

Gwynns Falls State Park Report

Natural Resources § 5-1012 (f-1)

Prepared by The Office of Mayor Brandon Scott, Baltimore City
Department of Recreation and Park, and the Maryland
Department of Natural Resources



December 2025

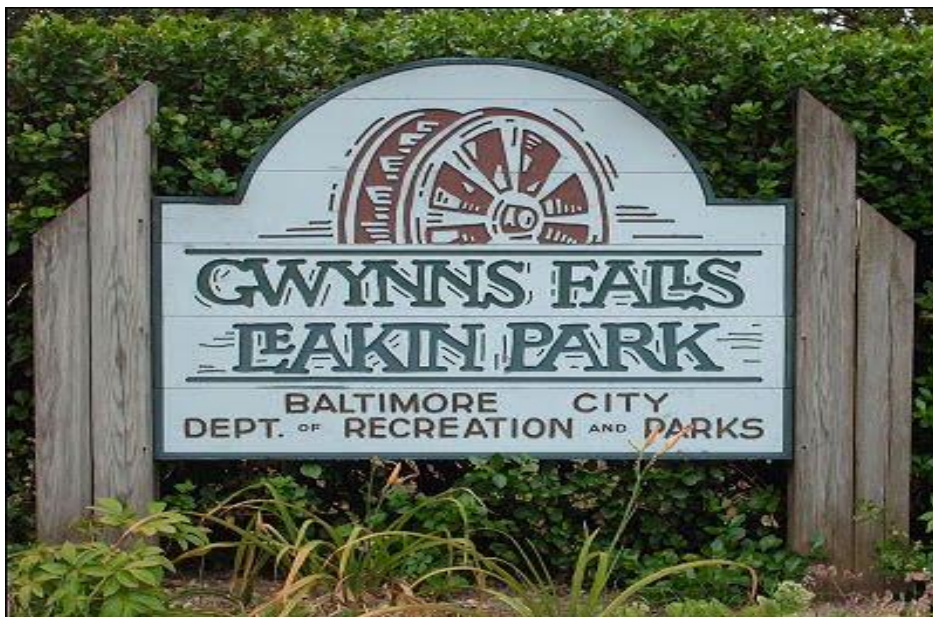


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1. Legislative History - House Bill 1358

[House Bill 1358](#) passed in 2024 requiring the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (the Department) and Baltimore City to convene focus group meetings on the establishment of the Gwynns Falls State Park with community members and stakeholders who reside or operate in the vicinity of the proposed State park. It requires the Department and Baltimore City to jointly work on the following:

- Convene focus group meetings on certain subjects,
- Establish a stakeholder advisory committee,
- Develop a list of priority needs and associated costs for park improvements, and
- Submit a report to the General Assembly by December 1, 2025, on properties suitable for inclusion in the State park and certain funding requirements.

The complete bill, along with the fiscal and policy note, can be found in Appendix A.

2. Gwynns Falls/Leakin Park History

Gwynns Falls Leakin Park is Baltimore's largest park and, at more than 1,200 acres, the second-largest urban woodland park in the nation. Under its canopy, the city falls away, and steep valleys, winding streams, and deep woods create the feeling of a wilderness that has quietly persisted within the urban landscape. This vast green space has made it both a haven and a battleground for Baltimoreans over the years—offering a refuge for nature lovers and outdoor enthusiasts, while also facing challenges related to urban encroachment, neglect, and misuse.

The park connects neighborhoods, provides opportunities for outdoor recreation and active transportation, and contributes significantly to community health and well-being. As one of the city's most vital natural assets, it offers both a sanctuary for local wildlife and a place for residents to engage with the outdoors in meaningful ways.

Like many large urban park and trail systems, it faces ongoing challenges related to maintenance, safety, accessibility, and equitable investment. However, in recent years, the trajectory has shifted. Baltimore City Recreation & Parks (BCRP) has made unprecedented investments in the park, signaling a new era of attention and care. The \$18 million Cahill Fitness & Wellness Center, built in partnership with Maryland Department of Natural Resources, and designed with the surrounding forest in mind, anchors a wave of improvements that includes a \$5 million synthetic turf field, a \$600,000 upgrade to the Leon Day playground and bleachers, a \$1 million relocation and rehabilitation of the Dypski Pavilion, a \$400,000 renovation of the Eagle Drive

restrooms, and the \$600,000 restoration of the park's tennis courts with state-of-the-art surfacing.

