

Rocks State Park:

Meet the Rock Stars

Come on out and meet some of our famous rock stars. You may have seen them on screen, television, in print or in photographs all over Facebook. People come from all over the world to catch a glimpse of them: from the famous, like kings and queens, movie stars, television personalities and writers, to the infamous like John Wilkes Booth, to just plain folks out for an adventure. This Quest will allow teams to enjoy a hike witnessing some of Mother Nature's best sculptures that reside in Rocks State Park.

Objective: Find all four of our Rock Stars! Please take a photograph with each rock formation, and show staff to earn your stamp.

Three options for parking, depending on trail difficulty:

First option- EASY – Rock Ridge Picnic Area.

3900 Saint Clair Bridge Road, Jarrettsville, MD 21084. Hike is 0.5 miles.

Second option- MODERATE – Rocks State Park Office.

3318 Rocks Chrome Hill Road, Jarrettsville, MD 21084. Hike is 1.5 miles.

Third option- MOST DIFFICULT – Rapids Area.

3634 Rocks Road, Jarrettsville, MD 21084. Hike is 1.5 miles.

Disclaimer: If you park here, you will come to the Gator Rock (Moby Dick) Rock Star first, then King and Queen Seat, North Wall, and Strawberry Jam Pillar

Driving Directions:

From Point South: Take Route 24 North (Rocks Road). For the Rocks State Park Office: turn left on Rocks Chrome Hill Road, and office will be on your right. For the Rapids Area parking lot: continue past Rocks Chrome Hill Road, and the Rapids Area will be on your left. For the Rock Ridge Picnic Area: turn left on Saint Clair Bridge Road, and the Rock Ridge Picnic Area will be on your left.

From Points North: Take Route 24 South (Rocks Road). For the Rock Ridge Picnic Area: turn right on Saint Clair Bridge Road, and the Rock Ridge Picnic Area will be on your left. For the Rapids Area parking lot: continue past Saint Clair Bridge Road, and the Rapids Area will be on your right. For the Rocks State Park Office: turn right on Rocks Chrome Hill Road, and the office will be on your right.

“Rock Stars”

The King and Queen Seat

Before this area was ever a state park, vandalism was already a reoccurring event. It is said that when this area consisted of a small village, there was a large boulder weighing many tons which acted as the backrest for the King and Queen. One night four men with long wooden poles pried the rock from behind the seat and it fell to the bottom of the formation, where it still rests today. The owner of the property offered a large reward to anyone who would name those who committed the crime. No one came forward. Later, the surfaces of the rock outcrop were carved with graffiti and inscriptions dating back into the nineteenth century when the site served as a popular local destination reachable by the Ma and Pa Railroad. Today, people use paint and markers on these rocks.

Please remember, graffiti mars the surface of the rocks making it slippery for climbers and unusable as camouflage for insects. Wildlife who utilizes the plant material and minerals found on or in the rocks may become sick after eating the plants or using it as nesting material. Graffiti stands out in this natural setting, so please leave the rocks the way you find them. This way visitors who come after you will be able to enjoy the same views that you have just enjoyed.

Is there a difference between the graffiti in the nineteenth century and the graffiti of today?

From the King and Queen Seat, walk downhill on the north side of the rocks. This trail will put the King and Queen seat on your right hand side. Be careful as this trail is rocky and steep. With this rock star looks can be deceiving...

North Wall

This star is a favorite of the younger generation. At first glance, this wall is a short hop up, but on the other side it is a long way down. This is the “Beginners” or “The Children’s” wall. Climbing is a popular sport at Rocks and a dangerous one; not everyone can tackle the 190 foot heights of the King and Queen their first time here. Most new climbers to Rocks start here at the North Wall. Youth organizations (like the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, private youth camps and children of parents who climb) all start off here learning the basics such as belaying, hand holds and rappelling before trying any climbs on the King and Queen Seat. Others start here to get use to the feel, texture and the way hand holds have formed in these rocks.

Do you think that you would like rock climbing?

From North Wall continue downhill a short ways, and on your right hand side you will meet the next rock star.

Strawberry Jam Pillar

This is the most colorful of our stars. The top portion consists of a reddish brown hue. The color comes from iron particles in the rock that react with oxygen to form rust. The next two layers are a display of lichens. Lichens are not plants; they do not have roots and survive with the ability to tolerate little to no water. This allows them to grow in locations where plants cannot such as rock, sand, and man-made structures like walls and roofs. Lichens are organisms that are part fungus and part algae. The algae produces sugar through photosynthesis and the fungus gives the algae a place to live. Lichens serve as food for mammals, nest material for at least 50 species of birds, hiding places for small insects, and camouflage for tree frogs and moths that are hiding from animals who would like to eat them. When growing on rock, some lichens contribute to the weathering process releasing nitrogen for other plants to use and gradually turning the rock into soil.

Why should people avoid damaging the Lichen?

Make your way carefully back to the interpretive sign that was located at the intersection of the Red and White Trails. At the interpretative sign, turn right heading downhill until you meet the Purple Trail. Follow the Purple Trail down to the last rock star on the right.....

Gator Rock (Moby Dick)

This rock star has a dual identity. To us in the Park this rock formation is called Gator Rock, but to the climbing community its name is Moby Dick. The large stone masses in this area are made up of the "Sykesville Formation" and may have once been part of a natural dam which was eroded by Deer Creek. The "Sykesville Formation" is also found in the Soldiers Delight Area of Patapsco Valley State Park and Rock Creek Park located along the Potomac River in Prince George's County. This type of formation can also be found in Massachusetts and Newfoundland. The Rocks are made up of magma, sedimentary rock and white quartz that have been changed by heat and pressure caused by the collision of tectonic plates. This process also formed the Appalachian Mountains. These rocks are quite hard and resistant to erosion. It has taken over a thousand years of constant erosion to shape the rocks as they are today.

What would you name this rock?

If you have completed the Easy or Moderate Quests, follow the Purple Trail back up to the white trail. Turn left onto the White Trail. At the King and Queen interpretative sign, turn right onto the Red Trail to return to the Rock Ridge Picnic Area. If you have chosen the Most Difficult Quest, continue on to meet our other Rock Stars!

Thank you for meeting our Rock Stars!

Rocks Stars

Park Quest 2017 Map

