

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

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In Case of Emergency: Dial 911
For Event Assistance: Jeff Giddings 240-753-0119

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Seneca Creek State Park Y0339

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, 10just before the gatehouse. Water and restrooms are available at the Boat Center in summer and year round at the playground near the big meadow.

AVA Special Programs

This event does not have any AVA Special Programs.

Parallel Registration

The Sugarloafers maintain a physical walk box for this event as well as OSB event registration. AVA permits the use of these parallel registration methods. You may choose to use either the walk box or the OSB but NOT a combination of both.

Registering for the walk

The Seneca Valley Sugarloafers Volksmarch club charges all participants over 12 a \$3 fee. When you register for your walk event, please DO NOT check the "No Credit" checkbox for any participant over 12 years of age. When you register for the walk you can download the PDF file with walk information. The PDF includes directions to the walk start and walk instructions. The fee for the download is \$2. You will be credited for this fee if you complete the walk and pay the walk participant fee within 60 days.



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After you have completed the walk

Please remember to log back into the OSB's "Finish Table" after completing the walk. Completion information includes the date the event was walked, the distance walked and applicable special programs.

Driving Directions to the Park Offices

Park Offices hours: 8 a.m. to Sunset, March-October; 10 a.m. to Sunset, November-February

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

GPS Coordinates of the Start Point are **39.151256, -77.249049**

Plus code is **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 points north, take I-270 south towards Washington, D.C., 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.



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Seneca Creek Trail 10k (6.2 miles) – 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.

1. With your back to the Park Offices, **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. **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 **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. **LEFT** to follow the trail as it goes away from the creek.
6. **RIGHT** at "Y" 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. **RIGHT** at blue and orange posts, following teal blazes.
8. **LEFT** to follow the trail as it enters the woods to its end at park road near the lake.
9. **CROSS and 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. **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. **RIGHT** at "T" intersection before another wooden bridge (with rails) on the left. Go uphill to the Fawn Picnic Pavilion and playground.
13. **LEFT** to go out to the road.
14. **LEFT** and walk on the left side of the road to the sign for the Bobwhite Pavilion. (5k)
15. **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: **RIGHT** to walk between horseshoe pits into the woods.



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Seneca Creek Trail - 10k

17. **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 RIGHT** at end of bridge and uphill on to the Seneca Greenway Trail (teal blazes) and Long Draught Trail (yellow blazes).
20. **RIGHT** at the Long Draught Trail sign and continue for about 1k to the main park road.
21. **CROSS** road and **RIGHT** toward the lake.
22. At the metal fence, **IMMEDIATELY** look for an opening in the fence.
23. **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.
24. **LEFT** at trail intersection to paved parking lot, ignoring all side trails. The Boat Center is in view.
25. **LEFT** onto the paved road away from the lake passing the Boat Center and uphill to the intersection.
26. **VEER RIGHT** across the road to One Way sign with an arrow.
27. **CROSS** small footbridge.
28. **IMMEDIATE RIGHT** to continue on Lake Shore Trail (blue blazes), keeping pine grove on your left to main park road, ignoring all side trails.
29. **CROSS** and **RIGHT** on the road to the stop sign.
30. **LEFT** onto park exit road. Continue downhill along the left shoulder of park exit road toward the gatehouse.
 - a. Just prior to speed hump, look **LEFT** for the Old Pond Trail sign.
31. **LEFT** to enter woods to follow the Old Pond Trail (red blazes).
32. **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.



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Clopper Lake Trail 10k (6.2 miles) - 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.

1. From the Park Offices, **RIGHT** at the black lamppost, walk on grass down to sign for Old Pond Trail. Go down steps and continue on trail (red blazes).
2. **Cross** bridge (with side rails).
3. **LEFT** at "T" with red blazed post to park entrance road.
4. **CROSS** and **RIGHT** on road to stop sign.
5. **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.
A short distance after the stop sign, turn LEFT on to the dirt road and walk to the Peony field ahead. RETRACE your steps.
6. **LEFT** onto the Lake Shore Trail (just before the Boat Center access road).
7. **Immediate LEFT** onto natural surface trail marked with blue blazes.
8. **LEFT** at "T" 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 **LEFT**. Continue through woods and back down to lake shore about 0.6k to bridge (with rails) on right.
10. **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 RIGHT** at next "Y" 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. **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 LEFT** as the trail goes around a large lake cove.
15. **Cross** bridge (with rails) and **RIGHT** to continue on Lake Shore Trail (blue blazes).
 - a. Cross short footbridge.
 - b. Pass the Boat Center across the lake, to another cove of the lake.
 - c. Cross 2nd small footbridge (no rails).
 - d. Cross a short boardwalk.
16. **Immediate 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).
 - c. Cross bridge over Long Draught Branch.



