

# Cromwell Valley Park

## Spring 2012 Newsletter & Program Calendar

www.cromwellvalleypark.org

410-887-2503

info@cromwellvalleypark.org

2002 Cromwell Bridge Road, Parkville, MD 21234



**Educational Programs – Seasonal Programs – Community Service Projects – Bird Watching – Habitat Restoration  
Hiking Trails – Summer Day Camp**

## Spring in 5D: Sights, Smells, Sounds, Tastes and Touches of early Spring

The seasons are changing! The days are longer and warmer, and there is more and more evidence that winter's hold is beginning to loosen. At Cromwell Valley Park, you can experience the change in 5 dimensions: Sight, sound, smell, taste and touch.

**Take a look:** The snowdrops are just emerging behind the Willow Grove Nature Education Center. Native to Europe, they will form a lovely white carpet in a few weeks.

**Northern Cardinal. B. Hubick**



**Take a listen:** We've heard them already. Northern cardinals start singing early to stake out a territory and to establish a bond with a mate. Listen for a loud "Cheerup, cheerup, cheerup, cheer, cheer, cheer."

**Take a smell:** What looks like a cabbage and smells like a skunk? It's skunk cabbage! The flowers, which emerge before the large leaves, emit a malodorous smell which attracts some

pollinating flies and bees. Unlike most plants, they can chemically produce heat which melts surrounding snow, protects new flowers and leaves from freezing, and probably helps disperse their odor to attract pollinators. There is skunk cabbage in the wetland at the intersection of the green and orange trails. Look for it in early March.

**Tapped sugar maple.  
J. Schaeffer**



**Take a taste:** The cool nights and warm, sunny days have made the sugary sap in our sugar maples begin to flow. Most of the sap, that's been stored all winter in the trunk and roots, will flow to the buds to nourish the miniature leaves and flowers that formed last summer. Some of the sap will flow into our collection buckets and become yummy maple syrup. Grab a taste of the sap and syrup and learn more about the process at our **Maple Sugarin'** program on **Saturday, March 3.**

And finally, the warm sun--**doesn't it feel good!** We've had a couple of those days when you can leave the winter jacket in the car and hike the trails in a t-shirt. Can't wait for more.

J. Schaeffer



**Snowdrops at WGNEC. J. Schaeffer**



**Skunk cabbage. J. Schaeffer**

**See our new pull-out section of Park Programs.**

## Meet our Teacher-Naturalists

Being a teacher-naturalist is not just a job: It's an adventure! It's a passion! Just ask our teacher-naturalists: Justine Schaeffer and Maureen Larkin. We are lucky to have these two talented and enthusiastic women teaching at our Willow Grove Nature Education Center. Their goal is to infuse children and their families with a love and respect for nature and to have fun as they learn. As Maureen says: "You've got to catch 'em while they're still young so they will care about the environment when they grow up to be tax-paying adults." Justine adds: "Yes, so that they will continue to fund parks ... and naturalists!"

Willow Grove Nature Education Center is open from 10-4 on Saturdays and most weekdays. The next time you're in the Park, hop on into the Nature Center to visit our resident animals, to explore our Discovery room, and to meet Justine and Maureen.

M. Larkin

Justine joined our Park in January 2009. She has a bachelor's degree in Biology and a Master of Science degree in Wildlife Biology that she earned after researching white-tailed deer. At Cromwell, she plans, develops, and teaches our programs for children, families and adults on a wide range of natural and cultural history topics—from trees to butterflies to rocks to rhubarb to history to creating habitats with native plant gardens.

Justine is especially proud of her work with the development of the Children's Garden and the displays in the nature center.



Before she came to Cromwell Valley Park, Justine was a Naturalist with Piney Run Nature Center, Oregon Ridge Nature Center, and Howard County

Recreation and Parks. She helped with the technical content of the nature exhibits in the newly-opened Robinson Nature Center in Howard County. Why does Justine like her job? "Because I get to learn new things and tell people about the fascinating way that nature is put together. I also have 6 windows in my office, a gorgeous view, and work with really nice people." Justine and her husband, John, enjoy their four adult children and a variety of outdoor activities.

