3.95 parking on Forest Rd.

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### 3.3 Miles Route\*

			1.7 cross Forest Rd.
L	1.4		Cross Rd. (unmarked)
	1.6		pass through gate
		L	2.1 Blue Trail (pickup cues at mile 3.1
			on 3.95 mile route)

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### 4.2 Miles Route\*\*

		L	2.85 Cross Rd. (unmarked)
R	2.0		Mistletoe Rd. (unmarked)
	2.2	R	2.1 Blue Trail (pickup cues at mile 3.1
			on 3.95 mile route)
			pass through gate after auto
			turnaround loop

# Blue Trail



## Forest Road

Distance: 5.0, 4.1 or 4.25 miles

Rating: IV or III, mostly single-track blazed trails through rolling woods

### 5.0 Mile Route

- |    |      |   |
|----|------|---|
|    | 2.8  | wooden bridges over Zekiah Swamp  |
| R  | 0.0  | onto Forest Rd.   |
|    | 0.1  | Sunset Rd. on R & bridge over creek                                     |
|    | 0.5  | Cross Rd.   |
|    | 1.05 | Mistletoe Rd. on L  |
|    | 1.1  | Blue & Green Trail X  |
| S  | 1.2  | parking for pond on L; go uphill following Green and Brown Trail blazes |
| R  | 1.5  | trail bears R at trail X on L   |
| <* |      |   |
| L  | 1.95 | at T; Brown Trail goes L; Green Trail goes R                            |
|    | 2.4  | gate to houses on R; Rd. X on L   |
| L  | 3.1  | at T to follow Brown Trail  |
| BL | 3.2  | at trail X; follow brown blaze  |
|    | 3.75 | Cedarville Pond parking & pipe bridge                                   |
| R  | 3.8  | Forest Rd. (unmarked)   |
|    | 3.9  | Blue & Green Trail X  |
|    | >**  |   |
|    | 4.0  | Mistletoe Rd. on R  |
|    | 4.5  | Cross Rd.   |
|    | >*   |   |
|    | 4.9  | bridge over creek & Sunset Rd. on L                                     |
| L  | 5.0  | into parking  |

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### 4.1 Miles Route\*

- |     |      |   |  |
|-----|------|---|--|
|     | L    | 2.9   | L at field & pavilion toward dirt road                 |
| R   | 1.95 | at T; Brown Trail goes L; Green Trail goes R                        |  |
|     | 2.55 | trail goes L after crossing wet ditch                               |  |
|     | 2.6  | wooden bridge over creek  |  |
|     | 2.75 | small wooden bridge   |  |
| <** |      |   |  |
| L   | 2.8  | trail X on L goes up hill leaving Green Trail before creek crossing |  |
|     | R    | 3.1   | Cross Rd. (gravel)                                     |
|     |      | 3.3   | Blue Trail X   |
|     |      | 3.5   | pass through gate                                      |
|     | L    | 3.6   | Forest Rd. (pickup cues at mile 4.9 on 5.0 mile route) |

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### 4.25 Miles Route\*\*

- |   |     |  |  |
|---|-----|--|--|
|   |     | 3.1  | Blue Trail merges from L                               |
| S | 2.8 | at TR X on L; cross tributary creek without bridge; follow main creek on poorly maintained trail |  |
|   | L   | 3.15   | Forest Rd. (pickup cues at mile 4.0 on 5.0 mile route) |



# Forest Road

