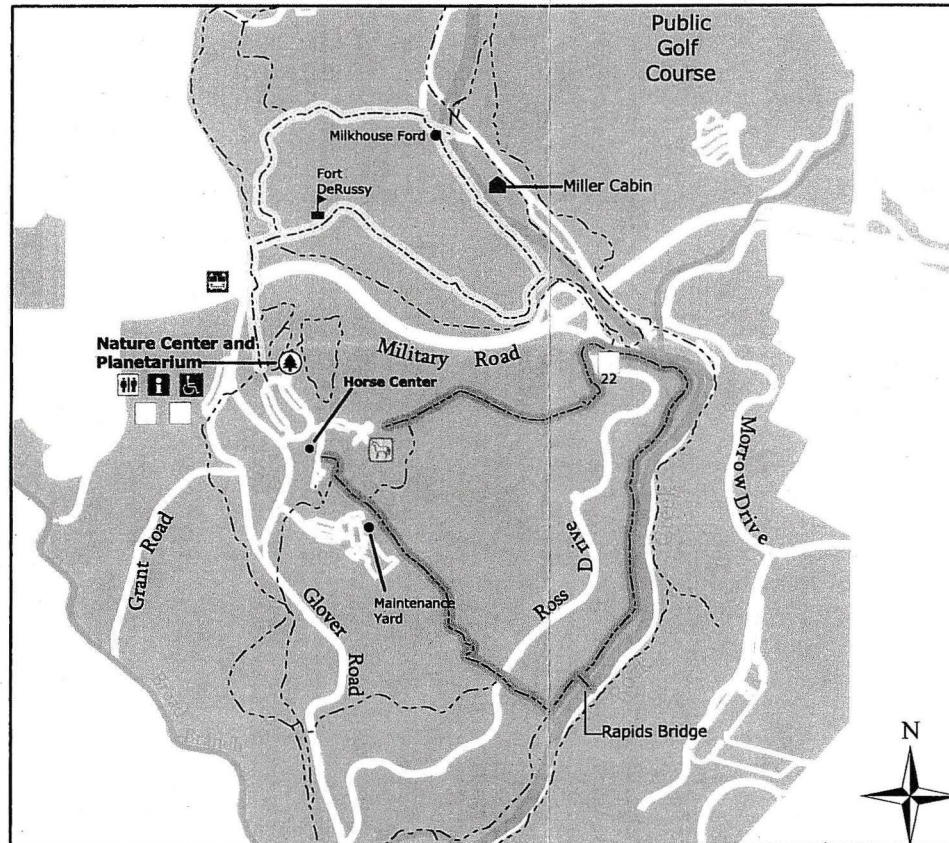




Scenic Hiking Trails Near the Nature Center



Legend

- Nature Center Hike
- ===== Rapids Bridge Hike
- Hiking Trails

"Nature Center Hike"

This 1.75 mile hike is a fun diverse walk that takes about an hour and a half.

Walk down the paved bike path from the Nature Center and cross Military Road. Walking east you will quickly find yourself near Fort DeRussy, which is a Civil War fort used in the Battle of Fort Stevens to defend Washington, DC. The earthen mounds still remain and are a treat for visitors to explore. The trail continues along a thicket of Spicebush and Viburnum. Notice the distinctly scented Sassafras when the trail starts to descend to the creek. Walking north, you will find yourself above Rock Creek overlooking Beach Drive and Picnic Grove 6. At Picnic Grove 6, notice Miller Cabin, dedicated to the California poet, Joaquin Milller. Farther north, you come to Milkhouse Ford, which was used in the past as a crossing point for vehicles. At this point you will find the trail that leads west and will loop you back around toward the Nature Center.

"Rapids Bridge Hike"

This 2-mile hike is an excellent weekend hike that parallels one of the most beautiful portions of Rock Creek. This trail can be accessed near the Horse Center. From the Nature Center, walk south through the parking lot and take a left into the Horse Center's parking lot. Ahead, you will see wooden fences. The trail head is directly to the left of these fences. Walking east, notice the many hardwood trees such as Tulip Poplars and smooth-barked Beech trees. White-Tailed Deer and foxes frequent this area! This trail will take you to Picnic Grove 22 where you will turn south to walk along Rock Creek. Notice the abundance of picturesque rapids and granite outcroppings.

These rapids are caused by what is called a "fall line," which is a transition point where the Piedmont Plateau meets the Atlantic Coastal Plain. Soon you will see a pedestrian bridge, known as Rapids Bridge, crossing Rock Creek. The bridge provides an awesome vantage point to witness the creek's beauty. Just south of Rapids Bridge, turn right heading west up a steep trail that will lead you under the Ross Drive Bridge. Continue on this trail past the maintenance yard and back to the Horse Center.