



The Respite

The official newspaper
of Rock Creek Park

Summer 2007

Remembering the Battle of Fort Stevens

While standing along the northern tract of Georgia Avenue and looking towards Maryland, it is hard to imagine that you are gazing upon a Civil War battlefield. With the large scale urbanization that occurred in this area in the late 1800's and early 1900's, the Civil War history seems to have been erased. But just next to Georgia Avenue, along the corner of 13th & Quackenbos Streets, one is transported back to a time when our nation struggled to remain whole and when Washington, D.C. was transformed into the most fortified city in the world. This is the location of Fort Stevens.

Best known for the battle which occurred on July 11-12, 1864, Fort Stevens served as the focal point for a Confederate attack on the Federal City. The two day battle pitted battle-hardened Union and Confederate soldiers against each other as the nation's capitol struggled to survive. Even President Abraham Lincoln visited the fort to view the battle and came within three feet of being shot by a Confederate sniper. But the history, the truth as Lincoln would have called it, of Fort Stevens does not just lie with the Battle of Fort Stevens or the commemorative stone dedicated to President Lincoln. Locked in the earthwork walls, the empty gun mounts, and the silent cannon of Fort Stevens are also the stories of sacrifice and struggle of those who gave everything to ensure the success of the fort, the preservation of our nation and its capitol, and the rights for all citizens of the United States.

On July 7, 2007, Rock Creek Park will commemorate the 143rd anniversary of the Battle of Fort Stevens with a series of ranger led programs. Join park rangers as they introduce the soldiers who called Fort Stevens home, the incredible stories of fort life and Elizabeth Thomas, a free black woman whose land was confiscated for the construction of the fort. Events for Fort Stevens Day will also take place elsewhere in Rock Creek Park. The Rock Creek Park Nature Center and Planetarium will be presenting the planetarium program *Night Sky To Freedom*, a 45-minute presentation that delves into the secrets of the Underground Railroad and how enslaved people used the night sky as a compass to reach freedom. Tours of Fort DeRussy and Battleground National Cemetery will also be given throughout the day.

New Fort Stevens Podcast Available

In preparation of Fort Stevens Day, Rock Creek Park is proud to announce the launch of our downloadable self-guided tour of Fort Stevens. The tour is available from the Rock Creek Park website www.nps.gov/rocr and can be played on any MP3 player. Running approximately 42 minutes, this self-guided tour of Fort Stevens covers not just the Battle of Fort Stevens, but the entire history of the fort.



A cannon and the commemorative stone marking the location where President Abraham Lincoln stood on the parapet and came under direct fire from a Confederate soldier.

*History is not history,
unless it is the truth.*
~ President Abraham Lincoln



Gravestones at Battleground National Cemetery for the soldiers who fought and died during the Battle of Fort Stevens

Welcome from the Superintendent

Rock Creek Park is a unique urban oasis in our nation's capital. It offers visitors the opportunity to relax and reflect. It is a respite from the everyday. Whether you spent your childhood wandering through these woods or this is your first visit to the park, you will find something that brings a smile to your face and peace to your heart.

Exploring the park trails is a popular recreational activity. Some of these trails were originally designed for horseback riding and some also offer scenic views of the forest and the creek. Rock Creek Park also has much to offer if you are interested in history. Wander through the civil war sites at Fort DeRussy and Fort Stevens (the only Washington fort that saw battle during the civil war), or visit one of the oldest standing structures in the District of Columbia, the Old Stone House in Georgetown.

Rock Creek Park is part of the National Park Service and, like all national parks, our mission is to preserve our natural and cultural resources not just for today but for generations to follow. You can help us protect these areas by enjoying your experiences in the park and by taking only pictures and leaving only footprints. Enjoy the respite of Rock Creek Park.

Sincerely,

Adrienne A. Coleman
Superintendent

2. Volunteers Attack the Green Alien Invaders

Invasive plants are invading Rock Creek Park. These aggressive non-native species are not only displacing native plants, but also altering the habitat. Learn what you can do to help protect our native flora.

3. Join Us in Sharing your Memorable Trees

Rock Creek Park invites you to partake in the celebration of the beauty of the park's natural elements - specifically its trees. So grab your camera, paint brushes, canvas and pencils and head out into the park!

