

Weddings at Natural Tunnel State Park

Thank you for choosing Natural Tunnel State Park for your wedding location. Our staff will be happy to assist in planning and coordination of your special event. Based on our past experiences with weddings and receptions held at the park, we would like to provide you with suggestions and information to consider when planning your wedding or reception at the Cove Ridge Center or other facilities within the park. Please take a few moments to read over the resources included in your reservation, seating capacities, restrictions on decorations and additional services you may want to consider.



Because of the variety of options available for weddings and receptions at the park, we require you make an appointment to meet with one of our staff members at the center. By providing the staff with information about your wedding plans, such as the time for the wedding ceremony and reception, expected number of guests, arrival times for caterers or florists, will allow us to ensure everything is in place at the proper time. Our goal is to help you make your wedding day a wonderful experience.

The Cove Ridge Center

Wedding Packages

The Cove Ridge Center offers a package for weddings that provides exclusive use of the center, covering the auditorium, meeting room, great room and deck, for three consecutive rental periods. Other wedding packages include exclusive use of the center as well as overnight accommodations in one lodge or both lodges. The lodges are adjacent to the center and provide a convenient location for out of town guests. Weddings at the Cove Ridge Center must reserve the entire center for both rental periods on the day of the wedding to allow things to run as smoothly as possible.

Resources

The center has 10 60" round tables, 30 30" X 72" rectangular tables and 150 upholstered chairs that can be arranged for seating in a variety of ways and locations. Both the round and rectangular tables can seat six. In addition we have four serpentine tables and three 4' round tables and which can be used for a unique presentation of food, cakes or decorations. There are 28 15" X 72" rectangular tables which are frequently used for a buffet line or for additional seating.

The center has many other items that can be used during your wedding including table skirts in navy blue and hunter green which can be placed on your cake, gift or buffet tables. We have rectangular and square white table linens that are available for rental. You are also welcome to make your own arrangements for linens.

A small kitchen is also available for rental with the Exclusive Use and Wedding packages. The kitchen is convenient for food preparation and has a stove, oven, and ice machine that can be used. There is also a refrigerator with limited space available. The group representative is responsible for cleaning the kitchen as well as any of the items used.

Seating Capacities

The Auditorium has a maximum seating occupancy of about 100. Additional seating can be added indoors in the Meeting Room and the Library. In addition to seating inside the center, 50 folding chairs are also available for rental. The park does not have any tables available for use outside. Additional tables and chairs can also be rented from local rental companies. Please note that the furniture in the Great Room cannot be moved.



Decorations

The Auditorium contains a 4' X 12' bulletin board as well as two corkboard strips that can be used for decorations. There are also bulletin boards in the hallway and Meeting Room that can be decorated. The beams and columns in the Great Room provide a beautiful framework for garlands, Christmas lights or tulle, as do the handrails on the deck. You may also use the door and window frames for attaching decorations with tape. However, please remember that no tape or pushpins are allowed on the walls. In the past, glitter and confetti have been used as decorations on tables. However, these materials will not come out of chairs or the carpet without professional cleaning, and we can no longer allow

the use of glitter or confetti in the Cove Ridge Center.

State law prohibits the use of open flame inside of any state facility. If you choose to use candelabras or other similar items please consider using battery operated candles. You may want to consider using Christmas tree lights for decoration as another alternative. Also, please remember that the Cove Ridge Center is used for environmental education programs. There are framed photographs of wildlife and wildflowers throughout the center, which must remain on the walls and cannot be covered up.

Amphitheater

The Amphitheater is located in a natural bowl across from the picnic shelters and is a perfect location for a wedding. The facility has restrooms and dressing rooms and provides covered seating for up to 200 guests. A simple sound system and concession area are both available for rental. The Amphitheater is available for daily rental and a two-day Wedding Package is also available. It is also available at a discount rate when rented in conjunction with any Cove Ridge Center Wedding Packages. Push pins can be used to secure decorations on the hand rails and on the walls of the Amphitheater, but the use of nails or screws is prohibited. Since the stage is not enclosed, lit candles can be used during the ceremony.

Deck at the Tunnel

The deck is available for four hour rentals and includes the set up of up to 50 chairs as well as transportation of your guests to and from the deck on the chairlift. Electricity is available at the mouth of the tunnel, but there is no running water. The deck is not available for rental until after the regularly scheduled hours of the chairlift, which vary by day and season. It is available at a discounted rate when rented in conjunction with any Cove Ridge Center Wedding Package.

Please note this option is the most staff intensive and logistically challenging due to the fact that there is no vehicular access to the gorge. All items at the deck must be transported via the chairlift. The trail to the gorge is not appropriate for conveyance of items due to its strenuous nature. In addition, the temperature in the gorge is significantly cooler than other locations in the park. We do not recommend this location for weddings before May or after September.

Gazebo

The gazebo provides a beautiful view of Rye Cove and is accessible by a gravel road with ample parking available. There is electricity at the gazebo, but no water or restrooms. The park does allow port-a-johns to be placed at the gazebo area and there is a local company that can provide these. The covered area of the gazebo is limited and the deck can hold approximately 50 chairs. The park has for rent two sizes of tents and there are also local companies that can provide tents. Seven days notice is required for rental from the park.



Many wedding parties reserve the day before their Wedding to allow time for a rehearsal as well as for items such as tents and chairs to be delivered and set up. Please be aware that although the road is gated while the gazebo is not in use, the area is still accessible by foot and we do not recommend electronics or items of value left at the gazebo overnight. We also suggest that decorations are not put up until the day of the wedding due to possible damage by dew or rain. Candles are permitted and push pins can be used to secure decorations on the rails of the Gazebo, but the use of nails or screws is prohibited.

Park Wide Information

Dance Floor Rental

A dance floor is available, however it is only to be used in covered areas in order to protect and preserve the floor.

Tent Rental

The park has a 10X20 tent and a 20X40 tent available for rental. The rental fee includes the set up and breakdown of the tents. Local companies can also provide tents for set up on the park.

Catering

The Cove Ridge Center can provide catering in the Center for groups of up to 50. You can also arrange for outside caterers to provide food service at most locations in the park provided the caterer has a license issued by the Virginia Department of Health. We have a list of caterers who have provided food for events at the center available upon request.

Fireworks

State law prohibits fireworks in all state parks. Please be aware that sparklers are considered fireworks, and can not be used to line walkways or held by wedding guests as the bride and groom leave the reception.

Cancellation Information

Your deposit is refundable up to 14 days in advance of the event to be held. There is a cancellation fee of 10% of the full rental fee or \$100.00, whichever is less. Refunds may take up to eight weeks to process. Also, please note that due to the demand for the facilities, deposits are non-refundable for events cancelled less than 14 days before the event. Final Payments are non-refundable for events cancelled less than seven days before the event.

Wildlife

For the safety of the animals in the park, we must insist that ONLY birdseed be thrown as the bride and groom are leaving the reception. Rice, candy or confetti could injure or even kill the local wildlife.