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Clopper Lake Trail - 10k

18. **Slight 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. **RIGHT** at the metal Long Draught Trail sign.
20. **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.
21. **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.
22. **RIGHT** and go uphill with power lines on your left.
23. **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).
24. **Hard RIGHT** at first “Y” 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).
25. **LEFT** at “Y” 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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Park Road Optional Trail 10k (6.2 miles) - 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.

1. With your back to Park Offices, turn **RIGHT** on the brick sidewalk. When the sidewalk ends, continue along the roadway.
2. Bear **RIGHT** at the fork in the road and walk to the STOP sign.
3. **RIGHT** and **CONTINUE** past the gatehouse and to the next STOP sign.
4. **RIGHT** and walk quite a ways, passing sign for the Cardinal Picnic Area, and passing intersection on the left with the playground (and restrooms), passing signs for the Chickadee Picnic Area, Kingfisher Overlook, Bluejay Picnic Pavilion and the Nuthatch Picnic Pavilion.
5. **CROSS** dam with Clopper Lake on left, and go to STOP sign (2.5 k).
6. **LEFT** and **CONTINUE** pass sign for Quail Ridge Picnic Area / Bobwhite Pavilion.
7. **CONTINUE** downhill and around bend passing signs for the Fawn, Doe and Buck Picnic Pavilions.
8. **RIGHT** on main park road, passing sign for Quail Ridge Picnic Area / Bobwhite Pavilion.
9. **CONTINUE STRAIGHT** at the next Stop sign.
10. **RIGHT** at the sign for Pheasant Run Picnic Area and continue around the loop road.
11. **RIGHT** at YIELD sign (5.5 k).
12. **LEFT** at the STOP sign.
13. **LEFT** at the next STOP.
14. **CROSS** dam with Clopper Lake on right.
15. **RIGHT** into Kingfisher Overlook, and around the circle at overlook. (7k)
16. **RETRACE** your steps back to the main park road.
17. **RIGHT** to **CONTINUE** to sign for Boat Center, Picnic Sites, and Playground.
18. **RIGHT** to pass the playground and **restrooms** on right. **CONTINUE** to sign on for Clopper Lake Boat Center. (8k)
19. **RIGHT** toward the Boat Center and lake and **CONTINUE** to and around the circle.
20. **RETRACE** your steps past the Boat Center and up to the STOP sign.
21. **RIGHT** and **CONTINUE** on the road to the next STOP sign. (9k)
22. **CONTINUE STRAIGHT**, passing the gatehouse until you reach the sign for the Park Offices.
23. Turn **LEFT** to Park Offices.

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Park Road Optional Trail 5k (3.1 miles) - AVA rating 1A

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1. With your back to Park Offices, turn **RIGHT** on the brick sidewalk. When the sidewalk ends, continue along the roadway.
2. Bear **RIGHT** at the fork in the road and walk to the STOP sign.
3. **RIGHT** and **CONTINUE** past the gatehouse and to the next STOP sign.
4. **RIGHT** and walk quite a ways, passing sign for the Cardinal Picnic Area, and passing the intersection on the left with the playground (and restrooms), passing signs for the Chickadee Picnic Area, Kingfisher Overlook, Bluejay Picnic Pavilion and the Nuthatch Picnic Pavilion.
5. **CROSS** dam with Clopper Lake on left, and go to STOP sign (2.5 km).
6. **Turn around** and **RETRACE** your steps across the dam and continue uphill.
7. Bear **LEFT** at the “Do Not Enter” sign on to the entrance road.
8. **CONTINUE STRAIGHT**, passing the gatehouse until you reach the sign for the Park Offices.
9. Turn **LEFT** to Park Offices.

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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

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](#)

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Photo Album



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