

# ***Cromwell Valley Park Council, Inc.***

## WINTER 2025 NEWSLETTER

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

[info@cromwellvalleypark.org](mailto:info@cromwellvalleypark.org)



**Educational Programs – Seasonal Programs – Community Service Projects – Bird Watching  
Habitat Restoration – Hiking Trails – Large-Scale Community Events**

### LETTER FROM CVPC PRESIDENT, ABE YOFFE

Dear CVP Council Members and Donors,

I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude for your ongoing generosity and support following our Fall 2024 Newsletter message about our evolving relationship with Baltimore County. Thanks to your contributions, we exceeded our 2024 donation goal by an incredible 120%! Despite a significant loss in program revenue, your support ensures that we can continue hosting events and maintaining the park to the highest standards for all our visitors.

One of the key uses of these funds has been the purchase of a new John Deere Gator utility vehicle. Our current vehicle, now over 10 years old, has become increasingly costly to maintain. The new Gator will enable our dedicated Trails Committee to continue performing vital tasks, including clearing debris, removing invasive species, and handling other essential maintenance and repairs. If you're interested in getting behind the wheel, consider joining the team and contributing some sweat equity—just reach out to me for more details!



This coming March marks the end of my second term as President of CVPC and the conclusion of my six-and-a-half years of service on the board. During this time, we've made tremendous strides: **our membership has grown by over 200 members, we've built the Wildflower Meadow Accessible Trail, established the Rolon Memorial Pond, restored the gazebo behind the Sherwood House, introduced goats to help control invasive kudzu, revitalized the apple orchard, revitalized the Honor Garden with amazing bucolic vistas and added an audio experience for our Hike Through History trail.**

We also navigated the challenges of COVID-19 and successfully restored several beloved events. These achievements, of course, are not mine alone. They are the result of the hard work and dedication of many individuals who share a passion for our beautiful park. I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to work alongside such committed and talented people. It's a constant reminder that even a small group of people, united in purpose, can make a meaningful and lasting impact. >>>

Looking ahead, elections for several open board positions will take place during our next open meeting on **March 10th**. We will gather at the **Sherwood House at 6:00 PM**, and for those who prefer to attend virtually, we will also provide a Google Meet link. If you are interested in learning more about how you can get involved or would like information on attending virtually, please don't hesitate to contact me at **president@cromwellvalleypark.org**.

I am also pleased to share that after a year-long negotiation, the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Nature Councils and Baltimore County Recreation and Parks has been finalized. While some roles and responsibilities have shifted, we have worked diligently to ensure that CVPC continues to play a significant and influential role in the ongoing story of Cromwell Valley Park. I would like to extend my deepest thanks to the members of the board who have dedicated hundreds of hours to understanding and adapting to these changes. Their hard work and commitment has been invaluable during this transition.

Once again, thank you for your unwavering support. I look forward to seeing you at the park soon!

### 2024 CROMWELL VALLEY PARK COUNCIL BOARD OF DIRECTORS & STANDING CHAIRS

President: Abe Yoffe

Vice President: Joe Rector

Treasurer: Mia Walsh

Secretary: Rachel Allshouse

Director: Deb Lee

Director: Stacey Cruise

Director: Carl Gold

Director: Bill Curtis

Volunteers: Pat Novak

Building and Grounds: Rick Childs

Membership: Kim Shapiro

Programs: Kelly Emerson

Fundraising & Communications: Mia Walsh

Newsletter: Dave Schroeder

Governance: Raymond Reed, Nominating

Trails Committee: Many helping hands!

Memberships and Donations may be made online at [www.cromwellvalleypark.org/donate](http://www.cromwellvalleypark.org/donate), through our secured registration system, [cromwellvalleypark.campbrainregistration.com/](http://cromwellvalleypark.campbrainregistration.com/) or through one of the methods below:

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# A Glimpse of Black History Before the Park Was Established:

## From Enslavement to Land Ownership

*By Stacey Cruise, Park Council Director and Chair of the*

*Cromwell Valley Park Council History and Cultural Heritage Committee*

Before its designation as a park in 1993, Cromwell Valley was an area with a rich agricultural and industrial heritage. Its history can be traced back to the early 1700s, primarily dominated by farming, with families like the Ravens and Towsons being among the first settlers. By the late 18th century, Cromwell Valley became a center for agricultural lime production. Stone lime kilns from this era, which stopped being used in the early 1900s, still may be seen in Cromwell Valley Park along the Minebank Run trail.

Although detailed histories of Black life in Cromwell Valley during this time are limited, it is crucial to acknowledge the substantial contributions of African Americans. Enslaved and free Black people were instrumental in the valley's agricultural and industrial progress. Their labor and skills were vital for the success of farms and lime production, an essential and lucrative industry at the time.

Even so, African Americans and their contributions are often omitted from mainstream historical narratives. In this context, the newly formed Park Council's History and Cultural Heritage Committee is dedicated to expanding the meticulously cataloged research housed in the Sherwood House Library. The Committee prioritizes uncovering and celebrating the valley's diverse histories, including the overlooked contributions of African Americans.

