



Buffalo Creek Nature Preserve

Want to mix up your hiking game? Head for Buffalo Creek Nature Preserve in Mt. Pleasant, N.C., just under 45 minutes northeast of Uptown Charlotte. Owned and managed by the Catawba Lands Conservancy, this nature preserve offers an easy, 2.1-mile (one way) natural surface trail (part of the Carolina Thread Trail) covering an interesting mix of terrains.

You'll find the trailhead in a small gravel parking lot with an information kiosk with a map and preserve information. From there, you'll head into the Piedmont Oak Savannah section of the trail. This landscape of open grassland, home to a number of ground-nesting birds and prairie species, was common in the southeastern U.S. until English settlers displaced the Native Americans who maintained the savannahs through intentional burning.

The Native Americans used to preserve the open space to make travel easier and facilitate the growth of herbs and berry-producing plants that were important for both food and medicines. To walk through the tall grasses under the open sky offers a peace unlike what you'll find on a typical hike in the woods.

Following the savannah, you'll pass the fields of an active working farm. The Catawba Lands Conservancy has leased the 130-acre farmland to a local farmer, who has implemented best-management practices to support both farming and wildlife. This farm grows hay and grains used to feed the local cattle.

After the farm, you'll turn into a stretch of oak forest that runs along Adams Creek and Buffalo Creek. At the 1.7-mile mark, you'll be rewarded with a trip across a suspension bridge over the water.

The trail ends at a neighborhood development; retrace your steps to return to the parking lot.

There are no restroom facilities at the nature preserve. Bikes are allowed, but only if it hasn't rained recently (if your tires make a track in the dirt, it's too wet to ride!).

Bonus: Hit the iconic Sundae Shop in Midland on the way home for a burger or milkshake!



How to get there:

The Buffalo Creek Nature Preserve parking lot and trailhead are located at 7911 Malibu Rd, Mt Pleasant, N.C. 28124.