PECKERWOOD NATURE TRAIL

The Peckerwood Nature Trail is located in Scout Camp Currier, property of Chickasaw Council, BSA. The camp is off Mississippi Highway 304, just west of Eudora. (See Map.)

The trail starts and ends at the Tomahawk Dining Hall on the main central road. You may park in this area. The trail is a loop approximately 5 miles long. This fulfills requirement 6.b of the Hiking Skill Award. Allow 3 hours hiking time. The trail is marked with a yellow Wolf's head painted on trees. The trail will introduce you to many of the trees native to this area. Besides trees, other nature lore will be taught. Use this trail as a nature lesson. Snakes are not often seen in Camp Currier, but do be careful. Most of the snakes are harmless and beneficial, but a few are poisonous and prefer to be left alone. Please do so. Everywhere you will see Poison Ivy. It grows as a small plant, a bush, or as a vine along the ground and up trees. Learn to avoid it.

The leaves are in 3's as:

Poison Ivy  Virginia Creeper

"LEAVES OF THREE, LEAVE IT BE"

Any plant with white berries is to be avoided (poison ivy and poison sumac). Any tree with red berries is safe to touch (dogwood, holly, shiney sumac, staghorn sumac).

"BERRIES WHITE, POISONOUS SIGHT"

You should also identify Virginia Creeper everywhere. It is a small plant or vine with leaves in 5's, smaller and duller than poison ivy. It is not poisonous.

Let us begin. Immediately across from the dining hall, notice first a number of tall pine trees. There are 4 kinds of
Pines common to the Mid South: Shortleaf, Longleaf, Loblolly, and Spruce Pine. White and Slash Pine are widely planted in Memphis. These Loblolly Pines have needles in bunches of 3's.

Just past the pines is a thicket of Sassafras. Notice the leaves are of 3 shapes.

![Sassafras](image1.png)  ![Pine](image2.png)

The leaves, bark, stems, and roots have a distinctive, very pleasant sweet smell. The roots were once used in tea and root beer. Scratch a stem and smell it. You will encounter many and larger Sassafras trees throughout the forest.

Just past the Sassafras, still on your left, is a line of oak trees. The leaves are deeply notched. The points between the notches are pointed in the Red Oak and rounded in the White Oak. Identify both before proceeding.

![Red Oak](image3.png)  ![White Oak](image4.png)

Soon on your right just as you enter the meadow, you will see a very big tree at the edge of the forest. This is a Yellow Poplar or Tulip Poplar tree. The trunk is very straight. In younger specimens the bark is smooth. The leaf is shaped like a tulip. In the spring there are tulip-shaped blossoms of green, yellow, and orange. This is the state tree of Tennessee. Before the arrival of civilization, the yellow Poplar was the most common really big tree east of the Mississippi River. This particular specimen is not as straight and well-formed as most. The large hole in the trunk shows that it was injured by fire when it was young. Except for that, this would probably be the biggest tree at Currier; it appears to be the oldest. Look closely for rows of small holes made by woodpeckers.

![Yellow Poplar](image5.png)  ![Sweet Gum](image6.png)

At the head of the meadow in the clump of trees by the concrete slab are several trees to learn. One has leaves in the shape of a 5-pointed star. Boys are usually familiar with the seed-burr or gumball. This is the Red Gum or Sweet Gum. Some specimens have cork “wings” along the stems - look for them.

![Redbud](image7.png)  ![Persimmon](image8.png)

A smaller tree in this clump has heart-shaped leaves. This is the Redbud (remember Heart-Shaped - Red Blood - RED-BUD). Early in the Spring these trees produce a bright purple blossom, seen best in cultivated varieties in the city.

A tall tree in this clump is the Persimmon. It has long, smooth, and slightly irregular leaves. Note the “checkerboard” pattern of the bark. The wood is very hard. In the Autumn a fleshy, orange fruit is produced which is a favorite of the opossum and other animals.
Also in this clump, you will find a big American Elm. The leaves are small with a saw-tooth edge. Two other Elms, the Slippery and the Winged, occur in the Midsouth. They have similar but larger leaves. The Winged Elm has cork wings on its stems like another tree you just learned. Which? Note carefully the design of the Elm leaf - you are going to see this general design again.

