



Spring Newsletter and Schedule of Events

The official newsletter of
Rock Creek Park



"Earth laughs in flowers."
- Ralph Waldo Emerson

Daffodils by Peirce Mill. NPS Photo.



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Rock Creek Park

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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.

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Rock Creek Park, in cooperation with park partners, is committed to preserving the natural and cultural resources and values of one of the nation’s oldest urban national parks, while providing quality recreational opportunities to visitors and residents in the greater Washington, D.C area.

Welcome to Rock Creek Park!

Hello and welcome to Rock Creek Park, one of the oldest urban parks in the National Park System. As spring rapidly approaches, I want to invite all Greater Washingtonians to explore and enjoy the spectacular changes that this season brings. In only a few weeks, the park’s barren woods will fade from gray to pale green with the emergence of new leaves; rains will carpet the forest floor in a weekly succession of wildflowers; and the woods, meadows, and tributaries of Rock Creek will come alive with the songs of spring peepers and migrant birds.



Spring offers something for everyone at Rock Creek Park.

For history buffs, historical programs make lasting connections to the days of old by vividly bringing the past alive through characters, storytelling, songs and interactive activities. At Peirce Mill visitors can learn how the centuries-old mill once worked. Other programs include a Civil War Roundtable and history hikes.

For budding astronomers, you’ll enjoy a first-ever Spring Break Astronomy Camp, and the ever-popular Exploring the Sky telescope series returns in April. You’ll be able to learn about the inner planets and outer gas giants of our solar system during other special planetarium programs.

For hikers, get back to nature or get fit on Rock Creek Park’s extensive trail system. Specially themed ranger-led hikes include an Earth Day Nature Hike and on select Saturdays, an Early Bird Hike.

For families, Rock Creek Park hosts a variety of free, family-friendly and entertaining special events. This March families can enjoy hands-on learning activities, demonstrations, and games at the National Agriculture Day celebration at Peirce Mill; and, in May, the park will host a ‘flock’ of fun activities from bird walks to bird talks during the “International Migratory Bird Day Celebration” at the park’s Nature Center.

For our virtual visitors, visit Facebook at www.facebook.com/RockCreekNPS to check out staff highlights, volunteer efforts and opportunities, fun-facts, and multi-media presentations. Make sure to “Like Us,” share any posts, and invite friends to join.

And, don’t forget a stop at the Nature Center. There’s always something new to do with featured programs every month for kids and families. You can boost your nature knowledge with interesting and unforgettable special attractions like the native wildflower garden, a hummingbird feeding station, and an animal exhibit. So, come and discover the many wonders of spring in Rock Creek Park!

Tara D. Morrison, Superintendent

Spring/Summer Day Camp Information and Registration

Explore, Discover, Create and Recreate at one of Rock Creek Park's Spring and Summer Day Camps!

Broaden your child's park-horizon by enrolling them in a camp designed to promote educational experiences and recreational activities in a safe learning environment that is sure to boost your child's fun. All camps are free. You must pre-register your camper in person at the Nature Center or by calling 202-895-6070. Registration begins on Friday, March 1st for Spring Break Astronomy Camps and Wednesday, May 1st for all summer camps. Camps fill quickly! Browse our selection of camps below.

Spring Break Astronomy Camp

Wednesday, March 27. Ages 7 to 9.

Friday, March 29. Ages 10 to 12.

Wednesday, April 3. Ages 7 to 9.

Friday, April 5. Ages 10 to 12.

2:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Campers will discover the wide world of astronomy through activities such as planetarium films, a bad light night hike, star-gazing through a telescope, and NASA's "Exercise Like an Astronaut" program. This camp meets the Boys Scouts of America astronomy merit badge requirements. 25 camper maximum.

Like to Hike Camp

Wednesday, June 26 to Thursday, June 27. Ages 11 to 13.

8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Campers will enjoy healthy exercise, play fun trail games, and discover hidden gems, while learning about the nature and history of the Washington, D.C. area. This camp is part of First Lady Michelle Obama's "Let's Move Outside" initiative. 25 camper maximum.

Junior Ranger Camp

Wednesday, July 10 to Thursday, July 11. Ages 7 to 8.

Wednesday, July 17 to Thursday, July 18. Ages 9 to 10.

Wednesday, July 24 to Thursday, July 25. Ages 11 to 12.

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

In this "classic" summer camp, children will discover Rock Creek Park through a myriad of activities including nature hikes, historic tours, arts and crafts, games, planetarium programs, and more. 25 camper maximum.

Georgetown Colonial Kids Camp

Wednesday, July 31. Ages 7 to 9.

Wednesday, August 7. Ages 10 to 12.

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

Using Old Stone House as home base, kids will explore what life was like for Georgetown residents in the 1770s.

Campers will learn about famous Georgetown figures, play colonial games, and meander through Montrose Park and Dumbarton Oaks Park. 10 camper maximum.

Summer Astronomy Camp

Thursday, August 1. Ages 10 to 12.

Thursday, August 8. Ages 7 to 9.

3:30 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.

See description for Spring Break Astronomy Camp.

Art in the Park Camp

Friday, August 2. Ages 11 to 13.

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

Utilizing the park's inspirational setting as their canvas, campers will explore several artistic staples such as drawing, painting, and writing. Campers will visit the cabin of eccentric American poet Joaquin Miller and use it as a backdrop to write poetry. Campers will then hike down to a scenic spot along Rock Creek to paint and to explore the recreational and health benefits of making art. 15 camper maximum.

Environmental Stewardship Academy

Wednesday, August 14 to Friday, August 16. Ages 13 to 15.

