

# **Greenbelt Park**

**MARYLAND**

Greenbelt Park provides a retreat from the pressures of city life and a refuge for native plants and animals just 19 kilometers (12 miles) from downtown Washington, D.C. Its 445-hectare (1,100-acre) woodland offers facilities for camping and other outdoor recreation in a rapidly expanding metropolitan area.

The park affords an opportunity to see that a forest is more than a collection of trees. It is a constantly changing plant and animal community adapting to influences of nature and people. Forest and people are just parts of a complex environment and each depends on the other for survival.

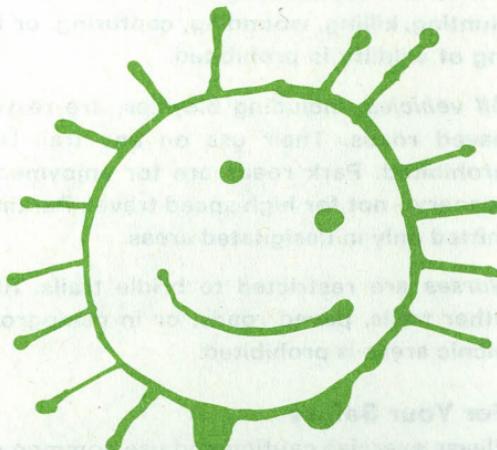
### What Is Greenbelt Park?

Long before man appeared here, these rolling hills teemed with trees, flowers, and wildlife continually adapting to changes in their environment. A balance existed between the land and its plants and animals.

Then the ax swung, the trees fell, and the forest was no more. Wildlife scattered. For the next 150 years the farmers cleared the land, plowed the field, and planted tobacco, corn, and fruit trees. The rich, fertile soil returned high yields.

But the farmers did not return as much as they took from the land, and the soil produced less each season. The farmers eventually moved on, abandoning the land, naked and defenseless, to erosion. Slowly, nature began the process of healing the scars.

Since the turn of the century, the process has continued. Today the pine forest testifies to the land's ability to recover. Unless man, fire, or disease interfere, another 25 years will probably



see the return of the deciduous forest that once covered the land.

This is only one chapter of the Greenbelt Park story. Many more await visitors who walk the trails throughout this woodland oasis.

Raccoon, squirrel, and red fox again make their home at Greenbelt, as do the bobwhite, blue jay, cardinal, and numerous other birds. In spring, displays of dogwood, laurel, and azalea rival any in the area, and, in autumn, the colors are as vivid as can be found in the region.

The summer visitor need walk only a little way on the trails before he is surrounded by myriads of ground-hugging wildflowers and luxuriant ferns.

In winter, a new world opens up. Crisp days—with sunlight filtering through the naked tree branches—provide an invigorating atmosphere for observing how nature protects her own.



## For Your Enjoyment

**Picnicking.** Three developed picnic areas—*Holly*, *Sweetgum*, and *Laurel*—are available for family picnicking. The Holly area may be reserved for group picnics; Sweetgum and Laurel areas are on a first-come basis. Each offers comfort stations, picnic tables, and fireplaces. Only charcoal is permitted.

**Camping.** The 178-site family campground is open all year. Facilities are available for tents, recreation vehicles, and trailers up to 30 feet long. Restrooms, tables, and fireplaces are provided, but there are no utility connections. Camping is limited to a total of 5 days from Memorial Day through Labor Day and to a total of 14 days the rest of the year. A nominal fee is charged. In summer, the campground is usually filled by nightfall. To be assured of a site, visitors should plan to arrive by mid-afternoon. Reservations cannot be made. No groups are allowed in the family campground.

**Nature trails.** Three trails introduce visitors to the park's flora, ecology, and human history.

**Azalea Trail.** This 1.9-kilometer (1.2-mile) loop trail connects the three picnic areas and shows the park's variety of plantlife. Wildlife may be seen on a stretch along the north branch of Still Creek.

**Blueberry Trail.** Primarily for campers, this 1.9-kilometer (1.2-mile) circuit begins near the entrance station. It traverses abandoned farmland, mature forest, and marshy stream bottom. During the school year it is the Environmental Study Area.