Recent research has revealed new insights into Black landownership in the valley, highlighting its pivotal role in shaping the park as we know it today. One such discovery is the inspiring story of Hattie Genevieve Norris Cooper (Mrs. Cooper), a remarkable Black woman who lived for 92 years in Towson. She was one of 14 children and spent part of her childhood on the grounds of the Hampton Estate, where her father, Thomas Norris, worked as a dairyman. During the 1930s, she lived on Railroad Avenue. Despite limited formal education, by the 1960s, Mrs. Cooper became one of the first Black female school bus drivers in Baltimore County. She later operated a daycare while supporting her husband's janitorial business. After the death of her only child, she adopted and raised her granddaughter, providing a private school education without incurring student loans.

Mrs. Cooper's father, Thomas Norris, owned an 11.92-acre plot within Cromwell Valley Park from at least 1910 until he died in 1950. Following his death, Mrs. Cooper and her brother Kermit inherited the land. In 1987, they transferred the property to Valewood VII Associates Limited Partnership (Liber 7716/folio 419). This transaction included an agreement that Valewood would develop the property but sell one of the subdivided parcels back to Genevieve for \$10.00, indicating her awareness of the planned development.



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By 1993, the property had been transferred to the State of Maryland (Liber 9914/folio 82 and following), paving the way for the establishment of Cromwell Valley Park. The deed reveals that Mrs. Cooper and Kermit's expectation of retaining ownership of a parcel within the development was ultimately relinquished in this agreement, contributing to the park's founding.

Today, Cromwell Valley Park thrives because of the rich histories of the diverse peoples and communities who have stewarded and shaped it over centuries. By protecting its landscapes and historic structures, we honor the legacy of all who lived and labored here, ensuring their stories are remembered and shared. As visitors hike the park's well-maintained trails and listen to the soothing sounds of its streams, they celebrate the past, relish the present, and embrace a future where the park remains important to future generations.

*We extend our heartfelt gratitude to Jim Kelly for his dedication to uncovering Hattie Genevieve Norris Cooper's historical connection to what is now Cromwell Valley Park. His efforts ensure stories like Mrs. Cooper's are acknowledged.*

## REGISTRATION:

Visit our CVPC CampBrain Registration site by choosing the REGISTER button on our website or visit our site directly at:

[cromwellvalleypark.campbrainregistration.com/](http://cromwellvalleypark.campbrainregistration.com/)

### Save the Date

Join Night Out With Nature and the Cromwell Valley Park Council History and Cultural Heritage Committee for:

## **The Women of the Valley:**

An Inspiring Round Table Discussion on Leadership, Legacy, and Conservation



**Date: Friday, April 4, 2025**

**Time: 6:30-8:00 PM**

**At the Sherwood House**

**Admission: \$10.00 Dessert Served**



Excerpt from 2020 Program Open Space public service announcement . *"Program Open Space symbolizes Maryland's long term commitment to conserving our natural resources while providing exceptional outdoor recreation opportunities for our citizens."*





# Growing Together: Little Hands and Big Hearts in the Children's Garden

*Stacey Cruise, Council Director*

This year's Children's Garden Club at Cromwell Valley Park, led by the ever-enthusiastic Ranger Grace, concluded on a high note, leaving everyone with cherished memories, valuable knowledge, and a deeper appreciation for nature. On certain Saturdays from April through October, the young gardeners gathered to explore gardening, connect with the environment, and share in cooperative-focused activities.

## Seasonal Highlights

The Club focused on fall planting, with children learning about cool-weather crops such as spinach, kale, and carrots. They rolled up their sleeves to prepare the soil, plant seeds, and care for their growing gardens through regular weeding and watering. The plentiful harvest included a variety of vegetables, including potatoes that were exciting to unearth!

Pollinator water fountains were a standout project. The children made fountains for their gardens and they served an important ecological purpose, attracting and supporting pollinators such as bees and butterflies.



Ranger Grace



The Children's Garden Club 2024



Little hands and big hearts:  
The Children's Garden Club 2024

## Creative Activities and Learning Moments

Cooking activities were a hit among participants, with Ranger Grace guiding the young chefs through making delicious creations from garden-fresh produce. The club included lessons on sustainability, composting, and the importance of biodiversity. Hands-on demonstrations helped reinforce these concepts, ensuring the children walked away with knowledge they could apply in their homes.

## Looking Ahead

The Children's Garden Club was a new and enriching experience for my granddaughter and me. We were both first time gardeners! I enjoyed watching her take responsibility and ownership of her garden. She was proud to cook her harvest for her parents and aunt, and her enthusiasm was contagious.

I look forward to having my grandson join us next year and experience the joy of tending to his garden and growing vegetables!

**Thank you, Ranger Grace, for your dedication and enthusiasm, which made this season unforgettable. We can't wait to see what the next year brings!**



# Dam Those Beavers! By Ranger Kirk Dreier

Beaver photos by Master Naturalist, Bill Curtis, and his “CVPC Critter Cam”.  
Landscape photos by Mia Walsh.

CVPC Trails Committee volunteer, Wayne Skinner, approached me at the Willow Grove Nature Center in December to alert me that beavers were building a dam down near the Marble Springs on Minebank Run. I immediately headed there to take a peek. In early January, Ranger Matt and I trudged through the few inches of snow to the edge of the creek to see what progress was being made.



Our attention was so focused on the growing pond, that both of us failed to see all of the stumps left behind by the beavers chewing on the saplings, which dotted the area around this part of Minebank Run streambed. The evidence, besides the growing impoundment and the dam, were the many sticks and branches on the bank, in and under the water, which were all completely stripped of bark and had the distinctive tooth marks that beavers leave on the wood.

