

More Tree Tales



Woodpecker Holes

Downy, hairy, and red-bellied woodpeckers leave scattered holes in trees as they dig for insects or create nesting cavities. Yellow-bellied sapsuckers make horizontal lines of shallow holes in the bark of a tree to feed on the sap that flows out. Pileated woodpeckers tear away large chunks of bark to get the insects underneath, and make distinctive oval-shaped holes for nesting.



Insect Damage

The twisting, winding trails of bark beetles can often be seen on dead or dying trees. Tunnel-like holes and sawdust are signs that a tree or log has been infested with termites or carpenter ants. White cotton-like tufts on the leaves of hemlock trees are the egg sacs of the hemlock woolly adelgid, a tiny insect that feeds on the tree's nutrients.



What do you think happened to these trees?



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New River State Park's

Tree Tales



Did you know that trees are great storytellers? If you look closely at the bark and the shape of a tree you might find clues about its past and future. During your hike, use this brochure to investigate unusual trees that can be found along the Hickory Trail.



What happened to that tree?

A tree's shape tells the story of its life. Bad weather, animals, fungi, other plants and humans can all leave their mark on a tree. As you walk the trail, look for these unique trees . . . each one has a story to tell.



Scar Tissue

As you approach the entrance to the woods, look up to the left to find a tree with a long deep gash. This scar was likely formed when a branch was torn off the tree in a storm. The tree has healed around the edges of the wound, but the center is exposed. How long ago do you think the branch tore off?



Lightning Strike

After re-entering the woods, continue up the trail. When the trail begins to level out, look to the right for a tree with a big black scar. This was likely caused by lightning hitting the tree. Lightning strikes sometimes cause forest fires. Can you find any other signs of fire nearby? How might a fire be good for the forest?



Odd White Pine

After crossing the road and entering the meadow, stop at the first large pine tree next to the trail. The trunks of white pine trees were once used as the masts of ships because of how straight and tall they grow. However, this one is short and has many trunks. Why do you think this white pine and others surrounding the meadow grew this way?

Kissing Trunks

At the trail's junction, turn right. Continuing down the trail, look left to find a tree with two trunks that are fusing into one. Can you tell if this is two separate trees that sprouted very close to each other, or one tree that grew two trunks?



Wind Throw

Further down the trail on the right, you will find a fallen tree with its roots exposed. This tree was probably blown over by a strong gust of wind. How do you think the fallen tree affected the rest of the forest around it? As you continue down the trail, look for other signs of wind damage.



Shelf Fungus

As you walk down the trail toward the river parking lot, look for flat, round growths on the trunks of several trees. These growths are called shelf fungi. Inside the tree's trunk, the fungi grow root-like hairs called *hyphae* that absorb nutrients from the tree. The disc-shaped mushrooms drop *spores* (fungus "seeds") that may spread to other trees. Do you think the shelf fungus helps or harms the trees? Why do you think it is called shelf fungus?