Maureen joined our Park in April 2011. She has a B.A. degree in Psychology, a M.A. in Experimental Psychology, and a M.A. in Teaching. She plans, develops, and teaches programs to children who visit Cromwell Valley Park on school field trips. Because our educational focus is farming, local history, nature, and conservation awareness, Maureen offers programs on *Spring Planting*, *Fall Harvest*, *Geology Rocks!*, *Come to Your Senses*, *Discovering Insects*, *Tremendous Trees*, *Signs of Animals*, and *Stream Strollers* – just to name a few! Maureen taught at Oregon Ridge Nature Center and at Marshy Point Nature Center before coming to Cromwell Valley Park. She also teaches environmental education at Ladew Topiary Gardens on the weekends and during the summer.

Maureen is proud to have survived her first Fall Harvest field trip season – 1041 school children visited the Park from September 12<sup>th</sup> through December 13<sup>th</sup> – and she is looking forward to this April when the spring field trip season begins.



Why does Maureen like her job? "I love sharing nature and science with children. I especially like that I have the freedom to develop various interesting programs that bring children of all ages closer to nature. Sharing a 6-window office with Justine is an added plus." Maureen and her husband, Barry, have two grown daughters. They love traveling, learning about other cultures, and being outdoors together.

## Nature Book Nook

***Summer World: A Season of Bounty*** by Bernd Heinrich. 2009.

Like taking a walk with an expert naturalist, this book informs, entertains and provokes thought. Dr. Heinrich is a professor emeritus of biology at the University of Vermont with a lifetime of experience observing nature and unraveling its wonders. He looks at plants and animals with the curiosity of a scientist and the excitement of a nature-lover. He has a wonderful way of explaining nature's adaptations and fascinating interactions in terms that everyone can understand. Reading this book helped me learn more about common animals and plants (e.g. ants, caterpillars, bumblebees, wood frogs, hummingbirds) and appreciate the fascinating way that the world around us is put together.

***Butterflies of the Western Chesapeake - Washington, DC, Maryland, Virginia: A Guide to Common and Notable Species*** by Arlene Ripley. 2011.

If you can carry just one butterfly field guide, make this the one. It features photos of most of 84 butterflies in our area and their caterpillars, as well as flight time, host plants, and wing span. This is a fold-up, laminated, pocket-sized pamphlet that you can take anywhere. Indispensable and at \$7.95 a great deal!

## Master Naturalist Interns spotted at Cromwell Valley Park

Have you noticed some new volunteers at the park? We have welcomed 13 new Master Naturalist Interns! Justine Schaeffer, our naturalist, conducted one of the first Maryland Master Naturalist classes here last spring, and now we have 13 new volunteers helping throughout the park on a variety of projects.

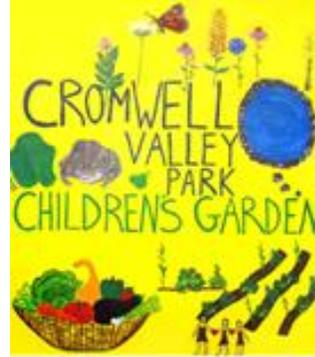
The Maryland Master Naturalist program is sponsored by the University of Maryland Extension, and is similar to the Master Gardener program. The interns had 48 hours of training by some high-powered experts, including staff from Maryland's Department of Natural Resources, Towson University, and the University of Maryland. Topics ranged from insects to Maryland's geology to plants to the science of science. They worked very hard, had fun, passed the test, created a project, and are now working on the required 40 hours of volunteer time here at Cromwell. We are so grateful for the expertise and willingness they bring to our volunteer corps. They will become certified Master Naturalist volunteers at a celebration in May, and continue to volunteer in coming years.

Here's where they've been helping: Fall Harvest Festival, School Field Trips, Habitat Restoration Team, Children's Garden (supervising helpers, repairing the fence, planning and planting, creating interpretive signs and a butterfly ID book), nature center (creating displays, shelves, programs and games).

Who are these Master Naturalists? Linda Talley, Bill Curtis, Alice Lange, Laurel Harrison, Maureen Larkin, Laura Lechtzin, Pat Novak, Helen Price, Deepti Scharf, Larry Tupper, Rowan Weber, Anne Wedgeworth, and Trit Farley. If you see them say hello and thanks!

