



FRIENDS OF GWYNNNS FALLS/LEAKIN PARK

1920 EAGLE DRIVE

BALTIMORE, MD 21207

www.friendsofgwynnsfallsleakinpark.org

Fall 2018

Flooding Damage in Gwynns Falls/Leakin Park - Summer 2018

The heavy rains of several storms over the Summer months caused the stream that normally runs through Gwynns Falls/Leakin Park to flood. It washed away the paths that run through the park and the roadways nearby.

Trees were down throughout the trails leaving many paths to be cleaned up by anyone who was able.

With the path collapsed and rubble left behind in many areas it could be some time before the park will be restored.

Photos clockwise from top left; Franklinton Road flood damage, tree down on Dickeyville path, George Farrant leads the charge to clean downed trees, crumbled pedestrian path.



UPDATES

Bridget McCusker

BGE Pipeline

The BGE Pipeline construction continues in GFLP, much to our displeasure. The original timeline projected that they would be gassing up the new pipe line at the end of June and here we are in October and it still has not happened. They are several months behind schedule due to challenges presented by drilling into granite bedrock and the excessive rainfall we have had this summer. The latest news is that they will be finished along the Wetheredsville corridor by Thanksgiving. Keep your fingers crossed.

Proposed Storm Water Management Projects

On September 28, two documents were mailed to the membership detailing storm water management projects proposed by the Baltimore City Department of Public Works (DPW) in Gwynns Falls Leakin Park. As of October 22, 2018, we have not received any feedback from the DPW regarding our request to meet with them to discuss our concerns. We will keep you updated about this matter. If you would like to discuss this issue with a knowledgeable board member, please let me know. I can be reached by email at mccbrid@gmail.com.



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

CJC workers in GFLP - Summer 2018

George Farrant

Five teams of 6-7 high school students worked in GFLP for 5 weeks this summer through the Community Job Corps Program. The students worked with their counselors and FOGFLP volunteers. Unfortunately, some of the work accomplished after the Memorial Day flooding event was undone when the second flooding event occurred at the end of July. Work projects included removing downed trees, removing large amounts of debris and trash that accumulated as a results of the flooding, pulling invasive vines, and mitigating some of the damage to trails and other park areas that were

damaged by the flooding. Other projects included sprucing up the Carrie Murray Nature Center and laying mulch for a contemplation garden at the lower end of the meadow behind the gazebo in The Crimea. Portions of the Gwynns Falls Trail had to be cleared of debris and silt build up from the flooding more than once. Eight dump trucks of debris and vines were removed from the Winans Meadow area along Dead Run. The damage to the park and Franklinton Road resulted in Franklinton Road being closed from July 24 - October 9. FOGFLP is very grateful to have had the CJC workers this summer and we look forward to having them aback again next year.



UPDATES Cont.

Bridget McCusker

WEBSITE NEWS

FOGFLP is in the process of updating and upgrading our website. We will be adding features to enable online options for joining, membership renewal, news updates, event listings, activities, an up-to-date calendar, and links to helpful and like-minded sites. We will continue to accept membership applications and renewals and send the newsletter by USPS for members who prefer that delivery option.

One Lucky Preschool Has Leakin Park as a Classroom

Take a moment to think back to your favorite memories as a child. Did these take place inside or outside? For the Wild Haven Forest Preschool team, the memories of getting muddy, finding salamanders and collecting acorns are the moments that stand out. Monica Wiedel-Lubinski (Wild Haven's Program Director), Monica French (Site Director/Lead Teacher) and Mepi Neill (Lead Teacher) are dedicated to bringing nature to every child and every child to nature. Wild Haven's pilot site in 2018 was at the Carrie Murray Nature Center where the team created a forest classroom, focusing on native species and developmentally appropriate nature exploration.

"By providing children nature-based learning experiences, we are creating Baltimore City's youngest environmental stewards," Neill says.

