



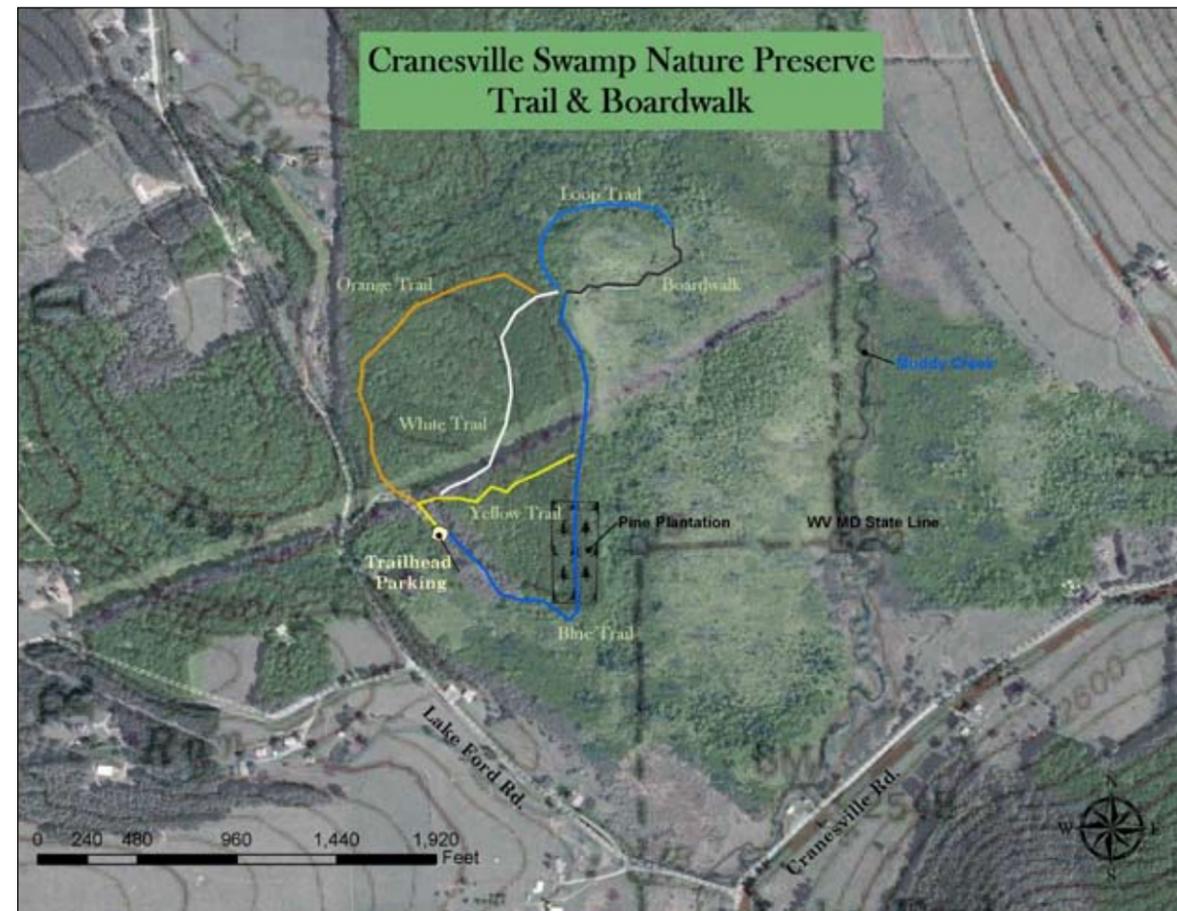
visiting the preserve

If you want to see, hear and smell the swamp's plant and animal life—take a hike! There are five trails to choose from, all less than 2 miles long. Hiking boots are recommended, as some trails will be muddy.

The Cranesville Swamp Preserve is open year-round during daylight hours for nature walks and birding in designated areas. While we encourage visitors to make the most of their visit, camping, pets, bicycling, and operating motorized vehicles within the preserve are strictly prohibited.

One of the highlights of the preserve is the 1,500-foot boardwalk, which allows for easy exploration over the wettest parts of the bog. Take your time and get a close-up look at the sphagnum moss, sundew and tamarack. In the skies overhead you may see a raven, the largest member of the crow family in North America.

Come prepared with sun protection, especially in the summer months, and wear footwear that is suitable for uneven, muddy surfaces. Bring insect repellent and take precaution against chiggers, mosquitoes, poison ivy, and ticks—especially deer ticks—that can carry lyme disease. To find out more about lyme disease, visit www.lymedisease.org or www.aldf.com, or contact the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at 1-800-311-3435.



