

Seneca Creek State Park Y0339  
Seneca Creek State Park and Clopper Lake  
Gathersburg, MD  
20k, 10k and 5k Walks

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## YRE Description

The Seneca Creek State Park, comprising 6,300 acres, extends along 14 scenic miles of Seneca Creek, as it winds its way to the Potomac River. The Clopper Day-Use Area contains many scenic areas, including Clopper Lake which is surrounded by forests and fields. Clopper Lake is a 90-acre impoundment on Long Draught Branch. The dam was built in 1975 for recreation and flood control. It averages 18 feet in depth with several shallow coves. Tree downfalls and beaver huts provide habitat in some areas of the lake for crappie, sunfish, carp and largemouth bass. A restored 19th century cabin and a self-guided path interpret the history of the area.

The Seneca Creek Trail and Clopper Lake Trail, each 10k on natural surfaces, can be combined for 20k. There are also instructions for alternate road-only walks of 10k and 5k. There is a link to an excellent trail map in the Internet Resources section.

Water fountains and restrooms are available at the Park Office when it is open. Restrooms are open most of the year on the park entrance road, just before the gatehouse. Water and restrooms are available at the Boat Center in summer and year round at the playground near the big meadow.

## Registering for the Walk

- **Participant Fee:** The Seneca Valley Sugarloafers Volksmarch club charges a \$4 per person participation fee for all participants aged 13 and older. This fee helps cover event costs.
- **Ensuring Your IVV Credit:** To ensure you receive IVV event and distance credit for your walk, please do NOT check the 'No Credit' box during registration if you are 13 years or older. This step is important for tracking your progress in Volkssporting!

## Accessing Walk Information (OSB PDF Download)

For your convenience, you can download a comprehensive PDF file containing detailed walk information, maps and instructions for your chosen route.

- There is a small, upfront \$2 download fee for this PDF.
- **Reimbursement for the PDF:** We'll credit this \$2 download fee back to you when you complete your walk using the OSB 'Finish Table' and pay the \$4 participant fee. Think of it as a prepayment that gets returned when you finish!

## After You Have Completed the Walk

After completing your walk, please return to the OSB and log your finish at the 'Finish Table' within 60 days of the event registration. Be sure to include the walk date, distance, and any AVA Special Programs that apply to this event (see the AVA Special Programs section in this document).

If walking for IVV credit, your event and distance credits will be recorded automatically.

## Driving Directions to the Walk Start

**Park Office hours:** Open from sunrise to sunset year-round.

**Address:** Seneca Creek State Park 11950 Clopper Road Gaithersburg, MD 20878

**GPS Coordinates:** 151256, -77.249049

**Plus code:** 5Q22+G9 Germantown, Maryland

*Plus codes are based on latitude and longitude. By using a simpler code system, they are intended to be shorter and easier to use than traditional global coordinates.*

**From Washington, D.C, Virginia and points south:**

- Take I-270 north towards Frederick, Maryland.
- Take Exit 10, Clopper Road (Route 117).
- Turn right at the light at the bottom of the ramp. The park is approximately 2 miles on the left.
- After entering the park, turn right at the first road to the Park Offices and park in the office parking lot.

**From Frederick, MD and points north:**

- Take Exit 11 (MD Route 124 west).
- Turn right at the light at the bottom of the ramp.
- At the second light, turn right onto Clopper Road (Route 117). The park is approximately 1.5 miles on the left.
- After entering the park, turn right at the first road to the Park Offices and park in the office parking lot.

## Seneca Creek Trail 10k

AVA rating 2C

This trail is for seasoned walkers who welcome a challenge and are accustomed to walking a 10k trail on the State Park's varied natural terrain, which can be muddy and slippery when wet. Several moderate hills are encountered, but you will be rewarded along the way with many different scenic passages.

***In case of Emergency: Dial 911.***

***For event assistance contact Pat King at (301) 977-1302***

With your back to the Park Offices

1. **Turn Left** on the sidewalk passing the old log cabin. Continue through the parking lot to the Great Seneca Trail sign.

*The cabin was relocated here from a site in Germantown. It is the last cabin of many built in 1830's by German settlers, thus the name Germantown.*

2. **Turn Left** at the sign and follow the trail with orange blazes downhill.  
*This trail leading down to Seneca Creek follows an old Indian trail which later became the mill road.*
3. **Straight** at the intersection with the Seneca Creek Greenway Trail (teal blazes). The trail turns Turn Left at the water's edge. Be careful on the rocks, they are very slippery.