The other evidence of the beavers’ presence was what looked like matzah balls sitting on the bottom of the pond; only they weren’t there for chicken soup. What we were looking at were the beavers’ distinct “droppings”. What goes in must

come out, as they say; and their droppings look like sawdust matzah balls.

During the Habitat Explorers school program at the park, I often use beavers as an example of a Keystone species. A Keystone species is one that affects all other creatures around it. Since beavers chew wood and build dams, they are nature's engineers creating habitats to meet their needs, but in the process, they create new habitats that enable other creatures to thrive. I often ask children, “What do they eat?” The almost universal answer I get is “wood!” Well, for those reading this article, beavers do not eat wood, they eat the bark of the wood. They absolutely do chew wood, which of course is how they build a good portion of their dams. >>>





The dam that Ranger Matt and I were looking at also included twigs and leaves, mud, and even rocks that the beaver carried and transported. We marveled at their engineering for a while and pondered where their lodge was. In the past, Disney created many nature-themed films which featured animals and their interactions with each other. One of those films I saw as a kid was called “Beaver Valley”, filmed in the west. I was enthralled with the film, as were so many other children of that generation. The takeaway from it was the classic beaver lodge resided in the middle of a pond surrounded by a moat. However, for the most part, beavers in



Baltimore

County build **bank lodges**. Most folks think of beavers as the chewers of trees and they are, but make no mistake about it they are like giant groundhogs and quite good at excavating dirt. This pair of beavers has done exactly that, they tunneled up into the embankment to create their home, under a half-dead box elder maple tree.

A week later January 10th, I was driving our electric Polaris back down the Minebank Run trail towards the lodge. I stopped about 40 yards from the ever-growing beaver pond and grabbed my binoculars. From there, I scanned the area of the lodge and sure enough, a beaver was swimming in the water (note that the air temp was 19° (brrrrrr!). We had not seen more than one up until that moment, but I continued to approach slowly. As I was “tip-toeing” towards the creek side, the beaver on the surface was

watching me cautiously. All of a sudden, I caught a glimpse from the corner of my eye a huge pressure wave in the creek; something big zipped through underwater! The proof was there and Bill Curtis’ CVPC Critter Cam captured two beavers on film on January 14th.

The creek bank is heavily eroded from past floods, and there is a cut on the left created by not only the Minebank’s erosion but also from the mini waterfall created by the outflow of the Marble Spring. I watched for a while noting that the dam had been added to where Minebank Run was beginning to try to flow around the dam. They had begun a mini dam on the opposite bank to slow that leak as well. I pondered to myself; if this is a male and female, we might have beaver babies here this spring. Crunching my way through the snow I noted the numerous tracks of animals in the snow. >>>





Other Park volunteers have already seen a great blue heron hunting the beaver pond for minnows, and ducks have taken to the impoundment as well. The new habitat created by the beavers has been beautifully captured by Master Naturalist, Bill Curtis, who is at the helm of Cromwell Valley Park Council's social media, posting many videos of the beaver and other waterfowl activity at the dam.

Now, how about some Beaver facts? Beavers can live to be 12 years old in the wild and some have lived to be 15 in captivity. If we go way back in time to the Pleistocene, beavers were the size of black

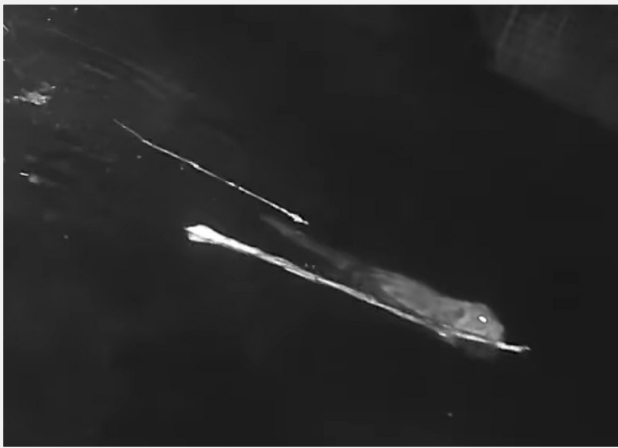
bears! Today, beavers are about 40" long and can weigh from 40 – 60 lbs. They have short necks, blunt heads, and plump bodies. Their fur is what nearly caused them to be wiped out due to the luxurious nature of the dense "wooly" underfur and the long outer guard hairs. This type of fur

interlocks with itself and this characteristic is what made it the perfect material for making hats during most of the 19th century. For the beaver this type of fur along with deposits of body fat allows it to swim in frigid water and be comfortable.

Other body adaptations to aquatic life are transparent eyelids to see under the surface and nostrils and ears that have valves that close automatically when the beaver dives underwater. They have very large lungs in proportion to their body size, and their heart rate slows when they dive allowing a beaver to hold its breath for 15 minutes or more. Their scaled tail acts like

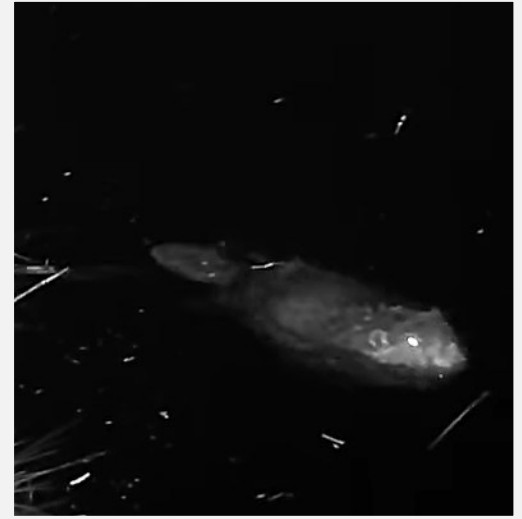
a rudder and propeller as well as a signal device when they slap it on the surface to alert other beavers of danger. They have amazingly supple front feet armed with heavy claws, that not only allow the beaver to dig burrows into the side of embankments but also carry rocks and mud in dam building. Their front feet allow the beaver to manipulate food items as well. Besides having true webbed hind feet, the second claw from the outside of each back foot has a split claw, which acts as a brush or comb and is used in grooming.

