

Park Rules & Regulations:

Observing the following rules will make your visit a safe and rewarding experience, and help preserve our park.

- ✓ Do not litter. Place trash and recyclables in their proper containers.
- ✓ ALL PETS must be leashed AT ALL TIMES.
- ✓ The removal of any objects from the park (plant, animal, rock or artifact) is not allowed.
- ✓ County parks are wildlife preserves. Hunting, trapping and gathering are not allowed.
- ✓ Catch-and-release fishing is allowed in designated areas only. No live bait is allowed.
- ✓ Fires are allowed only in designated areas.
- ✓ Firearms and fireworks are strictly prohibited.
- ✓ Possession or consumption of alcoholic beverages is not allowed.
- ✓ North Carolina motor vehicle and traffic laws apply in the park.

Picnic shelters are first come, first serve, but can be reserved for groups at (919)245-2660.

Questions, concerns, or suggestions should be voiced to park staff at the Little River Park office, **(919) 732-5505**, or the Orange County Parks and Recreation Division at (919)245-2660.

Park Hours (Gates Are Open)

Nov. 1 – Feb.28 8:00am – 5:00pm

March & October 8:00am – 6:00pm

April & September 8:00am – 7:00pm

May 1 – August 31 8:00am – 8:00pm

TRAILS CLOSE 1 HOUR BEFORE CLOSING TIME

Park Closed Thanksgiving Day and December 24 & 25

Who is Responsible?

The Little River Regional Park and Natural Area is a cooperative project between Durham and Orange Counties, funded equally by both, with major assistance from the Triangle Land Conservancy, Eno River State Park, NC Clean Water Management Trust Fund, NC Parks and Recreation Trust Fund, and the Land and Water Conservation Fund. The park is managed by Orange County.

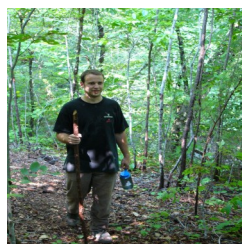
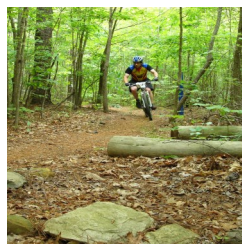
The park's creation would not have been possible without the generous help of hundreds of volunteers, boy scouts, students, community members, and neighbors, to whom we are extremely grateful.

What's available for visitors?

Park Developed Area: The 15-acre park entrance area is located on former tobacco fields. Visitors are welcome to make use of reading materials and environmental education tools in the park office. Picnic tables, grills, and waste bins are located at the two large shelters for your convenience. Individual picnic areas can be found around the handicapped accessible, interpretive loop trail, which brings the natural experience of the park to within easy reach of the parking area. The open play meadow, dotted with bluebird houses, provides a place to relax or throw a frisbee, while the playground offers active recreation for kids. Restroom facilities are located next to the meadow-side picnic shelter.

Hiking Trails: A restored pack house serves as the trail-head for over 7 miles of **hiking trails** covering the 376 acre natural area. Once within the well marked trail system, hikers will find informational kiosks, maps, benches, picnic areas, vistas and solitude, as well as interpretive signs. Hiking trails were designed and built by staff and dedicated volunteers, including AmeriCorps National Service members.

Mountain Bike Trails: In addition, over 7 miles of **single-track mountain bike trails** wind through the upland portion of the park on a separate marked trail system, with bike-only entrance and exit points. The bike trails and stream crossings were carefully designed to prevent soil erosion and maintain stream quality, and are safe for bikers with a wide range of technical abilities. These trails were created by DOMBO, the Durham/Orange Mountain Bike Organization, now recognized as TORC—Triangle Off-Road Cyclists.

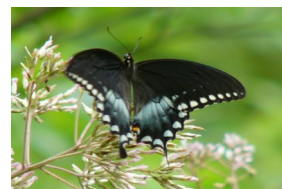


Group Campground: Little River Regional Park offers group camping opportunities for approved organized groups including Cub & Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, church groups, youth groups, camping clubs, 4-H, etc. All campers must be accompanied by someone at least 18 years old. Currently we do not offer camping for individuals or individual families. For more information or reservations call 245-2660.

Birding Trail: Little River Regional Park has a .6 mile birding trail. This trail is part of the North Carolina Birding Trail which serves as a guide to link different bird watching sites across the state. The trail starts at the park office where there are trail guides available for use. The trail meanders through various parts of the front part of the park terminating at the Butterfly Garden.

