



Carolina Raptor Center

6000 Sample Rd,

Huntersville, NC, 28078

# Request for Proposals To Provide Design Professional Services Carolina Raptor Center 2.0

Request Issued: May 1, 2026

Questions Due: May 8, 2026, at 11:59 PM

Proposals Due: May 30, 2026, at 11:59 PM

Interviews Begin: July 7, 2026

Firm Selected: July 22, 2026

Work Begins: August 1, 2026

Master Plan Completion: To be proposed by consultant

## Invitation

Carolina Raptor Center (CRC) is seeking proposals from qualified consulting firms to provide services to develop a Master Plan for the site, with a special focus on the Raptor Trail. Carolina Raptor Center is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit in Huntersville, NC dedicated to raptor rehabilitation, education, and conservation.

## Project Overview

CRC is moving into a new phase, seeking to revise how it operates, redesign its campus for bigger impact, and reconsider how it engages with the communities it serves, both avian and human. Through this master planning process, the organization wants to reinforce these mission, vision, and values:

*Mission:* To ignite a passion for raptors and a responsibility for our shared natural world.

*Vision:* The Carolina Raptor Center fosters communities where raptors and people thrive thanks to our unique blend of innovation, research, and education.

We are a world-class destination for avian rehabilitation, and our dedication to the birds in our care provides visitors a gateway to the natural world.

*Values:* Community, Stewardship, Learning, Impact, Excellence

Budget for the project is not yet set and will be informed by the master planning work. Funding may be sought by the organization as one capital campaign or as several consecutive campaigns.

## Scope of Work

This master planning process would focus on the following elements of the CRC site for development. We are open to considering well thought-out options for new builds and/or renovations to existing structures for some existing elements and suggestions on sizes of structures.

### Raptor Education Experiences

#### Raptor Trail

The ¾ mile Raptor Trail houses 25-30 native and non-native species of birds. It currently serves as the predominant guest experience for the public coming to CRC. It is a highlight and central to what our community thinks of as being the Raptor Center. However, many of the enclosures and other structures on the trail need repair or replacement. As we rebuild the elements of the trail, we are interested in reconsidering the layout, the enclosures, the interactives, interpretive graphics, trail and the use of the site to create a cohesive and impactful experience for those coming to visit for the first time or the tenth time. We would also like to build a trail experience that is accessible to everyone in our community. Finally, we are interested in finding ways to better tell the story of what the organization does with respect to conservation through rehabilitation.

## Education Center

The Education Center will feature flexible, multi-use rooms designed to support both presentations and hands-on lab activities, along with dedicated storage for educational materials, a small adjoining avian diet-prep area, and a staff break room. Movable partitions will allow the instructional spaces to function independently or be combined into one larger area as needed. Encompassing approximately 8,000 square feet, the facility will also provide generous guest seating, restrooms, and 3-4 professional staff offices with a shared workspace. The building should be strategically located near bus parking for easy school group access and positioned close to ambassador animal enclosures to ensure efficient program flow.

## Amphitheater

The zoo-grade outdoor amphitheater will feature tiered seating for approximately 500 guests, ensuring unobstructed views for flight demonstrations. A permanent stage with a naturalistic backdrop will connect to a dedicated behind-the-scenes support area that includes a food-preparation kitchen for raptor diet storage, appropriate sanitation utilities such as floor drains and wash sinks, and a functional workspace for animal care and record-keeping. Integrated into the overall structure, 10–15 ambassador-bird enclosures (each about 15' × 15') will provide indoor/outdoor access and designated release points to allow smooth, efficient movement of animals during show presentations.

## Visitor Center

The Visitor Center is a 2,844 square foot building originally constructed in 1993. Currently, 1,091 square feet are used for a ticketing and gift shop space, with the remaining 1,753 square feet used for office space for 10 employees, a small conference room with seating for 6, and an employee break room.

A renovated Visitor Center will optimize the retail space for use as a gift shop, including a dedicated space for backstock. The remaining space will be renovated to accommodate offices for 15 staff members, along with maintaining a small conference room with seating for 6 and an employee breakroom.