## ISO Garden Volunteers

Remember the beautiful and bounteous Children's Garden last summer? We had fruits and vegetables, corn and chestnuts, broccoli and beans, flowers and frogs, milkweed and pumpkins, butterflies, birds and native shrubs. We had signs to tell all about them. And we had an army of VOLUNTEERS!! **This is your invitation to be a part of our efforts in 2012.**



Last year we had a variety of people help us. Bob Eder and Allen Lembach get a special shout-out for mowing the garden, week after week, through the rain and heat. (We don't like to think about what would happen if Bob and Allen couldn't mow!) Several of our smaller gardens were adopted by families or individuals who regularly weeded and watered.

Teens helped all summer and on Drop-in-Garden days, and a group from area churches helped on ServeFest Saturday. A young adult from the League for People with Disabilities and her job coach, were ready three mornings each week to help. Master Gardeners, Master Naturalists and Council helpers lent us their expertise and muscle. We couldn't have had a lovely garden and super programs without everyone's help.

If you are a teen, a family, an adult, a scout, a teacher looking for an opportunity for you or your group to give back to the community and support the educational work we do, **be a part of GardenCrew 2012. You could help once a month on Drop-in-Garden days, or adopt a small bed to care for all season, or design your own experience. Give Justine a call at 410-887-3014.**

### INVASIVE PLANT NEWS FROM ANNAPOLIS

Volunteers at Cromwell Valley Park spend many hours working to preserve and restore natural wildlife habitat. The Habitat Restoration Team under the Council's Buildings and Grounds Committee meets regularly to eradicate invasive species that have taken up residence in the Park. Following is a summary of action taken by our State Legislature in answer to broad concern about invasive plants.

House Bill 831 has been passed by the State Legislature in order to regulate invasive plants in the state. An invasive plant is one that did not evolve in the state and if introduced within the state will cause economic, ecological or environmental harm and harm to human health. The invasive plants have been divided into two tiers: 1- those that are likely to cause **severe** harm within the state; 2- those that are likely to cause **substantial** negative impact within the state. A committee will be formed to establish the list of tier 1 and tier 2 plants and regulatory procedures by October 1, 2013. The regulations could involve the issuing of stop sales orders of certain invasive plants and establishing penalties for violations under this Act. Landscape architects, nurseries and plant breeders could be affected by these regulations.

Common invasive plants under scrutiny could be English Ivy, Vinca Minor, orange daylilies, Japanese barberry, multiflora rose, purple loosestrife Japanese wisteria and others. A good source for identification of invasive plants species is Plant Invaders of Mid-Atlantic Natural Areas published by the National Park Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 2010 and can be found online at:

[www.nps.gov/plants/alien/pubs/midatlantic](http://www.nps.gov/plants/alien/pubs/midatlantic)

or [www.mdflora.org/publications/forsale/plantinvasaders.html](http://www.mdflora.org/publications/forsale/plantinvasaders.html)

These two resources also offer native alternatives to the invasive plants and are useful when purchasing plants. Another useful resource lists native plants by area, habitat attractiveness, sun/shade requirements, and condition of soil: Native Plants for Wildlife Habitat and Conservation Landscaping-Chesapeake Bay Watershed published by the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service and can be found online at <http://www.nps.gov/plants/pubs/chesapeake>.

With a click of your mouse you can now visit  
"NATURE ON THE WEB"

DID YOU KNOW...Cromwell Valley Park has "Naturalist News" on its website! Posted by our Park Naturalists, the columns highlight current events in nature and help us notice, learn about and enjoy what's happening outside at the Park. Just click on the "Naturalist News" link on our homepage.

Visit us early and often!

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

The Cromwell Valley Park Council  
is now on Facebook.

"Like" us & get plugged into all that CVP  
has to offer!

### EVERYTHING'S COMING UP...RHUBARB!

Our first crop of the season is emerging in the Children's Garden--rhubarb. For some, the lazy gardeners among us, rhubarb is the perfect plant. It returns reliably year after year, requiring very little effort, and yields a tasty dessert. Rhubarb is a cool season and drought resistant perennial that requires cold winter temperatures (less than 40 degrees F) to stimulate growth in the spring. It grows best in areas where temperatures don't exceed 75 degrees in the summer--ok, that's not us in this part of Maryland. Our rhubarb does slow down in the hottest part of summer, but perks up again when temperatures cool down. A visitor to the garden last year told us that it was one of the few vegetables she could grow when she lived in the Rockies at 10,000 feet elevation. We eat the leaf stalks, but the leaves themselves are poisonous, containing high levels of oxalic acid. Combined with strawberries, rhubarb makes the perfect pie, just in time for Father's Day.

