

Baltimore City Recreation & Parks

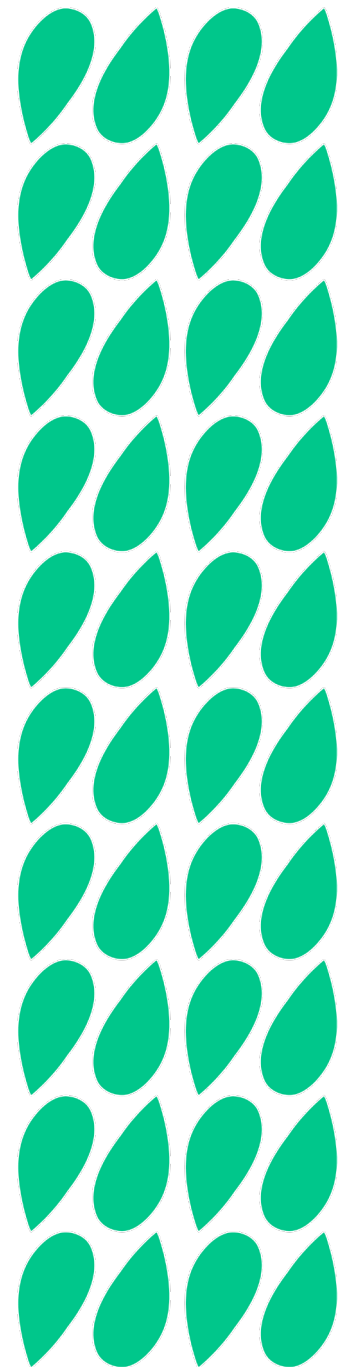
An overview of
Gwynns Falls Leakin Park

March 12, 2025



Gwynns Falls Leakin Park is the second-largest urban woodland park in the United States, at 1,216 acres (492 ha). Gwynns Falls/Leakin Park is one of the few large tracts of land in Baltimore to retain its original collection of structures—in relationship to its well-preserved natural landscape. Annexed in 1918, the park is part of the Baltimore National Heritage Area. The park is part of the Baltimore National Heritage Area.

The property purchase along the Gwynns Falls was the recommendation of the Olmstead Bros. The additional 240 acres was a donation of Baltimore attorney Thomas Winans in the Gwynns Falls valley. This parcel includes the Crimea section. An essential stipulation of the land transfer within the will was that the new park bear the Leakin name, honoring his grandfather, who had been a mayor of Baltimore.



The Crimea Section

The Crimea Section of the park includes the Thomas Winans miniature train, the stone Orianda mansion, and the Celeste Winans Chapel. These properties are both listed on the city list of historic Landmarks.

Much of the Crimea of this area is occupied and programmed by the Chesapeake Bay Outward Bound School - which offers outdoor adventure programs for youths and adults.



Carrie Murray Nature Center

Carrie Murray Nature Center provides nature programs and activities. The center was established in 1985 by Orioles baseball legend Eddie Murray as a tribute to his mother. Carrie Murray offers field trips and public programs for all ages. We proudly serve children as young as 2-5 years old in our Forest Preschool and Childcare program. We also offer summer camps, public programs, special events, and volunteer opportunities.

Carrie Murray Nature Center school hosts 25 children daily with a waitlist of over 150. Programs include guided hikes, animal meet and greets, nature lectures, and more.



Leon Day Park

A little farther down the park in an area known as Bloomingdale Oval is Leon Day Park which features athletic fields that honor Negro Leagues baseball Hall of Famer Leon Day.



Upcoming improvements to the park are a new playground coming this spring and new bleachers.

This park is named for Leon Day, an outstanding player in the Negro Leagues who was elected to the National Baseball Hall of Fame. A resident of southwest Baltimore, Day joined the Baltimore Black Sox in 1934 when African Americans could not play in the Major or Minor Leagues. He went on to excel as a second baseman and pitcher for several teams and returned to Baltimore in the 1940s as a member of the Elite Giants. He was inducted into the Hall of Fame in 1995 just a few days before he died.

Leon Day played every position in the field except catch, and he played them all magnificently. Owner of a baseball team

GWYNNS FALLS TRAIL

The flour-producing Five Mills at Calverton, located at the eastern end of this meadow in the 1800s, were powered by water from a millrace that extended here from Dickeyville.

The Baltimore Elite Giants (below), 1949 Negro National League champions: (top row, from left) Joe Black, Leroy Farrell, (first name unknown) Davidson, Monte Pearson, Bill Byrd, Al Wilmore, Bob Romby, Johnny Hayes, Junior Gilliam, Manager Hoss Walker. (bottom row) Ruth Davis, Lester Lockett, Sylvester Rodgers, Henry Kimbro, Coach Vic Harris, Harry Baylis, Frazier Robinson, Frank Russell, Pee-wee Butts, and Leon Day.

