1. ABRAMS CREEK WETLANDS PRESERVE
This natural area offers a pleasant walk, meal, stroll or bicycle ride. A paved path crosses wetlands that are home to over 100 bird species and more than 15 plants on Virginia’s Rare Plants List. Watch for green herons, great blue herons, kingfishers, red-winged blackbirds, meadowlarks, meadow frog, painted turtles and other marsh residents. From Route 211 north of downtown Winchester, turn right (west) onto Jubal Early Drive. In 0.5 miles, park at the Abrams Crossing commercial center on the left. Follow paved path inside the swamp.

2. VISITORS CENTER AND SHENANDOAH UNIVERSITY
Open daily, the Winchester-Frederick County Visitors Center provides maps, changing exhibits, an orientation video and views of nearby Rosia Spring ponds. At Shenandoah University’s Main Campus, enjoy the landscaped grounds of Sarah’s Glen and native plantings on the Main Quadrangle, or watch birds along Campus Creek. The Green Circle walking-cycling path connects native plantings on the Main Quadrangle, or watch birds along Campus Creek. The Green Circle walking-cycling path connects native plantings on the Main Quadrangle, or watch birds along Campus Creek. From downtown Winchester, take Andrew Street (Route 50 west) to the university entrance.

3. JIM BARNETT PARK AND WILKINS LAKE
From I-81, take Exit 313 toward Winchester. Turn right (north) onto Pleasant Valley Rd, in 0.5 miles, park at the Jim Barnett Park parking lot. Jim Barnett Park has playgrounds, a fitness trail, walking-biking paths, picnic tables, dog park, mini golf, and both indoor and outdoor swimming pools. You can catch trout and bass in Wilkins Lake. In the winter, the lake attracts migrating birds including buffleheads, mergansers, red-headed ducks and an occasional tundra swan. Open all year.

4. SHAWNEE SPRINGS PRESERVE
Located between downtown Winchester and Jim Barnett Park, the 14-acre site protects springs, wetlands and forests. It also contains part of the Civil War’s largest Union field hospital. The Shawnee Springs Trail offers an unpaved footpath through shady forests, while the paved Green Circle path here connects to downtown Winchester and Jim Barnett Park.

5. SHENANDOAH VALLEY DISCOVERY MUSEUM
Experience nature indoors through children’s museums programs and interactive hands-on exhibits about the Potomac River watershed, native animals, astronomy and other subjects; visit the rooftop garden. Open daily year-round. Admission charged. Located in Old Town Winchester at 19 W Crik St.

6. MUSEUM OF THE SHENANDOAH VALLEY
This history complex interprets art, history, culture and the natural riches that attracted the areas first settlers. It features a large regional museum and Glen Burnie, the home of Winchester’s founder, Colonel James Wood. Six acres of formal gardens contain headwaters of Town Run and large native trees. Museum open year-round, Tuesday-Sunday. Admission charged. From downtown Winchester, take Andrew Street (Route 50 west) to the museum entrance on the left just before James Wood Middle School.

7. VANCE’S COVE
Situatted between Paddy and Great North mountains, the Vance’s Cove area offers hiking, mountain biking and trout fishing in a scenic setting along Paddy Run. From the parking area, a grassy hiking route leads left. A hiking-biking route – its lower section is suitable for stroller bikes – begins as a gravel road and heads uphill to the right. Take Route 286 (1.1 mile) right into Strasburg. Follow Route 55 west for 0.5 miles to Forest Road 55 on the left. (Look for the small brown “35” sign about 0.9 miles past Forest Road 600.)

8. EAGLE ROCK
A 3.5-mile round trip hike, Eagle Rock provides commanding views of the Shenandoah Valley and Allegheny Mountains. The trail climbs an easy grade for about a mile to a junction. Turn right, more steeply uphill, to reach the rocky viewpoints.

