

Cromwell Valley Park

Spring 2018 Newsletter & Program Calendar

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2002 Cromwell Bridge Road, Parkville, MD 21234



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

LIME KILN BOTTOM—Making a Big Deal of Our Heritage



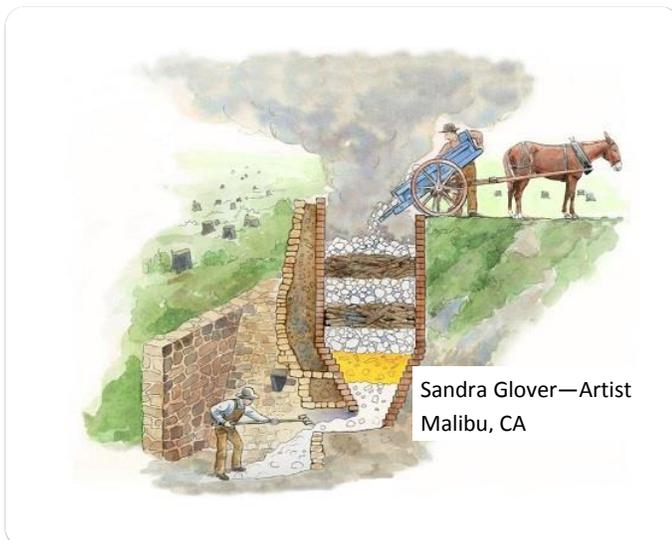
In 2005, the Cromwell Valley Park Council first considered the idea of working with the National Park Service to restore the lime kilns of Cromwell Valley Park. Bureaucratic delays inhibited progress, and finally in 2012 the Council decided to go ahead with State approval and hire its first professional consultant for advice on the project which included the lime kilns and the log house on the property. Now, five years later, the kilns and log house are stabilized and fourteen educational panels with photos and artwork are in place. These panels describe the history, manufacture and uses of lime not only in Cromwell Valley but also throughout the world. These kiln and house structures are the remnants of our cultural heritage; our visual and physical connection to the past. This kiln site exemplifies a vitally important industry that was the largest employer in Baltimore County in the 1800s and represents over 6000 years of technological development.

Lime Kiln Bottom is located within easy walking distance of Willow Grove Nature Education Center. A leisurely 400-foot stroll along Minebank Run brings you to the first sighting of the log house in the distance. Off to your left are the kilns and to your immediate left is the six-panel educational kiosk partially surrounded by the limestone sitting wall. At both ends of the sitting wall and scattered throughout the area are 500 million year old Cockeysville Marble boulders hand-picked for this site by project volunteers. This is the same marble used to build the Washington Monuments in both Baltimore, Maryland and Washington, DC.



Log house

Sitting wall with boulders



LIME KILN BOTTOM—(continued)



Fresh air, exercise and education are all thrown in for the price of one leisurely walk on the farm road leading to and from the lime kilns of Cromwell Valley Park. Come visit them.



Article & Photos
courtesy of Jim Kelly,
Lime Kiln project leader

Early morning is a good time for bird watching. Relax on one of the elegant park benches and take in the surroundings of Lime Kiln Bottom. Bring a lunch and enjoy it at one of the new picnic tables. For a great view, climb the refurbished White Trail, walk out on the new observation deck sitting above the kilns and look down on the whole site. You will quickly discover the difference between the kilns built in the 1800s and the one built in the 1700s. Just how did our ancestors build these structures without modern equipment?

BRIEF HISTORY OF WILLOW GROVE FARM

The house at Willow Grove Farm was built between 1850 and 1860 by the Shanklin family, who were prominent in Baltimore County business and political affairs in the 19th and early 20th centuries. The tract on which the house stands was part of the land acquired by John Wesley Shanklin beginning in 1838. At one time, his holdings extended to both sides of Cromwell Bridge Road, north along Satyr Hill Road to Joppa Road, and as far west as Old Harford Road.

In his will (1883), John divided his land and businesses among his three sons. Son John Wesley Jr. received the property and house on Old Harford Road (Shanklin-Carroll-Longbottom House, BA-282). The lime kilns and house on Satyr Hill Road (Forest Hall, BA-227, demolished in the 1980s) were left to William Jefferson (“Jeff”).

The farm property was left to Arthur Washington Shanklin (Shanklin House at Willow Grove Farm, BA-2768). Arthur, an attorney in Towson, was appointed Postmaster for Loch Raven in 1886, and served as County treasurer for many years. Arthur married Anne Eliza Bosley in 1861; they had 10 children.

