Cromwell Valley Park

Winter 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 PARK DIRECTOR The Sycamore - Baobab of the East

In General George Washington's Journal dated November 4th, 1770 he notes a tree along the Kanawha River measuring "3 feet from the ground, measuring forty-five feet around lacking 2". John and Samuel Pringle lived in a hollow sycamore tree near the present site of Buckhannon WVA from 1764 to 1768. The sycamore tree is indeed a remarkable tree in that it can grow to very large diameters and even when hollow on the inside can, and often does, continue to grow. As in the case of baobab trees in Africa, people often took shelter inside them and in at least the case of the Pringle brothers in the mid-18th century lived in one for four years!

This is a tree of our Eastern Forests (there are two other subspecies of sycamores in the US) and is mostly found along water courses in low, wet woods. They can grow to over 150 feet tall and 14 feet or more in diameter! The leaves of the sycamore look superficially like giant maple leaves. I can't tell you how many times a visitor has come to me in the autumn with one of the massive leaves dropped from a sycamore,



marveling at the size of the leaf and wanting to know what it was. The leaves are indeed large but some of that is related to where the leaf was on the tree's canopy. The lower down on the tree the wider and thinner the leaf (to gather sunlight), while higher up in the canopy the leaves will be smaller and thicker.

REPORT from the PARK DIRECTOR (continued)



The bark of the sycamore peels in brown strips that reveal a white smooth bark underneath. Large numbers of trees at a distance have the appearance of paper birch trees they can look so white. We've always assumed that the Willow Grove Nature Center's building was between 150 and 156 years old and was built by Arthur Washington Shanklin. In 1867 Arthur married Ann Bosley and we think that they planted trees in honor of each other; matrimonial trees if you will. That helps explain the two trees on each side of the Nature Center and thus, the trees are at least as old as

the building.

One tree, with its massive girth on the East side of the building (and is an emblem on our uniforms), is a Maryland Certified Big Tree and is 16 feet in circumference. Sadly, the other matrimonial tree on the South West side near the Children's Education Garden died this summer. It had a tough time leafing out this spring, and we were hopeful it was just dormant, but alas this venerable tree which



provided shade



for people and nests for orioles has passed away. At over 90' in height this sentinel of the garden is a real danger to visitors, as it has been dropping branches.

The tree is slated to be cut down in the next month, so, when you come by the park take some pictures of it before it's taken down. We are sad that this remarkable tree is gone.

Photos and Text by Ranger Kirk Dreier

Upcoming Events At Cromwell Valley Park

<u>Saturday Morning Bird Walks</u> Saturdays, Starting September 30 through November 11 at 8 AM to 10 AM_Ages 14+. This fall join a Park Naturalist on Saturdays for an early morning bird walk. FREE! Registration REQUIRED. Meet in the Willow Grove Parking Lot.

Gourd Bowls Saturday, November 11, 1 PM to 3 PM.

Adults 18+. Gourds were an inedible squash that humans found a use for. Gourds could be made into containers, ladles, spoons, and even corn storage containers. Join us at the Primitive Technology Lab, to learn the Stone Age method of creating a beautiful and useful container. \$2 members /\$4 non-members REGISTRATION REQUIRED FOR THIS EVENT

Let's Talk Turkey Saturday, November 18, 1 PM to 2 PM.

Let's Talk Turkey - All Ages. Benjamin Franklin wanted the turkey to be our national symbol. Meet our live turkeys on this day and learn what makes them special. \$2 members /\$4 non-members. BOTH ADULTS AND CHILDREN MUST REGISTER FOR THIS EVENT

Fort Garrison Feast Sunday, November 19, 12 PM to 2 PM

Fort Garrison Feast - Ages 13+. The fort was built on the Maryland frontier in 1693. Meet the Rangers and find out how they lived and what they ate. Don't miss this once-a-year event! Reservations REQUIRED. Directions will be given at time of registration. Dress for the weather. \$25 members /\$30 non-members. Call for more info.

