

## Natural History of Hemlock Bluffs Nature Preserve

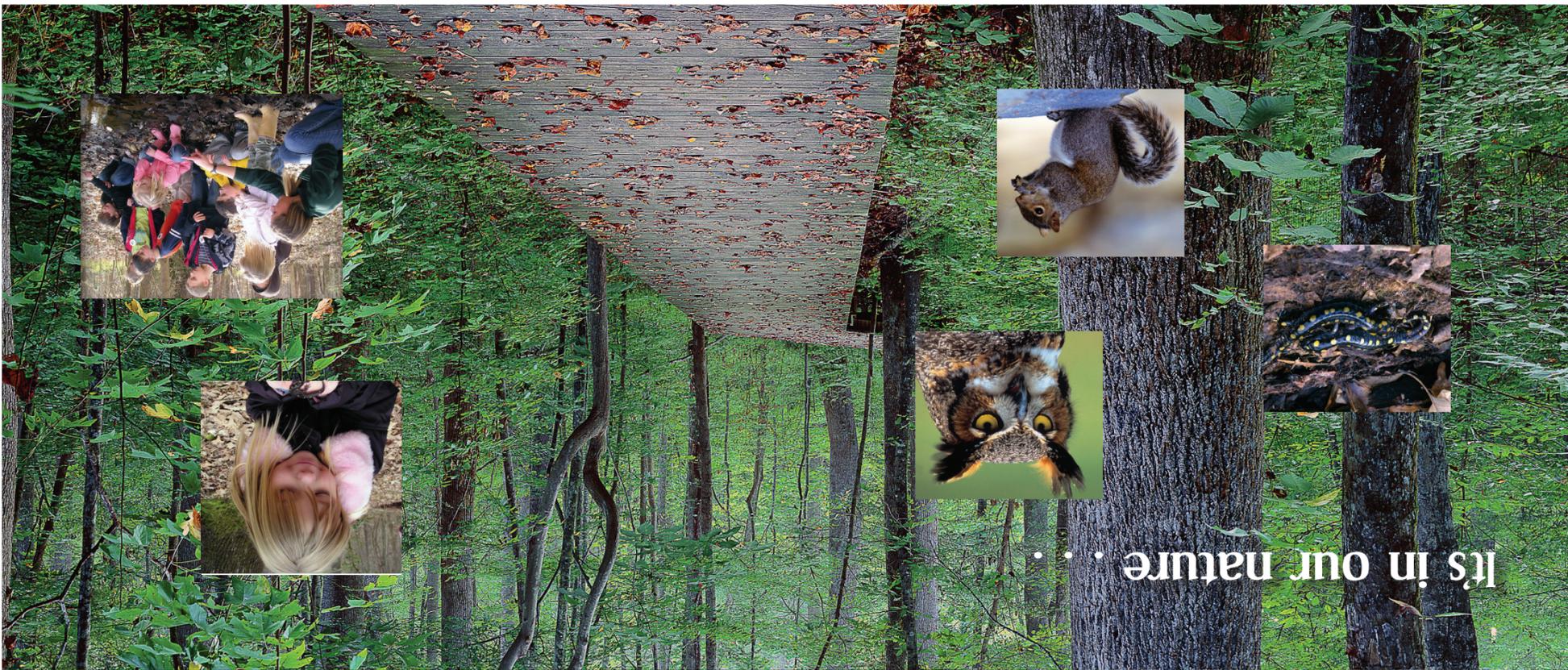
### Why do we have Hemlock Trees?

- A system of north-facing bluffs on the property provides a unique environment for the Eastern Hemlock—*Tsuga canadensis*—and other vegetation that are uncommon in the piedmont of North Carolina.
- The presence of Eastern Hemlocks can be explained by the cooler temperatures during the last glacial period, about 10,000 years ago. It is thought that a large amount of today's mountain species comprised the piedmont local flora during that time.
- Rare plant communities of Hemlock Bluffs Nature Preserve are unique relics of the ancient past, surviving primarily because of north-facing bluffs which help retain a cool, moist environment for the plants.

## Trails at Hemlock Bluffs

All distances are for a round trip starting from the Stevens Nature Center.

- **Swift Creek Loop Trail (SCLT)** – .8 mile  
Views of the Hemlock trees, East Bluffs, and Swift Creek. Approximately 100 stairs.
- **Chestnut Oak Loop Trail (COLT)** – 1.2 miles  
A winding trail through the upland forest, with ridges, ravines, and creeks. COLT has uneven terrain with some mild inclines.
- **Beech Tree Cove Trail (BTC)** – .9 mile  
Views of West Bluffs and Swift Creek. Accessed via the Chestnut Oak Loop Trail.
- **West Hemlock Overlook** – .7 mile  
Views of the West Bluffs and Hemlock trees. Mostly mulched trail with 19 stairs leading down to an overlook. Accessed via the Chestnut Oak Loop Trail.



It's in our nature . . .

## Hemlock Bluffs Nature Preserve

Stretches across  
**140 acres along Swift Creek**

Features  
**3 miles of trails & 4 bluff overlooks**

Cooperatively managed  
by the **State of North Carolina**  
& the **Town of Cary**

### Nature Preserve Rules

- Remain on the trails throughout the preserve. No walking or climbing in the creek or on the bluffs.
- Motorized vehicles, skateboards, roller-blades, bicycles, and horses are not permitted on the trails.
- No hunting, fishing, trapping, or release of captured animals.
- Collection, removal or disturbance of any natural objects is prohibited.
- No smoking or open flame anywhere on preserve property. Wildfire can irreparably damage the natural area.
- Alcoholic beverages are prohibited.
- Pets must be on a leash, no longer than six (6) feet. Cary ordinances require that you clean up after your pet.
- Picnicking is discouraged. Ritter Park is available for picnics and other recreation activities, and is located on adjacent property to the preserve.

### Hours of Operation

**Preserve:** Daily from 9 a.m. to sunset  
**Nature Center:** Monday–Saturday, 10 a.m.–5 p.m.  
Sunday, 1–5 p.m.

The Stevens Nature Center is closed on all official Town of Cary holidays.

(919) 387-5980 | [www.townofcary.org](http://www.townofcary.org)



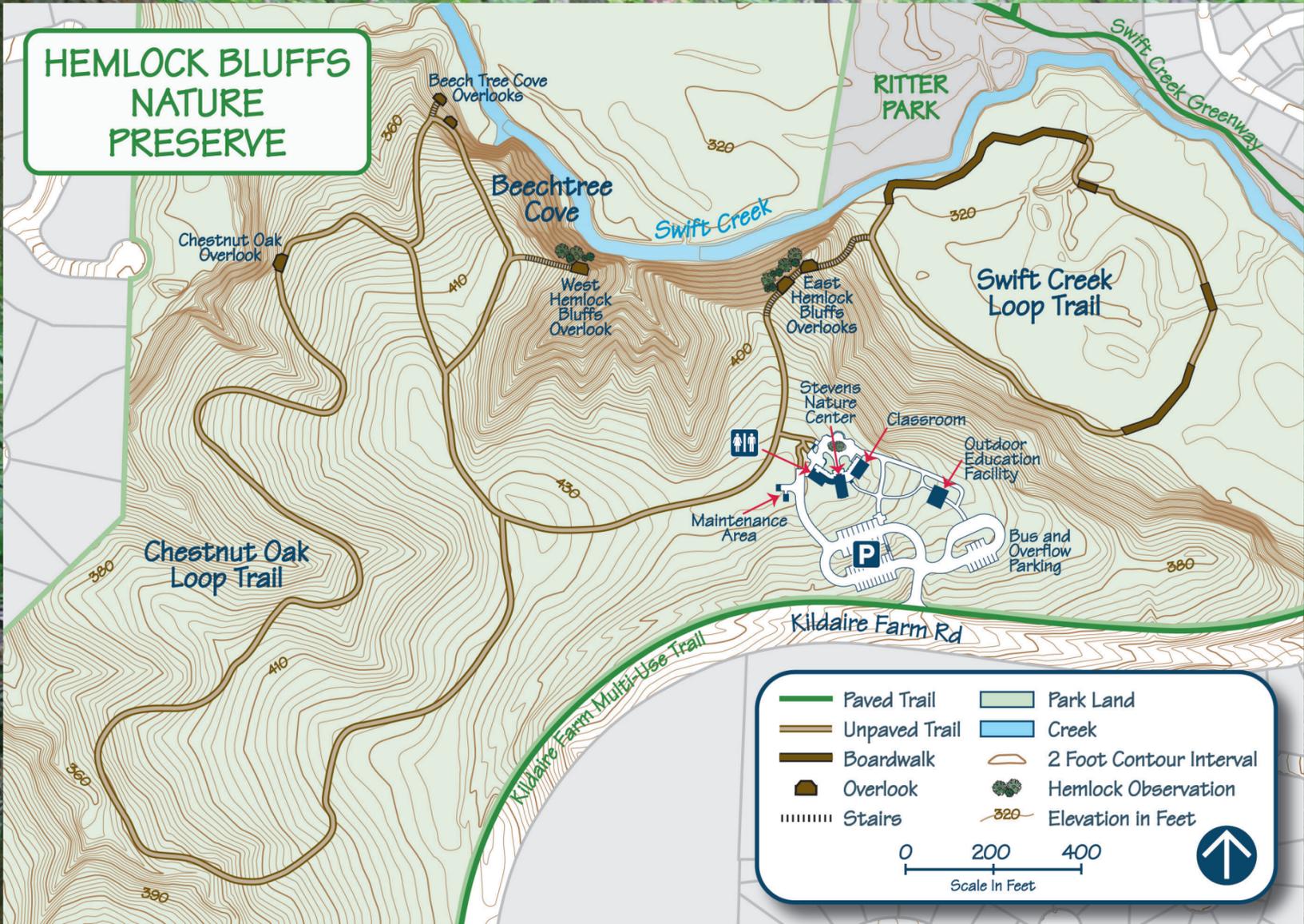
This brochure is printed on paper that is Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified and 100% post-consumer waste.

