Partners in the Pines

A guide to all you need to know about a wedding at the Cumming Nature Center.

Photo credit: Ash Carr Photography

An outdoor wedding at the RMSC Cumming Nature Center provides you and your guests with a strikingly beautiful natural setting to celebrate the transformational occasion of marriage, all while supporting the nature center's efforts to offer world-class exhibitions and educational programs to the Finger Lakes community and visitors. A ceremony in the cathedral pines is truly magical. From the dappled lighting to the naturally buoyant acoustics, this sacred outdoor space is always breathtaking, never unoriginal, and forever unforgettable.

*Peak Season Weekend Pricing
$950      Ceremony only
$1,250    Reception only
$1,500    Ceremony and reception
*May-October

**Off-Peak Season Pricing
$750      Ceremony only
$1,000    Reception only
$1,250    Ceremony and reception
**November-April

What We Provide

The nature center team will help guide you through the planning process of adapting this lovely space to match your vision for the day. We provide 125 wooden folding chairs, 10 8-foot tables, four 6-foot tables, and several miscellaneous tables as needed. Our 24-foot by 36-foot pavilion
comes with electricity and water, and our tent site can accommodate any size tent and comes with electricity. Both have sufficient power for all of your music, lighting, food, and other needs. We provide kind, resourceful, respectful staffing through the course of your event, and we will do our best to respond to the various last-minute details as they arise. We will be responsible for emptying trash and recycling receptacles at the end of the evening, and we will work in good faith with all of your vendors to help them however we can. Beginning 2019, the nature center will work with Impact Earth, a Rochester-based zero-waste company, to transition all nature center events to zero-waste. Our kitchen is available for use, and includes a ten-burner, double-oven commercial range, two griddles, a three-bay sink, and two warming devices. For parties of 100 or fewer, the visitor building can be utilized as the inclement weather site for both the ceremony (our theater) and the reception (our dining space).

The Ceremony

Ceremonies take place in nature’s cathedral pines with dappled lighting and swaying trees. The space is, simply put, mesmerizing. The clearing easily holds 200 chairs with plenty of standing room for the restless uncle or anyone bouncing a fussy baby. The acoustics are quite good. Past couples have utilized standard bluetooth speakers and bluetooth microphones to provide just the right amount of amplification for their ceremony. The nature center provides 125 wooden folding chairs and will be responsible for setting these up for your event.

The Yard

Photo credit: Ash Carr Photography

The Pines
The Reception

Receptions take place in the yard area by the main building, and they typically utilize a rented tent and/or the nature center pavilion. Both the pavilion and the tent site have sufficient power for caterers, sound, and lighting. The yard area is large, rolling, and grassy. There is a great mixture of sun and shade, plenty of space for yard games, a fire pit that we will gladly stock for you, and a nature play area complete with a living willow tunnel for children (and adults acting like children). The yard is also close to the building and, thus, the bathroom facilities. A reception in the yard allows couples to transition directly and seamlessly from their ceremony to cocktails, speeches, shenanigans and dinner. Though not the norm, it is also possible to position your tent close to the pavilion to utilize both spaces.

Frequently Asked Questions

INCLEMENT WEATHER
As an outdoor wedding venue, a rain plan is a must. Parties of 100 or fewer can utilize the nature center building as a rain plan, with the ceremony in the theater and the reception in the downstairs dining area. Parties of more than 100 MUST rent a tent. Though pricier than their white counterparts, clear tents provide the best of all worlds: shelter from the storm without
losing the sense of nature. Tailored Events and Nolans are two companies serving our area. Groups of fewer than 100 are still welcome to rent a tent if they prefer.

PARKING
250+ parking spots are available free of charge for event guests in the nature center main parking lot. This parking lot is located about 100 yards from the building. Handicapped spaces and bus parking are also available. There is additional parking for vendors.

INSURANCE
A certificate of event liability insurance providing $1,000,000 per occurrence and naming the Rochester Museum & Science Center as an additional insured is required for all wedding receptions. This is generally very simple to acquire and usually costs less than $150. Most providers carry some kind of event insurance.

ADVANCE RENTAL DEPOSIT
A 50% non-refundable deposit is due along with a signed event rental agreement to reserve your event date. The remaining balance is due one week prior to the event date.

PAYMENT
A major credit card is required to be on file for all events. Payment can be made with a check or money order, but all checks must clear 10 days prior to your event.