In addition to the house, Willow Grove Farm comprises a barn, corn crib, springhouse and two 20th century tenant houses. The Merrick log house (BA-2771) located to the southwest of the restored lime kilns was part of the Long Island Farm tract owned by the Risteau-Jenifer families.

The two-story barn is built on a stone foundation with adze-hewn, square logs, the members assembled at the corners with V-notches, *the only style of joinery ever noted in this county for log buildings*. The corn crib is also built of logs on a stone foundation. The spring house is built of rubble stone, to provide a cool, clean place for storing food, particularly dairy products.

The cemetery located in the open field in front of and to the west of the house is located on the property line dividing County-owned Sherwood Park and State of Maryland/Department of Natural Resources Willow Grove Park. Research reveals no evidence that it was used as a family burying ground by the Shanklin family, who had a family plot at Forest Hall and later were interred at Prospect Hill Cemetery in Towson. Despite the lack of headstones, it is unlikely that enslaved persons were buried in this cemetery, and there is no visible evidence of burials outside of the wall that surrounds it.

Sources *Cromwell Bridge Valley: Historic Background*, John W. McGrain, unpublished manuscript, Historical Society of Baltimore County topic file “Cromwell Valley”; Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties, BA forms as referenced above; BA numbers are property identification numbers (https://mht.maryland.gov/research_mihp.shtml); they may be found on the website by the number or name; Ancestry.com and Newspapers.com for information relating to the Shanklin family



Message from the President, Mia Walsh



By the time this newsletter arrives, Panxsutawney Phil will have told us if we are expecting our brisk winter to be extended or if a warmer climate is just around the corner. Personally, I love winter and I love Cromwell Valley Park covered in snow. The trees, trails and fields shimmer in the sun and our winter bird population is easier to view. There is a blissful quiet to be had during my daily strolls, which brings a much-needed inner peace to my often chaotic daily routine.



Spring, will bring a lot of exciting changes to Cromwell Valley Park; and for that, I am looking forward to the months progressing.



Our **Summer Day Camp registration** will move to a totally on-line format, using a well vetted system called “Camp Brain”. All registration information, payments, waivers and health contact information will be completed from your computer.



No need to make phone calls or drop off you paperwork to register! Our website will be updated with the registration links and instructions soon. Non-member registration will begin March 15th, 2018.

Our **website** will be getting a visual overhaul as well this spring. Look for a more dynamic user experience, filled with amazing photographs, many provided by park-goers like yourself. “Everything CVP” will be at your fingertips and will be equally as pleasing on a mobile device as a desktop or laptop. Please consider sending your photos for publication to socialmedia@cromwellvalleypark.org. We would love to hear from you and see your shots of our beautiful park. Many thanks to Kim Shapiro and our Communications Committee.

Plans are also underway for an **accessible birding trail**, made possible by personal donations from the Jenifer and McQuage families and other individual donors, as well as funding allocated by Cromwell Valley Park Council. The old-growth field area selected for the trail is a haven for Baltimore Orioles, bluebirds, woodpeckers, hawks and many other species. We are thrilled about this wonderful birding opportunity for those with accessibility needs. Thank you to John Canoles and Bill Curtis for spearheading this project.

Through Baltimore County Department of Recreation and Parks and funds directed by Cromwood Coventry Community Association, we will be adding an **accessible covered pavilion** near the Willow Grove Nature Center, perfect for family or company outings. The pavilion will also have an accessible trail connecting key areas of the WGNC, including our Barnatorium education site. We are hopeful for late-summer availability.

Look for notification for the release of some **historical videos** that were recently digitized from the 1920's – 1950's from the Sherwood Family's vault. This project began in 2015 under the leadership of Laurie Taylor-Mitchell and we are greatly thankful for the grant from Preservation Alliance of Baltimore County, which partially funded saving the visual history of Cromwell Valley Park Sherwood Farm and its people shown in this film clips.



Proposed Pavilion

Please take a look at our spring programs in this newsletter and try something new or something “tried and true”; make nature and the outdoors part of your springtime plans! While you are out, please say “thank you” to any of our volunteers who make this park the amazing jewel it is in Baltimore County.

Hope to see you on the trails!

Mia Walsh, President

Just Where Do They Go? - Eastern Box Turtles

F. Kirk Dreier—Senior Naturalist

Our lucky sighting

I am fortunate to live in the North Woods of Baltimore County. My wife Winnie and I enjoy the solitude of the forest of Pretty Boy Reservoir that surrounds our home. We especially enjoy observing the wild forest inhabitants that visit our bird feeders and go about their lives all around us.

