

# Rock Creek Park

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



Rock Creek Park is a place where you can relax and enjoy many activities. For some activities you may need a permit or a reservation. Knowing where to go or whom to see can make your visit easier, so read the following information carefully to see if something you want to do requires a permit or reservation.

**Picnicking** Rock Creek Park has 30 picnic areas throughout the park; some have rain shelters. Many areas can be reserved for groups up to 100. Reservations must be made in person. Call the D.C. Department of Recreation, 202-673-7646, for information. The park map shows areas that can be reserved.

**Playgrounds** The large recreation field at 16th and Kennedy Streets, NW, has room for many activities. Some of the fields, which are suitable for soccer, football, volleyball, and field hockey, can be reserved; call the D.C. Department of Recreation, 202-767-8363.

**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 rest 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 your 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 (PATC) 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. For physical fitness enthusiasts, a 1.5-mile exercise course begins near Calvert Street and Connecticut Avenue. For the horse rider, 13 miles of wide, dirt and gravel bridle trails crisscross the northern section of the park. Near picnic area 25 is an Equitation Field. Horseback riding lessons and guided trail rides are available 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 from 7 a.m. Saturday to 7 p.m. Sunday, and on holidays. Bicycles are not permitted on horse or foot trails.



## From Maryland to Military Road

**Fort DeRussy**, in a ring of forts built to protect Washington, D.C., during the Civil War, is off the bike path at Oregon Ave. and Military Road.

The **Rock Creek Nature Center and Planetarium** has information and activities related to the park's natural and cultural history. Exhibits tell about the park's wildlife and forest. Open to all, a library has books on natural history. Guided nature walks and other environmental education programs take place daily. There are two self-guiding roundtrip nature trails. The nature center and all programs are accessible to wheelchairs. The planetarium features as-

tronomy programs about the sky over Washington. The nature center encourages teachers and youth group leaders to use the facilities and staff during the week. Advance group reservations are required. A quarterly calendar of activities is available. The nature center is open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily from Memorial Day through Labor Day, and Wednesday through Sunday the rest of the year. It is closed July 4, Thanksgiving, December 25, and January 1.

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. The clubhouse has lockers and a snack bar. It is open daily, except December 25, from dawn to dusk. A fee is charged.

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

**Fort Stevens**, located at 13th and Quackenbos streets, NW, was the site of the only Confederate attack on Washington, D.C., during the Civil War.

## From Military Road to Tilden Street

**Fort Reno**, in the Civil War ring of forts, was first 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. It commands three major roads: Wisconsin Avenue, River Road, and Reno Road. The site is at Belt Road and Chesapeake Street.

**Fort Bayard** was one of the 68 forts encircling Washington, D.C., during the Civil War. The site is on River Road at Western Avenue, NW. The activities include picnicking and a ballfield.

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

The **Park Police Substation and Information Center** provides maps, information, and visitor assistance and is fully accessible for persons with disabilities. 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, N.Y. Activities range from picnicking and games in the summer to sledding and crosscountry skiing in 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 parking is permitted only on nearby streets.

## From Tilden Street to the National Zoo

At **Park Headquarters** 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 tree across a trail or something that needs attention, call the maintenance yard, 202-426-6953. Headquarters is open Monday through Friday 7:45 a.m. to 4:15 p.m. The maintenance yard is open the same days 7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

**Pierce Mill** is the last of many mills here that served local farmers from the late 18th to the early 20th centuries. The mill is open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily from Memorial Day through Labor Day, and Wednesday through Sunday the rest of the year. It is closed July 4, Thanksgiving, December 25, and January 1. It is not wheelchair accessible.

At the **Rock Creek Gallery** local artists display their work; exhibits change monthly. Free drawing lessons and other art activities are sched-

uled. The barn is managed by the Art Barn Association in cooperation with the National Park Service. It is open 11 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Thursday through Sunday; closed Monday through Wednesday and on federal holidays.

The **National Zoological Park**—"the Zoo"—is administered by the Smithsonian Institution. It features natural environments for many of its 2,000 animals. Enter from Connecticut Ave. or Beach Dr. (fee parking). Open daily except December 25. Call 202-673-4666.

## From the National Zoo to Memorial Bridge

At **Thompson's Boat House** you can rent bicycles, canoes, and rowboats to explore the Potomac River and 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 parking.

