

Partnerships and People

This is the traditional homeland of the **Kalapuya**. Their people, both past and present, are perpetual stewards of the Willamette Valley.

In 2004, **Mark Gehlar** made a \$1.35 million bequest to the Salem Audubon Society to create a nature center. Gehlar understood the value of a gathering place where children and adults could discover how important the environment is to our future.

The main building is Mark Gehlar Hall. It has an outdoor and indoor classroom, a laboratory area and storage.

Eventually, it will be expanded to include an exhibit hall/entry, 2 offices, and a multi-purpose room.

On the map inside you'll see the **David B. Marshall Outdoor Classroom** near Peregrine Marsh.

Dave Marshall helped create all the Willamette Valley National Wildlife Refuges. An outdoor classroom sitting alongside a wetland is the perfect way to honor him. His conservation legacy will live on through the education of future generations.

On the Northeast side of the parking lot is a memorial plaque to **Matthew Hunter Withee**. Matt worked for over 15 years for the US Fish and Wildlife

Service as an Equipment Operator at the Ankeny National Wildlife Refuge. His work was essential to restoring and maintaining native habitats.

Henry E. Ankeny was born in the 1840's and came to Oregon as a boy. He owned a mine in southern Oregon, a farm in Klamath Falls and a 4,000+ acre grain and dairy farm in this area. The family's home and outbuildings were near where the Center is today.

Education and the Future

The Center provides educational and interpretive opportunities to connect people with nature and to instill a sense of environmental stewardship.

- Your adventures are limitless in the Nature Explore Area!
- Grab an activity book as you journey along the Story Walk.
- Explore the Pollinator Patch.
- Visit the Oak Overlook and imagine that view through time....
- More interactive Education Nodes are in development.

For more information and updates visit www.ankenynaturecenter.org.



Photo Credit: Hope Presley

A Place to Learn & Explore!

The Center is located at Ankeny National Wildlife Refuge, which was established in 1965 to provide overwintering habitat for the dusky Canada goose and other migratory waterfowl.

Phase 1 of the Center opened in early 2022. It is the result of a public-private partnership with the local Salem Audubon Society, Friends of the Willamette Valley National Wildlife Refuge Complex, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Phase 2 opened the David B. Marshall Outdoor Classroom in early 2024.

Read on to learn about the people who shaped this place and future plans.



Ankeny Hill Nature Center

Other Features:

- Outdoor Classroom at Gehlar Hall
- Bicycle Racks
- David B. Marshall Outdoor Classroom at Peregrine Marsh
- Information/Interpretive Kiosk near Gehlar Hall
- Legacy Oak Stump
- Motus Tower
- Pollinator Patch near Gehlar Hall with information/educational activities
- Storywalk activity along the Little Loop and Big Loop Trail

Nature Explore Area Features:

- Tree Tunnel
- Create/Build Area
- Bridges
- Rock Swale
- Grass Hill
- Wood Cookie Steps