A beaver must groom itself constantly to keep its fur in order. They have oil glands near the base of their tails that they spread on their fur to keep it waterproof. They also have castor glands that exude a strong scent that the beaver uses to mark its territory. >>>





In my experience it smells like a horse barn. The castor glands exude castoreum which is used in the manufacture of some perfumes and is used by trappers to attract beavers. They have very keen olfactory senses and hearing but poor eyesight. The beaver is very agile and quick in water but is very slow on land. A beaver “knows” it is nothing more than a big bag of meat, and thus they rarely venture more than 200 feet from water. There are exceptions on occasion. They have little to fear from predators as long as they can get into the water impoundment which protects them, as the entrance to the lodge is always underwater and the inside of the lodge can have an open canopy 5 feet high.



Beavers mate in February and March and in April or early May after a 12-week gestation, 4-6 kits are born in the lodge with eyes open, fully furred, and have teeth. They weigh about a pound when born. They are even capable of swimming after birth but tend to stay in the lodge for a month or more before venturing out. The young often stay with the parents for two years before the parents drive them off when the mother becomes pregnant again.

From an article written by Carl Gold, “Beavers and their dams store carbon and help to mitigate climate change (at least in some small way) and the dam slows water velocities, creates wetlands and

can help with erosion.” Minebank Run has a tendency to flood during heavy rains and, as the park Naturalist/Ranger, I have high hopes that the colony will not only flourish but increase with time. Multiple dams and lodges on this creek might do what the Department of Public Works has not been able to do; help control the massive flows that scour the stream each year which makes it a very difficult place for living things to exist. In other words when folks marvel at how clear and gravelly Minebank Run is, what they don’t realize is that this is not normal and the stream gets “sterilized” each time there is a freshet that scours out and washes away all the nutrients and other small organisms that create an underwater ecosystem. Perhaps beavers may finally put a stop to that.

To me, this is very exciting news, and from a programming point of view what an exciting time to have beavers in the park!





## PEEKS INTO THE PARK'S PAST... *WHAT LIES BENEATH?*

**I**magine a daring band of scuba-equipped bandits escaping from pursuit by plunging into Loch Raven Reservoir. If the old town of Warren, drowned when the Reservoir was built, is not a modern-day Atlantis, able to sustain life underwater, where would they end up? Cromwell Valley Park contains several clues.

As you traverse some of the Park's eight miles of trails, have you ever noticed an 18-foot tall, 12-foot diameter, concrete silo,

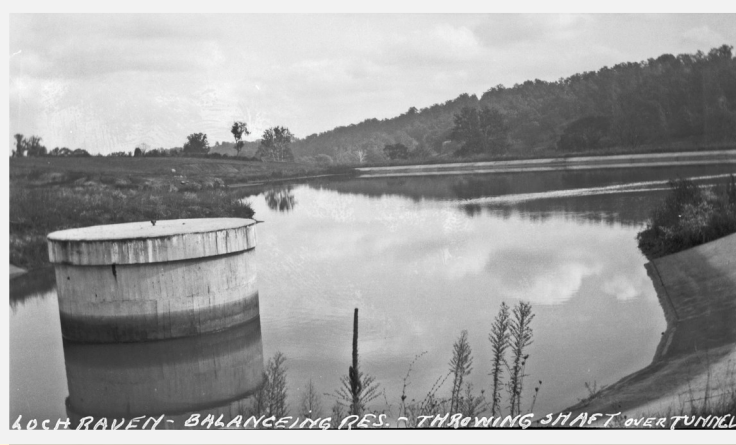
with circular steel plates sealing off access? Perhaps you paused and read the sign describing it as a Balancing Reservoir. If you are a grandchild of mine or a preschooler on a field trip and I am your trail guide, you may have learned that it is a rocket ship launcher or a stall for unicorns!

Completed in 1880, a tunnel was built from the original dam at Loch Raven traveling 7 miles to Lake Montebello in Baltimore City. The water was treated at Montebello, killing waterborne diseases thereby defeating the scourges of typhoid fever, cholera, and other now distant-memory horrors, and the water is finally dispersed throughout the city.

The tunnel still exists today and if you are a Navy Seal turned bandit you might be able to use it to



Photo by Keith Kridenoff



LOCH RAVEN - BALANCING RES. - THROWING SHAFT OVER TUNNEL

escape but you will not get far. More on that later. It is pretty flat but drops 10 feet in elevation from the Balancing Reservoir (about 152' EL) to the Montebello Water Filtration Plant (EL 142'). Its interior diameter is 12 feet and for most of its length it is carved out of seamless gneiss bedrock. For about 6,000 feet, as it gets closer to the Park, it passes through mica, schist, and seamy limestone, and, as a result, that section is lined with brick. In 1922, as Baltimore's population and industrial needs grew, the dam was raised to its current height. The tunnel could not withstand the increased water pressure. The Balancing Reservoir provided a temporary solution. Excess water would escape the tunnel into the Balancing Reservoir, flow down its spillway, then into adjacent Minebank Run, and ultimately the Gunpowder River.

