

# Coldwater River Nature Trail System

America's public lands provide important opportunities for citizens to enjoy the outdoors and learn about their natural surroundings. Although most citizens appreciate and wisely use their public lands, too many resources have been littered, vandalized, looted, burned, or misused.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is actively seeking your assistance by reporting abuse of public lands and resources.

If you have observed such abuse, you may contact a ranger or call Arkabutla Lake Field Office, 562-6261, Monday - Friday, 7:00 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.



# Coldwater Nature Trail System

## Welcome to Arkabutla Lake and the Coldwater Nature trail System

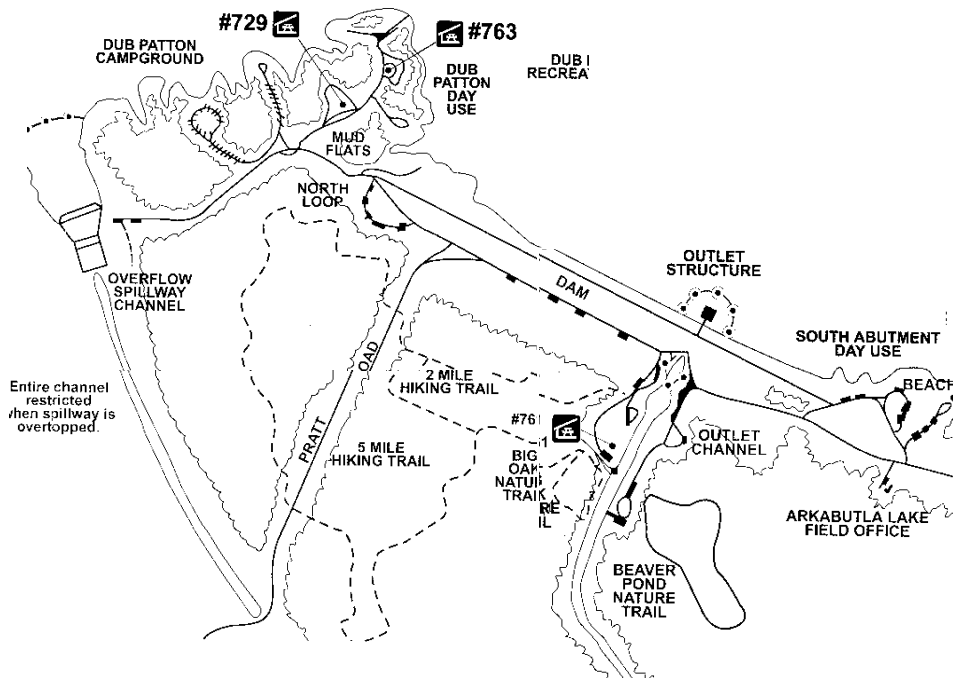
### Big Oak Nature Trail

This is a very special place, a river bottom area leading into a quiet bottomland forest. Many animals make this area their home, but they are easily frightened, so take your time, make many stops, look around, listen carefully, and your chances of seeing animals will increase. Keep your eyes peeled and record all animals and birds seen in the back of this book.

### Nature Trail

To explore the nature trail, use this booklet to guide you along the first loop which is 1/3 mile long and marked with a **Green Diamond**. To test your knowledge of the type of trees and vegetation that grow along the trail, stop at the numbered posts and attempt to identify the trees closest to the post. For the answer, **Match** the **Numbers** in the **Booklet** to those on the **Post**.

Our aim at Arkabutla Lake is to keep this area as pristine as possible for you and generations to come. You can help us in this very important task by bringing all litter you take into the area back out with you. Trash receptacles are placed at the end of the trail for your convenience. Remember this is your land, if we take care of it, future generations will be able to enjoy what you have helped protect today.



At the 2.5 mile trail marker, you will arrive at the site of the original construction headquarters building. This building was constructed in early 1940 and was the focal point for all construction activities during the building of Arkabutla Dam. The building was torn down shortly after the dam was completed in 1943. A new brick building was constructed at the South Abutment Area, which would act as both home and office for the newly appointed lake manager. At the present time, this building houses the lake field office. The safe from the old headquarters building, because of its size and weight, was left in place and is located within a few feet of its original position within the building. The safe was used to secure the payroll for the workers constructing the dam. The lab section is also in its original position, and was used to do soil and other material testing. This raised concrete structure is located forty feet southwest of the safe. A Wildlife Observation Platform has been constructed on the raised concrete portion of the old lab site. From this covered platform you can rest and enjoy the sights and sounds of the forest.