3. Shakespeare Returns to Carter Barron

The Carter Barron Amphitheatre kicks off its 2007 season with the Shakespeare Theater Company Free For All productions of *Love's Labor's Lost*. This is one of eleven free events in the 2007 at Carter Barron.

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National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Rock Creek Park

Rock Creek Park was founded in 1890 as one of the first federal parks. When the park was established, it bordered the edge of the growing city and was a favorite area for rural retreats. In the establishing legislation, Rock Creek Park would "provide for the preservation from injury or spoilation of all timber, animals, or curiosities within said park, and their retention in their natural condition, as nearly as possible."

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The National Park Service cares for the special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

Volunteers Attack the Green Alien Invaders

The heart of Washington, D.C. has been invaded. Green aliens from great distances have landed in Rock Creek Park and found the pristine land quite suitable for life. They will not leave. They are threatening life in and around the forest. How can such an invasion go unnoticed in the gem of Washington, D.C.?

These invaders are worthy foes. They are beautiful, but deadly. They are elusive, yet all around us. The untrained eye is completely blind to their presence. They hang in trees, stand beneath our feet, and even cling to the sides of buildings. Their weight pulls down native trees and their numbers dominate the forest floor so that nothing else can exist.

Initially intended for gardens, these species were brought here from other continents as far away as Asia. Their seeds are now spread by birds, wind, and water. In natural landscapes, invasive non-native species steal water, sunlight, and nutrients from native species. They also strangle trunks and branches, change the soil chemistry preventing other species from growing, and alter habitats.

Rock Creek Park is well aware of the invasion and with the help of some local volunteers is working to restore the habitats. The invasive plant volunteers dedicate several hours each month to cutting a specific invasive species in an assigned area. These events offer lots of fresh air, exercise, education, and even friendship with other people concerned about our environment. They also offer results. Most of the English Ivy growing in trees in Pinehurst, Melvin Hazen, and the northern section of Glover Archbold has been cut thanks to these hard working volunteers.



The invasive plant Porcelain Berry covers the trees and landscape at Dumbarton Oaks.

Common Invasive Plants in Washington D.C.

~ English Ivy - This vine forms dense evergreen mats throughout the forest, weakening trees and keeping anything else from growing.

~ Porcelain Berry - This plant kills other plants by climbing over and eventually smothering them.

~ Garlic Mustard - This early spring wildflower crowds out native flowers in both sunny areas and in the shady forest interior. It produces lots of seeds that burst from pods when brushed.

~ Japanese Honeysuckle - Honeysuckle can quickly create dense stands that threaten native plants by decreasing light and depleting soil moisture and nutrients.

~ Japanese Stiltgrass - This ornamental grass forms dense mats in late summer, which smother native plants. It spreads very quickly from disturbed sites into undisturbed sites.

What you can do to help preserve Rock Creek Park

~ Educate yourself and others about the threat of invasive species on natural landscapes. The Nature Center at Rock Creek Park has brochures about invasive non-native plants.

~ Volunteer with your local park. A new advocacy group, D.C. Woodlands, has become a powerful recruiting force and has provided assistance on volunteer days. To learn more about volunteering visit the D.C. Woodlands website at www.dcwoodlands.org or visit the Rock Creek Park website at www.nps.gov/rocr.

~ Be careful what you plant in your garden and yard. Instead of planting invasive non-native plants, try planting natives, such as periwinkle, virginia creeper, shad bush or summer grape.

~ Do not dump leaf litter and yard waste in the park. You may be introducing non-native seeds. Dumping is also illegal, you can be fined.

Visitor Information

Nature Center & Planetarium

The Nature Center is open Wednesday - Sunday 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The Planetarium is open only during show times. Show times for the planetarium are Wednesday at 4:00 p.m., Saturday at 1:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m. and Sunday at 1:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m.

Peirce Mill

Peirce Mill is currently closed due to renovations and repairs. Peirce Barn, next to the Mill, is serving as a Visitor Contact Station and Bookstore. The Peirce Barn is open Saturday and Sunday from Noon to 4:00 p.m.