*As you arrive at the creek, notice old bridge abutments which once supported a small bridge across creek. Can you spot the geodesic marker embedded in the rock? Going further along beside the creek and looking to your right across the creek, you may be able to spot the remaining walls of old Clopper grist mill. It flourished for over 100 years until it burned down in 1947.*

4. **Follow** the trail beside the creek, going downstream.
5. **Turn Left** to follow the trail as it goes away from the creek.
6. **Turn Right** at Y-intersection in trail.
  - a. Pass the 'Old Pond' sign

- b. Pass the teal blaze on your left.
  - c. Cross bridge (with rails).
  - d. Cross under high power lines.
7. **Turn Right** at blue and orange posts, following teal blazes.
  8. **Turn Left** to follow the trail as it enters the woods to its end at park road near the lake.
  9. **Cross and Turn Right** on the main road to walk on the left shoulder to the lake and along the trail next to a metal fence across the dam.
  10. **Straight** on the Lake Shore Trail (blue blazes).
  11. **Turn Left** at blue arrow on wooden post and follow this trail for about 1.6k.
    - a. Cross wooden bridge (with rails).
    - b. Ignore Mink Hollow Trail on the right.
    - c. Cross wooden bridge (no rails).
  12. **Turn Right** at T-intersection intersection before another wooden bridge (with rails) on the left. Go uphill to the Fawn Picnic Pavilion and playground.
  13. **Turn Left** to go out to the road.
  14. **Turn Left** and walk on the left side of the road to the sign for the Bobwhite Pavilion. (5k)

