

The Crum Woods

The Crum Woods of Swarthmore College is one of the last remaining forested areas in Delaware County, Pa. With roughly 3.5 miles of walking trails extending over more than two hundred acres of land, the Crum Woods is significant not only for its large area and biodiversity, but also for the opportunities it offers for learning and recreation. The woods are used as a classroom and laboratory by the College, and provide recreational opportunities for all, including the broader community. Visitors are encouraged to wander the trails, observe the flora and fauna, and otherwise explore, contemplate, and enjoy the woods.



Crum Creek, which runs north to south through the woods, was originally called Ockanickon, by the native Lenni Lenape who lived on its banks. Following European settlement in the early 18th century, the Swedes renamed it Crumkill, meaning “crooked creek.” Over time, much of the land around the creek was cleared for agricultural and industrial use. During the Great Depression, under direction of the Scott Horticultural Foundation (which is today the Scott Arboretum) the Crum Woods was replanted with over 60,000 native trees and shrubs. John Wister, first director of the Arboretum, named the trails for acclaimed botanists and horticulturists. The trail names on this map match those on Wister’s 1939 hand-drawn map.

A Natural History

The bedrock of the Crum Woods is primarily comprised of soft schist and harder gneiss. The creek’s distinctive oxbows and sharp turns were defined by these rocks, as the water turned aside wherever it flowed against a large mass of gneiss. Many plant communities have grown up around the creek, including dry oak-heath forest, tulip tree-beech-maple forest, and red maple-mixed shrub palustrine woodland, each providing desirable habitat for native wildlife.

An Outdoor Classroom and Laboratory

Over the past ten years, students in more than 35 Swarthmore College courses have taken advantage of the opportunity to learn in the woods. Here, artists, dancers, and writers might encounter engineers, ecologists, or political scientists—or a group of second graders from the local elementary school. Crum Woods research initiatives by professors, students, and outside experts explore a wide range of topics. Recent projects include monitoring water quality; calculating the amount of carbon trees sequester versus the amount they release through leaf decay; analyzing wetland destruction; and studying the effects of deer population management strategies on the forest’s ability to regenerate.

Management and Conservation

The woods offer a crucial habitat for migrating birds and native species, but this valuable resource is under pressure from invasive non-native species, storm water run-off, erosion, deer grazing, litter, and more.

The Crum Woods Stewardship Committee (CWSC) was created by Swarthmore College in 2000; its first mission was to establish a protection, restoration, and stewardship plan for Crum Woods. In 2001 the group commissioned the *Conservation and Stewardship Plan for the Crum Woods* by Natural Lands Trust and Continental Conservation. Since receiving the final report, the CWSC has been working to implement the recommendations of the plan, which can be read at www.swarthmore.edu/crumwoods.

The dedicated volunteers of the Scott Arboretum Woods Crew maintain the trails and woods throughout the year. Regularly scheduled community clean-up and tree-planting days give everyone a chance to contribute to the stewardship of the woods. Swarthmore College welcomes gifts which will ensure the care and maintenance of the woods in perpetuity. If you would like to get involved or contribute to the well-being of the woods, please contact the members of the Crum Woods Stewardship Committee at crumwoods@swarthmore.edu.



User’s Guide:

- The Crum Woods are open to visitors from sunup to sundown; visitors proceed at their own risk.
- Leave no trace. No plant material, minerals, animals, or artifacts may be removed and nothing should be left behind.
- Remain on existing trails to minimize erosion and loss of native habitat.
- Dogs must be leashed and owners must clean up after their dogs.
- Fires are prohibited.

Project management by Camille Robertson ’13; design by Laura Stiebitz; map by Doug Willen. Photos: R. Maurer, C. Sawyers, and E. Traverso.