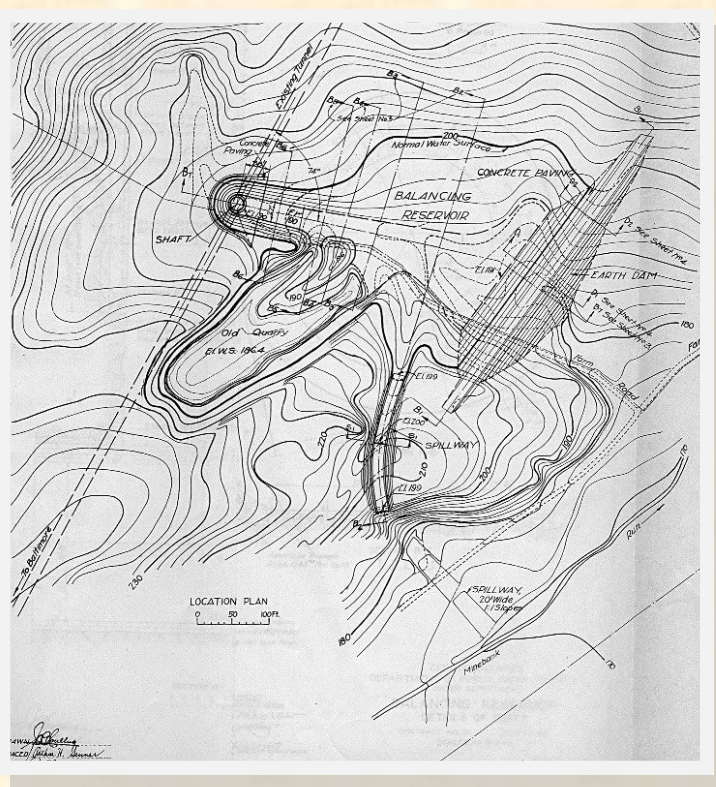
In the late 1930s and officially placed in service in 1940, a new tunnel was built to carry water from Loch Raven

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Reservoir to the Montebello Water Filtration Plant to face ever-increasing demands for water. The original tunnel was taken out of service but resurrected in the 1960s. It now returns treated water from the Montebello Plant to Baltimore County.

Unlike the “new” tunnel which still has the benefit of gravity, the treated water is pumped from the city back towards its original source. If you approach Cromwell Valley Park from the Beltway, you may notice a small brick building tucked on the left side of Cromwell Bridge Road between the two Park entrances. This is the Cromwell Water Pumping Station. It uses vertical turbine water pumps to draw water from the tunnel 100 feet below and send it to thirsty Towson citizens. When the pumping station was built, the old tunnel was blocked



with concrete between the pumping station and the Balancing Reservoir, separating the treated water from the reservoir side of the tunnel and eliminating bandit escape routes. Intrepid bandits can still access the “new” tunnel but will likely have to deal with metal screens that keep fish from entering the treatment plant. The pumping station is scheduled for a massive update and renovation. Due to its precarious footprint and proximity to the street, Park visitors may face occasional traffic delays once work starts. Stay tuned for more details.

The “old” tunnel was inspected in 1937, 1968, and 1984 by stalwart engineers using a small boat to travel its length. In 2017, an inspection was done by a disinfected submersible attached to a disinfected tether. The submersible had three cameras and two types of sonar. No escaped bandits were found. **\*\* Carl R. Gold is a Maryland Master Naturalist, and a board member of the Cromwell Valley Park Council, [cgold@carlgoldlaw.com](mailto:cgold@carlgoldlaw.com).**

*Due to the advocacy of our volunteers throughout the years, the park is a respite for all!*

## PEEKS INTO THE PAST

Piscataway means  
“the people where  
the river bends.”



### Land Acknowledgement

Cromwell Valley Park Council acknowledges the history of the land we now steward. It once provided for the Piscataway, Susquehannock, and other Indigenous peoples, who nurtured it for generations. We honor the enduring legacy of these tribal peoples, who live and flourish across the mid-Atlantic region today. We pledge to continue to support this stewardship tradition by protecting and preserving this place.



# PEEKS INTO THE PARK'S PAST... VOL.2

Cromwell Valley Park Council History and Cultural Heritage Ad Hoc committee developed a Land Acknowledgment and a Labor Acknowledgment to honor the history, culture, and contributions of the many communities that have shaped this land. These acknowledgments reflect a commitment to recognizing the complex histories tied to the park's lands and the diverse groups of people whose labor once sustained it.

