

Located just 5 miles south of downtown Raleigh, Historic Yates Mill was established before the City in the mid-1700s and is now the last operating water-powered mill, out of 70 or more gristmills that once existed in the Wake County area. The mill ground corn into meal and wheat into flour for the local community for over 200 years. Today it serves as a one-of-a-kind historic site and a center of education for all ages.

Park Features

The mill is the centerpiece of a 174-acre park which is managed as a native wildlife refuge (pets are not allowed). Park amenities include over 3 miles of hiking trails, picnic areas, boardwalk fishing, viewing scopes, and wayside exhibits, among other features.

Park Hours

The park is open seven days a week from 8 a.m. until sunset. Please call 919-856-6675 for the exact closing time for the date(s) of your visit. The A.E. Finley Center for Education and Research (i.e., the park center) is open 7 days a week from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. The gristmill is available for scheduled group tours, March through November.

Parking

Parking for cars is located outside the Finley Center; we also have three school bus parking spaces available. Students may be dropped off in front of the Finley Center at the bus loop.

Mill Accessibility

The mill is a historic site and may not be accessible for everyone. There are a few stairs that must be climbed to enter the mill. If you have physical ability questions, please ask the Group Program Coordinator.

All of our programs, including Mill Tours, are offered FREE for all groups

**"Escape the Daily Grind" at
Historic Yates Mill County Park**





Additional Group Program Information:

Before contacting park staff, please have the following ready:

- Your name and organization/school name
- Contact phone and email
- Grades or ages of students and number of participants
- Requested trip dates (with alternatives in case your first choice is unavailable)
- Request up to two staff-led activities and one self-guided activity
- How your group will be arriving (individual cars, vans, or buses)
- Any special needs requests.

Pre- and Post-Visit Materials

Educational lesson plans and fun theme-based activities that complement your field trip experience are available upon the booking of your visit.

Lunch

You may bring lunch to eat at the park. You will need to relay to the field trip coordinator that you will need scheduled time for a snack or lunch break. Please note that refrigeration is not available. While the park does have water fountains, it does not have ice, other drinks, or snack machines.

Cancelations/Weather

All cancelations of organized group programs require a two-week notice, but please inform park staff as soon as possible if your group will be unable to make it out for any reason. If weather is deemed unsafe or if the day is determined to be a washout, park staff may cancel your program.

Organized Group Programs

Please call the Group Program Coordinator at (919) 856-5638 to schedule a field trip. Reservations are taken year-round by phone or email on a first-come, first-serve basis at least one month in advance. Choose from a variety of mill tour types, classroom discovery labs, environmental field experiences, and additional self-guided activities to complete your park visit and meet your curricular goals.

- Group Programs are held Tuesdays and Wednesdays, with occasional availability on Mondays and Thursdays, March through November.
- Group sizes are restricted to 90 students per day plus chaperones. Large groups are broken up into 3 groups of up to 30 students. Mill tours are restricted by total individuals attending with a maximum of 30 people total (including students and adults).
- Please let us know if there are certain guidelines or special needs your group requires so that we can try to accommodate

Environmental Experiences

Staff-led Activities



Environmental Experience	Program Description	Details
Park Tales Ages 4 to 6 (Grades PreK to 1st)	Enjoy a nature-based children’s story, make a fun related craft, and take an interactive walk. <i>Great for younger audiences!</i>	Chaperone Ratio: 1: 8 (age 6 & under) Program length: 30-45 minutes
Guided Nature Hike Ages 5 & Up (Grades K & Up)	Take a hike to explore the park’s diverse habitats and wildlife. Want a specific topic covered, such as habitats, animal tracks, or birdwatching? Let our staff know in advance.	Chaperone Ratio: 1: 8 (age 6 & under) 1: 10 (ages 7 & up) Program length: 45-60 minutes
Pond Party! Ages 5 & Up (Grades K & Up)	What’s swimming underneath the surface of the pond? Explore critters that call this habitat home in a hands-on pond study. The highlight of your field trip will be when we go dipping for critters in the pond!	Chaperone Ratio: 1: 8 (age 6 & under) 1: 10 (ages 7 & up) Program length: 45-60 minutes

You can select up to two staff-led activities and one self-guided activity. Here are some example schedules:

	Group 1	Group 1	Group 2		Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	
10:00-10:45	Butterflies, Bees, and Bats Oh My!	10:00-11:00	Mill Tour	Artifact Discovery	10:00-11:00	History Detective Mill Tour	Butterflies, Bees, and Bats Oh My! Nature Journal/ Snack	
10:45-11:30	Pond Party	11:00-12:00	Artifact Discovery	Mill Tour	11:00-12:00	Nature Journal/ Snack	History Detective Mill Tour	Butterflies, Bees, and Bats Oh My!
11:30-12:15	Nature Journaling	12:00-12:45	Scavenger Hunt/Lunch		12:00-1:00	Butterflies, Bees, and Bats Oh My!	Nature Journal/ Snack	History Detective Mill Tour

Environmental Experiences (cont.)

Staff-led Activities



Environmental Experience

Program Description

Details

Fascinating Fossils

Ages 7 & Up
(Grades 2 & Up)

Fossils rock! Learn about how life and the Earth change over time, how organisms fossilize, how to identify a fossil, and what prehistoric creatures called NC home. Students will participate in hands-on activities to further enhance their learning.

Chaperone Ratio:
1: 10 (ages 7 & up)

Program length:
45-60 minutes

Butterflies, Bees, and Bats, Oh My!

