

Welcome to

Croydon Creek Nature Center



852 Avery Road
Rockville, MD 20851

Open Hours:

Monday - Closed

Tuesday-Friday - 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

Sunday - 1-4 p.m.

A Social Narrative
and Visual Tour

Hello and welcome to Croydon Creek Nature Center! We would like to show you around the center, so you know what to expect when you come to visit us. We are located with Rockville's Civic Center Park at 852 Avery Road in Rockville, Maryland.

The nature center is open Tuesday-Saturday, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. and Sunday, 1-4 p.m. We are closed on Mondays. We can be reached by phone at 240-314-8770 or email at ccnc@rockvillemd.gov. You can find us online at www.rockvillemd.gov/croydoncreek.



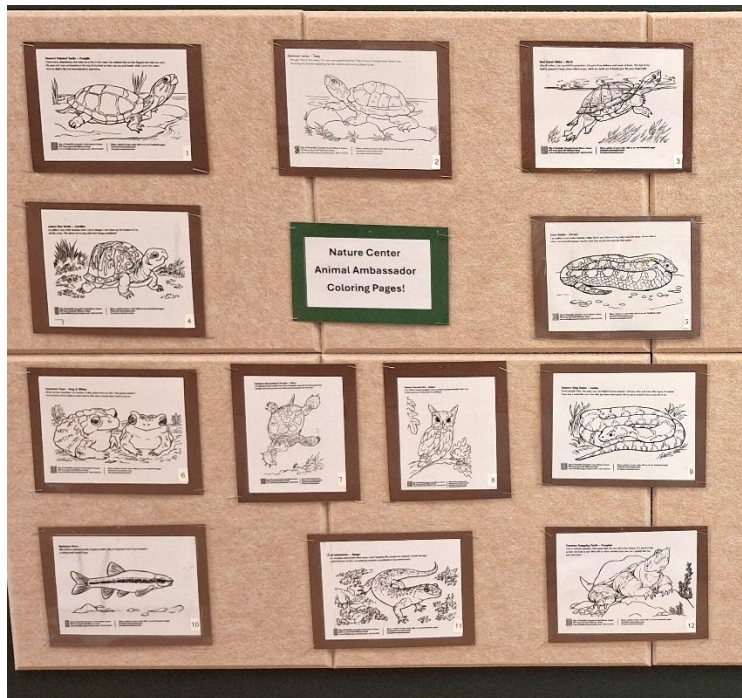
Our parking area is small, but we do have one accessible parking spot if you need it when visiting. If the parking area is full, you are welcome to use the parking spaces at the bottom of the hill in front of the tennis courts.



When entering the building, there are two sets of doors. The right door on each set is automatic and can be opened by an accessibility push button, both outdoors and indoors.



Once indoors, you can find many different types of informational flyers, pamphlets and activity sheets. Please help yourself to what you need and ask the front desk staff member if you need assistance.



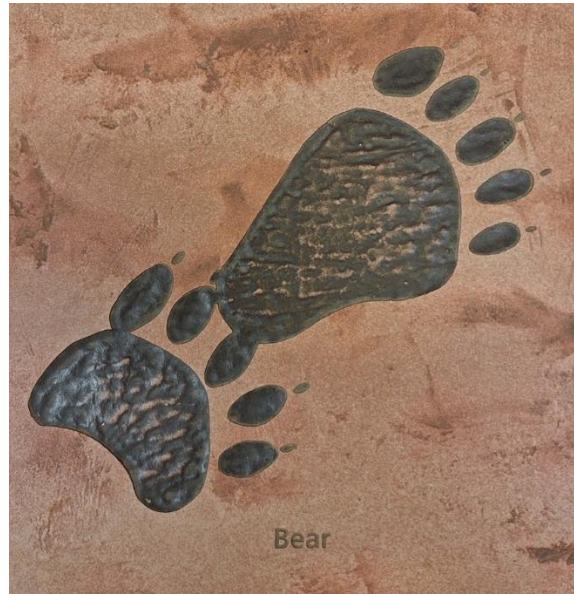
Behind the front desk area, you can see our Nature Nook gift shop. We sell items for a variety of ages and range of prices. We take cash, check, Visa and Mastercard.



In the entry of the nature center, as well as in different areas throughout, we have taxidermy displayed. These animals were once alive but are no longer. Most were donated to the center, but those that weren't, died of natural causes. Once an animal has passed, they may be taken to a taxidermist, whose job it is to preserve the animal for display/education. They take out any parts that might decay over time, replace them with fiber fill or artificial parts and then pose them in a realistic position. Taxidermied animals are a great educational tool that allow visitors to get up close to these animals while remaining safe. These animals are not for touching though as they are very fragile.



Beginning in the entry way and continuing throughout the tiled areas of the main level of the building, you will notice a variety of different animal footprints. All are labeled and we encourage you to try and spot them all!