American Elm

Follow the trail into the forest. What is the big Oak on your right with the trail marker? Its leaves have pointed tips.

On your right, just past the Red Oak is a nice Dogwood. You will see many and larger specimens in the forest, but this is a good one to look at the leaf. The rounded leaves with prominent veins occur in pairs - remember the pairs as “buddies” (you and your DOG are buddies). You are familiar with the lovely white blossom seen early each spring. A red berry appears in the Autumn. The bark in older trees may remind you of “alligator skin” or a small checkerboard. You can tell it’s a dogwood by its bark. The Dogwood has the hardest and heaviest wood in the forest.

Dogwood

Red Maple

On both sides of the trail, find maples. The leaf is more or less star-shaped, but the edge has deeper, smoother notches than the Sweet Gum you learned earlier. You will see a lot of Maples in this forest, usually on ridges like here.

As you hike, watch for “bamboo” cane. You will see many times in the forest. It usually grows on hillsides near water. The wood is extremely tough. The Indians had uses for cane - arrows, baskets, mats, roofing, blow guns and darts.

Also watch for patches of vines. The vines with thorns are Blackberry. The smooth vines are Honeysuckle.

On the left is a stand of Loblolly Pines. How many needles per bunch? Past the pines on your left, identify big White Oak. The bark and wood are paler than most oaks. The leaves have rounded points, TRUE or FALSE? Growing at the base of the White Oak are several small Sweet Gums. Note again the star-shaped leaf and the corky wings.

Soon on your right find a medium-sized tree with smooth bark and feathery, fern-like leaves. The Mimosa is a native Africa. It is seen often in the city but is uncommon in the forest.

The clearing has a turnoff to the boat dock. What is the tree in the center of the clearing? The trail does not go down to the dock, but you may.

Continue along the trail. Do not leave the trail, but walk down the hill to your right for a marked tree. This is the American Beech. The leaves are similar to the Elm family, but not quite as jagged. The bark is smooth and often damaged by carving. Don’t do it! The beechnuts are favorites of squirrels and deer.

You are now approaching Peckerwood Point, a Camp Courier landmark. When long term Summer Camp was at Courier the Craft Shack and Trading Post were here. Listen for
Swimming pool. What is the large tree with smooth bark.

At the end of the lake is the side trail that goes up to the name. Jagged edges. The seeds float on the surface of cotton. Hence the big Cottonwood. Its leaf is large. Roughly triangular with many layers leaving the white skinned trunk. There are a few seeds but in a fruit ball. On older trees the bark peels off in similar to a giant Maple leaf. The seeds are the distinctive waters edge. Find the Sycamore. Its leaf is very large. A look for beech. Hop Hornbeam. And some new trees. All (easy) and follows the shoulder past the end of the lake.

At Peckerwood Point the rail lumens sharply to the right called the Red-Headed Slicer. The most common here is a red patch on its head and is little. Bluegill Creek. Longfellow's bass and carp. Also look for Cottonwood. Longleaf Pine. The wood is so hard beams are here at Peckerwood Point. The water is so clear. Also find a smallish tree with leaves like an Elm. This Hop Hornbeam helps fish in long thin strips. Many Hop Hornbeam.

As you approach Peckerwood Point look for more beeches. Sapsucker. Down the Yellow-shafted Flicker. And the Yellow-bellied, and has 2 cres. You may see the Red-bellied, the hardy, the Peckerwood Area. The Red-headed Woodpecker is a crown the trail path. The Peckerwood is a crown.
To Approach Shepherds Lake.

To my left, as I climb the trail, I see the lake. It is surrounded by a dense forest of evergreens. The trail leads me past a small pond, where I can see the reflections of the sky in the water. I continue along the path, passing through a clearing where wildflowers bloom in full color.

