



# TREE TRUNK

## Matthews State Forest



This box contains lesson plans and supplies for field study on the Matthews State Forest. Please review the lessons you intend to use online before your trip, as some activities may require students to bring extra clipboards or notebooks. Teachers may arrange to borrow the trunk by contacting the Va. Dept. of Forestry office at 276-236-2322, or by emailing [stateforest@dof.virginia.gov](mailto:stateforest@dof.virginia.gov) with "Matthews" in the subject line.

### General Forest Information

The 566 acres that now comprise the Matthews State Forest was originally settled by the Nuckolls family in the late 1700s. Judge Jack Matthews purchased the property 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. Parcels that make up the Matthews State Forest were deeded to the Department of Forestry in 1993, 1994 and 2006. Judge Matthews' vision was 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."

The Matthews State Forest is managed for multiple uses: sustainable timber production that continually improves the forest; protecting and improving water quality; protecting and developing wildlife habitat; and promoting native biological diversity. Dominant forest types here are eastern white pine and mixed upland hardwoods. Two American chestnut breeding orchards have been established to assist in the reintroduction of this indigenous species. The Matthews State Forest 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.

The State Forests of Virginia are self-supporting and receive no taxpayer funds for operations. Operating funds are generated from the sale of forest products, demonstrating the value of good forestry practices. Twenty-five percent of the revenue from the sale of forest products on the Matthews State Forest is returned to Grayson County.

Trails on the forest include a 1.3 mile interpreted trail accessible from the forestry office parking area, and 8 miles of walking/biking trails accessible from the Rt. 617 parking area. Be aware that mountain bikers also use these trails. Restrooms and trash bins are located at the Dept. of Forestry Office on the north side of US. Rt. 58. There are no other restrooms or trash bins on the forest, so please take your trash with you.

## Regulations

A complete listing of State Forest regulations may be found at [www.dof.virginia.gov](http://www.dof.virginia.gov), but basic rules for Matthews State Forest are as follows:

- Park only in designated areas. Vehicles are not permitted on forest roads or trails.
- Pack out all trash.
- Do not remove any plant, animal or mineral.
- **Prohibited** activities and items on this forest include camping, ATVs, alcoholic beverages, fireworks, open air fires, and hunting with firearms (archery hunting only, in season).
- Mountain biking is permitted on established trails, and horseback riding on forest roads and open fields. Both activities require a State Forest Use Permit for those aged 16 and older.

## Directions for Access:

Matthews State Forest is located at latitude N 36° 38' 34", longitude W 80° 57' 27.4". There are two parking areas: at the Dept. of Forestry Office on the north side of U.S. Route 58, approximately ½ mile west of Galax, and on the north side of Rt. 617 at the intersection with the forest road. (See map on next page.) If you are bringing a group to the forest, please let the Va. Dept. of Forestry office know the date and approximate time of your visit. Call 276-236-2322, or email [stateforest@dof.virginia.gov](mailto:stateforest@dof.virginia.gov) with "Matthews" in the subject line.