Leon Day Park

Gwynns Falls Trail Council / A Project of the Parks & People Foundation
www.gwynnsfallstrail.org

CHESAPEAKE BAY GATEWAY NETWORK
www.baygateway.net

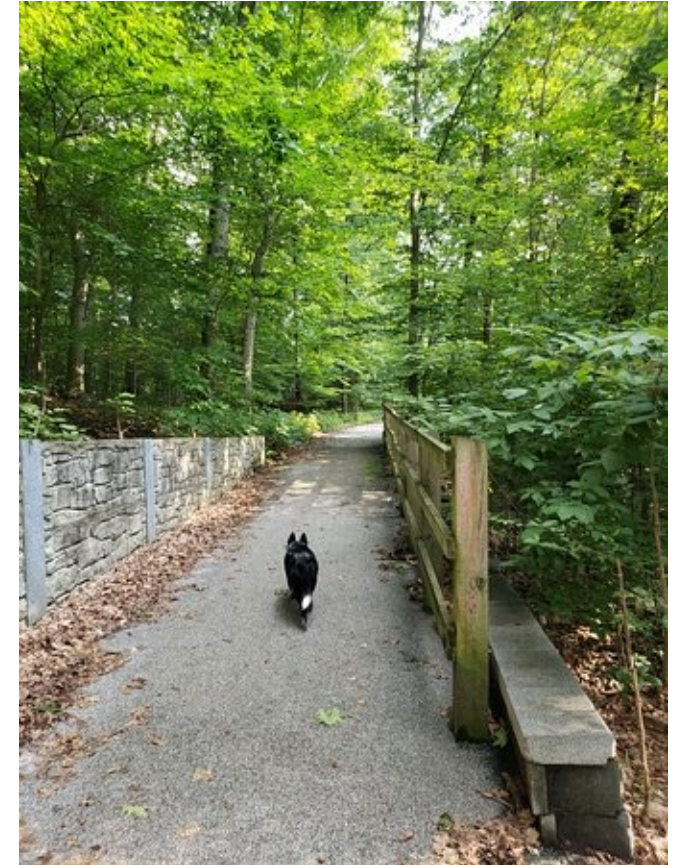
The Gwynns Falls Trail

The Gwynns Falls Trail was established in 1998. It is a 15-mile (14.894) series of paved hiking and bicycling trails inside the surrounding Gwynns Falls Leakin Park. It also encompasses 10+ miles of “unpaved or natural” that are not actively maintained by BCRP.



Our trail management team consists of a trail manager, two trail naturalists, one laborer, and a seasonal maintenance aide. They are deployed city-wide. Their focus is to tackle erosion issues and the removal of bulk dumping. The team is currently building out their equipment inventory and increasing its numbers.

Recent large scale trail infrastructure improvements were facilitated by the environmental non-profit, *Parks & People*.



Cahill Recreation Center

- A state of the art facility, Cahill Fitness & Wellness Center, in Baltimore's Gwynns Falls/Leakin Park, was inspired by the surrounding densely wooded 1,000-acre urban oasis.
- \$17M Project funding was a partnership between the City of Baltimore and MD DNR.



Park Maintenance

Gwynns Falls Leakin Park has no full-time staff assignments. It is part of the Gwynns Falls Maintenance Yard that oversees the western part of the city. There are 7 full-time and 3 part-time staff members assigned to the division.

Park Maintenance does on-call maintenance as required, and is scheduled to be there two days a week which consists of one three-person crew.

Park Maintenance activities include weed whacking, removing litter and debris, etc.

- The grass is cut weekly. (\$42.93 per acre) \$2,915 each week
- The Department of Public Works picks up the trash daily.
- Park Maintenance crews make site visits 2X per week (Monday and Wednesday) to remove ground trash, remove graffiti, leaves, illegal signs, and fallen limbs, install basketball nets \$91 per site visit

Illegal dumping is an ongoing issue in GFLP. There are at least 8 identified dumping areas. Park crews patrol the park perimeter weekly to identify and remove this trash. Roadside pickups are also in place to remove litter accumulations and bulk items. These activities require road closures.