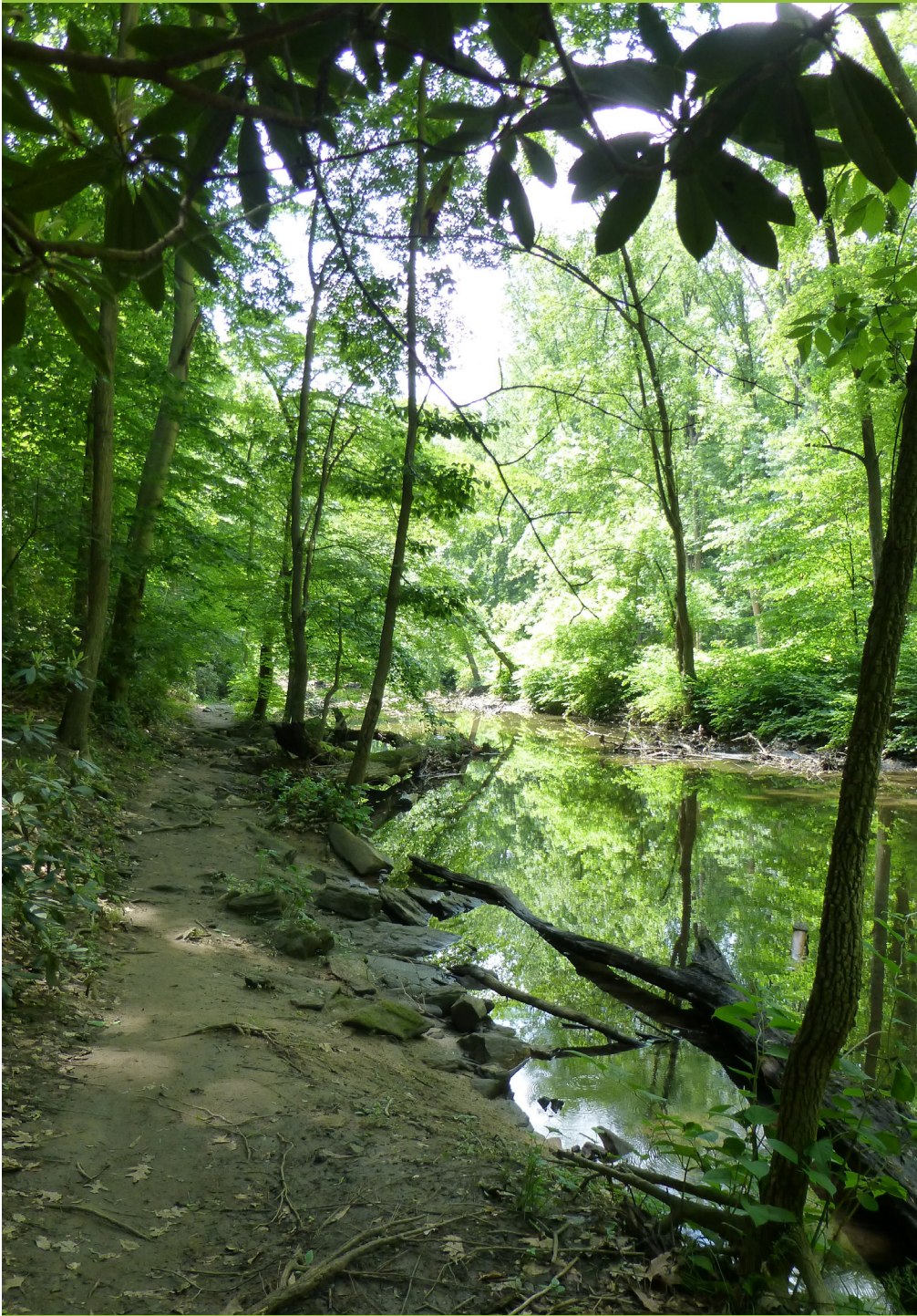


THE SCOTT ARBORETUM
OF SWARTHMORE COLLEGE
500 College Avenue, Swarthmore, PA 19081
www.scottarboretum.org

Crum Woods Stewardship
Committee of Swarthmore College

<http://www.swarthmore.edu/crumwoods>

Crum Woods Trails



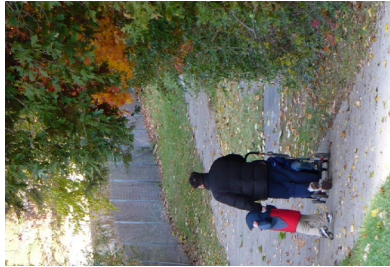
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Crum Woods Trail Map



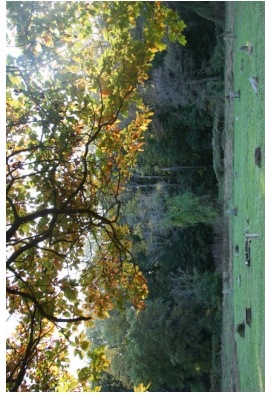
Alligator Rock

The bedrock of the area is primarily comprised of schist and gneiss. Because schist is a softer stone than gneiss, it is more prone to erosion. As it erodes, it leaves behind dramatic outcroppings of gneiss, such as Alligator Rock.



