

"The Prettyboy Dam Sensory Hike" DIY Park Quest 2020 in Parkton, Maryland

Pretty Scenery, Pretty Challenging Hike, Pretty Good Use of the Senses, and Pretty Interesting History at the Prettyboy Dam

*Gunpowder Falls
State Park*



*Hereford
Wildlands
Area*

Address: 1001 Falls Road, Parkton, MD 21120

For this Quest you will hike in our Hereford Wildlands Area towards the Prettyboy Dam where the Big Gunpowder Falls River and our Park begins!

The terrain is moderate-to-difficult (rock scrambling, ducking under mountain laurel), but the challenge makes it fun! The hike is approximately 3.5-miles long, out-and-back. Please wear sturdy, slip resistant, closed-toe shoes and bring water.

Follow along in your worksheet to complete sensory pit stops, and learn about the history of Prettyboy Dam and the importance of this unique watershed!



Contact Ranger Nicole Staab at
Nicole.Staab@Maryland.Gov
or call (410)592-2897
for any questions.



Additional Information in regards to this Park Quest

- The Park is open at sunrise and closes at sunset.
 - There are no restrooms at this location.
 - Please remember to bring your worksheet and a pencil. Also bring water to take with you on the hike and wear closed-toe, slip resistant comfortable shoes. It is always a good idea to use bug repellent to help protect yourself.
 - There is a shorter, alternative hike about a half mile south of the 1001 Falls Road address at the Highlands Trail Parking Lot at ~1243 Falls Road which would cut the hike in half.
 - Due to this being a Wildlands Area, bicycles are prohibited to minimize impact, and the park did not want to place any interpretive boards or signs along the trail to disturb the habitat; we wanted everything to stay as natural as possible to respect the flora and fauna of the area. This reflects our ***Leave No Trace** initiative.
 - The Prettyboy Dam is the City of Baltimore Property, and is not owned or managed by Gunpowder Falls State Park. About halfway through the trail at an unmarked location, state property transitions into city property, but the public is welcome on both sides. You would need special right of entry permission to enter from the city side. There is a gate that prohibits the public to walk the stairs up to the top dam for safety reasons.
- *Read more about Leave No Trace in your worksheet.**
- Please report any trail issues to Ranger Nicole Staab at Nicole.Staab@Maryland.Gov or (410)592-2897.

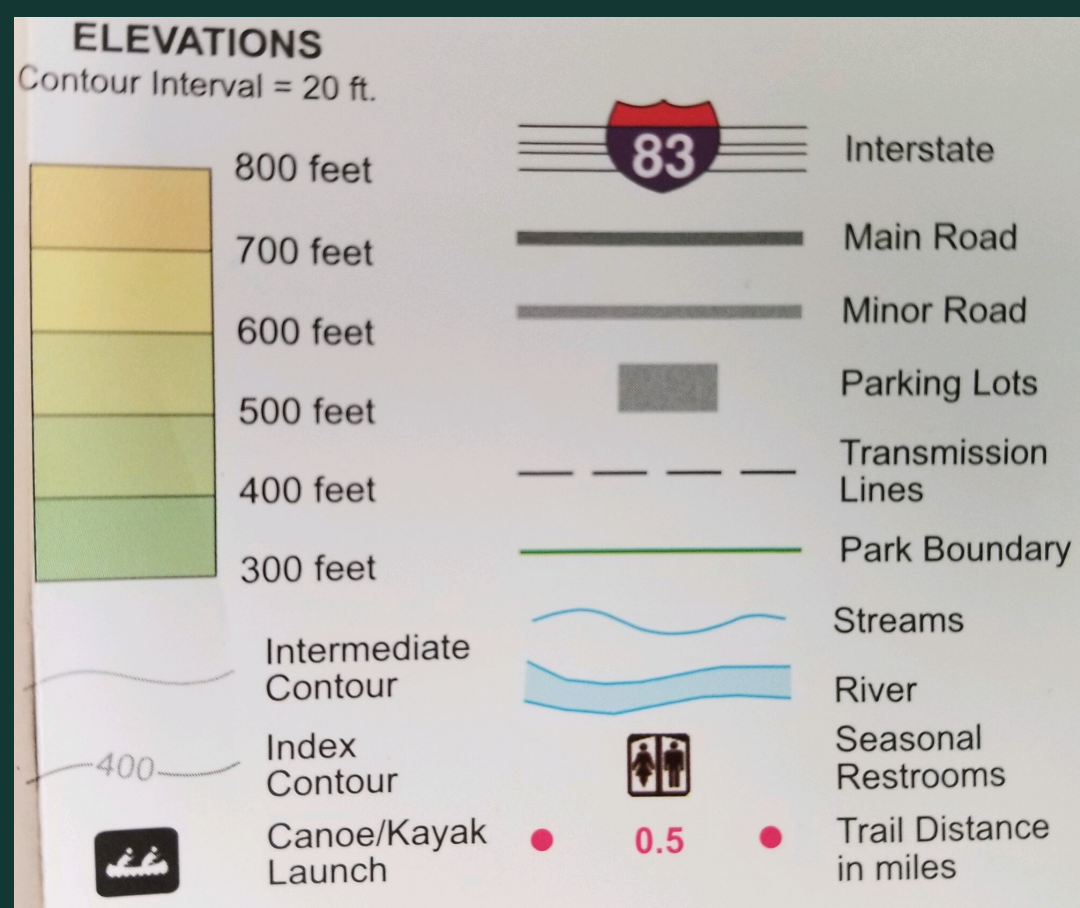
Additional Information in regards to other areas of Gunpowder Falls State Park

