

Frequently Asked Questions at the Ivy Creek Natural Area:

About the Natural Area:

- 1. Why can't I bring my dog to Ivy Creek?** Ivy Creek is a natural area which serves a different purpose than does a park. Our main mission is environmental education and the stewardship of the land entrusted to the Foundation by the city of Charlottesville and county of Albemarle. These interests take precedence over recreational interests. ICF believes that there are many wonderful places where someone can take their dog and enjoy nature. But there are very few where they can come experience nature in a way that is undisturbed by the presence of dogs. The forest floor is home to turtles, salamanders, and many species of birds, especially young ones. Regardless of how well-behaved a dog is, most wild animals see dogs as predators and will react as such. That is why we ask that pets (dogs, cats and others) be left at home and not brought to the Natural Area. Registered service dogs with their designation harness are, of course, welcome.
- 2. Who maintains the trails?** The Natural Area is owned jointly by the city of Charlottesville and Albemarle County. Albemarle County does much of the maintenance—mowing the grassy areas, snow removal, cleaning the Clivus, major repairs on the buildings and other infrastructure. Some large maintenance projects are contracted out to professional services. Most of the maintenance of the trails, fields and forests is done by ICNA volunteers, led by our Buildings and Grounds committee. We have volunteer work days twice each month that are open to the public. We also have trail monitors that check the conditions of each trail regularly and work with invasive plant management. If you are interested in helping with trail maintenance, please visit our website at <https://ivycreekfoundation.org/volunteer>.
- 3. How is the Ivy Creek Foundation funded?** Ivy Creek Foundation is mostly funded by private donations/memberships. We rely heavily on the goodwill of those who love the space and share in the desire/responsibility for its continued existence. Our partner organizations are another large source of financial support. To a much lesser extent, we receive some funds through grants and corporate sponsorships.
- 4. Can I bring a picnic to Ivy Creek?** We do not have picnic facilities at the Natural Area (although we have benches throughout). Visitors are welcome to bring food but we ask that they pack out everything that they pack in. Please leave no trash or food scraps on the trails or in the trash bins in the bathrooms. And please do not feed animals.
- 5. Do you have a recommendation for a trail to walk?** Ivy Creek Natural Area has 8 miles of walking trails and these can be combined in any number of ways to make the right hike depending on time restraints and preferences. The Blue, Red, Orange and Peninsula trails will have views of the reservoir while the Yellow, White and Green will follow or cross Martin's Branch and tend to be less travelled. The Orange trail takes you through a mature beech forest with open understory. The field trails are good for bird watching due to the edge habitat they skirt. For individual trail descriptions visit: <https://ivycreekfoundation.org/what-hike-shall-i-take>.
- 6. Why don't I see lots of spring ephemerals at Ivy Creek?** Searching for spring ephemerals is an essential rite of spring. While Ivy Creek does have these early wildflowers, they are not in the showy displays that you find at places like Monticello or at places along the James River. This is largely due to soil type as those spring wildflowers prefer rich, alluvial soils and are generally found in floodplains. Ivy Creek has less fertile, more acidic soil due to its rock substrate. The history of land management at Ivy Creek, particularly its history of farming and timbering and subsequent soil disturbance might be a factor, as would be the current presence of some quite aggressive invasive plant species and abundant wildlife.

7. **What do I do if I see a bear on the trail?** Although they remain rare, we do have the occasional bear sighting at Ivy Creek. Generally bears are shy of people and the best practice for most interactions is to be still and wait for the bear to move away. You should never run from a bear. For more information, here is a link from the Shenandoah National Park website: https://www.nps.gov/shen/learn/nature/bear_safety.htm
8. **Does Ivy Creek use pesticides/herbicides?** Ivy Creek does not use pesticides. The use of herbicides to control aggressive invasive plant species is a complicated and contentious issue. Ivy Creek does acknowledge that there is a need to manage invasive species while respecting the watershed and our visitors—animal and human. Over the years, Ivy Creek Foundation has used multiple techniques to manage invasive plants and to maintain the field areas, including controlled burns, bush hogging, hand pulling and professional applications of herbicides. The use of herbicides is never taken lightly and is a continuous subject for evaluation of best practices. If herbicides are deemed necessary, Ivy Creek adheres to all County regulations regarding their use.
9. **Can I find pawpaw trees at Ivy Creek?** Yes. Keep your eyes out on the Blue, Red and School trails. They can also be found behind the Pollinator Garden. There is a large stand on the Green trail where it crosses two streams and on the Yellow trail near the natural bridge over the creek. Paw paws are a favorite of our raccoon population.
10. **Are there snakes at Ivy Creek?** Yes. There are several species of snake at Ivy Creek. There are laminated guides available at the barn desk for specific IDs. Copperheads are the only poisonous snakes found at Ivy Creek.