An add-on connected to the existing building will include a dedicated ticketing space for two ticketing booths. It will also include a dedicated space for volunteers, with flexible seating, personal storage, and closet storage for a variety of supplies and materials. Additionally, the add-on will include a bathroom and a conference room accommodating up to 15 people.

## Parking Lot

A primary paved parking facility will accommodate approximately 120 passenger vehicles serving daily visitor operations. The parking area will include accessible parking spaces in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and applicable state and local codes.

The project also includes a flexible-use gravel overflow parking area with capacity for up to 150 passenger vehicles or approximately 10 buses, intended to support peak visitation periods, field trips, and special events.

Parking lot design should balance efficiency with the ability of the guests to feel immersed in nature.

## Free Flight Enclosure

The Free-Flight Enclosure will serve as an immersive educational space where trainers can safely conduct flight and behavioral training sessions while visitors observe. Enclosed with durable, raptor-appropriate woven netting, the structure will form a large, open-air environment that provides ample vertical and horizontal space for natural flight patterns. The enclosure will be designed to allow guests to watch training activities without disrupting animal or trainer focus, and naturalistic elements will be integrated throughout the enclosure.

## Playground

Carolina Raptor Center plans to install a 2,000 to 2500 sq ft playground in the fall of 2026. This will be designed to be movable, if the master plan determines a new location. The playground will help children feel that nature is a place where they belong. By integrating natural materials, organic forms, and a theme inspired by the Peregrine Falcon, a species that captivates kids as the fastest animal in the world, this play space invites exploration for children of all backgrounds and comfort levels.

## Raptor Care Facilities

### Raptor Care Building

The Raptor Care Building will include the Raptor Hospital and Avian Ambassador Care Center on the main floor with a classroom and office space on the second floor. Staircases from each side of the building will lead upstairs. The upstairs would have an open concept office space with some private offices on the perimeter and a small conference/community room. A break room and classroom space would also be important. The walk-in freezer will be the divider between the two sides of the building. The building in total will be 3500-4000 sq ft.

Biosecurity must be an integral part of the building. Details like washable walls, drains in floors, access to hoses in main rooms will need to be considered when planning and building. A mud room and separate entrances for each team will be vital as well as stations between high-risk areas within the building itself.

The Raptor Hospital will be a fully functional wildlife hospital including a front desk, intake and triage room, food prep kitchen, diagnostic and necropsy lab, surgery and x-ray space. Indoor kennel housing will be available in addition to a hospital quarantine area. We will need areas for medical supplies to be stored as well as wall safes to store controlled substances safely onsite.

The Avian Ambassador Care Center will be the main hub for the Avian Ambassador Team which cares for around 50 birds daily. It will include a full kitchen and prep area, health check room fully fitted with the ability to anesthetize and x-ray birds, and storage space for enrichment and training equipment. 4-5 quarantine and medical observation enclosure spaces will be built both inside and outside to ensure there is adequate care for incoming or sick ambassadors.

### Raptor Hospital Trail

The Raptor Hospital Trail is a private behind the scenes trail that provides temporary housing for wild raptors going through the rehabilitation process. Overall, the trail and enclosures will remain in the same place with the addition of several new flight enclosures to round out the needs of the Hospital

Team. The Hospital Trail needs a road to run around the outer perimeter to allow us easy access in the case of emergencies or if materials need to be dropped off closer to a construction site. In the installation of electricity that will run along the whole trail will allow us to provide supplemental heat to birds and install cameras as needed. The trail itself also needs to be upgraded. It is currently a natural trail with a few board walks in areas that flood. The trip hazard of roots and old rebar make it difficult to navigate safely at times and a more permeant solution while keeping in line with a more natural look would be ideal.

## Property Management

### Rebuild of Current Raptor Hospital and Parking Lot

The current Raptor Hospital is a two-story prefabricated build that is traditionally used for housing or office space. A conversion is needed to transform the hospital building into housing for future interns, veterinarian students, and visiting professionals. This would include an overhaul of space to make full bathrooms, kitchen space, laundry room, bedrooms, and a common space. The parking lot would need to have better security with an electronic gate and cameras for safety.