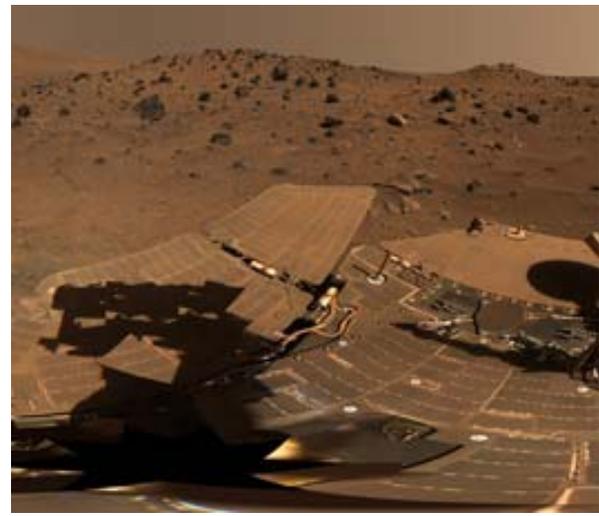
10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. daily.

This unique camp introduces young people to the joy and passion of the outdoors while at the same time teaching safety, respect, and care for the environment. Campers will take an in-depth look at the park's natural resources, research and investigate an environmental issue of their choosing such as storm water runoff, climate change, or illegal dumping, and participate in a hands-on resource management project. At the end of the camp, campers will work in teams or individuals to make presentations. 15 camper maximum.



A Rock Creek Park ranger leads Junior Ranger campers on a hike. NPS Photo.

March 2013



Rock Creek Park Fun Fact

At 409 feet above sea level, Fort Reno occupies the highest hilltop in Washington, D.C. Fort Reno was one of 68 defenses built to protect the capital during the Civil War. The fort bombarded Confederate soldiers with long-range cannon fire during the 1864 Battle of Fort Stevens.

At right: NASA instruments on the surface of Mars. Discover the worlds of Mercury, Venus, and Mars during March's "Rocky Worlds: Inner Planets" planetarium program. *NASA Photo.*

Wednesday

Friday

Saturday

Sunday

<p><i>Please take note that Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday are not shown on this Calendar (there are no programs on these days).</i></p>	<p>1 Spring Break Astronomy Camp Registration Begins 4:00 p.m. Creature Feature</p>	<p>2 9:30 a.m. Civil War Roundtable: Field Trip to President Lincoln's Cottage 10:00 a.m. Invasive Plant Removal with Dumbarton Oaks Park Conservancy 1:00 p.m. Rocky Worlds: Inner Planets 4:00 p.m. Exploring the Universe</p>	<p>3 11:00 a.m. Fort DeRussy Hike 1:00 p.m. Winter Night Sky 3:00 p.m. Colonial Games: Let's Play! 4:00 p.m. Exploring the Universe</p>
<p>6 4:00 p.m. Young Planetarium</p>	<p>8 4:00 p.m. Creature Feature</p>	<p>9 10:00 a.m. Invasive Plant Removal with Rock Creek Conservancy 1:00 p.m. Rocky Worlds: Inner Planets 2:00 p.m. By Dawn's Early Light 4:00 p.m. Exploring the Universe</p>	<p>10 1:00 p.m. Winter Night Sky 3:00 p.m. Colonial Games: Let's Play! 4:00 p.m. Exploring the Universe</p>
<p>13 4:00 p.m. Young Planetarium</p>	<p>15 4:00 p.m. Creature Feature</p>	<p>16 12:00 p.m. Down to Earth 1:00 p.m. Rocky Worlds: Inner Planets 2:00 p.m. Black Holes 2:30 p.m. Oasis in Space 3:00 p.m. Dawn of the Space Age 4:00 p.m. Exploring the Universe</p>	<p>17 10:00 a.m. Invasive Plant Removal with Dumbarton Oaks Park Conservancy 1:00 p.m. Winter Night Sky 3:00 p.m. Colonial Games: Let's Play! 4:00 p.m. Exploring the Universe</p>
<p>20 4:00 p.m. Young Planetarium</p>	<p>22 4:00 p.m. Creature Feature</p>	<p>23 National Agriculture Day Celebration 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. National Agriculture Day at Peirce Mill 1:00 p.m. Rocky Worlds: Inner Planets 2:00 p.m. Georgetown Through Time 4:00 p.m. Exploring the Universe 8:30 p.m. Earth Hour Movement</p>	<p>24 1:00 p.m. Spring Night Sky 3:00 p.m. Colonial Games: Let's Play! 4:00 p.m. Exploring the Universe</p>
<p>27 Astronomy Camp (Reservation Required) 4:00 p.m. Young Planetarium</p>	<p>29 Astronomy Camp (Reservation Required) 4:00 p.m. Creature Feature</p>	<p>30 11:00 a.m. History Hike 1:00 p.m. Rocky Worlds: Inner Planets 4:00 p.m. Exploring the Universe</p>	<p>31 1:00 p.m. Spring Night Sky 3:00 p.m. Colonial Games: Let's Play! 4:00 p.m. Exploring the Universe</p>

April 2013



Rock Creek Park Fun Fact

Several Rock Creek Park employees decrease their carbon footprint by using alternative forms of transportation to commute to and from work. They bike, walk, and use Metrorail and bus instead of using personal vehicles. Go green this spring!

At right: Cherry blossoms frame Mt. Fuji, part of Fuji-Hakone-Izu National Park in Japan. Discover the national parks of Japan, Brazil, Australia, and Mozambique during the Lunch and Learn: The National Parks of Planet Earth program on Earth Day Weekend. Photo courtesy of Japan's Ministry of the Environment.