Thanksgiving Day

Thursday, November 23 Thanksgiving Day - The Nature Center and Park Office will be closed, but the Park will be open sunrise to sunset for this Holiday.

Black Friday Night Hike

Friday, November 24 at 7 PM to 8:30 PM Black Friday Night Hike - Ages 8+. Skip the crowds at the mall on this busiest shopping day of the season and enjoy a night hike with a Naturalist that ends around the campfire with S'mores. \$3 members/\$5 non-members. BOTH ADULTS AND CHILDREN MUST REGISTER FOR THIS EVENT

Sheep and Wool

Saturday, November 25 at 12 PM to 2 PM Sheep and Wool – Ages 14+. Wool is a miracle fiber. It keeps you warm even if wet and can keep you cool when it's hot. Wool has interlocking fibers, which allow it to be felted. Join a Naturalist to make felted objects and learn about lanolin, fleeces, and sheep. \$4 members/\$6 non-members.

Volunteer – Habitat Restoration

Join our Habitat Restoration Team for 2 hours. We will remove invasive plants from the park and in warmer weather, also plant natives and maintain restored habitat – great opportunities for high school students for community service and volunteers who like to work outdoors. SEE https://cromwellvalleypark.org/volunteer/weedwarriors/TO SIGN UP! - FREE

Holiday Open House

Saturday, December 2 at 10 AM to 1 PM Holiday Open House - All Ages. Find all of your holiday excitement on one farm. Come help decorate the Sherwood House for the holidays. Seasonal crafts, cookie decorating, hot cider, music, and a visit with SANTA! Registration NOT required. \$3 per person/\$10 per family of 4 or more. Sherwood House

Hibernation – Where Do They Go?

Sunday, December 3 at 1 PM to 2 PM Hibernation – Where Do They Go? – All Ages. Just who are our winter hibernators at the park? Where do reptiles and amphibians go during cold weather? Join a Naturalist to find out. \$2 members/\$4 non-members. REGISTRATION REQUIRED

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Holiday Trivia Trail Trek

Sunday, December 10 at 10 AM to 2 PM Holiday Trivia Trail Trek – All ages. Pick up a self-guided trail book, answer the trivia questions, and return to the Nature Center for a prize! Drop-In program. Reservations NOT required. FREE!

Holiday Centerpieces

Saturday, December 16 at 1 PM to 3 PM Holiday Centerpieces - Ages 13+. The fresh greens in your arrangement will bring the scent and beauty of the outdoors to your table. Please bring garden gloves if your hands are sensitive to the sap and prickles of the pines. \$7 members per centerpiece /\$10 non-members per centerpiece. BOTH ADULTS AND CHILDREN MUST REGISTER FOR THIS EVENT

How Do Animals Stay Warm?

Sunday, December 17 at 1 PM to 2:30 PM How Do Animals Stay Warm? - Ages 4+. Join a Naturalist to discover the ways reptiles, mammals, birds, fish, and frogs avoid the cold. \$2 members /\$4 non-members. BOTH ADULTS AND CHILDREN MUST REGISTER FOR THIS EVENT

Solstice Winter Hike

Thursday, December 21 at 6 PM to 7:30 PM Solstice Winter Hike – Ages 10+. Early man thought the sun was gone for good and built Stonehenge and other structures to see if the longer days will return. Join a Naturalist for a seat around a campfire and hot chocolate with marshmallows. \$4 members/\$5 non-members. BOTH ADULTS AND CHILDREN MUST REGISTER FOR THIS EVENT

Visit the Nature Center

Saturday, December 23 and Sunday, December 24 at 10 AM to 3 PM Visit the Nature Center - All Ages. Visit the Nature Center during the Holidays. We will have hot chocolate and cookies while you enjoy your visit. FREE! Registration NOT required. Drop-in program. Donations Welcome! REGISTRATION NOT REQUIRED

