

Pohick Bay Regional Park

The peninsula of Mason Neck, which juts out into the Potomac River, forms one side of Pohick Bay. The bay, really the mouth of Pohick Creek, is a relatively healthy part of the river where Bald Eagles fish, Snowy Egrets hang-out in bunches on trees, and other birds and animals find refuge. Accotink Bay, the mouth of Accotink Creek, is adjacent to Pohick Bay. In Pohick Bay Regional park, people come to use the large swimming pool, rent or launch boats, go fishing, camp, picnic and hike. There's a nearby golf course and even a miniature golf course. There are plenty of nature trails that network through the park and most are well blazed. According to the Washington Post, "Pohick" is the Algonquin word for "water place."

Not far from Pohick Bay Regional Park is Gunston Hall. It was the home of George Mason, noted to be the most influential author of the Virginia Constitution and the Virginia Declaration of Rights. He was also most responsible for the Bill of Rights to the United States Constitution. Gunston Hall dates back to 1758 and is open to the public for a fee.

Getting There

From the Capital Beltway

Take Rte. I-95 south for 6.7 miles to the Lorton exit. Turn left off the highway ramp onto Lorton Rd. Turn right approximately 0.8 miles later onto Armistead Rd. Go only 0.2 miles and turn right onto Richmond Hwy., Rte. 1. At the top of the hill 0.9 miles ahead, turn left onto Gunston Rd. Pass the golf course, then turn left into the park on Pohick Bay Dr.; a little over 3 miles from Richmond Hwy. Pay the entrance fee if you're not living in Fairfax, Loudon, and Arlington counties, or Alexandria, Fairfax, and Falls Church cities. Proceed straight 0.5 miles further toward the boat ramp and park at the bottom of the hill near the sign for the Nature Trail.

Area Routes

Pohick Bay (4.8 miles, V)

Watch your step on this collection of nature trails. The hills are steep, both climbing and descending. Your payoff comes from flatter sections of trail where you'll cruise through the trees along the water's edge. You'll find Great Blue Heron's gliding, Snowy Egret's sitting in the trees, Red Wing Blackbirds hopping about and plenty of deer grazing.

Start on a blue blazed trail that climbs a little into the woods then drops to the water's edge. The trail climbs through the woods again and crosses a gravel road before again, returning to the water. The next climb is through a grassy power line clearing. Stay in the clearing until you see an obvious blue and red blazed trail on the right that climbs further. Turn right on the gravel service road at the top of the hill that's blazed red; going straight is the Yellow and Blue Trail. This road descends a ridge with good views, down to the water's edge again at a point where the bay takes on more of an appearance of being a wetland. A bench to rest upon is available at a very peaceful point that juts into the water. The road is flatter after this as it follows the shore. Turn right on the Red Shore Trail to make it last longer. A sharp and obvious turn to the left goes up a ridge, past the golf course to a group camping area. It's in the group camping area

where you'll need to follow the blazes most closely to stay on the Red Trail. You'll go through some clearings, and make many turns and pass a few houses. Short segments on the Red Access Trail and the Yellow Trail return you to Pohick Bay Drive. Turn left on the road to descend the hill back to the parking lot. Bicycling is not allowed on any of the park trails.

Nearby and Connecting Zones

Mason Neck
Pohick Creek
Jackson Miles Abbott Wetlands Refuge/Fort Belvoir
Prince William Forest Park

What to do Afterward

Food and Drink

Taste of Beijing - 703 339-5045
Tortillas Pacisico - 703 339-5564

Entertainment and Edification

Gunston Hall - 703 550-9220
Mason Neck State Park - 703 550-0960 - 703 550-0362
Mason Neck National Wildlife Refuge - 703 690-1297

Pohick Bay

Distance: 4.8 miles

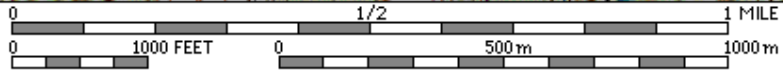
Rating: V; mostly dirt nature trails and gravel roads; steep hills; shady

- | | | | |
|---------|--|----------|--|
| 0.0 | from the parking lot; enter the woods at the Nature Trail sign (blue blazes) | R/L 2.75 | service road (follow red blaze) |
| | | R 2.8 | gravel service road |
| L 0.25 | at T; at water's edge; R is to the boat ramp parking | L 2.85 | Red Trail on L (red blaze) |
| 0.35 | cross the power lines again; trail X on R | R 3.05 | campground road |
| 0.5 | gravel driveway | | |
| 0.65 | cross the power lines again; trail X on L | R 3.1 | Red Trail on R |
| | | L/R 3.2 | bear L at trail X to stay on Red Trail; R at next where S is for horse trail |
| L 0.7 | at water's edge to stay on blue blazed trail | | |
| | | BL 3.35 | at bottom of hill to stay on Red Trail at trail X |
| BR 0.75 | in power lines; climb grassy hill in the power line clearing | | |
| | | R 3.4 | at trail X and cross stream; the trail is closed S ahead |
| R 0.9 | horse trail (blue and red blaze) | | |
| | | L 3.95 | after the crossing power line clearing onto service road; Gunston Rd is S |
| R 1.0 | gravel service road (red blaze); S is Yellow and Blue Trail | | |
| 1.3 | point—good views; bench | | |
| 1.4 | Red Cutback Trail on L | R 3.95 | Yellow Trail on R |
| | | 4.05 | Red Access Trail |
| R 1.55 | Red Shore Trail | | |
| | | L 4.35 | Pohick Bay Dr; gatehouse on R |
| L 2.15 | sharp left on ridge; horse trail (red blazes) | 4.5 | Orange Trail on L |
| 2.5 | golf course visible on R | | |
| | | BL 4.75 | at split in road and L into parking |
| R 2.55 | horse trail on R (red blaze) | 4.8 | Nature Trail head at parking lot |

Pohick Bay



MN TN
10 1/2°



Printed from TOPO! ©1999 Wildflower Productions (www.topo.com)