Wednesday

Friday

Saturday

Sunday

<p>3 Astronomy Camp (Reservation Required) 4:00 p.m. Young Planetarium</p>	<p>5 Astronomy Camp (Reservation Required) 4:00 p.m. Creature Feature</p>	<p>6 9:00 a.m. Sweep the Creek 9:30 a.m. Civil War Roundtable: Walt Whitman's Experiences 10:00 a.m. Invasive Plant Removal with Dumbarton Oaks Park Conservancy 11:30 a.m. Powder and Prose: Poetry of the Civil War 1:00 p.m. Spring Night Sky 4:00 p.m. Exploring the Universe 8:30 p.m. Exploring the Sky</p>	<p>7 11:00 a.m. Invasive Plant Removal with Dumbarton Oaks Park Conservancy 11:00 a.m. Rock Creek Park on Horseback 1:00 p.m. Spring Night Sky 3:00 p.m. Colonial Games: Let's Play! 4:00 p.m. Gas Giants of the Solar System</p>
<p>10 4:00 p.m. Young Planetarium</p>	<p>12 4:00 p.m. Creature Feature</p>	<p>13 7:00 a.m. Early Bird Hike 11:00 a.m. Fort DeRussy Hike 12:00 p.m. Down to Earth 1:00 p.m. Winter Night Sky 2:00 p.m. Black Holes 2:00 p.m. By Dawn's Early Light 2:30 p.m. Oasis in Space 3:00 p.m. Dawn of the Space Age 4:00 p.m. Exploring the Universe</p>	<p>14 11:00 a.m. Rock Creek Park on Horseback 1:00 p.m. Spring Night Sky 2:00 p.m. Fort DeRussy Hike 3:00 p.m. Colonial Games: Let's Play! 4:00 p.m. Gas Giants of the Solar System</p>
<p>17 4:00 p.m. Young Planetarium</p>	<p>19 4:00 p.m. Creature Feature</p>	<p>20 Earth Day Weekend 9:00 a.m. Invasive Plant Removal with Dumbarton Oaks Park Conservancy 10:00 a.m. Invasive Plant Removal with Rock Creek Conservancy 12:00 p.m. Lunch and Learn: The National Parks of Planet Earth 1:00 p.m. Spring Night Sky 4:00 p.m. Exploring the Universe</p>	<p>21 Earth Day Weekend 10:00 a.m. Earth Day Nature Hike 11:00 a.m. Rock Creek Park on Horseback 1:00 p.m. Spring Night Sky 3:00 p.m. Colonial Games: Let's Play! 4:00 p.m. Gas Giants of the Solar System</p>
<p>24 4:00 p.m. Young Planetarium</p>	<p>26 4:00 p.m. Creature Feature</p>	<p>27 National Park Week Program 7:00 a.m. Early Bird Hike 11:00 a.m. Be an Animal Athlete 2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. National Parks: Plan your Vacation! 1:00 p.m. Spring Night Sky 2:00 p.m. Georgetown Through Time 4:00 p.m. Exploring the Universe</p>	<p>28 11:00 am Rock Creek Park on Horseback 1:00 p.m. Spring Night Sky 2:00 p.m. History Hike 3:00 p.m. Colonial Games 4:00 p.m. Gas Giants of the Solar System</p>

May 2013

Rock Creek Park Fun Fact

The official bird of Washington D.C. is the wood thrush. Learn about this and other bird species found in Rock Creek Park during the International Migratory Bird Day Festival at the Nature Center on May 11th.

Rock Creek Park ranger leading a bird hike behind the Nature Center.



Wednesday Friday Saturday Sunday

<p>1 Summer Camp Registration Begins! 4:00 p.m. Young Planetarium</p>	<p>3 4:00 p.m. Creature Feature</p>	<p>4 9:30 a.m. Civil War Roundtable 10:00 a.m. Invasive Plant Removal with Rock Creek Conservancy 11:30 a.m. Play Ball! Civil War Baseball 1:00 p.m. Birds in the Night Sky 2:00 p.m. What's the Buzz 4:00 p.m. Exploring the Universe 9:00 p.m. Exploring the Sky</p>	<p>5 10:00 a.m. Invasive Plant Removal with Dumbarton Oaks Park Conservancy 11:00 a.m. Rock Creek Park on Horseback 1:00 p.m. Spring Night Sky 2:00 p.m. Black Holes 3:00 p.m. Colonial Games: Let's Play! 4:00 p.m. Exploring the Universe</p>
<p>8 4:00 p.m. Young Planetarium</p>	<p>10 4:00 p.m. Creature Feature</p>	<p>11 <i>International Migratory Bird Day</i> 7:00 a.m. Early Morning Bird Hike 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. International Migratory Bird Day Festival! 10:00 a.m. Montrose Park Scavenger Hunt 1:00 p.m. Birds in the Night Sky 2:00 p.m. By Dawn's Early Light 4:00 p.m. Exploring the Universe</p>	<p>12 11:00 a.m. Rock Creek Park on Horseback 1:00 p.m. Spring Night Sky 2:00 p.m. Dawn of the Space Age 3:00 p.m. Fort DeRussy Hike 3:00 p.m. Colonial Games: Let's Play! 4:00 p.m. Exploring the Universe</p>
<p>15 4:00 p.m. Young Planetarium</p>	<p>17 4:00 p.m. Creature Feature</p>	<p>18 <i>Kids to Park Day</i> 9:00 a.m. Invasive Plant Removal with Dumbarton Oaks Park Conservancy 11:00 a.m. Kids to Parks Day at Peirce Mill 1:00 p.m. Birds in the Night Sky 2:00 p.m. What's the Buzz 4:00 p.m. Exploring the Universe</p>	<p>19 11:00 a.m. Rock Creek Park on Horseback 12:00 p.m. Down to Earth 1:00 p.m. Spring Night Sky 2:00 p.m. Oasis in Space 3:00 p.m. History Hike 3:00 p.m. Colonial Games: Let's Play! 4:00 p.m. Exploring the Universe</p>
<p>22 4:00 p.m. Young Planetarium</p>	<p>24 4:00 p.m. Creature Feature</p>	<p>25 <i>Memorial Day Weekend</i> 7:00 a.m. Early Bird Hike 10:00 a.m. Montrose Park Scavenger Hunt 12:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. Support our Troops: Write a Letter like a Colonist! 1:00 p.m. Birds in the Night Sky 2:00 p.m. Georgetown Through Time 4:00 p.m. Exploring the Universe</p>	<p>26 <i>Memorial Day Weekend</i> 11:00 a.m. Rock Creek Park on Horseback 12:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. Support our Troops: Missives to the Battlefield 1:00 p.m. Spring Night Sky 2:00 p.m. Down to Earth 3:00 p.m. Colonial Games: Let's Play! 4:00 p.m. Exploring the Universe</p>
<p>29 4:00 p.m. Young Planetarium</p>	<p>31 4:00 p.m. Creature Feature</p>		

Program Descriptions (arranged in alphabetic order)

For specific program times and dates, refer to the monthly calendars section.

