

The North Woods Exploration Guide

Supported by The Dr. Mortimer and Theresa Sackler Foundation

Suggested for Grades 1 - 5

Welcome to Central Park's North Woods! There is plenty to discover in this woodland ecosystem.

What is a woodland ecosystem?

Woodland ecosystems consist of the forest floor, the understory, and the tree canopy. They are made up of living things, like plants and animals, and non-living things, like water, soil, and rocks. Although the North Woods is a designed landscape, it is still a functioning woodland ecosystem.

Trees

The woodlands are the only places in Central Park where you can observe trees in all stages of life, from seeds to dead logs. The young saplings in the North Woods may grow to be a part of the canopy, while mature trees provide shade and shelter for plants and animals. Dead logs can be hosts to a lot of life, including mushrooms, insects, and young plants.

Mushrooms

Healthy woodland ecosystems have rich soil and a thick layer of leaf litter covering the ground. Mushrooms and other decomposers are essential components of a healthy woodland because they break down dead plants and animals to provide nutrients for other plants, animals, and insects.

Wildlife

Many animals can be found in the North Woods because it offers plenty of food, water, and shelter to support diverse species. Woodpeckers drill for food and create nests in standing dead trees, while cardinals make their neat, round nests out of twigs in the lower branches of shrubs. Squirrels build their messy-looking nests, called dreys, in the sturdy upper branches of tall trees.

On your walk

Begin at the Charles A. Dana Discovery Center. Walking along the Loch should take about 40 minutes, including stops to observe and discuss woodland ecosystems.

Plan your visit

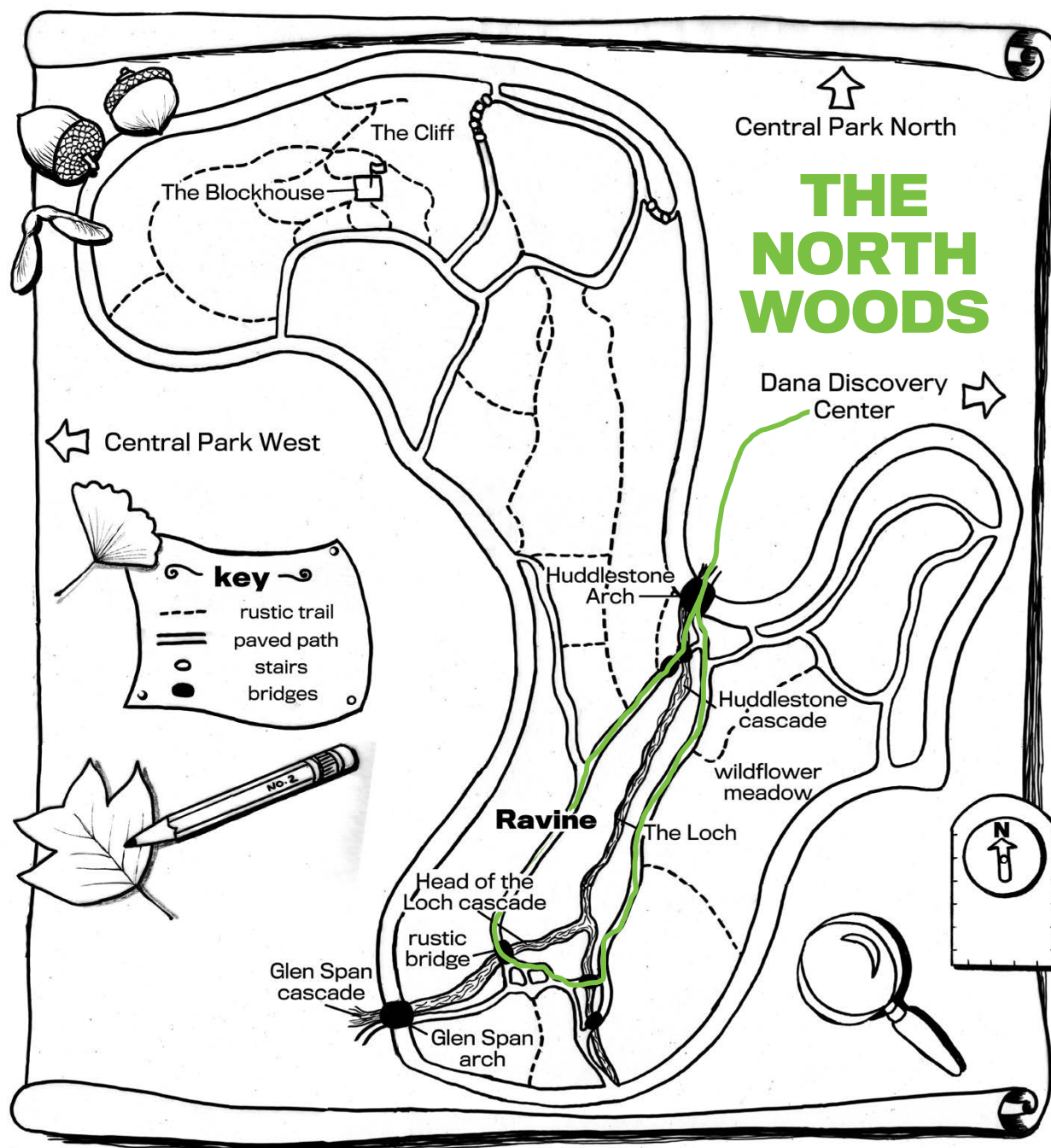
Enhance your experience by checking out a free Discovery Kit that includes binoculars, a hand lens, pencils, sketch paper, and child-friendly field guides. An optional Discovery Journal provides fun activities for children to do in the Park. Advance registration required for groups of five or more. For more information, contact the Dana Discovery Center at 212.860.1370.

Discover Responsibly

Do your part to keep the North Woods healthy and beautiful. Follow these three rules while you explore:

- 1. Stay on the path.** Walking off of paths can damage plants and disturb animals.
- 2. Take pictures, not souvenirs.** If every visitor took home a leaf or a rock, there wouldn't be any left in the North Woods!
- 3. Carry out what you carry in.** You won't see any garbage cans in the North Woods, so hold on to trash until you exit.

Tell us what you discover    @centralparknyc #Discovercentralpark



Illustrations by Anne Yen

Discover Central Park!

The Central Park Conservancy offers a variety of educational programs and resources to help children explore and discover Central Park, and develop skills for learning and inquiry, all in the world's greatest outdoor classroom. Learn more: centralparknyc.org/discovery

Exploration Guides are additionally supported in part by the Brooke Astor Fund for New York City Education in The New York Community Trust.

The Central Park Conservancy raises 75% of Central Park's annual Parkwide expense budget and is responsible for the day-to-day maintenance and operations that keep the Park beautiful.

The mission of the Central Park Conservancy is to restore, manage, and enhance Central Park, in partnership with the public.