PARTNERS IN THE PINES

An outdoor wedding at the RMSC Cumming Nature Center provides you and your guests with a strikingly beautiful natural setting to celebrate your marriage, all while supporting the mission of the Nature Center.

From the dappled lighting to the buoyant acoustics, our venue is perfect for couples who love the outdoors and have a creative vision for their wedding. Whether your wedding is a casual DIY party or an upscale affair, the majestic space of the cathedral pines will ensure your ceremony is breathtaking, original, and unforgettable.

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THE CEREMONY

Ceremonies take place in a grove of cathedral pines, surrounded by dappled lighting and majestic trees. The clearing holds approximately 180 chairs and can be set up in a variety of styles. The acoustics in the clearing are quite good, but electricity is available at the ceremony site if a sound system is required. 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 set them up for the ceremony.

Photo credit: Kathryn Anne Photography, Ewe Photography & Meghan Lynn Photography
THE RECEPTION

Receptions take place in a large, grassy side yard by the Visitor’s Center, under a rented tent and/or the nature center pavilion. Both the pavilion and the tent site have sufficient power for caterers, sound, and lighting. 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 close to the building, which is where bathroom facilities are located. A reception in the yard allows couples to transition directly and seamlessly from their ceremony to cocktails, speeches, and dinner.

Photo credit: Ewe Photography & McKay’s Photography
WHAT’S INCLUDED

Ceremony-Only

**Ceremony space:** Private access to ceremony site in the pines during event. Option for rehearsal.

**Chairs:** Use of 125 wooden folding chairs. Venue will set up.

**Building & Bathroom Access:** Your guests will have access to the building throughout the wedding, and they are welcome to explore the nature center’s exhibits. The wedding party will have access to up to 2 private spaces for prep and/or waiting.

**Venue Staff:** A staff member will be available throughout the course of your event. CNC staff manage venue-related needs, such as setting up chairs or assisting with vendor needs. Note: **CNC staff do not assist with decoration set up or managing ceremony activities.**

Ceremony + Reception

**Ceremony space:** Private access to the ceremony site in pines during the event. Option for rehearsal the day before the ceremony.

**Reception Space:** Receptions take place in the side yard, which can accommodate a tent of up to 40x100. For an additional fee, you may use our pavilion (24x36). Both the tent site and the pavilion have electricity access. After the nature center closes to the public, your guests will have exclusive access to the property.

**Chairs:** Use of 125 wooden folding chairs. Venue staff will set up chairs.

**Tables:** Use of 10 8-foot rectangular folding tables and 4 6-foot rectangular tables.

**Venue Staff:** A staff member will be onsite throughout the course of your event. Staff manage venue-related needs, such as restocking bathrooms, emptying trash, and lighting the campfire. We will do our best to respond to the various last-minute details as they arise. Note: **CNC staff do not assist with decoration set up or managing ceremony activities.**

**Building & Bathroom Access:** Your guests will have access to the building throughout the wedding, and they are welcome to explore the nature center’s exhibits. Our staff will clean and stock the bathrooms throughout the night. The wedding party will have access to up to 2 private spaces for prep and/or waiting.

**Campfire:** If requested in advance, venue staff can light a campfire during the reception for s’mores, etc.

**Trash Service:** We provide trash and recycling bins & bags, and take care of trash at the end of the evening.

**Fridge Access:** Access to at least 1 refrigerator, along with shared chest freezer access. Check in with the venue if your caterer requests kitchen access.
BOOKING FEES, PERMITS & INSURANCE

BOOKING FEES

Ceremony: $1,000 for 2-hour event
   Anytime during business hours; does not include set up or tear down

Ceremony + Reception: $2,400 for a 6-hour event
   Typically 4pm-10pm; does not include set up or tear down.

Optional Add-on Fees
Extra hour: $150 per hour (note: receptions must end by 10pm, but may start at any time)
Pavilion use: $200 (note: alcohol consumption in pavilion is limited to after 4pm)
Additional Staff Member: $50 per hour (additional staff member is required for weddings of 150+)

Payment Schedule
A 50% non-refundable deposit is due upon signing the booking contract. Final payment is due 10 business days prior to the event. 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.

Example Fee Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Fee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ceremony + Reception</td>
<td>$2,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra hour for 3pm start</td>
<td>$150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pavilion use</td>
<td>$200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TOTAL: $2,750

50% Deposit: $1,375 (due upon contract signature)
Final payment: $1,375 (due 10 business days prior to event)

REQUIRED PERMITS & INSURANCE

Alcohol Permit (~$36)
We require a One Day Beer & Wine permit from the NYS Liquor Authority and only allow alcohol to be served by a licensed bartending or catering company (i.e. no self-service bars).