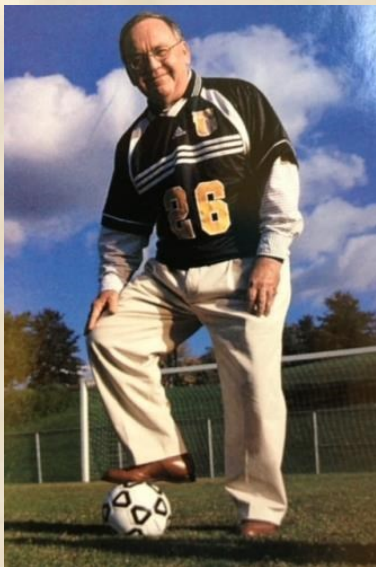
## Labor Acknowledgement

We pay tribute to all those whose labor helped shape this land. These laborers included the enslaved, indentured servants, sharecroppers, and settlers. We acknowledge their contributions. Together, these acknowledgments are a way for Cromwell Valley Park Council to promote a more inclusive understanding of the park's history, deepen connections with the community, and ensure that the stories of those who shaped this land are remembered and respected.



Photographs courtesy of the Maryland State Archives, donated by historic Long Island Farm.

## Wayne “Buckshot” Harman

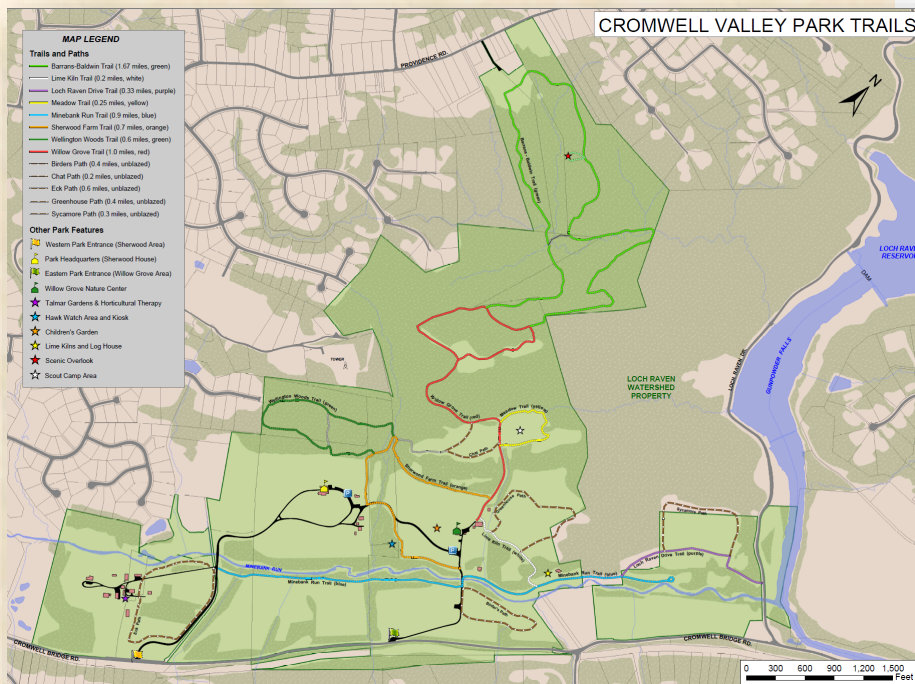


Wayne “Buckshot” Harman’s story deserves recognition for his tireless efforts to create what now is Cromwell Valley Park. Mr. Harman, who passed away on June 18, 2024, was the Director of Baltimore County Recreation and Parks, first appointed by County Executive Roger Hayden in 1990. Under his leadership, during a time of great fiscal restraint, most of the footprint of the park was assembled. He was quoted in the Baltimore Sun in a 1994 article, “[w]e want to maintain the integrity of the valley and its natural beauty while still making it available to everyone who wants to use it.” As is evident from this quote, he insisted on sharing the credit for the park’s creation. He attributed the “final ingredient” to the “public spirit of the owners of the Merrick, Sherwood and Eck properties.” In an article he wrote about the acquisition, their “love for the land and the desire to see it

protected and shared with future generations” overcame the austere fiscal climate. He lauded the contributions of Bob Stanhope, naturalist for the Baltimore County Recreation and Parks Department, and the leadership of Lillian Jenifer, whose Historic Long Island Farm was adjacent to the park. Harman developed what he called a “win-win” strategy – he made sure every stakeholder had a” piece of the pie”. His biggest challenge was identifying who



those stakeholders were. He went to committee meetings in Annapolis, testifying in front of the legislature and meeting individually with Department of Natural Resources head, Dr. Torrey Brown. Despite repeatedly being told money was not available and the creation of the park could not be done, he remained undaunted. His vision was to turn the land into the Central Park of Baltimore County. After enormous effort, he got an audience in front of the Board of Public Works of Maryland consisting of Governor Schaefer, Comptroller Goldstein, and Treasure Maurer. Just before the Cromwell Valley initiative was to be presented, the entire Board, walked out, not to return. After meeting individually with Goldstein and Maurer, Harman got the request back in front of the Board. This time, after convincing the Governor to visit the site, he was successful. Governor Schaefer, Congresswoman Bentley, County Executive Hayden, and Harman went for a jeep ride narrowly missing a herd of deer. The delighted Schaefer, said, “Why don’t you go for the whole valley?!”



## 2024 Statement of Financial Position



Despite the loss of income due to Baltimore County Department of Recreation and Parks’ “Reimagine Recreation and Parks” initiative, CVPC remained fiscally strong thanks to the generosity of our members and donors. The included **Annual Report** will share our successful year of activities & enhancements, allowing us to continue our CVPC Mission.