Rhubarb emerging in the snow.  
J. Schaeffer



## What's New at the Willow Grove Nature Education Center?

Have you seen the major additions to the permanent displays in the Willow Grove Nature Education Center?

One is an exhibit of Cromwell's Rocks, now housed in a wonderful vertical cabinet in the meeting room. It contains many stunning Baltimore County minerals that were donated to us by Ed Goldberg of the Baltimore Mineral Society, in memory of Larry Krause of Towson, a long-time leader, board member, and mineral educator. We've also added some samples of rocks typically found in the park and some interpretive signs related to our rocks. Do you know why Cromwell Valley is a valley? Do you know how old our rocks are? Do you know the difference between schist and gneiss? Do you know how our rocks shaped Baltimore County's industrial development? You can find these answers and more in the Cromwell's Rocks display.



Other improvements have expanded our display area. The

big magnetic board in the Discovery Room maximizes our flexibility to create interactive and seasonal displays. We currently have a couple of matching games on the board related to tracks and bird beaks. It's lots of fun to watch kids (and curious adults) think and solve the puzzles. The new bulletin boards in the front hall help us highlight upcoming programs, the latest articles from *Naturalists' News*, current press coverage about the Park, and other relevant news. And finally, we have a set of wonderful display shelves, custom built by Master Naturalist Intern Larry Tupper. These shelves greatly expand the display area in the Discovery Room. They were home to a variety of caterpillars, butterflies, other insects, and tadpoles last summer. Larry also built the shelving in the animal room that we hope to populate with taxidermy mounts of native birds and mammals, and the shelf in the kitchen for more Shanklin artifacts.

Something's always new at the nature center. Stop by Saturdays from 10 until 4 and see for yourself.

## Calling All Critters

The Willow Grove Nature Education Center is looking for a few good taxidermy mounts for use in our education programs. All native mammals and birds in good condition may apply. If accepted, each critter will have the opportunity to teach countless youngsters and adults about survival adaptations and wildlife conservation, and reside on high-quality, custom shelving with an excellent view.

Please contact Justine Schaeffer for an interview.  
([justine@cromwellvalleypark.org](mailto:justine@cromwellvalleypark.org) or 410-887-3014)

J. Schaeffer

## HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE

It was a bright sunny day when children and grown-ups arrived for the annual Holiday Open House in early December. The historic Sherwood House was filled with the fragrance of cider and fresh greens as well as the wonderful smell of fresh baked cookies.

There were activities for toddlers and young teens as well as the grown-ups. The children got busy right away for there was much to do, rolling dough to make a sugar cookie, then carefully choosing a cookies cutter, maybe the snow man, or reindeer. Decorating the cookies is always fun. They piled on the icing then added the jimmies. The joy in this activity could be seen on their faces. Green mouths and yellow cheeks gave them away.

Then on to the craft area. Grown-ups got busy making wreaths from beautiful fresh greens and bright bows. The children made trees from pine cones and decorated them with tiny colorful beads. They made tiny mice from a milkweed pod, seeds and pine tree parts made up the eyes, ears and nose.

Sharing the holiday is always important. The children and grown-ups made treats for the birds. They strung cranberries, raisins, Cheerios and seed covered pine cones to hang on the trees. Mrs. And Mr. Santa appeared again this year bringing candy canes and many wishes for a happy new year.

Everyone had a wonderful time as said Elle, age 3, in her blue velvet dress and white tights “ I liked my cookie so much my head could explode”. Her brother Dane, age 5, was very firm when he said, “this was the best thing [cookie] I’ve ever had.”

C. Ziegler

**Up next:** The Cromwell Valley Park Easter Egg Hunt, Sat., April 7<sup>th</sup> from 10 until noon. See the back page.

## EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

**CVP is now accepting applications for the following positions.**

**Part Time Naturalist** - Experienced Naturalist needed to conduct nature, environmental, and farming programs for children, adults, and families. Programs are scheduled **mainly** on weekends as needed. Salary range is \$10.19 to \$11.48 per hour.