Ages 7 & Up
(Grades 2 & Up)

Pollinators are among our most important animals. They help plants reproduce and sustain our ecosystems. Learn about the different types of pollinators and what we can do to protect them. Time permitted, go on a guided field exploration and see some of our park gardens and pollinator hot spots.

Chaperone Ratio:
1: 8 (age 6 & under)
1: 10 (ages 7 & up)

Program length:
45-60 minutes

Animal Tracks & Signs

Ages 7 & Up
(Grades 2 & Up)

Learn to read the tracks and signs animals leave behind. Find out what animals are eating, where they are going, and what they've been up to! Use your nature detective skills to figure out what animals live here, then we can try to observe animals in action throughout Yates Mill.

Chaperone Ratio:
1: 10 (ages 7 & up)

Program length:
45-60 minutes

NCSU Aquatic Conservation Lab Tour

Ages 7 & Up
(Grades 2 & Up)

Groups are limited to a max of 15 people

Experience what it is like to be a conservation aquaculturist at North Carolina State University's Yates Mill Aquatic Conservation Center. Learn about the amazing life cycle of the imperiled mussels living in our freshwater streams and why they are important. Then see biologists in action working to save these fascinating species with a tour of the propagation area and research lab.

Chaperone Ratio:
1: 10 (ages 7 & up)

Program length:
45 -60 minutes

Mill Tours & Historical Explorations

Staff-led Activities



Tours and Explorations

Program Description

Details

Little Red Hen Tour

Ages 5-7
(Grades K-2)

Get your young children excited about Yates Mill! Relive the beloved story of the Little Red Hen. Then take a trip inside the mill to gather ingredients for an imaginary loaf of bread.

Chaperone Ratio:
1: 8 (age 7 & under)

Program length:
60 minutes

History Detective Tour

Ages 8-13
(Grades 3-8)

Become a history detective! Take a guided hike to Yates Mill and examine artifacts to learn about life in the past as you explore inside the mill.

Chaperone Ratio:
1: 10 (ages 7 & up)

Program length:
60 minutes

Mill Heritage Tour

Ages 14 & Up
(Grades 9 & Up)

Learn about mill operations and our global mill heritage. Explore local community history and discover how simple hand mills gave rise to complex machines like Yates Mill.

Chaperone Ratio:
1: 10 (ages 7 & up)

Program length:
60 minutes

Artifact Discovery

Ages 7 & Up
(Grades 2 & Up)

Go back in time and compare life then and now. Through our activities, discover the purposes of several unusual objects from yesteryear through hands-on discovery.

Chaperone Ratio:
1: 10 (ages 7 & up)

Program length:
45-60 minutes

Hands-on-History

Ages 5 & Up
(Grades K & Up)

Choose one or two of the following history-based crafts and activities:
-Postcard Making -Quilting
-Whirligig Toys -Map Making
-Quill and Ink Writing

Chaperone Ratio:
1: 8 (age 7 & under)
1: 10 (ages 7 & up)

Program length:
30-45 minutes

All of our programs are FREE!



Self-guided Activity	Program Description	Details
Outdoor Scavenger Hunt	Can you find everything on our scavenger hunt? Take our A-Z Scavenger Hunt around the park and see how many things you can find.	Suggested length: 30-45 minutes
Nature Journaling	Test out your nature observation skills by observing wildlife around the pond while using your provided nature journal with prompts.	Suggested length: 30-45 minutes
Activity Packet	Enjoy some of our fun activity packets that include activities surrounding historical, agricultural, and environmental topics and themes.	Suggested length: 30-45 minutes
Museum Scavenger Hunts	Look for artifacts while you explore the historical museum inside the Visitor Center. We have two different Museum Scavenger Hunts, one for lower elementary age, and one for upper elementary/middle school.	Suggested length: 30-45 minutes

Everyone's Welcome Initiative

Historic Yates Mill County Park welcomes all visitors and affirms its commitment to offering programs and services that are accessible to everyone. We will make every effort to ensure that visitors of all abilities are fully included in all our programs and facilities. We welcome families with children and adults on the autism spectrum.

“My Historic Yates Mill Park Pack”: This pack is available to borrow and check out inside the park’s visitors center at the front desk. The kit includes a customizable visual schedule, maps, sensory-seeking toys, noise-reducing headphones, and suggestions for making your visit an enjoyable experience.

Please inform your field trip coordinator if you would like to request any of these materials for your visit.



GOING VIRTUAL!

Yates Mill's educational programming offers opportunities for students to learn about important parts of North Carolina's unique cultural, environmental, and agricultural history. Our educators lead engaging and interactive virtual presentations to immerse your students in Wake County's fascinating history.

Schools and other organized groups can get an interactive, educational experience from the safety and comfort of their own homes!

We can make programs tailored to different topics, so feel free to reach out if you have another topic in mind!



Virtual Program	Program Description	Details
Fascinating Fossils	Fossils rock! Learn about how life and the Earth change over time, how organisms fossilize, how to identify a fossil, and what prehistoric creatures called NC home.	Suggested length: 45-60 minutes Ages 7 & up
Artifact Discovery	Explore the world of artifacts. Compare objects from the past with objects today; discover why some artifacts last longer than others; learn how park staff research the history of the park's mill; and examine actual artifacts from the park to try to figure out what they are.	Suggested length: 45 minutes Ages 7 & up
Reptiles Rock!	Meet some scaly friends and learn about unique reptile adaptations. Learn to tell the difference between amphibians and reptiles, and discover what reptiles might live around Yates Mill.	Suggested length: 45-60 minutes Ages 7 & up