When you are done the Prettyboy Dam DIY Quest, we welcome you to explore other areas of Gunpowder Falls State Park!

- The closest parking lot of the Torrey C. Brown Rail Trail is just 6 minutes away from the Falls Road Parking Lot of the Quest. Just type in "Torrey C. Brown Rail Trail, Parkton, MD 21120" into your GPS. This trail is 19.7 miles of the former Northern Central Railway (NCR) in northern Baltimore County - from Ashland, Maryland north to the Maryland-Pennsylvania line, passing through historic communities including Ashland, Phoenix, Monkton, White Hall, Bentley Springs and Freeland. Hikers, joggers, bicyclists, horseback riders and pets on leashes are welcome. The Torrey C. Brown Trail is ADA accessible. We recommend that your family takes a hike or a bike ride on this trail after your quest. There are picnic tables and benches throughout the trail, so you can stop and eat your lunch along the way!
- The Gunpowder Falls DIY Park Quest for 2020 is located in a service charge free area. If you wanted to venture to other locations of Gunpowder Falls State Park where there is a service charge, you must pay the appropriate fee.

The Prettyboy Dam Sensory Hike

Trail Map



The Prettyboy Dam Sensory Hike Worksheet

Read along and complete this worksheet along your hike!

PARK QUEST FAMILY:

DATE OF QUEST:

NAME THE **5** SENSES:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

2. Begin Your Sensory Hike and **TOUCH** the Water!

Only about five minutes down the trail, you will come to an area along the river where it is flat and open.

TOUCH the water!

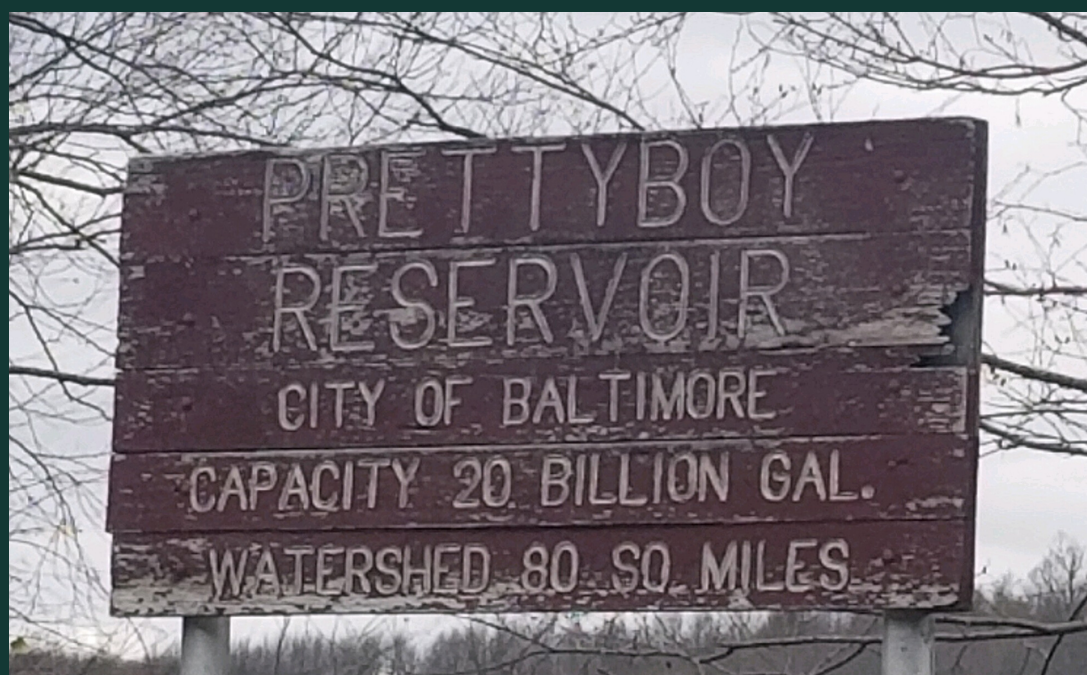
Circle one: Does it feel **hot** or **cold**?