Be an Animal Athlete!

Broad Branch Road at Rock Creek (Picnic Grove 2 West)
Are you ready for the hawk stance, white-tailed high jump, and green frog hop? Join the fun on the two-mile TRACK Trail. Bring water and close-toed shoes and be prepared to exercise. Ages 6 to 12 and their families.

Birds in the Night Sky

Planetarium
Explore bird constellations in the spring night sky in honor of International Migratory Bird Day. Ages 5 to adult.

Black Holes—the Edge of Infinity

Planetarium
Join us for a viewing of this cutting-edge, full dome production that uses high tech animation to explore the current science of black holes. Ages 7 to adult.

By Dawn's Early Light

Old Stone House
Learn the story of Francis Scott Key, author of our national anthem and Georgetown resident, on a stroll to Francis Scott Key Memorial Park. Ages 10 to adult.

Creature Feature

Nature Center
Did you know that turtles have existed for more than 200 million years or that snakes can't bite their food so they have to swallow it whole? Join a ranger during feeding time to learn more about your favorite Nature Center Critter. All ages welcome.

Civil War Roundtable: Field Trip to President Lincoln's Cottage at Old Soldiers Home

Old Soldiers Home in northwest D.C.
Join Rock Creek Park Civil War buffs on a special tour of President Lincoln's summertime home. Email NPS Volunteer John Hampton at jhampton2918@verizon.net for more information. Small fee required. Ages 12 to adult.

Civil War Roundtable: Walt Whitman's Experiences

Nature Center
19th century poet, Walt Whitman, made dozens of small notebooks from paper and ribbon to carry with him as he visited hundreds of Civil War soldiers in Washington area hospitals. These writings provide a poetic record that captures the heroism, horrors, exaltations, and anguish of the war. Join local researcher Martin Jones as he shares insights on Whitman's experiences and reactions to the war. Ages 12 to adult.

Colonial Games: Let's Play!

Old Stone House
Discover the games that children played in the 1700s. Be prepared to run around, have fun, and make new friends. Ages 6 to 12 and their families.



Child playing game of graces, a popular game in colonial America. NPS Photo.

Dawn of the Space Age

Planetarium
Travel through space and time to learn the history of space exploration, from the launch of the first artificial satellite to the construction of the largest spacecraft ever built. Ages 7 to adult.

Down to Earth: Zula Patrol

Planetarium
Bring your sleeping bag and pillow for a cartoon film in the planetarium! Follow the Zula Patrol as they chase Deliria back to Earth's early years. Ages 4 to 10 and their families.

Early Morning Bird Hike

Nature Center
Enjoy a morning walk with our expert naturalist and delight in the sights and sounds of the spring warblers and other songbirds. This walk caters to both novices and more experienced birders alike. Bring binoculars. Rain will cancel the walk. Ages 7 to adult.

Earth Day Nature Hike

Nature Center
Join a park ranger on a three-mile hike exploring the tremendous variety of life in Rock Creek Park. This hike is suitable for families, nature nuts, and anyone hoping to take a deeper look at the web of life along the "Boulder Bridge Loop." Ages 10 to adult.

Program Descriptions (arranged in alphabetic order)

Exploring the Sky

Military Field

(Picnic Grove 13)

Park staff and members from the National Capital Astronomers Association will guide you through an exploration of our local night sky through the lens of a telescope.

Examine the

extraordinary beauty and technology of these amazing instruments and the objects they enable us to discover. In case of rain or cloud cover, the program will be cancelled. All ages welcome.



Young astronomers learning about the night sky. NPS Photo.

Exploring the Universe

Planetarium

Travel from Earth to the most distant objects in the universe in this in-depth look to unlock the secrets and discover the mysteries of deep space. Ages 7 to adult.

Fort DeRussy Hike

Nature Center

Discover Fort DeRussy and the Battle of Fort Stevens on this one-mile roundtrip hike. Ages 9 to adult.

Gas Giants of the Solar System

Planetarium

Explore the worlds of Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune and discover their moons in the only planetarium in the National Park System. Ages 7 to adult.

Georgetown Through Time

Old Stone House

Discover Georgetown's rich past and explore some of its iconic cultural sites on this walking tour. Ages 10 to adult.

History Hike

Nature Center

A Civil War fortress, poet's cabin, and historic creek ford: Explore the unique history of Rock Creek Park on this two-mile ranger-led hike. Ages 10 to adult.

Invasive Plant Removal with Dumbarton Oaks Park Conservancy

Dumbarton Oaks Park (Lovers Lane Entrance)

Join in the battle against invasive, non-native plant species. Remove English ivy from the historic landscape of Dumbarton Oaks Park in Georgetown. Email aaldrich@dopark.org to register. Ages 16 to adult.

International Migratory Bird Day Festival

Nature Center

Woods and fields around the Rock Creek Park Nature Center are alive with song as migratory birds arrive at their summer habitats, so there's no better place to celebrate International Migratory Bird Day to learn about these melodious travelers. Guided bird walks, children's activities, and a live bird program are just a few of the ways we hope to inspire visitors of all ages to get outdoors, learn about birds, and take part in their conservation. All ages welcome.