Seneca Creek Trail - 10k

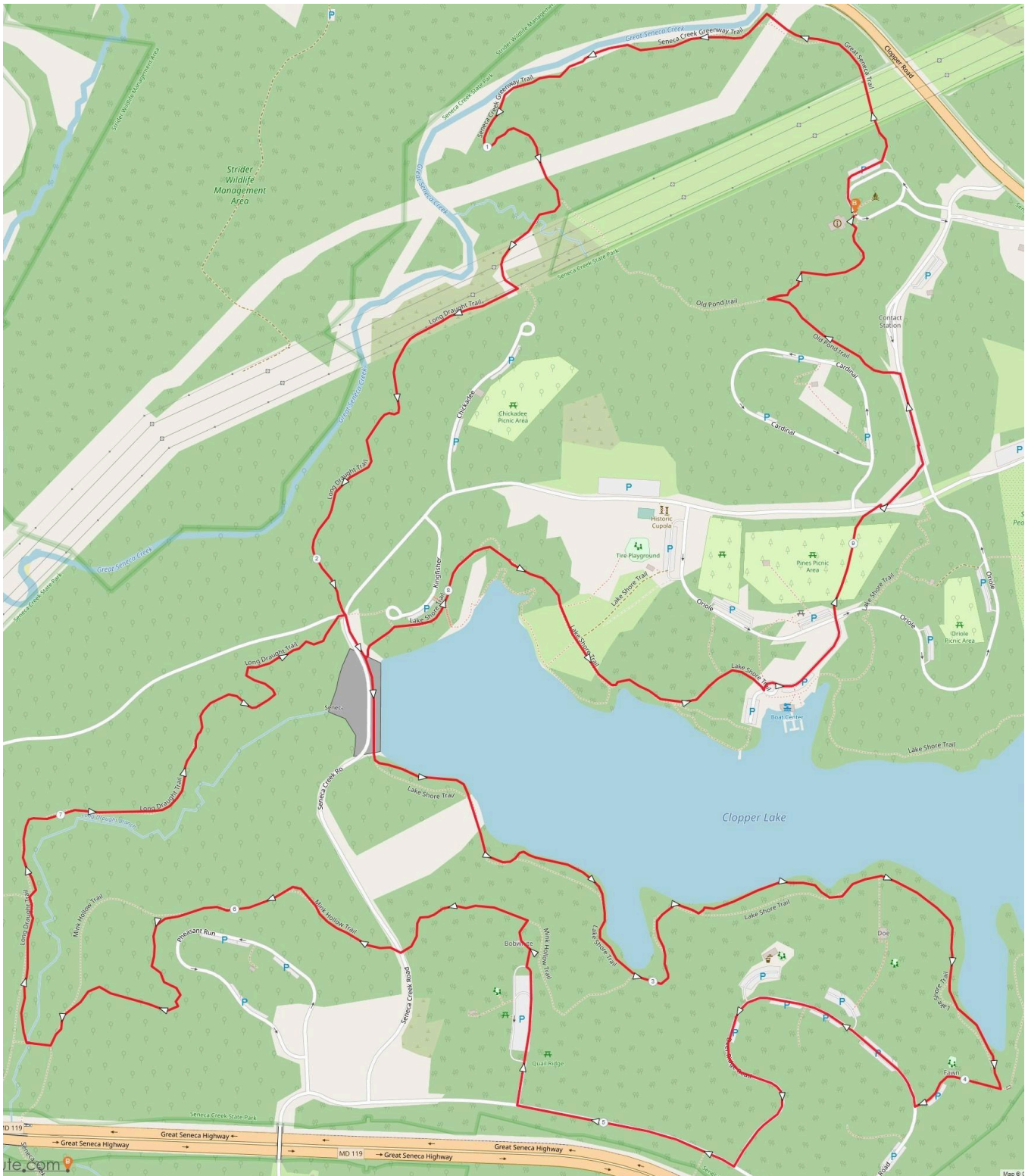
15. **Turn Right** and follow the access road through the parking lot toward the pavilion.  
*Water at pavilion (turned off in winter).*
16. Approaching the pavilion area, at the first black lamppost: **Turn Right** to walk between horseshoe pits into the woods.
17. **Turn Left** onto Mink Hollow Trail (white blazes) ignoring the Lake Shore Trail intersection to the main park road.
18. **Cross road** and re-enter woods and continue about 0.8k.
  - a. Cross short bridge (no rails).
  - b. Continue on a boardwalk across a swampy area to a bridge (with side rails).
  - c. Cross bridge over Long Draught Branch.
19. **Veer Turn Right** at end of bridge and uphill on to the Seneca Greenway Trail (teal blazes) and Long Draught Trail (yellow blazes).
20. **Turn Right** at the Long Draught Trail sign and continue for about 1k to the main park road.
21. **Cross road and Turn Right** toward the lake.
22. At the metal fence, **Immediately** look for an opening in the fence. **Turn Left** through fence opening to follow the Lake Shore Trail (blue blazes) with the lake on the right.  
*Building on the left in the large meadow area is year-round restrooms.*
23. **Turn Left** at trail intersection to paved parking lot, ignoring all side trails. The Boat Center is in view.
24. **Turn Left** onto the paved road away from the lake passing the Boat Center and uphill to the intersection.
25. **Veer Turn Right** across the road to One Way sign with an arrow.
  - a. Cross small footbridge.
26. **Immediate Turn Right** to continue on Lake Shore Trail (blue blazes), keeping pine grove on your left to main park road, ignoring all side trails.
27. **Cross and Turn Right** on the road to the stop sign.
28. **Turn Left** onto park exit road. Continue downhill along the left shoulder of park exit road toward the gatehouse.
29. Just prior to speed hump, look left for the Old Pond Trail sign. **Turn Left** to enter woods to follow the Old Pond Trail (red blazes).
30. **Turn Right** onto the first trail on the right, crossing the bridge (with rails), following the trail and then up steps to Park Offices.

*Thank you for walking our Sugarloafer year-round today!*

*We hope you enjoyed this trail.*

***These walk directions and maps may only be used with a signed American Volkssport Association athletic waiver. All other uses are prohibited.***

# Seneca Creek Trail - 10k



10k map - Created by PlotARoute.com, map data by OpenStreetMap Contributors

## Clopper Lake Trail 10k

AVA rating 2C

This trail is for seasoned walkers who welcome a challenge and are accustomed to walking a 10k trail on the State Park's varied natural terrain, which can be muddy and slippery when wet. Several moderate hills are encountered, but you will be rewarded along the way with many different scenic passages and an opportunity to see the park's peonies in season.

***In case of Emergency: Dial 911.***

***For event assistance contact Pat King at (301) 977-1302***

From the Park Offices,

1. **Turn Right** at the black lamppost, walk on grass down to sign for Old Pond Trail. Go down steps and continue on trail (red blazes).
  - a. Cross bridge (with side rails).
2. **Turn Left** at T-intersection with red blazed post to park entrance road.
3. **Cross and Turn Right** on road to stop sign.
4. **Straight** on park road.