These projects represent a long-awaited turning point, bringing resources that finally reflect the park's scale, significance, and potential. With these investments, Gwynns Falls Leakin Park is poised to fulfill its promise as both a natural sanctuary and a community hub.

3. Partners and Stakeholders

a. Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR)

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources was established in 1969 and currently manages nearly 500,000 acres with 21 total units, including three major land management units, Forest, Wildlife and Heritage, and the Park Service. The Maryland Park Service currently manages approximately 142,443 acres, with 269 full-time employees. The mission of the Maryland Park Service is to manage the natural, cultural, historical and recreational resources to provide for wise stewardship and enjoyment by people. The Service fulfills its mission by managing the 90 State Parks, State Historical Parks, State Battlefields, Natural Environment Areas, Natural Resources Management Areas, and Rail Trails in its extensive and growing portfolio. The Office of Outdoor Recreation was established to support and enhance outdoor recreation opportunities across the state. The Office strives to make outdoor recreation spaces more welcoming and inclusive, expand access to outdoor recreation opportunities, and amplify the good work that is being done in the field.

b. Baltimore City Recreation & Parks (BCRP)

The mission of Baltimore City Recreation & Parks is to improve the health and wellness of Baltimore through maintaining quality recreational programs, preserving our parks and natural resources, and promoting fun, active lifestyles for all citizens of Baltimore. BCRP manages approximately 4,800 acres across 265 parks, including 52 recreation centers—four of which are privately operated but city-owned—along with 135 playgrounds, 79 tennis and pickleball courts, 127 basketball courts, and 23 pools. BCRP also includes more than 25 miles of biking and hiking trails, 32 historic structures, 18 picnic groves, 12 pavilion groves, four dog parks, three skate parks, and several specialized facilities such as ice rinks, arenas, a golf driving range, and a rowing club. BCRP manages roughly 120,000 street trees citywide. These assets are maintained by a workforce of 800 authorized positions (FTE, part-time, and seasonal staff), distributed

across Administration, Park Maintenance, Recreation Centers, Aquatics, Urban Forestry, Horticulture, Special Events & Permits, Seniors/Therapeutic, Athletics, Outdoor Recreation, and Facility Maintenance.

BCRP's recommended FY26 annual operating budget is approximately \$79.3 million, funded primarily through the City's General Fund, with additional support from the state's Program Open Space, Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), casino and table-game revenues, user fees from enterprise facilities, and various grants.

c. Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC)

The Stakeholder Advisory Committee was established by HB1358 to gather community feedback on the potential establishment of a partnership park and to identify the community's highest-priority issues. The Gwynns Falls State Park Stakeholder Advisory Committee includes:

1. At least one member of the Friends of Gwynns Falls/Leakin Park;
2. At least six members representing local park advocacy organizations, local environmental organizations, local historic preservation organizations, neighborhood organizations from neighborhoods that border the future Gwynns Falls State Park site; and
3. Any additional members as determined by the Department and Baltimore City.

In addition to the legislatively required seats, DNR, BCRP, and the Mayor's Office worked with the bill sponsor of HB1358 to identify 12 additional neighbors and community advocates to ensure robust representation on the Commission. The complete list of the Stakeholder Advisory Committee is included in Appendix B.

4. Timeline

The Mayor's Office, DNR, and BCRP, worked collaboratively to establish the Stakeholder Advisory Commission's (SAC) membership in Fall 2024. SAC members were invited to advise on the scope and management of Gwynns Falls, attend SAC meetings, contribute input, promote and participate in focus group meetings, and

provide local context. A complete timeline of state and city partner meetings, SAC meetings, and community outreach can be found below.

Timeline of Meetings -

- **August 5, 2024 - Partner Meeting**
 - State and city partners (DNR, BCRP, and the Mayor's office) to discuss the legislation and general timelines.
- **October 31, 2024 - Partner Meeting**
 - State and City partners discussed/ finalized SAC membership and next steps.
- **December 19, 2024 - Stakeholder Advisory Committee Meeting**
 - An introductory meeting for DNR to provide an overview of the MD Park System and examples of partnership parks. SAC members were introduced and given an opportunity to ask questions to the partners.
- **March 12, 2025 - Stakeholder Advisory Committee Meeting**
 - A virtual meeting for BCRP provided a more in-depth review of its park system at large and Gwynns Falls Park.
- **May 19, 2025 - Survey opened and posted to the Gwynns Falls State Park Advisory Commission's [website](#)**
- **May 27, 2025 - First Focus Group Meeting**
 - An in-person event led by DNR to allow members of the community to come together and share their thoughts, concerns, and ideas regarding Gwynns Falls/Leakin Park.
- **May 29, 2025 - Second Focus Group Meeting**
 - A virtual event led by BCRP, hosted as a secondary opportunity to gather community input.
- **June 27, 2025 - Partner Meeting**
 - BCRP and DNR discussed the report and the feedback given at the focus group meetings.
- **July 1, 2025 - Engineering and Construction Tour**
 - DNR representatives toured Gwynns Falls Park to assess the current conditions of various structures on the property and the general infrastructure.
- **July 31, 2025 - Partner meeting**
 - State and City partners discussed logistics for the upcoming SAC tour.
- **September 27, 2025 - Field Trip with Stakeholder Advisory Committee**
 - An opportunity for SAC members to tour Gwynns Falls Park while sharing thoughts/ideas and asking questions of the State and City partners. The tour included:
 - The Crimea Area,



Photo at Carrie Murray Nature Center's Outdoor Classroom during the SAC Field Trip on 9/27/2025

- Leakin Park,
 - Carrie Murray Nature Center,
 - Cahill Recreation Center,
 - Leon Day Park,
 - The Gwynns Falls Trail, and
 - Winans Meadow and the Cardin Pavilion
 - **October 17, 2025 - First draft report sent to Stakeholder Advisory Committee**
 - **November 10, 2025 - Stakeholder Advisory Committee Meeting**
 - An opportunity for SAC members to discuss the report and share feedback with State and City partners.
 - ***November 5 2025 - Close the survey to responses***
 - **November 24, 2025 - Second draft report sent to Stakeholder Advisory Committee**
 - **November 25 - December 1, 2025 - Received additional comments from the Stakeholder Advisory Committee**
 - **December 4, 2025 - Final report submitted to the Legislature**
-

5. Summary of Community Feedback

Community feedback was collected through the Stakeholder Advisory Committee, in-person public focus groups, virtual meetings, and an online public survey.

The patterns received over 400 responses through the public survey. Each respondent was asked to identify, in their opinion, the most important aspect to address within a potential Gwynns Falls State Park. Within these responses, the top three items included (in order) -

1. Enhanced Natural Resources Management and Restoration
2. Enhanced Outdoor Recreation Amenities
3. Critical Maintenance

Other key themes from this community input are summarized below.

Safety

Enhancing safety and reducing crime consistently ranked as a top priority for SAC members and focus group participants. Community members support closing the park from dusk to dawn, increasing staff park presence, and installing additional security infrastructure (such as lighting, barriers, strategically-placed swing gates and bollards, cameras, call boxes, and signage) to deter trespassing, limit unauthorized vehicular access, and reduce illegal dumping. There were also suggestions to install signage with location-specific QR codes integrated into the city's 911 and 311 call systems to help

visitors report maintenance needs and accurately identify their location in emergencies. Additional priorities include addressing deferred maintenance of facilities and trails, and improving park access points and road crossings to allow community members to safely access the park.

Preservation of the Parks' Historic and Cultural Sites

SAC members and focus group participants strongly support preserving the park's historic structures and enhancing interpretation of its cultural resources. Community members recommended expanding interpretative programming, signage, opportunities for public art, and events to highlight the park's history, while celebrating community identity and heritage. Reprinting and updating interpretive signs originally installed with Parks & People was identified as a priority, particularly for highlighting the park's historical landmarks such as the water wheel, old fort foundations, and other archeological ruins in the park, many of which are trail adjacent.

Enhanced Outdoor Recreation Amenities and Opportunities

SAC members and focus group participants encouraged park managers to build and strengthen partnerships with nonprofit and community organizations, such as the Chesapeake Bay Outward Bound School, which operates within Gwynns Falls Leakin Park in collaboration with BCRP. Improving accessibility was a major priority, with recommendations to install ADA-compliant trails and facilities, provide multi-lingual signage, and incorporate sensory trails and features to engage visitors with sensory impairments.

Trail improvements were identified as another major priority, including upgrading trail conditions, enhancing directional signage and wayfinding, and establishing connections to planned and existing regional trail systems. Community members also recommended forming a trail crew to support maintenance needs while providing workforce development opportunities to the local community, as well as expanding volunteer opportunities.

Participants expressed interest in additional recreation amenities, including a disc golf course, a stride bike course, and improved access to fishing along the Gwynns Falls and Dead Run. They also recommended more diverse programming on varied days and times to better accommodate a wide array of interests and schedules. Technology Integration was identified as an opportunity to improve visitor access and awareness through social media and QR or mobile app-based tools for self-guided tours, safety and maintenance reporting, nature ID, or trail challenges.

Infrastructure Improvements

Participants emphasized the need to improve park infrastructure by adding restrooms and rest areas, widening trails, enhancing trails and facilities to meet accessibility and ADA standards, and improving directional and interpretive signage. SAC members and focus group participants also noted challenges posed by degraded walkways, aging parking lots, storm damage, and similar infrastructure issues, stressing the importance of routine maintenance and timely repairs.

Ecological Restoration

SAC members and focus group participants expressed strong interest in protecting and restoring the park's ecological features and forested areas. Community feedback suggested installing native pollinator gardens, vegetative buffers, bioswales, and reforestation areas to provide critical habitat for wildlife, improve water quality through natural filtration, and mitigate stormwater impacts. Community members emphasized the importance of controlling threats to environmental health from invasive species and overpopulated deer. During the community field trip, participants were highly engaged in learning about the ongoing efforts to address environmental pressures, restore healthy understory growth, and improve the resilience of trails and amenities to storms and climate change.

6. Summary of Key Findings

Gwynns Falls Leakin Park connects neighborhoods, provides opportunities for outdoor recreation and active transportation, and enhances community health and well-being. However, like many large urban park and trail systems, it faces challenges related to maintenance, safety, accessibility, and equitable investment. Over the past two years, state and local partners have worked together with the SAC membership to identify the strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities available in Gwynns Falls Leakin Park. The findings in this section are the result of a detailed SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis of the park conducted by the Department of Natural Resources based on information provided by Baltimore City Recreation and Parks, along with the feedback provided by SAC members, comments collected at the public focus group meetings, and responses to the public survey.

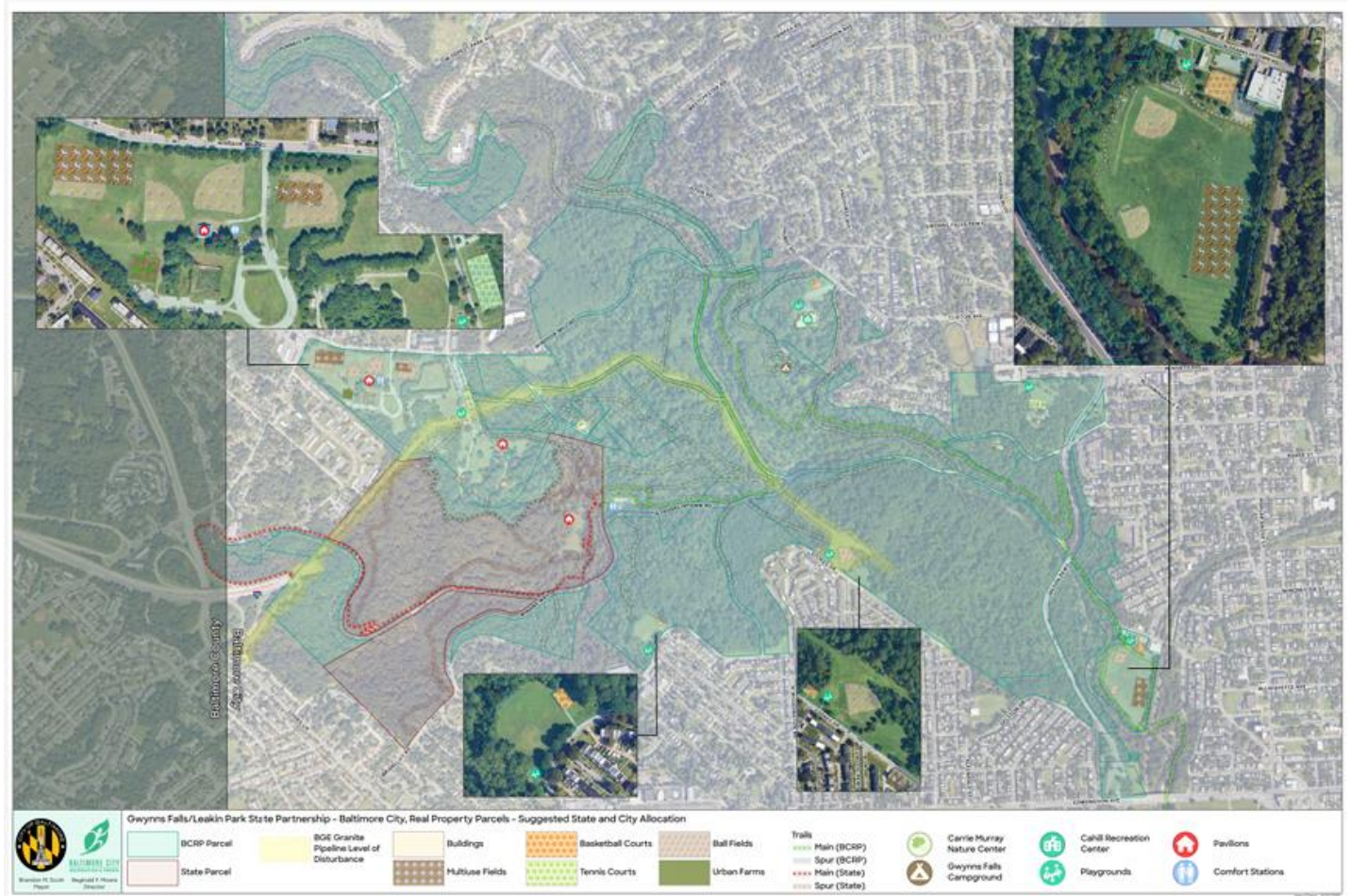
SWOT Analysis

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Strengths</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extensive and diverse Park Playground and trail network with cultural, ecological, and historic value. • Active partnerships with Friends of Gwynns Falls Leakin Park, and community groups. • Recent investments were made to improvements in wayfinding signage, trail blazing, and integration of location codes with 311/911 call centers. • Dedicated and skilled maintenance team, gradually building capacity with specialized training. • Growing volunteer engagement through Friends of Gwynns Falls Leakin Park, Green Cadets, Outward Bound and Roca. • Strong foundation for habitat restoration, public art, and cultural/educational enhancements. 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Weaknesses</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant backlog of critical maintenance needs such as erosion control, failing infrastructure, boardwalk repairs, and stormwater management. • Lack of security measures to combat the intensive illegal dumping along Franklinton Road, Windsor Mill Road, Winterbourn, and Morris Drive. • Insufficient staffing levels/specialized positions due to the ambitious size and scope of the park and its needs. • Degraded or inaccessible amenities (bathrooms, paved surfaces, boardwalks, flooded/icy sections).
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Opportunities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with interagency partners such as DOT and DPW on crosswalks, traffic calming, and maintenance needs. • Expand accessibility and connectivity through widened surfaces, ADA-compliant upgrades, and trailhead enhancements. • Improve visitor amenities: rest areas, fitness stations, picnic areas, and interpretive kiosks. • Strengthen sustainability and resilience with bioswales, improved drainage, and habitat restoration and deer control measures. • Expand public art and cultural interpretation to reinforce identity and celebrate community heritage. • Grow volunteer corps and partnerships for ongoing stewardship and maintenance. • Build out a more robust staffing structure with skilled trades and additional lower and mid-level positions. • Addressing deferred maintenance and leveraging new grants and partnerships that can expand the park's role within a regional trail network. 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Threats</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Illegal dumping drains staff time and resources, with over 8,000 lbs removed in just eight months. • Degraded walks and Parking lots aging infrastructure threaten park safety and long-term viability. • Dangerous road crossings at Franklinton Road pose serious user safety risks. • Illegal dumping continues to consume staff capacity and degrade the visitor experience. • Limited funding and resource constraints may delay critical repairs and infrastructure upgrades. • Climate change impacts such as increased flooding, droughts, and storm intensity exacerbate erosion and water issues. • Security concerns, including limited surveillance and emergency access, may deter use in certain areas.

