

# CHEESEQUAKE State Park

**Park Office**  
 P i

**Hooks Creek Lake Day Use Area**  
 P i A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

**Family Camping Area**  
 P i A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

**Group Camping Area**  
 P i A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

**NOT PERMITTED**  
 ATVs, alcoholic beverages, drones, smoking and vaping are NOT permitted in this park.  
 \*Smoking and vaping permitted only inside your personal vehicle.

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|---------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|------------------|----------------|-------------|--------------------------|
| Open Field or Grass | Yellow Trail (1.7 mi) | Accessible Facility | Drinking Water   | Nature Center  | Playground  | Swimming                 |
| Forest              | Red Trail (1.3 mi)    | Biking              | Fishing          | Park Office    | Restrooms   | Trailer Sanitary Station |
| Developed Area      | Blue Trail (2.7 mi)   | Canoeing            | Garden           | Parking Lot    | Scenic View | Visitor Contact Station  |
| Water               | Green Trail (3 mi)    | Crabbing            | Group Campground | Picnic Area    | Shower      |                          |
| Wetland             | White Trail (1.8 mi)  | Concession          | Information      | Picnic Shelter | Sledding    |                          |



**The Blue Trail** is a moderately difficult loop trail that journeys through a variety of habitats. It begins in a hardwood forest, crosses a freshwater wetland area and leads trail users through a small pine barrens habit. The pine barrens habitat is characterized by the presence of pitch pine trees. To identify a pitch pine, look closely at the needles, which are attached to the tree in bundles. Pitch pines have three needles in a bundle; white pines have five. Cross Perrine Road and try to identify the tall pines growing along the edge of the road. Make a left to continue on the Blue Trail and around a tidal saltwater pond. Take advantage of the wildlife observation blind on Perrine Pond to observe wildlife activity around this salt marsh ecosystem. Trail users can also turn right before Perrine Pond and follow this trail to the crabbing bridge and out to Hooks Creek Lake. This spur can connect to the Yellow Trail. Past Perrine Pond, the Blue Trail follows Perrine Road until it joins with the Red/Green Trails and loops back to the main trailhead.

*Moderate • Some hills, steps, boardwalks, uneven terrain*  
Blue • 2.0 mile loop • Hiking

### Blue Trail

**The Yellow Trail** is a short loop trail that offers an opportunity for a quick scenic walk. At the beginning, the Yellow Trail runs together with the Green and Red Trails before splitting to the right. The trail passes through mixed hardwood forest with a field of highbush blueberries. Look for songbirds feeding on the fruit and insects of the blueberries, sweet pepper bush and sassafras. The trail then touches the edges of the salt marsh and Hooks Creek Lake before passing through mixed hardwoods and then looping back to the parking lot. The Yellow Trail spur skirts the lake and leads to the day use area.

*Easy • Some hills, steps, uneven terrain*  
Yellow • 0.75 mile loop • Hiking

### Yellow Trail

### White Trail

*White • 1.8 mile loop • Hiking & biking*  
*Moderate • Large hills, uneven terrain, log obstacles*

**The White Trail** is the park's only multi-use trail that is shared by hikers and bicyclists. Please use caution and courtesy when using this trail. The rugged terrain makes it a popular trail for mountain bikers. This moderately difficult loop has many challenging sections due to large hills and exposed roots (but no steps), while passing through forests and wetlands, and along fields.

The White Trail explores wetlands, forests and fields and provides a great variety of wildlife viewing opportunities. Soon after beginning, the trail passes a freshwater swamp ringed by red maples. The path rises and overlooks a small ravine and parallels the Garden State Parkway. Further along, as it passes into Booth Field, visitors may want to take a moment to visit the butterfly garden and enjoy the colorful insects. Though many species will visit the garden between spring and fall, the striking black and orange monarch is one of the most popular. After leaving the field, the White Trail continues its winding path through the forest, skirting Cheesequake's boundary.