**Seasonal Naturalist/Historian** - Plans and implements varied nature, environmental and agricultural programs throughout the Northeast region of Baltimore County. Position includes 7 days of paid training in June. Salary range is \$9.21 to \$10.77 per hour.

**Summer Nature & Farming Camp Leader** – Plans and implements 7 - one week day camp sessions for children ages 5 - 13. Activities include hiking, stream walks, Indian lore, crafts & gardening. Position includes 7 days of paid training in June. Salary range is \$8.70 to \$11.64 per hour.

**Interested individuals should call 410.887.2503 between 9 AM and 2 PM for an application.**

## Cromwell Valley Park Council General Meeting

Come on out and meet some of the folks that help keep Cromwell Valley Park going, through planning, organizing and volunteering.

**Monday, March 12<sup>th</sup> at 7 pm  
at Sherwood House**

The guest speaker will be Rob Mardiney,  
the Director of Education at Irvine Nature Center.

### President's Report

This issue of our Newsletter represents a major change in content and format, as well as the responsibility for creating it. The Council has taken on a more active role in putting together this portion of the Newsletter, while the Park Administrative staff continues to put together the schedule of events as an insert. We combine the two for mailing.

This updated format is the work of the Communications Committee, and is exemplary of what volunteers are doing to support the many programs and activities in the Park. While the Executive Board as a whole meets once a month to discuss and make decisions on Council activities, it's the individual Committees where the real work gets done. I invite anyone interested in specific work to consider joining a committee where the accomplishments can be very rewarding. For those who like physical, outdoor work, the Trails Committee and Habitat Restoration Team are best. For organizational work, Policies/Procedures and Finance offer plenty of opportunities. For those interested in interacting with many others, consider the Programs, Communications, and Volunteer Committees. Planning and obtaining County support for major projects are the challenges of the Buildings and Grounds Committee.

I urge everyone to look into the possibilities to help the Park through their volunteer efforts.

Mike Pierce

**From our Park Manager, Leo Rebetsky**

### Nature in the Balance

Nature works best when it is in balance. So does CVP. Here at CVP, our staff and volunteers strive to offer a balanced range of recreational opportunities – both passive and active to persons of all ages, interests, and abilities.

The Park's 426 acres of natural beauty beckon the “nature curious” to explore the varied natural habitats (forests, meadows, streams) that make up our stream valley park. Birdwatching, wildlife observation, and trail hiking are just a few of the activities that are available to the public to enjoy on their own during all four seasons of the year. The Park's mission is to preserve these wild spaces for contemplation, exploration, and discovery.

For those who wish to learn more about the natural and cultural history of the area, public programs and special events take place throughout the year. Children can join the kid's Garden Club and grow their own veggies & fruits, attend our summer nature camp, or tag and release monarch butterflies. Families can “rough it” overnight at our campsouts, discover how maple syrup is made, or grind apples for cider at the Fall Harvest Festival. Adults can learn candy making techniques, make soups from scratch, or discover the geology that influenced the development of “limekiln hollow”.

Join us a CVP – a place where nature and history is preserved for all!

**Cromwell Valley Park  
2002 Cromwell Bridge Rd.  
Baltimore, MD 21234**



DEPARTMENT OF  
RECREATION AND PARKS

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CVP COUNCIL SPONSORED**

## **EASTER EGG HUNT**

**Saturday, April 7**

**10 AM - 12 PM**

***Sherwood Farm***

***Free event and***

***Fun for the entire family!***

***Kids can search for candy filled eggs***

***Make a spring bonnet/hat***

***Family Games***

***Natural Egg Dying***

**Egg Hunt Times**

***Ages 3 - 4 10:30 AM***

***Ages 5 - 6 10:45 AM***

***Ages 7 - 8 11:00 AM***

***Ages 9 - 10 11:15 AM***

***RESERVATIONS ARE NOT REQUIRED***

***In case of questionable weather, call the Park Office  
after 9 AM on Event Day for details.***

**Park hours:  
Sunrise to sunset**

## **ARTS IN THE PARK**

Presented by

**Towson Arts Collective**

Saturday, May 12<sup>th</sup> 10 – 5

Sunday, May 13<sup>th</sup> 12 – 5

**Art, Music, Poetry,  
Food, Wine and Classic Cars**

\$5 per car, suggested donation

**Cromwell Valley Park Newsletter Staff**

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