### Property Maintenance Workshop

CRC's property requires consistent maintenance and upkeep. As part of our vision for a new site plan, we would like to incorporate a new 1,500 to 2000 sq ft building to serve as the headquarters for the property maintenance team. It should include a workshop space and storage for raw materials, as well as a shed for parking a golf cart, 2 vehicles, and potentially a rough terrain lift.

### Perimeter Fencing

Carolina Raptor Center's long-term plans include pursuing accreditation from the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA), which requires facilities to meet strict operational and safety standards. A key requirement is the installation of a perimeter fence that fully encloses all CRC facilities, stands at least 8 feet tall, and is completely separate from all exhibit barriers and animal enclosures. This perimeter fence must be well-constructed to ensure the safety of both animals and people. It must prevent outside animals and unauthorized individuals from passing through or under it and coming into contact with animals on site, and it must also serve as a secondary containment system for the animals housed at CRC.

## Proposal Requirements

### General Guidelines

- Proposal should be no more than 100 pages in length with numbered pages
- Consistent layout throughout with clear headings and subheadings
- PDF format only

### Firm Overview

- Designated team lead/primary contact
- Background and qualifications

- Relevant experience with zoos, wildlife facilities, museums, or nature centers
- Project team bios and roles

## Approach & Methodology

- Description of your planning process
- Stakeholder engagement strategy
- How your team incorporates feedback from staff, board, volunteers, and community partners
- Proposed creative and technical approach

## Project Management

- Project schedule
- Deliverables at each phase
- Communication methods and primary point of contact

## Examples of Similar Work

- Maximum of 10 examples
- Portfolio of comparable projects
- Samples of master plans, bird or wildlife facilities, interpretive exhibits, or educational spaces

## References

- At least three recent clients
- Include name, title, phone number, email and address.

## Budget and Pricing

Proposals should include:

- Complete pricing for all phases of work
- Pricing options for completing the entire scope or individual categories (i.e. Raptor Education Experiences, Raptor Care Facilities...etc) that could be broken out.
- Optional or add-on services clearly delineated
- Hourly rates for key staff
- A description of reimbursable expenses

## Questions

Questions about the RFP should be submitted to [proposals@carolinaraptorcenter.org](mailto:proposals@carolinaraptorcenter.org).

Questions can be submitted until May 8, 2026 at 11:59 PM.

CRC will post answers to questions received until the specified date on May 15, 2026 at:  
[carolinaraptorcenter.org/rfp](http://carolinaraptorcenter.org/rfp)

## Timeline

RFP Issued: May 1, 2026

Questions Received by May 8, 2026 at 11:59pm

Answers Posted to CRC RFP Website by May 15<sup>th</sup>

Proposals Due: May 30, 2026 at 11:59pm

Interviews Begin: July 7, 2026

Firm Selected: July 22nd, 2026

Work Begins: August 1, 2026

Master Plan Completion: To be proposed by consultant

## Terms and Conditions

- CRC reserves the right to reject any or all proposals.
- Submission of a proposal indicates acceptance of the terms of this RFP.
- All proposal materials become the property of Carolina Raptor Center.
- CRC may request additional information or clarification during evaluation.
- Responder must outline any existing, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest that may arise through this partnership between CRC and the firm or its principals
- Responder certifies that neither it nor its principals are presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in this transaction (contract) by any governmental department or agency.
- Proposal received past the due date outlined above will be considered at the discretion of the CRC team.
- In the event that the Vendor desires to subcontract some part of the work specified herein, the Vendor shall furnish with their bid the names, qualifications, and experience of their proposed subcontractors. The Vendor shall, however, remain solely and fully liable and responsible for the work done by its subcontractor(s) and shall assure compliance with all the requirements and specifications of the contract.
- Vendor will serve as the prime contractor under this Contract and shall be responsible for the performance and payment of all subcontractor(s) that may be approved by FTCC. Names of any third-party Vendors or subcontractors of Vendor may appear for purposes of convenience in Contract documents; and shall not limit Vendor's obligations hereunder. Vendor will retain

executive representation for functional and technical expertise as needed to incorporate any work by third party subcontractor(s).

