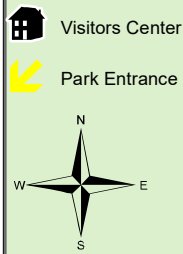
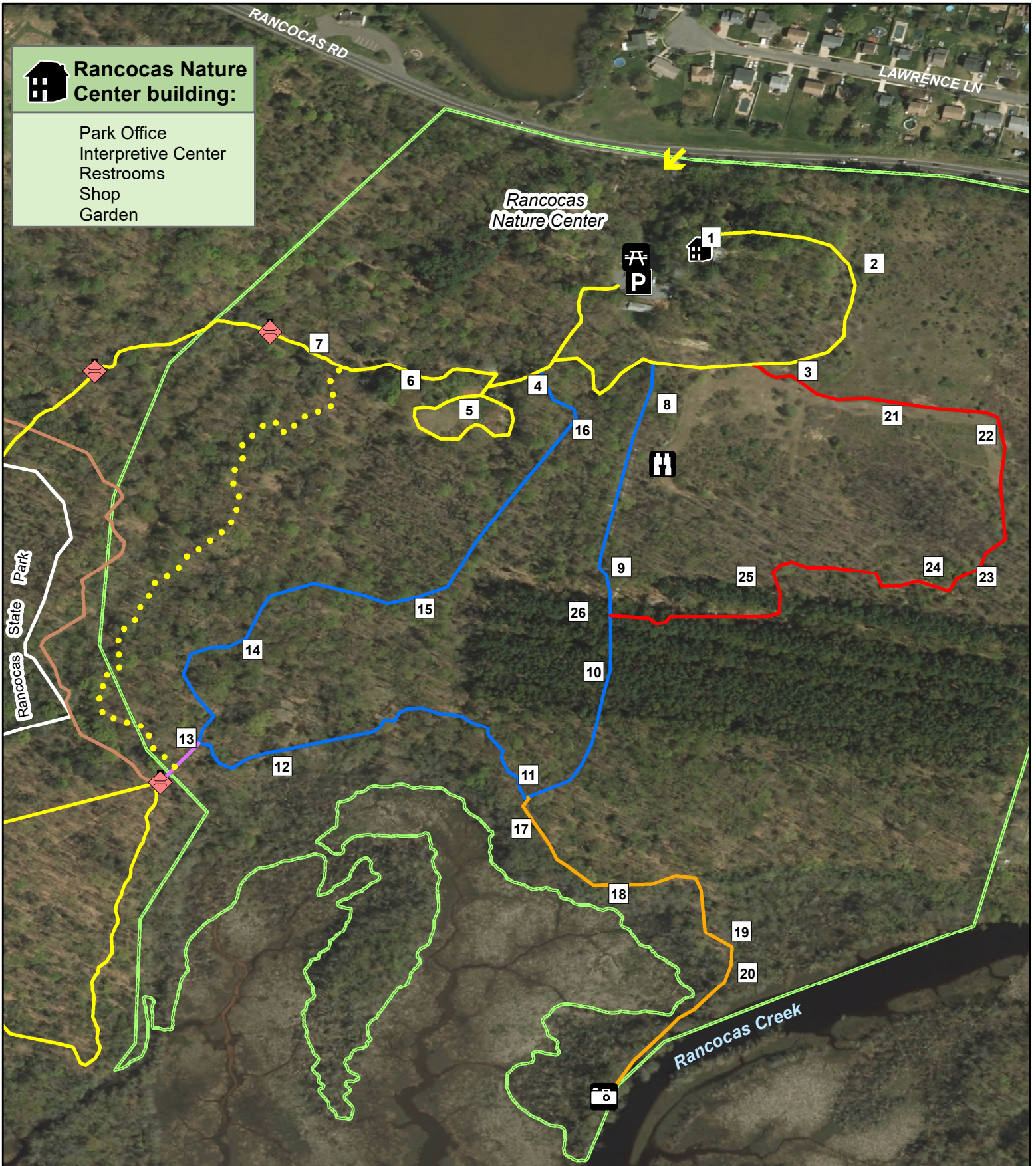




Rancocas Nature Center building:

- Park Office
- Interpretive Center
- Restrooms
- Shop
- Garden



- Park Features**
- Visitors Center
 - Picnic Area
 - Parking
 - Wildlife Viewing
 - Scenic View
 - Bridge

- Rancocas Nature Center Trails**
- Blue: Deer Run Trail (.7 mi)
 - Orange: Turkey Feather Trail (.25 mi)
 - Red: Meadow View Trail (.4 mi)
 - Yellow: Maple Leaf Trail (.7 mi)
 - Yellow Connector: Whispering Woods Connector Trail (.28)
 - Connector to Rancocas State Park, Westampton

- Rancocas State Park, Westampton Trails**
- Brown: Squirrel Run Trail (.5 mi)
 - White: Rancocas Trail (2.2 mi)
 - Yellow: Whispering Woods Trail (1 mi)
 - Park Boundary
 - Points of Interest

*****YELLOW TRAIL*****

1. Welcome to the Rancocas Nature Center! As you start on the trail, you'll notice an Umbrella Magnolia tree on the edge of the trail near the building. Umbrella Magnolia is typically found more commonly in the Southeastern United States, but may have been planted here as an ornamental. This particular part of the forest has been known to be a breeding area for Cooper's Hawks.

