

Great Falls Park



Junior Ranger Handbook

For Ages 8-12





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.

How can I earn the 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.
- Complete all of the activities in the book. 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 talk to you about Great Falls Park and the National Park Service.
- After you have finished the activities, ask a Park Ranger to look over your answers with you. Talk with the ranger about what you saw, heard, and learned today. 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 the 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 staying 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, and 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!



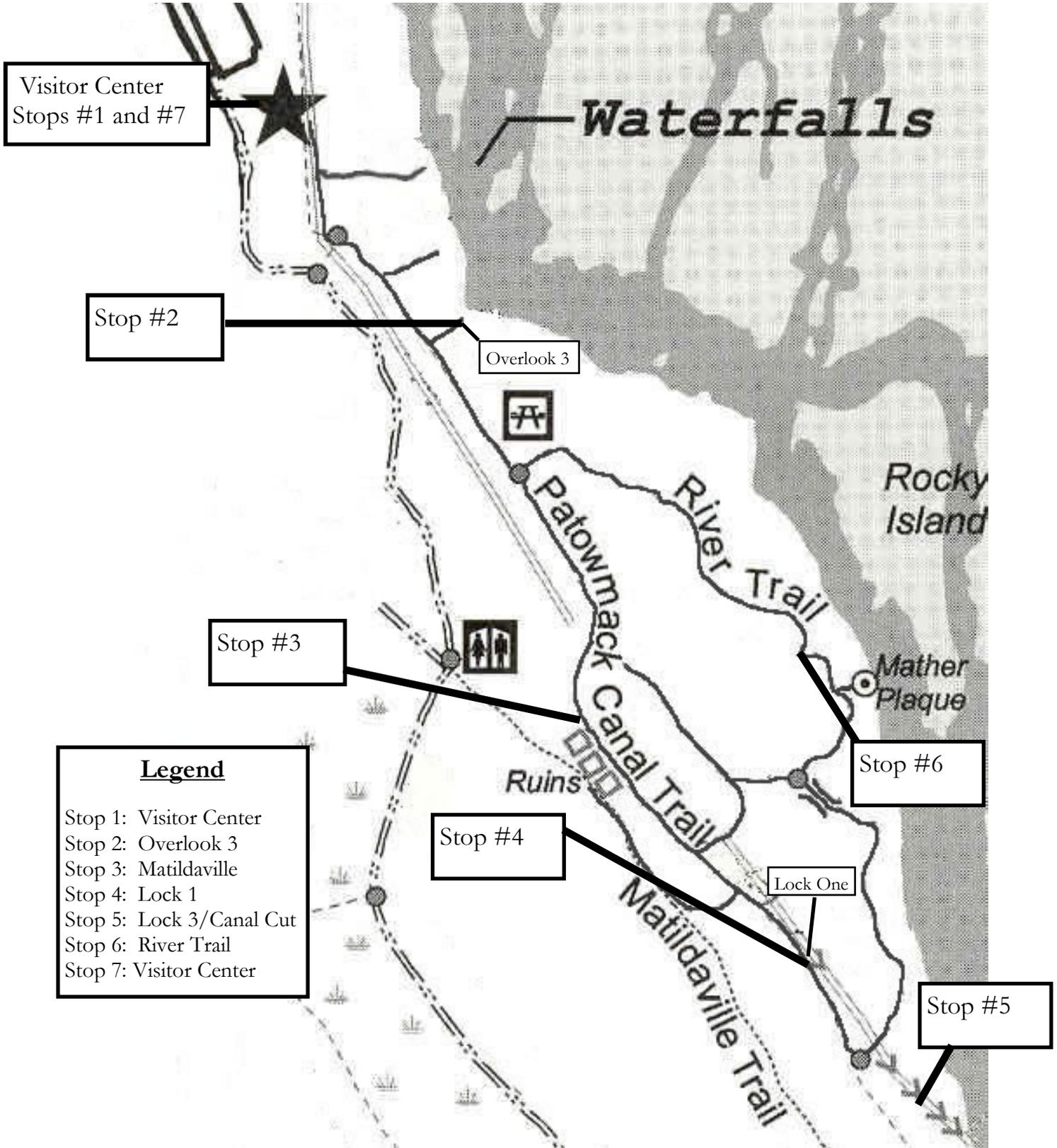
3. Use caution while climbing on rocks. There are tall cliffs here and the Potomac River has strong currents. No swimming or wading is permitted. Make sure to stay at least one body's length away from the edge of a cliff or the river. Be safe!
4. In the summer, it can get very hot. Remember to carry 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 on the map below and listed in the legend at the lower left part of this page. **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.



