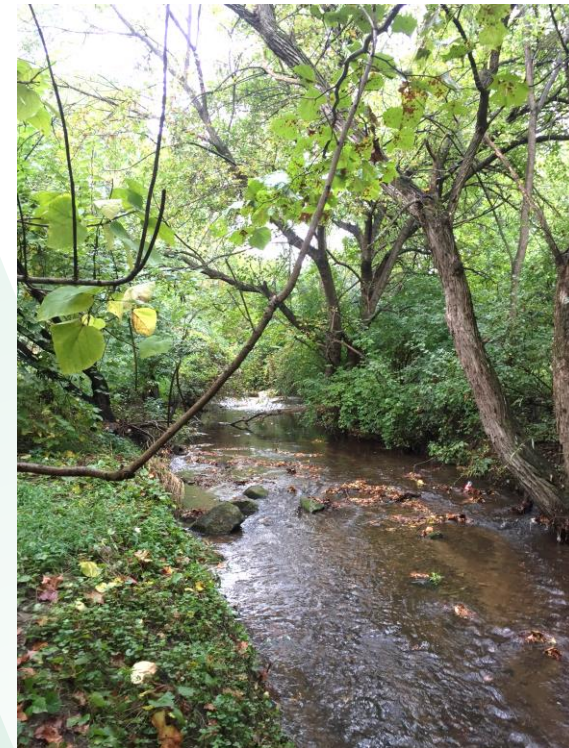


PEABODY PARK

Established 1901



For more information and a field guide to the flora and fauna of the park please go to:
www.sustainability.uncg.edu/peabodypark





Peabody Park is an ecologically diverse tract of land in the Northern portion of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro campus. It is a vital refuge for a wide variety of animals and plants characteristic of the Piedmont region of the eastern United States, and it serves as a pleasant retreat for students, faculty, staff, and visitors.

History of the Park

The Park was established in 1901 with a gift of \$5,000 from George Foster Peabody (1852-1938). Mr. Peabody was a prominent financier and philanthropist who supported educational causes across the United States, especially those connected with the education of women and African Americans. In the late 1800s, he served with Charles Duncan McIver on the Southern Education Board where he supported McIver's efforts to establish the Women's College that became UNCG. A granite marker (map #1) in Peabody Park Woods commemorates the College's first Bachelor degrees awarded in 1903.

University expansion has reduced the original 125 acres to 37+ acres (28 acres of tree canopy). The eastern half of the park has seen the addition of dorms and educational buildings. The western half was transformed multiple times from a pasture for dairy cattle to a lake in 1941, then an amphitheater in the 40s and 50s, and subsequently a 9-hole golf course in 1954. Stairs to the amphitheater can still be seen on a hillside (map #2). The western half currently has athletic fields and a walking/jogging trail.



Peabody Park was established as an educational park, and this mission is still the guiding principle today. Undergraduate and graduate students use the park for teaching and research. UNCG faculty, students, and staff, and members of the Greensboro community participate in special events to remove invasive plants, e.g., English ivy and bush honeysuckle, and help reforest with native species, e.g., loblolly pine and red buckeye. These activities help educate the community about the importance of maintaining ecosystem and species diversity. Also, members of the UNCG community and visitors use the park as a quiet respite from daily work. The park is a unique green space in the City of Greensboro providing about 230 metric tons of oxygen each year.

Geology and Biological Diversity

The park sits on a foundation of bedrock formed 500 million years ago. It is made of metamorphosed reddish granite-granodiorite with darker mafic intrusive layers, which are exposed at several points in the park. Several branches of North Buffalo creek that originate from underground springs on campus traverse the park and flow northward into the Lake Daniel neighborhood and eventually into the Cape Fear river. The small streams illustrate processes of natural stream erosion, deposition, and channel migration, and they form a haven for wildlife within the City of Greensboro.



The park is home to many native plants characteristic of the Carolina Piedmont. The woods is a small fragment of the oak-hickory forest that once covered the Piedmont. In it, one can spot native woodland wildflowers (such as Trout Lily, Wild Ginger, Red Trillium, Beechdrops, and False Solomon's-Seal), and native shrubs and understory trees (such as Viburnum, Strawberry Bush, Silverbell, Eastern Redbud, and Dogwood, the North Carolina state tree). The forest canopy is predominantly White Oak, Southern Red Oak, Hickory, Tulip Tree, American Beech, and Sycamore. Also, liverworts, ferns and horsetails are seen along the stream banks.

Most recently, UNCG has taken steps to restore natural ecosystems in the park by establishing Peabody Park Woods as a preserve and constructing an aerial bridge to provide a birds-eye view of the woods (map #3). It is also reestablishing a Piedmont Prairie (map#4) with native wildflowers and grasses in the western part, and has helped to construct two wetlands (map #5, 6), one in each area. The restoration efforts have been guided by the Peabody Park Preservation Committee, which was established by Chancellor Patricia Sullivan in 1997. The committee draws members from the UNCG faculty, students and staff, and members of the Greensboro community. All have an interest in promoting the conservation and education of natural areas in Greensboro. Although the committee's initial focus in the 90s was to restore and maintain the woods as an example of a native piedmont woodland, the focus has expanded to include caring for natural areas in the more open western half of the park.



Suitable habitat exists for animals. Mallard ducks are often seen on the streams and new wetlands, and small fish, crayfish, and aquatic invertebrates live in the streams. Red-tailed and Cooper's hawks, red-bellied woodpeckers, and many smaller bird species call Peabody Park home. Others use the park as an important stopover during annual migrations. Plant pollinators have become increasingly abundant because of the development of the Piedmont Prairie, and occasionally, one can spot a fox, raccoon, turkey, or possum.