Old Stone House

The Old Stone House is located at 3051 M Street in Georgetown and is open to the public for tours Wednesday to Sunday from Noon to 5:00 p.m. Eastern National Bookstore, located in the front room of the Old Stone House, is open every day Noon - 5:00 p.m.

Entrance Fees

Rock Creek Park is FREE!

Park Regulations

Camping is prohibited in all park areas.
All park areas are closed to the viewing of wildlife with an artificial light.
All park areas are closed to swimming, wading, and bathing.
Removing or damaging natural or cultural resources is prohibited.
Alcoholic beverages are prohibited from all park areas.
Fires permitted only in grills or fireplaces; visitors may bring their own grill and use them in designated picnic areas only.
Parking allowed only in designated parking areas.
Washing vehicles within Rock Creek Park is prohibited.
Dogs must be on leash in all park areas.

Volunteer in Rock Creek Park

Have you ever imagined working outdoors, perhaps educating people about the environment or simply working to care for and manage these beautiful places. Well why not become a volunteer?

Rock Creek Park is recruiting motivated individuals to volunteer their time in this unique urban oasis. Volunteer opportunities include:

Horse Center
Nature Center Visitor Service
Nature Center Trails and Garden
Peirce Mill Visitor Service
Bike Patrol
Skate Patrol
Invasive Species Control
USPP Mounted Patrol
Old Stone House Visitor Services
Old Stone House Garden
Hospitality Assistant at Carter Barron Amphitheatre
Usher at Carter Barron Amphitheatre
Stage Hand at Carter Barron Amphitheatre



Therese Roy, a volunteer at Rock Creek Park.

For more information about these volunteer opportunities, please visit the Rock Creek Park website at www.nps.gov/rocr and click on Volunteer or contact Volunteer Coordinator Dwight Madison at 202-895-6222.

Join Us in Sharing your Memorable Trees

Rock Creek Park invites you to partake in the quest of celebrating the beauty of the park's natural elements—specifically trees through the expression of art. So grab your camera, paint brushes, canvas and pencils and head out into the park! Use your artistic talent to capture the beauty and essence of Rock Creek Park trees that are meaningful to you. We're not just looking for the largest tree, but also those trees that are noteworthy for their beauty, age, history, community significance, or for any other reason that is relevant to the artist.

Send us your framed photographs, paintings, or drawings of the tree(s) along with an essay of 300 words or less telling why the selected tree(s) have significant meaning for you. Your framed submission should be no larger than 18" x 24".

Your choice of trees can be from Rock Creek Park proper or any of the other areas in Washington, D.C., administered by Rock Creek Park including Palisades Park, Glover Archbold Park, Whitehaven Park, Battery Kemble Park, Fort Reno Park, Soapstone Valley Park, Little Forest Park, Fort Stevens Park, Battleground National Cemetery, Meridian Hill Park, Old Stone House, Francis Scott Key Memorial, Dumbarton Oaks, Montrose Park, Normanstone Parkway, Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway, Klingle Valley Park, Melvin Hazen Park, Bryce Park, Fort Bayard Park, Fort Slocum Park, or Fort Totten Park.

This exhibit is open to visitors of all ages. Entries must be hand delivered to the Rock Creek Park Nature Center and Planetarium by close of business March 16, 2008.

Visitors whose images are chosen from the entries will be invited to attend the opening exhibit and reception the evening of April 6, 2008.

All visitors whose images are chosen will receive a copy of *Remarkable Trees of the World* by Thomas Pakenham.

For more information, visit our website: www.nps.gov/rocr or call (202) 895-6070.



One of the many beautiful and inspiring trees along Rock Creek.