Something else that is going to catch your eye as soon as you come in the front doors is our amazing mosaic! It is a wall covered in tile, glass, mirrors and other objects that create many different images. If you stand back, you can see animals, like a frog. If you get close, you can find smaller objects, like a turtle shell. You are welcome to touch the wall and feel all the different textures and admire the different colors up close. Please don't climb the wall though, it isn't that strong.



When you enter the building, immediately on the left is an area we call the holding area. This is where we have school groups leave their lunches and there are cubbies for backpacks. You can sit on these benches or enjoy our touch table. Anything that is on this table you are encouraged to touch. In the warmer months, we have a dehumidifier running in this area and it can be fairly noisy.



Turning left at the mural will take you toward the backdoors, the Observation Room, and the Discovery Room. There are backpacks hanging on the wall in this area you are welcome to use for imaginative play.



The Observation Room has tall ceilings and lots of windows! On the ceiling are silhouettes of different birds and we have a printed guide to tell you what they are.



If you look out the windows, you can see our birdfeeders, our native plant garden, the owl's garden house, and the meadow.



We have a craft display where you can get some ideas of crafts you might want to try at home and directions on how to do them.

There are binoculars in this room, but they are not easily accessible for shorter people or those in wheelchairs. There is an accessible pair directly outdoors to use on a nice day, but please ask a staff to get you a pair of portable ones to use in the building, if you need them.

In this room there are several animal ambassadors including the diamondback terrapins, the eastern screech owl and occasionally insects and/or arachnids. The animals have identifiers on their tanks and additional information can be found by either scanning the QR code with your phone or in the Animal Ambassador Information binder in the Discovery Room. Our screech owl has stanchions around his enclosure to make sure he has enough space, so he doesn't get nervous. He is a shy little owl who likes the quiet, so please use inside voices in this room.



Right next door is the Discovery Room where most of our animal enclosures are. We have turtles, snakes, toads and even a salamander. If you don't see anyone at home, it could be they are hiding somewhere quiet, at a program, eating lunch or suntanning in another room, or are visiting the vet. You can always ask a naturalist for help finding an animal if you'd like. Again, you are encouraged to get up close to our animal friends and even touch their enclosures, but please don't bang on the glass and use indoor voices so we don't scare them.



This room also contains our observation honeybee hive. This is a small beehive that you can see into! Don't worry, it is perfectly safe and although you can see the bees, they can't come out in the room. The beehive has a tube connected to the wall that allows the bees to go in and out of the building.

This room also has all sorts of puzzles, toys, books, and other hands-on activities. Feel free to play with or read whatever you'd like, but please make sure to put things away when you're done and share with others in the room. This is a table you can not only sit and color at, but there are also rubbing plates that reveal a hidden picture!



Because of the turtle filters and sometimes other guests, it can get pretty noisy in this room. If you need to step outside, there is a door in the corner where you can step outside or you can ask for earmuffs at the front desk. This door is locked from the outside, so if you go outside and want to come back in, you will need to come through the front or back doors.

If you head down the hall to the right of the mural (at the entry way), you will spot the AED cabinet. This device can save lives, though there will be a loud siren that goes off if the cabinet must be opened to let everyone know an emergency is happening.



The door next to the AED cabinet leads to our classroom and birthday party room. It has tall ceilings, a door to the back porch, tables, chairs, and a fun rug that looks like a pond. If you come here with your school, part of your program will be in this room. The naturalist might ask you to sit in a chair at the table or around the outside of the “pond.” If you come here for a birthday party, this room will probably have some decorations. When no one is in here for a program, it is a nice quiet room. If the room is empty and you need a quiet place to recharge, feel free to step in to enjoy the quiet.



Farther down the hall, there are water fountains and a water bottle filler. Sometimes the water fountain sprays high, so push gently on the buttons. To use the bottle refill station, place your water bottle in front of picture of the water bottle and water will pour in from the top. The single bathrooms are gender neutral, and anyone can use them. If you open the door, sometimes the lights will be off. You can find the switch on the wall next to the door. The bathroom on the left does have a heater in it, so in the cold months that will be blowing air and making some noise. Each bathroom also has a fan that come so when you turn on the light so you may hear that, as well.



At the end of the hall, there is a door to the outside that will let you out, but if you want to come back in you will have to use the front or back doors.

The nature center has a lower level that can be accessed via the stairway across from the classroom or the elevator next to the bathrooms. Hit the Level 1 button to head to the lower floor. It hums when it moves and sometimes bounces, which can seem a little scary but is totally normal.