- Are you and/or your subcontractor currently involved in litigation with any party? Please list any investigation or action from any state, local, federal or other regulatory body (OSHA, IRS, DOL, etc.) related to your firm or any subcontractor in the last three years. Please list all lawsuits that involved your firm or any subcontractor in the last three years
- By submitting a proposal, offerors certify that their proposal is made without collusion or fraud and that they have not offered or received any kickbacks or inducements from any other offeror, supplier, manufacturer or subcontractor in connection with their proposal, and that they have not conferred on any public employee having official responsibility for this procurement transaction any payment, loan, subscription, advance, deposit of money, services or anything of more than nominal value, present or promised, unless consideration of substantially equal or greater value was exchanged.
- Carolina Raptor Center is governed by USDA, US Fish and Wildlife Service, NC Wildlife Commission. Responders will need to be familiar with their regulations as it relates to this work or be open to learn about and adhere to them through this process.

## Submission Instructions

Submit all materials electronically as a single PDF to:

[Proposals@carolinaraptorcenter.org](mailto:Proposals@carolinaraptorcenter.org)

Subject Line: CRC 2.0 Master Plan Proposal – [Firm Name]

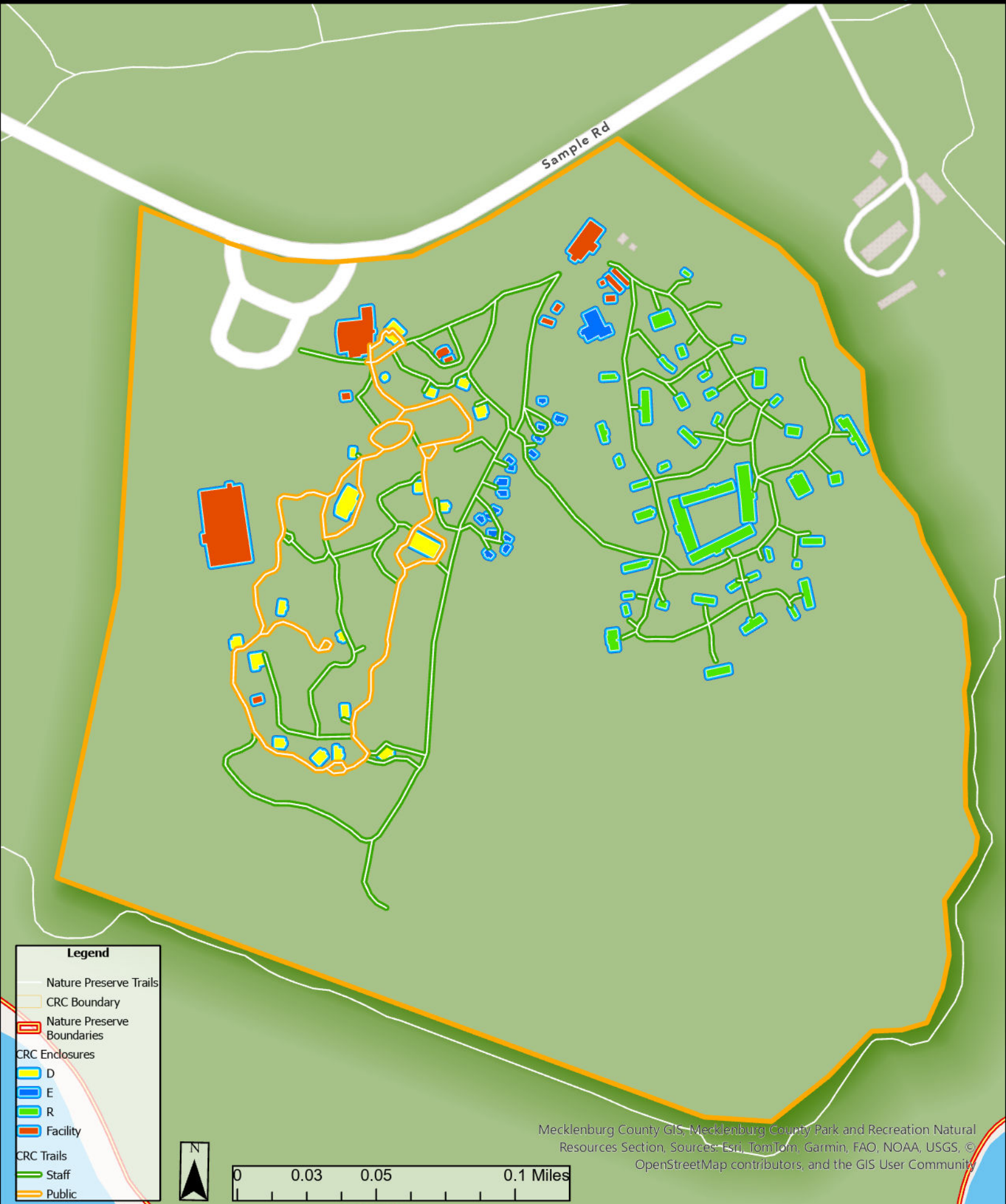
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## Attachments