Your chosen vendor must provide the Venue Manager with the following documents prior to the wedding: 1) a certificate of insurance with Cumming Nature Center listed as an additional insured for the event date, and, 2) a copy of the appropriate permit from the NY State Liquor Authority.

Event Insurance (~$100-$150)
Events with receptions are required to provide a certificate of event liability insurance providing coverage of up to $1,000,000 per occurrence and naming Cumming Nature Center as an additional insured. Some auto or home insurance providers offer event coverage. Past couples have also used Eventsured and Markel.
FACILITY INFORMATION

STAFFING

Venue Contact
Abby Merz is the primary venue contact for the wedding party and vendors leading up to the event. Contact her at amerz@rmse.org or (585) 374-6160 ext. 106. Notify Abby if you'd like to book an event.

Day-Of Staffing
One or more CNC staff members will be onsite for the duration of your wedding to manage venue-related needs and issues. Our staff remain until the end of the event to ensure everything is clean and all guests depart safely. Note: CNC staff do not assist with decoration set up or managing ceremony/reception activities.

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.

PUBLIC ACCESS

We are a Nature Center first and a wedding venue second. As such, CNC visitors and programs will be present on CNC property during open hours, which run from 9am-5pm on weekends. The trail to the ceremony site will be closed to the public approximately 2 hours prior to the start of the ceremony. After 5pm, the Nature Center building and trails will be exclusively open to guests of the wedding.

PARKING, RESTROOMS & ACCESSIBILITY

Parking
150+ 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.

Restrooms
Restrooms are located inside the Nature Center in the main lobby. Guests will have access to the building for the duration of the event, and staff will ensure that all bathrooms are stocked and well-maintained.

Accessibility
Weddings take place in a clearing roughly 200 yards from the visitor building. The nature center can provide two outdoor wheelchairs with wide rubber wheels upon request. An access road for dropping off disabled/elderly guests is available (see map). Note: Some couples have rented a golf cart from a third party vendor if they anticipate needing to shuttle guests from the parking lot to the ceremony site.
ELECTRICITY ACCESS

Ceremony Site: The ceremony site has access to one 20 amp outlet at the furthest point from the trail and one 20 amp outlet nearest to the trail.

Tent Site: The tent site has access to two 20 amp outlets, with 2 plugs each. This is enough power to manage basic reception needs such as the DJ, tent lighting, and possibly coffee service. When planning your tent set up, please consider where the electric box is located. CNC does not provide extension cords. If you plan to use heaters, notify your tent company of the limited electric access so they can bring a generator if necessary.

Note: outdoor patio lights are installed in the yard around the firepit, at the entrance to the building, and in the open area between the building and the tent. Tent lighting is not provided by CNC.

Pavilion: The pavilion has access to two 20 amp outlets, with 2 plugs each. The pavilion lights utilize one plug.

WIFI & CELL SERVICE

Wifi & Cell Phone Service

Wifi: Wifi is available in the building, pavilion, and at the reception tent. There is no wifi access in the pines.

Wifi: NatureCenterGuest
Password: N/A

Phone: There is no cellphone service at the Nature Center. Landline phone access is available.

CEREMONY SITE

Ceremonies take place in a clearing in the pines, approximately 100 yards from the start of the trail. This clearing has access to electricity and can fit up to 180 chairs.

Couples are responsible to set up all decorations. CNC staff will set up the chairs (up to 125 are provided). We suggest that couples decorate the trailhead to help orient guests in the yard. Bugs are not normally a concern in the ceremony site, but we suggest providing bug spray (some folks are sweeter to insects than others!).

Ceremony Rain Plan

Our indoor theater can accommodate a wedding ceremony of up to 100 people. Universally, couples have preferred to get married in the pines and to wait for a break in the rain or get married in the rain if it is light enough. Couples may provide umbrellas for their guests and bring a pop-up tent out to the pines for the officiant/couple to stand under. CNC staff will do our best to keep chairs dry up until the ceremony begins.

Ceremony Site Decorations

All ceremony decorations must be taken down the same day, with the exception of arbors which can come down the next day by 10am with prior approval. We do not allow fireworks, glitter, confetti, rice, fake flower petals, or decorations that hang from the trees (see Venue Manager for exceptions). We suggest using leaf confetti, eucalyptus leaves, or dried flower petals for your flower girl/boy. Any brightly-colored flower petals that don’t blend into the forest floor must be picked up after the ceremony.
**RECEPTION SITE**

**Reception Location**
Receptions take place under tents in the side yard unless the couple pays an additional fee to rent the pavilion (see map). All receptions are required to have shelter in case of rain, as there is no alternate indoor rain location for receptions of any size.

