

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



DEPARTMENT OF
RECREATION AND PARKS

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Cromwell Valley Park

Fall 2023 Newsletter

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

Report from the Council President

At this point in the Summer I'm sure many of you are eagerly anticipating Fall's cooler temperatures as much as I am. Despite the heat and humidity, the Cromwell Valley Park Council has been hard at work preparing for the upcoming season.

We will be holding our 3rd Annual Migration Celebration (formerly known as the Fall Festival) on September 16th from 10am - 4pm. As in previous years, the event will feature the observation of the hawk migration, live birds of prey closer to the ground, guided nature walks, crafts and games for kids, food, and fun for the whole family. This year we are partnering with the Towson Arts Collective who will be holding their Arts in the Park Festival at the same time on Saturday, the 16th and Sunday, the 17th. Come check out some beautiful local art and music.

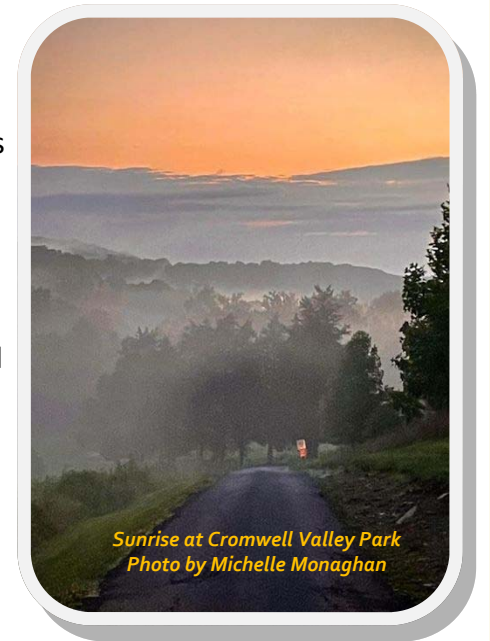
The Member Appreciation Picnic, rained out in April, has been rescheduled for September 23rd. We are very excited to have live music and catered BBQ to show appreciation for our amazing members and volunteers. Please keep an eye out for registration for this free members-only event, as there are only a limited number of spots available.

I am also very excited to announce the return of our Night Out with Nature series. Pat Novak has been hard at work organizing this beloved activity. The first talk will be given on Wednesday, September 27th by Lauren Lustig and is titled "Game Wardens – The Thin Green Line". Additional NOWN talks are scheduled for October 25th & November 29th. Please check out our website for more information.

Since the last newsletter we have added several new members to the CVPC Board. Please welcome Stacey Cruise as Secretary and Dave Votta, Deb Lee, and Carl Gold as new Directors. We are also reviewing our committee structure and plan on making some changes soon, which should create opportunities for additional involvement, so please get in touch if you are interested in helping to oversee this fantastic park.

Last but not least, we must stay vigilant in our fight against the invasive plant species in our park. The Weed Warriors - Habitat Restoration Team leads the effort to mitigate their effect, but while we have occasionally enlisted the help of some goats, more human hands are always needed. Please take a look at our website for upcoming dates and for more information about what you can do.

Abe Yoffe, Cromwell Valley Park Council President



Use this QR code to access
the full events calendar:



or visit us online at:

<https://cromwellvalleypark.org>

Park hours: Sunrise to sunset

Cromwell Valley Park Newsletter Staff

Communications Committee: *Mia Walsh,
Pat Novak, Kim Shapiro & Dave Schroeder*

Contributors: *Abe Yoffe, John Canoles,
Stacey Cruise and Carl Gold*

Editor: *Dave Schroeder*

Get Ready for our Fall Events...

Night Out with Nature is BACK!



After a hiatus since COVID, Cromwell Valley Park Council is pleased to announce the return of our Night Out with Nature Speaker Series! This Age 18+ evening series brings adult education back to our park for fun and enjoyable evenings, which include refreshments, desserts and a social atmosphere with your fellow CVPC members. Our fall programming includes:

Wednesday, September 27 at 6:30-8:30pm

A Thin Green Line: Tales from a Mason/Dixon Game Warden (Ages: adult)

Our speaker series Night Out with Nature has returned with Loren Lusting, a wildlife biologist, park naturalist, resource manager and environmental educator for almost 50 years. Loren will present numerous examples from his 12 years as a Deputy Waterways conservation officer for the PA

Fish and Boat Commission. Registration required. \$10 includes dessert and beverage.

