

# My Harris Lake Park Pack

A Resource for Visitors on the Autism Spectrum



# My Harris Lake Park Pack

## Instructions:

1. First, take a look at our brochure (included in the notebook) to learn about the different activities you can do during your visit. Open up the brochure to see a map, which will tell you all the different areas you can explore and where they are located in the park.
2. When you've decided which areas you want to visit, use the location cards with Velcro on the back to create your own tour checklist.
3. You can use the communication cards to say when you need to take a break, sit down, use the restroom, etc.
4. Sensory supports (noise-reducing headphones, fidget toys) are also included in your bag, use them as you'd like!
5. Feel free to ask a staff member for suggestions for activities, quieter places in the park to explore, etc.
6. Then, start your tour! When you have completed a stop on your tour, check it off using the dry erase marker in the "All Done" column.

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## **Sensory tips:**

### **Noisy places**

- The children's playground can get very loud during busy times. Quieter times are generally in the morning, especially on weekdays. Park grounds are open from 8 a.m. to sunset every day.
- The park has many grassy areas that are mowed by our staff from spring through fall. If staff is mowing a certain area, you can choose to move away to a quieter area until they have finished their work.

### **Quiet places**

- The Educational Garden, located between the Cypress Shelter and the restroom building, has several picnic tables that are in the shade and a raised platform where you can sit and enjoy a quiet moment.
- Behind the restroom building, there is a bench in the shade of a large Sweetgum tree. This is a quiet spot to sit to get a drink of water, eat a snack, or just enjoy a view of the lake.
- The natural trail which surrounds the Cypress Pond is a quiet area where you can observe wildlife around and in the pond. You can also choose to do the interactive mobile tour called the Cypress Tree Trail as you walk. Scan the QR code located on a post at the start of the trail with a cell phone to access this tour. There is a bench near one end of the pond where you can sit and enjoy the view.
- Just beyond the Cypress Pond is our Amphitheater. This area provides several rows of wooden benches to sit and enjoy the sounds of nature.

### **Activity suggestions**

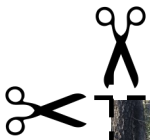
- Visit the Fishing Pier where you can simply enjoy the view of Harris Lake from this floating dock and see birds and other animals, as well as boats, or you can try your hand at fishing. You can visit the Park Office beforehand to borrow a fishing rod and a tackle box through our Tackle Loaner program. All NC freshwater fishing regulations apply.

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## Activity suggestions (continued)

- The Educational Garden features a variety of native plants which attract insect pollinators like butterflies and bees. Stroll along the mulched paths and see if you can spot one! The Garden also features an interactive mobile tour which you can access using a cell phone. This tour will tell you about a bit of the history of the park, some of the plants in the Garden, and things you can do in your own backyard to help wildlife.
- Our main hiking trail, the Peninsula Trail, is a shady place to explore. It is identified by a single orange blaze (trail marker). The entire trail is almost 5 miles long, so you can choose to walk just part of it and turn around when you need to. It is a fun place to observe wildlife. The beginning of this trail is called the Red Fox Run and it is about 1/4 mile in length. There is an interactive mobile tour along this portion of the trail which you can do as you walk. Access this tour by scanning the QR code on the informational kiosk at the beginning of the Peninsula Trail or the QR code located on one of the posts along the trail.
- Visit the History Trail which is a short loop off of the Peninsula Trail. It is identified by signs and double orange blazes (trail markers). The History Trail will allow you to get up close to an old homesite belonging to one of the families that lived on the property before it became a park and to see a restored wash house. To enhance your experience, be sure to listen to the Womble Interpretive History interactive mobile tour on a cell phone as you walk along. It will explain the historic features you will see along the trail.
- Enjoy a picnic at one of our three covered picnic shelters. If one is reserved, there will be a blue “Reserved” sign hanging from the shelter sign. If there is no “Reserved” sign, the shelter is available on a first-come, first-served basis.
- On your way out, you can stop at the Fishing Pond. You can either walk around the pond to observe wildlife, or stand on the wooden dock which looks out over the pond. You may also fish in this pond. It is stocked with Channel Catfish during the spring and summer. If you have already borrowed a fishing rod from the Park Office through the Tackle Loaner program, you can use it here too!





1

Park Office



2

Restroom building



3

Behind restroom building



4

Educational Garden



5

Natural Play Area



6

Open playfield



7

Cypress Pond



8

Amphitheater



9

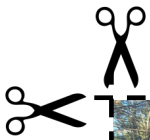
Traditional playground



10

Fishing Pier





11

**Cypress Shelter**



12

**Loblolly Shelter**



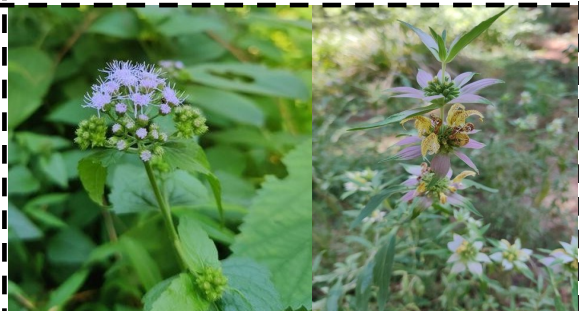
13

**Longleaf Shelter**



14

**Fishing pond**



**Look for pollinators in the  
Educational Garden**



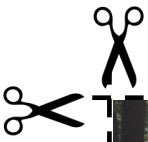
**Enjoy the Natural Play Area**



**Picnic at one of the shelters**



**Go fishing at the Fishing Pier**



**Hike on the Peninsula Trail**



**Visit the History Trail to see the old homesite and restored wash house**

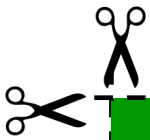


**Hike around the Cypress pond**



**Go fishing at the Fishing Pond**





I need a  
restroom



I need help



I would like  
a drink of  
water



I am ready  
to go home



I need a  
quiet space



I would like  
to sit down



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## Tour Checklist

This is what I will see or do:  
(attach picture cards or write steps)

All done




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**2112 County Park Drive**  
**New Hill, NC 27562**

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**Email: [harris.lake@wakegov.com](mailto:harris.lake@wakegov.com)**

**Website: [www.wakegov.com/parks/harrislake](http://www.wakegov.com/parks/harrislake)**

**Harris Lake County Park welcomes comments and suggestions about how we might continue to improve our accessibility.**

**Please call, email, or write to us.**

**This resource was created with help from Access Coordination at The Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Autism Society of North Carolina.**

