

Marge & Charles Schott Nature Playscape

Question and Answers

What is a Nature Playscape?

CNC's Nature Playscape is designed to provide children with opportunities for unstructured play in a resilient version of local natural habitats. Native plants, fallen logs, boulders, rocks, water, and soil create forest and field habitats for children to explore. CNC's Nature Playscape will contain very few man-made structures, (swings, slides, etc) and strives to re-create the kind of childhood experience many parents and grandparents had in nature when they were young.

Where will CNC's Nature Playscape be located?

CNC's Nature Playscape will be located on 1.6 acres of forest and field habitat next to Abner Hollow Cabin. The cabin and nearby ponds will not be within the playscape.

Why does CNC need a Nature Playscape?

Part of CNC's mission is to "inspire passion for nature." A nature playscape helps fulfill the mission by giving children the opportunity to explore and play freely in nature. Research indicates that children who play frequently in nature may develop a comfort and familiarity with the natural world that reaches into adulthood.

Because children are not permitted off-trail elsewhere on CNC property, and few families have a diverse natural setting in their own backyards, CNC is providing a place where children can explore nature without compromising the rest of our 1,025 acres of habitat. CNC has over 25,000 children visit annually. The playscape concentrates the impact of play to one small area and protects the more pristine parts of the property.

Will CNC's Nature Playscape be safe?

The area will be entirely fenced so that children and parents will be aware of its boundaries. Dogs and other pets are prohibited in the area. Just like everywhere else at CNC, adults are responsible for their children.

How much habitat will be altered to build the nature Playscape and what is being done to mitigate these habitat alterations?

Approximately 1.6 acres of land at Rowe Woods is being altered as a result of the construction of the Nature Playscape. This land area is comprised of forest edge and meadow. Though altered, both habitat types will remain after playscape construction. CNC actively manages nearly 900 acres of forested habitat at Rowe Woods along with over 150 acres of grassland. One of the reasons for choosing this site is the high level of invasive species present. During construction, many non-native plants will be removed and many native plants added. This may actually improve biodiversity in the area.

When will construction begin and when will it open?

Construction will begin in August 2010. It will open to the public in the fall of 2011. Members will be notified as the opening date approaches.

Who can use the playscape and when?

The Nature Playscape is designed primarily for ages 11 and under with adult supervision. Both members and visitors paying daily admission fee to Rowe Woods will have access. The Nature Playscape will be open during normal operating hours.

What facilities will be located at the playscape? (restrooms, drinking fountain, picnic)?

Since this is intended to be a natural play area, there will be few facilities. A wheelchair accessible port-o-let will be installed behind a decorative fence. Benches made from natural materials and a small storage shed for play equipment will be located near the entrance. Families should plan to bring their own water and snacks as no services will be provided.

Can I leave my children at the playscape while I go for a hike on my own?

The Nature Playscape is a place where families interact with nature together. Parents are solely responsible for their children at all times. Children may not use the playscape without adult supervision.

Is the playscape going to be staffed?

The Nature Playscape at CNC is designed for self-led family adventures. Children are invited to play under the supervision of their parents, grandparents, or adult caregivers. Occasionally, staff or volunteers will be available to provide special programs or to encourage families to play in creative new ways.

Can I volunteer in the Nature Playscape?

New opportunities are available to become a "Play Facilitator" volunteer. Visit www.cincynature.org for a volunteer job description. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact our Community Coordinator for more information.

Are dogs allowed in the Playscape?

Dogs are not allowed inside the Nature Playscape boundary.

Can I build a nature playscape at home?

We hope CNC's Playscape will encourage families, schools, and parks to incorporate natural elements into their play areas. Anyone can build a Nature Playscape in their own backyard by designating a space specifically for children to explore, play, and dig, allowing them freedom to interact with nature and natural materials freely. Be sure to provide a variety of natural materials such as sticks, rocks, water, sand, soil, etc. For more ideas, please check out our website, www.cincynature.org or email us at cnc@cincynature.org

Are there any other nature playscapes in Cincinnati?

The University of Cincinnati is in collaboration with CNC to build a Nature Playscape on their Clifton campus. This area will be open to the public during restricted hours. Bill Hopple and a team of childcare experts are leading an initiative to create additional Nature Playscapes throughout the Greater Cincinnati area.