Wednesday, October 25 at 6:30-8:30pm

Identification of birds using technology (Ages: adult)

John Canoles has been involved in nature education in Baltimore County since the 1980's. He is an ecologist by trade and will show us how to use tools like E-Bird, Merlin, and iNaturalist to help identify birds and promote citizen science and improve important birding databases. Registration required. \$10 includes dessert and beverage.

Wednesday, November 29 at 6:30-8:30pm

Native Bees in our Yards (Ages: adult)

Sara Yosua, Baltimore County Master Gardener and Maryland Master Naturalist will bring the importance of our native bees to promote healthy, sustainable, functioning ecosystems in our properties and describe projects to attract these important pollinators.

Registration required. \$10 includes dessert and beverage.



3rd Annual Migration Celebration

Saturday, September 16th
10am - 4 pm

Cromwell Valley Park
2175 Cromwell Bridge Road
Baltimore



Hawk Watch
Birds of Prey
Educational Hikes
Crafts & Games
Music & Food
Art Vendors

Presented by Cromwell
Valley Park Council in
partnership with
Towson Art Collective
"Arts in the Park"

\$5
donation
requested
for
parking



**Don't forget to bring your own
binoculars to Cromwell Valley Park's
third annual Migration Celebration!**

**This year, we are pleased to announce that
Towson Arts Collective vendors will be on site
for their "Arts in the Park" festival, both
Saturday, the 16th and Sunday, the 17th of
September.**

**If you are interested in nature, hiking, bird
watching and the arts, this is an event you
don't want to miss. For more information,
please visit:**

[https://cromwellvalleypark.org/
migrationcelebration/](https://cromwellvalleypark.org/migrationcelebration/)

Bluebird of Happiness

Imagine trying to learn the English language if you are not a native speaker. The same word can have opposite meanings. For example, "blue." When we are unhappy, feeling sad, had a rough day, it is common to say we are "blue." The **Moody Blues** greatest hits include Melancholy Man:



*I'm a melancholy man
That's what I am
All the world surrounds me and my feet are on the ground
I'm a very lonely man
Doing what I can
All the world astounds me and I think I understand
That we're going to keep growing
Wait and see*

Yet one of our happiest symbols is the **Eastern Bluebird**. I choose to focus on the happy meaning and the astounding Eastern Bluebird. They are cavity-nesting birds who stay in our region all year round. They live in most of the United States east of the Rocky Mountains and parts of southern Canada. They can live for 6 to 10 years but most do not survive their first year. The males have beautiful blue bodies and orangey breasts. The females are more of a dull blue-grey. Tree holes are their favorite nesting spots but they have adapted remarkably well to human made nesting boxes. In the spring and summer, they feast on insects and share that energy boosted bounty with their young. In winter, they subsist on seeds and berries.

Eastern Bluebirds are commonly found in "edge" environments or ecotones. They love the area where an open field abuts a wooded area or water source. They prefer an open canopy or at least semi open adjacent to low grass as they primarily hunt insects on the ground. They take 2-5 days to build their nest and lay one egg a day for 5 to 7 days. The eggs are a brilliant blue, think Carolina blue, not Duke blue. Once in a while, an egg will be white or even a little pinkish. It only takes 14 days incubation to reach hatching stage. After only 22 days the chicks will be fledged. This means the downy feathers have been replaced with adult feathers and they start to learn to fly.

I was privileged to accompany Cromwell Valley Park Naturalist **Laura Lechtzin** on a Bluebird nest hike. She runs the nesting program at the park where, along with volunteers, about 30 nests are monitored. Plans are to increase the number of boxes to 50 and more. Marshy Point Park also has a few boxes and hopes to expand.