Scavenger Hunt

While you are on the Junior Ranger trail, keep your eyes open for the items on this list! Remember, use all of your senses to help you solve the clues. As you find the answer to each clue, write it down along with where you found it.



Help protect your National Park! Nothing may be collected from a National Park and taken home. Take only pictures, leave only footprints. Good luck!

A structure in the park built by people:

The type of rock most commonly found at Great Falls:

Something that does not belong in nature:

This man was the first president of the Patowmack Canal Company:

One of these can provide a home for many different types of birds, insects, and animals both in life and after it has died:

A spectacular river event that is marked by Overlook 3:

Your favorite thing at Great Falls:

Three popular recreation activities at Great Falls:

The total length of the Potomac River:

One of the buildings in the town that used to be here:

An animal or bird that lives in the park:





Protecting Your National Parks



National Parks are special places for people to visit. An important part of being a Junior Ranger is staying safe. These rules help keep you safe, along with protecting the natural and historical features in your National Parks. Take a moment at the bulletin board on your way to Overlook 3 to look at the pictures below and write down what you think each symbol means.



















Write a safety tip here



REFLECTIONS BEETLECTIONS



On your journey today, you will investigate the history and natural resources that make Great Falls such a special place. Your second stop on the Junior Ranger trail is at Overlook 3.

The Potomac River is a river of dramatic changes. You can see on the 'High Water Marks' pole just how high the river gets during a flood. Imagine what the Overlook 3 area would look like during a flood. Then walk down to the River of Change display on the Overlook. Look at the pictures and compare them with what you imagined a flood looks like. Talk with an adult or a Ranger about how the two were alike and how they were different.

One of the reasons people come here is to see the Potomac River as it cascades over the Great Falls. Take a look at the waterfall and then write down some things you thought of while you were looking at it.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____



Now imagine that the year is 1785. You are trying to bring a boat downstream, loaded with goods for you to sell. What are some things you might think about the Falls now?

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Let's take a look at the solution to getting around this dangerous waterfall. Follow the Junior Ranger Trail down the Canal trail to Matildaville and the canal locks.