2. The trail is now leaving the forest and entering the Nature Center's largest meadow. The meadow provides habitat for a wide variety of wildlife, but must be maintained to combat succession and invasives. As the temperatures rise in the spring, the sound of tiny frogs known as Spring Peepers will fill the air.

3. This edge habitat is a great place to look for the silhouette of diurnal raptors roosting in the tree tops. As home to rodents and other prey animals, the meadow provides an example of the food chain in action.

4. This mixed forest has vines of grape and wisteria that twist and intertwine to create nature's own works of art.

5. This half-acre meadow just off the trail is home to six honeybee hives. The meadow is mowed annually, but in spring, summer, and fall, common milkweed acts as a host plant for Monarch butterfly eggs and larva, and a nectar source for the adults, as well as other butterfly species and bees.

6. This area was the site of a former 19th century house. Nearby is a sugar maple tree that provides a focal point for the Nature Center's annual Maple Sugaring program in late winter.

7. This stand of American Holly trees are among some of the oldest in Burlington County. Holly is a dioecious plant, meaning that it has separate male and female plants. The berries found on the female plants are a food source for overwintering birds.

*****BLUE TRAIL*****

8. In the spring, this area becomes a vernal pool – a shallow pond that only exists for part of the year. Without any fish to prey upon eggs, the vernal pool is an excellent breeding ground for amphibians such as frogs and salamanders.

9. This part of the forest has an abundance of grapevine, a native plant whose fruit provide a food source for many of the animals here. Identified by its characteristically shaggy bark, grapevine was also used by the Native Americans.

10. The pine forest is ideal habitat for Great Horned Owls. These nocturnal predators roost during the day near the top of the tree and close to its trunk, so be on the lookout for large shadowy figures in the treetops. Evidence of owls such as white wash and pellets have been found deeper in the rows of pine.

11. At this high elevation, one gets sweeping views of the creek and wetlands. Obscured when trees start to leaf out, the view is a treat for winter hikers.

12. This spot offers great views of the Rancocas Creek and surrounding wetlands. Of note is the stately sycamore on the edge of the trail. Estimated to be over 250 years old, this tree may have been just a sapling during the time of the Revolutionary War. Up ahead, between posts 12 & 13, uprooted trees are a testament to the strength of Superstorm Sandy.

13. The bridge to the west accesses multiple trails in the portion of the Rancocas State Park to the north of the creek. Upstream, evidence of beaver activity can be found. The stream eventually feeds into the Rancocas Creek.

14. Rotting logs offer opportunity for a close up look at decomposers in action. Decomposers complete the life cycle by forging a connection between living and non-living. As the trail meanders, be sure to follow the blue blazes. If the trail is wet, be on the lookout for tracks for clues on what animals call Rancocas home.

15. Can you spot the hairy vine on the east side of the trail? Look, but don't touch! Poison Ivy is a native plant whose berries provide food for animals, but every part of the plant causes distress to humans. In winter, the hairy vine may be the only visible identifier.

16. A deer run shows the route our largest mammals take from the forest to both meadows. As an edge species, deer especially like areas such as this one, which offers open grassy areas for grazing, with nearby forests for cover. Rancocas' understory has been negatively impacted by deer browsing, though the issue remains unresolved.

*****ORANGE TRAIL*****

17. This wetland is part of the 80 acre natural management area maintained by the Rancocas Nature Center. On the banks, skunk cabbage pokes through as the first sign of spring. When fully bloomed, its large green leaves are an indicator of wetlands.

18. This area was excavated in the 18th century in order to set up a system of dikes for the grazing of animals.

19. If you look around this spot, you'll see where North America's largest rodent, the beaver, has been chewing on trees and bark. Strict herbivores, beavers live in family groups that include a mated pair, new cubs, and the older offspring.

20. The Rancocas Creek is tidal all the way to Mt. Holly, with both high and low tides occurring twice a day. Tides are especially high during the full moon, and the views of the creek can vary dramatically depending on the tide.

*****RED TRAIL*****

21. NJ is home to 8 species of bats. An Eagle Scout installed the bat box you see here, used in the warmer months by these colonial breeders. Bats are beneficial to humans because they can eat thousands of mosquitoes in a single night.

22. Sometime in March, the American Woodcocks return to the Rancocas meadow, where they perform an elaborate mating ritual that includes soaring and diving. Their long, thin beaks are helpful for extracting organisms from the soil, despite their comical appearance.

23. This area is home to a stand of an early successional tree known as Sweet Gum. In order to maintain our meadow, saplings are removed. Young branches have a unique winged pattern and the seed pods are a distinct spiky ball.

24. In the warmer months, this transitional area is filled with dogbane and milkweed, providing great habitat for dragonflies and butterflies. Many birds also frequent this area, and if you stand completely quiet for just a minute, you may be able to hear their calls.

25. This part of the trail transitions from a young deciduous forest to a conifer forest featuring White Pine, easily identified by its bundles of five needles.

26. Intended as a tree farm, these trees were planted in rows, but never thinned out. As a result, they compete for sunlight. On a breezy day, if you remain quiet you can hear them creaking as they sway in the wind.