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Law of Claw & Fang

Saturday, December 30 at 1 PM to 2 PM Law of Claw & Fang – All Ages. Join a Naturalist to learn about food chains and help us feed our animal collection. Drop-In program. Registration NOT required. FREE! REGISTRATION NOT REQUIRED

Audubon's 124th Christmas Bird Count

Sunday, December 31 at 8 AM to 11 AM Audubon's 124th Christmas Bird Count – Ages 12+. Come join a Naturalist in this 100+ year tradition of tracking the health and populations of our local birds. We will hike the Park's various habitats and count birds as we go. Bring binoculars, if you have them. Dress for the weather. FREE! BOTH ADULTS AND CHILDREN MUST REGISTER FOR THIS EVENT



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.





Wednesday, November 29 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.

2022 Statement of Financial Position



2022 saw the return of many of our beloved community events, which were sorely missed in 2021 due to the pandemic. Though our donations were down from 2021, our financial health remained very strong to close the 2022 year end with a \$21,000 surplus.

Assets:	<u>\$145,998.01</u>	Restricted Funds:	\$ 1	5,888.41
Checking	\$ 98,550.21	Accessible Trail	\$	250.00
Savings	\$ 46 , 725.94	CampBrain Balance	\$	2,146.00
Petty Cash	\$ 479.74	Children's Garden	\$	161.85
PayPal	\$ 242.12	Deady Funds	\$	112.05
		Fort Garrison Funds	\$	6,437.99
		France-Merrick Funds	\$	553.11
Liabilities & Equity	<u>\$ 145,998.01</u>	Friends of Sherwood	\$	3,912.08
Restricted	\$ 15,888.41	Koininia Funds	\$	480.05
Unrestricted	\$ 108,556.38	Lawnmower Fund	\$	793.30
Net Surplus	\$ 21,553.22	Merrick Bank Barn	\$	590.00
		Summer Camp Funds	\$	127.63
		Weed Warrior Funds	\$	258.09

Thanks to fundraising campaigns to support specific areas of the park in 2022, we received \$26,110.92 in donations in calendar year 2022, of which \$9,405.35 was donated for specific items, like dog waste stations, benches and our successful test pilot of Goats Eating Invasive Species.

THANK YOUTO ALL WHO DONATED!



Deb & Chuck Donofrio David McKibbin 2022 **Alan Penczek NEW Jack Walsh**

\$1,000 lifetime memberships

2022 MEMBERSHIP DONORS

2022 \$250 PATRON **MEMBERSHIPS**

Canoles, John Conklin. Charlie Isaacs, Tricia/Dent, George Scott, Allan Supik, Patricia Trout, Debbie & Jerry



2022 \$100 SUSTAINING MEMBERS

Bankey, Laura Boecker, Ralph Ciesielski, Maureen & Jack Craig, Anne Curtis, Garry Davis, Ronald & Loretta Diller III, Frank/McCabe, Jennifer Dorsey, Susan & Jeff Gibson, Bruce & Margaret

Jones, Allison Kahla, Paul & Janet Lee. Deb & Ed

Oswalt, Kelli Snead Melev. Teresa/ Meley, Larry Stevens, Joyce Suzdak, Carol & Peter Virro, Meghan Wieczynski, Jan Wolff, Marc

Maher, Patrick

* Denotes years of consecutive DONATIONS to Cromwell Valley Park Council

Cromwell Valley Park Council @CromwellValleyPark



Along with credit card donations from our website, we also accept Venmo and Paypal to make your year-end giving as simple as possible!



\$2,000+ LEVEL

*Craig. Anne

*McQuage, Kenneth

*Walsh, Mia & Brian

\$1.000—\$1.999 LEVEL

*Baltimore Road Runners Club Moran, Kathy Stapleton, Mary *Walsh. Jack

\$500—\$999 LEVEL

*Barker, Jason & Jean *David W. Buck Family Foundation Fleming, Meghan Goldman, Stuart Klesius, Michele Kutzera. Michele *Murphy, Kate *Paszkiewicz, Kelly & Greg Smith. Michael *Yoffe, Hilarie & Abe

\$200—\$499 LEVEL

*Bluesteel Stampede Cardwell, Katherine *Clarke, Jason *Lutherville Garden Club *Geraghty, Jerome & Carolyn Konradi. Amanda

\$200-\$499 LEVEL CONT.

