

JANES ISLAND STATE PARK WATER TRAILS

Explore the Marshes of the Eastern Shore

All of the Janes Island water trails are managed by the state park and begin at the marina. The boat ramp is primarily for motorized craft and is located at Lat. 38° 0'35.33" N, Long. 75° 50'53.70" W. Non-motorized vessels are encouraged to use the soft launch located next to the ramp at Lat. 38° 0'35.75" N, Long. 75° 50'53.59" W.

The boat ramp can get very busy during the boating season. Have all of your gear ready and be courteous to others as you prepare to launch. Wind, wave action and water levels (tides) can result in hazardous conditions for paddlers. Be sure to check conditions before you launch since these factors may impact the route and direction that you paddle. The Janes Island water trails are among the many designated water trails in Maryland.

This guide is meant to be used as a reference for explored routes and areas of public access. It is strongly recommended that you consult a range of other detailed maps, charts and supplemental information geared to your specific needs when planning for or undertaking extended excursions beyond the park.

WEAR IT!

All boaters are advised to wear life jackets when recreating on the water. At all times, there must be one wearable life jacket per person on board. Maryland state law requires that all children under age 13 must wear a U.S. Coast Guard approved life jacket at all times in any boat under 21 feet.

Water Trail Routes and Descriptions

Each of the seven water trails at Janes Island is marked with signs. The signs correspond to the color or name of the trail and have distinct symbols. All signs are posted for two-way travel. Ask a ranger or the canoe/kayak attendant for additional information about navigating the trails.

The Yellow, Short, Blue, Black and Red trails provide protected paddling within the marshes and creeks of the island's interior. These are flat-water trails and are easily navigated by novice or intermediate paddlers. The Green and Brown trails are open water routes that are subject to high winds, wave action and tidal currents. These trails are recommended for experienced paddlers only.

YELLOW TRAIL

Distance: Approximately 2.5 miles round-trip.
Difficulty: Novice

This trail enters the Daugherty Creek Canal directly across from the marina and continues west along Ward Creek. Along the trail to the north side of Ward Creek is the location of "the Acre," which for many years was populated by family farms. A series of high tides and storms eventually destroyed the farmland on the island and families were forced to relocate to Crisfield.

As you paddle from Ward Creek into the Flatcap Basin, you will see the island dock at the far west side of the basin. From the dock you can access Flat Cap Beach. The beach features beautiful white sand and spans approximately six miles along the west side of the island. The beach's gradual slope is ideal for wading and beachcombing. Swimming is allowed, but there are no lifeguards so swim at your own risk.

SHORT TRAIL

Distance: Approximately 1.25 miles round-trip including part of the Yellow Trail.
Difficulty: Novice

The Short Trail is ideal for paddlers who lack time or paddling experience. Depart from the marina and head west on the Yellow Trail. Continue for about a quarter-mile then turn right at the first creek on your right. The trail continues northward along this unnamed waterway. Although this route is short, an abundance of birds, reptiles, fish, crabs and other wildlife can be seen. Retrace your route to return to the marina.

BLUE TRAIL

Distance: Approximately 2.5 miles including parts of the Yellow and Brown trails.
Difficulty: Novice to Intermediate

This trail begins by following the Yellow Trail then heads south along an interior waterway to a cove at the headwaters of the Little Annessex River. This section can be very shallow during low tides, so it is important to consult a tide chart before you attempt this route.

As you exit the cove and enter the Little Annessex River, McCreedy Hospital will be visible along the eastern shoreline. Continue north into the Daugherty Creek Canal to return to the marina.

BLACK TRAIL

Distance: Approximately 3.5 miles including parts of the Yellow and Brown trails.
Difficulty: Intermediate to Experienced

This trail begins by following the Yellow Trail. Pass the Blue Trail and follow a serpentine waterway that meanders south through the interior of the island to Back Creek and the Little Annessex River. Once on the Little Annessex River, head north to the Daugherty Creek Canal and return to the marina.

RED TRAIL

Distance: Approximately 4 miles including part of the Yellow Trail.
Difficulty: Intermediate to Experienced

This trail snakes through the narrow marshlands on the northern end of Janes Island. Launch from the marina and head west on the Yellow Trail. Where the creek widens, you will see a the island dock in front of you. To the left of the dock is a narrow stretch of beach that fronts on the Tangier Sound.

