

# Swanson Road Natural Area

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**October 1  
Saturday**



For QOC's second event of the season in the DC area, we'll hold a regular event for the first time in a new section of Patuxent River Park (previously used only for a low key summer series event). Beginner through advanced courses from White up to Red will be available. The terrain is varied with open fields (for parking, the white course, and some other courses to traverse occasionally), generally quite nice open woods (for almost the entirety of the orange and advanced courses) and greener areas (to make advanced orienteers cautious when they briefly dip into them and for the vital purpose of making the fringes of the map colorful in the absence of magenta course markings). Any youth or large groups attending this event should contact the [Event Director](#) [2] so that we can coordinate pre-registration for your group; the group registration and waiver [form](#) [3] is part of the information on our [Group Leaders](#) [4] page. Dogs on leash are welcome at this park. Parking for this event will be on the hilltop adjacent to the start/finish and on either side of the road starting at the cluster of buildings south of the hilltop as shown [here](#) [5]. The available parking should suffice for a typical to good QOC local event turnout but please do your best to park efficiently but without trapping any other cars anyway.

**Location**

Swanson Road Natural Area, North end, Upper Marlboro, MD (Classic Orienteering)

**Registration**

No advance registration required. Just show up and have fun!

**Start Times**

You may start your course at any time during the



**Schedule**

start window listed below for your event.

**Saturday, October 1** 11:00 am - Classic Orienteering: Start window

1:00 pm

3:00 pm Classic Orienteering: Courses close (all runners should be out of the woods)

**Volunteers**

Event [Dave Levine](#) [6]  
 Director:  
 Course [Jon Torrance](#) [7]  
 Setter:

**Course Details**

Classic Orienteering Course Name	Length (km)	Climb (m)	No. Controls
White	1.9	45	9
Yellow	3.6	115	13
Orange	4.5	185	13
Brown	4.5	175	14
Green	5.9	200	19
Red	7.5	305	21

**Course Notes**

**Classic Orienteering**

For an explanation of the course color-coding system, please refer to the [Your First Event](#) [10] section of the web site.

All courses: The park, at least the parts used by the courses, is quite a pleasant piece of spur and reentrant terrain with mostly open woods and three large open areas. The main hazard in the terrain is stream crossings, since the stream banks are steep and/or high in places - please take care in picking a spot to cross that's comfortably within your abilities. You shouldn't have to go far at all to find an easier crossing point than the one right in front of you if it looks intimidating. That aside, ticks are always with us, and poison ivy, but neither were detected during the course design process. Dress appropriately and check yourself for ticks afterwards and all should be well.

The park boundary is clearly marked on the map and there should be no need for anyone on any course to cross it, so don't. Within the park, people on some courses may encounter "Private Property" or "No Trespassing" signs whose time has passed and which can be disregarded. The one area within the park that should be avoided other than the more thickly vegetated ones is that portion of the easternmost large field in the park used by the Prince Georges Radio Control Club for takeoffs and



landings of RC aircraft. This is easily recognisable on account of the paved runway - give that a respectful berth and all should be well.

The park management told us to expect some trailmaking activity from horse riders in the park during September but gave only a rough idea of where the new trail might pass and no idea precisely when it might come into being. As of a week before our event, no sign of it was found in the terrain but it is always possible that it has since come into existence. This shouldn't be any concern for the white course; everyone else should be prepared to assume that a trail they encounter that doesn't seem to be on the map actually isn't on the map rather than jumping to the conclusion that they must be lost.

The map will be printed at a scale of 1:10,000, except as noted below. The contour interval is 20ft (~6 meters). Check your control codes - many controls are closer together than 100 meters with the closest two controls a mere 60 meters apart (on dissimilar features but the closest two on similar features are only 67 meters apart).

Notes on individual courses:

White: the white course runs almost entirely through open areas with variably tall grass and other plants. No particularly nasty plants were seen during the course design process but long pants and, for young children, long sleeved tops are nevertheless advisable. The map will be printed at a scale of 1:5,000 (1 centimeter on the map = 50 meters in real life).