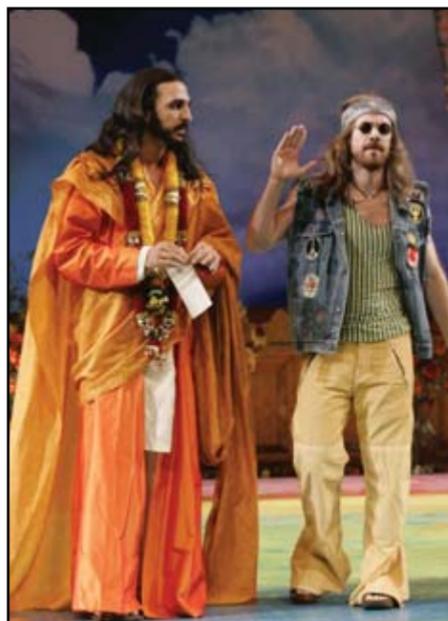
Shakespeare Returns to Carter Barron

Carter Barron Amphitheatre in Rock Creek Park kicks off its 2007 season with the Shakespeare Theatre Company's production of *Love's Labor's Lost*. The Shakespeare Theatre Company Free For All program started in 1991 to bring Shakespeare to diverse audiences in the Washington metropolitan area and has presented Shakespeare under the stars to more than 500,000 area residents. With *Love's Labor's Lost*, Shakespeare created a feast of language, rich with rhymed verse, wordplay and witty banter. The play begins with King Navarre and three of his noble men renouncing the world's pleasures for the world of academia. But when the Princess of France and her three ladies arrive, the men find themselves helplessly falling in love. With clever repartee equaling that of *Much Ado About Nothing's* Beatrice and Benedick, Shakespeare depicts a battle of the sexes where the men receive their schooling from four learned ladies. Performances are free with tickets each evening from Thursday, May 24 to Sunday, June 3, excluding Monday, May 28.

The Shakespeare Theater Company Free For All is one of eleven free events during the 2007 season at Carter Barron. Others include the Washington Post Weekend's Weekend concerts on Fridays, June 15, 22, 26; the National Symphony Orchestra concerts on July 13 and 14; Metro DC Dances on August 11; Spoken Word in the Park on August 24; and the DC Blues Festival on September 1.

The Carter Barron Amphitheatre is also home to another program, the Blues Alley Youth Orchestra Summer Jazz Camp. In between attending workshops, master classes, study tours and daily rehearsals the musicians, ages 10 to 18, will take part in a series of public performances throughout the area culminating with a free concert at Carter Barron on August 12th.

For a complete summer schedule please visit the Rock Creek Park website at www.nps.gov/rocr and click on the Carter Barron link or call the concert line at 202-426-0486.



Amir Arison and Michael Milligan in the Shakespeare Theatre Company's production of "Love's Labor's Lost." Photo by Carol Rosegg.

Contact Information & Phone Numbers

Facility	Address	Phone
Nature Center	5200 Glover Road, NW	202-895-6070
Peirce Barn	Beach Drive and Tilden Street	202-282-0927
Old Stone House	3051 M Street, NW	202-426-6851
Carter Barron Amphitheatre	16th Street and Colorado Ave.	202-426-0486
Thompson Boat Center	2900 Virginia Ave, NW	202-333-9543 202-333-4861
Rock Creek Horse Center	5100 Glover Road, NW	202-362-0117
Tennis Center	3149 16th Street, NW	202-722-5949
U.S. Park Police	1800 Beach Drive	202-619-7300

Ranger Programs

Junior Ranger Camps

10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Nature Center

Our Junior Ranger Camps introduce youngsters, ages 7-12, to many of the natural, cultural, and recreational opportunities available at Rock Creek Park. Participants will have the opportunity to explore woodland trails, examine the wildlife in Rock Creek, discover the different plants, visit historic places, touch live animals and make new friends. Campers should wear old clothes and bring a bag lunch. Park Rangers will lead a total of five two-day camps for the following age groups:
Ages 7-8: July 11-12th, August 1-2nd
Ages 9-10: July 18-19th, August 9-10th
Ages 11-12: July 25-26th

Young Planetarium

4:00 p.m. Wednesdays

Planetarium

This introduction to the night sky for the youngest of astronomers is a shortened version of our Night Sky Planetarium Program. Ages 4 and older.

Summer Night Sky

1:00 p.m. Saturdays & Sundays

Planetarium

Visit the only planetarium in the National Park system and explore the wonders of the night sky. View the brightest stars, planets, and constellations and learn their stories. Ages 5 and older.

Exploring the Universe

4:00 p.m. Saturdays & Sundays

Planetarium

Join us for a series of planetarium programs exploring the universe. Topics for these programs include the sun, moon, stars, planets, and other space phenomena. Ages 7 and older.

