



## Big Rock Nature Preserve

I would argue Charlotte has a number of natural wonders. Our majestic, towering oaks. Our creeks that permeate town like a network of veins. The capacity of our weather to run the gamut of seasons in a single 24-hour period.

I've lived here all my life, but only recently learned of a Queen City natural wonder that might top the list. Tucked quite incongruently in a south Charlotte suburban subdivision is the aptly named Big Rock Nature Preserve.

Here, you'll find an outcropping of boulders bigger than school buses. They sit nestled in a 22-acre forest setting, now protected by Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation.

The first visitors here are thought to have been the Archaic Indians some 10,000 years ago. This tribe of hunters and gatherers probably camped in and around the boulders during their travels. Today, there's about a mile of trails that wind through and around the nature preserve. A McAlpine Creek tributary borders the preserve and makes for an excellent spot to explore wildlife.

I recommend a visit to the Big Rock Nature Preserve if for no other reason than to marvel at the boulders' incongruous and improbable existence in the heart of Charlotte.

Note: There are no restroom facilities at the preserve, so make a stop before you arrive.



### How to get there:

The entrance to Big Rock Nature Preserve is located at 6500 Elmstone Dr., Charlotte, NC 28277. There's no parking area, but a county sign signals the trailhead. Park along the neighborhood road. The boulders are less than a quarter of a mile from the entrance.