

Visit Patrick County and the Fairy Stone State Park



Fairy Stone State Park, the largest of Virginia's six original state parks, is home to its namesake "fairy stones." These rare mineral crosses and the park's scenic beauty, rich history and ample recreational opportunities make it a local and regional favorite. The 4,639 acres that make up the park were donated by Junius B. Fishburn, former owner of the Roanoke Times, in 1933. The Civilian Conservation Corps originally built the park, its lake and many structures still in use there.

The Legend of the Fairy Stone: Many hundreds of years before Chief Powhatan's reign, fairies were dancing around a spring of water, playing with naiads and wood nymphs, when an elfin messenger arrived from a city far away. He brought news of the death of Christ. When these creatures of the forest heard the story of the crucifixion, they wept. As their tears fell upon the earth, they crystallized to form beautiful crosses.

For many years people held these little crosses in superstitious awe, firm in the belief that they protected the wearer against witchcraft, sickness, accidents and disaster. Fairy stones are staurolite, a combination of silica, iron and aluminum. Staurolite crystallizes at 60 or 90 degree angles, hence the stone's cross-like structure. Found only in rocks once subjected to great heat and pressure, the mineral was formed long, long ago, during the rise of the Appalachian Mountains. The stones are most commonly shaped like St. Andrew's cross, an "X," but "T" shaped Roman crosses and square Maltese crosses are the most sought-after. The rare staurolite stones are found elsewhere but not in such abundance as at Fairy Stone State Park.

Park Size: 4,537 acres, 168-acre lake adjoining the Philpott Reservoir.

SOURCE: Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation.