TIMELINE
Remember, we’re a nature center first, wedding venue second. The nature center is open to the public from 9 a.m. until 5 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday. Visitation is generally comprised of fewer than 100 people throughout the course of the day. Spread across 900 acres and 15 miles of trails, visitors will not crowd your event. The ceremony site and reception area can be, to a degree, separated from or distinguished from the public areas. Weddings and receptions can take place throughout the day. We will work with you to find the right time for your wedding. A typical timeline may look like:

- 4:30pm - Ceremony
- 5:00pm - Cocktails
- 6:00pm - Dinner
- 7:00pm - Dancing
- 10:00pm - Wrap up

Events that stay past 11 p.m. may be charged a discretionary $75/hour fee. If a good faith effort is made to be cleaned up and out of the space by 11 p.m., this fee may be waived.

ALCOHOL
A licensed vendor is required to serve alcohol. In other words, self-service bars are not allowed.

ACCESSIBILITY
The nature center has two accessibility limitations. The first is due to the fact that weddings here take place in a clearing roughly 200 yards from the visitor building. For this we have two outdoor wheelchairs with wide rubber wheels. Couples often rent a golf cart for the day if they anticipate
needing to shuttle folks from the parking lot to the ceremony site. The second issue is access to the downstairs, specifically in the case of those weddings that utilize the dining area in the visitor building due to inclement weather. There is no elevator, so those who must avoid stairs will need to exit the building and re-enter from the lower level. There are bathrooms on the lower level, so once there, guests will not need to move back and forth.

OUTSIDE VENDORS
We do not currently have a list of preferred vendors, so feel free to work with whomever is the right fit for your event. For music vendors we do recommend checking out the Eastman School of Music’s gig service web platform. You can list your event and various student solo and group acts will respond if interested and available. The local music scene is also very active, and we will happily put you in touch with some of our favorite artists such as Richie and Rosie, Aaron Lipp (and his various bands), Bobby Henrie, and others.

SECURITY
At least one nature center team member will be present. Weddings of more than 150 will require a second staff person at a charge of $50/hour. We reserve the right to remove guests that fail to respect the nature center grounds, buildings, or team members.

MUSEUM EXHIBIT & ATTRACTION ACCESS
The CNC gallery spaces, theater, and 12+ miles of trails are open to your guests after hours. If you’d like to coordinate a private guided hike or program during your event, just let us know and we’ll see what we can make happen!

VENUE CONTACT
The nature center will provide one on-site contact person for any venue-related needs for the duration of your event. Parties of more than 150 will require a second team member at a rate of $50/hour. The RMSC events coordinator will also work with you to provide the RMSC contract and take payment.

EVENT SET-UP
Our team will set up chairs in the ceremony site and provide general assistance as necessary with ceremony site setup (stumps for flowers, raking pine needles, etc.). To the degree that we are able, we will set up tables in advance. This isn’t always possible, and we are not able to assist with day-of table setup.

We provide 125 wooden folding chairs, 10 8-foot tables, four 6-foot tables, and several miscellaneous tables as needed. Chairs in the same style as ours can be rented locally. We do not have any round tables. Your caterer or event manager will be responsible for ensuring that any and all rental items are cleaned and ready for pick-up by the end of your event.

DECORATIONS
The client will be responsible for setup of all decorations, floral arrangements, and centerpieces. We can provide on-site storage. Please note that the following items are strictly prohibited: helium balloons, glitter, and those floating, flaming, forest-fire-causing lanterns.
REHEARSAL
The nature center is open from 9 a.m. until 4 p.m. on Friday. We ask that you schedule any decorating, rental deliveries, and your rehearsal during our regular business hours. Please contact us if there are any issues and we will be happy to work out a solution.

WIFI AND CELL PHONE RECEPTION
Cell service is non-existent at the nature center. We do have very limited wifi in the building, which can be extended to the pavilion space. However, it is necessary to make sure any music, speeches, or otherwise important information is downloaded onto your device. We will share our wifi with you for the day of your event, but it must be used sparingly during normal business hours. For your reference, our fastest service typically provides 1.5 mbps download speed, usually slower. A typical connection in Rochester, for example, would be 50 mbps.

IMPORTANT CONTACTS
585-374-6160 Cumming Nature Center
585-271-4552 ext 346 RMSC Events Coordinator
585-697-1942 RMSC Member and Visitor Services