We ask that you leave the area undisturbed, so those that follow will be able to enjoy this important site also. Points of interest on the trail network are located at the following trail distance markers:

- .40 Rest area and fish/wildlife observation site
- .85 Rest area and beaver observation island
- 1.2 120 year old cypress tree
- 2.5 Original Construction headquarters bldg.  
Site and wildlife observation platform
- 3.0 Wildlife food plot
- 4.0 Beaver pond and rest area

# 1

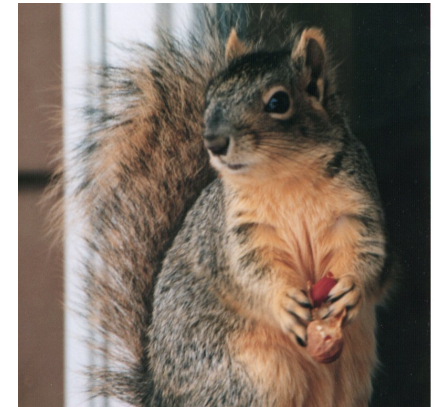
## Riverbottom Forest

Riverbottom forests cover much of the southern United States, generally in the low lying areas with moderate to good soil drainage. They are composed chiefly of various oaks, hickories, beech, sweet gum, and birch, which prefer to grow just beside the water. Most of these species make excellent growth in this type of environment and are used for lumber throughout the U.S. The forest in this area will not be cut but will continue to house and feed the many wild animals and birds which live here. Some of the more common ones you may see on your walk are raccoons, grey squirrels, deer, woodpeckers, and fox squirrels. Look carefully as you walk and you may see a deer track or two.

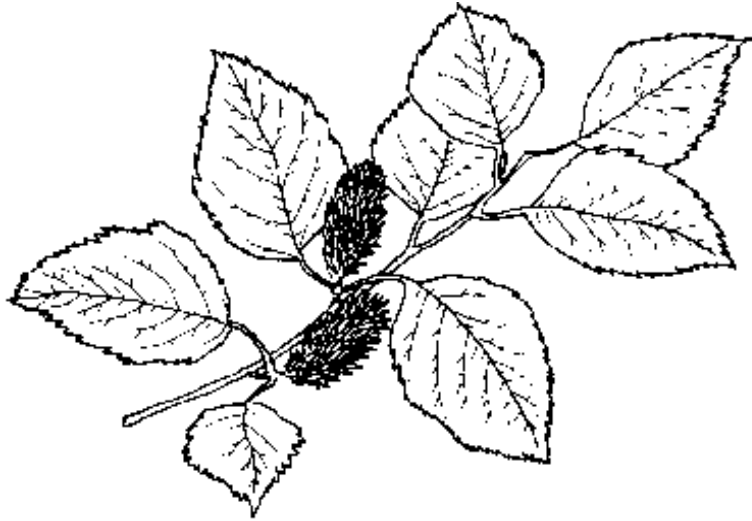
### Fox Squirrels

**Size:** Head and body, 17 7/8-27 1/2" (4504-69.8 cm); tail, 7 7/8-13" (20-33 cm); weight, 17 5/8-37 1/8 oz. (504-1,062 g)

**Habitat:** hardwood forests, borders of cypress swamps, thickets, and urban areas. Prefers large trees.



# 19

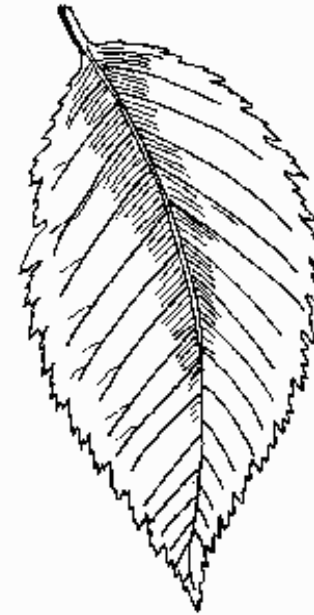


[Http://www.treelink.org/whattree/index.htm](http://www.treelink.org/whattree/index.htm)

## **River Birch**

The thin, papery, scaly bark on the trunk of this tree immediately identifies it as a Birch. This species grows much farther south than any of its northern relatives, along slow moving, silt-laden rivers and streams. The seeds ripen in May and June when water levels are high and fall into the water to ride the current to some muddy shore where they will germinate. Can you think of any other plants whose seeds are spread by water? How are the seeds adapted for their journey?

# 3

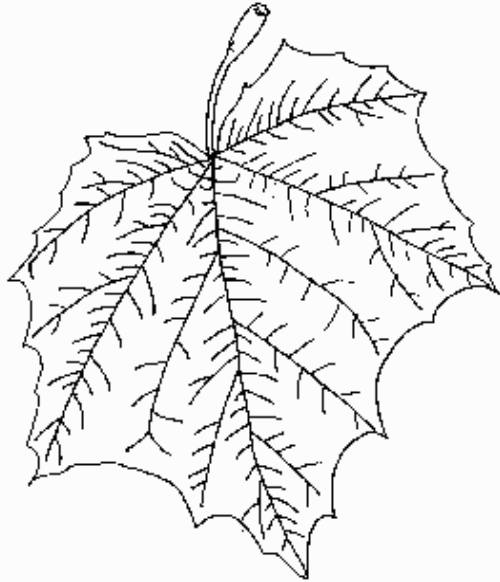


[Http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/forestry/commortr.com](http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/forestry/commortr.com)

## **Slippery Elm**

Slippery Elm was well known to the early pioneer woodsmen for its slippery inner bark. They chewed this bark to quench their thirst and steeped it in water to produce a common remedy for sore throats and fever. Even today, Slippery Elm is still used for this purpose. The powdered bark was recommended for poultices. The upper surface of the leaves of this tree feels like sandpaper. Slippery Elm is susceptible to the Dutch Elm disease, which is rapidly killing the beautiful American Elms in many cities and towns.

