



Extreme, Close Up

Nearby mountains, rivers, and fields offer abundant sporting options

So here it is. You can see winter in the rear-view mirror and the weather is starting to improve. You discover a renewed sense of energy and want to go on an outdoor adventure. But first, you need to answer a few simple questions: How adventurous do you really want to be? How much do you really want to spend? How comprehensive is your health insurance?

Once you're fairly sure of your answers to the first two questions, compare them to some extreme sports options we've scouted out that others in the Frederick area actively pursue. Before heading out the door, however, make sure you answer the ever-important Question Number Three.

Kayaking/Whitewater Rafting

Choosing between kayaking and whitewater rafting often comes down to how many people are in your group. If you're looking to go it alone, or in a small group, a kayak is probably the way to go, says Matt Knott of Harpers Ferry, West Virginia-based River Riders, Inc. "With a raft," says Knott, "you need plenty of people to go with you each time."

Buying a boat and the necessary gear (personal flotation device, paddle, spray skirt, and helmet) can range from \$400-\$700 (used) to the \$500-\$1,500 range for all new equipment.

There are several nearby options to take your equipment and hit the water, including Cunningham Falls State Park in Thurmont, Fort Frederick State Park in Big Pool, and Harpers Ferry National Historical Park.

If you're just starting out, renting might be the best way to go. One-day rentals include all of your equipment and are usually in the \$40-\$60 range per person. Western Maryland Adventures in Flintstone and River Riders in Harpers Ferry can set you up with everything you need.

ATVing

The sport that might require the most advance work is ATV riding. A new vehicle can run between \$3,500 to upwards of \$7,000. Throw in another \$150-\$300 for a helmet (required by state law) and gloves and you're talking about a real commitment. Fredericktown Yamaha/Triumph and JT Motorsports on Urbana Pike both offer a variety of vehicles that can have you off the road in no time.



Mountain biking in Gambrill State Park—(from left) Clyde Hicks, Phil VanWerkhoven, and Derek Van Werkhoven. (right photo) Tiffany Lane, rockclimbing at Annapolis Rocks.

After figuring out the logistics, finding a trail to ride on provides its own set of challenges. Unless you plan to use the vehicle on private property, users must be registered to ride on the 86 miles of trails approved for ATV use in Maryland state forests. Because of this scarcity, many local ATV enthusiasts ride only on private land—or break the law on public lands to get their fix.

Don't want to sniff out trails on your own? Western Maryland ATV Tours in Oakland and Western Maryland Adventures in Flintstone offer tours that run around \$55 and \$60 for an hour for riders aged 16 and older. Reservations are often required, so call ahead.

Mountain Biking

The sport that ostensibly requires the least amount of training before you set out on your own is mountain biking. But that doesn't mean there's nothing you should do to prepare for a day on the trails.

"It's pretty common that people don't realize what they're getting into," says Philip vanWerkhoven, Frederick-area trail liaison for the Mid-Atlantic Off-Road Enthusiasts group (MORE). "Because when you're mountain biking, you're going over such uneven terrain...the thing you need to learn to do is balance front to rear, as well as side-to-side. It's really a three-dimensional balance."

Quality bikes can range from \$400 to as much as \$4,000. When you swing by Frederick Bicycle Sales & Service or Under the Sun Sports on West Patrick Street, or any bike shop for that matter,

vanWerkhoven suggests focusing on the size of the frame as much as the typical focus on wheel size.

"Doing what we do on a mountain bike—because you're so abusive to your equipment—you have to have quality components," he says.

There are numerous options in the area to take that new bike and hit the trails. Fortunately for Frederick residents, the closest option—Gambrill State Park in Frederick—with its rocky terrain, elevation, and the technical ability that it sometimes requires, makes it vanWerkhoven's favorite spot. "This is one of the premier spots on the East coast, if not the Mid-Atlantic," he says.

Paintball

Several organized paintball facilities are available to the public in the Frederick area, including Paintball Sportsland, Paintball Adventures Park in Taneytown, and—coming soon to New Market—Adventure Park USA, which is expected to open next month. Prices generally range from \$10-\$20 admission without equipment rental, and full packages range from \$36-\$55 and include admission and equipment rental.

If you plan to show up fully prepared, a stop at Paintball Wholesalers Frederick or Pursuit Marketing to pick up goggles, a gun/marker, pressurized gas, and enough paint (ammunition) to hit everyone on the opposing team can cost as little as \$100 or as much as \$3,000.

"I think that's what makes this sport so popular," says Bill Miley, co-owner of Paintball Sportsland in Frederick.

"Anyone from any financial background can get involved in this sport. Anyone from 10 to 100 can get involved in this sport. There are no limitations."

Rappelling

Some people eschew floating down a river, rolling along a mountain trail, or dodging flying paint. They'd much rather just hang out. Then there are others who take that notion to the extreme.

Interested in rappelling? Go solo at nearby destinations like Sugarloaf Mountain in Dickerson or Annapolis Rock in South Mountain State Park. Those seeking more instruction or who want the peace of mind of having a trained professional guiding you down the rocks can contact Tealink, Upward Enterprises, and Nirvana Climbing Guides in Point of Rocks, Western Maryland Adventures in Flintstone, or GO-AdventureSports in Germantown.

