

**Tree Trunk**

**Cumberland State Forest**

This box contains lesson plans and supplies for field study on the Cumberland 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 State Forest office at 804-492-4121, or by emailing stateforest@dof.virginia.gov with “Cumberland” in the subject line.

General Forest Information

The land that now comprises the Cumberland State Forest had a long history of farming. Evidence of the land's former inhabitants can be seen in the cemeteries and old homesteads scattered throughout the forest. By the mid-1930's, much of this land had become unproductive and was highly eroded. At that time, the federal government began purchasing marginal farmland under the Bankhead-Jones Farm Tenant Act, enacted to help conserve and restore the health of the land. Much of this purchased land was soon leased to the state. In 1954, the federal government deeded land to the Commonwealth of Virginia, and the Cumberland State Forest was born. Under the Virginia Department of Forestry's management, the forest grew to its present 16,222 acres.

In the 1930's, much of today's forest was open farmland. When farming ceased, native pines colonized the abandoned fields. Eventually, as the soil improved and the pines died out, hardwood species became dominant. Today the Cumberland State Forest contains a diversity of timber types, including loblolly pine stands and mature oak-hickory forest. Management activities demonstrate good forestry and conservation practices and serve as sites for applied research in forestry. Wildlife habitat, recreation, watershed protection, and sustainable timber management are all goals for this large State Forest.

The Cumberland State Forest offers opportunities for hiking, wildlife watching, biking, horseback riding, hunting, fishing, and picnicking. Visitors are asked to adopt a “leave no trace” ethic when visiting the forest, as there are no restrooms or trash cans. (These can be found at Bear Creek Lake State Park, located within the State Forest and accessible for a small parking fee.) Major trails are the 14-mile Cumberland Multiple Use Trail, accessible from the State Forest Office or from within the State Park; and the 16-mile Willis River Hiking Trail, accessible from the Winston Lake boat launch and picnic shelter area on the south end, or from Warner Forest Road off Rt. 608 on the north end. Hikers may also use the network of forest roads and trails that traverse the forest. Four lakes are available for fishing on the forest.

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 Cumberland State Forest is returned to the county.

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 Cumberland State Forest are as follows:

- Vehicles are permitted on established forest roads that are not gated.

- Pack out all trash.

- Do not remove any plant, mineral, or animal (except as acquired by legal hunting and fishing).

- Mountain biking and horseback riding require a State Forest Use Permit for those aged 16 and older.

- Hunting and fishing are permitted in accordance with State regulations. Both regular licenses and State Forest permits are required.

- **Prohibited** activities and items on this forest include camping, ATVs, alcoholic beverages, fireworks, and open air fires.

Directions for Access:

The Cumberland State Forest office is located at 751 Oak Hill Road, Cumberland, VA. Please see the map for additional parking areas. If you are bringing a group to the forest, please let the State Forest office know the date and approximate time of your visit. Call 804-492-4121, or email stateforest@dof.virginia.gov with “Cumberland” in the subject line.