# 18

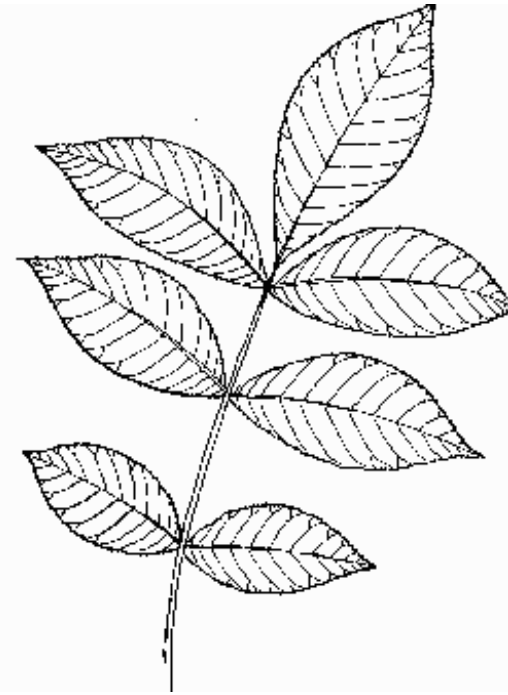


[Http://www.dcnr.state.paus/forestry/commotr/comm](http://www.dcnr.state.paus/forestry/commotr/comm)

## **Sycamore**

A tree often seen along river and lakes is the sycamore. The early settlers often sought out the land with these trees growing on it because they indicated a place of rich soil. The wood is very difficult to split and, as a result, is found even today in butcher shops as chopping blocks. As you look up into the tree you can see the flaky, dark bark peeling off to expose newer, creamy white bark. This and the strange, brown, ball-shaped fruit make it an easy tree to identify. The seed balls are shed irregularly throughout the fall, winter, and early spring. Although very few animals eat this fruit, the tree itself is used as a nest or dens of owls, hawks, birds, and squirrels.

# 5



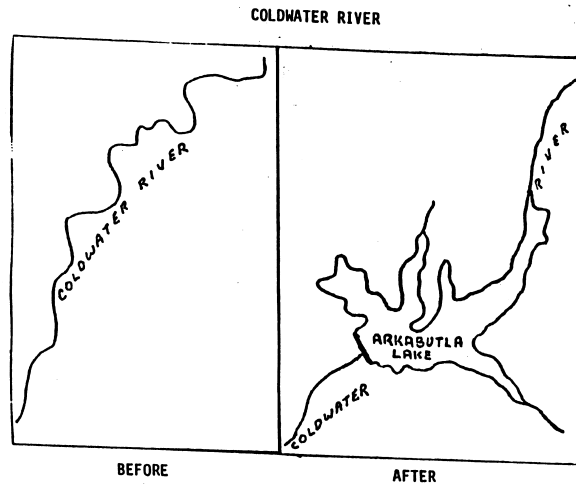
[Http://www.dcnr.state.paus/forestry/commotr/com](http://www.dcnr.state.paus/forestry/commotr/com)

## **Shellbark Hickory**

This tree would be hard to mistake for any other. Do you see why it is called the shellbark hickory? The hickory family includes the pecan trees, which are planted for their fine, tasty nuts. The nuts of the "true" hickories are equally tasty but much more difficult to extract from their shells.

# 16

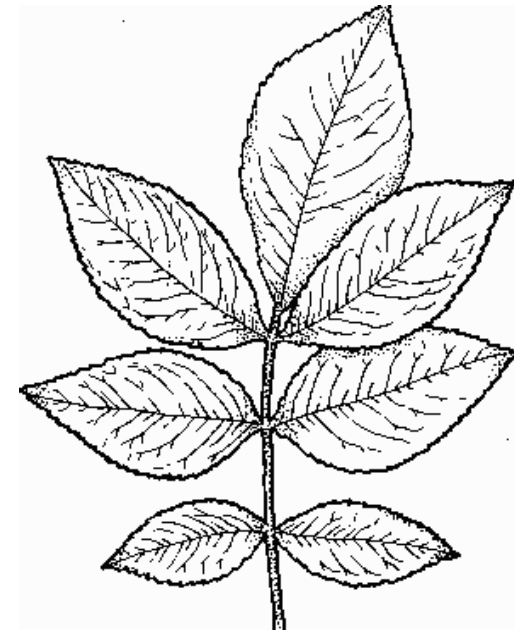
## Coldwater River



Before Arkabutla Dam was built, the Coldwater River flooded the area you are now on, every year. This area was part of the river's flood plain. When a river overflows its banks onto its floodplain, the native floodplain forest is seldom damaged because its species are adapted to periodic flooding. When man, however, moves his homes, factories, and farms onto the floodplain, a flooding river can cause a great deal of damage. This was the case before Arkabutla Dam was built. This area no longer floods.