While Winnie and I were shooting a round of archery on my target course, we had a rare sighting. It was autumn and the leaves were changing; the evenings were chilly and the days still warm. While reclaiming the arrows from one of my hanging burlap targets, we heard the scratching of leaves near us. Following the source of the sounds, which was amplified by the dry crackly leaves, I saw a slight movement. Pushing the forest duff aside for a better view, we saw a box turtle about eight or ten inches into the ground. It was oblivious to our presence as it went about its business digging its hibernacula for the winter. We marveled at our luck of seeing this natural event, which occurs all over the region every autumn. This busy fellow seemed to be pushing the soil and leaves behind and over its shell. We re-covered the turtle to let him finish his project of burrow digging.

Survival mechanism

Now, when I think about the bitter cold arctic blasts that strike the East Coast in winter, I wonder how in the world a box turtle could survive such temperatures. When temperatures day-after-day sink into single digits, the soil and forest humus can freeze over a foot below the surface. These box turtle burrows are usually no more than two feet deep, according to experts at the Maryland Zoo, and the one we observed was much shallower. For the box turtles, as the days get shorter and the temperatures fall and the turtles begin to burrow, their body begins to produce natural antifreeze from the liver, called glucose and glycerol. In addition the turtle's cells begin to dehydrate so that water moves out of the cells into the body cavity, where it can be frozen without damaging surrounding tissues by water crystals expanding in cell membranes. When it's really cold, a hibernating box turtles lungs can freeze solid and its heart stops beating. Research has shown that 58% of a box turtle's body can be frozen solid without ill effect. It is almost like a "death in winter and spring resurrection" each year.

Range map



Turtle emerging from burrow

Territorial creatures

This brings me to the subject of collecting box turtles and moving them around. Box turtles have fixed territories. When a human moves a turtle from its territory, it wants to return to its home range, which it has memorized and naturally wants to return. Thus released anywhere other than near the territory it came from, in its effort to return, it may cross roads, a dangerous proposition. When I'm with children I use an analogy, "If you were visiting someone else's home, would you know where the kitchen is right away or where the bathrooms and bedrooms are? Of course not, and a box turtle is the same; their territory is their home and they know where the water is, the best spots for digging their hibernacula's, and where fruit is available." Box turtles have a mental map of their territory, which may be no bigger than two football fields, where they may spend their entire very long life.



Photo by Judy Gallagher
Wikimedia Commons



Six species of box turtles have been identified; four in the US and two in Mexico. Our box turtle, *Terrapene carolina carolina*, can be found from Southern Maine to Florida and West to Illinois, Oklahoma, and Texas. Here at Cromwell Valley Park, we have this species in abundance. It is always a real treat, when leading a group of children on a field trip, to encounter a box turtle. The children will be charged with excitement, not to mention the beauty of a teachable moment. The questions asked are very direct and sincere. What does it eat; is it a boy or a girl; what kind of turtle is it?

The Box Turtle has a hinged shell, which allows the animal to completely pull all its soft body parts within and then close up like a box. A boney shell is presented as its only defense. A fully-grown box turtle has no real enemies other than humans and their cars.

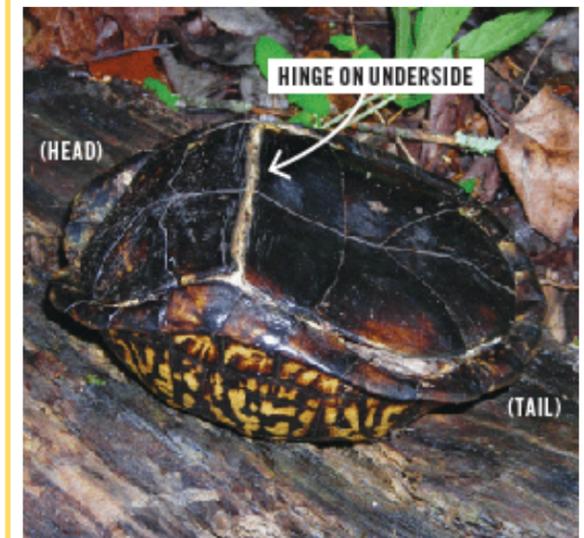
Box Turtles are omnivorous. Their diet includes worms, insects, berries and greens, slugs and the like. But, I've personally seen them eating a dead mouse, snakes, and toads (squashed on the road by cars). They are long-lived, from fifty to sometimes more than hundred years. They lay relatively few eggs, one to eight eggs a season, and they do not become sexually mature until they are five to ten years old.