Eastern Bluebirds have many predators. House sparrows are among the worst, perhaps tied with eastern rat snakes. Eastern Bluebirds are picky about the size of the hole (about 1 and a half inch) for their nest. Most predatory birds cannot fit. That size is perfect, however for house sparrows. A house sparrow will take over a Bluebird nest, pierce the Bluebird eggs, killing them, and lay her own eggs. European starlings will do the same. Short of adding the house sparrow or starling eggs, not much can be done to deter them. Snakes, however, can be deterred with a cylindrical metal or plastic baffle that fits over the pole to which the nest is attached. You can make your own baffle with duct work available at any hardware store. Here is a link for a DIY version:

<https://nestwatch.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/guardsto.pdf>.

Female Bluebirds often will lay a second clutch of eggs, and sometimes a third in the same season. You can clean out their nests after each clutch has matured enough to have left the nest. At a minimum, clean the nests in the fall to reduce the likelihood of parasites taking over. In the winter, or early spring, scrape off any wasps' nests. Spider families can be left alone.

Carl R. Gold is a Maryland Master Naturalist and can be reached at cgold@carlgoldlaw.com, or crgkoko on Instagram & Twitter.



Eastern Bluebird at CVP
Photos by Mia Walsh

Through the Seasons: All-ages Programs & Events at Cromwell Valley Park

Cromwell Valley Park's staff plans an array of year-round nature education programs and nature-focused events which cater to participants of all ages. Guided by a team of expert Park Rangers and Naturalists, these immersive experiences encourage visitors to deepen their understanding of nature while exploring the park's natural wonders. With a strong emphasis on hands-on learning, participants sometimes use binoculars, nets, magnifying glasses, and jars to get up close and personal with the park's vegetation, insects, birds, animals, and reptiles.

This interactive approach deepens the connection to the natural environment and leaves a lasting impact, especially on the children in the group! The nature education programs and events span a wide range of captivating topics, covering everything from plant identification to wildlife tracking and even exploring the intricate interconnectedness of ecosystems.

A popular event often happens when the new moon rises, night hikes! During the night-time hikes, the Park Rangers highlight how busy nature is at night! These hikes end with the warm glow of a crackling campfire and a yummy snack, allowing adults and children over age 8 to experience the park's nocturnal creatures.

Environmental stewardship is at the core of Cromwell Valley Park's mission, and this message is clear throughout the various programs and events. Participants are reminded of the delicate balance that sustains life on Earth, serving as a poignant call to action to protect and preserve our Park's valuable habitats.

For my family, these experiences offered by Cromwell Valley Park's nature education programs and events always leave us with a profound appreciation for the beauty and fragility of the natural world. The dedication of the expert Park Rangers and Naturalists, combined with the enthusiasm of participants, always make Cromwell Valley Park a place where fun, and learning, inspire an even deeper connection to nature.

To view and register for Cromwell Valley Park's program and events, visit <https://cromwellvalleypark.org>

Cromwell Valley Educational Programs and Events



For all ages! Year around! Hands-on!



To learn more visit, www.cromwellvalley.org



Shining Stars Volunteer Awards



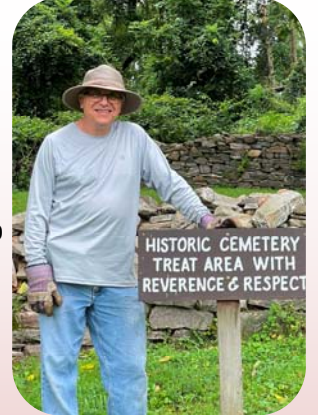
Abe Yoffe

Abe Yoffe has been President of Cromwell Valley Park Council since April of 2021. In the last few years, Abe has been a strong advocate of the park through his numerous Town Hall presentations with Baltimore County leadership, his work with the Department of Environmental Protection and Sustainability, as well as with the Department of Public Works. Abe's background in construction and project management has been an integral part of the capital project initiatives which Baltimore County has set for the park, including approximately \$2 million in improvement projects, currently in the design phase. **Thank you Abe!**



Mike Mauro

Mike Mauro is a retired licensed Physical Therapist, who operated his own practice for over 20 years. Since joining the Trails group in February 2022, he has volunteered an enormous number of hours keeping the park looking great. He has mowed, chain sawed, mulched, mended fences and helped to maintain the ponds. Beside all of the hard physical work he has done, Mike found time to research and write about the history, cultivation and growth of the Sherwood Apple Orchard for the purpose of an informational display at the orchard, which, by the way, he helped plant and now helps maintain. **Thank you Mike!**



Even more events at Cromwell Valley Park...

