

# Cache River State Natural Area

State Park Patch for Girl Scouts.



This book belongs to: \_\_\_\_\_

# Welcome to Cache River State Natural Area!

- Did you know that from 1970-1990, the land which became Cache River State Natural Area was a satellite area of Ferne Clyffe State Park? Early settlers lived in the watershed as early as 1795!
- What are you waiting for!?! Pull on hiking or rubber boots and get your feet wet in the swamp. Check out our champion trees! Discover the secrets of the many plants and animals that call the Cache River State Natural Area home.

Practice "Leave No Trace Ethics" when you visit Cache River State Natural Area! Take only photographs and leave only footprints.



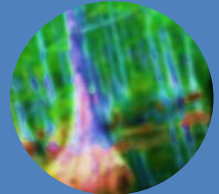
**Grades K-3**

Complete at least  
**3** activities



**Grades 4-8**

Complete at least  
**5** activities



**Grades 9-12**

Complete at least  
**7** activities

Cache River State Natural Area Patch Activity Checklist:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wetland Center            | <input type="checkbox"/> Big Cypress Access            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pollinator Garden         | <input type="checkbox"/> Heron Pond Boardwalk          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Champion Trees            | <input type="checkbox"/> Wildcat Bluff Nature Preserve |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lower Cache River Access  | <input type="checkbox"/> Marshall Ridge Access         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Section 8 Woods Boardwalk | <input type="checkbox"/> Trash in the Cache            |

# Wetland Center

1. Watch the 12 minute film about Cache River watershed.

2. Travel back in time to learn about historical events in the Cache River watershed. Add at least 7 events to the timeline that are significant to the people, land and waters of the Cache River.

3. When was the Post Creek Cut Off constructed and why is this a significant event?

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Ask for a site map and learn about current trail conditions before traveling onward.



Pre-1800's

1800

1840

1880

1920

1960

2000

# Pollinator Garden



1. Hike 0.5 miles on the paved Egret Slough hiking trail. Read the signage about the 12 pollinator garden plots to see what you can do to attract pollinators to your yard!

How many different pollinators did you spot in the wild or on the signs?

\_\_\_\_\_



2. Take photos of at least 3 different pollinators. Identify them in the Wetland Center by using an available field guide.

A. \_\_\_\_\_

B. \_\_\_\_\_

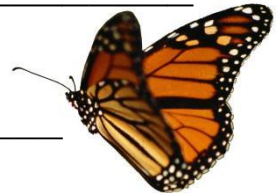
C. \_\_\_\_\_

3. The flower on the patch is the state-threatened copper iris! This slough beauty is unique to flooded cypress sloughs or roadside ditches in the Cache River basin.

**Which pollinator garden did you find it growing in?** \_\_\_\_\_

4. Why are pollinators important?

\_\_\_\_\_

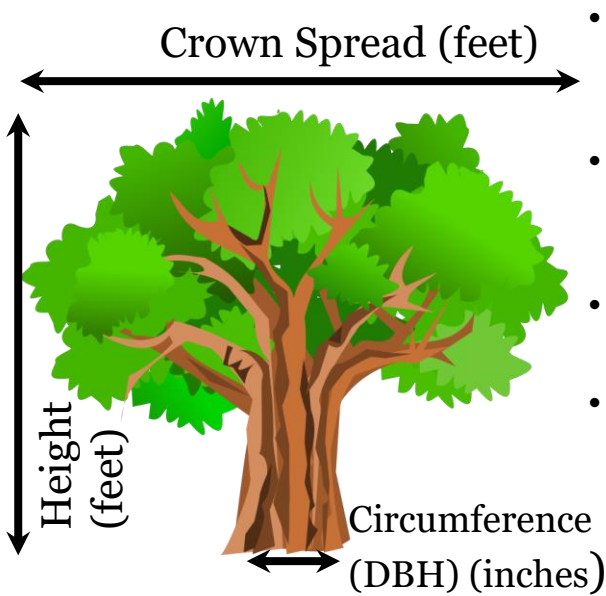


5. **Or, learn about mason bees and build them a house for your yard.** Remember to place the house in a sunny area and provide mud nearby. In a journal, try to keep track of the number of bees that you see using the hotel in the spring and summer. Get more information at the desk.