The greatest danger facing wildlife like the box turtle is the human penchant for habitat fragmentation and destruction. A case in point is the May's Chapel North development adjacent Padonia Road, developed about 20 years ago. At the time a friend of mine, Judy Bond, went to the woodland that was to be raised; with buckets and shovels and flowerpots she tried to salvage and transplant as many wild plants as she could, before the development would destroy them. While harvesting plants in that forest she hit a "rock." Flipping that rock up and out of the hole, she discovered she had unearthed a hibernating box turtle. How many turtles, snakes, amphibians, chipmunks, deer mice, moles, shrews, are crushed and buried when such developments occur?

We see similar development along White Marsh Blvd. where miles of old forest is being destroyed. As a naturalist, I marveled at the size of the trees one passed along the way to Eastern Ave., through nearly seven miles of forest, which undoubtedly contained a wide array of wildlife. Sadly, over the past nine years, much of that old forest is gone along with the box turtles that lived there.

As our box turtles start emerging in April, start looking for them on a spring walk at Cromwell Valley. If you are lucky enough to come across one, marvel at how they survive in the wild.

Habitat destruction



Sources: The Maryland Zoo website
Marshall University Benjamin Owen Koester-
Hibernacula sites in WVA
Judy Bond-
New St Andrews College- Dr. Gordon Wilson –
Eastern Box Turtles Frozen Alive 2011
Penn State Un. Nicole Lenninger Bio 220 paper
Spring 2002 Box Turtles

Winter Woodpeckers

With winter fully in force, our deciduous woodlands have dropped their leafy cloaks, exposing the complex woody structure of the canopy. The bare branches now clank and clatter in cold winter breezes, no longer buffered by the leafy canopy. The winter woods reveal secrets that the summer woods hold close. Nests that were tucked into leafy nooks are exposed, the bone white skeletons of the sycamore reveal the patterns of stream valleys and floodplain terraces, and cavities, large and small, are no longer camouflaged by the leafy cover. The revelations of the winter woods also includes sightings of the oft elusive pileated woodpecker.

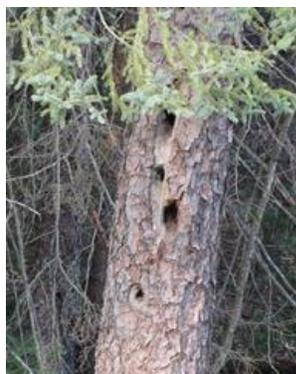
The pileated woodpecker is the largest of the seven woodpecker species that may be found in Cromwell Valley Park. Typically found in large forested tracts, the pileated woodpecker is a picture of contrast. Starkly clad in black, white and red, every feather is meticulously placed. The black could not be blacker and the white could not be whiter. The large red crown, present on both the male and female, may be flatten or extended depending on the mood of the moment. With a length of up to 20 inches and a wingspan that can reach up to 30 inches, they are one of the largest forest birds in the US.

Despite its size and bold coloration, the pileated is like a ghost in the summer forest, dashing through the canopy, offering only the slightest glimpse of its presence. Its laughing call rings out through the summer woods as if to taunt the trailing birdwatcher. In winter, however, the advantage falls back to the birdwatcher. The desperation of the season combined with the long, open views of the winter woods allow birders to take in lengthy, and often relatively close up views of this beautiful bird.



Pileated woodpecker
David Margrave — Wikimedia Com.

When searching for pileated woodpeckers an experienced birder will keep their eyes and ears peeled for several signs. In addition to their loud laughing call, pileated woodpeckers also reveal their presence as they chisel their way into the bark of a dead or dying tree in search of an insect meal. They feed heavily on carpenter ants and chase their colonies deep into dead and dying tree trunks or rotten logs on the forest floor. The heavy, slow thudding of the feeding pileated is much different that the rapid hammering of the smaller woodpeckers. The pileated use their large powerful bill like a chisel, hammering the tree with slow deliberate blows. When watching a pileated feed you will notice that they often crane their necks around looking at the bark from many angles, surveying to find the perfect location for the next blow. Their feeding activity often leaves large chunks of bark scattered on the forest floor, another sign of that a pileated is present in the forest.



Pileated Woodpecker Holes
Seney Natural Hist. Assoc.—WC

The six other woodpecker species that may be found within the Park and in woodlands across the area include the downy, hairy, red-bellied and red-headed woodpeckers, yellow-shafted flicker, and yellow-bellied sapsucker. Most of these species can be attracted to feeder stations for close inspection and enjoyment. They are especially attracted to suet which adds quick fat that helps them to withstand the cold winter temperatures.