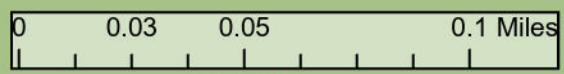
included here and posted to [www.carolinaraptorcenter.org/2026RFP](http://www.carolinaraptorcenter.org/2026RFP)

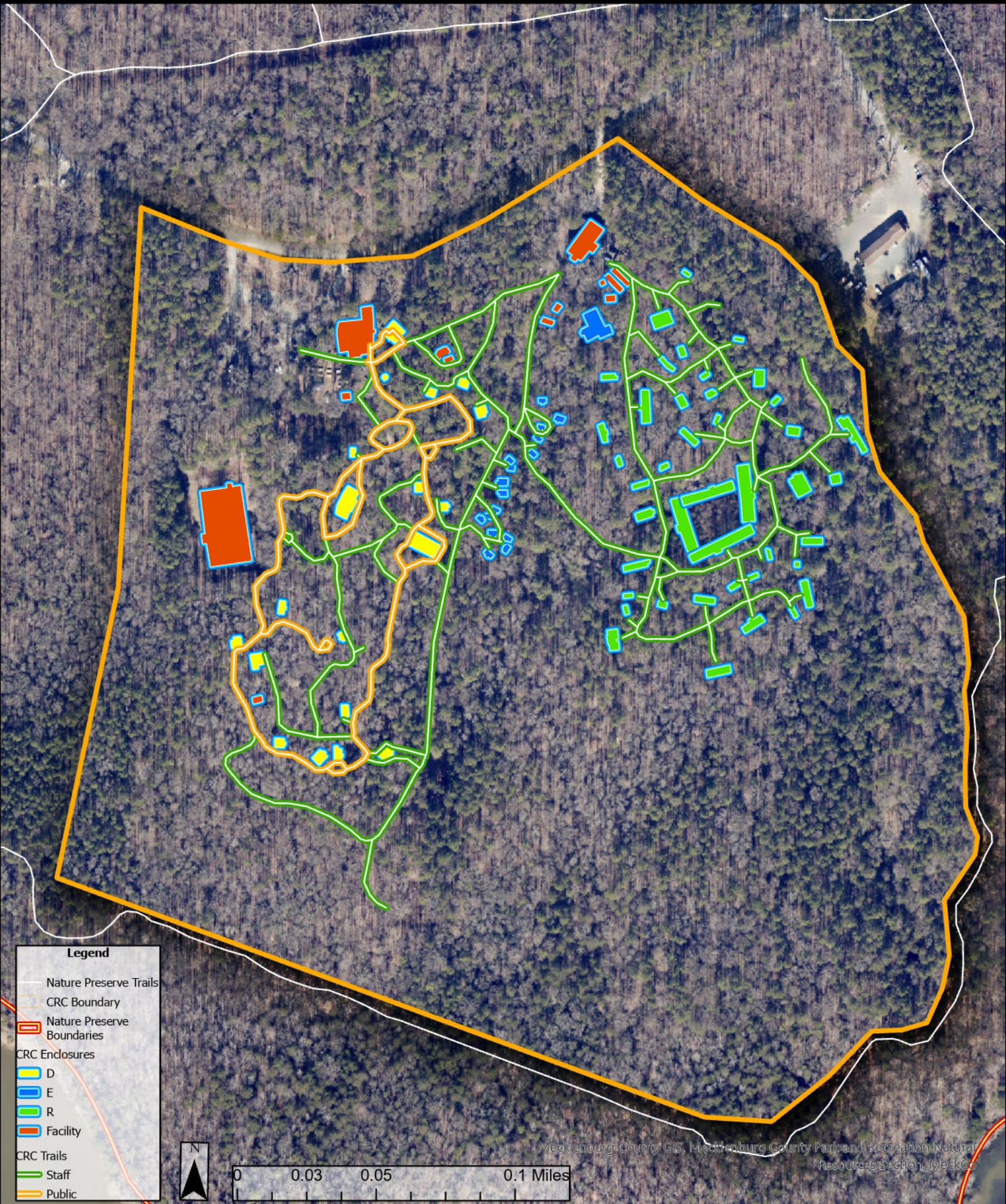
- Site map
- Terrain map
- Infrastructure map
- Visitor data and program summaries