*NOTE: In late May/early June, you may want to make a short detour at this point to admire the peonies in bloom.*

5. A short distance after the stop sign, turn **Turn Left** on to the dirt road and walk to the Peony field ahead. Retrace your steps.
6. **Turn Left** onto the Lake Shore Trail (just before the Boat Center access road).
7. **Immediate Turn Left** onto natural surface trail marked with blue blazes.
8. **Turn Left** at T-intersection intersection to stay on the Lake Shore Trail. Continue on trail with lake on right to bridge (with side rails), about 0.5k.
9. **Cross bridge and Turn Left.** Continue through woods and back down to lake

shore about 0.6k to bridge (with rails) on right.

10. **Turn Right** to cross bridge and follow the trail to an intersection with a gravel path.
11. **Straight** to follow the trail uphill (blue blazes) and then back down along the lake shore.
12. **Bear Turn Right** at next Y-intersection in trail to go around the end of the lake. Do NOT go up to the road. Follow the trail over the cement causeway for the Long Draught Branch.
13. **Turn Right** at the end of the causeway and downhill to the Lake Shore Trail (blue blazes) to walk along lake shore. Ignore unmarked side trails and road. You can see a few private homes on your left in a couple places on this side of the lake.
14. **Bear Turn Left** as the trail goes around a large lake cove.
15. **Cross bridge (with rails) and Turn Right** to continue on Lake Shore Trail (blue blazes).
  - b. Cross short footbridge.
  - c. Pass the Boat Center across the lake, to another cove of the lake.
  - d. Cross 2nd small footbridge (no rails).