Arkabutla Dam is an earth filled dam, 482 feet wide at the base, 67 feet high and 11,500 feet long (that's over 2 miles). It stores 5,100 acres of water (one acre - foot equals one acre of water one foot deep) at conservation pool and when filled, stores 31,500 acres of water, and has 255 miles of shoreline.

# 7

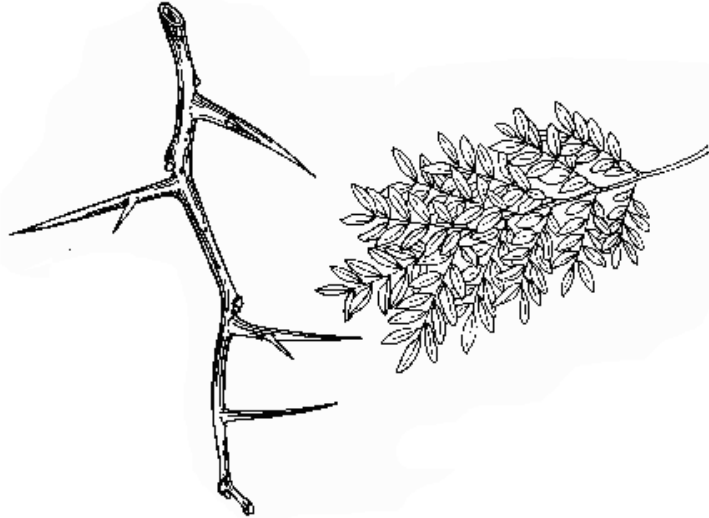


[Http://www.dcnr.state.paus/forestry/commotr/com](http://www.dcnr.state.paus/forestry/commotr/com)

## Mockernut Hickory

The compound leaves of this hickory are fragrant when crushed. The kernel is sweet and not hard to extract from the tough nut. The various species of hickory have always found many uses. Their wood and nuts were used by both Indians and early settlers. The Indians crushed the nuts and made "hickory milk", which they used in cooking. The pioneers used the wood for smoking hams, making boxes, furniture, and even gun ramrods. President Andrew Jackson earned the title "OLD HICKORY" from his men for being "as tough as hickory wood".

# 14

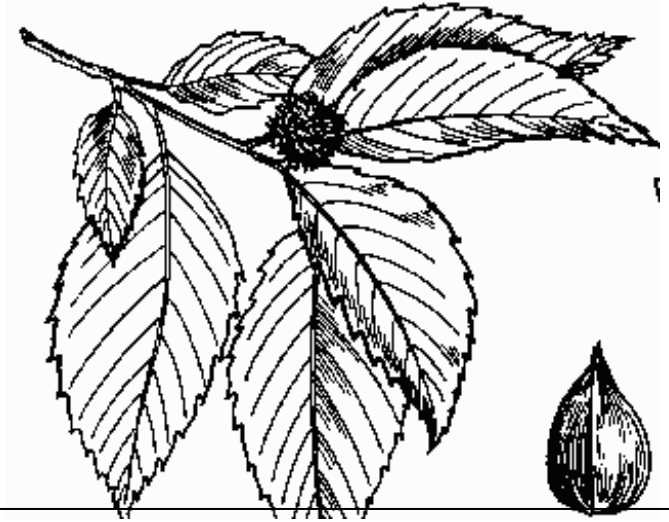


[Http://www.dcnr.state.paus/forestry/commotr/comm](http://www.dcnr.state.paus/forestry/commotr/comm)

## **Honeylocust**

The large, forked thorns on the trunk of the honey-locust trees are an excellent identification feature. This tree owes its name to the sweet, edible pulp in its strap-shaped pods. This pulp furnishes food for cattle, deer, rabbits, foxes, squirrels, and other animals. During America's early days, frontier children eagerly gathered them for their own taste treats. A thornless variety of the honeylocust is widely planted as an ornamental tree.

# 9



[Http://www.dcnr.state.paus/forestry/commotr/comm](http://www.dcnr.state.paus/forestry/commotr/comm)

## **American Beech**

The American Beech is one of our most beautiful and distinctive trees. Its smooth light gray bark makes the tree stand out even at a distance. The tree was named by the early settlers after the European Beech which has a long history of use. The wood has been used for various tools and other purposes and the nuts are used for fattening hogs, and as a source of vegetable oil. The name "beech" has a very ancient origin. The early writings of the Germanic people were inscribed on tablets of beech. As the word for beech became incorporated into old English, our word "book" evolved from it.