Receptions with more than 40 guests must rent a tent for the reception. Receptions with less than 40 guests may choose to use our 24x36 pavilion for an additional fee instead of renting a tent. CNC does not provide tents and couples are welcome to work with their preferred vendor. All tents must be placed in the side yard, which can accommodate a 40x100 tent footprint (see map).

**Reception Decor**
Couples are responsible to set up all decorations, floral arrangements, and centerpieces. Please note that the following items are strictly prohibited: helium balloons, glitter, and floating lanterns. Couples are responsible for the removal of all decorations and other items brought on site, and the cleaning of the building and grounds as detailed in the Cleaning Checklist.

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**EVENT SET UP**

**Storing Items in Advance**
Couples may store items at the Nature Center beginning the Wednesday before the wedding. The Nature Center is open Wednesday through Friday from 9am-4pm and Saturday and Sunday from 9am-5pm. Items must be neatly stored in areas designated by staff. Note: CNC programs use indoor spaces during the week, so couples may not use storage spaces as prep areas prior to the day of the wedding (i.e. to prep flowers, food, etc.).

**Tent, Table, and Chairs**
Tents are generally set up Friday-Sunday. Contact the venue directly to arrange earlier set up times. CNC staff set up tables on Friday mornings if the tent is up, and set up the ceremony site chairs the morning of the wedding. Chairs in the same style as ours can be rented locally. Couples are responsible for any rental items.

CNC can transport chairs from the ceremony to the reception upon request. Please plan at least 45 minutes for this transition. Most couples opt to rent more chairs or have guests transition the chairs themselves.

**Decoration Set Up**

*Day before:* Arbors and other heavy items may be set up on Friday. If a tent has four closed walls to protect decorations from wind, dew, and curious wildlife, couples can set up tableware and centerpieces in the tent on Friday (note that tent walls are easy to take down the day of the reception if desired).

*Day of:* Yard games, signage, and ceremony site decor must be set up on the day of the wedding. If a tent is open on any side, items like glassware, linens, and centerpieces must be set up on the day of the wedding.

**Unloading & Parking**
Couples may use the North building entrance to unload items being stored inside. Couples and vendors may use the access road to the tent to unload items closer to the ceremony site and reception tent (see map). This road is solely for unloading and no cars should be parked here for longer than 30 minutes. A maximum of two cars are allowed in the yard area at any given time. *Cars may NOT be driven up to the building.*
EVENT TIMELINE

REHEARSAL

A Friday rehearsal is automatically included in your booking (note: if you are getting married on a day other than Saturday, your rehearsal time will be coordinated in advance). The nature center is open from 9am until 4pm on Friday. We ask that you schedule decorating, rental deliveries, and your rehearsal during regular business hours.

DAY OF WEDDING

Set Up & Getting Ready
Couples may arrive to set up anytime after 9am on the day of the event. The Nature Center provides up to two spaces for prep. Only one of the prep spaces has mirrors and access to a private bathroom, so please plan accordingly!

Wedding parties and guests may **not** use the public restrooms to change their clothes or do make-up and hair.

Start of event
Most ceremonies with an onsite reception begin at 4pm, but can begin earlier if desired. Your booking covers a 6-hour window for your event (not including set up or tear down), with an option to pay for additional time.

A typical timeline may look like:

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

Ceremony-only events may take place at any time during the day. If the event takes place outside of business hours (past 5pm), an additional $150 fee will be charged per hour.

End of event
All receptions **MUST** end by 10pm, without exception. We require that couples plan at least 1 hour of clean up after the reception, and all guests and vendors must leave the premises by 11pm. Events that stay past 11pm may be charged a discretionary $150 fee for the extra hour. If a good faith effort is made to be cleaned up and out of the space by 11pm, this fee may be waived.

CLEAN UP

Couples are responsible for the removal of all decorations and other items brought on site, and the surface-level clean up of the building, parking lot, and grounds as detailed in the Cleaning Checklist. Our expectation is for visitors to encounter a clean, wild space the next morning and for our staff to be able to accomplish their tasks without impediment (i.e. tearing down tables and chairs).
COMMON PLANNING QUESTIONS

Preferred Vendors
We do not currently have a list of preferred vendors. Email Abby at amerz@rmsc.org for a list of recommended vendors.

Share this Wedding Vendor FAQ document with vendors so they can be prepared for your big day.

Day Of Coordinator
A day of coordinator (either paid vendor or a willing friend) can be a huge help for DIY weddings! We highly suggest hiring or assigning someone this role to help streamline the set up and tear down portions of the day.