**Glover Archbold Park** is a 183-acre forested area that runs from behind the restaurant at the corner of Van Ness Street and Wisconsin Avenue south to the C&O Canal. A trail, 3.1-miles, runs the 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.

**Montrose Park and Dumbarton Oaks Park** are on the northern edge of Georgetown, next to the Dumbarton Oaks estate. Montrose Park has tennis courts (first-come, first-served), picnic and open areas. Dumbarton Oaks Park contains the wildflower gardens and paths of the original Dumbarton estate. For information contact the nature center; parks are open daily.

The pre-Revolution **Old Stone House**, 3051 M Street, NW, offers colonial furnishings and programs about colonial life. Maximum persons allowed at a time is 25; groups by appointment.

First floor and gardens are wheelchair accessible. The Old Stone House is open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily from Memorial Day through Labor Day, and Wednesday through Sunday the rest of the year. It is closed July 4, Thanksgiving, December 25, and January 1.

### Regulations

For your safety and to protect the park, please observe these regulations. • The park is open only during daylight hours; traffic is permitted 24 hours a day. Trucks and buses are prohibited on park roads. • Overnight camping is not allowed. • Pets must be leashed at all times. • Use trash cans located in picnic areas, and help keep the park clean. • Fires are permitted only in grills or fireplaces; bring your own grill and fuel • All natural and cultural objects are protected by law. Do not collect or disturb rocks, animals, or plants. Let wildflowers grow. Do not remove trees, even dead ones, for firewood. • Hike only on marked trails to minimize erosion. • Bicycles are permitted only on paved bike trails and roads. • Park only in designated areas.

**More Information** Write: Superintendent, Rock Creek Park, 3545 Williamsburg Lane, Washington, DC 20008-1207. Call: 202-282-1063. Internet: [www.nps.gov/rocr](http://www.nps.gov/rocr).

