

Rock Creek Park

100 YEARS: 1890-1990

Washington, D.C.
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Rock Creek Park is a place where you can do a lot of different things. For some activities, however, you may need a permit or a reservation. Knowing where to go or whom to see will make your time in the park free of complications, so read the next few paragraphs carefully to see if something you want to do requires a permit or reservation.

Picnicking. Rock Creek Park has 30 picnic areas scattered throughout the park; some have rain shelters. Many of the areas can be reserved for groups up to 100. Reservations must be made in person. Call the D.C. Department of Recreation, 673-7646 or 673-7647 for information. The park map shows which areas can be reserved.

Playgrounds. The large recreation field at 16th and Kennedy Streets has room for many activities. Some of the playing fields, which are suitable for soccer, football, volleyball, and field hockey, can be reserved by calling the D.C. Department of Recreation, 673-6788.

Tennis. The 15 soft-surface and 10 hard-surface tennis courts at 16th and Kennedy Streets, NW., must be reserved in person through Guest Services, Inc. The courts are open from April through mid-November. A fee is charged. For the remainder of the year, the 10 hard-surface courts are available free on a first-come, first-served basis. Six soft-surface courts are located off Park Road, just east of

Pierce Mill. Make reservations for these courts through Washington Area Tennis Patrons in person at the courts; open May through September. A fee is charged. The courts at Montrose Park are free. When others are waiting, limit play to one hour.

Trails. An extensive system of trails and paths covers Rock Creek Park and outlying areas such as Glover-Archbold Park. For the hiker, trails maintained by the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club consist of a blue-blazed trail that follows the east side of the creek, a green-blazed trail that follows the western ridge of the park, and tan-blazed connector trails. A 2.4-kilometer (1.5-mile) exercise course has been laid out for joggers and those interested in physical fitness. It begins near Calvert Street and Connecticut Avenue. For the horse rider 18 kilometers (11 miles) of wide, dirt and gravel bridle trails crisscross the wooded northern section of the park. Near picnic area 25 is an Equitation Field. Horses can be rented and horseback riding lessons can be taken at the Rock Creek Park Horse Center.

Biking. A signed bicycle route runs from the Lincoln Memorial through the park and into Maryland. Memorial Bridge connects it to the Mount Vernon Trail in Virginia. Beach Drive between Military and Broad Branch Roads is closed to cars 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays. Bicycles are not permitted on horse or foot trails.



From Maryland to Military Road

Fort DeRussey was one of a ring of forts built to protect Washington, D.C., during the Civil War. The fort is located off the bike path at Oregon Avenue and Military Road.

The **Rock Creek Nature Center and Planetarium** is the park's major information center and focal point for activities related to the park's natural history. Exhibits tell about the wildlife and the forest of the park, and a library, open to all, has many books on natural history. Guided nature walks and other ecology programs take place daily. Two self-guiding nature trails lead from and return to the center. The center and all pro-

grams are accessible to wheelchairs. Astronomy programs about the sky over Washington are regular features at the planetarium. The nature center encourages teachers and youth group leaders to use the facilities and staff during the week. Reservations can be made for school groups by calling ahead of a planned visit. A quarterly calendar of activities is available upon request. The nature center is open year round from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. It is closed Mondays except holidays.

The **Rock Creek Golf Course** is an 18-hole public golf course with a clubhouse. It can be

reached from 16th and Rittenhouse Streets, NW. Clubs and carts can be rented and the clubhouse has lockers and a snack bar. It is open year round, except December 25, from dawn to dusk. A fee is charged.

The **Rock Creek Park Horse Center** rents horses for trail rides and lessons. A therapeutic riding program for the handicapped is available at the center. Fees are charged.

From Military Road to Tilden Street

At the **Park Headquarters and Maintenance Yard**, the superintendent's office gives information and permits for special events. You cannot get picnic permits here; they must be requested in person from the D.C. Department of Recreation. If you notice a downed tree across a trail or something that needs attention, call the maintenance yard. Headquarters is open Monday through Friday 7:45 a.m. to 4:15 p.m. and the maintenance yard is open the same days 7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Fort Reno, one of the Civil War ring of forts, was originally known as Fort Pennsylvania. The site of the fort, of which no trace remains, is on the heights of Tenleytown, west of Rock Creek Park, on the highest point in the District of Columbia and commands three

major roads: Wisconsin Avenue, River Road, and Reno Road. The site is located at Belt Road and Chesapeake Street.

Fort Bayard was one of the 68 forts built around Washington during the Civil War. The site is located on River Road at Western Avenue, NW. Activities include picnicking and a ballfield.

Carter Barron Amphitheater, a 4,000-seat outdoor theater in the woods, is a home to the performing arts during the summer months. Information and tickets are available at the theater box office, 16th and Kennedy Streets, NW. Newspaper ads also give performance times and ticket information. Parking for performances is available; on week-days, the parking lot is open for commuters.

