



Piney Orchard Nature Preserve

Location: Crofton, MD

Address: MD Route 170/Patuxent River Road

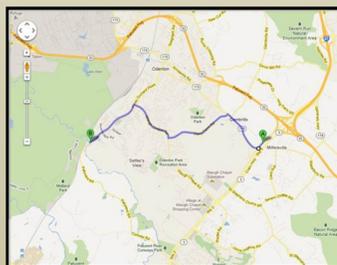
URL: http://www.pineyorchard.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=121&Itemid=79

SITE DESCRIPTION:

Piney Orchard is a planned community near Crofton, Maryland. The Preserve was opened in 1996 and includes about 5 miles of walking and biking trails along the wetlands of the Little Patuxent River.



Directions: From I-97, take Route 301 south towards Crofton. Turn right onto MD 175, then left onto Dairy Farm Road, the right onto Waugh Chapel Road and then left onto Patuxent River Road/MD 170.



REVIEW: The Nature Preserve at Piney Orchard is a neighborhood gem. On the up-side, you are never too far from civilization so you will never feel completely alone or un-safe in the woods. On the down-side, you can hear the noise from the homes that pretty much surround the Preserve. There is a very nice butterfly garden at the entrance that was literally buzzing with honey bees and butterflies. The main path into the Preserve is a nice wide



paved path and provides for a low-impact walk across the top side of the area. Several smaller walking paths that are not paved branch off the main path and lead you away from the residential streets and deeper into the Preserve. There is also a nice boardwalk area very near the entrance that leads down to an observation deck that includes two sets of stairs that might be difficult for anyone with joint problems. We walked the Duck Cove Pond Loop, which is about 1/2 mile long measured from the main walkway. It was a hot humid day and not really the best time for birding or hiking but the walk was relatively pleasant and the path was level and easy to follow. There were a couple of benches at the either end of Duck Cove Pond. Although the benches were not placed to afford a very good view of the pond, they did provide a nice respite for tired knees. There were informational markers at several points along the path that provided historical and nature information. We encountered several residents walking their dogs that were well-behaved and didn't seem to impact the few birds that we sighted. We did watch our steps a little more after seeing the Preserve was used as a local dog walk. There is a nice paved parking lot across the street from the Preserve entrance that I had been told was for the Preserve but, on our arrival, we noted that there was a sign with a stern warning that the parking area was for residents only and all others would be towed. Not wanting to risk the car being towed and being left stranded on a hot day after a long walk; we opted to park on the side of the road near the Preserve entrance.



Site Amenities:

Boardwalk		Visitor Center		Fee	
Paved Paths	🎵	Bathrooms		Vending	
Difficult Paths		Porta-Potties		Snack Bar	
Benches	🎵			Parking Lot	

Birds Spotted: Solitary Sandpiper
Green Heron

Black & White Warbler

UP Side: Quiet residential area with paved/flat walking trails. It is easy to find and makes for a nice walk on a summer day.

Down Side: Some paths are not paved and benches are not positioned very well for best birding or nature viewing. Residents use the preserve for dog-walking.

BirdingBoomer Rating: