

A WALK IN THE PARK

Join us for a trail walk in Bullock-pens Park as part of Churchill's Earth Day celebration on **Saturday, April 22, 2017.**

Volunteer park naturalists Joan and Milton Gottlieb will guide you along a one-hour trail that hugs the southern end of the park (parallel to Chalfant Run) and then dips down to the recently abandoned golf course, crosses the creek, and emerges on the park road near the picnic shelter from which we will start.

Along the way we should see many of the trees for which Churchill's park and nature reserve is noted: redbud trees in full rosey color, flowering dogwood with swelling buds, several majestic species of maple and oak, towering American beech, hickory, and tulip poplar, along with rarities like eastern cottonwood and hop hornbeam.

We'll note the native spice bush plus alien multiflora rose and honeysuckle shrubs among other woody, understory plants, and the forest floor should be a-bloom with native toothwort, trout lily, trilliums, and other "ephemeral" beauties. More perennials should be in various stages of emergence, e.g. cow parsnip, Jack-in-the-pulpit, stonecrop, squawroot, Solomon's seal, etc.

Expect many invasive weeds to be getting a jump start on the season. We'll see Japanese knotweed, garlic mustard, and point to habitats where mile-a-minute, Japanese stiltgrass, and Canada thistle will smother some areas later in the season.

The section of our walk in the golf course is slowly "returning to nature" in a slow succession from mowed to "meadowed". Fish have been seen in the stream, an interesting cliff fern is populating an old wall, and species of asters, milkweeds, and other plants are joining the grasses. shrubs, and trees planted on the property when it was developed by the former Churchill Country Club. Birds are abundant and easy to find here, especially in the early morning and evening, so bring binoculars for a good look.

Do not miss this chance to enjoy our "wild" part of Churchill Borough and then return often to see its beauty unfold as the seasons progress. Always wear comfortable, athletic-type shoes on hikes, and dress appropriately for the weather. There will be two slightly steep, but short, sections along the trail, and no strollers will be permitted.