

## Trail Restoration and work

There are approximately 10 miles of hiking trails to enjoy in Stone Mountain Park! The trails allow visitors to explore forest, meadow and rock outcrop habitats. They are also a convenient path for water to follow.

The heavy visitor use and erosive power of water have created unsightly, unstable and unsafe conditions on Stone Mountain Park trails. Many people seeking an experience at the park go off trail and create their own trails (desire trails) through the intact forest. Where water flows, rocks and roots are uncovered as soil is washed away. Low lying areas and trail sections close to the lake are frequently covered in water or extremely muddy.

The current trail conditions are also damaging the environment. For instance, sections with high water flow quickly carry soil into the lakes. Desire trails create additional edges or corridors through the forest which are disruptive to many animals. Eroded creek banks lose soil quickly into the creeks.

SMMA is committed to preserving the beauty of the Natural District while also providing natural experiences for visitors.

- **Nature Garden and Trail:** We began restoring the Nature Garden Trail in September, 2007 and have finished the trail work in January 2008. Work includes blocking desire trails, installing signage notifying visitors of the trail restoration, installing benches, consulting with a landscape architect firm on trail rehabilitation needs, rerouting the trail away from steep sections. Plant identification signs will be installed in the garden in 2008.
- **Cherokee Trail:** The Cherokee Trail has been rerouted near the Putt-Putt course, marked with better blazes and clearer signs installed. Also in this area, a new trail connecting the Cherokee Trail and the bathrooms has been created. Other sections will be rerouted or repaired and new, clearer signs installed throughout 2008. Keep checking the ecosystem: trails section for updated trail maps.
- **Songbird Habitat and Trail:** We continue to remove invasives in the wooded area. Five additional benches were placed along the field trail in January, 2008. The field will be retilled and wildflower seeds spread in Fall, 2008 to maintain the field habitat for Songbirds.

[back to top](#)

**How can you help with trail restoration?**

At present, we have no volunteer opportunities for helping with trail restoration.

We do need help removing invasive plants at the Nature Garden. If you are interested, please call 770-498-5658 to join us.

Please stay on the marked trails. Your one afternoon of exploring can leave a noticeable path off the main trail that tempts other to follow it.

Be prepared for trail conditions. If it has rained recently, low lying areas may be muddy. Be prepared to walk through or just on the edge of the mud. This avoids creation of new or wider paths.

At Stone Mountain Park, dogs are welcome on hiking trails, excluding the walk up trail to the top and the Songbird Habitat Trails. They must be on a 6 foot leash and accompanied by an owner! You can enjoy your dog off leash at the Stone Mountain village dog park located between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> streets.

In an effort to reduce stream bank erosion and bacterial contamination, please keep your dog out of the creeks in the Park.

Follow "leave no trace" practices. For example, carry your trash with you until you reach a trash can. Don't collect plants and don't mark on trees or stone.

### **How to read the blazes:**

Cherokee Trail: white  
blazes

Connecting Trails: orange blazes

Single rectangular blaze: stay straight on the current trail

Double Blaze, same colors, top offset to left: turn left to stay on current trail  
Double Blaze, same colors, top offset to right: turn right to stay on current trail

Double Blaze, different colors, top offset to left: turn left to hike on new trail  
Double Blaze, different colors, top offset to right: turn right to hike on new trail

Triple Blaze, same colors, top offset to left and right: turn either right or left  
Triple Blaze, different colors, top offset to left and right: turn right or left to stay on trail of your choice