

# Greenbelt Park

MARYLAND

Greenbelt Park, a 1,100-acre woodland in a rapidly expanding metropolitan area, provides a retreat for those seeking escape from the pressures of city life, and a refuge for native plants and animals. Just 12 miles from the center of Washington, it offers easy access to facilities for camping and other forms of outdoor recreation.

The park affords an opportunity to see that a forest is more than a collection of trees. It is, rather, a constantly changing community of plants and animals, adapting to natural and man-caused influences. Both the forest and man are just part of a complex environment, dependent upon each other for survival.

## What Is Greenbelt Park?

Long before man appeared here, these rolling hills teemed with trees, flowers, and wildlife, which constantly adapted to the changes taking place in their environment. A balance existed between the land and the plants and animals it supported.

Then the ax swung, the trees fell, and the forest was no more. Wildlife scattered, and for the next 1½ centuries, the farmer cleared the land, plowed the field, and planted his crops. He raised tobacco, corn, and fruit trees. In turn, the rich, fertile soil returned high yields.

But man did not return as much as he was taking from the land, and the soil produced sparser crops each season. Eventually, the farmer moved on, abandoning the land and leaving it naked and defenseless against the elements eroding it. Recovery was slow, but nature began healing the scars.

Since the turn of the century, the process has continued. Today the pine forest stands in silent testimony to the ability of the land to recover. Unless man, fire, or disease interferes, another one-quarter century will undoubtedly see the re-

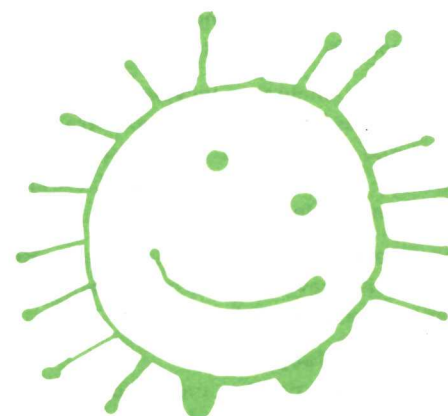
turn of the deciduous forest that once covered the land.

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

Deer, 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.



## 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**



## 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.** A 1.2-mile loop connecting the three picnic areas, this trail offers a glimpse of the various forms of plantlife in the park. It includes a stretch along the north branch of Still Creek where wildlife can be seen.

**Blueberry Trail.** Primarily for campers, this 1.2-mile circuit begins in the campground near the entrance station. A cross-section of abandoned farmland, mature forest, and marshy stream bottom characterizes this area, which is used as the park's Environmental Study Area during the school year.

**Dogwood Trail.** Ecology, early uses of plants, and man's influence on the land are some of the stories told along this 1.4-mile trail. The trail begins at the parking area midway through the park on Park Central Road. Self-guiding leaflets are available.

**Other trails.** Nearly 12 miles of well marked trails provide access to most sections of the park, bringing visitors in contact with many outstanding natural features. A 6-mile loop, which has also been designated as a bridle trail, circles the western half of the park.

**Interpretive services.** A full program of interpretive services, including guided walks, talks, and evening programs, is offered. Information about off-site services can be obtained at park headquarters.

## Accommodations and Services

Since Greenbelt Park is in a metropolitan area, it is convenient to commercial establishments. Motels, restaurants, grocery stores, service stations, and department stores are nearby. Commercial bus service to and from downtown 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 into the park.

## 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 campground, 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.

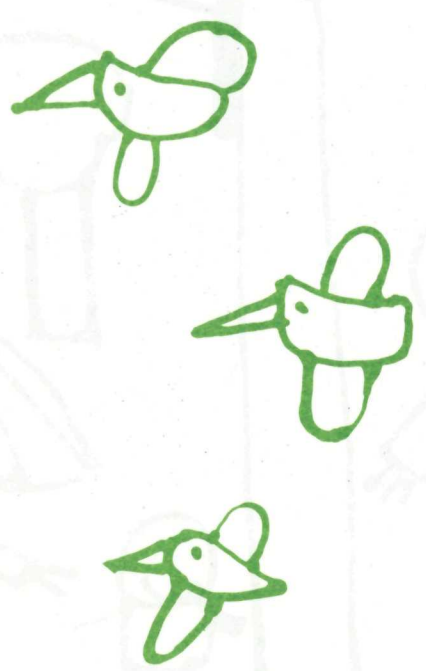
*Firearms*, including air pistols, bows, and slingshots, are not allowed in this wildlife sanctuary. Hunting, killing, wounding, capturing, or frightening of wildlife is prohibited.

*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.



# GREENBELT PARK