As I near the lake, I see a small cabin on the shore. It appears to be abandoned, but I decide to take a detour and explore the area. I follow the trail around the lake, taking in the beauty of the surroundings.

When I reach the lake, I sit down on a rock and enjoy the view. The water is crystal clear, and I can see the bottom of the lake. I feel a sense of peace and tranquility wash over me.

I spend some time here, taking photos and sketching the landscape. As the sun begins to set, I decide to make my way back to the cabin. The trail is well-marked, and I follow it back to my starting point.

Overall, it was a wonderful experience. I feel refreshed and invigorated, ready to tackle whatever challenges come my way.

Along the Path:
- Rattlesnake Fern
- Resurrection Fern
- Maidenhair Fern
- Beech Fern
- Christmas Fern
- Epony Speewannort Fern
meadow toward the pavilion. The Mockernut Hickory tree in
woodpeckers, so keep your eyes and ears open. Cross the
favorite haunt of the Red-headed and Red-bellied
Orange Fruit is called what? Indian Meadow is a
find several trees with smooth leaves and checkeredboard
at the water fountain. By the road, at the water fountain,
right of the fork? Take the left fork to Indian Meadow.
State Tree of Tennessee. What is it? In front of the Ranger's
Cabin, you will find on your left another specimen of the
Backtrack to the West Road. Just before the old Ranger's

You should see rich, fogs, and crows in the stream.
stream has eroded its base. Erosion is rather young here.
that always adorns the stump. Proceeded to Clay Cliff. The
in the hill. Do not disturb the moss! Indian, and roadsides
Halfway down the hill past the old 34 site find a big stump
Look for the leaflets along the stream. Between the leaves.
edge of the hill. The tell tell thin leaves have feathery leaves.
just past 134 there is a stand of Shining Sumac on the right
create posts and follow the Willowhead markers to Clay Cliff.
big Pine tree at the intersection? Turn right at the two con.
beloved Ranger of Camp Currer for many years. What is the
On your right is Hope Ford Bridge named for the much
summer.

and Wimosa produce seeds in long beans in the lake
leathery leaves? Like the Wimosa, but also has thorns. Locusts
important! The tree with the W? on it is a Black Locust. It has
each side of the road. From what continent were Wimosas
Road. Just past the pavilion (W?) look for a big Wimosa on
of the forest by Kludzu. Turn right (Southeast) on the West
Our trail goes East to the West Road. Note the destruction
the meadow is one of 5 kinds of hickories in the Mid-South. Follow the trail through the campsites. What is the clump of trees with heart shaped leaves at the back of the campsite? Proceed downhill to Nature Lane and take a right. Again you will find many ferns in this moist valley. The Christmas and Beech Ferns are everywhere. Can you find the one clump of Polypody fern? It has single leaflets like Christmas Ferns but without the toe. Notice cane growing.

Following Nature Lane, take a left across the stream to find famous Suicide Cliff. Thirty years ago Suicide was much steeper, steeper even than Clay Cliff seen earlier. Erosion has worn it down. Its dirt is now the bottom of the lake. At the bottom of Suicide notice several big Beeches, Sycamores with peeled bark, and Tulip Poplars. The trees growing at angle in the water are Black Willows. They have long narrow leaves and always grow in or near water.

Backtrack to Nature Lane and find the Wolfheads leading uphill. Past the clearing you will find the Central Road. To your left, within sight is Tomahawk Dining Hall where you started.

Before boarding your car, check all your Scouts for ticks. One in one hundred thousand ticks carries the germ of Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever. The tick must feed on a human for several hours before it can transmit the germ, so if you get the ticks off now, you should have nothing to worry about.

The Peckerwood Nature Trail is a Volunteer service project to The Chickasaw Council. We hope you enjoyed the Trail and learned a lot. An attractive Trail Patch is available for $1.50.

Order from: Peckerwood Nature Trail 1345 Hickory Ridge Cove Memphis, TN 38116 Phone 396-0447