Park Ecology

The Little River Regional Park brings visitors up close with the best of the Piedmont's environment and natural resources. The North Fork of the Little River is relatively unaffected by development and agriculture, and thus carries some of the Piedmont's most pristine waters. It is habitat to several native fish and mussel species. Numerous birds, reptiles, and mammals frequent the park including White-Tailed Deer, Turkey, Fox and Beaver. Occasional visitors include Otter, Mink and Coyote.



Several tracts of mature hardwood forest can be found in the farther sections of the park, generally on steeper slopes by the river, where logging was more difficult. Because of this varied topography, several species of plants and animals, which normally occur only in the mountains to the west, such as the red-backed salamander, can be found here.

At the same time, human influences on the landscape are both subtle and undeniable. Evidence of timber harvesting can be found on many trails, where the large stumps of selectively cut hardwoods dot the rebounding woods. Even the Little River itself has been altered by its milling history. Farming of various crops on this land, including tobacco, occurred for over a century, halting at various times on different sections of the property. As a result, several stages of forest regeneration can be seen; older oak-hickory and beech stands are found in the more remote sections of the park, and dense pine stands cover much of the more recently farmed areas near the parking area. To this day, plow lines remain on portions of the pine forest floor.

Park History

Historic Paths: Well before European settlers cut roads into the area, American Indians developed extensive systems of trading paths for travel between settlements and trade with various tribes throughout the region. In Little River Park, a section of path that may have joined Hillsborough with centers of commerce in Virginia and north follows the river. If so, it was used by the Occaneechi and Catawba tribes. Visitors should imagine others walking this same route over the past thousand years, and how the forest landscape has changed in the time since!

Following European settlement, these same paths would have been shared by Native people and the newcomers, and altered and rerouted as more permanent home sites and milling operations were established along the river.

Milling along the Little River: Evidence of the milling history of the area is abundant along the North Fork of the Little River. Careful inspection reveals several stages of milling carried out by settlers of this site. The round depression of the original, small tub-mill, can still be seen recessed into the river bed where it was built in the early 1800's. As the amount of corn flour that could be produced by this small operation would no longer suffice, the tub mill was replaced by a dam and raceway that channeled water to a mill-house a few hundred feet downstream. With a keen eye, the mill-house site, raceway, and dam footings can all still be seen along the river, and represent just one of dozens of such historic operations in the area.

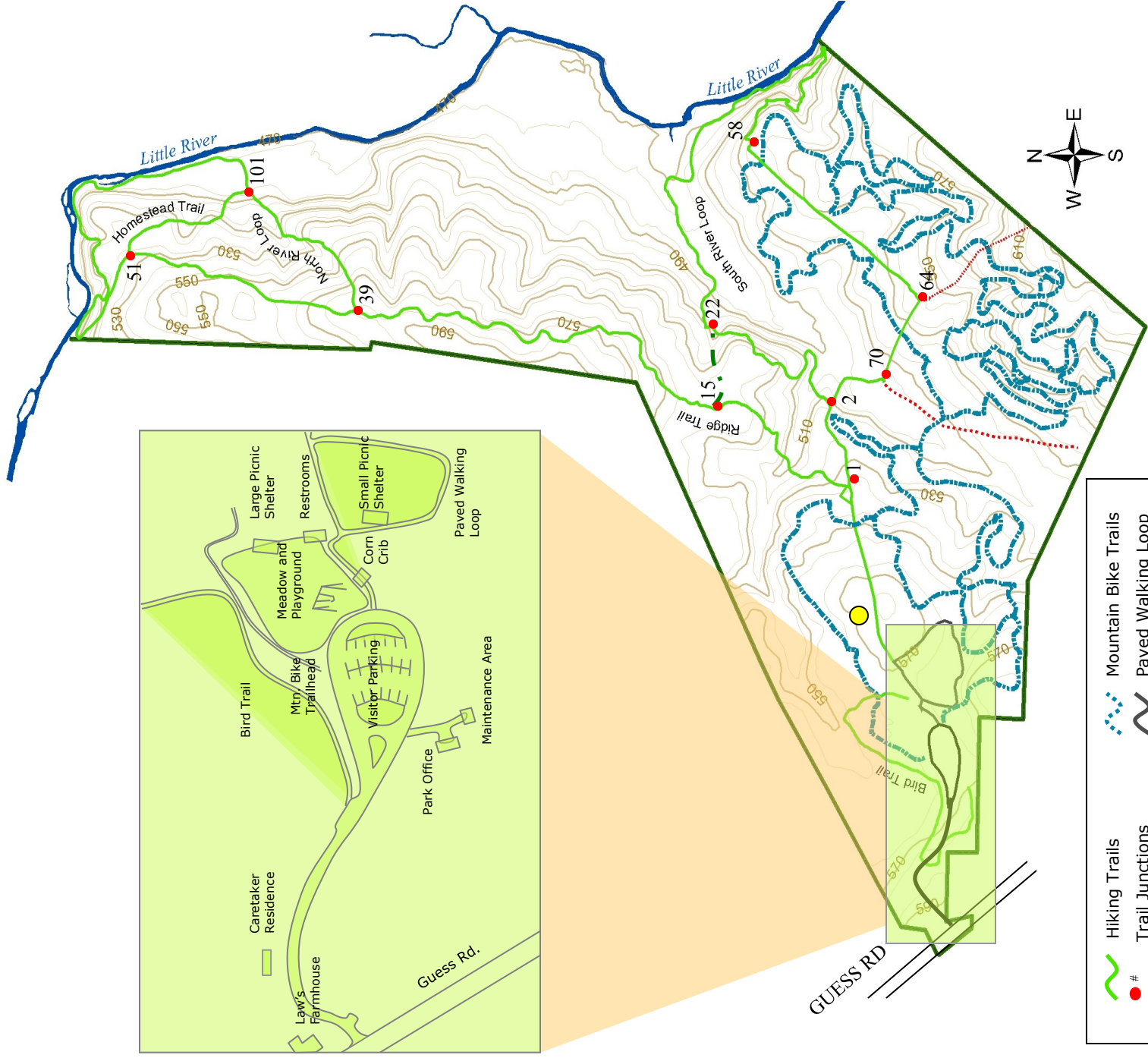
Tobacco Farm Building Restoration: The restoration of historic buildings on this former tobacco farm was performed by restoration professionals.