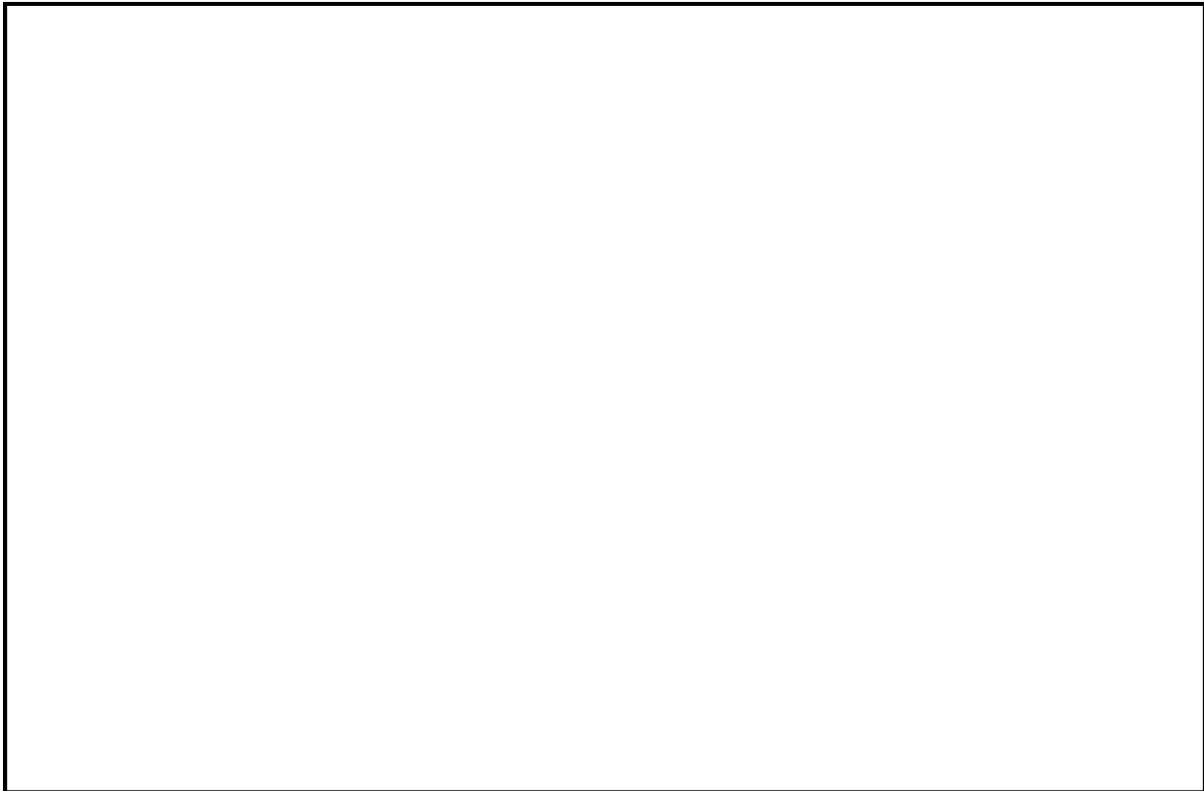


The Town of Matildaville



Stop #3 on the Junior Ranger Trail is the town of Matildaville. Henry (Lighthorse Harry) Lee, who was a friend of George Washington and the father of Robert E. Lee, built the town next to the Patowmack Canal. He named it Matildaville, after his wife, Matilda Lee.

Now it's your turn to design a town. Imagine you are in Henry Lee's shoes. You have an opportunity to build a town next to the Patowmack Canal. There will be a demand for food, lodging, housing, and storage. In the space below, draw the layout of your town and label all of the buildings in it. be sure to include the canal To get ideas for what your town will need, walk around the ruins of Matildaville and read about the buildings that made up the town, . Among the ruins are the Superintendent's house, the inn, and a springhouse.



What's in a Name?



Your town will need a name. What will you call it? Henry Lee named his town in honor of his wife. Other towns are named after rivers, land features, or famous people. Towns may also have an original name that the founder creates. Think about what you would like to name your town and write it below. Talk to an adult or a Ranger about why you chose the name.



The Patowmack Canal 1785-1828



Stop # 4 on the Junior Ranger Trail is Lock 1 of the Patowmack Canal. This canal was built over 200 years ago! Boatmen used it to get around the dangerous waterfall here at Great Falls.

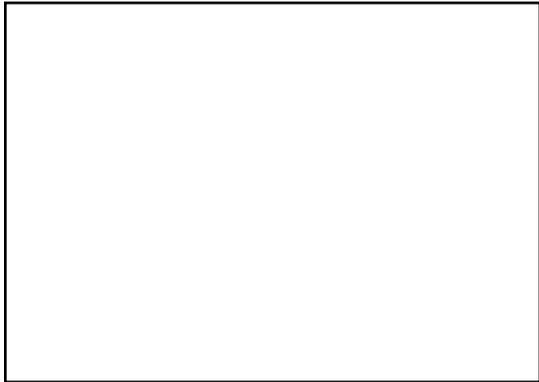
Building the canal was hard work. Look at the stones that were used to construct Lock 1. People called masons cut all of these stones by hand. They would carve a Mason's Mark into the stones to show who cut each block. There are several different Mason's Marks carved into the stones in the Canal.

Now it is time to test your observation skills. See how many Mason's Marks you can find in Lock 1, and then design your own Mason's Mark in the blank space on this page.

A Picture of a Mason's Mark



Design your own Mason's Mark



Stop #5 will take you down to Lock 3. Take a moment and look around at the last three locks. Locks 4 and 5 were built through solid rock. This meant using black powder to blast through the cliff. This was the first time black powder had been used in an engineering project. It was very dangerous. How would you have felt if it was your job to do the blasting?

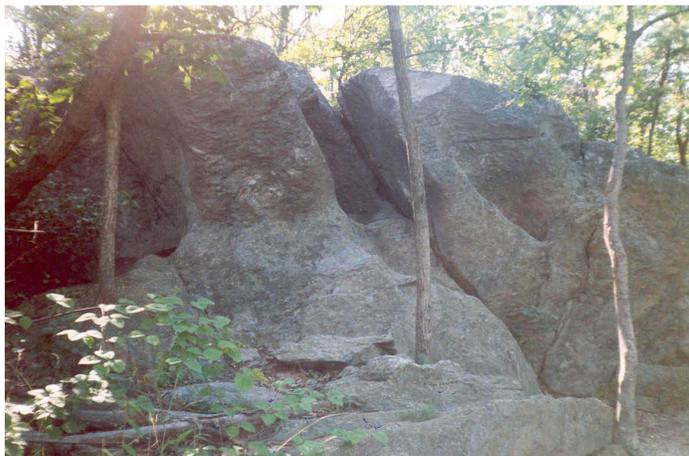


It's time for the last part of the hike! Walk over the footbridge to join the River Trail. Watch for blue blazes on the trees.

River Trail Adventure

Did you know that the Potomac River used to flow through what are now the hiking areas in Great Falls Park? Let's look for some clues along the River Trail, stop #6, that will tell us where the river used to run.

As you walk, look for potholes. A pothole looks like a smooth, hollowed out bowl. They can be large or small and give us clues about where the river used to be. How do you think they formed?



