

ATLANTA SCIENCE FESTIVAL

Orienteering Scavenger Hunt at Mason Mill Park

Orienteering is the sport of navigation using a map and compass. On this scavenger hunt, you will use the principals of orienteering—plus clues provided—to explore the trails of Mason Mill Park, seeking unusual and unique spots in the forest. Prizes are available (while they last) for those who collect pictures of each Destination in the hunt.

What you need:

- These scavenger hunt instructions
- Comfortable walking shoes & clothes appropriate for the weather
- A snack and water
- A smartphone with a camera & compass app (or a magnetic compass & digital camera)
- Your wits

Instructions:

- Use the compass app on your phone (or a magnetic compass) to follow the bearings provided to reach each of the five Control Points and nine Destinations on this scavenger hunt
- This scavenger hunt will require a mile walk (out and back) on the South Peachtree Creek PATH Trail, plus short explorations off the paved PATH to find each Destination.
- How to play the orienteering scavenger hunt:
 1. Stand as close to the Control Point as you can.
 2. Use your compass to point yourself toward the bearing provided.
 3. This bearing is the exact, straight-line direction to your next stop. However, most Destinations will require you to find a less direct routes to reach your goal. The bearing and distance serve as a guide, but you'll need to follow the clues and use your wits to find each Destination!
 4. Snap a picture when you find each destination.
- Want more tips? Scan this QR code to watch a video tutorial by Ranger Jonah.



Where to start:

Mason Mill Park is located at [1340 McConnell Drive, Decatur, GA 30033](#). This scavenger hunt begins on the South Peachtree Creek PATH Trail which has a trailhead in the park near the DeKalb Tennis Center at the intersection of McConnell Drive and Mason Mill Road. The PATH trail has two information kiosks. This adventure begins near the southern of the two kiosks.



Control Point #1 – Trail Information Kiosk

Clue: You'll know you are at the correct info kiosk if you see Aneesh Gupta's Eagle Scout plaque on the side.

- **To Control Point #2 – Railroad Bridge**
 - Bearing: 180°; Distance: 210 yards
 - Clue: Follow the PATH downhill, then uphill until you reach the pedestrian bridge over the railroad tracks.

Control Point #2 – Bridge over railroad tracks

The railroad you are standing above was originally built in the 19th century as the Seaboard Air Line. You could get on a train in Birmingham, Alabama and ride it all the way to Boston, Massachusetts. The railroad bridge to your north is on the National Registry of Historic Places. Today these tracks are used for freight, not passenger trains. As you walk down the PATH from the bridge, look down to your right and you'll see the ruins of the old Decatur Waterworks, now covered with multi-colored graffiti.

- **To Destination #1 – Historic Water Tower**
 - Bearing: 95°; Distance: 10 yards
 - Clue: A stone cylinder covered in graffiti and vines.
- **To Control Point #3 – Stone Bridge**
 - Bearing: 75°; Distance: 160 yards
 - Clue: Stand directly above the tracks when you take your bearing. Then follow the PATH as it winds downhill to the stone bridge.

Control Point #3 – Stone Bridge over Burnt Fork Creek

Works Progress Administration (WPA) workers built this stone bridge in 1939 to be part of a public park on Decatur Waterworks land. From here, you can see the foundation of a picnic pavilion, an ornamental fountain made from river stones, and the ruins of the dam that held the reservoir which was Decatur's primary water source from 1908 – 1945.

- **To Destination #2 – Historic Fountain**
 - Bearing: 240°; Distance: 20 yards
 - Clue: You can see this from the bridge. It's made of river stones.
- **To Destination #3 – Picnic Pavilion Foundation Ruins**
 - Bearing: 85°; Distance: 20 yards
 - Clue: This can also be seen from the bridge and is built of the same granite material.
- **To Destination #4 – Abandoned Car**
 - Bearing: 335°; Distance: 30 yards
 - Clue: You'll have to go off-trail to find this relic.
- **To Destination #5 – Gnome Home "Waterfront"**
 - Bearing: 25°; Distance: 60 yards
 - Clue: Opposite side of creek from the car; within site of the dam.
- **To Control Point #4 – Blue Blaze**
 - Bearing: 90°; Distance: 50 yards
 - Clue: Continue on the PATH and be looking for a blue blaze on an oak tree to the right, near where the PATH curves to the left.

Control Point #4 – Blue Blaze

You crossed Burnt Fork Creek on the stone bridge and now you can see South Fork Peachtree Creek below you. This small ridge is the separation between these two important DeKalb County watersheds. The confluence of the two creeks is near the site of the old Decatur Waterworks.

- **To Destination #6 – Gnome Home "Zen"**
 - Bearing: 180°; Distance: 90 yards
 - Clue: At the high point of land, near a large boulder and cliff.
- **To Control Point #5 – Trailside Bench**
 - Bearing: 10°; Distance: 160 yards
 - Clue: Walk uphill on the PATH until you find the metal bench.

Control Point #5 – Trailside bench

The square concrete structure covered in graffiti to the right of the PATH was part of the Decatur Waterworks complex and contained a pump that moved water from the South Fork Peachtree Creek reservoir to the Burnt Fork Creek reservoir. Standing next to the pump house looking east, you can see a shallow ditch where pipes used to run uphill from South Fork Peachtree to the pump house, then downhill into the Burnt Fork reservoir. The two reservoirs combined could produce 1.25 million gallons of drinking water a day.

- **To Destination #7 – Gnome Home “Bark Residence”**
 - Bearing: 140°; Distance: 20 yards
 - Clue: Just beyond the historic pump house.
- **To Destination #8 – Christmas Tree & Gnome Garden**
 - Bearing: 345°; Distance: 40 yards
 - Clue: Use dirt trails to walk towards the railroad tracks. The Christmas tree is only 3 feet tall.
- **To Destination #9 – Abandoned Volkswagen**
 - Bearing: 30°; Distance: 140 yards
 - Clue: Leave the PATH as it starts curving right and downhill. Stay parallel to the railroad tracks and the Destination is at a low point below the tracks.

You’ve finished!

To log your success for a chance to receive an Atlanta Science Festival prize, submit your pictures of the Destinations you found:

- Email to jpmcdonald@dekalbcountyga.gov
or
- Post on Facebook and tag @Trails of Mason Mill
or
- Post on Instagram and tag @trails.mason.mill

Finally, retrace your steps on the South Peachtree Creek Trail to return to the trailhead and Mason Mill parking lot. On your way, you might choose to explore the graffiti-covered Old Decatur Waterworks ruins.