



7. SUCCESSION

Look around and find evergreen trees and hardwood trees (trees that lose their leaves each fall). After years of logging and farming, much of the land along the Roanoke River was eventually left to nature. Grasses and wildflowers were the first to take over, then pines took root and the land began to develop into a forest. Gradually, hardwoods gained a foothold in the under story and began replacing the pines. This natural process of one group of plants replacing another is called succession.

8. OCCANEECHI NATIVE AMERICANS

Along this river, the Occaneechi Native Americans had a trading empire ranging over 500 miles! Their primary settlement was on Occaneechi Island in the Roanoke River near Clarksville. In 1676, many of the Native Americans were massacred by Nathaniel Bacon and his men. Although the island is now submerged, signs of the Occaneechi, such as arrowheads and pottery, can sometimes be found along the shoreline.

9. ROCK OUTCROP

This large rock outcrop is called a "metamorphic granite formation," which is composed of feldspar (pinkish crystals), quartz (white crystals), and biotite (black crystals). Look closely and you can see the crystals in these rocks. This solid granite bedrock provided the necessary foundation to construct the John H. Kerr Dam.

10. DRUMMING TREES

The holes in this tree were made by the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker and they harbor a variety of insects, spiders and other small creatures, which woodpeckers and other insect eaters depend on for food. Listen and you might hear the tapping of a woodpecker finding food, such as the Redheaded, Pileated, Hairy, Downy or Flicker.

In case of emergency call 9-1-1.

11. REMARKABLE REPTILES

As you hike back up the hill think about all the reptiles that call this forest home. Eastern box turtles, rough green snakes, and eastern fence lizards are only a few of the reptiles that you may spot climbing a tree or scurrying across the forest floor. Most visitors have a fear of our native reptiles, but reptiles are critical to controlling pest species, provide ecosystem services, and are indicators of environmental health.

12. WILDLIFE TREE

We live in houses, snakes may live in a rock pile, and box turtles carry an armored shell wherever they go. Shelter is what makes this tree important to wildlife. The cavities within trees provide a den for squirrels, opossums, owls, and other creatures of the forest, so it is important to leave dead trees in the forest.



Share your pictures with us!
We'd love to see them.
Find us on Facebook at:

@JohnHKerrReservoirBuggsIslandLake

Liberty Hill Trailhead and Parking:

4499 Buggs Island Road
Boydton, VA 23917

Location: Southeast of John H. Kerr Dam.

Length: 1.66 miles; allow 1-1½ hours;
Moderate difficulty.



John H. Kerr Dam & Reservoir
Visitor Assistance Center
1930 Mays Chapel Road
Boydton, VA 23917



US Army Corps of Engineers
John H. Kerr Dam & Reservoir

LIBERTY HILL NATURE TRAIL HIKERS



**While hiking the trail take this brochure
with you to learn more!**

Scan the QR Code above to visit the John H. Kerr
Dam & Reservoir website.

For information call: (434) 738-6143

Follow the numbered posts along the trail and learn about each location.

1. SIGNS OF HUMAN ACTIVITY

About 180 years ago this was the site of the St. Leon Plantation. Just 80 years ago this was open farmland. For many years, this old roadbed was used to transport crops and cattle, including tobacco. As you explore, look for other signs of this farming history, such as drainage ditches and planted farm rows.

2. LISTEN!

Stop here a moment and listen to the many sounds of this old forest. Can you hear the rustle of a squirrel gathering hickory nuts or the leaves rustling in the wind? Listen for the smooth melody of the Wood Thrush, and the calls of the Yellow Billed Cuckoo and Pileated Woodpecker.

3. MOUNTAIN LAUREL

This evergreen shrub can be found in a forest understory. When in bloom, around May and June, the plant produces showy white/pale pink flowers. Every part of this plant is poisonous to humans, but this native shrub is an important plant for pollinators like bumblebees.

4. WILDLIFE, THEN AND NOW

Notice the Wood Duck nesting box across the stream. In the 1900s, Wood Duck populations were extremely low due to loss of habitat and nesting areas from logging. Wildlife restoration projects, such as nesting boxes and wintering impoundments have helped the population recover.

5. NATURE'S FERTILIZER

Fallen logs from storms become habitats for many small animals, decomposers, and fungi. They break down the log, and it returns to the earth as a rich soil which contains potassium, sodium, calcium, phosphorous and magnesium. These chemicals are then used by plants and animals to continue the food chain.

6. CEMETERY

If you look closely among the trees, you will see depressions in the earth. These are old grave sites presumed to be the final resting place for the enslaved peoples that once worked the fields of the St. Leon Plantation. Some of the graves are marked by stones at each end. Did you know that traditionally, graves are laid out from east to west? It was once believed that facing the rising sun after death would aid in passage to the next life.