Please continue the cycle and return the brochure for someone else to use or keep it and recycle it when you are done with it.

## Hemlock Bluffs Nature Preserve

It's in our nature . . .

**TOWN of CARY**  
2616 Kildaire Farm Road, Cary, NC 27518



## Stevens Nature Center at Hemlock Bluffs Nature Preserve



- The Stevens Nature Center, at 3,700 square feet, features an interactive exhibit hall, classroom, and office space.
- Opened in 1992, the Nature Center is named in honor of the late Colonel W. W. Stevens and his wife, Emily.
- An outdoor education facility on site is used for staff-led programs and group instruction.

### Exhibit Hall

The exhibit hall features displays that educate patrons about the uniqueness and history of the preserve, and provide information about the environment. Visitors find information on soils, forests, animal habitats, nocturnal animals, and local parks and greenways. The exhibit hall also houses a nature center favorite, our track table, where children and adults get a hands-on look at common animals and their tracks.

### Wildflower Gardens

Throughout the spring and summer, the gardens bloom with native species of North Carolina wildflowers. Many of these flowers attract wildlife, including butterflies, bees, and birds.

The Hemlock trees in the center garden are grown from cuttings of original Hemlocks on site. Bird feeders and bird baths are enjoyed year round by a large variety of native wild birds.

### Nature Programs

Each year, hundreds of environmental education programs are presented by trained staff to the public, scouts, schools, and many other groups.

Classes are offered for all ages on a variety of topics. Camps and classes are available for registration throughout the year. Groups can schedule a program upon request. Stop by or call the nature center's front desk for more information.

### Friends of Hemlock Bluffs

The Friends of Hemlock Bluffs, formed in 1994, is a non-profit membership organization dedicated to the promotion and protection of Hemlock Bluffs Nature Preserve. The mission of the Friends of Hemlock Bluffs includes supporting the Nature Center, raising funds for environmental education, and helping the citizens of Cary and North Carolina appreciate the preserve and its conservation efforts.

To learn more, visit [www.hemlockbluffs.org](http://www.hemlockbluffs.org).

**Our Mission: To share local wildlife and nature facts and information with all visitors to inspire stewardship at the preserve, in the community, and at home.**

### Colonel William Walton Stevens & Emily Wilson Inscoe Stevens

Colonel Stevens was a native of Wake County, and worked as a soil scientist and soil conservationist for the State of North Carolina. W.W. and Emily Stevens expressed their commitment to the protection of the preserve through their financial support for on-going environmental education programming.