Creature Feature

4:00 p.m. Fridays

Nature Center

Get acquainted with the Nature Center's live animals and assist a park ranger in their feeding. Please note: Houdina, a red corn snake, is fed a live mouse every two weeks. All ages.

Peirce Mill Updates

Please contact Nature Center for times.

Peirce Barn

Discover what's happening at Peirce Mill, Rock Creek's last remaining mill. All ages.

Bicycle Rides

Please Contact Nature Center for location and times.

Join a park ranger for a bike ride through Rock Creek Park and learn about the different bike trails in Rock Creek and Washington, D.C. Bring your own bike, helmet, and water. Ages 8 and older.

Ranger-led Horseback Tours

Please contact Rock Creek Horse Center for times.

Rock Creek Horse Center

Experience Rock Creek Park with a ranger by horseback. This one hour tour leaves from the Rock Creek Park Horse Center and travels south along Rock Creek. Participants must be 12 years old or older and weight limits may apply. Reservations must be made at least 24 hours in advance and are taken on a first come-first served basis. Fee \$30. A credit card is required to make a reservation. Please arrive 30 minutes before your ride. For further information call (202) 362-0117.

Park Clean-ups

Please Contact Nature Center for location and times.

Assist park rangers in keeping Rock Creek beautiful by picking up trash. All ages.

Black Georgetown Walks

Please contact Nature Center for times.

Old Stone House

Explore the stories of sacrifice, adversity, and success on this ranger-led tour of historic Herring Hill, a Georgetown neighborhood that holds reminders of the vibrant African-American community that thrived in the 19th century. Ages 8 and older.

Please contact the Nature Center at 202-895-6070 or visit the Rock Creek Park website at www.nps.gov/rocr and click on the Ranger led Programs link for a complete list of activities and programs available.



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Rock Creek Park
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EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA™

Celebrate Rock Creek Park Day

There are few tangible items in the United States still functioning from the year 1890. A little of the currency and coin from that year has been stashed away in vaults and safety deposit boxes. Fashions from those times have ceased to exist except in museum collections or costumed reproductions. Transportation such as horse and carriage has been relegated to collections, ranches, and farms, rarely seen or used in the cities of the 21st century except during special events and celebrations. Most of the other material items of that year have faded with time, abandoned or thrown away for what is new or improved.

There are always exceptions to the rule. In 1890, Idaho and Wyoming became the 43rd and 44th states, Yosemite National Park and the Daughters of the American Revolution were established. All of these very tangible items are still around today and functioning. But to me the most important tangible item still functioning from 1890 is Rock Creek Park, established on September 27, 1890.

The Park was established as a respite from the modern city, an escape from the burgeoning industrial revolution, an island to contemplate nature and enjoy solitude or family gatherings, sitting unimpaired in the nation's capital. One hundred seventeen years later, the smoke and clanking of the machinery of the industrial revolution has been replaced by the hum and beeping of information technology but the function of Rock Creek Park remains the same, a respite, a place to escape to, however briefly an island of solitude in Washington D.C.

Much of what was here in 1890 can still be seen. Birds that are on the international migratory bird route still frequent the park as they did in 1890. Trees, many older than 117 years can be found, observed and appreciated. Cultural treasures such as Civil War Forts and Peirce Mill are still located where they were built prior to 1890 along Rock Creek and early Rock Creek Park Trails.

Today's visitors also experience the Park much like their 19th century predecessors. Some hike, some walk, others go on horseback. Families and friends gather for reunions and picnics. Young people go courting but in 21st century fashion and artists try to capture a moment in time with charcoal, canvas, paint, brush or camera.

On Saturday September 30, 2007 Rock Creek Park will celebrate its 117th birthday with festivities from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Rock Creek Park Nature Center and Planetarium located at 5200 Glover Road NW.

Participate in the activities from 1890 that we still enjoy today: hiking, horseback riding, star gazing and picnicking. Share with your family and friends Ranger led programs that will highlight history, promote conservation, advance local environmental partnerships and promise adventure.

Join us in celebrating this special place which is preserved for future generations-- To the founders of Rock Creek Park in 1890, that was you and your family.



Visitors enjoy a talk from the Raptor Conservancy of Virginia during Rock Creek Park Day.