

Maurice River Bluffs Wellness Garden FAQ

What is the Wellness Garden?

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) is excited to bring a new, accessible Wellness Garden to our Maurice River Bluffs preserve. The garden will be an inclusive and accessible area where people of all abilities and backgrounds can connect with nature. We will also be installing ADA parking spaces and an accessible paved path from the parking lot to the old farmhouse.

Why are you building this new area?

The Maurice River Bluffs Preserve is an amazing place to experience nature. The upgrades to the parking lot and trail, as well as the addition of the Wellness Garden, will create an accessible and welcoming space for new and regular visitors to enjoy the preserve at their own pace and ability.

How did you approach the garden's design?

TNC worked with Rutgers University's Masters of Landscape Architecture students to create a plan for an experience-oriented space that takes the local community and natural landscapes into consideration.

When will the construction begin/end? Will the preserve be open during the construction phase?

This is a long-term project that will proceed through several stages before completion. The first stage of the work will begin February 2026 and proceed through September 2026. The majority of the preserve will not be affected. Visitors should be mindful of trail closures on the Orange and Blue trails during this time.

How big is the area and where will it be located?

The Wellness Garden will be in the main loop of the Orange Trail and it will take up an area of about five acres. See figure 1.

How will people access the area?

The Wellness Garden will be accessible from the parking lot via the Blue Trail. This portion of the Blue Trail will be paved.



What features will the garden have?

The Wellness Garden will have accessible, firm trails, picnic tables, shaded seating areas and benches. A highlight of the Garden will be a large steel and glass shade structure in the shape of a box turtle. Natural features will include a wildflower meadow, and pine and persimmon groves. An audio tour, interpretive signage and tactile elements will provide information in various forms to accommodate different learning styles and needs.

What will the trails be made of/what materials will be used?

The ADA parking spaces in the parking lot will be concrete. The Blue Trail down to the farmhouse, the trails around and within the Wellness Garden, and seating areas will be asphalt.

Will this addition harm the preserve's ecology?

Work on the garden will improve the site's ecology with the removal of invasives and the planting of a diversity of native flora. The majority of the trail work will be improving existing trails and additional paths have been chosen to minimize impact on vegetation and maximize visitor experience.

Are bikes or dogs allowed in the Garden?

Bicycles must remain on the mountain bike trails and will not be allowed in the Wellness Garden. Leashed dogs are allowed throughout the preserve.

If you have additional questions about this project, please contact Erika Iouriev:
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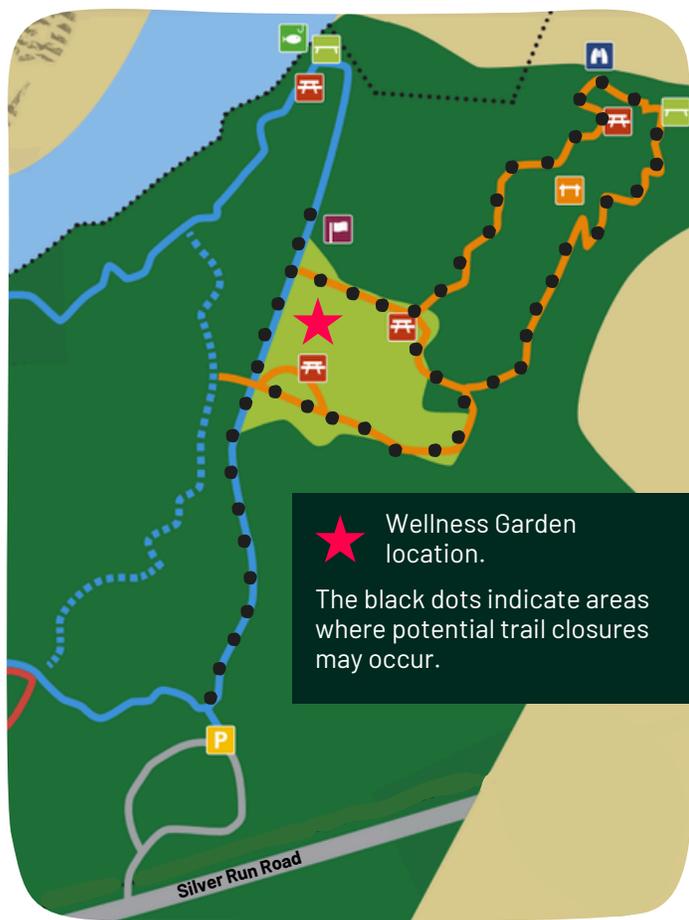


FIGURE 1 -- Potential Trail Closures



FIGURE 2 -- Draft Garden Design Rendering

Wellness Garden Features

*Images are suggestions only and do not reflect actual installations.

