



MAYAPPLE

Large umbrella-like leaves sprout along the sloping edges of the swamp. In May, plants with two leaves develop a white flower in the fork between the leaves. The root of this plant, mandrake, was once used for medicinal purposes.



CRAYFISH CHIMNEYS

Near the banks of Battle Creek, small chimneys of stacked-up mud pellets mark the entrances to submerged burrows of crayfish. At night, hungry raccoons probing for crayfish with sensitive paws leave hand-like prints in the mud.



JACK-IN-THE-PULPIT

Along drier slopes, this familiar plant sends up a tubular green spathe (the pulpit) within which sits a white spadix (Jack) of tiny flowers. By midsummer, the flowers are replaced by a cluster of berries which turn bright red in the fall.



SKUNK CABBAGE

Where the trail changes from boardwalk back to wood chips, look for a plant with huge, broad green leaves. A common swamp resident, skunk cabbage is one of the first plants to emerge in spring, sometimes pushing up through snow. Its flower produces a rank odor, hence its common name.



TURTLES

Warm, sunny weather brings out cold-blooded reptiles. Spotted and painted turtles like to bask on logs in the creek. The mud turtle is somewhat more elusive, but its tracks are easily recognized in the mud along the trail.



DID YOU KNOW?

The odd, woody "knees" sticking up from the swamp floor are living parts of the roots of the Bald Cypress. They help the tree hold firm in its mucky footing.



SPRING BEAUTIES

These tiny pink or white flowers open in the bright spring sunshine. Look for them along the chipped path near the end of the main boardwalk.



PROTHONOTARY WARBLER

This yellow warbler is a frequent spring resident of forested wetlands. Nests are cavities near water, and its young are known to swim. Adults sometimes feed from floating debris, finding snails and other invertebrates.



LIZARD'S TAIL

Thriving in wet soil, lizard's tail carpets the swamp floor with heart-shaped leaves. Aquatic insects cling to the submerged stems of this plant, while pale green Luna moths may hide under its broad leaves.

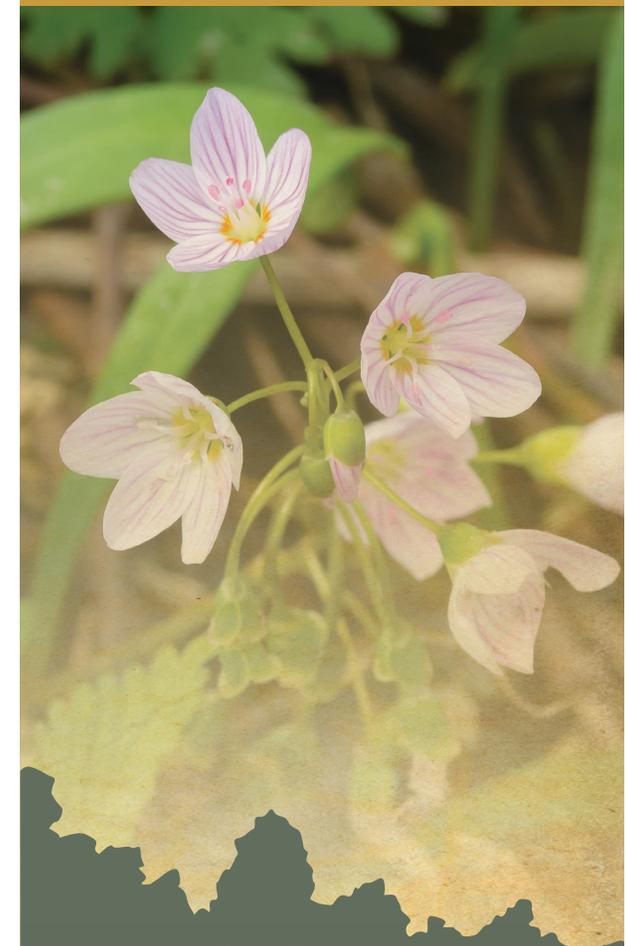


SPRING PEEPERS

You may hear a chorus of peepers, calling to prospective mates. These tiny frogs congregate to breed at temporary pools in wooded areas. Their tiny eggs are deposited singly and attached to submerged plants and twigs. Look for larger egg masses of other amphibians, such as salamanders, in shallow water.

BATTLE CREEK CYPRESS SWAMP CYPRESS KNEE TRAIL

Spring



Welcome to **BATTLE CREEK CYPRESS SWAMP**

Stop for a moment and look up. Towering 50 to 100 feet above you is the majestic bald cypress, the most abundant tree in this swamp. Its flared base is distinctive, and its feathery needles (leaves) are shed in the fall. Peculiar knobby projections poking through the mud (called "knees") are extensions of the root system. They help brace the tree, store carbohydrates, and may help provide oxygen to the submerged roots.

In the shade of these towering giants, it is easy to abandon the stress of daily living for the intimate struggle of a spider with a fly or a crayfish with mud.

Remember: Stop frequently. The trail can be walked in 15 minutes, but pause to absorb the sights and sounds, and to enrich your memory of the cypress swamp.

Look with your eyes, but see with your brain. Try to think like the animal you seek, then look for movement; you may be rewarded by the bobbing of a waterthrush at your feet or by the barred owl's quiet stare.

Listen for every little sound. Many elusive creatures reveal themselves with sound. Woodpeckers can often be spotted by following their tappings.

Enjoy your visit, but please remember to stay on the trail and leave everything as you found it for others.

MAP KEY	
	Parking
	Picnic
	Restroom
	Nature Center
	Structure
	Swamp Boardwalk (0.4 Mile)
	Meadow Trail (0.3 Mile)
	Path

