

**VIVA
HANDBOOK**
Revised August 2010

**VISITOR INFORMATION VOLUNTEER
ASSOCIATION**



**BANSHEE REEKS NATURE PRESERVE
21085 THE WOODS ROAD
LEESBURG, VA 20175**

703-669-0316

www.loudoun.gov/prcs/parks

www.bansheereeks.org

RON CIRCÉ — PRESERVE MANAGER

**HOURS OF OPERATION
SATURDAY & SUNDAY 8 - 4
OTHER TIMES BY APPOINTMENT**

(Note: The Visitor Center is open the third weekend of every month)

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LEESBURG , VA 20175
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CONTACT INFORMATION

In case of EMERGENCY, call the numbers in the following order

EMERGENCY 911

(When calling 911 you must give the street address — 21085 The Woods Road)

Ron Circé: Office 703-669-0316
 Cell 571-233-0185
 Home 703-737-3957

Or
Dave Clark Cell 571-233-2832
 Home 703-787-6761

If you cannot reach Ron or Dave, please call

Steve Torpy Office 703-777-0345
Div. Manager, Parks, Cell 571-233-0123
PRCS Home 703-754-7960

OTHER NUMBERS

Game Warden:	540-840-2070
Non-Emergency Sheriff Department	703-777-0445
Friends of Banshee Reeks (FOBR) — Keith (Casey) Crichton, President	friendsofbansheereeks@yahoo.com
VIVA Coordinator — Pat Rhodes	703-779-7796 rhodes42@verizon.net
Wildlife Rescue League	704-440-0800 www.DC-ADNET.com/WRL
Leesburg Animal Emergency Hospital	703-777-5755

BANSHEE REEKS NATURE PRESERVE

GENERAL INFORMATION

Banshee Reeks is operated as a nature preserve by the Loudoun County Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Services. It is supported by the Friends of Banshee Reeks, a volunteer, nonprofit organization. The preserve strives to protect the natural habitats and wildlife populations of Banshee Reeks, to conduct and coordinate ecological, historical and other scientific research and to provide the public with an opportunity to enjoy and learn from this unique, reserved area. The property is also kept intrinsically dark and will be managed as a "Dark Sky Facility" for the benefits of both the environment and visitors.

FACILITIES

The preserve consists of 725 acres of forests, succession fields, ponds and streams. The Goose Creek, a State Scenic River, flows over two miles along the southern border of the property. The Banshee Reeks property includes numerous buildings both historic and contemporary. The manor house contains the preserve staff offices and is the home of the Visitor Center and Education Center. Also located on the property are an 1830's log cabin and a pre-civil war bank barn.

Members of wildlife organizations, schoolteachers, conservancies, and preserve staff offer year-round programs and nature walks to the public. A primitive camping area (Leave No Trace) is available for organized groups: e.g., Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts. Catch and release fishing is allowed on two of the ponds on the property.

Enhancements to the facility in recent years include 20 miles of mowed and marked trails, benches along some of the trails, addition of a building adjacent to the garage for training and education, and a large garden whose produce is donated to Loudoun Interfaith Relief.

ORIGIN OF THE NAME

In the early part of the 19th century, the owner of the farm now called Banshee Reeks was said to be of Irish/Scottish descent. In the Gaelic language Banshee is a female spirit and reeks refer to hills and dales. The story goes that one night the farmer went into the town of Leesburg to attend to personal business and also paid a visit to the local saloon. Upon arriving back at his farm very late at night, with the wind howling and the night animals making their noises, the farmer was in such a state of mind that he claimed he heard a banshee in the reeks. The phrase was altered over the years and the area became known as Banshee Reeks.

BANSHEE REEKS NATURE PRESERVE

HISTORY OF BANSHEE REEKS (1728-Present)

In 1728, Englishman Robert Carter II acquired an 11,537-acre tract of land along Goose Creek from which the Banshee Reeks property was eventually subdivided. Robert Carter II was descended from one of Virginia's wealthiest and most influential families, and it was his grandson, George Carter, who inherited 5,000 acres of land along Goose Creek in 1798 and set about constructing the architecturally renowned Oatlands Plantation. Construction of Oatlands, which lies to the west of the Banshee Reeks property, began around 1803 and was completed some time in the 1830's.

In 1841, Jordan B. Luck, a resident of Oatlands, acquired a 225-acre tract of land from George Carter for \$2,706. Based on available evidence, it appears that Luck built the stone house, now located on the Banshee Reeks property, and that it was he who gave the site its distinctive name. (See previous page.) In 1845, Luck acquired another 139 acres of land adjacent to his first purchase, increasing the size of his farm to 364 acres. Although a gap in the chain of title exists during the mid-nineteenth century, it is possible that Jordan B. Luck may have owned the 364-acre Banshee Reeks property as late as 1864.