Directions to Cranesville Swamp Kiosk and Boardwalk

From Maryland/DC – Coming from the DC area, take I-270 north to Frederick, then I-70 west to Hancock, and then I-68 west.

On I-68, take Exit 4, MD-42/Friendsville (only 4 miles from the WV line). At the exit, take a left at the first stop sign (Maple) and a right at the second stop sign (Friendsville Rd/42 North). Continue 1.5 miles on 42 North. Take a left onto Blooming Rose Road (there are two entrances for Blooming Rose, either one is fine), crossing back over I-68. Continue 3 miles on Blooming Rose Road. Take a left onto White Rock Road, continue 4 miles. At a Y-intersection, veer to the right to get onto Cranesville Road. Continue on Cranesville Road for 5 miles, to the corner of Muddy Creek and Cranesville Road; look for a little red house on the right; this is where the information kiosk is.

Note: the road on your right immediately before Muddy Creek is Lake Ford Road. This is the Road that leads to the boardwalk. If you already have a trail map, you can proceed directly to the boardwalk by taking a right on Lake Ford Road, for 0.2 mile, then taking a right at the fork. Proceed another 0.2 miles, and look for preserve signs on your right.

From West Virginia – From Morgantown, W.VA. (2 hours) Take I-68 into Maryland. From here, follow the directions in the opposite column, starting with the second paragraph.



the nature conservancy

The Nature Conservancy is an international, non-profit conservation organization formed in 1951 to preserve the plants, animals, and natural communities that represent the diversity of life on Earth by protecting the lands and waters they need to survive. If you are interested in volunteering for The Nature Conservancy or becoming a member, please visit our web site at nature.org/marylanddc and nature.org/westvirginia.



The Nature Conservancy in Maryland/DC

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Bethesda, MD 20814
(301) 897-8570
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The Nature Conservancy in West Virginia

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cranesville swamp



Protecting nature. Preserving life.



cranesville swamp

Given Cranesville Swamp's lush forest and wetland, it's not surprising that it is home to an exceptional variety of animals. In total, more than 50 rare plants and animals live at Cranesville.



Formed 15,000 years ago during the last Ice Age, Cranesville Swamp sits along the border of Maryland and West Virginia near the western edge of the Appalachian Mountains. Home to a bog that contains peat more than three feet deep, plants that eat insects, a conifer that sheds its needles in fall, and an owl that fits in the palm of a hand, Cranesville Swamp is an unusual refuge for northern species below the Mason-Dixon Line. In 1960, The Nature Conservancy first began to protect Cranesville Swamp with land donated from Dr. and Mrs. Charles Baer. Since then, the preserve has grown several thousand acres through land purchases and generous donations from individuals.

Cranesville Swamp provides a range of habitats for seasonal and year-round birds. In particular, the conifer swamp forest is an important area for migratory songbirds, like the alder flycatcher and Blackburnian warbler. The saw-whet owl, a small owl with a strange, tooting call, also nests in stands of red spruce and hemlock in the conifer swamp forest. All told, 100 species of birds can be found at Cranesville, including eight that are state-rare.



frost pocket

At Cranesville Swamp the elements of wind, water, mountains, and temperature have created a landscape that is both beautiful and rare. In combination, these climactic elements produce a local natural occurrence known as a "frost pocket," a low area that collects moisture and cooler temperatures. As weather travels west-to-east across the North American continent, the hills surrounding Cranesville Swamp channel precipitation and chilled air into the valley, consistently making Cranesville one of the coolest and soggiest spots in Maryland and West Virginia.

for the love of peat

The permanent cool, wet setting of Cranesville Swamp is ripe for the formation of peat. Peat is made of compacted sphagnum moss, which over thousands of years grows into thick, damp, mats of vegetation. The breakdown of sphagnum moss creates an acidic, nutrient poor environment for other plants, called a bog. While few trees can grow in the bog, plants that can tolerate the conditions—like cranberry, sedge and sundew (a carnivorous plant)—thrive in these open areas.



cold, wet blanket

Once moist, cool air moves into Cranesville Swamp, vegetation acts to keep it there. Conifer forests of red spruce, hemlock and other evergreens form an insulating layer that filters out warming sunlight and drying winds from the forest bottom. In addition, the peat itself can have a chilling effect—studies at Cranesville have shown the peat to be 10 degrees cooler a foot below the surface.



challenges

The primary threat to the unique setting of Cranesville Swamp is a warming of the local climate, causing a loss of habitat and species. Historic logging, foreign insects and an overpopulation of deer have depleted the forests of Cranesville, allowing sun and wind to dry and warm the ground. The Nature Conservancy is working to prevent a loss of species at Cranesville Swamp by restoring forests, managing wildlife and promoting compatible land management in the valley.