



Evergreen Nature Preserve

Growing up, going to east Charlotte meant a trip to the ice skating rink at Eastland Mall. Not since then have I found such a delightful reason to visit the spaghetti junction of Central Ave., Sharon Amity and Albemarle Rd. Until now.

Tucked magically behind the Eastway/Sheffield Park neighborhood off Independence Blvd. is the Evergreen Nature Preserve, land protected and managed by Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation. This urban oasis offers the peace and tranquility of a national forest, just a short drive from uptown and a stone's throw from one of the city's major thoroughfares.

A hiking trail through the preserve is accessible from both the Sheffield Neighborhood Park, where there's also a playground, picnic shelter, and basketball and tennis courts, and the Norland Rd. entrance. From either trailhead, you can do a loop just over 1.25 miles long.

The natural surface trail is flat and easy. The tree canopy is thick and the shade is refreshing. Along the way we saw two box turtles, butterflies and caterpillars. We also enjoyed the hum of cicadas, the music of songbirds and the general sounds of nature insulated by the preserve from the den of city living.

Eastland Mall and its ice rink are long gone, but, thanks to Evergreen Nature Preserve, I've discovered a fun reason to delight in a trip to this particular area on the east side of town once again. I highly recommend you check it out, too.



How to get there:

Sheffield Neighborhood Park is located at 3100 Winterfield Pl., Charlotte, NC 28205. The trailhead is located behind the lower basketball court. To do a loop, take a left to follow the yellow blazes, then a right to follow the orange blazes back toward the park. The main Evergreen Nature Preserve parking lot (with restrooms) is located at 1336 Norland Rd., Charlotte, NC, 28205. Take the short paved trail to access the natural surface trail.

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