Yellow: the layout of the trail network made it seem best to start the yellow course off with legs in open areas, then mostly along trails, and finally following small streams to guide you into the close vicinity of the controls. The last third, more or less, of the course is therefore at the high end of difficulty for yellow and the warning about taking care in stream crossings applies to the yellow course even more so than the more advanced courses, since people doing yellow are presumably less accustomed to leaping small streams with a single bound than long time orienteers. As for everyone else, wait, if necessary, until you reach an easy crossing point before attempting unavoidable stream crossings. The map will be printed at a scale of 1:7,500 (1 centimeter on the map = 75 meters in real life).

Also, I didn't really think you needed that many water controls so early in the course. They're largely for the benefit of people on other courses which happen to share these controls with yours.

Orange: I expect a significantly higher success rate than on my most recent two orange courses but this orange may still be slightly harder than the



typical orange course at a QOC local event. If in doubt about your ability to succeed on the fastest possible route, please go for the safest route instead, somewhat longer though it may be. And please give me feedback on whether you felt this was too hard, too easy or just right. The caution about stream crossings obviously applies to you. Brown and Green: in your case, I'm probably more worried about damage to the stream banks than to you. Try to cross the streams where they're most easily crossed anyway. Otherwise, I got nothing. Red: See Brown and Green. Also, one leg in your course is bent on the map purely in order to avoid passing through another control circle and confusing people as to which is their next control. It is not bent to say anything about what routes are allowable on that leg. That said, it's not a large park but good things can come in small packages. Enjoy!

## Entry Fees

### Individual Entries

Non-Member: \$10/adult, \$6/junior (under 21 years old)

Member: \$6/adult, \$4/junior (under 21 years old)

### Team or Group Entries

Participants are welcome to compete together as a single team entry. Teams containing one or more nonmembers are charged the nonmember individual rate. Teams containing one or more adults are charged the adult individual rate. For teams to receive member or junior rates, all members of the team must be members or juniors, respectively. Each extra team map beyond the first is an additional \$4. Individuals or teams desiring to compete on a second course can do so for a reduced fee of \$4/map.

### Important Notes

- At the event, we can only accept payment in cash or check; online, you may use a credit card or PayPal account.
- Most of our events use electronic timing. We will provide you with an electronic timing chip (aka e-stick, finger dibber, or SI-card) for free if you don't own one. Loaned e-sticks that are lost incur a \$40 replacement fee.
- Compasses are available at no charge, but if lost incur a \$15 replacement fee.
- Please provide collateral (driver's license or car keys) when borrowing a compass or e-punch.
- For additional safety, whistles are available for sale at \$1/each.



- Free beginner instruction is always available - just ask at the registration table.

**Source URL:** <https://www.qocweb.org/events/2011/10/1/swanson-road-natural-area>

**Links:**

[1] <https://www.qocweb.org/events/2011/10/1/swanson-road-natural-area>

[2] <http://qocweb.org/contact/Levine/Dave>

[3] <http://qocweb.org/sites/default/files/maps/waiver.htm>

[4] <http://qocweb.org/content/group-leaders>

[5] <http://qocweb.org/content/swanson-road-parking>

[6] <https://www.qocweb.org/contact/Levine/Dave>

[7] <https://www.qocweb.org/contact/Torrance/Jon>

[8] [http://maps.google.com/maps?f=q&source=s\\_q&hl=en&geocode=&q=loc:38.8612,-76.7064&sll=38.8612,-76.7064&sspn=0.076258,0.086346&ie=UTF8&z=14](http://maps.google.com/maps?f=q&source=s_q&hl=en&geocode=&q=loc:38.8612,-76.7064&sll=38.8612,-76.7064&sspn=0.076258,0.086346&ie=UTF8&z=14)

[9] <https://maps.apple.com/?ll=38.8612,-76.7064&q=Swanson Rd Natural Area&t=m>

[10] <http://qocweb.org/content/discover-orienteeing-discover-yourself-your-first-event>