### Assets: **\$208,377.18**

Checking	\$ 161,753.03
Savings	\$ 46,262.97
Petty Cash	\$ 119.06
PayPal	\$ 242.12

### Liabilities & Equity: **\$ 208,377.18**

Restricted	\$ 23,995.15
Unrestricted	\$ 142,939.60
Net Surplus	\$ 41,442.43

### Restricted Funds: **\$ 23,995.15**

Accessible Trail	\$ 250.00
Deady Funds	\$ 112.05
Fort Garrison	\$ 4,223.25
Lime Kiln Funds	\$ 186.11
Friends of Sherwood	\$ 2,294.11
Honor Garden	\$ 1,525.69
Koininia Butterfly	\$ 480.05
Lawnmower Fund	\$ 336.33
Merrick Bank Barn	\$ 590.00
2025 Gator for Trails	\$ 13,273.78
Restricted	\$ 723.78

*Thanks to fundraising campaigns to support specific areas of the park, we received \$30,481.66 in donations in calendar year 2024, including a total of 229 donations from 193 donors.*

*Our two largest restricted donation funds were for our John Deere Gator purchase (\$7,959 in donations from 51 donors) and our Honor Garden Enhancements (\$ 4,905 from 34 donors).*



# Coyotes at Cromwell Valley Park—“ma ii”

*Written by Master Naturalist, Carl R. Gold*

*Photographs by Master Naturalist, Bill Curtis, and his CVPC Critter Cam from January 2025.*

*Both Carl and Bill are Directors on the Board of Directors of Cromwell Valley Park Council, Inc.*

Recent sightings of coyotes at Cromwell Valley Park and Marshy Point have sparked interest among our visitors. With the assistance of John Canoles, a former director of the Cromwell Valley Park Council, and Rangers Kirk Dreier and John Lehman, here is the latest update. On September 3, 2024, Park supporter Dennis Murphy captured some amazing photos of Cromwell’s resident wild canines. As he was



Photo by Dennis Murphy 9/3/24

entering the park from the Sherwood entrance just past dusk, a coyote crossed the road ahead of him. He was able to snap the photo. Coyotes have been spotted at the Park since 2015 and they

have been sighted in Maryland since 1972. Ranger Lehman reports that Marshy Point trail cams captured 2 coyotes this past winter.

Coyotes are not native to Maryland or anywhere east of the Mississippi but can now be found in all 50 states. According to author Deanna Wolfe, a coyote was spotted running between two taxicabs in New York City. Molly O. Hoopes, Naturalist at Cylburn Arboretum and H.P. Rawlings Conservatory, both in Baltimore City, reports the night watchman at Cylburn spotted one and her son videoed one at Herring



Run Park on Chesterfield Avenue. Development pressure has pushed them closer and closer to humankind and away from their preferred habitat of mixed woodland and farmland. Cromwell Valley Park and Marshy Point, of course, provide the perfect habitat. They are an integral part of Native American lore.

In Diné bizaad, the Navajo language, Coyotes are known as “ma ii” and tradition associates them with trickery, evil, and misfortune. To like effect are Pueblo beliefs. In Apache culture, they are associated with hunting and war. A Miwok myth holds that coyotes created all animals and called them to a council to discuss the creation of humans, perhaps to their sorrow. They serve as a favorite plot device for many modern authors, most notably Pulitzer Prize-winning Barbara Kingsolver. Along with her daughter Lily, she is the co-author of the children’s book, *Coyote’s Wild Home*. *Coyote Waits*, by now deceased Tony Hillerman, is a masterful murder mystery metaphor interwoven with the coyote code of conduct. >>>>>>





Coyotes look like unkempt smaller German Shepherds. They are usually around 30 to 40 pounds but can get as big as 60 pounds. Males are larger than females. Females give birth to 5 or 6 pups a year. They will eat almost anything- primarily small mammals and birds but also plants, carrion, and insects. Farm livestock as well as your dog and cat also make a tasty meal. They will eat deer, but from anecdotal evidence, they are not making a significant impact on the local deer population. Generally, they are only able to capture fawns. Biologists believe that they take advantage of wounded or dead deer much more often than they take down a full-size deer. In Maryland, they have become a top-tier predator often displacing the red fox. Be on the lookout for coyote scat. It is tubular and tapered –



rope-like and filled with hair and bones, thus unlike domestic dog scat. Ranger Lehman frequently sees this scat – and their trails – at the Marshy Point bluebird field. Lehman also explained that coyotes are “compensatory reproducers.” This means that females will have more pups if the population is at risk.



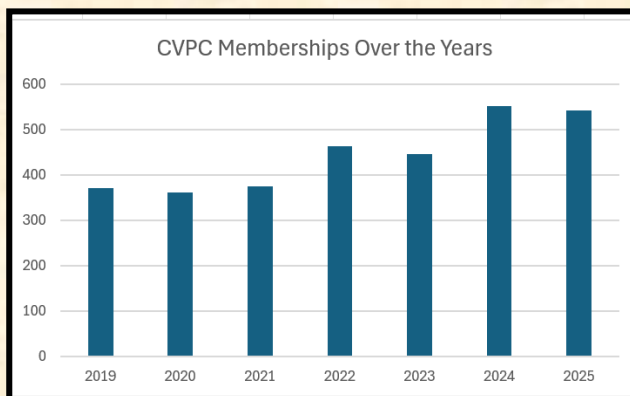
Photo by Mia Walsh

You are unlikely to come across a coyote during a daytime visit to Cromwell Valley Park, Marshy Point, or walking through Loch Raven Reservoir. If, however, you do see one, as with any wildlife, keep your distance. Pretend you are in a fraternity and haze the animal- throw things at it, yell, and scream. Stand up to your full height, wave your arms, and shake your legs. Release your bottled-up anger.