Where to stay?
The closest traditional hotels are in Victor or Canandaigua (~25 minutes away). Many couples rent an Airbnb nearby for the weekend where their wedding parties can stay and get ready. We do have prep spaces at the Nature Center, but getting ready in a hotel or at an Airbnb tends to be easier for large groups.

Where to take photos?
Beyond the iconic photos in the pines, there are several other scenic photography locations nearby. Many couples take photos further down the trail (an area with ferns is just around the first bend), behind the nature center (an open, meadow area), or on the gravel drive into the nature center (for a rustic look). You are welcome to scout out areas in advance!

Transportation
Many couples rent shuttles for their wedding parties and families, and some will rent a bus for guest transportation if a significant number of guests are from out of town. We have ample parking at the Nature Center if guests choose to drive.

Going Green
There are many resources available for hosting an eco-friendly wedding. The Center for Biological Diversity has put together a Wildlife Friendly Wedding Guide that offers tons of ideas for reducing waste. It can be overwhelming (and it’s actually impossible to implement all of them!), so focus on the changes that feel easy to implement and are aligned with your vision and budget.

Support the Nature Center!
Thank you for supporting our mission and programs by choosing the CNC as your wedding venue! If you are considering including charity donations in your wedding registry, we would love to be one of your chosen charities. We are a 501c3 focused on environmental education and your support helps us nurture meaningful, life-long connections between families and the natural world.
APPENDIX I: VENUE CHECKLIST

Use this checklist to keep track of venue fees, permits, and requirements.

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**AT BOOKING**
- 50% deposit and security deposit are due upon signing contract

**3-6 MONTHS TO GO**
- Apply for any alcohol permits (note that permits aren't sent out until 1-2 weeks before the event)
- Provide copy of event insurance to venue (receptions only)

**20-30 DAYS TO GO**
- Complete CNC Venue Logistics Form
- Schedule call with CNC venue manager
- Review venue policies and Clean Up Checklist

**10-14 DAYS TO GO**
- Call CNC venue manager to go over the Venue Logistics Form details (~30 min call)
- Make final venue payment (via phone or in person)

**3-4 DAYS TO GO**
- Send CNC venue manager diagram of table set up (if applicable)
- If weather forecast looks bad, make rain plan

**DAY OF EVENT**
- Enjoy the day!
- Complete clean up list
- Walkthrough with staff member at the end of the event

**DAY AFTER EVENT**
- Pick up anything left at Nature Center by 10am

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Contact Abby Merz at amerz@rmsc.org or (585) 374-6160 ext. 106 with any questions.
APPENDIX II: CLEAN UP CHECKLIST

Before leaving the venue at the end of the night, this checklist must be completed, signed, and left with a CNC staff member. CNC will provide cleaning supplies for each area.

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RECEPTION AREA (TENT, PAVILION, CAMPFIRE AREA)
- Remove all table linens, tableware, decor, florals, signs, and accessories. Items must be taken off-site OR neatly boxed and stored inside the building. **All items stored in the building must be picked up by 10am the next day.**
- Wipe down all tables with a damp cloth to remove food residue.
- Throw away ALL trash in trash cans (including any trash on the ground, particularly around the campfire area, bar, and tables).
- If you have any non-CNC rental items, prepare items for pick up per your rental companies' instructions.
- If anyone is leaving their car overnight, notify staff.

CEREMONY SITE (PINES, TRAIL)
- Remove all decorations, including decor and signage at trailhead.
- If used, pick up any artificial or brightly-colored petals from ground/aisle.
- Any decor left overnight must be pre-approved by CNC staff and picked up by 10am the next morning.

BUILDING (CONFERENCE ROOM, BRIDAL ROOM, RESTROOMS, KITCHEN)

**Conference Room:**
- Clear tables, box remaining items, and neatly stack for next-day pick up.
- Throw away trash and leave recycling by trashcan.
- Wipe down tables.
- Vacuum floor (if needed).

**Bridal Suite:**
- Clear surfaces & remove any remaining items.

**Restrooms:**
- Check restrooms for guest items or wedding-related trash (cans, cups, etc.)

**Kitchen:**
- All kitchen surfaces (sink and tables) must be cleared and wiped down.
- Sweep kitchen floor (if needed)
- Clear all food from fridges (leftovers must be approved by CNC staff).

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REMINDER:
CNC will not store items past 10am the morning following your event, and we reserve the right to dispose of any remaining items past this point.

Signature: ________________________________  Date:______________
APPENDIX III: MAP OF CNC YARD