The North Woods
Discovery Journal

Name

Date of Visit
Welcome, Park Explorer!

This journal is your guide to exploring the North Woods as a designer, a gardener, and a naturalist. By completing the challenges on these pages, you’ll discover how designers, gardeners, and naturalists are also stewards, or caretakers, of this special place. With millions of visitors each year, it takes a lot of hard work to keep Central Park’s landscapes healthy and beautiful.

The Central Park Conservancy is the official steward of Central Park. But we need your help, too! As you explore the North Woods, follow the Park Explorer’s Code of Conduct:

✓ **Stay on the path.**
  Walking off of pathways can damage plants and disturb animals.

✓ **Take pictures, not souvenirs.**
  If every visitor took home a flower or leaf, there wouldn’t be any left in the Park.

✓ **Put trash in its place.**
  Litter pollutes the Park and can be harmful to animals.

✓ **Keep wildlife wild.**
  Human food is for human beings, not animals.

✓ Add one more guideline for Park Explorers to follow, so they can be stewards, too!

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**Discover!**

As you explore the North Woods, pay close attention to what makes each woodland layer different. What do you notice in each?

In the ground layer, I notice...

In the understory layer, I notice...

In the canopy layer, I notice...

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Add one more guideline for Park Explorers to follow, so they can be stewards, too!
Planning a Wild Garden
Although the North Woods looks natural, it is a carefully planned “wild” garden! Park designers built the North Woods so that visitors can experience the unique sights and sounds of the Adirondack forest without leaving the city.

Discover!
Create a sound map of the North Woods! Sit or stand in one spot, and carefully listen to the sounds around you. On the map below, draw or describe five sounds you hear and where they are coming from.

Being in an urban woodland makes me feel...

Name your woodland picture!
Who Keeps the North Woods Healthy?

Woodland gardeners keep the North Woods healthy for the plants and animals that live there. Here are just some of the things a woodland gardener may do during the day:

Add plants to help keep the soil in place.
Create woodchipped paths so visitors know where to walk.
Remove litter to keep the woodlands beautiful.
Remove weeds so that other plants have enough room to grow.
Prune, or cut back branches, to keep trees healthy.
Leave logs on the ground to create habitat, or home, for wildlife.
Teach visitors about the North Woods and its history.

ONGOING NORTH WOODS PROJECTS

Different trees have different needs, so gardeners pay careful attention to which kind of tree they are caring for. They are able to identify trees by closely observing and comparing their different parts: the trunk, the bark, the branches, the leaves, the flowers, and the seeds.

Discover!

Create a Tree Profile for one North Woods tree.

The North Woods is one of the only places in Central Park where you can see trees in all stages of life— from tiny seeds to dead logs. Can you find them all?

NORTH WOODS TREE PROFILE

Drawing of entire tree:

Drawing of a leaf:

Drawing of bark:

I think this is a sapling because I notice...

Seeds and Fruit (samaras, acorns, and seedheads)
Sapling (very young tree)
Log (dead tree on the ground)
Mature Tree (thick trunk and strong branches)
Snag (standing dead tree)
Not Just for People!
Urban naturalists study the plants and animals living in cities. The North Woods is a habitat for many animals that live in New York City for some or all of the year, providing them with food, shelter, space, and water. Naturalists teach others about the importance of places like the North Woods by recording and sharing what they observe.

Discover!
Investigate a fallen log for signs of insect, mammal, and bird life. Record your observations below and remember to replace any leaf litter and logs after you’re done!

GROUND LAYER STUDY

On the log, I notice...

Under the log, I notice...

Under the leaf litter, I notice...

Animals may leave behind cracked-open seeds, chewed leaves, droppings, feathers or fur, holes in wood, eggs, claw marks on trees, sawdust, or even footprints!

NORTH WOODS ANIMAL CARD

Animal Name

Location
- Tree
- Plant
- Log
- Leaf
- Rock
- Pathway
- Other

Habitat
- Ground Layer
- Understory
- Canopy

Behavior
- Eating
- Flying
- Singing
- Resting
- Climbing
- Walking
- Crawling
- Drinking
- Building
- Other

Interesting Observation

Complete the Animal Card for one animal you observe in the North Woods.
Central Park is MY Park!
You are one of millions of people who visit Central Park every year! With so many visitors, it takes a lot of hard work to keep Central Park’s landscapes healthy and beautiful. The Central Park Conservancy is the official steward, or caretaker, of Central Park. By following the Park Explorer’s Code of Conduct, you are a Central Park steward, too! Sharing why Central Park is important to you and teaching others about your discoveries is another way to be a steward.

Healthy Cities Need Healthy Parks!
The North Woods is one of many special places in Central Park where people can enjoy and explore the outdoors. Since urban parks provide so many benefits to people, people need to be stewards of urban parks – including Central Park!

Discover!
Share your favorite North Woods discovery!

This is...

I’m sharing this because...

Being an urban park steward is important because...

Official Steward
Complete your badge by adding your name and picture!
Discover Central Park!

The Central Park Conservancy offers a variety of Discovery Programs to help children explore Central Park and develop skills for inquiry, all in the world's greatest outdoor classroom.

Learn more: centralparknyc.org/discovery

Share photos from today! #discovercentralpark

@centralparknyc