The old farm house at the park entrance is the only surviving structure linked to the Laws family, who started the tobacco farm on this property. The house has been stabilized and visually restored, to preserve the character and vernacular architecture of the turn-of-the-century, rural, Orange County farmhouse. Other structures like the former tobacco pack house, and the corn crib, were stabilized and relocated within the park.

Park Programming

Little River Regional Park conducts regularly scheduled educational and informative programs on a variety of topics. Please contact the park office for a complete schedule of upcoming programs and events or check our website at www.co.orange.nc.us/deap



Little River Regional Park and Natural Area

Hiking:

Over seven miles of hiking trails are available in the park. **Hikers should follow the green trail markers.** They are spaced to retain the natural beauty of the area, but found at critical points to assist hikers. Symbols depict the permitted uses of trails. Marker numbers indicate location within the trail system, with intersections referenced on the map. **Odd numbers mark the Ridge and N. River Trails, while even numbers mark the S. River Loop Trail.** Signs at trail intersections show trail names and directions. Please notify park staff of any difficulties on the trail system.

Hikers are encouraged to carry water, and choose a route that fits their physical abilities. The route along the Ridge Trail and North River Trail offers beautiful natural settings and scenic vistas, but is approximately 4 miles and can easily take 4 hours to complete. The South River Loop is slightly shorter in distance, but may still take 2 hours or longer. Plan a route that allows enough time for enjoyment, and don't forget that the park's gates lock at posted closing times.

Hikers are also permitted to hike on the mountain bike trails. Be aware that these are hilly, winding, narrow, single-track trails, which are designed for bikers, and made for one user at a time. **Hikers must yield to bikers on these trails.**

Mountain Biking:

Blue markers indicate mountain bike trails. Over seven miles of single-track trails are waiting to be ridden! Markers are found only at intersections and hiking trail crossings, and therefore signal areas where riders should minimize speed and exhibit added caution. Extra care should also be taken at trail-heads and around the parking lot, where multiple users of the park come together.

The mountain bike trails are specially designed to prevent erosion and maintain stream and river water quality. Bikers are asked to remain on posted mountain bike trails at all times. Biking on the gravel logging roads should be limited to emergency situations only.

The level of technical difficulty on trails increases with distance from the trail-head. Since use of the gravel roads is not meant for bikers, please plan a route that permits a return path along the mountain bike trails. Don't forget that the park's gates lock at posted closing times.

Bikers must be aware that hikers, while not encouraged to use the bike trails, are allowed to explore the trail system. However, biking trails are made for bikers, and hikers are advised to yield to riders on the mountain bike trails. Please report any problems encountered along the trails to park staff.

Please contact the park for current bike trail conditions and closings status.