Downstairs we have more bathrooms and water fountains. There is a family bathroom like the two upstairs, a girl's bathroom and a boy's bathroom. Both the girl's and boy's bathrooms have stalls so that two people can use the bathroom at once. Just like upstairs, the lights are usually off when you open the door, so you might need to turn them on, and the switches are just inside the doors. The water fountains are located around the corner to the right of the elevator, at the bottom of the stairwell.



Heading down the hall, past the restrooms, you will see the Lactation Room. This is a room for breastfeeding, pumping and anyone else needing a quite space. The windows are frosted, and the door can lock from the inside for privacy.



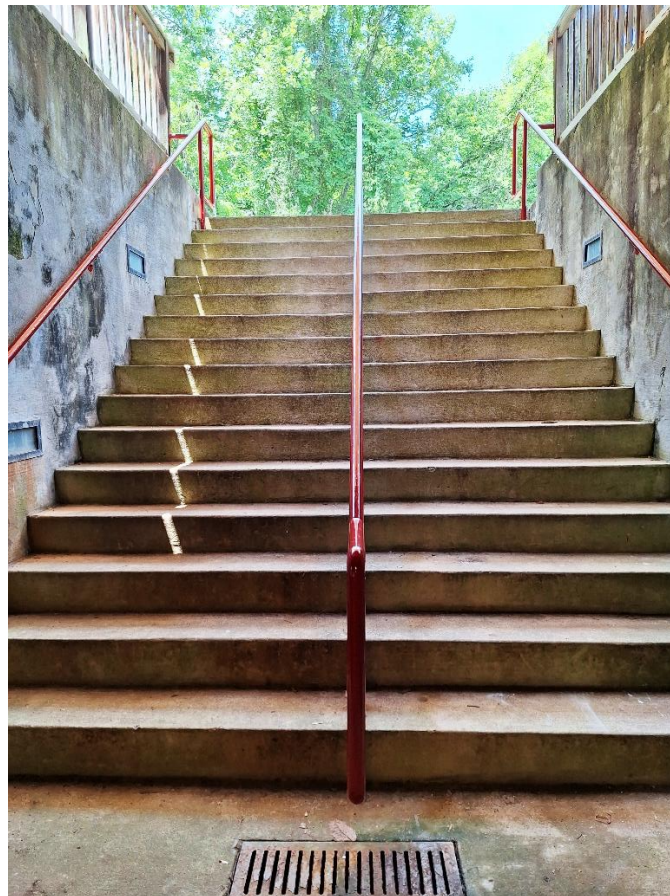
The hall opens into a wide area with several items and exhibits to explore. There is a big wooden table that is an interactive 3D watershed model. There are also additional books, puzzles, and toys to use. In the corner, you will notice a few more taxidermied animals. This room is typically quiet, though in the warm months a dehumidifier may be running and making noise.



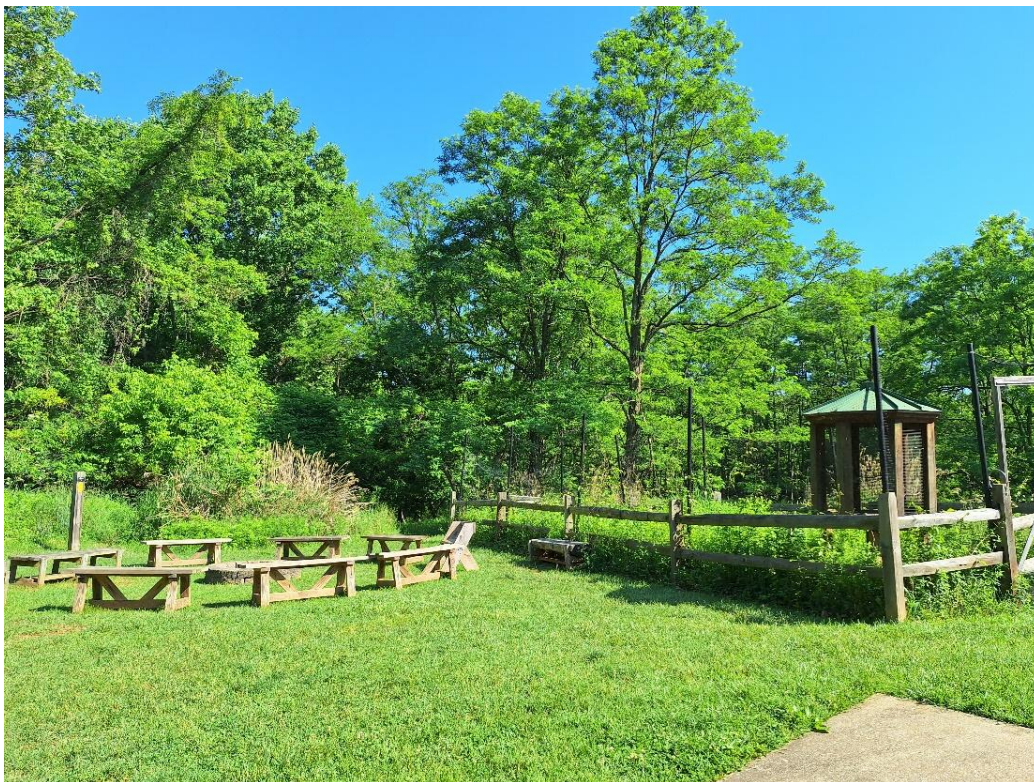
There is an additional classroom down here that is utilized for programs and rentals. It has no windows, but the French doors make it feel spacious. There is a smart board inside that can be used for programs and presentations.