9. FOSSIL SITES
In western Frederick County, fossils date back to the Devonian and Silurian periods of the Paleozoic Era, about 400 million years ago. A good collecting site is located alongside Route 50, beginning 0.2 miles west of the Hoffnep Beet Church and 11 miles west of Winchester. Information on other sites near Hedgesfield and Gore is available at the Discovery Museum.

10. TUSCARORA TRAIL
This blue-blazed trail provides challenging hiking and several views. A 3.5-mile section crosses Route 55 and follows Great North Mountain northward to the town of Gore and Route 50. The trail continues north towards Shockey’s Knob on county roads.

11. SHOCKEY’S KNOB
Shockey’s Knob offers views and a moderate hike through an oak-hickory-pine forest to a rocky ridgeline. A 6-mile round trip, Shockey’s Knob is on the blue-blazed Tuscarora Trail.

12. CEDAR CREEK & BELLE GROVE NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK
The “Morning Attack Trail” consists of three individual trails, that, when combined, total 1.7 miles in length. The trails cover an area where part of a surprise Confederate attack during the Battle of Cedar Creek occurred on the morning of October 19, 1864. This trail provides expansive views of the Blue Ridge Mountains to the east, the Massanutten Mountains to the south, and the Allegheny Mountains to the west. Open year-round from dawn to dusk. The park is 15 miles south of Winchester via Routes 33 and 141. For more information, visit the Cedar Creek Battlefield Foundation Visitors Center on the left and Belle Grove on the right.

13. LAKE FREDERICK
This 117-acre lake offers good trout fishing opportunities as well as fishing for bass, crappie, northern pike, and channel catfish. Jon boat and kayak rentals are available on-site. A public boat launch is provided, but gasoline-powered boats and sailboats are prohibited.

14. SHARONDA PARK
The 330-acre Sharonda Park features wooded walking trails, an outdoor pool, playgrounds, mountains hiking trails, disc golf, and a 4.5-acre fishing lake (no swimming). Open all year.

15. THIRD WINCHESTER BATTLEFIELD
A 5-mile system of bicycling and walking trails meanders through sunny fields and forests where the Third Battle of Winchester occurred in 1864. The main path from Redbud Road crosses Redbud Run Marsh and is about a mile. Redbud Run access take 341 north from Winchester to Exit 317. Turn right onto Redbud Road. Follow for 0.6 miles to a parking area. Mildred Run access take 341 east 0.5 miles for Redbud road. After about a mile, turn left into Mildred Run; trail entrance sign posted Mildred High School.

16. REDBUD RUN WILDFLIGHT MANAGEMENT AREA
Redbud Run supports brook and rainbow trout, wildflowers, birds, and wildlife. Wooded paths traverse the tree-covered ravine’s slopes. From 341 east 311, take Route 7 for 2.1 miles to Woodland Rd (left ramp). Parking lot is on the right at 0.2 miles.

17. ROSE HILL PARK
The site of the Civil War’s 1862 First Battle of Kernstown, the park is open free of charge, 8am to dusk. It features a walking trail, valley views, restrooms, interpretive signage, and picnic shelters.

18. SHEPHERD'S MOUNTAIN
From Route 522 in Elkton, take Cedar Creek Road south onto Union Mills Road and enter Cedar Creek Battlefield Park. Continue south onto Union Mills Road and turn right (east) onto Shockey’s Knob Road at the fork. The park is 0.4 miles on the right.

DISCOVERING NATURE IN WINCHESTER, FREDERICK COUNTY, AND CLARKE COUNTY

Northern Shenandoah - Naturally!

PROTECTING Wild PLACES
matters to our hearts, our souls, and our physical well-being. Perhaps more importantly, our will to preserve these places says something about our relationship to the future.

-W. Michael Lipford, Virginia State Director, The Nature Conservancy

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MAP & GUIDE to PLACES
Discovering Nature in Winchester, Frederick County, and Clarke County

WELCOME TO THE SHENANDOAH VALLEY, a region rich in nature, culture, and history. There is much that makes this area special, from apple orchards and limestone houses to mountaintop views and a storied, peaceful river.

