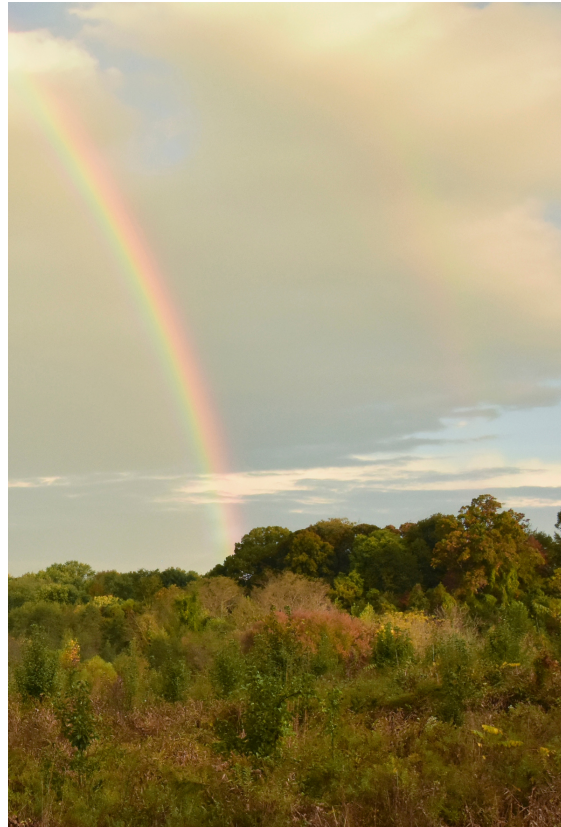


Remember that you are a visitor in the home of many plants and animals. Please be respectful of them by staying on trails and leaving no trace.

OTHER PLACES TO VISIT:

- CHICKENS & GOATS IN THE ORCHARD AREA
- NATURAL PLAY AREA NEAR MONTJOY BARN
- COMMUNITY GARDEN
- NATIVE PLANT HONORS GARDEN

THANKS FOR
VISITING.
DONATIONS KEEP
OUR TRAILS
MAINTAINED AND
FREE FOR THE
COMMUNITY



Howard
County
Conservancy

connecting people to nature

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*Image credits: cover; Richard Orr, inside stream;
Biohabitats back; Wendy Crowe*

MEADOW & STREAM HIKE



Venture through grasslands, enjoy commanding views of the surrounding countryside, and walk along the Davis Branch stream on this easy, 0.7 mile, family friendly hike.

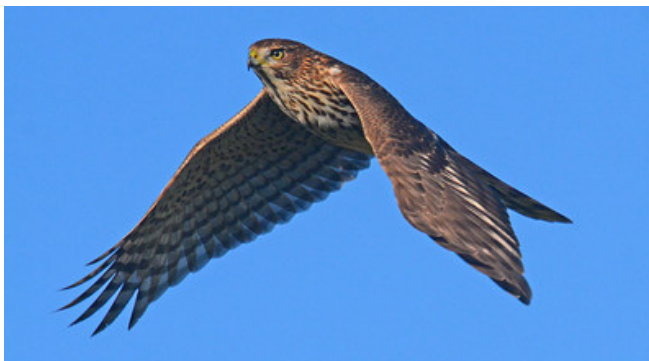
Start this hike at the gray barn you first see when you drive in.

Stop #1: Montjoy Barn

Built in 1792, Montjoy Barn is one of only 2 buildings not original to this property. Farmland development led to the barn being dismantled, moved, and rebuilt here for preservation! Constructed primarily of old growth oak and hand-hewn with wooden pegs, the barn was originally a bank or banked barn built into a sloped hill. Over the years the barn was used for tobacco, then wheat, and finally as a dairy barn. **Exit east from the barn, and go past the Master Gardeners' Garden on your right. Turn left, pass the donation post on your right and walk straight onto the Grassland Trail.**

Stop #2: Meadow Habitat

Along the path, discover beneficial plants and insects native to Maryland! Native meadows provide cover and food for birds and insects. Look for milkweed in the summer, and you may just find monarchs! Did you know that the monarch butterfly's body contains a toxic chemical to defend itself from hungry predators? Milkweed is the only host plant for monarch caterpillars, supplying the caterpillars with the toxic chemical. In Spring you will see hard & spiky green pods, beautiful pink flowers in the summer, & dried open pods filled with cotton-like fibers in Fall. **Continue on the trail until you reach the mulched bird watch on the left.**



Stop #3: Chandler S. Robbins Skywatch

This Skywatch is in honor of Chandler S. Robbins, a visionary leader of 20th century bird conservation. Look out to observe the hillside grasslands and the many birds that frequent this area. Hawks, eagles, and vultures can often be spotted soaring above, especially during peak migration in the spring and fall. Raptors can be identified from a distance by their silhouettes. Learn the common silhouettes using the "Have You Seen Any of these Raptors?" sign.

Continue on the trail downhill until you reach the stream.

Stop #4: The Davis Branch Stream

The Davis Branch Stream shows how interconnected our surroundings are. The East Branch stream flows from the other side of the Conservancy's property, emptying into the Davis Branch. Downstream a few miles, the Davis Branch Stream spills its waters into the Patapsco River. This same water will flow through Ellicott City, into the Chesapeake Bay and finally, the Atlantic Ocean. Look around this area, and explore the stream. The pavilion you see is a stopping point for hundreds of students who come to the Conservancy every year!

Head back to the southwest past the pavilion, and take a right on the Davis Branch Trail that parallels the stream. Walk upstream towards the Stone Wall Trail until you reach the bridge.

Stop#5: Wetlands Area

Go out onto the bridge. Look to the right, and you'll see where you came from. Look to the left, and you'll see the Davis Branch Stream Restoration. For many years this area was a stream with eroding banks. In 2017, the stream was restored. Notice the different pathways through which the water flows. Freshwater wetland plants help slow down and hold onto water, helping to prevent land erosion due to fast water flow. Wetlands also support an abundance of macroinvertebrates (such as insect larvae or nymphs, crayfish, snails, and worms), crustaceans, fish, frogs, and water birds that all call this area home. You may see different varieties of ducks in the many pools of water or even signs of beavers! Look out for a beaver dam and pointed trees that the beavers have chewed on.

Return to the Davis Branch Trail & follow to the end enjoying the views. Then, reverse your hike to the Stone Wall Trail, and take it up the hill.



Stop #6: Stone Wall Trail

As you walk up the hill, notice the stone wall. The historic wall was built back when the land was used agriculturally. As fields were cleared for planting crops and grazing animals, the rocks found were stacked, creating the wall. Stonewalls like this were used as fences between fields, or as property boundaries.

Continue back to the parking area or extend your adventures by exploring another trail or visiting our resident animals!