

HOLIDAY COMPASS PROGRAM

DESCRIPTION: Families can enjoy the beautiful scenery at Biscoe Gray Heritage Farm while practicing to use a base plate compass.

DATE & TIME: December 12, 2021 – January 15, 2022. You can go to the park with your family any day, dawn to dusk, throughout this time period.

LOCATION: Biscoe Gray Heritage Farm.

- Park at the main entrance; however, most of the compass courses begin on the equestrian side of the park.
- **Quickest Path to the Equestrian Side from Main Parking Area:** Hike past the tobacco barn at the top of the hill and follow the trail down the hill where it opens into a field where the equestrian area begins. The equestrian parking lot is at the top of the driveway.



HOW TO DO IT:

- You will need a base plate compass.
- Watch the instructional video on one of these websites:
 - <https://calvertparks.wildapricot.org/Activities>
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-oMHeYVcKII>
- Print the clues for each compass course or download this document to your portable smart device to reduce paper waste.
- Print or download the instructions for how to use a compass, the No-Hunting Safety Zone map, and the Tree ID page.
- Follow the compass course instructions to find the 5 checkpoints (or clues) for each course. The checkpoints are small laminated pictures of the bird that matches the name of the course. They will be hanging from tree branches, signs and stumps throughout the safe zones of the park.
- **Please do NOT remove the checkpoints.**
- Each course takes 20 - 40 minutes to complete.
- **Although you do NOT need to register for this program, we would love to hear stories or see pictures of your compass adventures. Please share them at CypressSwamp@calvertcountymd.gov**



BARRED OWL COMPASS COURSE

Using a compass and the clues below, find the 5 Barred Owl Checkpoints for your group. Write the letters found on each numbered checkpoint to create a holiday saying unique for your course.

Enjoy your nature hike!

START: Follow the mowed trail past the brochure box at the NE side of the equestrian parking lot, past the 3 beehives, and around the corner to the “FOREST LOOP” trail sign on the left. Begin using your compass coordinates at the sign.

WRITE YOUR UNIQUE HOLIDAY SAYING HERE:

CHECKPOINT #1: At the Forest Loop sign, take the trail to the E where you will find the next one in a clump of Autumn Olive shrubs.

CHECKPOINT #2: Take the trail 310°NW past 2 signs to the first holly tree that is taller than you.

CHECKPOINT #3: Follow the trail that goes 290° NW until you come to a trail marker post. Find this one 20 paces from the post in a holly tree 190° SW.

CHECKPOINT #4: Return to the trail marker and head W until you find the next one at a sign.

CHECKPOINT #5: This last one will be at a nest box directly W from the sign. (The private property referred to is the Gatewood Preserve, which is our property). After you find the clue, use your compass to go directly E to the trail.

CONGRATULATIONS! YOU DID IT!



Ring-Billed GULL COMPASS COURSE

Using a compass and the clues below, find the 5 Ring-billed Gull Checkpoints for your group. Write the letters found on each numbered checkpoint to create a holiday saying unique for your course.

Enjoy your nature hike!

START AT: The Biscoe Gray Map Sign next to the Equestrian Parking Area

WRITE YOUR UNIQUE HOLIDAY SAYING HERE:

CHECKPOINT #1: Find this clue in a Loblolly Pine 220° SW.

CHECKPOINT #2: Take the trail that begins 30° NE. Follow the trail until you see a half-dead cedar on the LEFT.

CHECKPOINT #3: Follow the trail to the E to the first sign on the LEFT. Then take the trail that begins directly SOUTH to the 5th little holly tree on the RIGHT

CHECKPOINT #4: Take the trail S until you reach a sign, then take the trail that goes E until you see a stump beside the trail that is taller than you.

CHECKPOINT #5: Take the trail W to the 5th orange sign on the RIGHT.

CONGRATULATIONS! YOU DID IT!



