

Green Hand Farm Park, Gloucester, VA  
<http://www.greenhandfarmpark.com/>

This past Sunday (10/14/12) we took our sixth grade Cadettes to Green Hand Farm Park. We decided to visit the maze at the farm because we are doing the "A-Maze" journey as Cadettes. We had a great time!

The Farm is located right off Route 17 in Gloucester--30 minutes from my home in Grafton. We were 7 girls and 3 adults, and even though we were not the 20+ usually considered a group, they let us have the group rate because we were Girl Scouts (make sure you email them that you're coming ahead of time). Mrs. Hand even took the time (even though they were busy) to introduce me to Mr. Hand as the "Girl Scout leader we've been emailing with".

There are many things to do there including a hayride (Girl Scouts already have a Certificate of Insurance on file for the farm), a corn catapult, pony rides, childrens' maze, and a FABULOUS CORN MAZE that kept us busy for 90+ minutes. We would have stayed in the maze longer but we were hot and thirsty. There are also bonfires and the maze after dark.

Besides just being a maze, it is also a scavenger hunt. We had to look for clues in the maze and write them in booklets provided by the farm. It is challenging and kept my girls interest.

If you are concerned about getting lost, there are flags you can take with you into the maze. If you get lost, you wave them above the corn and a farm spotter will help you out.

#### Hints if you want to go:

We scheduled 3 hours including driving time. Not enough time. That only gave us 2 hours to do everything. Next time I'll set aside 2 hours just for the maze.

Have the girls carry small backpacks with water and a snack into the maze.

It was in the mid to upper 70's when we went. Most of us wore long pants to protect us from the corn leaves. The paths were wide enough that our legs were not really bothered by the corn, but those in shorts did complain about biting bugs. Those of us in long pants complained about the heat--you just can't please everyone! Do realize there is no shade in a corn field and plan accordingly (sunscreen!).

I felt this was a fun, safe, family environment. You could let the girls go off on their own, but I'd recommend dividing the girls into groups with an adult in each group for when you get lost. This provides the girls with a feeling of security.

Cell phones are a must. I had good reception and could easily communicate with my girls who wandered away from their adult and got lost!

For the 2012 maze: As you enter the right entrance (there are 2), keep to the left until you come to a bridge. Under the bridge is a map of the entire maze including where all the clues are. Take a picture of this with your cell phone. I wouldn't use it at first--it's fun to get lost in the maze and

try to figure things out--but it can be a very good resource if you are lost or your girls are frustrated from not finding clues. Then let the girls use it to find where they are, where they want to go, and how to get there. We did not do this, but I think it would have helped.

I highly recommend Green Hand Park Farm to all Girl Scout leaders. My troop is planning to go back next year.

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