7. Recommendations

a. Land Transfer: Potential Establishment of a Partnership Park

Currently, DNR has, or is actively working to acquire, at least one state park within every county in the state. Gwynns Falls State Partnership Park would be the first time the Department had a presence within the City of Baltimore, and would help make state park resources more available to City residents. The map below identifies a portion of Gwynns Falls Park, highlighted in red, that the City of Baltimore is willing to lease to the state in order to create a partnership park.



[GFLP State Partnership Parcels V7 24 x 36 Landscape B.pdf](#)

(Click link above for full view of map)

The proposed map boundaries reflect a strategic and fiscally responsible approach jointly developed by the City and the Department. The intent was to define an area that aligns with both near-term planned public investment and the operational and budgetary scope mutually agreed upon by the agencies. BCRP's core investment focus includes athletic areas, the Cahill Recreation Center, the Carrie Murray Nature Center, and facilities that anchor daily public use, structured programming, and maintenance operations. The State's designated focal area, centered on the Winans Meadow and Cardin Pavilion corridor, was selected due to its trail network, open landscape suitable for large-scale programming, and high public visibility. The Department is in ongoing discussions with Baltimore City to identify what a potential lease agreement could look like within the defined boundaries.

Based on an analysis of the potential leased property, the Department has created a draft budget of the anticipated costs associated with the establishment of this partnership park, which includes operational costs, capital expenditures, and addressing the existing critical maintenance needs on the property.

Within the land identified by the city as suitable for transfer to the state, DNR has identified a number of critical maintenance and new construction capital projects that would be necessary to support a viable state park. These projects include maintenance work on the existing Cardin Pavilion, parking area, comfort station, and trail network. Additional necessary projects include the creation of a Park Office, a fenced and secured maintenance complex, a security camera system to address illegal dumping, and a new automated entrance gate with a park fee collection system. Potential costs for these capital projects could range from \$7 million to \$18 million, depending on further architectural and engineering analysis and on the outcome of design processes. A detailed budget analysis is available in Appendix C. These budget estimates are preliminary, and certain projects could vary greatly depending on the existing utility infrastructure and other factors. Currently, DNR's capital budget is programmed to the dollar through Fiscal Year 2031, and in the absence of new funding, the earliest that the necessary funds could be fully secured would be Fiscal Year 2032. Given average project development timelines, the earliest these capital improvements would be complete would likely be in calendar year 2034 or 2035.

Contingent on the lease, the Department will provide staff responsible for the maintenance and day-to-day operations of the partnership park, and who will be able to provide regular programming, operations support in the form of civilian staff, regular maintenance, and historical interpretation relevant to the park's history. Based on the size of the potential leased property and the anticipated rate of visitation, the Maryland Park Service expects the Gwynns Falls partnership park to cost approximately \$2.7

million in upfront costs, which includes around \$1 million a year in annual staffing expenses. A detailed initial operational budget can be found in Appendix D.

Additional Points of Consideration and Limitations: The Maryland State Park System, and its Rangers, are primarily responsible for managing parks in lower-density areas of the state, on properties that have gone through a lengthy vetting process prior to acquisition. Gwynns Falls would be the first time the State Park system would be responsible for providing services in a setting of such high population density and for operating a park on land not owned by the state. This presents a unique set of circumstances that should be considered before establishing a partnership park, ensuring that potential issues are addressed.

The long-standing issue of illegal dumping within the potential leased property is a point of concern for the Department and will need to be considered as a part of the larger operational and maintenance costs for the potential partnership park. To monitor and address the illegal dumping problem, DNR would at minimum need to purchase a trash collection vehicle and install security cameras at identified dump sites.