COMMON LOON COMPASS COURSE

Using a compass and clues below, find the 5 Common Loon Checkpoints for your group. Write the letters found on each numbered checkpoint to create a holiday saying unique for your course.

Enjoy your nature hike!

START AT: The Forest Retention Sign on the SE side of the Equestrian Parking Lot

WRITE YOUR UNIQUE HOLIDAY SAYING HERE:

CHECKPOINT #1: Find the first clue in a Cedar Tree 320° NW. When you find it, also check out the praying mantis egg cases and hanging bagworms.

CHECKPOINT #2: Look for the trail that begins about 50 paces 100° SE and follow it to the trail sign where another trail intersects it. Take the trail WEST to a small stump on the right.

CHECKPOINT #3: Follow the trail 240° SW to the 4th orange sign on the RIGHT.

CHECKPOINT #4: Take the trail 320° NW to a medium-sized American Beech on the LEFT.

CHECKPOINT #5: Follow the trail 260° SW to a patch of Mountain Laurel on the RIGHT.

CONGRATULATIONS! YOU DID IT!



SCREECH OWL COMPASS COURSE

Using a compass and clues below, find the 5 Screech Owl Checkpoints for your group. Write the letters found on each numbered checkpoint to create a holiday saying unique for your course.

Enjoy your nature hike!

START AT: The Forest Retention Sign on the NW side of the Equestrian

Parking Lot

WRITE YOUR UNIQUE HOLIDAY SAYING HERE:

CHECKPOINT #1: Find the first clue in a Loblolly Pine 40° NE.

CHECKPOINT #2: Toward the EAST you will find the next one on a place where you can sit.

CHECKPOINT #3: Take the trail that goes up the hill 160° SE to the first nest box you see on the right.

CHECKPOINT #4: Look for a sign about pollinators in the SOUTH.

CHECKPOINT #5: Take the path 200° SW then turn left. Take the trail to the first nest box on the RIGHT.

CONGRATULATIONS! YOU DID IT!



CANADA GOOSE COMPASS COURSE

Using a compass and clues below, find the 5 Goose Checkpoints for your group. Write the letters found on each numbered checkpoint to create a holiday saying unique for your course.

Enjoy your nature hike!

START AT: The nest box halfway up the left side of the equestrian entrance driveway.

WRITE YOUR UNIQUE HOLIDAY SAYING HERE:

CHECKPOINT #1: Look for this clue on the end of the fence 60° NE.

CHECKPOINT #2: Take path that begins 160° SE to the 1st nest box on the RIGHT. You will find the next clue in a distant sign 140° SE of the nest box.

CHECKPOINT #3: Find a gate 300° NW.

CHECKPOINT #4: This one is beside a sign 320° NW

CHECKPOINT #5: Follow the trail that starts directly WEST to the 4th Holly Tree on the RIGHT that is taller than you.

CONGRATULATIONS! YOU DID IT!

HOW TO USE THE COMPASS

- Hold the compass level braced against your body
- Point the direction of travel arrow away from you
- Turn the housing in the direction you want to go
- SLOWLY turn your body (not the compass) until the red needle is in the “shed”: “Put Red Fred in the Shed!”
- You are now facing the direction you want to go.

Be sure to stay within the orange safe zones where hunting is not permitted.

BISCOE GRAY HERITAGE FARM MAP OF THE ORANGE SAFE ZONE



Wildlife & Heritage Service
5625 Myrtle Grove Rd.
La Plata, MD 20646
301-743-5161

0 250 500 1,000 1,500
Feet

TREES USED AS CLUES



American Beech-
smooth bark, dead
leaves usually still
attached this time of
year



American Holly –
smooth bark,
evergreen, sharp
spines on leaves,
female trees have
poisonous red
berries



Mountain Laurel –
evergreen shrub



**Autumn Olive – shrub, may still have a few
dead leaves**



**Loblolly pine (LEFT) &
Red Cedar (RIGHT)**