



## FRIENDS OF GWYNN'S FALLS/LEAKIN PARK

1920 EAGLE DRIVE

BALTIMORE, MD 21207

[www.friendsofgwynnsfallsleakinpark.org](http://www.friendsofgwynnsfallsleakinpark.org)

Winter 2017

### Starting on the Good Foot

*First Day Hike and Bike - January 1, 2017*

*Bridget McCusker*

In recent years, parks throughout the country have been offering hikes on the first day of the year as a way to encourage people to start the new year in the outdoors, exercising, and connecting with nature. FOGFLP has been following the trend for the last several years and this year a bicycle ride on the Gwynns Fall Trail was added for those looking for a little more adventure and the possibility of some liquid refreshment at the half way point downtown. Twenty six people showed up to participate in the activities. The hikes covered most of the trails in the park and included the Carrie Murray Nature Center. The bike ride was led by John McCaul and the hikes were led by George Farrant, Heide Grundmann, and Bridget McCusker. It was great to have Ed Orser along because he was able to provide a wealth of information about the history of areas along the trail of which I was not knowledgeable. Hope we see you for next year's First Day Hike and who knows, we might add another new adventure.



### Black Friday Alternative Event

The Friends of Gwynns Falls/Leakin Park decided to follow the lead of REI by offering an alternative to retail madness on Black Friday, November 25th. Several FOGFLP members led and participated in hikes in our park for community members who "opted out" of the madness. Stay tuned for next year's opt outside event in Gwynns Falls/Leakin Park and we welcome your ideas.



Follow The Friends of Gwynns Falls Leakin Park on  
Twitter (@FOGFLPMEDIA or @FOGFLP or  
on Instagram (FOGFLPMEDIA)

## Bats of Leakin Park

*Ela-Sita Carpenter*

Bats are a commonly misunderstood group that happen to be important for the ecosystem. Very few carry rabies or drink blood, they won't fly in your hair, and they are very clean animals. There are over 1,300 species worldwide; some act as insect control, others pollinate flowers (like bees), and others act as gardeners by eating fruit in one area, and transporting the seeds to a different area to grow. Maryland has 12 bat species, and they all eat insects. Some live in caves, but many live in or on trees, and occasionally in buildings or under bridges.

I feel lucky to be not just be a FOGFLP member, but also a University of Missouri PhD student working with the Baltimore Ecosystem Study. My research focuses on determining what factors support bats living in Baltimore City. Last summer I did acoustic surveys at sites along the Gwynns Falls watershed at night. I used a device called a bat detector to record bats' echolocation calls that they emit as they hunt for insects. When these calls are viewed on a laptop they look like graphs, and most species' calls have unique patterns which allow scientists to identify them without seeing or touching them. I also visited several other parks and vacant lots in the city.

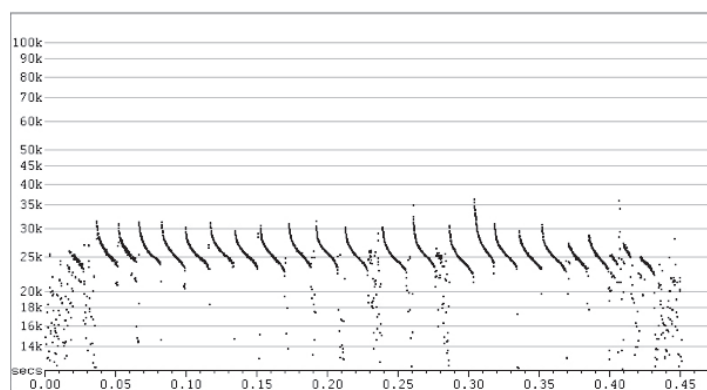
I was pleasantly surprised by my results. There appears to be 6-7 bat species present throughout the Gwynns Falls watershed during the summer. Most sites had 3-5 bat species present, but my Rognel Heights & Leakin Park sites had 6-7 bat species: the big brown bat, red bat, hoary bat, silver-haired bat, tricolored bat, evening bat, and possibly little



*A red bat foraging above Winan's Meadow on a warm December afternoon.*

brown bat (this species is a bit hard to ID, so still unsure). I usually heard 0-4 species during my 30 minute recordings, but during my first evening at Leakin Park I recorded all six species within 30 minutes! It's likely that our park's incredibly large size is the reason so many different bat species are present – there are large, old trees to roost in, lots of insects to eat, and the land has been mostly undisturbed by people. Additionally, I recently discovered a bat hibernating in a structure

in the park. With some of these species (tricolor and little brown bats) facing serious threats from a fungal disease called white-nose syndrome, it's great to know that Leakin Park and the greater Gwynns Falls watershed is providing important habitat for them.