Leiper-Smedley Trail

The 2.2 mile (3.5 kilometer) paved Smedley-Leiper Trail is currently the only open trail on the west side of the creek.



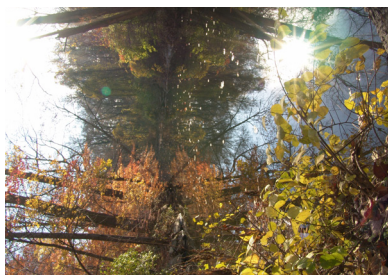
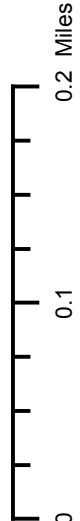
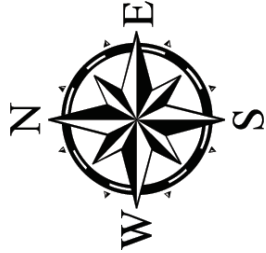
Crum Meadow

This 6-acre area is commonly known as Crumhenge as a result of the large decorative stones that were placed in the meadow in the late 1980s. It was previously called “Palmer’s Meadow” in honor of Samuel Palmer, member of the Class of 1895, Swarthmore professor of botany, and early advocate for the founding of the Arboretum.



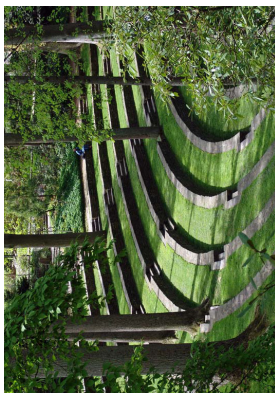
- Leiper-Smedley (2.2 mi) ♦♦
- Valley Walk (1.7 mi) ♦
- Crumwald Path (0.1 mi) ♦
- Evans Path (0.1 mi) ♦♦♦
- Bartram Path (0.4 mi) ♦♦
- Alligator Step (0.1 mi) ♦♦♦
- Humphry Marshall Path (0.2 mi) ♦♦♦
- Trotter Dell (0.1 mi) ♦
- Rhododendron Collection (0.2 mi) ♦
- Pierce Path (0.1 mi) ♦
- Painter Path (0.1 mi) ♦♦♦
- Sargent Road (0.3 mi) ♦
- Asa Gray Entrance (0.05 mi) ♦♦
- Wister Garden Walk (0.1 mi) ♦

- ♦ Easy
- ♦♦ Medium
- ♦♦♦ Challenging
- Seasonal flooding
- ⬆ Ongoing research site
- ▲ Trail head



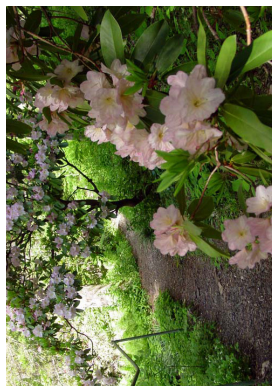
Crum Creek

Crum Creek runs 22.5 miles, draining a watershed of some 38 square miles. The creek runs from its headwaters in Malvern, Chester County, to the Delaware River, 4 miles downstream from Swarthmore.



Scott Outdoor Amphitheater

The amphitheater was designed by noted Philadelphia landscape architect Thomas W. Sears and constructed in 1942. Soaring tulip trees and white oaks provide the ceiling for the amphitheater, which is the site of the Collegé’s commencement exercises each year.



Wister Garden

This woodland garden is highlighted by sweeps of bulbs and rhododendrons. It was originally the personal garden of the Arboretum’s first director, John Wister, and his wife Gertrude Wister, who served as assistant director.