Learn about the Watershed:

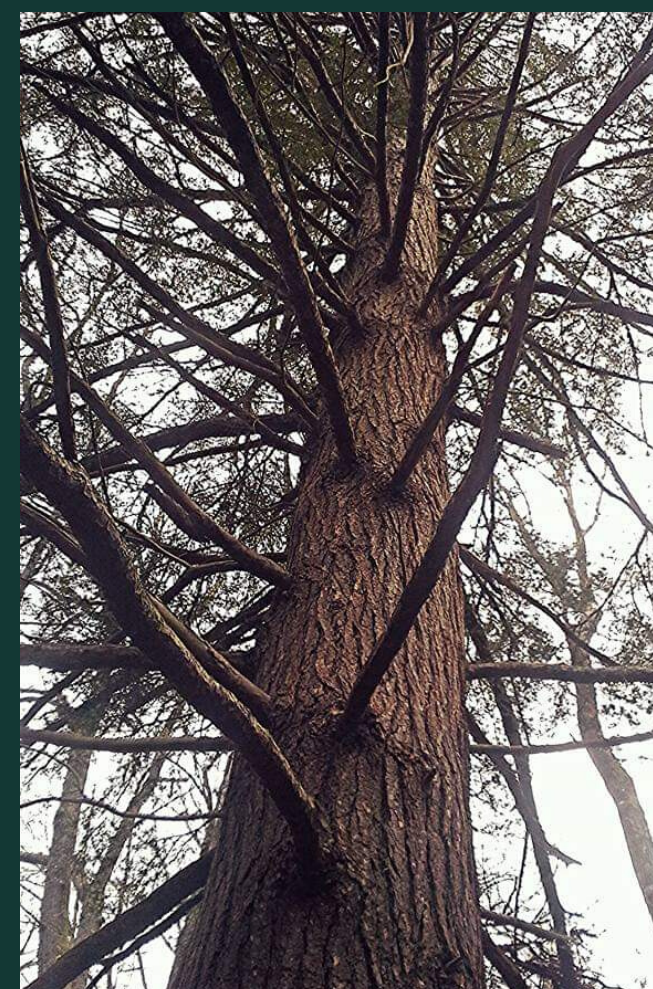
I bet it felt cold! Did you know that the water here all dropped from the dam's lower gate and stays on average about 55 degrees Fahrenheit year round? This makes the river the perfect habitat for trout which need clean cold water like this to survive. Also **SEE** how you can see through the water to the bottom? This is called water turbidity.

When it is clear like the Big Gunpowder Falls River here, that is an indicator that it is clean and healthy! This watershed also houses a number of ***keystone species** like the near threatened Eastern Hemlock that thrive from the clean cold water benefits.

The Prettyboy is considered a "source water" or drinking watershed. Prettyboy is one of three reservoirs created to supply the Metropolitan Baltimore water system. These reservoirs provide about **61%** of the drinking water in this area! That is well over half! If your well at home runs on city water and you are from Baltimore City, Baltimore County, or northern Anne Arundel County, or maybe you filled your bottle up from a place around here...your water could have come from Prettyboy Reservoir, which you are about one mile away from, behind the dam you are hiking to!