Invasive Plant Removal with Rock Creek Conservancy

Locations vary by date

Join the Rock Creek Conservancy and the National Park Service in the battle against invasive, non-native plant species. Email kzeiter@rockcreekconservancy.org to register and for more information. Ages 16 to adult.

Kids to Parks Day at Peirce Mill

Peirce Mill

Calling all kids and families! Discover your favorite urban national park through special music, games, and activities. All ages welcome.

Lunch and Learn: The National Parks of Planet Earth

Nature Center

Dreaming of visiting Uluru (Ayers Rock) in Australia, Mt Fuji in Japan, or the Brazilian rainforest? Learn about the incredible biodiversity of our planet and begin planning your dream vacation as a panel of National Park Service rangers and volunteers make presentations discussing their experiences in national parks around the world. Bring a brown bag lunch for this unique, two-hour Earth Day Weekend program. Ages 9 to adult.

Montrose Park Scavenger Hunt

Montrose Park

Join a ranger on a scavenger hunt through Montrose Park and explore the secret spots of this historical site. Ages 6 to 12 and families.



Montrose Park in Georgetown. NPS photo.

Program Descriptions (arranged in alphabetic order)

National Parks: Plan Your Vacation!

Nature Center

Are you taking a national park vacation out west this summer? Stop by the Nature Center and meet with a well-travelled ranger to work on your itinerary, get your questions answered, and learn about your vacation destination's must-see sites. All ages welcome.



Visitors watch the miller pour corn into a holding bin at Peirce Mill, circa 1945. *NPS Photo.*

National Agriculture Day at Peirce Mill

Peirce Mill

Step back in time and see this water-powered machine at work. Enjoy the aroma of corn becoming cornmeal! Mill tours will occur on the hour, and children's crafts and games will take place at Peirce Barn. All ages welcome.

Oasis in Space

Planetarium

Journey through the planets of our solar system on a quest for water and life during this state-of-the-art planetarium film. Ages 7 to adult.

Play Ball! Civil War Baseball

Nature Center

Take an in-depth look at how baseball was played during the Civil War and learn how the sport has evolved over the years. Ages 7 to adult.

Sweep the Creek:

The 25th Annual Potomac Watershed Clean-Up

Various locations

Help Rock Creek Park stay beautiful by joining Rock Creek Conservancy on Saturday, April 6th during the 25th annual Potomac Watershed Cleanup. By removing litter, you can help prevent pollutants from harming wildlife, entering the watershed, and spreading invasive species. E-mail kzeiter@rockcreekconservancy.org to register.

Powder and Prose: Poetry of the Civil War

Nature Center

The poetry of the American Civil War evokes extraordinary emotions of grief, pride, courage, and indignation that shook America in its darkest hour. Join us as we explore unique perspectives offered by literary figures such as Herman Melville, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Emily Dickinson, and how they experienced the war. Ages 12 to adult.

Rock Creek Park on Horseback

Horse Center

Take a ranger-guided horseback tour over the hills and dales of Rock Creek Park. Reservations required. Fee \$40. For more info call (202) 362-0117. Ages 12 to adult.



President Theodore Roosevelt horseback riding in Rock Creek Park. *NPS Photo.*

Rocky Worlds: Inner Planets

Planetarium

Explore the rocky, metallic worlds of the inner solar system and learn how Mercury, Venus, Earth, and Mars were formed. Ages 5 to adult.

Space Travel: Out of the World

Planetarium

Join us in the planetarium for a program exploring the history of mankind in space, from 1950s Sputnik to the International Space Station of today. Ages 7 to adult.

Spring Night Sky: When You Wish Upon a Star

Planetarium

Uncover the mysteries and explore the wonders of our local sky. Learn about the stars and constellations, and listen to amazing stories. Ages 5 to adult.

Support Our Troops: Missives to the Battlefield

Nature Center

For many American soldiers of the 1860s, the Civil War was their first extended absence from home. There were few greater pleasures in camp than receiving mail from loved ones. Join a ranger in a Civil War tent to learn more about the Civil War through personal letters. Then, using a quill and ink, write a letter to a US soldier. Letters will be mailed to American soldiers overseas. Ages 8 to 12 and families.

May Schedule of Events

Support Our Troops: Write a Letter Like a Colonist!

Old Stone House

Learn about colonial letter writing and then use a quill pen to write a letter to a soldier. Afterwards, letters will be sent to U.S. soldiers overseas. Ages 8 to 12 and families.

Winter Night Sky: When You Wish Upon a Star

Planetarium

Uncover the mysteries and explore the wonders of the night sky. Learn about the stars and constellations, and listen to amazing stories in the only planetarium found in the National Park System. Ages 5 to adult.

What's the Buzz:

All about Bees

Nature Center

Bees play an important role in nature. Learn all about bees during this interactive program. Ages 7 to adult.

Young Planetarium

Planetarium

Curious young minds will enjoy this program specially designed to encourage families to use their sense of exploration and their keen observations to discover our solar system and beyond. Ages 4 to 10 and families.



Park ranger moving a beehive during a beekeeping class. *NPS Photo.*

Kids Corner



Pokey, Rock Creek Park's famous eastern box turtle. *NPS Photo.*

Where in the Park is Pokey?!

Pokey, the Nature Center's resident eastern box turtle, has been exploring the park with Ranger Michael recently. Using the photograph above, can you find out where Pokey was? Tell a ranger at the Nature Center and receive a free gift!

Ranger Joke #34: What did the big flower say to the little flower?

Ranger Joke #19: What did Mars say to Saturn?

Answers on page 15.

Team Up for Fun Day Camps!