Park rangers are civilian state employees who are primarily responsible for park maintenance and visitor services. Although rangers are responsible for enforcing park rules, they are not trained to address significant crimes or handle more serious confrontations. Additionally, Natural Resource Police are primarily trained in enforcing conservation-focused infractions. Therefore, DNR would still rely on city police resources to assist with law enforcement matters within Gwynns Falls Partnership Park, as is standard protocol for any state park.

Additionally, the Maryland Park Service relies on entrance fees to assist with the operational costs associated with operating a park. In a setting where there has traditionally been free access to the public, the Department expects pushback from the community regarding the implementation of any fee. The Department will have to work with the city to develop a revenue capture strategy to help with the day-to-day operations of this potential partnership park.

b. Continued Investments and Partnership

In addition to the establishment of a potential partnership park within the leased area, continued investment and strategic partnership efforts are critical to addressing the broader challenges facing Gwynns Falls Leakin Park. These efforts will focus on enhancing the park's infrastructure, community safety, accessibility, and environmental sustainability, and will be carried out by both Baltimore City Recreation & Parks (BCRP) and the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) in collaboration with local community groups, volunteers, and external partners.

Addressing Community Concerns

To ensure that the entire park—both the leased and non-leased portions—benefits from improvements, BCRP plans to implement a range of strategies designed to address the community's concerns, particularly in areas that fall outside of the leased property:

- I. **Ranger Training & Presence:** BCRP will continue its partnership with DNR to provide specialized ranger training for park staff. These training courses equip staff with the necessary skills to address specific challenges faced in urban parks, such as illegal dumping, crime prevention, and community engagement. As the program expands, they can increase their visibility in the park, providing a stronger presence to ensure safety and support ongoing maintenance efforts.
- II. **Signage & Wayfinding:** BCRP will continue its work on improving signage and wayfinding throughout the park, focusing on both the leased and non-leased areas. This can include installing new directional signage, safety alerts, and educational kiosks to raise awareness about the park's history, ecology, and the ongoing restoration efforts. Enhanced signage will also serve to guide visitors to park entrances, trails, and amenities more easily. Phase 1, which includes kiosk map signs, is scheduled for Spring installation. Mile markers that line 11 miles of trail within the park, from I-70 to Carroll Park, were installed in late October 2025.
*Trails assessment attached
- III. **Volunteer & Community Partnerships:** BCRP will continue to foster volunteerism within the community, particularly the Forestry Division with groups such as the Friends of Gwynns Falls Leakin Park and other local environmental and advocacy organizations. Volunteers will play a critical role in supporting light maintenance tasks, including trail clearing, invasive species removal, and debris clean-up, helping to keep the park accessible and well-maintained. These partnerships will also contribute to a sense of community ownership and pride in the park.
- IV. **Updated Policing Plan:** Neither agency has sufficient enforcement capacity to monitor Gwynns Falls State Park. Both Baltimore City Recreation and Parks (BCRP) and the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) maintain small ranger staffs whose roles focus on education, stewardship, and visitor support rather than law enforcement. BCRP's ranger force is currently very limited in number and does not hold enforcement authority. DNR's ranger staffing is allocated by acreage and likewise does not provide an enforcement presence within the park. As a result, both agencies rely heavily on external policing entities for public safety. The park requires increased and consistent presence from the Baltimore Police Department (BPD), Natural Resource Police (NRP),

Maryland State Police (MPS), and other law enforcement partners to ensure adequate coverage and timely response across its extensive wooded landscape.

- V. **Improved Infrastructure & Maintenance:** While the leased area will receive direct attention through DNR's efforts, BCRP would continue baseline mowing services and trash removal along the perimeter, Winans Meadow and the Cardin Pavilion.

BCRP will continue to prioritize infrastructure improvements throughout the rest of the park. This includes continuing efforts to upgrade outdated facilities, ensuring ADA compliance, and addressing deferred maintenance such as road repairs and stormwater management. BCRP will work closely with the Department of Transportation (DOT) and Department of Public Works (DPW) to improve access points and ensure safe crossings at critical locations, particularly along Purnell Drive and Franklinton Road.