*Lewis, Robert/Cook, Peggy Palitti, Sloan *Roche, Nancy & Joe *Shapiro, Kim Sobeachy Haitian Cuisine *Teixeira, Cathy Whiteford, Michael & Beth

\$100—\$199 LEVEL

*Barnes, Barbara *Boland, Bill & Barbara *Bullen, Greg/Whalen, Patti *Canoles, John

*Ciesielski, Maureen & Jack

*Cieslicki, Mary

*Comotto, Jennifer & Brian

*Crowley, Kristen

*Diller III, Frank/McCabe, Jennifer

Downing, Greg

*Elseroad, Margaret & Jeffrey

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*Giltinan, Timothy & Lynn

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*Gunter, Rusty & Linda Hot Glass Burns

*Kelly, James & Patricia

*Kong, Kenny

*Mills. Albert & Patricia

donation?

What's better for CVPC? A high-

level membership or a general

level) and also contribute to our specia

For a complete list of CONTRIBUTING members, please visit

2022 donors at every level

EMAIL YOUR QUESTIONS TO TREASURER@CROMWELLVALLEYPARK.ORG

\$100—\$199 LEVEL CONT.

Poitras, Kimberly *Pollard, Ashling Rein. Bart Seiler, Lorraine & John Snead Meley, Teresa/Meley, Larry Stengel, Jana *Sullenberger, Diane Talley, Anne Towson Presbyterian Kindergarten, Inc. Vrankovich, John Wengert, Katherine & Jason Wolfe, Rose *Wright, Claire

\$50—\$99 LEVEL

Biddle, Lori Bledsoe, Janice Brownawell, Emily Canino, Marisa Carroll Manor Elementary - 5th Grade *Childs. Richard & Sharon Cooke, Linda *Dilks, Martina & Nicholas *Dorsey, Susan & Jeff *Federated Garden Clubs of Maryland District III *Gibson, Bruce & Margaret Hahn, Ed *Hofmann, Nancy Hoover, Erin & Brian *Hunter, Cindy/Roberge, Martin Infants and Toddlers Program Activity

\$50—\$99 LEVEL CONT.

*Lake, Sue *Levitas, Wende Malinowski, Karen Manor Garden Club McCloskey, Michael *Morris, Martha & Robert Naft, Andrea & Joseph *Norton, Katie & Kyle *Novak, Pat Pagonis, Tony Pucak, Michele/Blanpied, Thomas *Ramsburg, Kenneth *Rector, Joe & Jacki Reiche, Sean & Colleen *Riggs, Marita & James Rudolph, Kathy Senft, Curt/Surkhang, Dechen Shell. Caroline & Justin Simms, Laura Stevens, Joyce Suzdak, Carol & Peter Timonium Elementary School **Towson Arts Collective** Tran, Cao-Ly *Varisco, Frank & Martha Watson, Frank Wilson, Robin Zen Fiber Arts

FULL LIST OF 2022 DONORS:

www.cromwellvalleypark.org/donate

and scroll to bottom

Programs & Events at Cromwell Valley Park

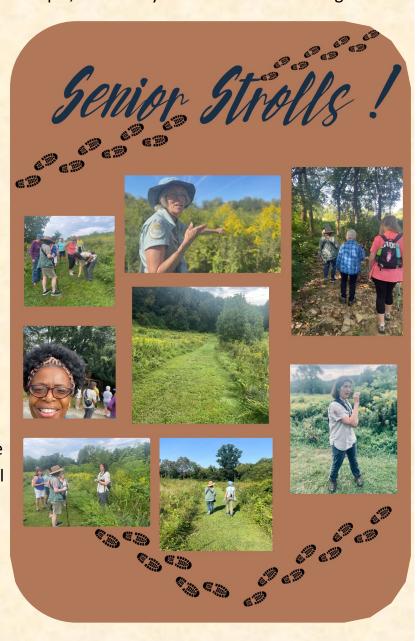
Cromwell Valley Park's Senior Stroll Program: Elevate Your Well-being By: Stacey Cruise