### For information or reservations

**Carter Barron** (weekends): 202-426-6837

**D.C. Dept. of Recreation** (picnic areas): 202-673-7646

**D.C. Dept. of Recreation** (playing field reservations): 202-767-8363

**Golf Course**: 202-882-7332

**Guest Services, Inc.** (tennis courts): 202-722-5949

**Maintenance Yard**: 202-426-6953

**National Zoological Park**: 202-673-4666

**Nature Center**: 202-426-6829 (voice/TDD)

**Old Stone House**: 202-426-6851 (voice/TDD)

**Park Headquarters**: 202-282-1063 (voice/TDD)

**Park Police** (for information, weekdays): 202-426-7716 (voice/TDD)

**Pierce Mill**: 202-426-6908 (voice/TDD)

**Rock Creek Gallery**: 202-244-2482

**Rock Creek Park Horse Center**: 202-362-0117

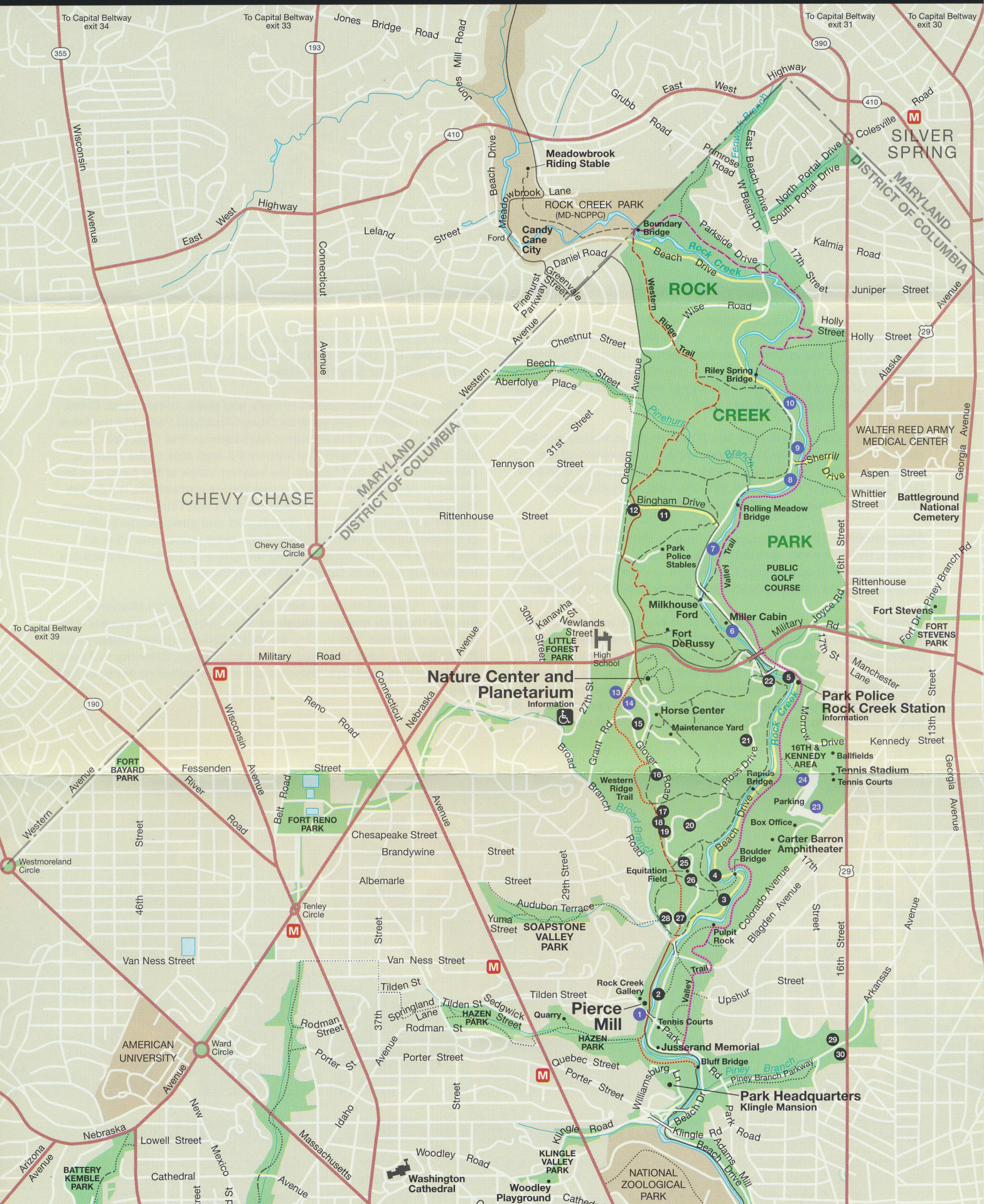
**Rock Creek Regional Park** (Md.): 301-948-5053

**Thompson's Boat House**: 202-333-4861

In an **emergency**, contact the park police anytime: 202-619-7300, or call 911.

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Foot trail



Horse and foot trail



Bike and foot trail



West Ridge Trail



Valley Trail



Weekend/holiday road closure



Rock Creek Park



Other NPS property

1 Picnic area (no permit needed)

2 Picnic area (permit needed)

M Metro Station

Handicap Access

## Trails

Here are the main park trails; many more side trails connect with the main ones, so you can plan a circular route. The park has two self-guiding interpretive trails; check at the nature center for information. **For your safety, use only designated trails. Hikers may use any trail. Bicyclists are limited to paved bicycle routes. Horses must stay on equestrian trails.**

| Name                          | Length/Route                                       | Description                                                                   |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Valley</b> (Hiking)        | 9.0 km/5.6 mi<br>Maryland line to Bluff Bridge     | <b>Moderate</b> Near stream;<br>Blue Blazed.                                  |
| <b>Western Ridge</b> (Hiking) | 7.4 km/4.6 mi<br>Maryland line to Bluff Bridge     | <b>Strenuous</b> Green<br>Blazed.                                             |
| <b>Bike Trail</b>             | 15.8 km/9.8 mi<br>Maryland line to Memorial Bridge | <b>Easy</b> southern part<br><b>Moderate</b> northern<br>Both sections paved. |

| Name                               | Length/Route                                       | Description                               |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| <b>Glover Archbold</b><br>(Hiking) | 5.0 km/3.1 mi<br>Van Ness St. to C&O Canal         | <b>Easy</b> Blue Blazed.                  |
| <b>Black Horse</b><br>(Equestrian) | 7.6 km/4.7 mi<br>Maryland line to Broad Branch Rd. | <b>Moderate</b> Follow black horse signs. |
| <b>White Horse</b><br>(Equestrian) | 8.7 km/5.4 mi<br>Maryland line to Broad Branch Rd. | <b>Moderate</b> Follow white horse signs. |