**Legend**

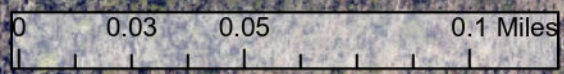
- Nature Preserve Trails
- CRC Boundary
- Nature Preserve Boundaries
- CRC Enclosures**
  - D
  - E
  - R
- Facility
- CRC Trails**
  - Staff
  - Public

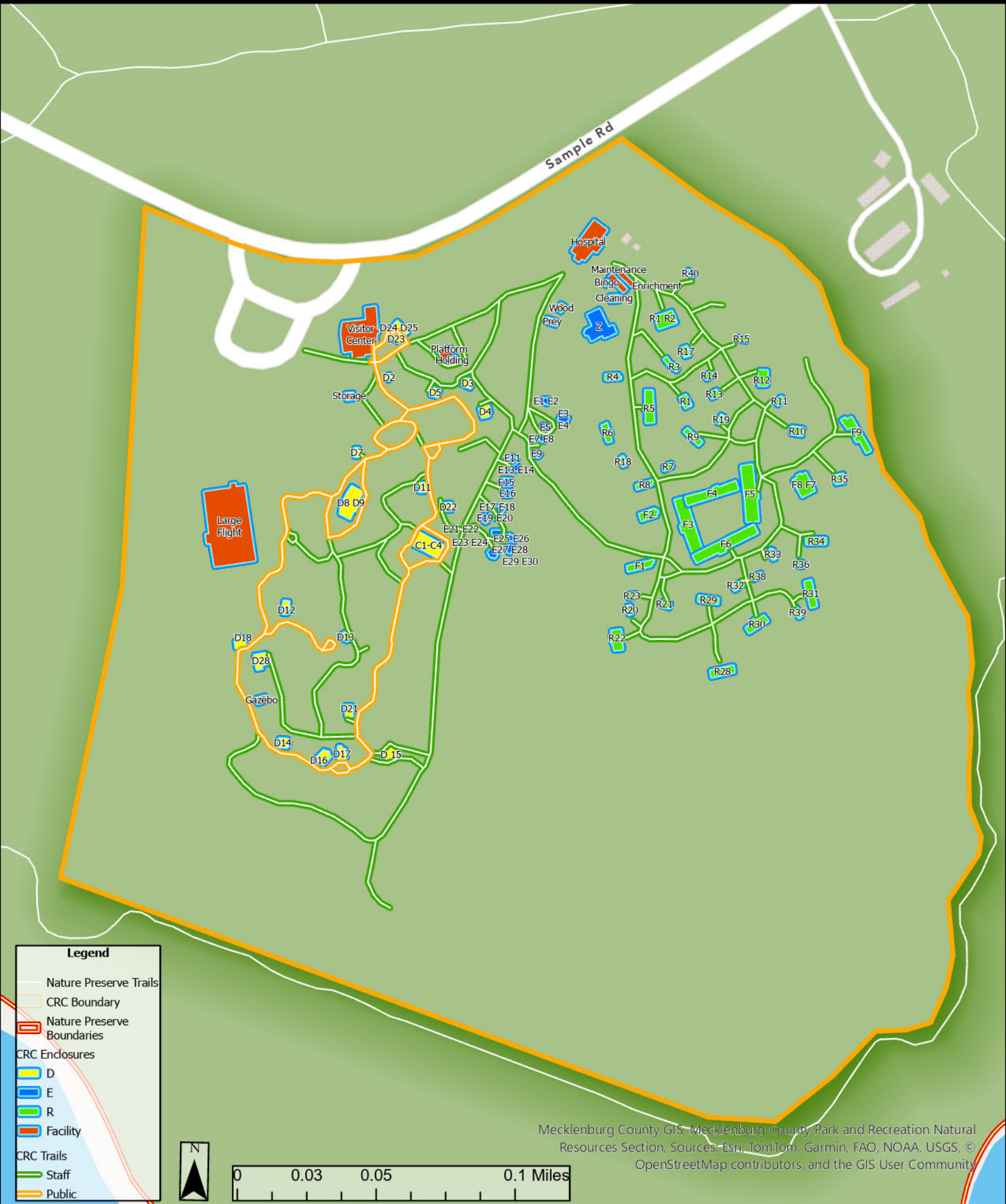