Hi, I'm Ranger Scott and I'd like to invite you to join us for a fantastic spring break and summer of safe, fun, ranger-led camps at Rock Creek Park. If you think summer camp is only about canoeing, archery, and campfires, you may be surprised to learn how much it's changed. This spring and summer, you can join park rangers to pursue a creative interest at the 'Art in the Park Camp;' discover the mysteries of deep space at Astronomy Camp; or hone your hiking skills at the 'Like to Hike Camp.' So, if you like Rock Creek Park, making friends, and learning about the importance of appreciating and taking care of nature and history, then don't miss out on all the fun! Check out page three of this newsletter for more information. See you at camp!



Calling all Scouts

Are you working towards a merit badge? Rock Creek Park is here to help. We can work with your troop to create a specific program that fits your needs, whether it's nature, history or astronomy-based. Also, Eagle Scout and girl scout projects are available. Contact Ranger Michael Zwelling at 202-895-6012 for more information.

Five Steps to Reduce Air Pollution and Protect Rock Creek Park

At first glance, the plant life in Rock Creek Park seems natural and pristine. But if the park's native trees and plants could talk, they would describe how they are being attacked by some of the most unwelcome park visitors: invasive, non-native plants. As Earth Day approaches us this spring, consider protecting Rock Creek Park and the total environment from intruders such as invasive plants, air pollution, and litter with these five ideas:

1. Join in the Earth Hour movement on the evening of March 23rd.

Conserve energy, decrease greenhouse gas emissions, and decrease light pollution by turning out the lights in your house from 8:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. on Saturday, March 23rd—you'll join millions of environmentally conscious citizens from around the globe! Here are some ideas of things to do: set up a tent and have a campout in your backyard, read a book or play a game by candlelight, lay down on the grass and observe the heavens (the less artificial light, the more stars and planets we can see in the night sky). To learn more about Earth Hour, visit www.EarthHour.org.

2. Attend an Earth Day Weekend program at the Rock Creek Park Nature Center.

On Saturday, April 20th, take a brown bag lunch to the Nature Center and discover the national parks of Australia, Japan, Brazil, and Mozambique. Park rangers and volunteers will discuss their experiences in these overseas national parks. Then on Sunday morning, April 21st, learn about the biodiversity of Rock Creek Park on a special Earth Day Weekend nature hike.

3. Bicycle, walk, metro, or bus to work and school.

Several Rock Creek Park employees commute to the park by using alternative forms of transportation. Park employees bike, walk, use Metrorail and bus to help reduce their carbon footprints. Furthermore, bicycling and walking are great forms of exercise and also serve as stress reducers. Bike to Work Day is May 17th!

4. Join in the battle against invasive, non-native plant species by volunteering.

Increase biodiversity and protect park trees with Rock Creek Conservancy or Dumbarton Oaks Park Conservancy. These park partners host invasive plant removal events several times each month. Get healthy exercise, meet new people that are passionate about public lands, and help us protect the park. We hope that you share what you learn and take your interest to a new level.

5. Sweep the Creek.

Get Involved! Support the 25th annual Potomac Watershed Cleanup by joining park staff and members of the Rock Creek Conservancy to remove litter and contribute to the health of Rock Creek tributaries and the Potomac Watershed. See event description on page eight for details.



Visitor on bicycle near Peirce Mill. NPS Photo.

Check out our New Brochures and Wayside Exhibits!

Next time you drop into the Nature Center, grab copies of the park's newest publications to learn more about your national park. The *Meadows* brochure will introduce you to the biodiversity in Rock Creek Park's eleven man-made meadows. *Invasive, Non-native Plant Species* describes the most invasive plants found throughout the Rock Creek area with information on how they threaten native communities, and information on native species that can be used as alternatives in gardens and wildlife plantings. A *Hiker's Guide to the Civil War Defenses of Washington: Self Guiding Tour from Fort Reno to Fort Totten* is a new publication for Civil War enthusiasts and walking aficionados. Grab this brochure from the Nature Center and then head out for more than seven miles of Civil War exploration.

Next time you visit Meridian Hill Park, take time to read the new wayside exhibits which will introduce you to the park's rich history and statues.



Taking Back the Night: Light Pollution in the District

By Deanna Ochs, Park Ranger

Webster identifies hopelessness as “offering no hope or expectation of improvement; incurable; impossible.” It drags one down in defeat before a single step is ventured.

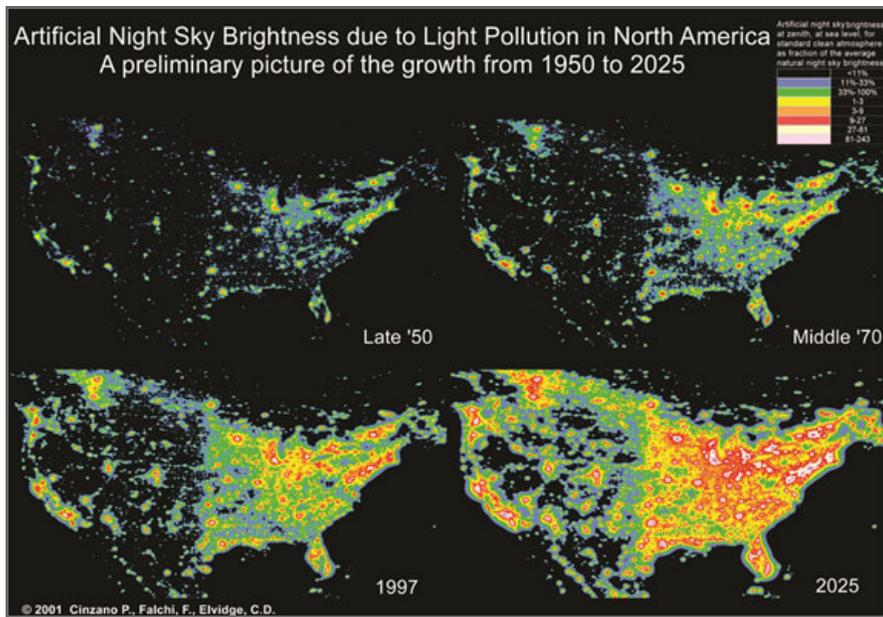
It is what I experience any time I look up into the night sky outside my apartment building, hoping to identify a friendly constellation or two. Instead, the milky haze of a thousand manmade lights obscures all but the brightest celestial bodies. I might wish upon a falling star for darker skies, if I could see one.