*Acoustic graph of a big brown bat, the most common species I recorded in Baltimore. Our hearing range goes up to 20 kilohertz, while most bats in the area emit calls between 25-40 kHz.*

## The Carrie Murray Nature Center

...was created to give children who live in Baltimore City the opportunity to learn about and be a part of nature. Carrie Murray Nature Center's Summer Camp is aligned with this mission and combines environmental education and summer time fun. Our location in Gwynns Falls Leakin Park allows children to see their local ecosystem in a natural setting with hands on activities in the outdoors. Campers go on daily hikes fostering a spirit of adventure and familiarity with the woods, engage in meaningful stream studies in the heart of the Baltimore watershed, and learn about animals living in the park. Themed weeks provide a general focus and in the past have included reptiles, birds of prey, and wild, fun, and wacky days. A sample day at camp begins with "Morning Circle" where campers start their day outside stretching, playing games, and singing camp songs. Campers also reflect on their experiences in a journal where they write about what they've learned and enjoyed. Naturalists help teach

the children about the animals in the nature center, in the park, and around the world. Additionally, guest speakers cover a variety of topics, including Native American culture, dinosaurs, and geology. One day a week is devoted to offsite adventures, bicycling, and canoeing. The camp experience allows kids to be kids by providing them time away from their screens in the great outdoors. What better setting is there for children to have a blast this summer than at the Carrie Murray Nature Center? Camp runs Monday through Friday, 8:30am to 3:30pm, at the cost of \$175 per week. Early drop off and late stay options are available at an additional cost - \$25 per week per family for either early drop off or late stay and \$50 per week for both. Registration for summer camp will begin in March. Camp sessions run from June 27 - August 19. For more information about the Carrie Murray Nature Center 2017 Summer Camp Experience call (410) 396-0808 or check out the website at [carriemurraynaturecenter.org](http://carriemurraynaturecenter.org)



## Martin Luther King Day of Service

George Farrant

The Friends of Gwynns Falls/Leakin Park held their Annual MLK Day of Service in Winans Meadow on January 16, 2017. Twenty two people showed up from Hunting Ridge and other local neighborhoods. Volunteers cleared a walking path from the Ravine Trail to the caretaker's ruins behind the Ben Cardin Pavilion. Invasive vines were cleared, large logs were rolled, wheel barrows were filled over and over again, and the garden in front of the pavilion was cleared out by Heide and her helpers. Several families included their young children and it was a joy to watch them work and play and figure out how to use the tools. What a wonderful way to show our gratitude to Dr. King by getting our children involved in community service work at a young age. The Friends are thankful to all for a job well done.



## WHERE TO FIND INFORMATION ABOUT PARK ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS

THE FOGFLP ANNUAL MEETING HAS BEEN SCHEDULED FOR APRIL 2, 2017, AT THE ORIANDA HOUSE, 2:00 - 4:00PM. Our guest speaker will be from the Forestry Department of Baltimore City.

Friends of Gwynns Falls/Leakin Park - [friendsofgwynnsfallsleakinpark.org](http://friendsofgwynnsfallsleakinpark.org)

Baltimore City Department of Recreation and Parks - [bcrp.baltimore.gov](http://bcrp.baltimore.gov)

Baltimore Bird Club - [baltimorebirdclub.org](http://baltimorebirdclub.org)

Gwynns Falls Trail - [gwynnsfallstrail.org](http://gwynnsfallstrail.org)

Carrie Murray Nature Center - [carriemurraynaturecenter.org](http://carriemurraynaturecenter.org)

Outward Bound - [outwardboundbaltimore.org](http://outwardboundbaltimore.org)

Parks and People Foundation - [parksandpeople.org](http://parksandpeople.org)

Tuesday Trail Work in Gwynns Falls/Leakin Park will start back up again in March, 9:00 - 11:00am. Contact George at (410) 566-2101 or Jo at (410) 566-2230 for info.

Gwynns Falls Trail Monthly Clean-ups - Gwynns Falls Trail Advocates in partnership with Baltimore City Department of Recreation and Parks hosts trail clean-ups on the last Saturday of every month, from 10:00am - 12:00pm. Areas of high trash accumulation are targeted along the entire trail. Contact Jackie Bender - BCRP at (410) 396-7020 or Bridget McCusker - FOGFLP [mccbrid@gmail.com](mailto:mccbrid@gmail.com)

SPECIAL REQUEST - FOGFLP is exploring the possibility of working with the Parkrun Program to establish a running program for all ages in Gwynns Falls/Leakin Park. We are seeking volunteers who are runners, former runners, and/or interested in working to set up the running program in our park. We are very excited about this opportunity to attract more visitors and promote healthy habits in our park. If you are interested or know of someone who may be interested, please contact George Farrant at [garrant@yahoo.com](mailto:garrant@yahoo.com) or Jo Orser at [joorser@gmail.com](mailto:joorser@gmail.com)



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## Winter 2017

### Christmas Caroling at Winans Chapel

*Bridget McCusker*

The Friends of Gwynns Falls/Leakin Park and other friends gathered together at the beautifully decorated Winans Chapel on December 11, 2016, to sing christmas carols for what we hope will be an annual event. It was a very cold day and even colder inside the chapel but a hearty group of carolers made some beautiful sounds. We were accompanied by Marlin Ballard on the recorder and his friend, Leah, on both the recorder



and guitar and an enthusiastic young boy who stepped forward to join the musicians on a drum. The event was the bright idea of Joy Goodie,

FOGFLP Treasurer, who pulled together it with help from FOGFLP members and Baltimore City Department of Recreation and Parks who sent Molly Gallant to provide wonderful fire pit drums that were greatly appreciated. The caroling was followed by warm cider, hot chocolate, and sweets. Many thanks to all who helped make it happen and to those who showed up on a very cold afternoon. We hope to see you again next year.