This brochure will lead you to nearby locations that can bring you closer to our forests, wildlife, wetlands, and parks. Some places are well known as recreational or historic sites, while several areas with distinctive natural features may allow new discoveries for even longtime Shenandoah Valley residents.

Our region’s history and economic development are rooted in geology. The limestone that lines Interstate 81 and Routes 7, 11, 50, and 340 formed the fertile soils that made the Shenandoah Valley the “breadbasket of the South” during the Civil War. Those same soils support today’s orchards and farms. Sandstone holds up the Allegheny ridges to the west, while quartzite and other metamorphic rocks shape the Blue Ridge Mountains to the east.

The Shenandoa people traversed this valley in search of its abundant plants, fish, and game animals. From eastern Pennsylvania, German and Scots-Irish farmers, merchants, and artisans traveled down the Great Philadelphia Wagon Road searching for a place where they could become independent and self-sufficient. From Tidewater Virginia came English planters. What better new home could there be than this lovely, fertile valley? As people long ago discovered new possibilities here, we hope you will explore, discover, and enjoy the natural heritage of Winchester, Frederick County, and Clarke County.
Natural HERITAGE SITES

Winchester
Frederick County
Clarke County

18. STATE ARBORETUM OF VIRGINIA AT BLANDY EXPERIMENTAL FARM
The Arboretum is a peaceful place to stroll through tree and garden plantings, meander the Native Plant Trail, drive through scenic forests and fields, and enjoy bird watching. Open daily, dawn to dusk, with free admission. From I-81 Exit 315 near Winchester, go 9 miles east on Route 50. Entrance is about 1.5 miles past the Route 340 intersection.

19. SHENANDOAH RIVER
The famed Shenandoah River is the major waterway of the Shenandoah Valley. It is ideal for canoeing, kayaking, fishing and observing nature. Snickers Gap parking lot is on the right. From I-81 Exit 315 near Winchester, go 9 miles east on Route 50. Turn left immediately after crossing the Shenandoah River. Continue 0.5 miles south on Barter Lane.

20. APPALACHIAN TRAIL
Hawk watchers gather here in October. From the parking lot on Route 7, a blue-blazed trail leads south to the A.T. Follow the A.T. left for 0.5 miles to Bear’s Den Rocks, with extensive views of the Shenandoah Valley. From Winchester, take Route 7 east 17 miles to the crest of the Blue Ridge. The Shenandoah National Park A.T. guidebooks and maps are available at local outfitters.

22. SNICKERS GAP & BEAR'S DEN ROCKS
See above.

1 ABRAMS CREEK WETLANDS PRESERVE
2 VISITORS CENTER AND SHENANDOAH UNIVERSITY
3 JIM BARNETT PARK AND WILKINS LAKE
4 SHAWNEE SPRINGS PRESERVE
5 SHENANDOAH VALLEY DISCOVERY MUSEUM
6 MUSEUM OF THE SHENANDOAH VALLEY
7 VANCE’S COVE
8 EAGLE ROCK
9 FOSSIL SITES
10 TUSCARORA TRAIL
11 SHOCKEY’S KNOB
12 CEDAR CREEK AND BELLE GROVE NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK
13 LAKE FREDERICK
14 SHERANDO PARK
15 THIRD WINCHESTER BATTLEFIELD
16 REDBUD RUN WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA
17 ROSE HILL PARK
18 STATE ARBORETUM OF VIRGINIA AT BLANDY EXPERIMENTAL FARM
19 SHENANDOAH RIVER (MULTIPLE ACCESS POINTS)
20 RIVER CAMPUS AT COOL SPRING BATTLEFIELD
21 APPALACHIAN TRAIL
22 SNICKERS GAP AND BEAR’S DEN ROCKS