On the right side of the creek, about 150 yards from the dock, you will see the first Red Trail sign. The Green and Red trails meet at this point. Turn right and follow the signs in a generally northeast direction. Because of the many creeks intersecting the trail, if you have not seen the next sign in a few minutes go back and reorient yourself. When you exit the narrow portion of the trail, you will be in Acre Creek, which is much wider. Head straight across toward the shoreline northeast of you. Follow the shoreline to the Big Annessex River, and continue south into the canal and back to the marina.

GREEN TRAIL

Distance: Approximately 6.25 miles including part of the Yellow Trail.
Difficulty: Experienced paddlers only

Start at the marina and head west on the Yellow Trail. When you are near the island dock you will see a small beach on the left bank. The Tangier Sound and miles of beautiful white sand beach lie just on the other side.

A sign for the Red Trail will be on your right approximately 150 yards before the dock. Turn right at this sign and the next sign you see will be the first sign for the Green Trail. Follow the shoreline and continue toward the marsh straight ahead. At the marsh, turn left and follow the Green Trail signs until you reach Rock Hole. A green sign marks the head of the cove, which is a favored spot for catching rockfish.

Follow the shoreline out of Rock Hole, keeping the island on your right. You will enter the Big Annessex River. Soon after, you will cross the mouth of Acre Creek and enter the Daugherty Creek Canal. Continue south until you arrive at the marina.

BROWN TRAIL

Distance: Approximately 12.5 miles one-way.
Difficulty: Experienced paddlers only

This trail is the longest of the Janes Island water trail routes and it circumnavigates the entire island. The majority of this trail is open water that is very exposed to weather conditions including high winds, waves, currents and tide fluctuations. This trail should only be attempted by experienced paddlers.

Begin at the marina and travel north along the Daugherty Creek Canal. Head northwest on the Big Annessex River and follow the shoreline along the entire length of the island. While paddling the southernmost reach of the Brown Trail, paddlers will see the Old Island Chimney, also known as "the Stack." This 50-foot tall, brick chimney is all that remains of a once-thriving business and small community. In 1900, a fish-processing plant was built on this site and operated until 1929. It was destroyed on July 21, 1932. In its heyday, the site included several houses, at least two stores and a bunkhouse.

The Stack also marks the entrance to Old House Cove. This area used to be the highest, most fertile land on the island in the 1800s. It contained a ship chandler's store, a maritime school and a small community with several farms that produced garden-variety crops such as watermelons, cantaloupes, apples and peaches.

The Janes Island Lighthouse is approximately 1.4 miles southwest of Island Point. It features a caisson base and was built in 1936 to replace the previous light, which was a 1879 screw-pile light that was destroyed by ice in 1935.



Park Marina, Campground and Facilities

The Marina -- The Janes Island marina provides a safe and convenient place for visitors to moor their boats when they are not on the water. The slips vary in size, but most can accommodate boats as large as 16 to 18 feet long. There are a few slips that can accommodate boats as large as 23 feet.

Care should be exercised when launching and recovering larger boats. At low tide, there is a sharp drop-off at the end of the ramp.

The Campground and Cabins -- The park has 103 campsites that are suitable for most any type of camping unit. 48 sites are equipped with electrical hook-ups (30 amp and 20 amp, 115 volt). All sites have a picnic table and a fire ring. The campground has three heated restrooms with hot showers, a sanitary dump station and hydrants with municipal water.

Five waterfront camper cabins are available during the camping season. Each can sleep four people and is equipped with air conditioning and heat, electric, a table and chairs, either two sets of bunk beds or a double bed and a set of bunkbeds, ceiling fans, a picnic table and a fire ring. Restrooms are shared with the campground.

Four full-service waterfront cabins are available year-round. Each sleeps six people and has three bedrooms, a full kitchen, a full bathroom, a gas fireplace, air conditioning and heat, a screened porch with a picnic table and an outdoor grill.

The Daugherty Creek Lodge has an overnight capacity of 16 persons and a meeting/dinner capacity of 65. Four bedrooms, three and a half bathrooms, two fireplaces, and a fully equipped kitchen. The second-floor deck and screened porch make this an ideal site for family or business retreats. Reservations are made by contacting the park office.