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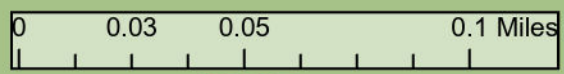
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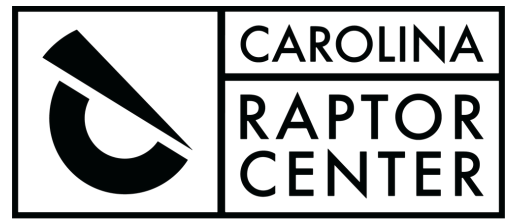




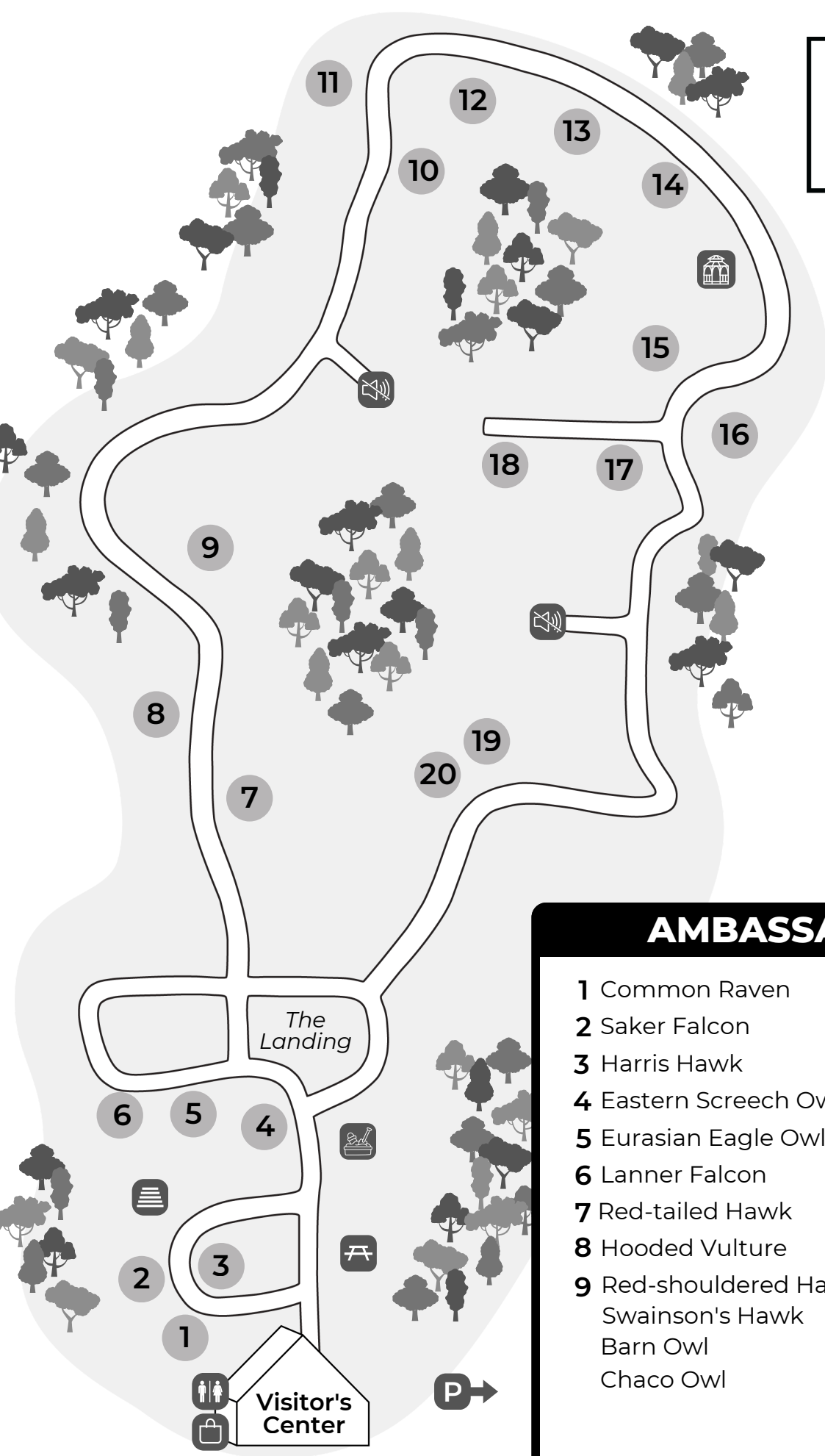
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- CRC Trails
  - Staff
  - Public