# 12



[Http://www.hammocd.ifas.ufl.edu/image/fr/fr004f7.gif](http://www.hammocd.ifas.ufl.edu/image/fr/fr004f7.gif)

## **Swamp Chestnut Oak**

This tree is commonly called "cow oak" because cows like its acorns. Sometimes it is also called "basket oak". The quality of the wood is second only to that of the best White Oaks and for this reason, the tree has suffered excessive cutting in many areas. Oak trees are among our most important wildlife food species. Their acorns furnish staple food for many animals and deer. Many small animals nest in old oak trees.

# 10



[Http://www.treelink.org/whattree/index.htm](http://www.treelink.org/whattree/index.htm)

## **Southern Red Oak**

The oaks are generally divided into two large groups, the red oak and the white oak groups. The red group, of which this tree is a member, has tiny bristles on the tips of the leaf lobes and the white group has leaves that are smooth. Look around you as you walk the trail. Can you tell from which group the leaves come?



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## **Other Recreational Opportunities**

The Corps of Engineers has developed many other modern facilities.

### **Concrete Boat Launching Ramps**

Eight (8) Launching ramps that allow easy access to the lake for boating, skiing, or fishing. They are located at: Outlet Channel, Dub Patton Recreational Area, Bayou Point, Kelly's Crossing, Pleasant Hill, Highway 51, Hernando Point and Coldwater Point.

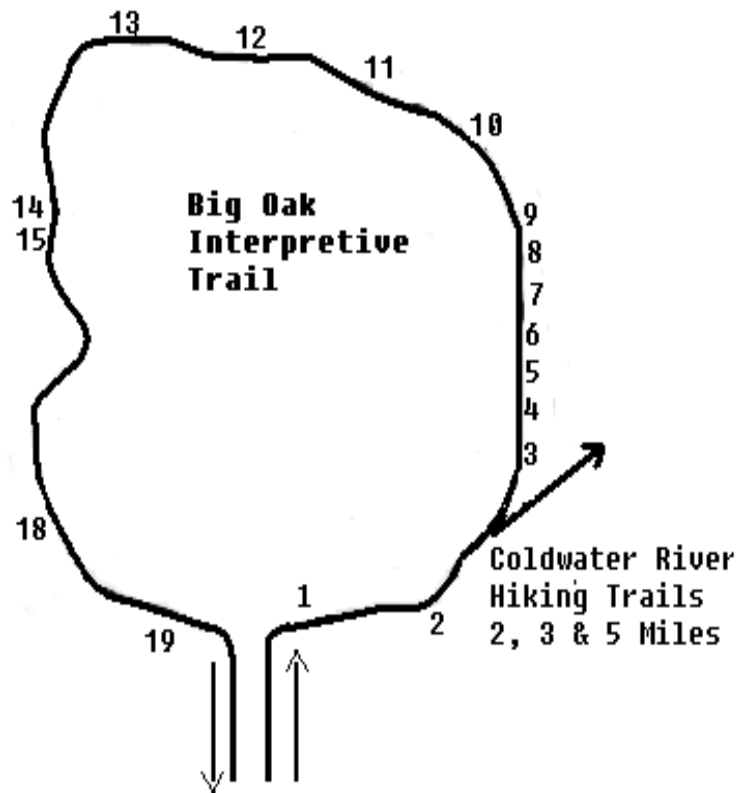
### **Swimming and Sunbathing**

Three (3) spacious, developed beaches are for use at South Abutment, Pleasant Hill, and Hernando Point.

### **Camping**

Three (3) Class A campgrounds are in operation with hot showers, electricity, paved pads, and dump stations. They are located at: Dub Patton Recreational Area, South Abutment, and Hernando Point. Primitive camping is allowed in many of the remaining recreational areas.