The **Park Police Substation and Information Center** provides maps, information, and visitor assistance. It is on Beach Drive south of the Military Road overpass and is open daily from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Battery Kemble was named after Gouverneur Kemble, a former president of West Point Foundry in Cold Spring, New York. Activities range from picnicking and games during the summer to sledding and skiing during the winter. It is bounded by Chain Bridge Road, MacArthur Boulevard, 49th Street, and Nebraska Avenue. During the summer there is limited parking on site; in winter it is permitted only on adjacent streets.

From Tilden Street to the National Zoo

Pierce Mill is a restored gristmill that offers a chance to step back in time to hear the rumbling millstones grinding corn and wheat into fine flour and to see the gears, drive shafts, and pulleys operating, powered only by the force of the falling water. Pierce Mill is the only survivor of a number of mills along Rock Creek that served local farmers from the late 18th to the early 20th centuries. The cornmeal and wheat flour ground here is for sale. The mill is open 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Closed Mondays, Tuesdays, and holidays.

At the **Art Barn**, an old carriage house adjacent to Pierce Mill, groups of local artists display their work. Exhibits change monthly and free drawing lessons and other art activities are scheduled frequently. The barn is managed by the Art Barn Association in cooperation with the National Park Service. It is open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; closed Mondays, Tuesdays and holidays.

The **National Zoological Park**, known locally as "the Zoo," is administered by the Smithsonian Institution. It contains more than 2,000 animals from around the world. The Zoo is in the midst of developing natural environments for many of the animals to replace confining cages. Enter either from Connecticut Avenue or Beach Drive. There is a fee for parking. It is open daily except December 25.

From the National Zoo to Memorial Bridge

At **Thompson's Boat House** you can rent bikes, canoes, and rowboats to explore the Potomac River and nearby Theodore Roosevelt Island. It is open daily (except December and January), weather permitting, with an entrance opposite Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway at Virginia Avenue. Limited free parking is available.

Ness Street behind the restaurant at the corner of Van Ness and Wisconsin south to MacArthur Boulevard. A 6.2-kilometer (3.6-mile) nature trail runs the entire length of the park. Via the Whitehaven Parkway and Dumbarton Oaks Park, Glover-Archbold is connected to Rock Creek Park. Information is available at the nature center.

town, adjoining the historic Dumbarton Oaks estate. Montrose Park has tennis courts (available on a first-come first-served basis), open play areas, and picnic areas. Dumbarton Oaks Park contains the wildflower gardens and walking paths of the original Dumbarton estate. For more information, contact the nature center. The parks are open daily.

Glover-Archbold Park is a forested tract of 73 hectares (183 acres) that runs from Van

Montrose Park and Dumbarton Oaks Park are located on the northern edge of George-

Old Stone House, 3051 M St., NW., is open Wednesday – Sunday 8:45 a.m. to 5:15 p.m.

Regulations

The park is open only during the daylight hours; traffic is permitted 24 hours a day. Overnight camping is not allowed. Pets must be kept on a leash at all times. Trash cans are in all picnic areas. Help keep the park clean. Fires are permitted only in grills or fireplaces. Bring your own grill and fuel.

Amplified music is permitted only in picnic areas 23 and 24, with written permission from the superintendent.

All natural objects are protected. Do not disturb rocks, live animals, or plants. Let the wildflowers grow. Do not remove the trees, even dead ones, for firewood. Please restrict

your hiking to the marked trails and thus help minimize erosion. Trucks and buses are prohibited on park roads. Collecting is not permitted.

These telephone numbers will help you reach the people who can help you with information, reservations, or in an emergency.

Art Barn 244-2482 or 244-2483

Carter Barron 829-3202

D.C. Department of Recreation
(picnic area information)

673-7646 or 673-7647

D.C. Department of Recreation
(playing field reservations)

673-6788 or 673-6789

Golf Course 882-7332

Guest Services, Inc.

(for tennis courts) **722-5949**

Maintenance Yard 426-6958 or 426-6910

National Zoological Park 673-4717

Nature Center 426-6829 (Voice and TDD)

Old Stone House 426-6851

(Voice and TDD)

Park Headquarters 426-6832

(Voice and TDD)

Park Police 426-7716 (Voice and TDD)

(Emergency) **426-6600**

Pierce Mill 426-6908 (Voice and TDD)