**Open Daily**  
**10:00AM - 4:00PM**



- Outdoor Classroom
- Quiet Area
- Picnic Area
- Restrooms
- Gift Shop
- Parking
- Gazebo
- Sandbox

## AMBASSADOR BIRDS

- |                       |                       |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 Common Raven        | 10 Turkey Vulture     |
| 2 Saker Falcon        | 11 Andean Condor      |
| 3 Harris Hawk         | 12 Turkey Vulture     |
| 4 Eastern Screech Owl | 13 Black Vulture      |
| 5 Eurasian Eagle Owl  | 14 Great Horned Owl   |
| 6 Lanner Falcon       | 15 King Vulture       |
| 7 Red-tailed Hawk     | 16 Peregrine Falcon   |
| 8 Hooded Vulture      | 17 Barred Owl         |
| 9 Red-shouldered Hawk | 18 Golden Eagle       |
| Swainson's Hawk       | 19 African Fish-eagle |
| Barn Owl              | 20 Bald Eagle         |
| Chaco Owl             |                       |

**Carolina Raptor Center Background:**

Carolina Raptor Center (CRC) is a leading conservation, education, and wildlife rehabilitation organization serving the greater Charlotte region. CRC is a nonprofit dedicated to igniting a passion for raptors and a responsibility for our shared natural world. CRC's mission is advanced through its dynamic education programs, extensive public engagement, and nationally recognized Raptor Hospital, together offering meaningful connections between people and raptors while promoting environmental stewardship.

**Education and Public Engagement:**

At the heart of CRC's visitor experience is the Raptor Trail, a three-quarter-mile outdoor walking trail and zoological facility that permanently houses and exhibits more than 25 birds of prey from around the world. These raptors serve as avian ambassadors, helping guests explore both local and global species diversity and ecological principles in an immersive environment. In addition to trail exhibits, CRC features ambassador raptors that participate in onsite and outreach educational programming.

CRC delivers science-based learning opportunities for schools, community groups, and the general public. This includes private educational presentations, Keeper Chats, and free-flight Bird Shows, all designed to deepen understanding of conservation, biology, and species protection. Education ambassadors are trained using industry-leading avian care methodologies, emphasizing positive reinforcement, behavioral choice, and animal welfare best practices.

Each year, CRC welcomes over 40,000 visitors and engages approximately 10,000 students through hands-on environmental education programs. Seasonal programming, such as the summer Bird Show, which attracts more than 2,000 attendees annually, further expands public access to wildlife learning experiences.

**Raptor Care and Rehabilitation:**

CRC also operates one of the region's most experienced and best-equipped raptor hospitals, providing comprehensive medical care to 800–1,000 injured, sick, or orphaned raptors every year. With more than 27,000 patients treated to date, the hospital manages all aspects of avian medical care including intake, triage, diagnostics, surgery, long-term rehabilitation, and monitored release.