# Team Up to Clean Up!



## Coldwater River Hiking Trail

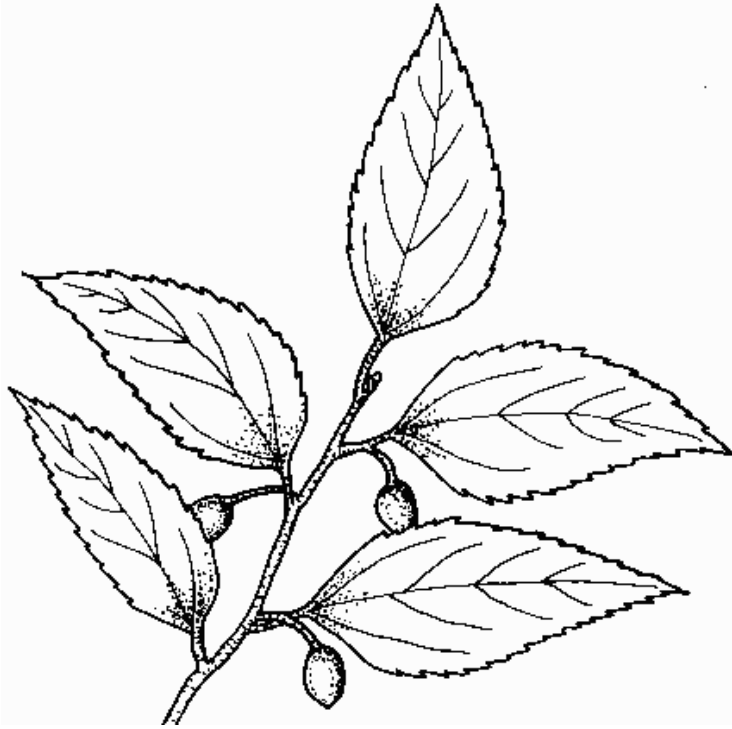
The 5 mile trail system will take you back into the past as you travel along streams that wanders through hardwood trees that are, in some instances, over 125 years old and stand like guardians over the forest floor sheltering a multitude of animal life. Whitetail deer browse and doe deer deliver their young here in early spring. If you encounter a young fawn, please do not disturb or try to handle it in any way. The baby is not abandoned. The mother is close by even though you may not be able to see her.

Bobcat, fox, squirrel, turkey, and an occasional armadillo call this their home. Raccoon forage along the stream shoreline for small crawfish and frogs. Crawfish are the favorite food of this masked, mischievous animal. The stream is also home to many fish, such as bluegill, sunfish, gar, and bass. On a sunny day, these fish can be seen swimming just under the surface. Logs that have fallen across the stream are a favorite perch for turtles and frogs to bask in sunlight. Woodducks can be seen near nesting boxes located at ponds which have been formed by nature's best engineers, the beaver. A quiet approach could result in observing one or more of these busy animals at work. Many species of birds inhabit the hardwood forest canopy. Stop and quietly listen to a beautiful serenade by nature's feathered songsters.

The trail will also take you into an area of the present. As you cross Pratt Road you will enter into a predominately pine forest. Rowcrops and pasture land covered most of this area in the 1930s. After the dam was completed in 1942, the area was planted in loblolly pine trees.

Pine stands, like other crops, must be managed. As you look out across the forest floor in this area, you will see stumps, tree tops, tree limbs, and skid marks. This residue was left by the loggers who performed a process called thinning. During this process, inferior trees and stands which have trees too close together are removed and sold for pulp, (paper products). The remaining trees will grow and reach maturity in a shorter period of time.

# 2



[Http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/forestry/commotr/omm](http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/forestry/commotr/omm)

## **Hackberry**

The warty, gray bark of the Hackberry is an excellent identification feature. The fruit of this tree is eaten by many birds, and in the process many of the seeds are scattered far from the tree. Have you ever tasted a Hackberry fruit? Hackberries often become infected with a virus, which causes them to sprout clusters of small twigs along their branches. These "witch brooms", as they are called, are another way in which you can recognize a Hackberry.

## **Coldwater River Hiking Trail**

### **Hiking Trail**

If you decide on a longer walk, turn right on the trail between stops 2 and 3.

The entire 5 MILE TRAIL can be hiked on foot or toured on off road bicycles. The trail has THREE LOOPS, which measure TWO, THREE and FIVE miles respectively. The trail system has two marked entrances. The FIRST is located in the north Outlet Channel Area at the east side of the foot bridge which spans Elbow Creek. The SECOND entrance is located in the Dub Patton Day Use Area 75 yd. northwest of the water treatment plant. Both entrances have parking and trail maps.

The trail is constructed so anyone entering the trail network at the North Outlet entrance, may return to the starting point at the ONE-AND-A-HALF-MILE point. The trail should appeal to all levels of hiking and biking expertise. Hikers are reminded that this trail system is located in a lowland forest area. During the fall and winter seasons there will be wet and muddy spots along the trail. A good pair of hiking boots is recommended. The TWO-MILE loop, which is marked with a WHITE diamond on the trail markers, is mostly level with only small inclines.

The THREE-MILE loop, marked with a YELLOW diamond and the remainder of the FIVE-MILE trail, marked with an ORANGE diamond has more bumps, longer inclines with varying levels of steepness, sharp turns and downhill, making this part of the trail a fun ride for the more advanced cyclist.

Trail distance is indicated with a BROWN diamond. The mileage is marked in white numbers.

# 4



[Http://www.treelink.org/whattree/index.htm](http://www.treelink.org/whattree/index.htm)

## Water Oak

This species of oak is a favorite ornamental in many southern cities due to its fast growth and sturdiness. If you can find any of the small acorns, they will be almost black. They are usually hard to find because squirrels, bluejays, and other birds carry them away as soon as they become ripe.