# Champion Trees of the Cache River Watershed

## How do trees become champions?



- Using a measuring tape and clinometer, a forester collects standard measurements on trees which yields a total point score.
- Total Points = Circumference (in) + Height (ft) + (1/4) Average Crown Spread (ft)
- The resulting score is compared in the Illinois Big Tree Registry.
- Use a measuring tape to measure the circumference of a favorite tree. You may check out a tape at the Wetland Center. Be sure to measure in inches 4.5 feet above the ground. How does it compare to one of our state champion trees?



Visit 3 of 11 champion trees at Cache River SNA.  
Place an X in the table when you visit the tree!



	Bald Cypress	Cherrybark Oak	Water Tupelo
Circumference	34'5"	25'5"	22'5"
Height	63'	103'	84'
Crown Spread	37'	116'	44'
Total Points	487	438	387
Location	Lower Cache River Access	Heron Pond Nature Preserve	Section 8 Woods Nature Preserve
I SAW IT!			

Can you find a new champion tree on site or in your neighborhood? If you think you've found a new champion: record the common and scientific name, take measurements, photos, provide a gps location, and submit your findings to the



















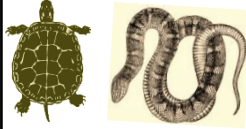





# *Lower Cache River Access Buttonland Swamp Nature Journal*

1. The tree on the patch is the bald cypress which is a keystone species. Other species depend on the bald cypress so much that if the cypress disappeared from the swamp, the ecosystem would change significantly.
2. Walk the paved path to see the State Champion bald cypress. This tree is estimated to be 1200 years old; making it one of the oldest trees east of the Mississippi River!
3. Create a nature journal entry. Be creative; the sky is the limit. Sketch, paint, write poetry, or compose song lyrics in the space below inspired from your visit.



# Section 8 Woods Boardwalk Bingo!

1. Hike 475 feet over a wooden boardwalk in a floodplain forest. Moving quietly and slowly may reward you with wildlife sightings!
2. Using your bingo card, cross off each nature sighting! Don't forget to look up, down, and all around!
3. The end of the trail showcases one of our Illinois State Champion trees! What type of tree is it? \_\_\_\_\_

<p>SINGING BIRD</p> 	<p>TREE TAGS</p> 	<p>SUN</p> 	<p>VINE</p> 	<p>FUNGUS</p> 
<p>FLYING INSECT</p> 	<p>SPIDER OR WEB</p> 	<p>WATER</p> 	<p>CAVITY</p> 	<p>OAK LEAF</p> 
<p>MAPLE LEAF</p> 	<p>MOSS</p> 	<p>FREE SPACE</p>	<p>DECAYING LOG</p> 	<p>CLOUD</p> 
<p>ANIMAL TRACKS</p> 	<p>CRAYFISH BURROW</p> 	<p>NEST</p> 	<p>CYPRESS KNEES</p> 	<p>REPTILE</p> 
<p>ROCK</p> 	<p>SEED</p> 	<p>BARK</p> 	<p>BIRD FEATHER</p> 	<p>LICHEN</p> 

# Big Cypress Access

Girl Scouts are always prepared. POP QUIZ!!! How ready were you today? Below is an suggested checklist so you can be safe and comfortable while visiting the Cache River SNA. Check off what you brought. Circle what you need to remember next time.