MOVIE NIGHT



**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 2ND
SEATING AT 6 PM - MOVIE AT 7 PM**

FREE! REGISTRATION NOT REQUIRED!



CROMWELL VALLEY PARK
2175 CROMWELL BRIDGE ROAD
410-887-2503

WWW.CROMWELLVALLEYPARK.ORG



Primitive Technology Weekend!



Join us as we share knowledge and hands-on experience in the replication of items composed of stone, bone, wood, and natural fibers.

Saturday, October 14 at 10 AM to 4 PM
and Sunday, October 15 at 10 AM to 1 PM

Admission is **FREE!!!**

Limited camping is available Friday & Saturday Night- **\$5/person.**

If you are camping, please arrive by 8pm.

You **MUST** register for camping online at www.cromwellvalleypark.org



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2175 Cromwell Bridge Road
Parkville, MD 21234

For more information:
www.cromwellvalleypark.org
410-887-2503



Should you require special accommodations (i.e. language interpreter, large print, etc.) please give as much notice as possible by calling the Park office at 410-887-2503 or the Therapeutic Office at 410-887-5370. TTY users call via Maryland Relay

Cool Days Ahead - Time for a Hike!

With fall quickly approaching... the humidity of summer will soon be a memory. This summer seemed particularly hot and humid, at times, so the change of season will surely be welcome. Though summer will be marked on our celestial calendars until September 23, signs of the coming season abound. The southern migration of birds has already begun with some species of songbirds, shorebirds and raptors already winging south. By early September, the hawk migration will be in full flight over the park. This annual spectacle will hit its peak sometime in mid-September depending on weather and wind patterns. The hawk watch crew is anxiously awaiting the swirling kettles of broadwings and knifelike flight of kestrels and merlins. As summer turns toward autumn, the old fields at Cromwell will be full of activity as butterflies, moths, bees and wasps of countless species all forage on the endless bounty of energy that the flowers have converted from sunshine to nectar and pollen.



Photo by Sean Fisher

Another group that prospers in summer-fall transition period is the dragonflies and damselflies which hunt the skies in search of prey. Though most often associated with ponds, adult dragonflies may be found in a variety of habitats. They can be found winging over ponds, fields, meadows and even into the forest in search of prey. The dragonfly life cycle is much like that of a butterfly in that it typically has three stages. The first stage of life comes as the egg is laid in late summer by the female dragonfly on vegetation over a pond, marsh or wetland. If a leafy laying location can't be found, the eggs can be deposited directly onto the surface of the water.



Photo by Rose Wolfe

The green darner is one of the most common dragonflies in North America. They are relatively large, 2-3 inches in length with wingspans ranging to 4.5 inches. They have large green bodies, thorax, with large heads with giant eyes. The sides of the male's abdomen are blue and the females are told by their gray/green flanks. As with most of their kind, green darners are quick and acrobatic fliers. They generally live around ponds and slow moving waters where they feed on mosquitoes, small flies, butterflies, bees and wasps. For their size they are voracious predators.

Of particular interest is the fact that green darners migrate. The darners' migration is not as simple as an individual moving north-south with the seasons, their migration spans generations, much like the monarch. Detailed scientific studies of museum specimens along with real time monitoring of population movement have only recently begun to unravel this mystery of their migration. In general, each year the darners produce three populations that complete the full migration and annual life cycle of the species. The first generation of adult dragonflies, which emerge from an aquatic larval form, take to wing in late winter in the southern US, Mexico and the Caribbean. These adult dragonflies begin their migration north, reaching the mid-Atlantic in mid-spring.