## White-Tailed Deer

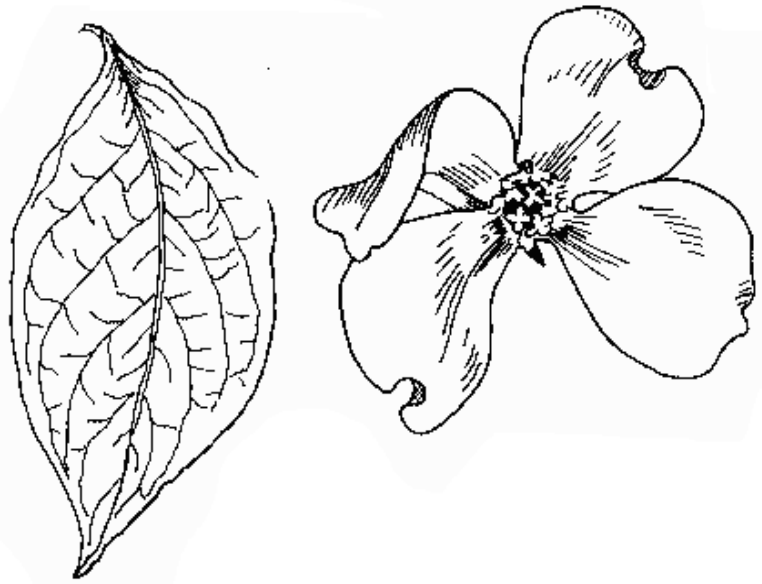


**Size:** length, to 6 ft. (1.8m); shoulder height, to 3 3/4 ft.(1.1m); male weight, 75-400lbs. (34-181.4 kg); female weight, 50-250lbs. (22.7-113.4 kg)

**Habitat:** brushy, low mixed woodlands, and forest edges.

The White-tailed deer is the most popular big game animal in the United States. The average weight of a mature buck ranges from 100-200 lbs., depending on local food conditions. A mature doe usually weighs between 90-100 lbs. Browse, which is deer food, consists of tender twigs, new leaves, and buds. However, they also forage seasonally on nuts, fruits, grasses, and aquatic plants. They can jump an 8-foot fence and cover a horizontal distance of 30 feet in one leap. They can run at speeds of up to 45 mph. Contrary to popular belief, the size and number of points on a buck's antlers depends on the quality of food the animals eat and does not indicate age.

# 6



[Http://www.dcnr.state.paus/forestry/commtr/comm](http://www.dcnr.state.paus/forestry/commtr/comm)

## **Flowering Dogwood**

Almost everyone can recognize the Dogwood tree in the spring. Its white blossoms are one of the first signs of spring. This is one of the most widely planted ornamental trees. In the forest, deer nibble on the tender leaves and twigs, while squirrels and song birds eat the red berries in the fall. Do you think you could recognize the Dogwood in the winter by its bark? There is a legend associated with the Dogwood tree....maybe your local library will help with this.

# 17



[Http://www.dcnr.state.paus/forestry/commtr/comm](http://www.dcnr.state.paus/forestry/commtr/comm)

## **Boxelder**

From its leaves, you might think Boxelder is some sort of ash tree, but a close look at its paired fruits in the spring will prove it to be in the maple family. Sometimes called the ash-leaved maple because of its resemblance to an ash, the Boxelder is one of the few maples with compound leaves.

Boxelder grows very quickly and has few insect enemies or diseases, so if you have a spot you want to shade in a hurry, this is a good choice. And should you develop a yen for homemade syrup, you can always tap the tree in the spring, just like a sugar maple.

# 8



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## **American Hornbeam**

The American Hornbeam is a lovely little tree, usually regarded as a “weed tree” because its small size and poor form make it unprofitable to harvest commercially. It is very tolerant to shade and commonly occurs as a member of the understory in hardwood forests. Its wood is hard, tough, heavy, and difficult to dry. Its most popular use is in making handles for various tools such as hammers, hoes, etc. It is a member of the Beech family and the blue-gray bark on its muscular appearing trunk resembles that of the Beech. The small nutlets are sometimes eaten by birds and squirrels.

# 15



[Http://www.dcnr.state.paus/forestry/commotr/comm](http://www.dcnr.state.paus/forestry/commotr/comm)

## **Red Maple**

Red Maple is the most widespread of our eastern maples. Its common name is very appropriate, since there is something red about it throughout the year. The leaf stalks are red and in the fall the leaves turn beautiful shades of scarlet and crimson, making this a popular ornamental tree. The winter buds are red, and in the spring they give way to a riot of small red flowers and winged fruits. Our pioneer ancestors made ink and dye from the bark of this tree. Red maple wood is used for flooring and small woodenware articles. It can be tapped for sugar, too.