Sure, artificial light, for the most part, is a welcome invention. We feel safer entering well-lit buildings after dark and crossing illuminated parking lots to get there. We like to know what we are stepping in when we cross the dog park at night.

However, like a glass of tipped milk, human-generated light is spilling into places we never intended. Drive down a well-lit highway on a foggy night and you will see them; beams of light spreading like bat wings above the horizon. Such artificial lights are gulping up vast regions of what were once supremely dark skies. In fact, light pollution is increasing at a faster rate than the human race. Dark zones on nighttime satellite images of the United States are now so few they appear as freckles on pale white skin. At our current pace, soon few people will even remember the spectacle of the Milky Way.

Based on the amount and intensity of artificial light, Washington, D.C. residents should have some of the safest parking lots in the nation. Studies of dark sky quality indicate that this city is mighty well lit, and that’s not referring to the number of local pubs and their merry patrons. With the region’s population continuing to grow, it would seem that our future is, literally, very bright. Planetariums, such as the one in Rock Creek Park, of course, offer great stargazing opportunities, but there is really nothing like contemplating the dazzling mystery of the real thing.

Because of this, growing numbers of people are joining the cry for dark sky preservation. Entire cities, by choosing night sky friendly lighting, are willingly plunging into darkness. National Parks, too, are dimming the lights to



Map showing an increase in light pollution from the 1950s to the present. NPS graphic.

protect some of the darkest night skies in the world, as well as the wildlife that relies on the cloak of night for survival.

Perhaps the brightest spot in all of this is that the loss of a dark sky is not a necessary fact of modern life and fixing the problem doesn’t require that we stumble blindly in the night. In fact, light pollution is one of the easiest types of pollution to fix. We can tame straying light beams and direct aimless glaring bulbs downward fairly simply and inexpensively.

The National Park Service’s Natural Sounds and Night Skies Division offers tips on how to make a difference in your own backyard (or front yard, or condominium parking lot or local sport field for that matter) as well as insight, research and inspiration for anyone looking to improve their night sky viewing. Visit their website at <http://www.nature.nps.gov/night/index.cfm>. With a little effort, and armed with information, desire, and some good old fashioned hope, we can put the “night” back in nighttime.



Streetlights that shine up cause light pollution (top graphic); streetlights that shine down do not. NPS Photo.

Volunteer News

U.S. Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood Volunteers in the Park

On a cold, crystal-clear mid-January day, U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood, Federal Highway Administrator Victor M. Mendez, and several other civil servants joined staff and volunteers from the National Park Service and Rock Creek Conservancy in removing invasive, non-native plant species from Soapstone Valley. Approximately 140 volunteers removed 98% of the arborized English ivy vines within the tributary park as part of the Martin Luther King, Jr. National Day of Service.

“Volunteering is democratic,” said Secretary LaHood. “People coming together to help protect public lands is a great thing.”

English ivy is a non-native vine that grows aggressively as ground cover and also up into the canopy of trees. The ivy slowly kills trees by stealing their sunlight. When trees die, they release all their carbon that they’ve stored over the years back into the atmosphere. Fortunately, Rock Creek Conservancy, a non-profit group consisting mostly of volunteers, has pledged to remove all arborized English Ivy vines within Rock Creek Park. Park Vegetation Specialist Ana Chuquin leads and coordinates the park’s partnership with Rock Creek Conservancy.



U.S. Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood (center) and other community volunteers in Rock Creek Park. *Photo courtesy of Rock Creek Conservancy.*

Hats off to Interpretive Volunteers!

Thank you to the following active interpretive volunteers and interns for enhancing the visitor experience in Rock Creek Park: **Havala Osdoba, Anita Montero, Maddie Galvez, David Lyman, Jim Fetterhoff, Adrienne Farfalla, Quentin Looney, Amber Chisholm, Cane West, John Hampton, Albert Arevalo, Aya Yatsumoto, Libby Moulton, Deborah Dougherty, Tish Kilpatrick, Desmond Miller, Amanda Kopil, and Zachery Goslin.**



Education Specialist Volunteer Adrienne Farfalla showcasing park wildlife during a community outreach event in southeast Washington, D.C. *NPS Photo.*

Interested in volunteering? Email the volunteer coordinator at scott_einberger@nps.gov or visit www.volunteer.gov/gov for more information.

From Tokyo to the District of Columbia

Rock Creek Park recently welcomed Aya Yatsumoto as its newest volunteer. An employee from Japan’s Ministry of the



Rock Creek Park Volunteer Aya Yatsumoto. *NPS Photo.*

Environment, Aya is spending six months in the U.S. learning about the National Park Service with an eye on natural resource management, interpretation and education, and volunteer program management. Aya will take the ideas she learns in the U.S. back to Japan.

Come out and chat with Aya about Japan’s natural wonders on April 21st during a special Earth Day program entitled “Lunch and Learn: The National Parks of Planet Earth.”