Coyotes are another good reason to keep your dogs leashed. At home, do not leave food outside, and keep an eye on your cats. There have only been a few reported incidents of coyotes attacking humans in Maryland and all the coyotes were determined to be rabid. No one was seriously injured except for the coyotes who were found and killed.

**Carl R. Gold is a Maryland Master Naturalist, [cgold@carlgoldlaw.com](mailto:cgold@carlgoldlaw.com).**

**Please join Cromwell Valley Park Council as a member or renew your membership today.** Your donations directly fund our volunteer efforts in the park, such as Council-sponsored events, maintenance of trails and gardens & program expenses.



Year	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Jan. totals	372	362	375	463	446	553	542





# 2024 Annual Report

## Cromwell Valley Park Council, Inc.

### Hike through History Audio Tour

Take a walk through Cromwell Valley Park locating 22 important structures or areas in the park, identified by posts and QR codes, which launch an audio history of each stop. This project originally began as a self-guided, interpretive trail booklet produced as fulfillment of the Eagle Scout project for Sebastian Schreiber-Pan (Troop 444) between December 2015 and September 2016. In 2024, CVPC updated the booklet adding inclusive audio components for each location. These components were recorded by Alex Hyman, an alumnus from Towson University, Department of Electronic Media & Film (EMF). The total walking distance is approximately 2 miles and takes between 1 and 2 hours. Thank you to CVPC Director, Deb Lee, for her work on this project as well as the Trails Committee for their installation expertise!

### Revival of the Sherwood Apple Orchard

Volunteer, Mike Mauro, organized the planting of 35 apple trees in the area where the 1940's orchard once owned by the Sherwood family stood. Mike and the volunteer crew take on the maintenance of pruning, fertilization, mulching, pest and disease control, and thinning. The trees are inspected regularly for signs of stress, disease, or insect damage. Early detection can prevent further damage and allow for prompt treatment. Mike has several information boards describing the species of apples, which once were sold by the Sherwood family to select A&P supermarkets and the wholesale waterfront markets in downtown Baltimore, like the G. Fava Fruit Company.



### Number of Donors by Donation Amount—2024



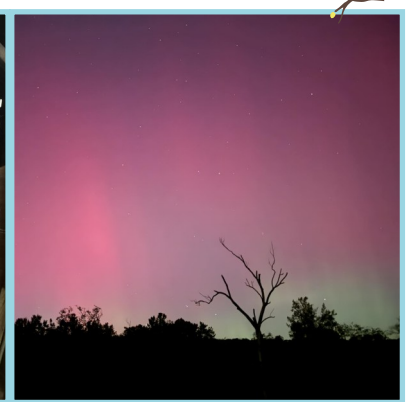
Cromwell Valley Park Council had a challenging, but rewarding year in 2024. We survived the great poop practical joke on the Minebank Run trail, caught aerial glimpses of our park shared by CVPC member, Stuart Goldman, and cleaned up the aftermath of winter and summer storms which wreaked havoc on our trail systems.

We rolled out some new initiatives: Installed 22 post rails for our interactive QR-code based audio “Hike through History” tour, hosted Shakespeare Beyond, A Midsummer Night’s Dream as a free community event, and approved the creation of our new History and Cultural Heritage Committee.

We resurrected the Honor Garden, designed by Charles Suter, with native plants and Adirondack chairs to enjoy the views (see Fall 2024 Newsletter for all the info!); and continued development of the historic Apple Orchard.

We partnered with Baltimore County for our Fall Harvest Festival and Arts in the Park with the Towson Arts Collective, brought back our Night Out with Nature Speaker Series after COVID knocked us out, and continued attacking invasive species with our Weed Warriors team.

AND WE SAW THE NORTHERN LIGHTS IN CROMWELL VALLEY PARK!! Who would have thought that would happen in 2024?!







# 2024 CVPC Donations **\*\* Denotes 5 consecutive years of donations**

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Thank you to our \$24 and under donors who are all listed on our website under the DONATIONS tab. These donations totaled \$5,394, a significant contribution showing that no matter the donation amount, YOUR DOLLARS MAKE A DIFFERENCE!!!

**The Honor Garden was given a new life in 2024 thanks to generous donors honoring Dr. Alan Lake, Dr. Patricia Kingman, Joseph D. Standeven and Phil Tupper.**

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# Please renew your **MEMBERSHIP**

Thank you for your continued membership in the Cromwell Valley Park Council! You help us support park trails, education and events.



Current memberships expire March 31, 2025. See your CVPC membership number and expiration date under your mailing address of this newsletter. Please consider a new membership or renewing NOW—we certainly don't want to lose you. *(We now accept Venmo, PayPal and Zelle—see page 2 for details)*

Join or renew online at: <https://cromwellvalleypark.org/membership/>

If you prefer to join or renew by mail: please make check payable to

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**2002 Cromwell Bridge Road**  
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***Park  
hours:  
Sunrise  
to Sunset***  
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Communications Committee:

***Mia Walsh, Pat Novak, Kim Shapiro & Dave Schroeder***

Contributors: ***Abe Yoffe, Stacey Cruise, Carl Gold, Bill Curtis  
and Kirk Dreier***