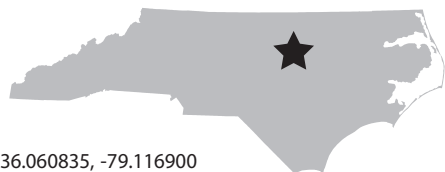


Occoneechee Mountain State Natural Area



GPS: 36.060835, -79.116900

Directions: From I-85, take exit 164. Turn north onto Churton Street. Turn left at the stoplight onto Mayo Street. Turn left at the stop sign onto Orange Grove Road. Turn right on Virginia Cates Road and follow signs to parking area.

Park Information



Park Hours: Please visit the North Carolina State Parks website or contact the park office for the **most current information** about seasonal hours, activities, alerts, camping fees, programs, rules and weather.

Contact Information: Occoneechee Mountain State Natural Area does not have an office onsite and is managed by staff at Eno River State Park. Please contact Eno River State Park for information.

Eno River State Park
6101 Cole Mill Road
Durham, NC 27705-9275
(984) 250-1370
eno.river@ncparks.gov

N.C. Division of Parks and Recreation
Dept. of Natural and Cultural Resources
1615 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-1615
919-707-9300

Roy Cooper
Governor



When you have finished with this publication, help save our earth by sharing it with a friend, returning it to the park or recycling it.

Welcome

Occoneechee Mountain State Natural Area has been recognized as one of the most important natural areas in the Triangle. The various habitats found on the mountain support species that are rare and significant in this region. With over 230 acres of land and more than 3 miles of trails, visitors can experience a wide variety of the area's natural habitats and wildlife.

Trails

Enjoy a walk through the natural area's various habitats or hike to the summit for a spectacular view. The natural area has diverse trails to be enjoyed.

Brown Elfin Knob Trail 0.1 mile easy blue ●
This 0.1-mile trail takes you through a mature oak forest and to high scenic views. It traverses mountain laurel and rhododendron thicket and is particularly beautiful when flowers are blooming mid-spring.

Chestnut Oak Trail 0.9 mile moderate orange ●
This 0.9-mile trail takes you along a north-facing slope of the mountain through beautiful groves of chestnut oak trees. Combined with a part of the Occoneechee Loop Trail, this can extend to a 1.4-mile loop from the parking lot and back.

Occoneechee Mountain Loop Trail 2.2 miles moderate red ●
Hiking the loop around Occoneechee Mountain is an exhilarating walk over steep terrain and along the peaceful Eno River. A few short, steep slopes along this trail make it moderately challenging. Prepare for some elevation changes!

Overlook Trail 0.15 mile moderate yellow ●
This 0.15-mile trail takes you to the overlook with beautiful panoramic views of the surrounding mature oak forest, mountain laurel and rhododendron.

Fishing

Wet your line in two small fishing ponds or one of the best fishing streams in the Neuse River Basin. The Occoneechee ponds are great for catching bass and bream. The Eno is a great place for fly-fishing, casting lures or baiting. Most of the river can be waded and there are many openings for bank fishing. Common game fish include largemouth bass, bluegill, redbreast sunfish and the feisty Roanoke bass. Chubs and bullheads add to the fishing fun. All N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission fishing regulations are enforced.

History Highlights

Rising more than 350 feet from the Eno River, the Occoneechee Mountain summit is the highest point in Orange County. The summit is also reported to be the highest point between Hillsborough and the Atlantic Ocean.

Less than 2 miles downriver in a sharp bend in the Eno, the Occoneechee tribe built a village during the 1600s after migrating from the present-day Clarksville, Va. area. Their descendants maintain a strong presence in the area.

During the colonial period, European immigrants settled the area, and the land was divided and had several owners. Until the 1950s, a mill village occupied a section of the natural area. The N.C. Division of Parks and Recreation first purchased land at Occoneechee Mountain in December 1997. Since then, the natural area has grown to 228 acres.

Flora and Fauna

Occoneechee Mountain State Natural Area showcases a wide range of natural communities with diversity that is not found elsewhere in the Triangle area. The forest of the ridge top includes one of the best chestnut oak stands in the region. The mountain is also an important wildlife habitat. Acorns produced by the chestnut oaks and other berries from area plants nourish animals including as deer, groundhog and wild turkey.

The top of Occoneechee Mountain's ridge and its northern slopes provide a habitat for a wide variety of wildlife species that are typically found in the mountains. Bradley's spleenwort and wild sarsaparilla reach their easternmost limits here. Catawba rhododendron is present on the steep rock outcrop and a mountain laurel-galax community grows in the slopes of the ravine. Pygmy pipes, mountain witchalder and purple fringeless orchid can also be found here.

Researchers believe that the area's habitat has remained relatively unchanged since the last ice age due to the presence of brown elfin, a rare butterfly, as well as several unique plant species. When the Piedmont's habitat underwent enormous transformations after the last ice age, the area became unable to support the brown elfin and other species more accustomed to cooler environments. Brown elfins, believed to have once populated the Piedmont, were restricted to the state's mountains. However, the brown elfin butterflies at Occoneechee Mountain remained.

Picnicking

Picnic tables are available under shady oaks on the lawn near the parking area. A vault toilet is nearby.