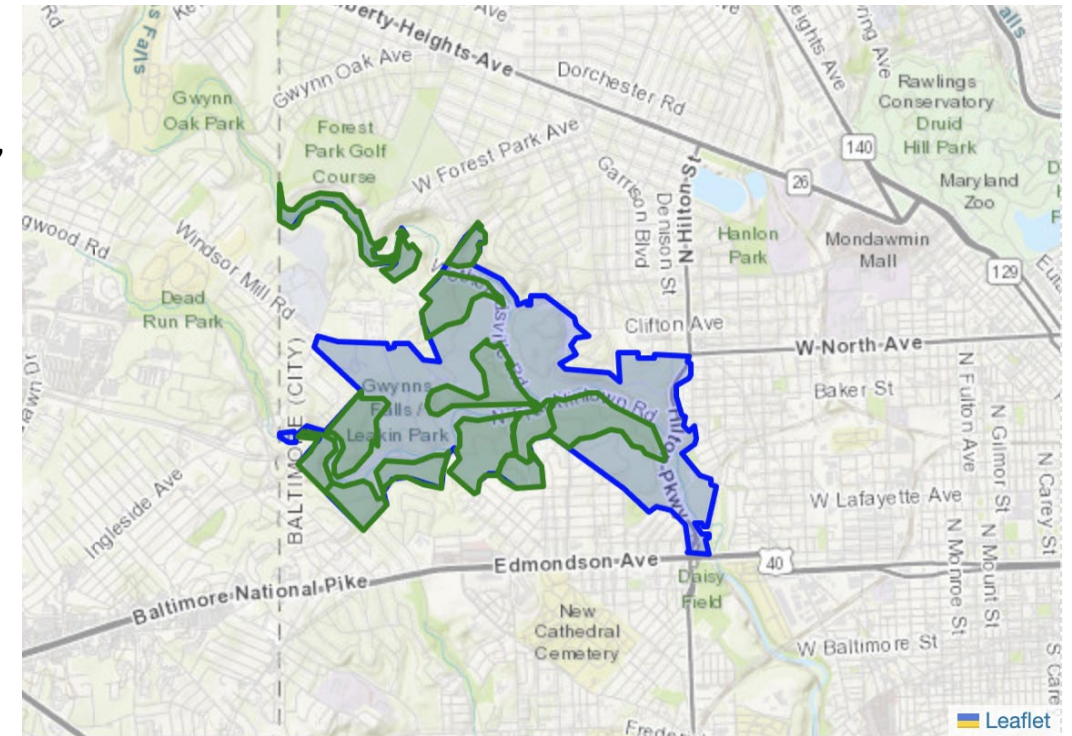
Forestry Division – Natural Areas Unit



To further protect forest health, BCRP's Forestry Division launched a forest management plan in 2017. They actively control invasive plants, are planning deer population reductions, and implement native plantings across 350+ acres of GFLP forests. Additional forest stands are incorporated each year.

BCRP also enforces environmental protections during major construction projects, including a 2018 partnership with BGE to establish the first known native pollinator habitat on a gas pipeline.

GFLP Forested Natural Areas by Forest Stand



- Active conservation sites
- Future restoration sites

Baltimore City Weed Warriors



Gwynns Falls Leakin Park provides a unique chance to experience nature in the city. Guided by BCRP's pillars—Health and Wellness, Environmental Conservation, and Community Engagement—the park remains a vital resource. Its 900-acre forest supports community health by cooling urban heat, filtering stormwater, improving air quality, and boosting biodiversity. To combat extreme urban pressures on these areas, active forest management is essential.

Through the Baltimore City Weed Warriors program, we engage 80+ community members annually to help them learn about and assist with stewarding the land.



Community Engagement



Park Maintenance Completed

- Removed fallen tree on trail
- Multiple sections of paved trail around park have been resurfaced
- Vegetation cutback completed within 10ft of trail
- Charcoal bin installed
- Wood fence completed

Not Completed

- Replace restroom doors (quote provided)
- Replace all stolen copper pipe with PVC (FM is meeting Fischer on site next week to assess and plan the replacements as it is not in our capabilities to do the work)
- Renovate Restrooms
- Install lumber on bleachers

Facility Maintenance Completed

- What has been completed:
- FM installed new grill
- Roof was Completely replaced
- Three interior metal doors were installed
- Repairs were made to the electrical panel box behind the facility. (Secured)
- Minor fence repairs have been made throughout the park

Not Completed


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- Replace all stolen copper pipe with PVC (FM is meeting Fischer on site next week to assess and plan the replacements as it is not in our capabilities to do the work)
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Special Events & Permits

Rentals







(Including Pavilion's & Areas)

 61

Special Event Permits

-  City Catch
-  Baltimore Herb Festival
-  Rhythm & Reels

Partners

-  Outward Bound
-  Friends of Gwynns Falls/Leakin Park
-  Chesapeake Allegheny Steam Trains
-  Friends of Winans Chapel
-  Parks and People Foundation
-  MD Trout Unlimited

Capital Investment

Cahill Recreation Center – Opened 2021; \$18M

Synthetic Turf Field – Ready for Bid; \$6M

Leon Day - Playground - Spring 2025 - \$350k
Bleachers - tbd - \$600k on hand

Pavillion Installation – Completed Summer 2024; \$500k

Eagle Drive Restroom Renovation – Completed; \$300k

Gwynns Falls Trail Signage – In Progress; \$35k

Seminole Avenue Playground – In Design; \$600k

Youth Campground – In Design; \$3.2M; Advertising Summer '25

Sloman Drive – Ridgetop Rd. New trail – In Design; \$800k





Questions?

