Matthews State Forest

Forest History

The 566 acres that now comprise the Matthews State Forest was originally settled by the Nuckolls family in the late 1700s. The Nuckolls family cemetery sits on a ridge overlooking the homestead. Judge Jack Matthews purchased the property from a Nuckolls heir in 1946. The Judge enjoyed all types of wildlife, gardening, what he called "old-time apples" and planting trees of any kind. One of his passions was for the American chestnut, and he had a strong desire to see its return. He could remember the chestnut before it was devastated by the blight and how important it had been ecologically, economically and socially to the region. When Judge Matthews conveyed his land to the VDOF, he also conveyed his vision to create a state forest "to provide for the scientific, educational and research needs for Southwest Virginia's children and the public, and to continue the work to bring back indigenous species, such as the American chestnut." Parcels that make up the Matthews State Forest were deeded to the Department of Forestry in 1993, 1994 and 2006.

Forest Management

The Matthews State Forest is managed for multiple uses. Forest land is managed for sustainable timber production, with an overall goal to continually improve the forest. Other management goals include: protecting and improving water quality; protecting and developing wildlife habitat, and promoting native biological diversity. All of these goals can be attained through scientifically-based and ecologically-sound forest management.

The Matthews lies within the native range of eastern white pine. This species, along with mixed upland hardwoods, make up the two dominate forest types found on the state forest. White pine thrives here, achieving rapid growth, large size and phenomenal volumes per acre. An American chestnut breeding orchard has been established and to assist in the reintroduction of this indigenous species to our forests... also a part of Judge Matthews' vision.

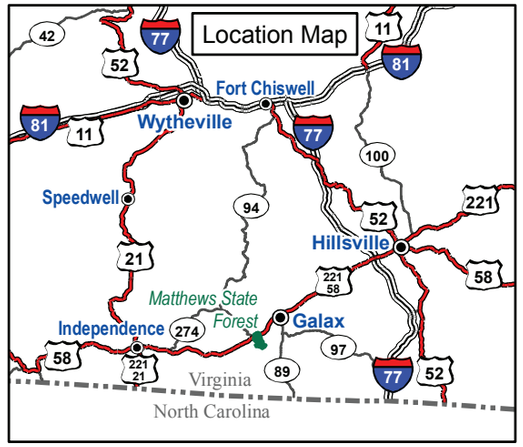
The MSF is used as an educational center to teach children about our natural resources, and to conduct programs to demonstrate sound forest management practices to landowners, loggers and industry professionals.

About Your State Forests

The Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOF) manages 19 State Forests and other state lands, totaling 57,685 acres. Virginia's State Forests are managed for multiple uses: water quality, recreation, forest products, wildlife and scenic beauty. The primary management goals of individual State Forests may vary, usually depending on the wishes of the donor of the land.

The State Forests of Virginia are self-supporting and receive no taxpayer funds for operation. Operating funds are generated from the sale of forest products. In addition, up to 25 percent of the revenue received from the sale of forest products is returned to the counties in which the forests are located. You can support educational programs on your State Forests by donating a portion of your state tax refund to Virginia's State Forests Fund.

Location



More Information

To learn more about what your state forests have to offer and to get directions to any state forest, visit **www.dof.virginia.gov**.

Contact Information

State Forest Main Office:

Phone: (804) 492-4121 ; FAX: (804) 492-9213
751 Oak Hill Road, Cumberland, VA 23040-2511

Matthews State Forest Office:

Phone: (276) 236-2322 ; FAX: (276) 236-4114
106 Matthews Lane, Galax, VA 24333

Virginia Department of Forestry
Headquarters
900 Natural Resources Drive, Suite 800
Charlottesville, Virginia 22903
www.dof.virginia.gov
Phone: (434) 977-6555
Fax: (434) 296-2369

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Matthews State Forest

~ 566 Acres ~
Grayson County

Virginia Department of Forestry
www.dof.virginia.gov

Forest Recreation

The Matthews State Forest is open during daylight hours for hiking, biking, wildlife watching, horseback riding and hunting. There are nearly eight miles of challenging mountain bike trails that are open to hiking as well as biking. Horseback riding is limited to roads and open fields. Hunting on the Matthews State Forest is archery only.

A State Forest Use Permit is required for hunting, trapping, fishing, bike riding and horse riding on Virginia State Forests. Permits are required for individuals age 16 and older, and can be purchased online for $15.00 at http://secure01.virginiainteractive.org/horf/ or where hunting licenses are sold.

Education

One of Judge Matthews' wishes for his property was that it be used as an educational site to teach people about our natural resources. Educational programs are available to any group, and can include a wide variety of natural resources related topics. Contact the Matthews State Forest office for more information.

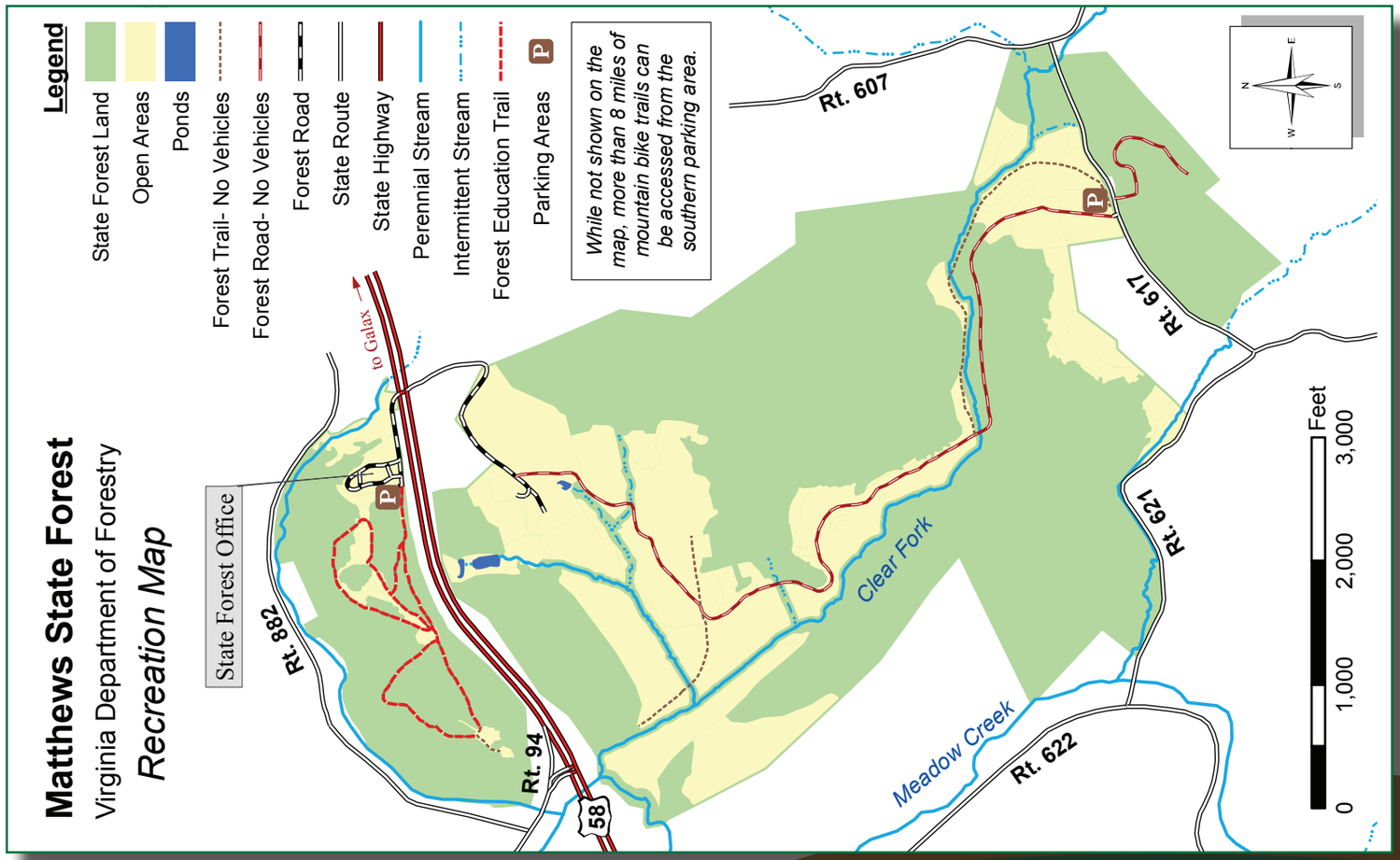
Matthews State Forest Features:
Trails: 1.3 miles
Vehicle Roads: 0 miles
Mountain Bike Trails: 8 miles
Gated Vehicle Trails: 4.5 miles
Ponds/Lakes: 2
Hunting: Yes, archery only Fishing: No
Picnic Shelter: 0 Restrooms: No

State Forest Regulations

- Hunting and trapping with State Forest Use Permit in accordance with state hunting regulations.
- Biking and horse riding in designated areas only with State Forest Use Permit.
- State Forest Use Permits required only for anyone age 16 and older.
- No removal of any tree, plant or mineral.
- Remove all trash.
- No camping, ATVs or public display of alcohol.
- No fireworks, campfires or open air fires of any type.
- Firearms are prohibited except for hunting purposes.
- Gasoline motorized boats are not permitted.
- Vehicular traffic on established roads only; not permitted on gated roads.

For a complete listing of State Forest Regulations, go to www.dof.virginia.gov.

Hunters map available at www.dof.virginia.gov.



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