The populations continues spreading north through New England so that by early summer green darner dragonflies are common across much of the US. This adults will then lay eggs that become the second generation of the year. The eggs are laid in pools and slow waters where they hatch into aquatic nymphs. These predatory nymphs will feed on other larvae, tadpoles and even small fish as they develop. Eventually the nymphs crawl out of the water onto nearby vegetation and the adult dragonfly will emerge, similar to an adult cicada emerging from its larval stage. This generation of adult dragonflies will then migrate south to lay the eggs of the third generation of the year. This generation of adults does not migrate but will breed and lay eggs to create the first generation of the following year's population.

Green darners are commonly seen migrating through the skies high above Cromwell Valley Park. Their numbers are recorded, at least generally, by the hawk watch crew though sometimes their flights take them beyond the range of even the best binoculars.

As you enjoy the transition from summer to fall, pay special mind to the changes of the wildlife around you. Preparations for winter and future generations take advantage of the abundance of the season and activity abounds.

John Canoles, Former Director, CVP Council



Photo by Carl Mayford

WELCOME to the CVP APPLE ORCHARD!!

The trees in the current Cromwell Valley apple orchard were planted between 2021 and 2023 on the site of the Sherwood Farm Apple Orchard that once stood in this field. Apples, as well as other produce, were grown at Sherwood Farm for sale at local markets.

The original Sherwood Apple Orchard was planted in 1944 by the Sherwood family. Eleven acres of Winesap apple trees and a few peach trees were planted. The orchard was located between Wellington Woods and the farm manager's house on Sherwood Farm. A tool barn was converted into the Apple House for the purpose of cleaning and processing the apples for market. Picked apples were placed in cloth bags for transfer to the Apple House. There they were culled, washed and packed in special wooden boxes stamped with the Sherwood logo in preparation for market. The boxes of apples were sold at Baltimore wholesale waterfront markets and at stalls in the various city markets around town. Some apples were packed in three pound bags for sale at the Farm, at select A & P stores and in the city markets. The original Sherwood orchard contained between 175 and 200 trees. Today's demonstration orchard contains about 35 trees of 12 different varieties, and plans are to produce enough apples to supply the Park's apple sauce and apple butter-making programs. Approximately 100 apples make 20 pints of sauce or butter.



(Please don't eat the apples as they will be used for activities sponsored by Cromwell Valley Park.)

APPLE TREE QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

What is the history of the apple tree?

Apple trees are grown worldwide. They originated in Central Asia and have been grown for thousands of years in Asia and Europe. They were an important food source in many ancient civilizations, and are mentioned in ancient Greek and Norse mythology. In the Middle Ages, apples were often used for medicinal purposes and were believed to have a range of healing properties. They were brought to North America by European colonists.

How do apple trees pollinate?

Apple trees can be self-pollinating; however, most apple trees require cross-pollination. They can cross pollinate with a tree of the same or a different variety. When they are pollinated by a different variety of apple tree, the fruit produced is often bigger and the tree more productive. The best fruit production occurs when two or more varieties are planted in the same general area. This is why apple orchards typically contain multiple varieties of apple trees. Pollen is transferred by insects such as bees, butterflies, flies and beetles, as well as the wind.

What does cultivar mean?

Apple trees are cultivars. The term cultivar is short for "cultivated variety" and refers to a plant variety that has been intentionally selected and bred by humans for desirable traits such as enhanced flavor, disease resistance, increased yield, and other characteristics. There are over 7500 cultivars (varieties) of apple trees.

Will the seeds from an apple produce the same type of apple tree?

No, the seeds from an apple will not produce the same type of tree as the parent tree. This is because apple trees cross pollinate between different varieties. When an apple tree produces seeds, those seeds inherit genetic material from both the male (pollen) and female (ovule) parent trees. The offspring trees grown from apple seeds will exhibit genetic variation and may have different characteristics compared to the parent tree. Apple trees are typically not grown from seeds, but rather from grafting or budding to reproduce a specific tree without relying on seeds.



This is an excerpt from an article by Mike Mauro. To find out more, be sure to visit the park!