



NEWS RELEASE

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Discover Hidden Treasures at Wake County Parks

It's no secret that Wake County's parks have great playgrounds and programs. But did you know you can also paddle through a blackwater cypress swamp, walk along the Butterfly Highway, hike part of the Mountains-to-Sea Trail or participate in a birding meetup? July is National Parks and Recreation Month, and this year we're exploring the lesser known features of our parks and preserves.

Birding near the Beaver Creek Bridge

[The American Tobacco Trail](#)

The American Tobacco Trail provides a linear 22-mile well-maintained trail to walk, run or ride a bike or horse from Wake County to Durham County. When you slow down, any part of the American Tobacco Trail in Wake County offers wildlife viewing opportunities. The half-mile portion of the trail from the New Hill parking area to the Beaver Creek Bridge is a spectacular place to take your binoculars and camera and spend some time observing birds, turtles and other wildlife. Slow down and enjoy the sights and sounds of our feathered friends and more.

Hiking on the North Carolina Mountains-to-Sea Trail

[Blue Jay Point County Park](#)

Blue Jay Point's long history of providing quality environmental education is enriched by having 3.2 miles of the North Carolina Mountains-to-Sea Trail running through the park. This 1,175-mile trail begins in Clingmans Dome in the Great Smoky Mountains and continues all the way to Jockey's Ridge on the Outer Banks. The section running along Falls Lake, known simply as the Falls Lake Trail, provides excellent opportunities for viewing wildlife, traversing natural landscapes and clearing the weariest of minds.

Exploring Piedmont Prairie Garden and Trails

[Crowder County Park](#)

The land for Crowder County Park was donated to Wake County in 1992 by Mrs. Doris Pierce Crowder with the stipulation that the land must be used for a public park. While the site contains 1.1 miles of heavily-utilized walking trails, the park also features a 0.2-mile unpaved nature trail referred to as the Cooper's Hawk Trail. Another notable feature is the Piedmont Prairie Garden, installed in spring of 2014 and maintained by the Wake County Extension Master Gardener volunteers. The garden showcases the native grasses, wildflowers and shrubs found in a North Carolina prairie landscape.

Picnicking at the Sycamore Shelter

[Green Hills County Park](#)

Green Hills County Park not only provides several miles of multi-use trails, direct access to Raleigh's greenway system and spectacularly unobstructed views atop the nearly 200-foot tall enclosed landfill, but it's also a great place to host a birthday party, family picnic or corporate gathering. The Sycamore Shelter, which is located near the playground, operates on a first-come, first-served basis and can accommodate up to 100 people. Specific information about planning a picnic at Green Hills can be found [here](#).

Walking along the Butterfly Highway

[Harris Lake County Park](#)

Harris Lake County Park is almost 700 acres of natural forest with trails and amenities sprinkled in. The park is registered with the Butterfly Highway, a program of the N.C. Wildlife Federation, and its butterfly plots are sponsored by Duke Energy. One of the park's

butterfly highway plots is along the history trail off the Peninsula Trail—plan to scan our QR codes at each history trail stop to learn more about the cultural history of the land. More information on the Butterfly Highway can be found [here](#).

Fishing in the Farm Ponds

[Historic Oak View County Park](#)

Historic Oak View County Park offers a variety of cultural and recreational opportunities on its 27-acre site. These include historic farm buildings, walking trails, picnic shelters, gardens, goats and chickens. Oak View is also a great place to introduce young ones to the pleasures of cane-pole fishing. The park is home to two fishing ponds, and families are welcome to access them with their own equipment during open hours (North Carolina Freshwater Fishing Regulations apply, and all fishing is catch-and-release only). Oak View also hosts staff-led cane-pole fishing activities during special events such as Heritage Day, Fishing Fun Days and Farm Camp. Find more information on special events at Oak View [here](#).

Learning about Rare Species and Unique Habitats

[Historic Yates Mill County Park](#)

Come to Historic Yates Mill to see a new temporary exhibit, Rich in the Rare, on loan from the N.C. Department of Natural and Cultural Resources. This six-panel exhibit showcases North Carolina's rare plant and animal species and highlights the state's unique habitats, from the mountains to the coast. It also explores what people can do to help protect wildlife and the environment. Children will enjoy playing with interactive materials such as a toy loggerhead turtle nest and park ranger dolls.

Seeing a Historic Homesite

[Lake Crabtree County Park](#)

At Lake Crabtree you can find the remains of a 19th-century tenant farm. You can see the ruins of a tenant house, a stone-lined well and a tobacco ordering pit. The home site can be accessed from the open play area by following Connector Trail B. A free audio tour

is available to guide you through this glimpse into the past. Read more [here](#).

Kayaking through the Swamp

[Robertson Millpond Preserve](#)

Escape the summer sun and paddle around the shaded paddling trail of the only blackwater cypress swamp in Wake County. Bring your own boat, or rent a kayak from Paddle Creek on Saturdays from 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. More information is available [here](#).

Attending Wake Audubon Birding Meetups

[Turnipseed Nature Preserve](#)

Enjoy the handicapped-accessible crushed gravel trails around meadows and down to the creek where lots of species of birds can be seen. Wake Audubon holds regular hikes at the preserve. Join their [meetup.com group](#) for more information.

To learn more about [Wake County Parks, Recreation and Open Space](#), follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) at @WakeGovParks. You can also check out each of our parks on [Facebook](#).

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