And what better place for a classroom than GFTLP? From splashing in the creek at Winans Meadow to balancing on logs on the Upper Fort Trail, the children are developing a sense of place and a special connection to the park. The Wild Haven team is excited to help families realize the value of the resource of this city park—not just its playground and train rides (which are fabulous), but also its trails and meadows.

Wild Haven is a program of Baltimore City Recreation and Parks, which means as demand grows for immersive nature-based early childhood education, Wild Haven can utilize parks across Baltimore City.

"We had our first Family Forest Gathering to celebrate the graduation of our first preschool class, the Fiddleheads," continues Neill. "We are grateful to BCRP and all of the families who believe in our mission for their support. The community we are creating is something to be proud of."

Wild Haven is onto something. Emergent, nature-based curriculum follows the children's interests, making learning relevant to their lives. In addition to addressing the developmental domains that ensure success in kindergarten (literacy skills, mathematical thinking, etc.), Wild Haven's approach to education helps children "learn to learn" by building self-esteem. "When a

child does something challenging, such as crossing the creek without holding a hand, it builds confidence. It is through this work that children develop the ability to try something even though it is hard and they have never done it before," beams Neill. These little victories are monumental for young children – mind, heart, and soul. Wild Haven blends environmental ethic, and essential values of compassion and kindness with foundation skills. Many parents feel this approach is lacking or altogether absent in traditional preschool or childcare settings.

Enrollment for Wild Haven's 2018-2019 school year is near capacity, proof that the community is eager for this experience for their children. On Wild Haven's horizon? "Extended days, serving younger ages and scholarships so that this type

of programming is accessible to every family in the community," says Neill. "Our goal is to introduce nature-based learning to families who have never considered this approach to education before."

So when you see Wild Haven hiking the trails, please introduce yourself! The little ones love meeting members of our community. If you have any questions about ways to support this program, please contact Monica French at monica.french@wildhaven.us and check out the website, wildhaven.us.



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Notable Trees in Our Parks

Ed Orser

Tree Baltimore, a citizens' advocacy group, works with the Forestry Division of the Department of Recreation and Parks to expand and promote both the diversity and the number of trees in the City. To get an idea of its Notable Trees program, go to the organization's web site to find maps with locations for trees identified as distinctive in such categories as State Champion, City Champion, Exemplary Species, Favorite Trees (with stories), and Historic and Memorable Trees.

Gwynns Falls and Leakin Parks, largely woodland preserves, contain a wealth of distinctive trees, but many need to be identified and added to the Tree Baltimore list. This summer, intern Jordan Nicolette, working on the Notable Tree program with Ted Martello of the Forestry Division and Nathan Randolph, GIS mapping specialist (park neighbor and frequent park user), set

out to locate and document some of the significant trees that GIS and aerial maps hinted could be found there. The fruit of his effort was the location of a tall American Sycamore near the Windsor Mill Road trailhead that qualified as the new City Champion for the species (the nomination is pending, so it shortly should show up on the web site map). Nearby, the map identifies a State Champion Black Walnut.

Champion trees are rated using a formula that takes into account both height and diameter. Jordan and Ted, who had set off on their bicycles to try to locate candidate trees, discovered that many of the parks' older trees had grown tall in their quest for sun light but had not developed comparable diameters the way that trees standing alone might.

The summer's project might serve as a nudge to park users to be mindful of the Notable Trees program and to consider potential nominations of trees

that deserve recognition as distinctive. Check out the empty spaces on the Notable Trees program maps and think of candidates to fill in the empty spaces!

As for Jordan, a junior in the Environmental Science/Conservation Program at the University of Maryland (College Park), the summer's experience impressed his faculty advisor, who invited him to use the skills he had developed to serve as a research assistant for a project on the trees of the D.C. metro area.

And when you're checking out the Notable Trees site, go to the Favorite Trees page to see the article from an earlier FOGFLP newsletter with its story associated with the gathering of Chinese Chestnuts that occurs every year at this time.