

# Take a Walk Back in Time This Holiday Season

The new **North Field Trail** at the Ivy Creek Natural Area passes through some of the most interesting signs of history to be found at Ivy Creek. Starting on the trail with the lavender posts (off the paved trail), note the beautiful barn to your left. Built in the 1930s, the barn was the creation of Conly Greer (son-in-law of Hugh Carr and husband of Mary Carr Greer) who harvested trees from the land and brought in a portable saw mill to shape the lumber for its construction. Farmers from all around the county came to Riverview Farm to see the innovative design of the barn and Greer's other modern farming practices.



## Native Grasses

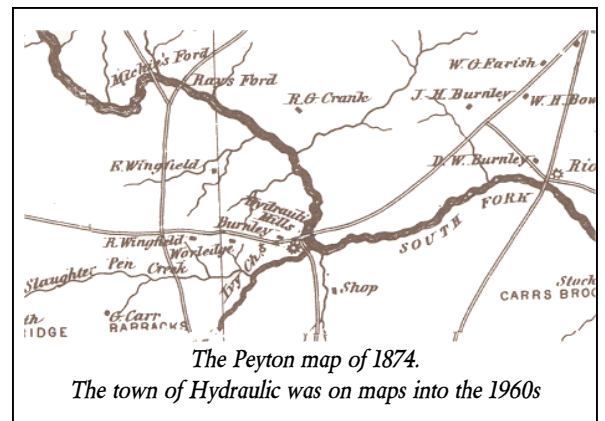
At the start of the trail, you will walk along a field of native warm season grasses. This prairie was restored in 2001 from the more common European fescue fields found throughout the East. It is reminiscent of what the colonists would have found when they first came to Virginia 400 years ago, when Native American tribes maintained large expanses of open areas with fire to promote good hunting and living conditions. Some of the native grasses that would have grown naturally in an open field at that time include those found here— Big Bluestem, Indian Grass, and Little Bluestem. ICF maintains these fields with bi-annual burning.

## Native Forest

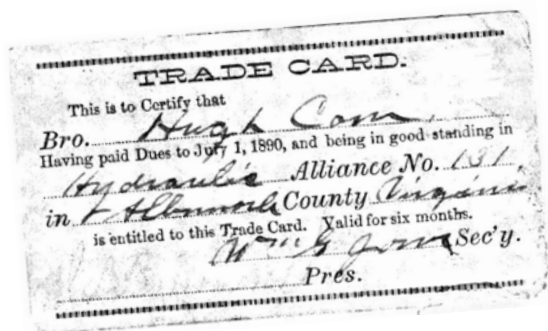
At the end of the field, you will enter a beautiful stretch of mature forest, highlighting several species of oaks and hickories with an understory of dogwood, sassafras, and redbud. This forest, relatively free of the non-native invasives common in the rest of the natural area, is another illustration of days gone by before the introduction of the non-native flora that has become so prevalent in our area.

## Imagine Hydraulic Mills

The least visible piece of history, yet probably the most significant, is the site of the former village of Hydraulic Mills. Built in the early 1800s, the mill supplied much of the lumber used to build the University of Virginia. By mid-century, the mill complex grew to include a grist and merchant mill, a miller's house, a cooper (barrel maker), blacksmith, country store and post office. By this time, Hydraulic had become the head of navigation for the Rivanna River. Farmers from all around brought wheat and tobacco to be processed and sent downriver by batteaux to Richmond and beyond. In the 1880s, a black miller bought the property and Hydraulic Mills became a commercial and social center for the growing African American neighborhood known as Union Ridge –



The Peyton map of 1874.  
The town of Hydraulic was on maps into the 1960s



of which Hugh Carr, who owned the land that became ICNA, was a prominent member. Note his trade card from 1890. There is an overlook to the former site of Hydraulic Mills off the Field Trail. While observant eyes will detect vestiges of the old road, no sign of Hydraulic Mills remains, as all evidence of it is now under the Reservoir.

For more on the history of Riverview Farm, visit [www.ivycreekfoundation.org/FamilyHistory.html](http://www.ivycreekfoundation.org/FamilyHistory.html)