

Exhibits

The Nature Center's exhibit hall, organized by habitat, displays plants and animals that live in Rock Creek Park. There are also exhibits on nature, astronomy and other special topics. Visit Discover/Descubra Rock Creek Park, a bilingual hands-on exhibit for children.

Films

A variety of astronomy, nature and history films are available for viewing. Films range in length from 10 minutes to one hour. Contact the Nature Center for a list of titles.

Self-Guided Nature Trails

Two self-guided trails near the Nature Center are perfect for introducing students to the outdoors. The Edge of the Woods Trail is an easy, wheelchair accessible, paved 1/4 mile path. Signs along the way help students learn about the forest, pond and meadow. The Woodland Trail is a slightly strenuous 1/2 mile loop with numbered guide posts that correspond to a trail brochure. The trail winds through upland and ravine woodland habitats.

Discovery Room

This special room is filled with puppets, books and activities to stimulate preschoolers' interest in the natural world. Limit eight children in the Discovery Room at one time.

To Schedule a Program

Programs are free but must be scheduled at least two weeks in advance. Call the Rock Creek Park Nature Center and Planetarium at (202) 895-6070, 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m., Wednesday-Friday.

Please note: Most programs are limited to 30 persons per park ranger. Planetarium programs are limited to 75.

Please visit www.nps.gov/rocr/forteachers/rangerguided.htm for more detailed information about our programs and suggestions for pre- and post-trip activities.

The Rock Creek Park Nature Center is located at 5200 Glover Road NW, Washington, DC 20015, near the intersection of Military Road.

Trip Tips

- Incorporate pre- and post-trip lessons into your visit. Contact our staff for ideas.
- Dress for the weather. Make sure all participants wear clothing that is suitable for the outdoors. Programs are held in sun, rain, heat and cold.
- Bring your lunch. Limited uncovered picnic areas are provided. There are no food facilities at the park.
- Wear name tags to help make the program more personal.



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Rock Creek Park
3545 Williamsburg Lane, NW
Washington, D.C. 20008
(202) 895-6000
www.nps.gov/rocr

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U.S. Department of the Interior



Rock Creek Park
Washington, DC

Education Programs for Groups

At the Rock Creek Park Nature Center



Explore a woodland trail using your five senses. Learn about the planets and stars in our galaxy. Discover what creatures live in the park. Touch live animals. Find constellations. Investigate Rock Creek's water quality. Learn about how the forest grows.

All these experiences and more are available for your group.



Environmental Education

Pre-K Nature Tales (1 hr) This program introduces preschool and kindergarten learners to the wonders of nature. It includes a story in combination with a hike, live animals, or other activities that introduce young students to a variety of topics. Choose from Animal Babies, Camouflage, Slithering Snakes, Oh Deer, or Turtle Mania.

Sensory Stroll (Grades 1-2, 1 hr) Observe nature in a whole new way! Discover how animals use their senses to survive.

Meet A Tree (Grades 1-3, 1 hr) Meet a new friend ... a tree! Learn how trees are similar to people and find out why they are so important.

Flower Power (Grades 1-3, 1 hr) Spring season only. Learn about pollination and the important role butterflies and bees play in making new flowers.

Magical Seeds (Grades 1-3, 1 hr) Fall season only. Discover the uniqueness of plants and their life cycle. Watch how a mighty plant grows from a tiny seed!

Habitat Hunt (Grades 2-3, 1 hr) Explore a section of Rock Creek Park's 1754 acres of habitat and find out why it is so important to the animals of Washington, D.C.

Be a Junior Naturalist! (Grades 2-3, 1 hr) Learn about the skills and tools naturalists use while observing nature.

Adaptations (Grades 2-4, 1 hr) Win, lose, or adapt! Discover how animals must adapt to thrive in their environment.

Aquatic Ecology (Grades 4-6, 1 1/2 hrs) Journey through the water cycle and learn the importance of conserving and protecting our water resources.

Layers of the Forest (Grades 4-6, 1 1/2 hrs) Explore the forest community from the ground up.

Learn why forests take years to build and only a moment to destroy.

Protecting our Park (Grades 4-6, 2 hrs) Help a Park Ranger protect Rock Creek Park by completing a service learning project such as a watershed cleanup or an invasive plant removal.

Forest Ecosystems (Grades 7-12, 2 hrs) Apply chemistry and mathematics to learn more about the health of Rock Creek Park's forest. Also, participate in a service learning project by helping to remove exotic invasive plants. These programs can be tailored to all ages and/or grade levels.

Water Quality (Grades 7-12, 2 hrs) Investigate the quality of water in Rock Creek using a combination of bioassessment and chemical tests. Also participate in a service learning project by helping to cleanup the creek.

Bridging the Watershed (Grades 9-12, 4 hrs) Choose one of five performance-based science modules focused on the Potomac River Watershed. Students studying biology, chemistry, environmental science and geology will gather authentic data to understand and problem solve resource issues. *Teachers must attend a one-week teacher-ranger summer institute.* For more information, visit the Bridging the Watershed website at www.fergusonfoundation.org or call (301) 292-8757.

Animal Viewing (Any age or grade, 1/2 hr) Observe our live animals at the Nature Center. Learn how they live, touch their skins and shells, and find out what they eat!

Seasons in the Park (Any age or grade, 1 hr) Discover the beauty of Rock Creek Park in any season. Hike the nearby forest and look for seasonal changes.

Planetarium Education

The Sky Above Us (Pre-K-Grade 2, 1/2 hr) This introductory planetarium show is a shortened version of our "Wonders of the Night Sky" program. It is geared for the youngest of astronomers.

The Native Americans' Night Sky (Grades 1-3, 1 hr) An exploration of the night sky with an emphasis on Native American legends.

Wonders of the Night Sky (Grades 2-4, 1 hr) See the night sky from the city and countryside while never leaving your seat. Come on this journey to study stars and the movements of the Earth and Moon. We'll also identify constellations and hear of their stories.

Our Universe (Grades 4-6, 1 hr) The conceptual science of astronomy is made tangible through the combination of active demonstrations and a planetarium program focusing on our universe. If you would like to schedule a planetarium program for older students, please call the Nature Center and we will tailor a program specifically for your group.

Searching the Solar System (Grades 4-6, 1 hr) Does life exist outside our planet? Find out if it's possible to live on neighboring planets.

Night Sky to Freedom (Grades 4-8, 1 hr) Explore how and why African-Americans escaping slavery on the Underground Railroad used the night sky to lead them to freedom.

Wildlife Kits

Urban wildlife kits for pre-K through 3rd grade are available by loan from the Nature Center. These deer, turtle and owl kits contain activities and a teacher's guide to help students learn about adaptations and habitats. Please reserve your kit 2 weeks in advance. Teachers may borrow kits for up to 3 weeks.