**Dogwood Trail.** Ecology, early plant use, and human influence on the land are stories told on this 2.2-kilometer (1.4-mile) trail. It begins at the parking area on Park Central Road. Self-guiding leaflets are available.

**Other trails.** Nearly 19 kilometers (12 miles) of well-marked trails offer contact with outstanding natural features throughout the park. A 9.6-kilometer (6-mile) loop, also designated a bridle trail, circles the park's western half.

**Interpretive services.** Guided walks, talks, and evening programs provide a full program of interpretive services.

## Accommodations and Services

Greenbelt Park is in a metropolitan area and close to motels, restaurants, grocery stores, service stations, and department stores. Commercial bus service to and from Washington, D.C., is available in nearby communities.

## How to Reach the Park

From the Capital Beltway (Int. 495), take Exit 28 at Kenilworth Avenue (Md. 201), proceed south toward Bladensburg and follow the signs into the park. From the Baltimore-Washington Parkway, exit at Greenbelt Road (Md. 193) and follow signs.

## Preservation of the Park

**Natural features** must be left as you find them. Do not deface or remove plants, flowers, or rocks.

**Fires** are restricted to fireplaces only. In picnic areas, only charcoal is permitted. In the camp-ground, dead-and-down vegetation may be gathered and burned. Do not leave fires unattended; be certain fires are dead out when leaving.

**Pets** must be on a leash no longer than 6 feet, or otherwise confined.

**Firearms**, including air pistols, bows, and sling-shots, are not allowed in this wildlife sanctuary. Hunting, killing, wounding, capturing, or frightening of wildlife is prohibited.

**All vehicles**, including bicycles, are restricted to paved roads. Their use on any trail is strictly prohibited. Park roads are for enjoyment of the scenery—not for high-speed travel. Parking is permitted only in designated areas.

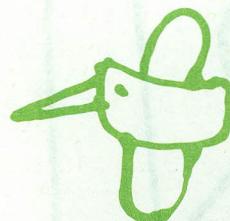
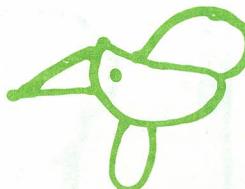
**Horses** are restricted to bridle trails. Riding on other trails, paved roads, or in campground and picnic areas is prohibited.

## For Your Safety

Please exercise caution and use common sense so that your visit will be a safe and happy one.

## We're Joining the Metric World

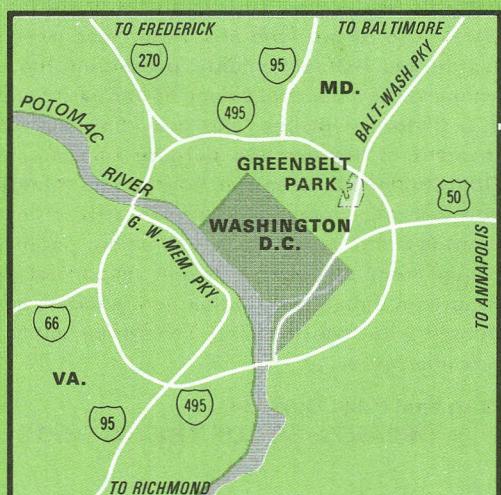
The National Park Service is introducing metric measurements in its publications to help Americans become acquainted with the metric system and to make interpretation more meaningful for park visitors from other nations.



# GREENBELT PARK



- Amphitheater
- Sanitary Dump Station
- Campground
- Picnic Area
- Parking
- Fire Road-No Vehicle Access
- Vehicle Road
- Horse and Foot Trail
- Foot Trail Only



## **Administration**

Greenbelt Park is administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. An area manager, whose address is Greenbelt Park, Greenbelt, MD 20770, is in immediate charge.

As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering the wisest use of our land and water resources, protecting our fish and wildlife, preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical places, and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The Department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to assure that their development is in the best interests of all our people. The Department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in Island Territories under U.S. administration.

**National Park Service**  
**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**