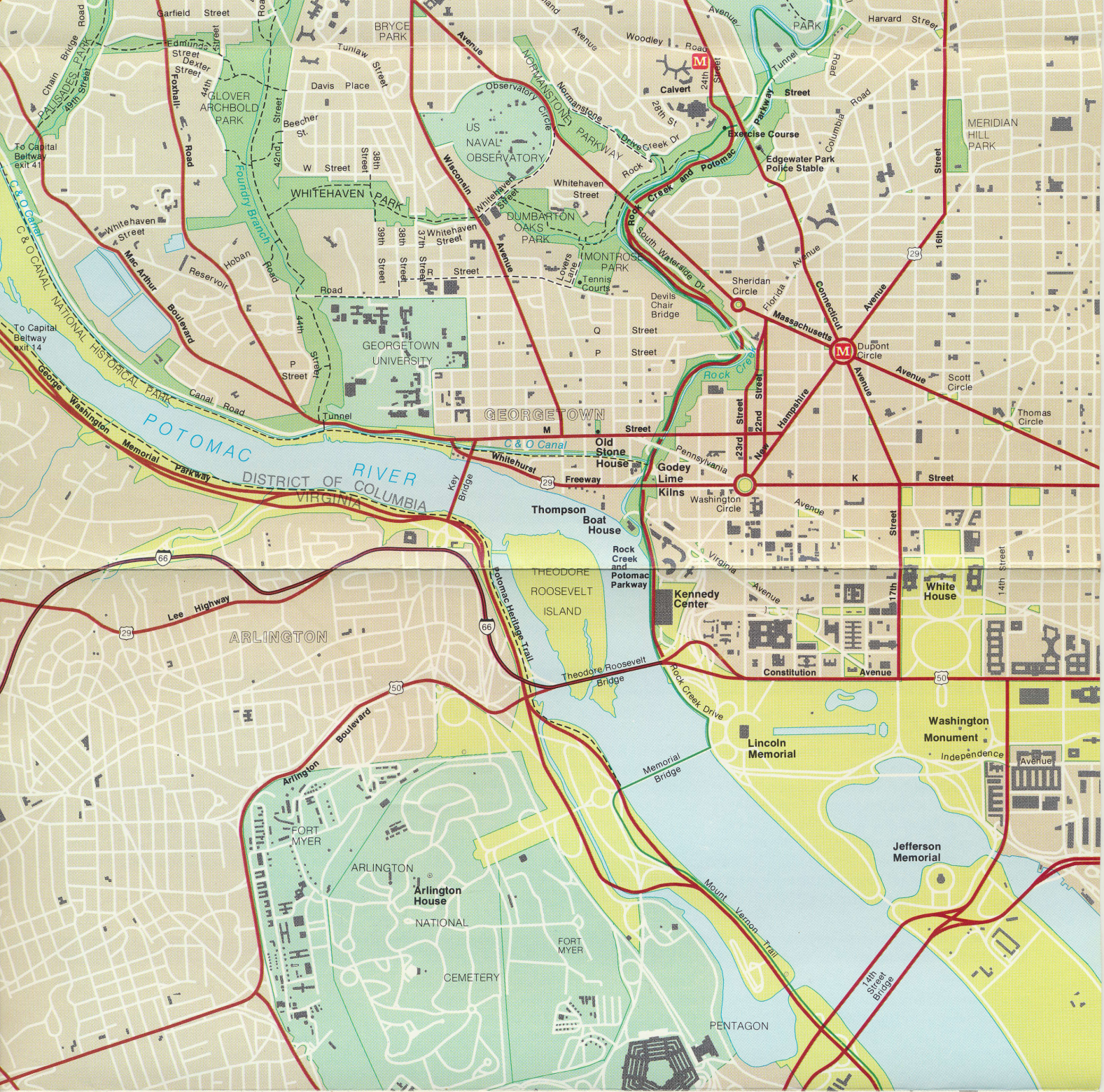
Rock Creek Park Horse Center 362-0117

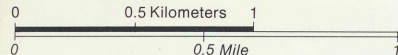
Thompson's Boat House 333-4861

Rock Creek Park

Rock Creek Park is administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. A superintendent, whose address is 5000 Glover Road NW, Washington, DC 20015, is in charge.







Handicap access



Foot trail



Horse and
foot trail



Bike and
foot trail

1

Picnic area
(no permit needed)

2

Picnic area
(permit needed)



Metro station

Trails

Here are the main park trails; many side trails connect with the main ones, so you can plan a circular route. Hikers may use any trails, bikers are limited to paved bicycle routes, and horses must stay on equestrian trails. The park has three self-guiding interpretive trails; check at the nature center for more information.

Name	Length/Route	Description
Valley (Hiking)	8.3 km/5.2 mi Maryland line to Bluff Bridge	Moderate Near stream; Blue Blazed.
Western Ridge (Hiking)	6.9 km/4.3 mi Maryland line to Bluff Bridge	Strenuous Green Blazed.
Bike Trail	12 km/7.5 mi Maryland line to Memorial Bridge	Easy southern part, Moderate northern part. Both sections paved

Name	Length/Route	Description
Glover-Archbold (Hiking)	6.2-km/3.7-mi Van Ness St. to C&O Canal	Easy Blue Blazed.
Black Horse (Equestrian)	7.2 km/4.5 mi Maryland line to Broad Branch Rd.	Moderate Follow black horse signs.
White Horse (Equestrian)	6.9 km/4.3 mi Maryland line to Broad Branch Rd.	Moderate Follow white horse signs.