

Rock Creek National Park

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Rock Creek Park was founded in 1890 as one of the first federal parks. Its establishing legislation cites the area's natural beauty and high public value. The park is surrounded by an urban landscape. Rock Creek Park provides an oasis within the District of Columbia for a variety of animal and plants, including coyotes, raccoons, owls, deer and many species of trees. In addition it is an important area for neo-tropical migrant birds on their way south to their wintering grounds or on their way north to their breeding grounds. The park has an area of approximately 1100 ha and is connected to a larger park in Montgomery Co, MD. The park is primarily upland piedmont forest dominated by oaks, tulip and beech trees with riparian areas along the stream.

Rock Creek National Park houses the Smithsonian National Zoological Gardens, where there is extensive science and conservation expertise. Research interests at the National Zoo span many disciplines and projects include collaborative studies with experts from other organizations around the world, as well as within the Smithsonian. Specifically, National Zoo researchers are assessing how animals adapt and survive in human-dominated landscapes; the origins, spread, diagnosis and treatment of disease, including emerging diseases that can be transmitted between humans and animals; how animals use their habitats; and how they adapt to changed environments.



The Park is also part of the National Park Service Inventory and Monitoring Program. A primary role of the Inventory and Monitoring (I&M) Program is to collect, organize, and make available natural resource data and to contribute to the Service's institutional knowledge by facilitating the transformation of data into information through analysis, synthesis, and modeling.

The five goals of the I&M Program are to:

1. Inventory the natural resources and park ecosystems under National Park Service stewardship to determine their nature and status.
2. Monitor park ecosystems to better understand their dynamic nature and condition and to provide reference points for comparisons with other, altered environments.
3. Establish natural resource inventory and monitoring as a standard practice throughout the National Park system that transcends traditional program, activity, and funding boundaries.
4. Integrate natural resource inventory and monitoring information into National Park Service planning, management, and decision making.
5. Share National Park Service accomplishments and information with other natural resource organizations and form partnerships for attaining common goals and objectives.