## Clopper Lake Trail - 10k

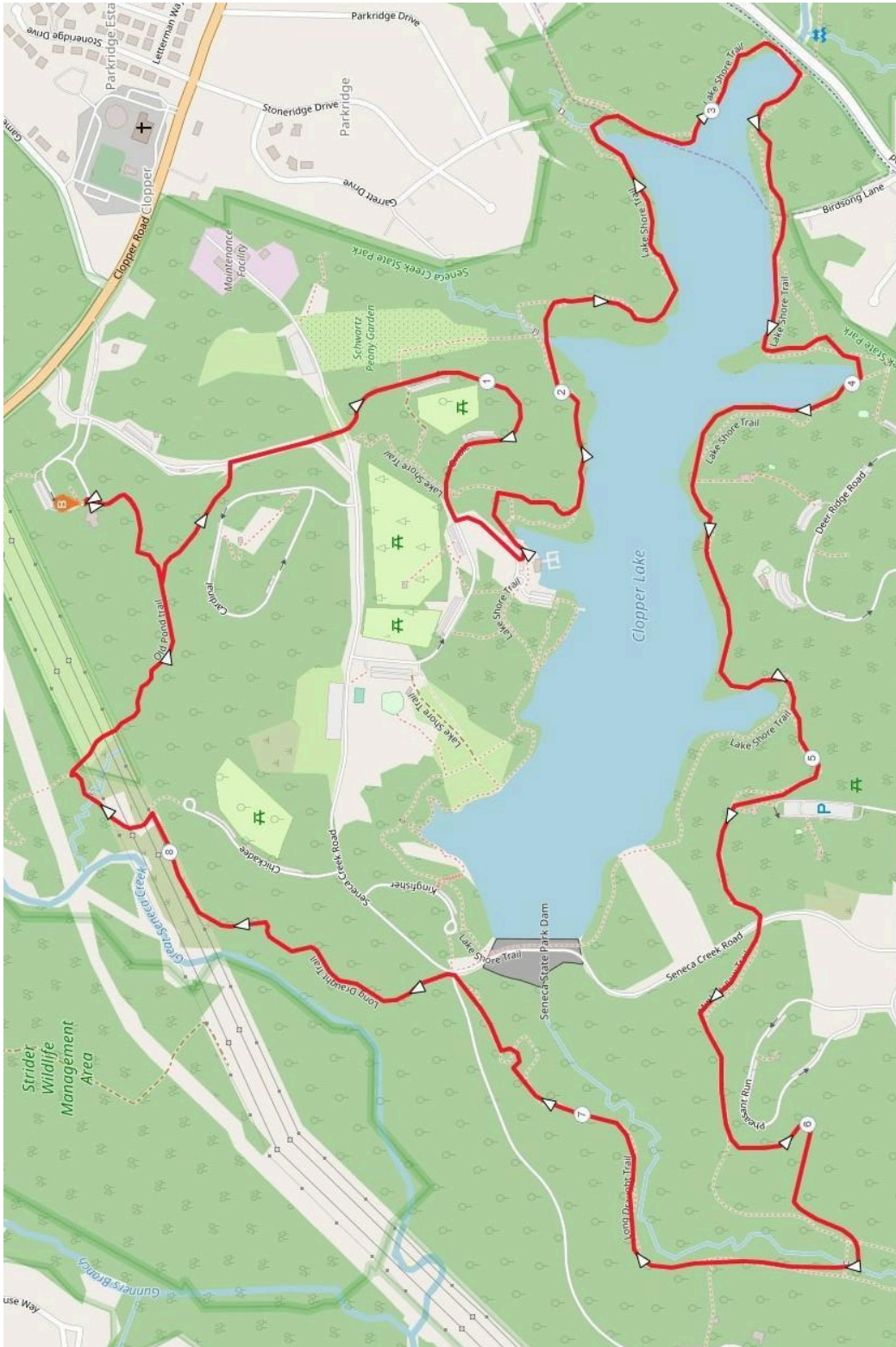
- e. Cross a short boardwalk.
16. **Immediate Turn Left** onto Mink Hollow Trail (white blazes) and follow it away from the lake, passing the Bobwhite picnic shelter and water fountain on your left.
17. **Cross road** and re-enter woods and continue about 0.8k.
  - a. Cross short bridge (no rails).
  - b. Continue on a boardwalk across a swampy area to a bridge (with side rails).
    - a. Cross bridge over Long Draught Branch.
18. **Slight Turn Right and uphill** on to the Seneca Greenway Trail / Long Draught Trail (no sign or blazes).
  - a. Cross short footbridge (no rails).
  - b. Pass 12 ½ Mile Post.
19. **Turn Right** at the metal Long Draught Trail sign.
20. **Turn Left** after the bridge (with side rails), follow trail until you reach the intersection of the main park road and the access road for the Nuthatch and Bobwhite pavilions.
  - a. Cross the pavilion access road and enter the woods at the 'Great Seneca Trail' sign. This trail is marked with Teal and Orange blazes. Continue until the trail exits the woods at the power lines.
21. **Turn Right and go uphill** with power lines on your left.
22. **Turn Left** at top of hill with 2 posts, 1 orange and 1 blue. Follow the trail carefully down a short, steep slope.
  - a. Cross under the power lines.
  - b. Cross bridge (with rails).
23. **Hard Turn Right** at first Y-intersection in the trail marked with a wooden 'Old Pond' sign (and red blazes).
  - a. Cross under power lines.
  - b. Continue through the woods.
  - c. Cross short wood bridge (no rails).
  - d. Cross short wood bridge (with side rails).
24. **Turn Left** at Y-intersection in trail (marked with a wooden post with 2 red triangles), crossing the bridge (with rails), following the trail and then up steps to Park Offices.

*Thank you for walking our Sugarloafer year-round today!*

*We hope you enjoyed this trail.*

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# Clopper Lake Trail - 10k



10k map - Created by PlotARoute.com, map data by OpenStreetMap Contributors

## Park Road Optional Trail 10k

AVA rating 2A

We have developed this alternate trail—completely on paved park roads—for all walkers to enjoy the quiet and beauty of this wonderful park. Please follow the rules of the road, and walk facing traffic.