Experience the joys of nature and nurture your well-being by participating in Cromwell Valley Park's "Senior Stroll" program, exclusively for those aged 55 and above. Immerse yourself in the park's natural beauty and explore its tranquil, beautifully maintained trails. This gentle

outdoor exercise promises many physical and mental benefits while fostering community among fellow nature enthusiasts.

Walking in nature is not just a pleasant pastime; it is a holistic experience that nourishes the mind and body. The knowledgeable Naturalists guide everyone through some of the Park's most accessible and serene trails, ensuring a safe and enjoyable experience. With their expertise, you'll better understand the flora and fauna that call the Park home.

The benefits of the Park's Senior Stroll program are many. Nature walks reduce stress, boost mood, and improve overall mental well-being. Moreover, the physical act of walking promotes cardiovascular health, strengthens muscles, and enhances flexibility. The Park provides the perfect backdrop for mindful reflection and relaxation.



Best of all, participation in the Senior Stroll program is FREE. However, pre-registration is required due to the popularity of this program and to ensure the best experience for all participants. Don't miss out on this wonderful opportunity to connect with nature and its restorative powers.

NATURE IN FOCUS

MAGNIFICENT BRYOZOA

After a couple of hours kayaking at Loch Raven Reservoir in northern Baltimore County, Maryland, adjacent to Cromwell Valley Park, I head to my favorite cove for a snack and a drink - perhaps even a nap. Under a cerulean sky I see what appears to be a massive collection of frog eggs – an 18-inch-long, gelatinous mass seeming to float in the water. Upon closer examination, there are three masses, not floating but attached to a partially submerged tree limb. The other two are not quite as large as the one that caught my attention but are still at least a foot long and thick as my thigh. Unlike frog egg masses, these appear to be tightly bonded and not translucent. They are near the surface of the water, at least in part, so they do not resemble spawning fish-egg nests. Are these nascent blobs of 1950's era horror movies? Some type of alien pods hoping to be touched so they



Magnificent Bryozoa (Pectinatella Magnifica) Photo by Carl Gold

can take control of a human body? I have no idea. Too scared to touch them, I take photos instead.

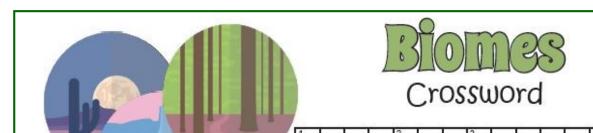
The **iNaturalist** app comes to the rescue. I have stumbled onto several colonies of **Magnificent Bryozoa** (**Pectinatella Magnifica**). They are also referred to as **Moss Animals** or **Snot Monsters** (this is the most accurate description). Up close they look like combined drippings of hundreds of virus infected preschoolers all joined together. From a distance they look like sepia toned phosphorus bubbles that occur in our waterways after a pollution discharge or storm water runoff, but not as fluffy. Despite their off-putting appearance, they are indeed magnificent. The blobs are not made of preschooler's snot but groups of microscopic aquatic invertebrates called **zooids**. They are an indicator of healthy water. They are similar in formation to brain coral, but not hard. (Yes, after reading about them I touched them gently without separating them from the tree limb or each other.) The outer layer is squishy, and the interior is firm. These invertebrate animals create gelatinous exoskeletons – each "colony" is made up of an enormous number of zooids that can only be seen under magnification. Each has an outer sleeve-like structure and an inner mass of organs. At the top of the sleeve there is an opening that lets a portion of the inner part lift to the water like a periscope. It is capped with a Medusa-like group of tentacles called **lophophores** that filter food from water (or grab it, if you want to scare your kids). According to the fossil record, they have existed for at least **500 million years**.

