

Flat Naturalist–Dead Pond Trail



#DiscoverPIFlatNaturalist



Hi! My name is John Laskos and I work for DCNR as an Environmental Educator. The staff has created several self guided tours for you using our own “Flat” photos. This one is mine. Follow along with the instructions and enjoy the walk. Take a selfie photo at the end with my “Flat” Naturalist and post it to our Facebook Page. Consider doing all the self guided walks and be SAFE!!

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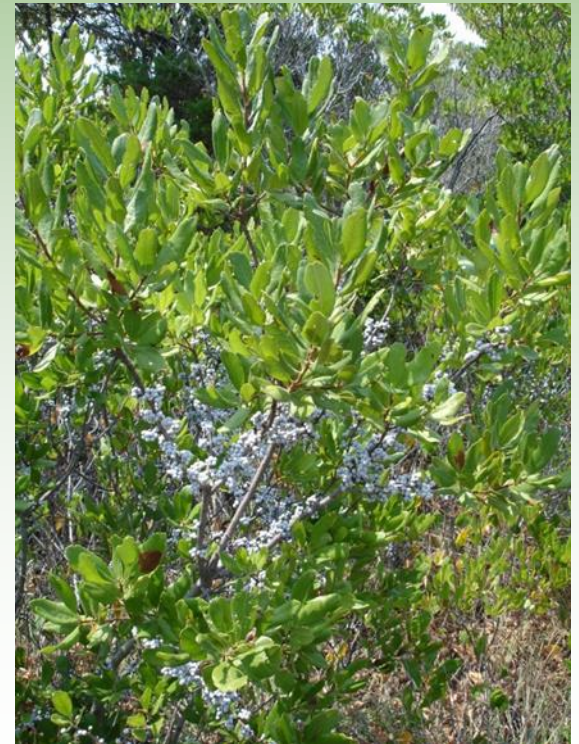
Beginning

- Park at Thompson Circle.
- Just to the South is the road to the Coast Guard Station.
- An access to Dead Pond Trail is here at Thompson Circle, Enter there.



First Turn

- After entering the trail from Thompson Circle, you will walk a very short distance.
- You have to go either left or right.
- Go Left.
- Look for the  post on your right near a small bayberry bush.



Bayberry

The berries provide a key energy source for swallows migrating south along the mid-Atlantic coast. These fruit are retained on the plant well into winter above any accumulated snow, making them readily available for bobwhite quail, ruffed grouse, ring-necked pheasant and numerous songbirds to consume. The highly scented fruit of bayberry was a source of wax for early settlers in America. This scent is still used in candle making. The aromatic fruit laden branches, bare of leaves, have often been utilized for residential decoration in fall and winter.

Continue On

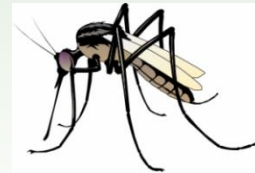
- Look for a young Birch tree on the right, not too far from the Bayberry. It may even be visible from where you are. Head there.



This photo is not from the park.

Wetlands

- If you are at the Birch tree, you may notice the wet area on the right. This is relatively recent. High waters the past two years have inundated much of the park. It has created many problems for visitors and staff. However, areas like this provide excellent habitat for many species, such as Beaver, Red Winged Blackbird and others. You may wish to avoid this area in late Summer, as the biting insects will undoubtedly be very numerous. But once again, these insects are food for Dragonflies, Damselflies, and Purple Martins.



Continue On

- Just down the trail from here is another stopping point marked by a ★ . It's near a very small Birch Tree again.
- Head there.




Birch Trees. Not on the park.


Buck Rub

- When you get to the small Birch, look to your left. You should see many young trees. Look at the trunks and you may be able to find some buck rubs. This is when a tree is rubbed by a mature Buck as he shed the velvet from his antlers. Usually only larger, more mature bucks with bigger racks will use trees with thick trunks. You may notice more rubs that were done on smaller trees and saplings. Presque Isle is home to a few impressive male deer. We believe the population lingers around 20 – 25 deer, after searching for them from a helicopter and conducting pellet counts.

Continue On

- Walk the remaining trail to the road and head South to your right. Turn left onto the road to the Coast Guard Station and follow it until you see the  near a small tree in the bushes on your right.
- It is almost right across from a lone tree on the left at the end of a parking row.
- Enter the trail here. It may be a little overgrown/

Continue On

- When you find the , enter the trail here.
- There may be places that the trail seems to go left, but make sure you keep right.
- There are small trees down across the trail so step carefully.
- You'll pass by and under some lower hanging branches.


Warbler Territory

- After you pass under the branches, you are in Warbler country.
- This is prime viewing area for watching Warblers during Spring migration. Remember that and come visit them when its time.
- Continue On.



Yellow Warbler

Keep Walking

- Find the  on your left.
- Follow the trail as it winds around to the left of what is Fry's Landing in front of you and dead ends.
- You'll see large debris piles. Maintenance crews take downed trees and brush here to be burned later. Keep following the trail to find Flat John on your left.
 - Before you leave, take a selfie with Flat John. You will find him on a tree nearby. You can post the photo to our Facebook page or on twitter using the hashtag [#DiscoverPIFlatNaturalist](#)

End of Trail

- Notice the tall reeds to your left. This is Phragmite, a Common Reed that is highly invasive at the Park. It can grow 12-15 feet tall. First brought here in the 1970's by Boy Scouts looking to improve duck habitat, it spread quickly, usually displacing native vegetation. Efforts to control it began many years ago. It's now much nicer in the lagoon area and species once gone are returning, such as the American Bitterns. Each year our intern staff heads out to keep working on its removal so that more native plants may re-emerge. Its been a lot of work, but we want to maintain the natural beauty of the park for our use and the use of future generations. It's called Resource Management.



Return

- You can head back to your vehicle now.
- I estimate that the trail so far was around .75 to .8 miles, give or take.
- I hope you enjoyed the self guided tour.
- Consider doing another one with a different Flat Naturalist. Be Safe!