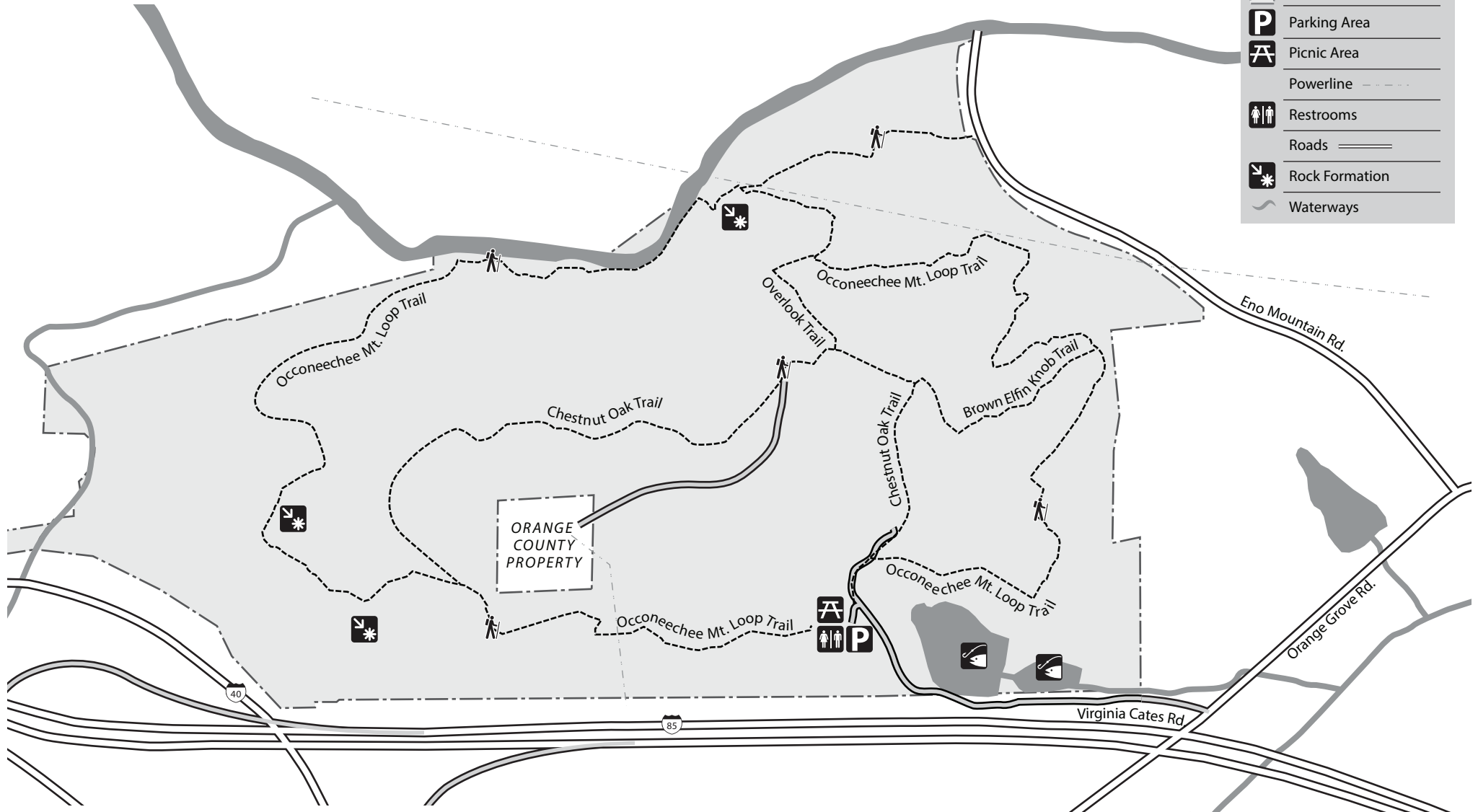
Rules and Regulations

- Rock climbing and rappelling are prohibited.
- Do not climb up the sides of the quarry, even with equipment. The quarry's steep slopes, eroding rock and other hazards are dangerous for climbers.
- The removal or disturbance of any plant, animal, artifact or mineral is prohibited.
- Please throw trash in proper receptacles. State law requires aluminum cans and plastic bottles to be placed in recycling containers.
- Firearms and other weapons are prohibited except that those with a proper permit may possess a concealed handgun in permitted areas and under the requirements of N.C. G.S. 14-415.11.
- Alcoholic beverages are prohibited.
- North Carolina motor vehicle and traffic laws apply in the park.
- All state parks are wildlife preserves. Hunting and trapping are not permitted.
- Fishing is permitted only during park hours. All regulations of the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission are enforced.
- Pets must be on an attended leash no longer than 6 feet.
- Do not leave vehicles in the park after closing time.
- Open fires are not permitted in the park.
- Respect the rights of private land owners when parking and hiking.
- Horses, motorcycles, vehicles and bicycles are not permitted on hiking trails.

OCCONEECHEE MOUNTAIN STATE NATURAL AREA

Legend


-  Fishing
-  Hiking Trail - - - - -
-  Park Boundary
-  Parking Area
-  Picnic Area
-  Powerline - · - · - ·
-  Restrooms
-  Roads = = = = =
-  Rock Formation
-  Waterways



Trails

| | | | | |
|---------------------------|-----------|----------|--------|---|
| Brown Elfin Knob Trail | 0.10 mile | easy | blue | ● |
| Chestnut Oak Trail | 0.90 mile | moderate | orange | ● |
| Occonechee Mt. Loop Trail | 2.2 miles | moderate | red | ● |
| Overlook Trail | 0.15 mile | moderate | yellow | ● |



0  2,000 feet

North 