The entire 364-acre property was sold at auction in 1882 to John T. Elgin, who already owned 408 acres of land adjacent to the Luck Farm. Elgin resided on the property until his death in 1904, at which time it was sold by his estate to Mahlon Morris for \$6,579. In 1920, Morris sold the property to D.F. and Meda Hagins for \$17,000. Otie Hagins Drake later inherited the property from the Hagins, and upon his death in 1947 it was sold to George W. Patton for \$12,000. Patton sold the property to Thomas Meloy in 1959, who held it until his death in 1979. In accordance with Mr. Meloy's will, the property, as well as several other adjacent tracts under his ownership, were put under protective open space easement in 1984.

The most recent private landowner, Salvatore Cangiano, purchased Banshee Reeks in 1987 and owned the 695-acre property up until the time that it was sold to the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors in April of 1991. The property was purchased, in part, to serve as a buffer between residential properties in the area and the county-owned landfill located to the north of the site. More than simply a buffer, though, the site was also acquired so that a regional park/preserve could be established to serve the rapidly growing population of central Loudoun County. Moreover, the acquisition of Banshee Reeks was in keeping with the goals of the *Loudoun County Department of Parks and Recreation Service Plan*, which called for the establishment of a county regional park in the vicinity of central Loudoun.

In April of 1999, the Board of Supervisors moved that Banshee Reeks be established as a nature preserve. They also moved that the 30 acre Marcum Property become an addition to Banshee Reeks.

Source: Banshee Reeks Master Plan, Loudoun County, Virginia, February, 2001.

BANSHEE REEKS NATURE PRESERVE

HISTORY OF BANSHEE REEKS

JORDAN B. LUCK HOUSE (The Visitor Education Center)



According to the Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission, the house was named for the original owner of the property, Jordan B. Luck, who is believed to have been the builder.

The land, totaling approximately 365 acres, was acquired from Oatlands Plantation over a period of four years (1841-1845). It is believed that Luck built the still occupied residence and acquired income through agricultural endeavors. Although there is no census information, tax assessments indicated Jordan B. Luck had a son of 16 years and owned six slaves all over the age of 16 years. Foundations of the slave quarters, however, cannot be located.

The foundation of the house is made of stone and stucco and has a simple gable style roof. The stucco finish was scored into blocks to resemble stone. The original layout of the house was a simple two-story dwelling with a two-room plan and one interior chimney. Renovations and modernization have enlarged the house to a point that it is not considered a good example of farmhouses of that period.*

Other bits about the house:

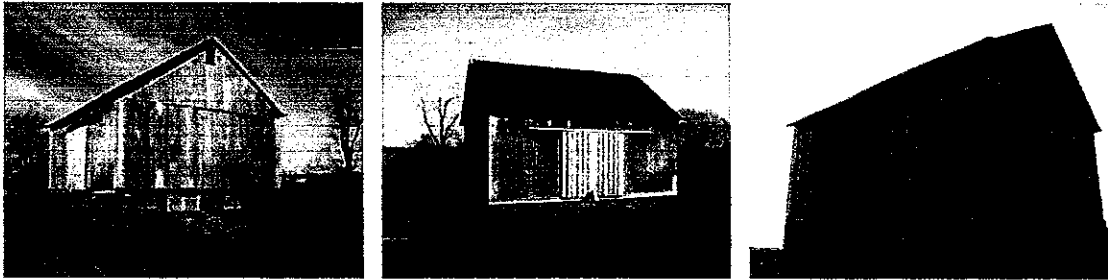
Stones used for keystones are not native to Loudoun County. It's believed that they came from the Warrenton area of Fauquier County. They can best be seen on the southwest corner from the porch. Some of the original mortar is still visible just below the porch roof. Much of the glass in the windows is original. There is one chimney but three fireplaces. The cooking was done in the fireplace in the basement. Until the summer of 2003 the water for the house came from the springhouse. And by the way, the house is said to be haunted.

* Source: Park and Landscape Planning Class, Recreation and Parks Curriculum, Northern Virginia Community College.

BANSHEE REEKS NATURE PRESERVE

HISTORY OF BANSHEE REEKS

PRE-CIVIL WAR BANK BARN



The bank barn gets its name from a simple but clever construction technique: the barn is built into the side of a hill, thus permitting two levels to be entered from the ground. The lower level housed animals, the upper levels served as threshing floor and storage. The hillside entrance gave easy access to wagons bearing wheat or hay. The general form of the bank barn remained the same whether it was built into a hillside or not. Where a hill was lacking, a "bank" was often created by building up an earthen ramp to the second level.

In the earliest examples of bank barns narrow-end side walls are frequently stone or brick, with openings for ventilation. (Since "curing" green hay can generate enough heat to start a fire through spontaneous combustion, adequate ventilation in barns was vital.)

The bank barn at BRNP is believed to have been built no later than 1830. It was in a very rundown condition until recently. A team of renowned timber restorers were contracted to restore it using methods that were the same as those in use when the barn was originally built. The restoration was done during the fall of 2004. The timber that was used in the restoration came from trees at BRNP that had fallen during storms. Also some timber was recycled from another old barn that had collapsed on the property. Some finishing touches are still needed to bring this bank barn back to its full glory.