Another river effect that has an impact on the land here are the floods. Look for evidence of flooding on your hike and write down what you see here.

The metamorphic rock formations at Great Falls are very strong. It takes the river a long time to carve a path through this kind of rock. Two hundred years ago, George Washington probably saw the same waterfall and gorge that you are looking at today. What do you think Great Falls will look like 200 years from now? Do you think the Falls will be the same? Tell an adult or a Ranger what you think about these questions.



Choose a bench in the picnic area by Overlook 3 to fill out your Journal. When you are done, share what you have written with an adult or a Park Ranger.

What I learned: Below, write down three things that you learned during your visit.



My Favorite Things: Next, write down the things that you liked the most. They can be places, birds, animals, or natural wonders.



What I can do to help: Finally, write down some things that you can do at home to help protect your environment.





Your National Parks



The last stop on the Junior Ranger Trail is #7, the Visitor Center.

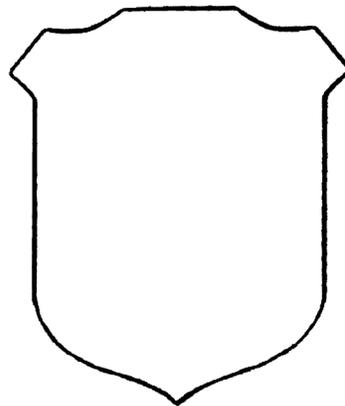
There are over 390 National Park sites in the United States. Let's look at how Great Falls became part of the National Park system.

For a National Park to be created, there must be something that is so special or unique that it is set aside as a protected area. What are some special things at Great Falls that would be reasons to make this place a National Park?

In some parks a piece of history, like a battlefield, can be the reason. In others, the reason is a natural feature, like the Grand Canyon. In some parks, there may be more than one feature that is protected. National Parks protect natural, historical, and cultural places.

Junior Rangers learn about and help take care of our National Parks. Take a look at the badge display in the children's area of the Visitors Center to see other parks where you can earn a badge. Write down two things being a Junior Ranger means to you.

Will you journey on to other parks to earn more badges? Look at the display and choose a badge from the park you would like to visit next. Draw it below. When you get home, you can visit www.nps.gov to learn more about your next park.



The park I chose is: _____





Talk to a Park Ranger

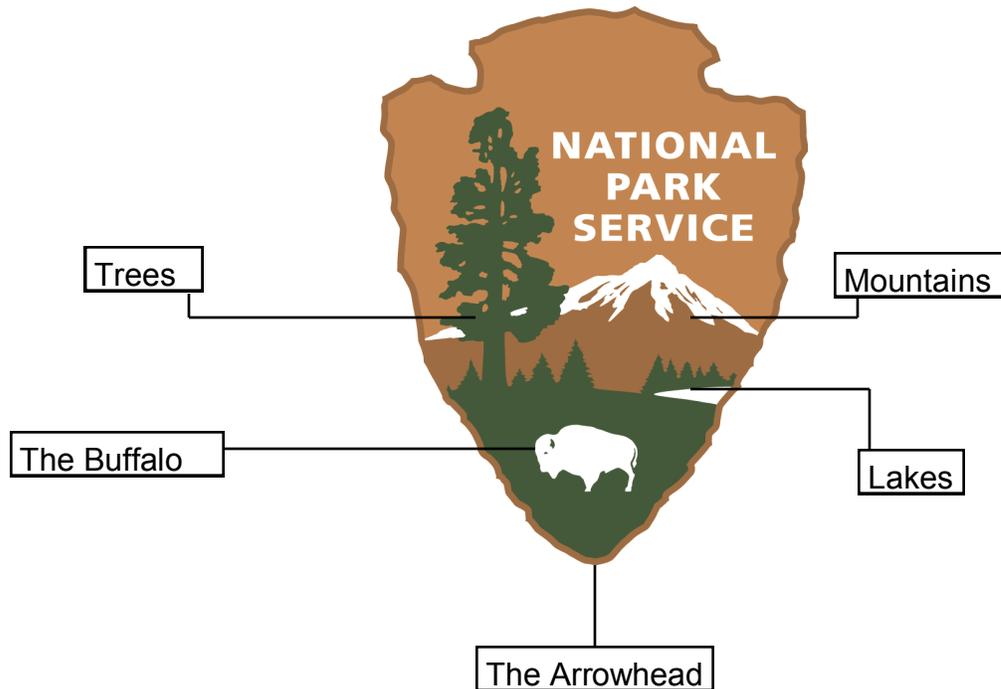
Ask the Ranger these questions.



1. What is your name?

2. What does a Park Ranger do?

3. There is a picture of the brown patch that Rangers wear below. Each line points to a different part of the patch. Write down what each part symbolizes.



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