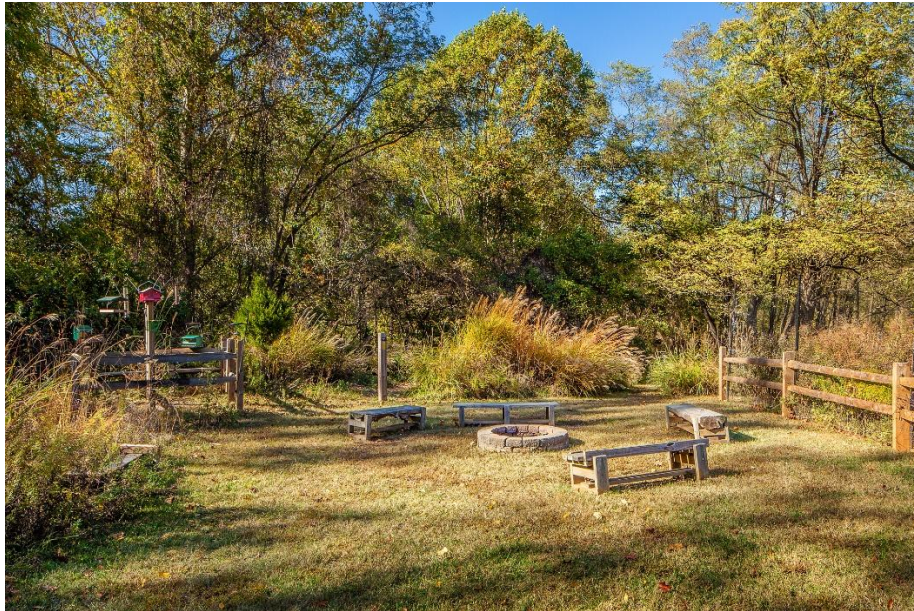
The doors at the end of the room lead to a stairwell heading up to the campfire area outdoors. They are locked from the outside, so if you wish to reenter the nature center, you will need to do so from upstairs.



Heading out those doors and up the stairs, you will arrive at the campfire area. This spot has benches around a fire pit you are welcome to sit on, but please don't light any fires. You can also see the native plant garden inside a small, fenced area and our owl's outdoor enclosure. He can be seen in his garden house on warm days in the spring, summer, and fall.



This area also contains our birdfeeder station. These feeders are filled once per week and attract a wide variety of wildlife including birds, foxes, squirrels, deer and more.



Finally, there is access to a steep, short connector trail beginning at the post with the yellow blaze. For more information on our trails, please see the Welcome to the Hayes Forest Preserve Trails social story and visual tour document.

Around the back of the building is the back porch and meadow. Shaded benches offer a place to rest, and an accessible viewfinder helps visitors who are colorblind experience nature's full range of colors. There is also a ramp that allows those with mobility issues or strollers to be able to enjoy a walk around the entire building.





Additionally, there is a very short trail that goes around the meadow. It is a mowed, grass path that is relatively flat though it can get a bit muddy.

Continuing around the side of the building, you will see our Nature Play Area. This area is designed for 2-12yr olds and promotes imaginative play. There is a mud kitchen, chalkboards, balance beams, musical instruments and more! For those with communication barriers, we have a communication board to facilitate play and conversation. This area also contains two picnic tables, one that is accessible. This play area can get very loud depending on if anyone is playing our xylophones.



Just beside the play area is the trash and recycling cans as well as a bike rack. The door here is locked and can only be exited from the indoors, not entered.



Back at the front of the nature center, there is a boardwalk that leads to the left and wraps around the building. This boardwalk will take you past the entrance/exit of our observational honeybee hive. The boardwalk is several feet away and if you stay on the path, the bees shouldn't bother you. If you have a bee allergy, please proceed with caution. The boardwalk will take you back to the campfire area.



The nature center closes at 4pm, though all outdoor areas are open until dusk. Please keep in mind that once the building is closed, there will not be any access to restrooms on the property.

For any additional questions regarding your visit, to request accommodations, or inquire about best times to visit for those with sensory needs, please contact us at:

ccnc@rockvillemd.gov

240-314-8770

We hope you will come and visit us soon!