- Trail map and compass
- Whistle and first aid kit
- Cell phone and waterproof case
- Bug spray, netting or gaiters
- Sunscreen, protective lip balm, sunglasses or a wide-brimmed hat
- Dress in weather-appropriate layers. Did you check the weather?
- Extra set of clothing
- Poncho, umbrella, or rain gear
- Waterproof hiking boots
- Rubber boots or waders
- Headlamp or flashlight
- Snacks and water
- Binoculars
- Trekking poles or walking stick
- Field guide(s) for identification
- Journal and pen or pencil
- Bag for collecting trash

- This old growth forest lies within the original channel of Cypress Creek.
- Walk on the footpath to see trees that are over 1,000 years old! Follow the instructions below to find the “Pooh Tree.”



1. Face the two largest bald cypress trees.

2. If they are in the 12:00 position on a clock, look to 1:00.

3. You can't see the tree yet so...

4. Walk 150-200 ft. Record your steps.



6. YOU DID IT!



5. It took me \_\_\_\_\_ steps!

7. Wrap your arms around the tree! You just hugged a 1,000 year old bald cypress tree! What did it feel like? \_\_\_\_\_
8. Take a flashlight and shine in the hollow at the base of the tree. Did you find any sign of wildlife? Circle what you observed:
- |                      |                |       |
|----------------------|----------------|-------|
| Animal Tracks        | Cached Food    | Skin  |
| Feathers             | Scales         | Fur   |
| Eggs                 | Antler Scrapes | Nests |
| Boring Insect Trails | Chew Marks     | Scat  |
9. Hollows are important habitat for wildlife. Bats use hollows as roosts during the day, while chimney swifts may use the location at night. Flooded hollows provide nurseries for fish, frog, salamander, and toad larvae.
10. If no wildlife is at home, are you brave enough to squeeze through the hollow? How many people can the “Pooh Tree” shelter at one time?  
\_\_\_\_\_

## DISCUSSION

Why would you pack these items? Is there anything else you would want to add to the list?





# Heron Pond Boardwalk

## Heron Pond Word Search

On your hike you may have a chance to see and encounter these things on trail.

1. Hike the Todd Fink-Heron Pond Trail (1.5 miles) and look for things mentioned in the word search.

2. If you choose to complete the Champion Tree Activity on page 5, check out the Cherrybark Oak before leaving Heron Pond Nature Preserve. It's only 1/4 mile past the boardwalk!

D X B S M U V K O S S E R P Y C N A X U  
 O D J G R Q V Q L F E A T H E R F O I L  
 B Z D S D E W P N I K L N O X J Q S T X  
 Z R U E Q W K T M A J Z C I B F Q Y L S  
 I P F A E I E C G C V B G C J V Z T P K  
 S R Z Z R W U N E H J O X J S Q K I L O  
 L Z R N E C K H V P Y L L X W S O S G P  
 Z L B T T O M C P D D C B N A E B R Z M  
 Q Z E S A T S K U Q B O V V M I L E Q W  
 D A C M W T O U M D I E O I P U C V T L  
 D Z F O K O V V J E O O F W L M X I S B  
 W C J O C N B R K L A W D R A O B D G E  
 T Y X R A M U E O U G V Q P F A R O O E  
 U W C H B O M P M H K C I P Y L E I R H  
 P F R S J U M N W Y H B R B T V V B F E  
 E W B U T T E R F L I E S R K B A S E O  
 L N E M O H E R O N S I C N U J E I E Q  
 O G Q G D E T C E T O R P A S V B I R V  
 A L P I O H V J Y A S Y U E T Q A E T I  
 D M W Z T H E W A T E R S N A K E S X E

BACKWATER  
 BOARDWALK  
 CYPRESS  
 HERONS  
 SWAMP  
 WATERSNAKES

BEAVER  
 BUTTERFLIES  
 DUCKWEED  
 MUSHROOMS  
 TREEFROGS  
 WOODPECKERS

BIODIVERSITY  
 COTTONMOUTH  
 FEATHERFOIL  
 PROTECTED  
 TUPELO



The bird on the patch is the prothonotary warbler! This neotropical migrant travels to the Cache to breed in flooded bottomland forests and wooded swamps. Heron Pond is a really special place where you can spot these birds. Birds are visible April-September. They are most active in May and June when you hear males singing to defend their nesting territory. Listen for “sweet-sweet-sweet-sweet” and look for a flash of yellow with cadet blue wings.