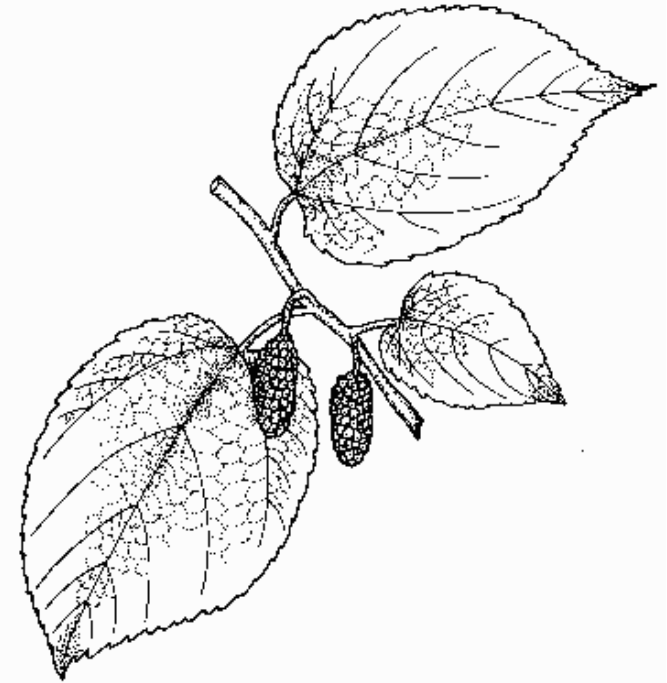
# 13



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## **Touch-Me-Not**

There are many common names for this fragile orange and yellow flower. This delicate inhabitant of shaded stream banks and riverbottoms earned its common name of touch-me-not from its seed capsules which, when ripe, explode at the slightest touch, hurling the seeds in all directions. It is believed that rubbing with the leaves will prevent and cure poison ivy. These plants are in abundance around the trail...can you find them?



[Http://www.dcnr.state.paus/forestry/commotr/comm](http://www.dcnr.state.paus/forestry/commotr/comm)

## **Red Mulberry**

Several species of Mulberry are cultivated in different parts of the world for their delicious fruit, and in the Orient, Mulberry leaves are used to feed silkworms. The fruit of the Red Mulberry is one of the best tasting of our wild fruits. It is a favorite of many birds and they will usually strip a tree clean before the mulberries are completely ripe. The leaves of the Mulberry tree come in three shapes...can you spot them?

# Opossums



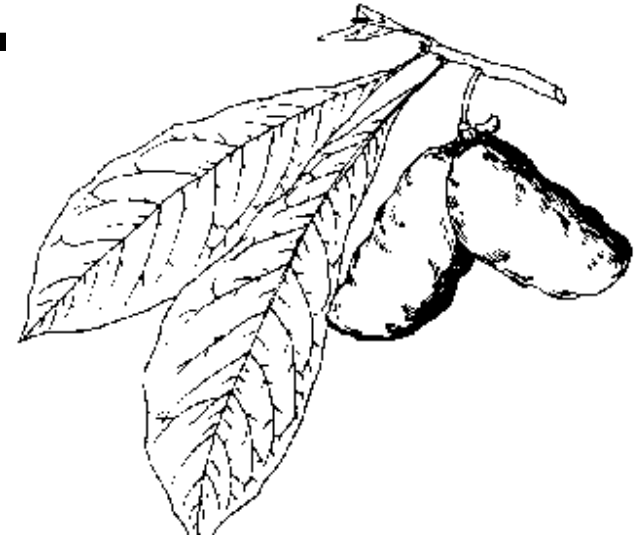
**Size:** head and body, 15-20 in. (38.1-50.8 cm); tail, 9-13 in. (22.9-33 cm); weight, 6-12lbs. (2.7-5.4 kg.)

**Habitat:** open woods, farming areas, forest edges, and brushy wastelands.

Opossums spend their days curled up in a hollow stump or log and awaken at night to hunt for food. They will eat almost anything but they are especially fond of persimmons and stories often have opossum hunts ending at the foot of one of these trees. When opossums are born; they are not completely developed, blind and so tiny that 20 of them will fit into a teaspoon. Right after birth, they crawl into their mother's pouch where they remain until they complete their development. When frightened, opossums will bare their teeth or play dead. Most species of the opossum family live in the tropics where they feed on fruit.

[Http://hammock.ifas.ufl.edu/images/uw/u026p1.ipg](http://hammock.ifas.ufl.edu/images/uw/u026p1.ipg)

# 11



[Http://www.treelink.org/whattree/index.htm](http://www.treelink.org/whattree/index.htm)

## Pawpaw

With its large drooping leaves, the small pawpaw tree looks like an escapee from the tropical jungle. Pawpaws once formed large thickets throughout the Mississippi Valley and was one of the food plants which helped sustain DeSoto's expedition in 1541. The pawpaw's banana-flavored fruit ripens in late fall and can be made into bread, pudding, jelly or pies.