*This brochure was funded by the Federal Highway Administration's Recreational Trails Program through the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection.*

**The Red Trail** is a moderately difficult loop trail that navigates through hardwood forest and pine barrens ecosystems. The Red Trail shares a path with the Green Trail before separating at Perrine Road, where it takes a turn to the left and passes Interval Pond. Stop and listen for wildlife in the lowland and wetland areas before continuing on the trail then across Museum Road. Note the sandy soils and pitch pine trees that indicate a pine barrens ecosystem. Pine barrens in New Jersey are dominated by pitch pines, but are also home to oaks and mountain laurel. Most of the plants in pine barrens habitats are adapted to survive varying effects of fire. The trail skirts the group campsite then intersects with the gravel Museum Road. Turn right on Museum Road to return to the trailhead.

*Moderate • Some hills, steps, uneven terrain*  
Red • 1.3 mile loop • Hiking

### Red Trail

**The Green Trail** is the longest of Cheesequake's trails. It begins as a stepped boardwalk through a mixed hardwood forest of oaks, sassafras and sweet peppertree. A small bridge then leads uphill to the Cheesequake Nature Center where hikers are encouraged to visit and learn more about the natural resources of the park. After the nature center, the Green Trail proceeds up a long set of steps. Stay right to descend into and through the largest Atlantic white cedar swamp in the park. The trail then crosses over Museum Road into a forest. Look around for large eastern white pine trees (some of which may be around 150 years old) and notice the white sand beneath your feet. The trail continues through a mix of hardwood trees and up a set of steps where a view of platform gives visitors the chance to look over an open floodplain dotted with red maples and river birches. The trail continues into the hardwood forest and, at about 2.5 miles, crosses a footbridge before heading uphill toward the group campground. As you walk up this hill, look for large American beeches, which are characterized by their smooth silver-grey bark. The trail skirts the group campsite then intersects with the gravel Museum Road to return to the trailhead.

*Moderate • Some hills, steps, uneven terrain*  
Green • 3.0 mile loop • Hiking

### Green Trail

## TRAIL SENSE AND SAFETY

**Trail Markings:** Official trails are marked with colored blazes on plastic posts, or with painted disks or markers on trees. Please keep the trails safe for everyone; do not alter the trail markings in any way. Entrances to the trails are well-defined wooden arches that bear the trail's name. Permitted uses are indicated at the trailheads. The Yellow, Red, Blue and Green Trails are for hiking only. The White Trail is for mountain biking and hiking. Please stay on the trails. Museum Road, Perrine Road, Dock Road and Booth Road can be used to enhance your explorations. Be aware of changing trail conditions.

**Be Prepared:** Consider bringing water, snacks, sun and bug screen, and a hat. Check the weather before you go, dress appropriately, and tell someone where you intend to hike and when you expect to finish.

**Pets:** Pets must always be on a leash no longer than six feet in length and under the control of the owner at all times. Please clean up after your pets and take the waste with you.

**Keep It Clean and Green:** Bring a bag or two and carry your trash out with you. Trash cans are not provided. Don't forget to recycle!

**Tick Protection:** Bring insect repellent, wear light-colored clothing, tuck pants into socks, stay on trails, check yourself thoroughly, shower and launder clothes immediately.