Byrozoas are found in every continent except Antarctica. Until the 1960's, they were only found east of the Mississippi. Now they can be found throughout the United States and into Canada. Scientists speculate that migrating waterfowl may be responsible for their spread. Perhaps climate change is allowing them to flourish where they have always existed, but, with more favorable conditions, they are larger and now noticeable. They prefer quiet water such as lakes and ponds, but some appear in streams. They form in the spring and die in the winter. Late summer and early fall are the best times to spot them, as they are at their largest. They are usually sessile, meaning they attach to something like a downed tree, dock, or rock. Sometimes they can be found free-floating. When the colony dies, the individual zooids dissolve and seed-like creatures called statoblasts disperse, waiting for the water to warm up again so they can start the cycle of life anew. Under magnification, the statoblasts look like classic shortbread Christmas cookies with a blob of hard red jelly in the middle. Fish are fond of the statoblasts as well as the bryozoa colonies. Snails and mussels also partake.

There is some debate among biologists as to whether they are **cryptogenic**. This means experts are uncertain if they are invasive in any region. With accelerating climate change perhaps, this is an issue ripe for further research. Who knows, they might turn out to be aliens after all?

In large numbers, bryozoas can clog drainpipes and water intake pipes. Other than their possible alien origin and clogging ability, they cause no harm to humans and can be safely touched. I have not found any research as to whether they are safe to eat, so do not. (I would not eat them unless I was starving!)

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



ACROSS

- Wooded biome that occurs in areas with moderate temperatures.
- Biome found at high altitudes on mountain ranges around the world.
- 7. Where a river's current meets the ocean's tide.
- 8. Found in water.
- Salt water biome.
 The largest biome on earth.
- 14. Relating to the area close to the North Pole.
- Water ecosystem that is not salty.
- 19. Characterized by warmth and humidity.
- 20. Tropical grassland biome with scattered trees.
- 21. A biome with very little rainfall and sparse vegetation.
- 22. A community of plants and animals that occupy a distinct region.

DOWN

- 2. Interacting community of plants and animals and their physical environment.
- A moist subarctic biome.
- 4. Flat, treeless arctic biome.

- - 5. Biome where the soil is saturated with water.
 - 9. On land.
 - Hot, dry biome with mostly shrubs and thorny bushes for vegetation.
 - 12. Tropical woodland biome with a high annual rainfall.
 - 13. Plant life.
 - Marine biome held together by structures secreted by corals.
 - Biome that is dominated by grasses.
 - 17. Height in relation to sea level.

WORD BANK

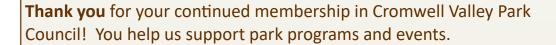
Alpine
Altitude
Aquatic
Arctic
Biome
Chaparral
Coral Reef
Desert
Ecosystem
Estuary
Freshwater
Grassland

Marine
Rainforest
Savanna
Taiga
Temperate
Forest
Terrestrial
Tropical
Tundra
Vegetation
Wetland

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Please renew your

MEMBERSHIP





The membership drive happens in February & March, but you can help us by renewing early. Your renewed membership will be good through March of 2025. Some of you have already done this, and we really appreciate these early donated funds and your help to lighten the load on the spring mailing.

Donate online at: https://cromwellvalleypark.org/membership/

Or donate by mail - please make check payable to CVPC and mail to:

CVPC Membership 2002 Cromwell Bridge Rd Parkville, MD 21234

Name:				
Street Address:				
City:			Zip code:	
Phone:E				
Please select your membership categ	gory:			
Individual	\$15		Non-profit Organization	\$25
Couple/Family	\$20		Contributing	\$50
Senior Citizen, Individual 65+			Sustaining	\$100
Senior Citizen, Couple 65+ \$15			Patron	\$250
			Corporate	\$250
			Life Member	\$1,000
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Date:				

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Use this QR code to access the full events calendar:



or visit us online at:

https://cromwellvalleypark.org

Park hours: Sunrise to sunset

(don't get locked in)



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