

Trail Description: Do not attempt to follow the Patriot's Path to the connector path for Schiff Nature Preserve. The sign states "No Horses". This difficult area is wet and dangerous or private property.

History: During the course of the past 70 years, the property currently known as the Schiff Nature Preserve has endured a multitude of changes in both ownership and mission. After many years as a private estate, public use of the property began in 1933, when the Boy Scouts of America purchased approximately 570 acres and established the Mortimer L. Schiff Scout Reservation and National Education Center. For the next 46 years, Boy Scouts and their leaders from across the country gathered at Schiff for the opportunity to train with, and be trained by, other scout leaders. In 1979, the Boy Scouts sold the Schiff property to AT&T, which proposed to build a corporate conference center on the site. Strong local opposition led AT&T to abandon this plan, and the property was transferred to the Westage Corporation, a developer, which planned a limited development on a small portion of the property in partnership with the Trust for Public Land. During this time, some 70 acres of the property were sold to finance this partnership. These plans were also eventually abandoned, however, when Westage became insolvent, and its bank foreclosed on the property. Jackson Homes eventually purchased some 500 acres from the bank, and proposed what would become the Brookrace and Chamberlain Sawmill Village developments, expanding upon the earlier development plans to build a total of 98 housing units on almost 200 acres of the property. Finally, the fate of Schiff was sealed when the Schiff Natural Lands Trust, a non profit organization which was formed in 1984, reached an agreement with Jackson Homes which provided for 310 acres of the property to be conveyed to the Trust and added to the 30 acres it already owned to comprise the current 340 acre Schiff Natural Lands Trust.

The Schiff Nature Preserve is now open 365 days a year from dawn until dusk and offers visitors opportunities for nature study, biking, hiking and horseback riding on almost seven miles of well maintained trails. The Preserve is also in the process of renovating the old Administration Building for use as a full time nature center. Several public nature programs are offered monthly and new members are always welcome.