**Report** trail issues to park office: **732-566-2161**

**Emergency numbers:** 1-877-WARN-DEP  
(1-877-927-6337), or 911



**CHEESEQUAKE STATE PARK**  
300 Gordon Road,  
Matawan, N.J. 07747  
732-566-2161



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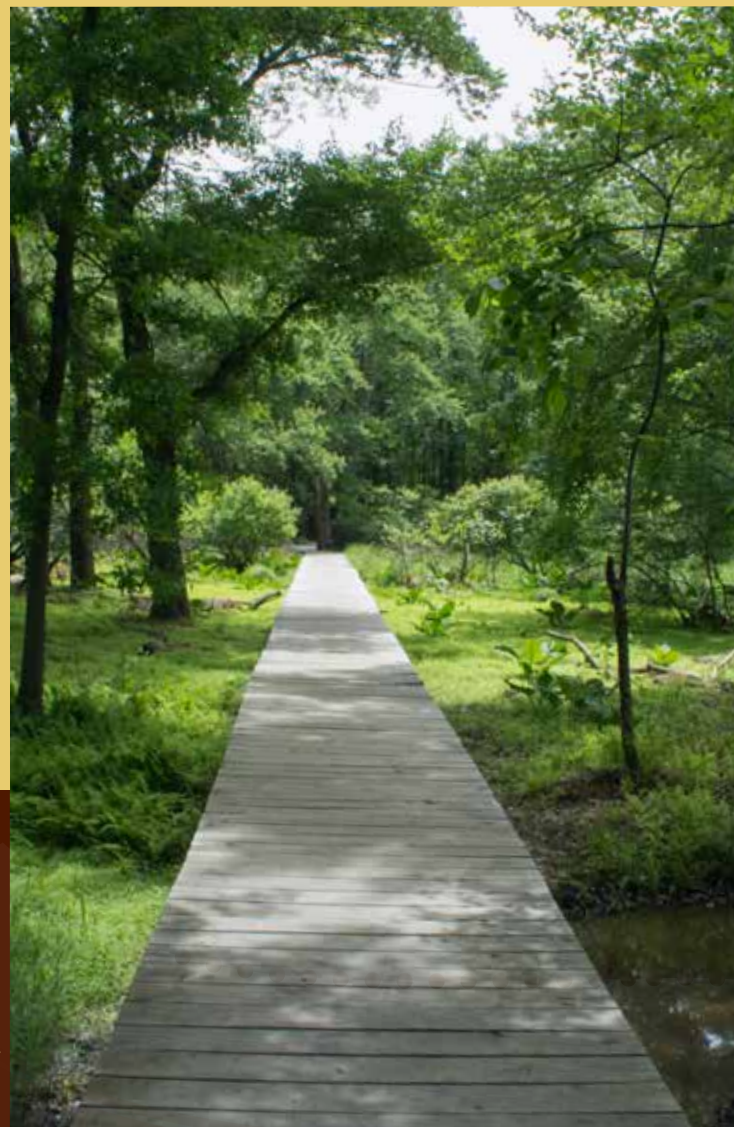
Trailheads for Yellow and Blue Trail spurs can be reached from the lake parking lot. For Yellow Trail, walk around Hooks Creek Lake to meet the wooden steps that join the trail. The Blue Trail spur begins just past the crabbing bridge then connects to Perrine Road. The White Trail is located one mile further into the park. After passing the main trailhead lot turn right at the stop sign and look for a small parking area on the right side of the road beyond the open field.

**Cheesequake's Trailheads** The main entrance to the four hiking trails is at the trailhead parking lot, located just beyond the park entrance on the left. Here visitors will find kiosks and signs with maps and information, including the trail lengths. All four hiking trails begin here, are contiguous, then split off at certain points. All trails are loops that return to the parking lot. Yellow and Blue Trails have spurs that lead to the lake day use area. Trail users can pick a trail and follow that color blaze or plan a more elaborate route with multiple trails. All have tenth-of-a-mile (0.1 mile) markers to help trail users monitor distance and plan their hike.

**TRAILS OF CHEESEQUAKE STATE PARK**  
Cheesequake State Park is a fabulous place to explore a variety of east coast ecosystems, from lowland salt marsh to upland woodlands. Cheesequake's trails allow visitors to step into woodlands, traverse marshes, watch wildlife, hear birds and smell the earth – all within a short distance of the Garden State Parkway. Permitted uses for all trails are indicated on signs. multi-use loop for hikers and mountain bikers. Cheesequake Natural Area. The White Trail is a trailhead parking lot and lead visitors through the four hiking-only trails originate at the Cheesequake State Park has five official trails of varying lengths and difficulties that traverse through the diverse ecosystems of the park. The four hiking-only trails originate at the trailhead parking lot and lead visitors through Cheesequake Natural Area. The White Trail is a multi-use loop for hikers and mountain bikers. Permitted uses for all trails are indicated on signs.

# TRAILS

## Cheesequake State Park



State of New Jersey  
Department of Environmental Protection  
**State Park Service**