***In case of Emergency: Dial 911.***

***For event assistance contact Pat King at (301) 977-1302***

With your back to Park Offices,

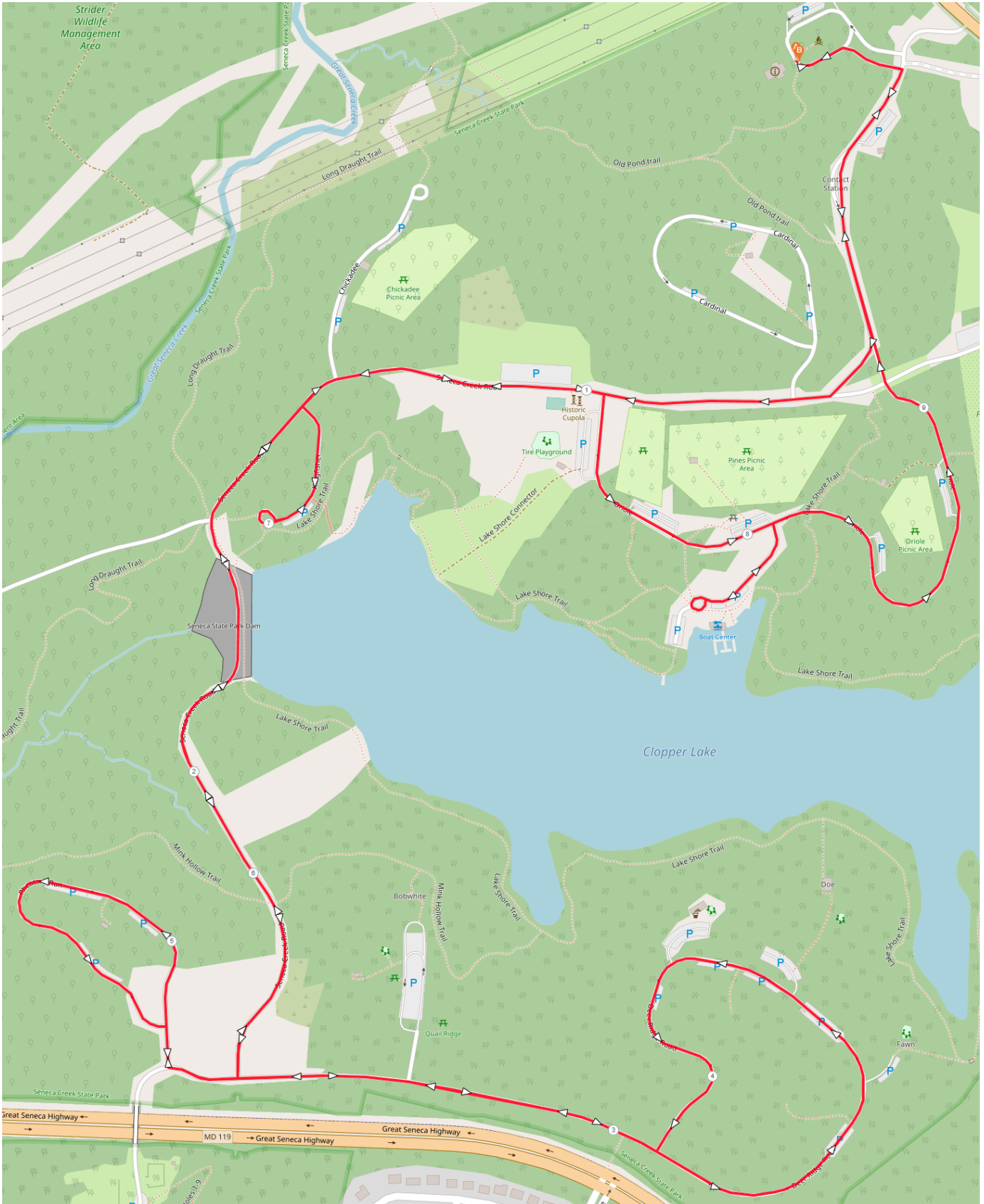
1. **Turn Right** on the brick sidewalk. When the sidewalk ends, continue along the roadway.
2. **Bear Turn Right** at the fork in the road and walk to the stop sign.
3. **Turn Right** on the entrance road, passing the gatehouse.
4. **Bear Turn Right** at the Y-intersection to the main park road.
  - a. Continue on main park road
  - b. Pass Cardinal Picnic Area
  - c. Pass playground (and restrooms) on left
  - d. Pass Chickadee Picnic Area
  - e. Pass Kingfisher Overlook
  - f. Pass Bluejay Picnic Pavilion
  - g. Pass Nuthatch Picnic Pavilion
  - h. Cross dam with Clopper Lake on left
5. **Turn Left** at stop sign (2.4k).
  - a. Pass Fawn Picnic Pavilion
  - b. Pass Doe Picnic Pavilion
  - c. Pass Buck Picnic Pavilion
6. **Turn Right** on main park road.
  - a. Pass sign for Quail Ridge Picnic Area / Bobwhite Pavilion.
7. **Straight** at stop sign (4.6k).
8. **Turn Right** at the sign for Pheasant Run Picnic Area and continue around the loop road.
9. **Turn Right** at Yield sign.
10. **Turn Left** at the stop sign (5.5 k).
11. **Turn Left** at the next stop sign.
  - a. Cross dam with Clopper Lake on right.
12. **Turn Right** into Kingfisher Overlook, and around the circle at overlook. (7k)
13. **Retrace** your steps back to the main park road.
14. **Turn Right** to sign for Boat Center, Picnic Sites, and Playground.
15. **Turn Right** to pass the playground and restrooms on right.
  - a. Continue to sign on for Clopper Lake Boat Center. (8k)
16. **Turn Right** toward the Boat Center and lake and Continue to and around the circle.
17. **Retrace your steps** past the Boat Center and up to the stop sign.
18. **Turn Right** on the road to the next stop sign.
19. **Straight** on Park Entrance road. (9.1k)
  - a. Passing the gatehouse until you reach the sign for the Park Offices.
20. **Turn Left** to Park Offices.