Park Partners

Alice Ferguson Foundation connects people to the natural world, sustainable agricultural practices and the cultural heritage of their local watershed through education, stewardship and advocacy. Visit fergusonfoundation.org

Dumbarton Oaks Park Conservancy seeks to restore one of America's ten greatest garden landscape designs: the 27-acre Dumbarton Oaks Park in Georgetown. Visit dopark.org

Eastern National promotes the public's understanding and support of America's national parks by providing quality educational experiences, products, and services to visitors. Visit easternnational.org

Friends of Georgetown Waterfront Park works to support the maintenance of Georgetown Waterfront Park through fundraising. Visit georgetownwaterfrontpark.org

Friends of Peirce Mill works to raise awareness of and funding for the restoration of this early 1800s water-powered gristmill. Visit peircemill-friends.org

National Capital Astronomers advances space technology, astronomy, and related sciences through information, participation, and inspiration. Visit capitalastronomer.org

Potomac Appalachian Trail Club, through volunteer efforts, advocacy and education, maintains the Appalachian Trail and other trails nearby for the enjoyment of present and future hikers. Visit patc.net

Rock Creek Conservancy, formerly known as Friends of Rock Creek's Environment (FORCE), works to protect and restore Rock Creek and its waters, parks, and lands. Visit rockcreekconservancy.org

Student Conservation Association builds the next generation of conservation leaders and inspires lifelong stewardship of our environment and communities by engaging young people in hands-on service to the land. Visit thesca.org

Washington Tennis & Education Foundation improves the life prospects of DC-area youth, particularly those from lower-income communities, by providing athletic, academic, and life-skills activities that teach discipline, build confidence, and improve academic performance. Visit wtcf.org

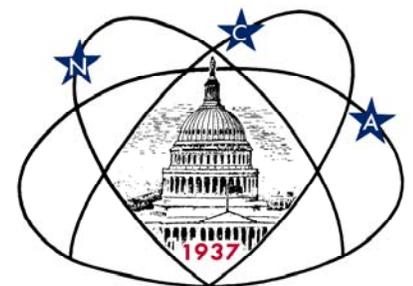


Friends Of Georgetown Waterfront Park

Spotlight on National Capital Astronomers

On a clear night in the summer of 1937, volunteers from a newly formed non-profit group called the National Capital Astronomers (NCA) set up telescopes and let viewers of all ages gaze through their lens'. Visitors observed Jupiter and its Galilean moons, and learned about astronomy from the gurus under the Rock Creek Park night sky. Over 75 years later, volunteers from NCA lead stargazing programs once a month from April to November during the park's "Exploring the Sky" program.

NCA, a proud, long-time partner of Rock Creek Park, is dedicated to advancing space technology and astronomy through information, participation, and inspiration. To learn more about the organization, visit their website at <http://capitalastronomers.org/>



The Faces of Rock Creek Park: Zenide Rose

Meet Zenide Rose, budget analyst for Rock Creek Park. Born and raised in Sarasota, Florida, Zenide began working for Rock Creek Park in the spring of 2012. Recently, she took time out of her busy schedule at park headquarters to talk about her job, her favorite part about Rock Creek Park, and other national parks that she's visited.

What do you do as a budget analyst?

I assist the park's management team to plan the budget and monitor spending through the year. It's more fun than it sounds! I spend a lot of my time crunching numbers (which I actually enjoy) and learning about how the park works. I also serve as the park housing coordinator and an Financial Business and Management System field trainer.

What is your favorite part about working in Rock Creek Park?

I enjoy the feeling that I'm getting away from the city - it's like a little vacation every day. It's also pretty great to support an organization whose mission I really believe in and a park that so many of my friends and neighbors enjoy. Remembering that helps me to not sweat the small stuff.

Have you visited any other units of the National Park System?

Rock Creek Park is the only park that I have worked for, but I have had the pleasure of seeing lots of National Park

System sites. The first park I ever visited was Blue Ridge Parkway. I recently spent the holidays in Everglades National Park and Big Cypress National Preserve, and the next park on my list is Olympic National Park. I spend a lot of time hiking and camping in Shenandoah National Park, but my favorite park (besides our own!) is probably Yosemite National Park, where I tied the knot.



***Did you know?** Each employee of Rock Creek Park works for one of the following teams: the Division of Interpretation and Education, the Division of Resource's Management, Division of Administration, Division of Maintenance, and Superintendent's Office. Approximately 60 employees work at Rock Creek Park. Say "hi" to us if you see us in the park!*

Answer to Ranger Jokes from page 10:

Ranger Joke #34: What's up Bud.

Ranger Joke #19: Give me a ring sometime.

Contact Us

Nature Center & Planetarium

5200 Glover Road, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20015
202-895-6070
Wednesday-Sunday
9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Information, live animals, plant and animal exhibits, bookstore, children's discovery room, bilingual Spanish/English exhibits, bathrooms, trails.

Peirce Mill & Barn

2401 Tilden Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20015
202-895-6070
Saturday and Sunday,
10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Information, water-powered gristmill self-guiding tours, history exhibits, bookstore, trails.

Old Stone House

3051 M Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20007
Daily, 11:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.
Information, colonial home self-guiding tour, history exhibits, garden, bookstore.

Rock Creek Park Golf Course

16th Street, N.W. and Rittenhouse Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20011
202-882-7332

Rock Creek Park Tennis Center

16th Street N.W. and Kennedy Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20011
202-772-5949

Rock Creek Park Horse Center

5100 Glover Road, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20015
202-362-0117

Important Phone Numbers

Park Headquarters 202-895-6000
U.S. Park Police Non-Emergency
202-895-7505
**U.S. Park Police Emergency
202-610-7500**
Special Use Permits 202-895-6013

Visit us on Facebook!

Enter keywords:
"Rock Creek Park Nature Center"
"Fort Stevens Rock Creek Park"



Enjoy your national park this spring!



Last Look



Meridian Hill Park, circa 1938.

Meridian Hill Park is a national park site located within a vibrant and diverse community in northwest D.C. From civil rights rallies and weddings to drumming circles and family picnics, Meridian Hill Park is a gathering place for people of all ages and backgrounds. A myriad of activities, events, and programs occur annually that help provide a sense of place and connection to the surrounding communities.

Meridian Hill Park was designated a National Historical Landmark in 1994 due to its "outstanding accomplishment of early 20th-century Neoclassicist park design in the United States." *NPS Photo.*