*Pictured above, the sign states that the reservoir can hold 20 billion gallons! Pictured right, is an Eastern Hemlock. **SEE** if you can find them on the trail. A give away is the staggered branches and green needles.*



***keystone species-** a species on which other species in an ecosystem largely depend on. Without them, the area would change drastically.

3. Hike On and SMELL the Mountain Laurel

LOOK for Mountain Laurel pictured below, and when you find some (hard to miss on this trail!), smell the flowers if it is in bloom!



In Bloom
(May-June)



Not in Bloom



What does it smell like? If it is not in bloom, what do you think it would smell like?

Draw a picture of this plant below:

Plant Facts:

- Whatever you do, do **NOT** eat any part of this plant! Mountain Laurel is highly toxic! It has even held the nickname of "Calf-Kill" and "Lamb-Kill". Although it is not known to be deadly to the pollinators that drink the flower's honey.
- Mountain Laurel ranges from 3-40 feet, and we have that range all over the trail! (More on the shorter scale.)
- It grows best in acidic soil and rocky wooded terrain, and can primarily be found in the Eastern U.S.
- Native Americans were known to make spoons from the wood.
- Mountain Laurel is the state flower of Pennsylvania and Connecticut!

4. Continue On the Trail and LISTEN to What's Around You

About halfway through the hike, the trail will have you yield a hard left (see the map where it curves). Stop and take a break here.

Once you have caught your breath, be silent for two to five minutes (or more if you'd like!) You can find a log to sit on, or just stand right off of the trail by the water. Close your eyes if this helps, but focus on listening to the wildlife, nature and sounds around you. Hint- the longer you stay quiet, the more you may hear since the wildlife is not being startled by any noise you may make and won't shy away from feeling threatened.

Be



Quiet!

Did you hear birds chirping? Maybe an airplane flying over? The water flowing? Maybe you heard a squirrel in the woods, or a kayaker making their way down the river?

Make a log of the noises that you heard during your quiet time:

5. *TASTE* your Water!

We hope you have taken a drink from your water bottle before reading this, but please drink some now to stay hydrated and fuel up for the remainder of the hike!

Just like how all the flora and fauna around you need water to survive, you do too for the same reasons! Especially while doing physical activities like Park Quest hikes since water helps regulate your body temperature, keeps you focused and lubricates your joints.



Do you use a reusable water bottle? Here is why you should!

Releases less carbon dioxide into the atmosphere

SAVES MONEY\$

*Cleanable and reusable
convenient*

Less likely to end up in a landfill

Saves Oil/Plastic

Protects water and marine life

Can be personalized

Can use other hot/cold liquids in them

D
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E

6. SEE the Dam!

This is the most exciting part of the Quest! There is the perfect flat rock in front of the dam that is a great spot to capture a picture of this beautiful feature, or take a family photo!

A little about the dam...

The curved crest of the dam has a peak elevation of 520 feet. It employs a relatively simple design where water flows over the crest and directly under the four concrete arches of the bridge. The spillway crest serves as an overflow which automatically releases water whenever the reservoir surface rises too high. The dam also has gates and valves to control and direct the flow of water from the reservoir.

The dam required 192,000 cubic yards of concrete, and the cost of construction was \$2,383,732. However, this did not include the purchase and clearing of land for the reservoir, the building of roads, other bridges, and culverts, and numerous engineering expenses. The total cost for the entire project was \$4,110,135.

Due to inflation, in 2020 that would have been equivalent to \$47,302,594.44 for construction, and \$81,561,202.78 for the entire project!

Prettyboy Reservoir takes its name from Prettyboy Creek, a small stream in the area. It is rumored that a settler's daughter of the time was gifted a beautiful colt who she named, "Prettyboy". One evening, after a storm, the horse escaped and failed to return home. After days turned into weeks, and weeks into months of looking, the horse was never found. The area was named "Prettyboy" in the horse's memory.

7. Backtrack!

Once your family is done exploring the trail around the dam, you can backtrack to your vehicle.

Thank you, and Congratulations on completing the Gunpowder Falls State Park Park DIY Quest, we hope you had a great time and we look forward to seeing you around our park, and other Maryland State Parks in the future!