Thank you for walking our Sugarloafer year-round today!

We hope you enjoyed this trail.

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# Park Road Optional - 10k



10k map - Created by PlotaRoute.com, map data by OpenStreetMap Contributors

Revision Date: 5 December 2025

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## Park Road Optional Trail 6k

AVA rating 2A

We have developed this alternate trail—completely on paved park roads—for all walkers to enjoy the quiet and beauty of this wonderful park. Please follow the rules of the road, and walk facing traffic.

***In case of Emergency: Dial 911.***

***For event assistance contact Pat King at (301) 977-1302***

With your back to Park Offices,

1. **Turn Right** on the brick sidewalk. When the sidewalk ends, continue along the roadway.
2. **Bear Turn Right** at the fork in the road and walk to the stop sign.
3. **Turn Right** on the entrance road past the gatehouse and uphill.
4. **Bear Turn Right** at the Y-intersection to the main park road.
  - a. Continue on main park road
  - b. Pass Cardinal Picnic Area
  - c. Pass playground (and restrooms) on left
  - d. Pass Chickadee Picnic Area
  - e. Pass Kingfisher Overlook
5. **Turn Right** on road immediately after sign for Bluejay and Nuthatch Picnic Pavilions to parking lot at the end of the road.
6. **Continue clockwise around the parking lot** and retrace your steps back to the main park road.
7. **Turn Left** on main park road to road for Boat Center.
  - a. Pass Kingfisher Overlook
  - b. Pass Chickadee Picnic Area
8. At sign for Boat Center (on left), **Turn Right** on road.
  - a. Pass playground and restrooms on right
  - b. Pass Boat Center on right
  - c. Continue to stop sign
9. At stop sign, **Straight** on entrance road.
  - a. Pass guard house
10. At first road on left, **Turn Left** to Park Offices.

*Thank you for walking our  
Sugarloafer year-round today!*

*We hope you enjoyed this trail*

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## Internet Resources

Seneca Creek State Park: <https://dnr.maryland.gov/publiclands/pages/central/seneca.aspx>

Trail map: [https://dnr.maryland.gov/publiclands/Documents/seneca\\_map.pdf](https://dnr.maryland.gov/publiclands/Documents/seneca_map.pdf)

Geographic region: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Piedmont\\_\(United\\_States\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Piedmont_(United_States))

Club Information: [Seneca Valley Sugarloafers Volksmarch Club](#)

## AVA National Programs

This YRE qualifies for all AVA National Programs:

- Walking the United States (50 States) → Maryland
- Walking the USA (A - Z) →
- Centurion Achievement Challenge → 1 event
- IVV Americas

## AVA Special Programs

SC10 → Seneca Creek Trail - 10k

CL10 → Clopper Lake Trail - 10k

PR10 → Park Road Optional Trail - 10k

PR6 → Park Road Optional Trail - 6k

Special Program Name	Years	SC10	CL10	PR10	PR6	Information
A-MAZE-ing Labyrinths	2024   2027					
Anniversaries Hurrah	2026   2026					
Appalachian Trail	2018   2029					
Grain Elevators: Monarchs of the Plains	2025   2028					
Lighthouses II	2023   2026					
Par for the Course	2023   2026			<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	
Rails-to-Trails	2022   2026					
Step to the Beat	2024   2027					
Walking with America's Veterans	2021   2028					

## Seneca Creek State Park Y0339

Walking With the Wild Things	2025   2028					
Washington-Rochambeau National Historic Trail	2022   2032					

## Photo Album