BANSHEE REEKS NATURE PRESERVE

HISTORY OF BANSHEE REEKS

SPRING HOUSE



The spring house was the main water supply for the Luck house up until the summer of 2003. In the early years it was not only used for water it was also used to keep certain foods cool. We are not sure if it ever had a roof.

GOOSE CREEK



The Goose Creek forms the southern boundary of BRNP. It is joined, from the south, by the Little River. The south western and southern parts of the preserve are part of the Goose Creek flood plan. After it passes BRNP it flows into Goose Creek Reservoir and then on to the Potomac River.

BANSHEE REEKS NATURE PRESERVE

DIRECTIONS TO BANSHEE REEKS

Banshee Reeks Nature Reserve is located at:

21085 The Woods Road

Leesburg, VA 20175

703-737-7843

Open Every Weekend – 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

From Leesburg, take U.S. Route 15 South. Approximately 1/4-mile South of the Leesburg Bypass, turn left onto Route 621, Evergreen Mills Road. Proceed South along Evergreen Mills Road about 5-miles. Turn right onto The Woods Road (Route 771). Proceed down The Woods Road for approximately one mile. Entrance to Banshee Reeks is on the left.

From Gilbert's Corner (junction of Route 50 and Route 15), go North, cross the Goose Creek Bridge; immediately past the bridge turn right on Route 650. As you travel along Route 650, the Dulles Greenway Wetlands Mitigation Project (an excellent area for birding) will be on your right. Turn right and travel along Route 771; entrance to Banshee Reeks will be on your right.

From the Beltway, take the Toll Road west towards Leesburg. Exit the Toll Road at Rt. 659, Belmont Ridge Road and go south. Turn right on Rt. 772, Ryan Road. When you come to Rt. 621 (at a stop sign), turn right on to Rt. 621, Evergreen Mill Road. About a mile after you cross over the Goose Creek you will come to Rt. 771, The Woods Road - turn left. The entrance to the Banshee Reeks Nature Preserve will be on your left after about a mile.

BANSHEE REEKS NATURE PRESERVE

EQUIPMENT INSTRUCTIONS

Telephone

The telephone number for Banshee Reeks is 703-669-0316. Please answer the phone "Banshee Reeks Nature Preserve." Take a message using the message pad if you cannot answer the caller's question.

There is a list of numbers and extensions by the phone on the visitor desk. To dial an extension number, press intercom then the extension number.

If you have to make an emergency call, e.g., 911, make sure you give the address of Banshee Reeks — 21085 The Woods Road — and also contact Ron Circé.

Sign -in Procedures

All volunteers working at BRNP, at anytime, must sign-in using the Volunteer Log Book located on the front desk. All volunteers should check for any new information that may be posted.

All visitors to BRNP, on the open weekends, should sign-in using the Visitor Registration Book located on the front desk. Make sure, that for each family/group that signs-in, the number in the family/group is recorded.

First Aid Kits

Whenever a volunteer goes out to check the trails or takes a group out on the trails that volunteer must take a First Aid Kit with them in case of an emergency. The First Aid Kits are kept in the closet next to the front desk. If any thing is used from the First Aid Kit please notify Ron Circé.

BANSHEE REEKS NATURE PRESERVE

Maps, Brochures, Bird and Wildflower lists, etc.

BRNP trail maps, brochures, and bird lists are available for visitors at the front desk. The VIVA volunteer can use these to help the visitors become familiar with the layout of the preserve and to help answer any questions. Remind visitors to stop back in to discuss what they have seen for the "Sightings" white board, feedback for improvement, and it also gives you a good opportunity to talk about volunteering, FOBR membership, etc.

Guide Books and Binoculars

BRNP is happy to loan the many nature/identification guide books and/or binoculars to visitors while they are here at the preserve. Visitors are required to leave their driver's license at the front desk until they return the items borrowed.

BORROWING PROCEDURE

1. Visitor makes selection. (1-2 books / group — 1 pair of binoculars/group)
2. Put name of books/number of binoculars onto index card with time and date.
3. Clip borrower's license onto index card. (paper clips in file box)
4. File card alphabetically in file box.

Sales

BRNP has a small number of items for sale. One VIVA volunteer on each shift will be in charge of all sales.

ITEMS FOR SALE

1. Hiking Medallions \$2
2. ID Lanyards \$1 (Black, blue, green, or red)
3. T-Shirts \$5 child, \$10 adult
4. Note Cards \$5
5. Posters \$10 unsigned & unnumbered, \$20 signed & numbered

SALES PROCEDURE

1. VIVA sales person will get sales box from front desk.
 2. Check or cash only.
(Check made out to County of Loudoun for items 1 & 2)
(Check made out to The Friends of Banshee Reeks for items 3, 4, & 5)
 3. In sales book A) Write up sales slip listing all items sold.
B) Give bottom receipt to customer.
C) Top two receipts remain in sales book.
- Sales tax is included in price of item. No returns.