Introductory classes can range from \$75-\$165 per person, depending on the size of your group. If you're interested in owning your own equipment, a trip to the Trail House on South Market Street in Frederick could run between \$250 and \$300 for a harness, carabineers, gloves, and rope.

"For the beginner, it's really quite fun because they get to mentally push themselves beyond their perceived limits," says Robb Macgregor, Director of Nirvana Climbing Guides in Point of Rocks. "It's scary leaning back over an edge and having to trust your equipment and trust yourself to do the right thing at the right time. ✚"

Where to Go

Rafting/Kayaking

Locations

Cunningham Falls State Park
14039 Catoctin Hollow Road
Thurmont, MD 21788
301-271-7574
<http://www.dnr.state.md.us/publiclands/western/cunninghamfalls.html>

Fort Frederick State Park
11100 Fort Frederick Road
Big Pool, MD 21711
301-842-2155
<http://www.dnr.state.md.us/publiclands/western/fortfrederick.html>

Outfitters

River & Trail Outfitters
604 Valley Road
Knoxville, MD 21758
301-695-5177
<http://www.rivertrail.com>

River Riders, Inc.
408 Alstadts Hill Rd
Harpers Ferry, WV 25425
800-326-7238/304-535-2663
<http://www.riverriders.com/>

Under the Sun Sports
1003 West Patrick Street
301-698-8900
<http://utssports.com/>

Western Maryland Adventures
16701 Lakeview Road NE
Flintstone, MD 21530
301-784-8403
<http://www.wmdadventures.com/>

ATV

Guides

Western Maryland ATV Tours
19530 Garrett Highway
Oakland, MD 21550
301-387-2095
<http://www.wmdatvtours.com/>

Western Maryland Adventures
16701 Lakeview Road NE
Flintstone, MD 21530
301-784-8403
<http://www.wmdadventures.com/>

Locations

Garrett State Forest
222 Herrington Lane
Oakland, MD 21550
301-334-2038
<http://www.dnr.state.md.us/publiclands/western/garrett.html>

Green Ridge State Forest
28700 Headquarters Drive, NE
Flintstone, MD 21530-9525
301-478-3124
<http://www.dnr.state.md.us/publiclands/western/greenridge.html>

Savage River State Forest
349 Headquarters Lane
Grantsville, MD 21536
301-895-5759
<http://www.dnr.state.md.us/publiclands/western/savageriver.html>

Outfitters

Fredericktown Yamaha/Triumph
5800 Urbana Pike
301-663-8333
<http://www.fredericktownyamaha.com/index.html>

JT Motorsports
5848 Urbana Pike
301-846-4318
<http://www.jtmotorsports.net>

Mountain Biking

Locations

Black Hill Regional Park
301-972-9396
http://www.mcmncppc.org/parks/facilities/regional_parks/blackhill/index.shtm

Gambrill State Park
301-271-7574
<http://www.dnr.state.md.us/publiclands/western/gambrill.html>

Greenbrier State Park
21843 National Pike
Boonsboro, MD 21713-9535
301-791-4767
<http://www.dnr.state.md.us/publiclands/western/greenbrier.html>

Little Bennett Regional Park
Clarksburg, MD
301-972-6581
http://www.mcmncppc.org/parks/enterprise/park_facilities/little_bennett/bennett_trails.shtm

Outfitters

Under the Sun Sports
1003 West Patrick Street
301-698-8900
<http://utssports.com/>

Frederick Bicycle Sales & Service
1216 West Patrick Street
301-663-4452

Paintball

Locations

Adventure Park USA
(Scheduled to open May 2005)
New Market, MD
301-865-6800
info@adventureparkusa.com
<http://www.adventureparkusa.com/>

Paintball Adventures Park
3939 Old Taneytown Road
Taneytown, MD 21787
410-756-4200
http://www.paintballwholesalers.com/private/field/field_info.htm

Paintball Sportsland
10418 Old Liberty Road
Frederick, MD 21702
301-898-1100
<http://www.paintball-sportsland.com/>

Outfitters

Paintball Wholesalers Frederick
205C Bucheimer Road
Frederick, MD 21701
301-624-4399
http://www.paintballwholesalers.com/index_rd.htm

Pursuit Marketing Inc.
4650 Wedgewood Blvd.
Frederick, MD 21701
Suite 108
847-233-2545
<http://www.buypmi.com/>

Rappelling

Locations

Sugarloaf Mountain
Dickerson, MD
301-874-2024

Annapolis Rock
South Mountain State Park
Boonsboro, MD
http://www.bettercamper.com/mountains/mountain_link.pl?mountain_id=2933

Instruction

Nirvana Climbing Guides
1731 Ballenger Creek Pike
Point of Rocks, MD 21777
301-788-0354
<http://www.nirvanaclimbing.com/>

Tealink
8848 Indian Springs Road
301-695-1814
<http://www.tealinkinc.com>

Upward Enterprises Inc.
240-632-9840
<http://www.upwardenterprises.com/>

Western Maryland Adventures
16701 Lakeview Road NE
Flintstone, MD 21530
301-784-8403
<http://www.wmdadventures.com/>

GO-AdventureSports
Germantown, MD
240-603-4150
<http://www.go-adventuresports.com/>

Outfitters

The Trail House
17 South Market Street
Frederick, MD 21701
301-694-8448
<http://trailhouse.com/>