



Contact: Katie Reeder
Public Relations Manager
Alpharetta Convention and Visitors Bureau
Office: 678-297-2811
Cell: 404-384-2954

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Back to the Basics

Go green with this easy-to-plan, affordable getaway

We've all heard the old adage, "Take time to stop and smell the roses." Well, it's never been easier to embrace nature than with a trip to Alpharetta, Georgia. Nearby Alpharetta Outfitters recently opened their doors to eager customers seeking the best quality gear and supplies for adventures of all shapes and sizes: from fly-fishing to rock-climbing, hiking to camping. And, the equally-accessible Chattahoochee Nature Center only just underwent a multi-million dollar renovation, providing endless potential for outdoor adventure. Plus, there are more than 13 trails within a 20-mile radius of Alpharetta, including the Alpharetta Big Creek Greenway, a 6.1-mile, 12-foot wide paved path that includes additional mountain biking trails and is perfect for running, walking, biking and inline skating.

So dig out your hiking boots, or, if you need a pair, head over to Alpharetta Outfitters, and let's get going!

The Chattahoochee Nature Center offers annual membership for a reasonable fee, but once-in-a-while visitors will find the \$5-\$8 entry fee readily affordable. Be sure to pack binoculars for spectacular wildlife viewing, a camera (you won't want to forget this excursion!), walking shoes, lunch (the great outdoors sure builds an appetite), rain gear (just in case!) and sunscreen. But, leave Fido at home because no pets are allowed here.

You'll enjoy hiking the Center's six woodland, wetland trails and exploring the beautiful gardens, several of which are designed with native plants. Check the calendar of events on the Center's web site (<http://chattnaturecenter.org/>) for special activities included with your admission.



The Interpretive Center for the Chattahoochee Watershed includes visual exhibits explaining details about water preservation.

Want an even bigger thrill? You just *can't* miss the brand-spanking new Interpretive Center for the Chattahoochee Watershed, including a Discovery Center. There's nothing else like it! More than a museum or science center, the New Discovery Center is a portal of information to the Chattahoochee River Watershed. From the forests to the wetlands to the river, visitors discover what makes the Chattahoochee River Watershed so unique. More importantly, the new center helps visitors find their way to more adventures and ultimately how to become a part of this amazing environment.

The Discovery Center features:

- Two levels of learning for older and younger visitors
- Engaging interactive exhibits
- Live, native animals
- Chattahoochee River Resource Gallery will help visitors find four avenues to get involved in the watershed
- Exquisite Native Plant Gardens
- Green Roof Terrace planted with native plants
- The Nature Exchange, a dynamic environment to share nature collections and trade for points or bank them
- Unique gifts and learning tools

For an extra fee, you can plan a birthday party at the Nature Center, gear up for a canoe trip, or participate in early childhood programs like infant walks, animal breakfast, and story time by the river. There are even special programs just for adults!

No matter how you choose to relax and unwind, we recommend you enjoy the great outdoors. Then, retire in one of the city's 23 upscale and modern hotels so you'll awake refreshed and renewed, ready for another day of adventure. Special packages and hotels with complimentary breakfast, suites and pools, along with more than 150 dining options, will round out your exploration of Mother Nature. Explore lodging and dining options at www.AwesomeAlpharetta.com. You'll also find a comprehensive listing of area trails on our web site.

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The Alpharetta Convention and Visitors Bureau serves as the destination marketing arm for the City, promoting tourism to Alpharetta, Georgia, and attracting visitors to all 23 of Alpharetta's upscale and modern hotels. Visit www.AwesomeAlpharetta.com for more information.