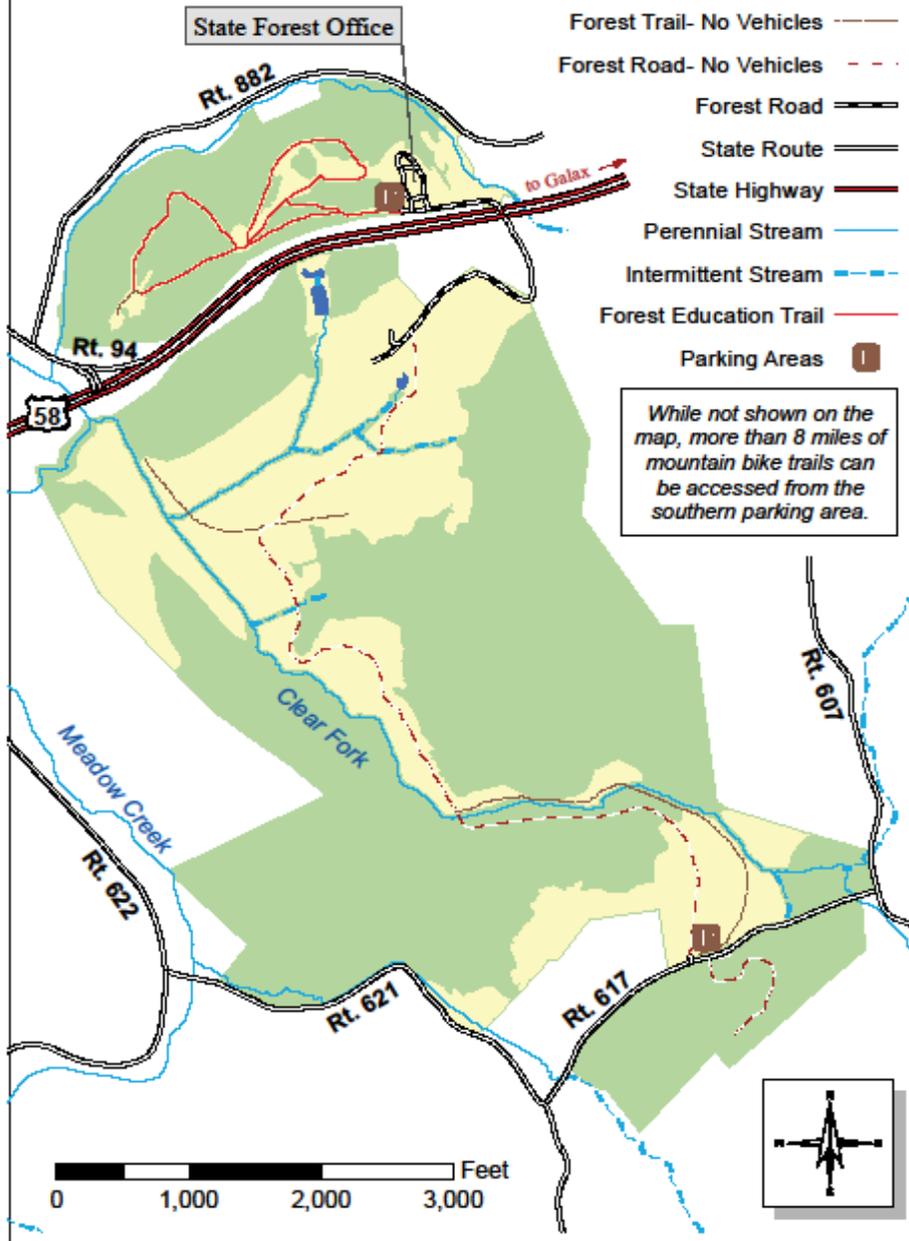
# Matthews State Forest

Virginia Department of Forestry

## Recreation Map

### Legend

- State Forest Land 
- Open Areas 
- Ponds 
- Forest Trail- No Vehicles 
- Forest Road- No Vehicles 
- Forest Road 
- State Route 
- State Highway 
- Perennial Stream 
- Intermittent Stream 
- Forest Education Trail 
- Parking Areas 



## Overview of Activities and Materials in the Tree Trunk

### 1) Forest Sense – grades K-12

Use the senses to gather information about the forest in this quiet writing (or drawing) activity.

-- \*Clipboard, paper, and pencil for each student

### 2) ID That Tree – grades 4-12

Use a scientific key to identify common trees of the State Forest.

-- Single-page keys to common trees of the State Forest, for younger students.

-- Laminated photo cards of the trees in key, for younger students

-- Tree ID books for older students

### 3) A Tree for Me – grades K-5

Get closely acquainted with a single tree by making detailed observations.

-- \*Clipboards, pencils, worksheets for grades 2-5 students /plain paper for K-1 students

-- Peeled crayons

### 4) Plots and Plans – grades 6-12

Collect biotic and abiotic data from a 1/10 acre forest plot, and make management recommendations for the State Forest.

-- 37.2 ft. yarn pieces (red), attached to stakes

-- Set of marker flags

-- Clipboards, pencils, data sheets

-- Flash ID guides

### 5) Measuring Up – grades 6-12

Use a Biltmore stick to determine tree height and diameter and calculate the amount of wood in a tree.

-- Biltmore sticks

-- 66-foot yarn pieces (orange)

-- Clipboards, pencils, paper

### 6) Could I Live Here? – grades 3-7

Learn about native wildlife and decide whether particular species could live on this site.

-- Laminated animal photos with info on back

-- Clothespins

### 7) Trees in Trouble (from PLT) – grades 3-8

Search a section of forest for signs of tree damage or poor health.

-- Clipboards, pencils, paper

-- Tree-tective Trouble Guide and Reading Leaf Symptoms pages

### 8) The Future Forest? - Grades 6-12, advanced (best for those proficient in tree ID)

Assess tree regeneration and make predictions about the future makeup of the forest.

-- 23 ft, 4.9 in. yarn pieces (yellow)

-- Data sheets, clipboards, pencils

-- Rulers

-- Tree ID books

Over →

9) Pests Gone Wild – Grades 6-12

Learn about invasive species threatening Virginia's forests, brainstorm solutions, and search for invasive plants.

-- Pests Gone Wild card set

-- Laminated invasive plant photos

\*Additional clipboards will be needed for starred activities, as there are only 5 in the trunk.