Winter also reveals the large oval-shaped openings that the pileated woodpeckers created when excavating their nesting cavities. These cavities are impressive, reaching up to 24 inches in depth. The deliberate work of constructing the cavity is performed in the spring of the year, mostly by the male, and takes 3-6 weeks to complete. The nest cavities are often utilized by other species once abandoned.

Though certainly the most spectacular of our woodpeckers, the pileated is not the only woodpecker whose activity is easier to find in the winter.



Red-bellied woodpecker
Manjithkaini— Wikimedia Commons

Red-bellied woodpeckers, named for the reddish tint on the male's belly during the breeding season, are also clad in bold red, black and white colors but are smaller and lack the crest of the pileated. They are common at feeder stations and enjoy peanuts and corn as well as suet. Red-headed woodpeckers, whose name clearly explains their appearance, are likely the least common woodpecker species to visit the park. These habitat specialists prefer open woodlands or tree scattered meadows and are only locally common in our area. Their winter numbers also decrease because there is some southerly migration outside the breeding season. As conspicuously clad as the pileated, though also lacking the crest, the red headed woodpecker is a real treat to behold.



Red-headed woodpecker
Bill Hubick Photography

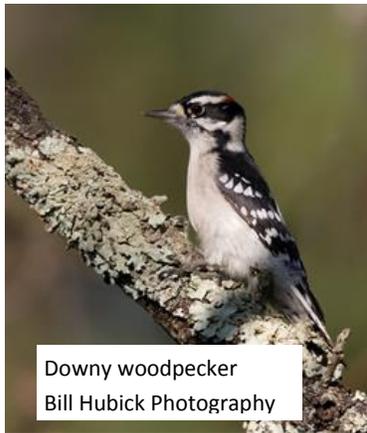
Winter Woodpeckers—(cont.)

The downy and hairy woodpeckers are nearly identical in overall appearance, similarly patterned with white and black with red patch on males head. The hairy is larger and has a much larger and heavier bill in proportion to its head than the downy. Experience will allow a birder to make a quick distinction between these species, careful inspection may be required for the novice. The downy is much more common than the hairy woodpecker, which prefer larger forest stands as compared to the less picky downy, but both species will often forage at feeder stations, eating both suet and sunflowers. Downy woodpeckers are seen in congregations with chickadees, titmice and nuthatches, while hairy woodpeckers are more solitary.

Yellow-bellied sapsuckers are most common in our area in the winter, migrating south from their northern breeding grounds. They will occasionally visit feeding stations but are usually found in the forest drilling their small circular holes around trunks of trees to attract insects to the sap that seeps from the small wound.

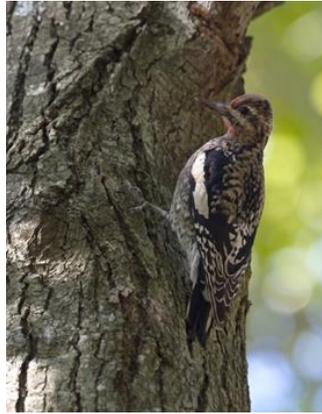


Hairy woodpecker
Bill Hubick Photography



Downy woodpecker
Bill Hubick Photography

Yellow-bellied sapsucker
Bill Hubick Photography



The winter woodpecker show is well worth the effort of bundling up and heading out for a winter walk. Pick a mild, sunny day and enjoy the excitement of the season. The winter woods are not just clanking branches and wind chills, there are many unique sights and sounds that cannot be found in summer.

John Canoles, Eco-Science Professionals, Inc.
P.O. Box 5006 Glen Arm,
MD 21057

The yellow-shafted flicker, now less colorfully named the northern flicker, is a year round resident in the park. Unlike the other woodpeckers, flickers often can be found feeding on the ground, gobbling up ants and other insects. In winter they will turn to eating fruit and seed. Also unlike the other woodpeckers in our area, flickers are uniquely feathered in brown and gray tones with black spots and a red highlights. The males have a red moustache, the females a red crescent on the back of the neck. The shafts of the flight feathers in the wings are yellow, as the name implies, giving the birds quite an exciting appearance in flight.

Yellow-shafted flicker
Bob MacInnes— Wikimedia Commons



Cromwell Valley Park

Nature Camps and Family Programs

Welcome to Cromwell Valley Park Council's new on-line registration system for Cromwell Valley Park's Summer Nature Camps and all activities.

Watch for email announcements and news on our website for the introduction of our new on-line registration system.

Members can register for Summer Camp March 1. Non-members, March 15.



DEPARTMENT OF
RECREATION AND PARKS

The next general meeting
of the CVPC is scheduled
for Monday, March 12, 2018
7 pm at the Sherwood House.

Please join us!

**Park hours:
Sunrise to sunset**

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