## **Wildcat Bluff Nature Preserve**

The views from Wildcat Bluff are outstanding! Choose **one** hike and learn about the namesake creature of the bluff.

- Explore the Lookout Point Trail (1 mile) to discover sandstone bluff overhangs, unique rock formations, a steep hill prairie and panoramic views of the Cache River basin.
  
- Follow the Little Black Slough Trail (5.5 miles) from the top of the bluff to the wetland below.

**Wildlife viewing tips:** Bobcats are elusive; try to catch a glimpse of these felines by hiking when they are most likely to be active at dawn or dusk.



Unscramble the words below to learn about bobcats (*Lynx rufus*).

1. Bobcats only live in NTOHR CIAMERA.  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. They are twice the size of EOUSH CTAS.  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. The favorite food of the bobcat is IARBBT.  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Bobcats are solitary and mark their OTRTERIRY by spraying urine and clawing trees.  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Fur of bobcats are prized for their DETTOPS coats.  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Bobcats have 7-10 year PANSLIFE  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. Young of bobcats are called KETSTIN and mothers have up to 2 TLITRES each year.  
\_\_\_\_\_

# Marshall Ridge Access

- The Marshall Ridge Access allows exploration of the Little Black Slough Nature Preserve via two different trails including: the Marshall Ridge Trail (2.8 miles) or the Tupelo Trail (2.5 miles). Pick one of these trails to hike.
- Or visit the Michael Wolff Wetlands.

## Tips for hiking in areas with venomous snakes!

Learn how to identify the timber rattlesnake \_\_\_\_\_, copperhead \_\_\_\_\_, and cottonmouth \_\_\_\_\_ before hiking our trails.

1. If you encounter any snake on trail, give it space. Walk around the snake giving it plenty of room.
2. Never handle wild animals.
3. Snakes are masters of camouflage, be alert when passing over downed trees or rocky areas. Be aware where you are putting your hands, feet or face.
4. Snakes are active during warmer months of the year. When temperatures are cooler in the mornings or evenings, you may observe snakes basking to catch the dappled sunlight on the trail. On extremely hot days, snakes tend to hide in vegetation or in flooded pools to keep cool so they don't overheat.

Did you know that all venomous snakes in IL have elliptical cat-like pupils while all non-venomous snakes have round pupils?



A



B



C



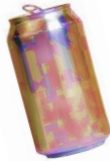
D

Which snake is not venomous?

\_\_\_\_\_

# Trash in the Cache

Trash is harmful to water quality and wildlife. In some cases, it is illegally dumped in roadside ditches which drain into the Cache River. See how much trash you can remove to improve wetland habitat. Bring multiple bags to separate trash from recyclables.



1. What was the most unusual piece of trash that you found? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Where did you find most of the trash that you picked up? How do you think it could have gotten there?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What can you do if you see someone littering?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Discover what kind of trash makes up the most litter in the Cache. Fill in the table by sorting the trash you collected. What can you do with most of the litter you collected? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# of Pieces	Plastic	Glass	Metal	Paper	Waste
Up to 5					
5-10					
11-15					
16-20					
21-25					
26+					

# *Thank you for visiting Cache River State Natural Area!*

When you have finished all of the  
Cache River Patch requirements, have a  
ranger or volunteer at the Visitor Center sign  
off here:



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Signature of Completion



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Date of completion

To receive your Cache River Patch you must  
place an order for through the Girl Scouts of  
Southern Illinois shop. This can be done  
online or by visiting our shop in person.