About River View Farm:

1. **Why is Ivy Creek sometimes called River View Farm?** River View Farm was the name of the farm which was situated on the land that is now Ivy Creek. Hugh Carr was born into slavery but, after emancipation, began the process of purchasing the 58 acre property in 1870 that became River View Farm. He came to fully own the farm in 1873 and expanded it during his lifetime to over 125 acres. He lived here with his wife, Texie Mae Hawkins, and their seven children. His eldest daughter, Mary Carr Greer was a prominent figure in education in the area. Greer Elementary is named for her. Her husband, Conly Greer, was the first African American extension agent for Albemarle County and, in the 1930s, built the barn that Ivy Creek still uses. When the Natural Area was created in 1979, the Foundation was conscious of the historical significance of the Carr/Greer family within the local community. It saved documents found in the original farmhouse (which are now housed in Special Collections at UVA), maintained the basic structure of the barn and established relationships throughout the years with the descendants of Hugh and Texie Mae Carr. The Foundation recognizes that the stories of this family continue to be important ones for the community and therefore continue to refer to the Natural Area as River View Farm when speaking of its cultural history between 1870-1970. In December of 2020 River View Farm was listed on the National Register of Historic Places.
2. **How did Hugh Carr earn the money to buy River View Farm?** We don't know exactly how Hugh Carr saved the money for the purchase of the farm. We do know Hugh Carr was raised under slavery and that he was enslaved at the Woodlands plantation located near River View Farm. We know that after emancipation he was hired by JR Wingfield to be the manager of the farm at Woodlands where he was also given a house for himself and his mother to live in. There are records of the contract signed between the two men. What is evident is that Hugh Carr was a hard working, capable farmer with a strong streak of perseverance and a dedication to education (this even though he, denied education under slavery, remained illiterate his whole life). It is also evident that there was a strong African

American community forming all around this area and that family support and community support was integral to the ability of this community to thrive.

3. ***Is that the original farmhouse by the parking area? Does someone live there?*** That is the house where the Carrs and Greers lived—with additions being made over the years that they were there. The county of Albemarle had arranged for caretakers to live in it up until just a few years ago. No one lives there now and, unfortunately, it is badly in need of repair and stabilization. The County has provided funding to begin work on stabilizing the basic structural bones with the hope that it can ultimately be repaired with appreciation of its cultural significance. During this time there will be restrictions on access to that area and we ask that visitors be respectful of these. The Farmhouse is one of the structures listed under River View Farm's National Register of Historic Places designation.
4. ***Your website says that this is an African American Heritage Site. What does this mean?*** In 2000, the Ivy Creek Foundation was given a grant by the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities to study the life of Hugh Carr, in an effort to include River View Farm in its, then, new initiative called African American History in Virginia. In 2002 River View Farm/Ivy Creek was included in the African American Heritage Trail (maps are available at the barn) and became a part of the data base curated by Virginia Humanities now called AfroVirginia. Information can be found at: <http://afrovirginia.org>. This is a collection of sites in Virginia with particular significance for African American cultural history.

About the Barn and Barn Exhibits:

1. ***Why does the queen bee have a colored dot? What is the liquid in the jar?*** Beekeepers will often use paint to distinguish the queen bee. This makes it easier for them (and us!) to find her but is also used to allow beekeepers to know how old she is. There is an international coding system used so that all queen bees reared in a certain year will have the same color. The water in the jar is sugar water which is used as supplemental food for the bees if they need it. The beekeeper makes sure there is always food for the bees (which can access the water with their long proboscis). For more information on bee biology and behavior visitors can reference the information panels by the demonstration hive. The bees go home with the beekeepers in the winter.
2. ***When is the barn open?*** The barn is open to the public on weekend afternoons from 2-4pm from the first weekend in April through the third weekend in November. It is also open for school tours.
3. ***What is upstairs and can visitors go up there?*** Upstairs in the barn is the hayloft where hay was stored to feed the animals. The hay was collected from the pastures onto a wagon and brought to the outside of the barn doors where it was grabbed by a large hay fork, lowered by a pulley system from the loft. This pulley system was operated by horses who would then move the loaded hayfork through the upstairs until positioned correctly and the farmer would release the hay from the hayfork. Visitors may go upstairs only with a barn docent. There are photographs available for visitors who are unable to go upstairs.
4. ***Is the cement floor original?*** Yes. And it was one of the best practices features that made the barn unique for its time. The cement floor was much easier to clean and significantly increased the hygiene of the structure.
5. ***Can I milk the cow?*** Visitors can milk Tillie, the cow, if there is more than one docent working in the barn, as one docent needs to always be available to supervise visitation at the demonstration beehive.