To further strengthen the collaboration between the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and Baltimore City Recreation & Parks (BCRP), and to address critical operational needs in Gwynns Falls/Leakin Park, we recommend the identification and potential shared use of a building within the park to house both **DNR Rangers** and **BCRP Rangers & Trail Staff**. This initiative will support the operational efficiency, safety, and overall effectiveness of park management, while also promoting the "partnership" concept between state and city agencies.

Identification of a Building for Joint Ranger & Trail Staff Occupancy

Given the unique role that both DNR and BCRP staff play in managing and maintaining Gwynns Falls Leakin Park, the need for an operational base that facilitates communication and coordination is critical. Currently, there are limited available structures within the park that could serve as a central hub for both organizations. However, one promising option is to jointly occupy the Trail House within the Crimea Footprint of the park.

The Trail House, located within the Crimea Area of Gwynns Falls Leakin Park, presents an opportunity to house both DNR Rangers and BCRP Rangers & Trail Staff in a shared space. This approach would offer several benefits, including:

Enhanced Communication & Coordination: The shared occupancy of the Trail House would establish a central point for staff from both agencies to collaborate closely on day-to-day operations, event planning, and park management. It would improve communication channels between DNR and BCRP, ensuring more effective responses to maintenance needs, safety concerns, and community engagement efforts. This

proximity would allow for quicker decision-making and real-time coordination between the park rangers and trail staff.

Building the "Partnership" Concept: A joint ranger and staff presence in the Crimea Trail House would serve as a powerful symbol of the ongoing partnership between the state and city agencies. It would demonstrate a shared commitment to the park's well-being and send a clear message to the community about the collaborative efforts being made to improve Gwynns Falls/Leakin Park. The shared space would also foster a sense of teamwork and unity, creating an atmosphere of collaboration rather than division between the state and local partners.

Operational Efficiency: The shared use of the Trail House would allow both agencies to maximize the limited space available in the park. With park rangers and trail staff from both DNR and BCRP working in close proximity, resources can be pooled more effectively, reducing redundancies and streamlining park operations. This would be particularly valuable for managing the day-to-day needs of the park, including visitor services, maintenance, and law enforcement.

Community Engagement: Having a combined presence at the Crimea Trail House could also open opportunities for more direct engagement with park visitors. Rangers and staff from both agencies would be on-site, ready to interact with visitors, answer questions, and provide educational programming. This would improve the overall visitor experience and enhance the sense of security and accessibility in the park.

Operational Considerations

While the concept of shared occupancy is promising, a few operational factors must be considered:

- I. **Space Utilization:** The Crimea Trail House, like many other buildings within the park, may have limitations in terms of size and layout. A detailed assessment of the space would be necessary to ensure it can accommodate both DNR and BCRP staff without compromising their ability to function effectively. This might include considerations regarding office space, storage, equipment, and security.
- II. **Security and Privacy:** Both DNR and BCRP staff may have specific security and privacy requirements for their respective operations. It will be important to develop protocols to ensure that each agency's needs are met, while maintaining a shared and open environment that encourages collaboration.
- III. **Infrastructure Needs:** Depending on the current condition of the Crimea Trail House, there may be a need for infrastructure upgrades to make the space suitable for shared use. This could involve renovations or improvements to facilities such as bathrooms, staff offices, and storage areas. These upgrades

would need to be incorporated into the park's overall capital improvement plans, and funding sources would need to be identified.

- IV. **Long-Term Sustainability:** The long-term viability of shared space will depend on consistent funding and support for ongoing maintenance and upgrades to the building. This will require both BCRP and DNR to allocate resources to maintain the facility and ensure it remains a functional and safe environment for staff and park visitors alike.

C. Current and Ongoing Efforts in Critical Area Management

BCRP's Forestry Division maintains primary responsibility for the stewardship of natural resources within Gwynns Falls Leakin Park. In 2017, the Division completed the park's first Forest Management Plan, which launched a sustained, science-based approach to restoring and managing the park's forested landscapes. Since then, BCRP has implemented integrated vegetation management across priority forest stands, expanded restoration areas each season, and established a biannual inspection cycle for treated sites. Today, approximately 320 acres, roughly 40% of the park's natural areas—are actively managed through long-term ecological restoration, invasive plant control, and geospatially tracked maintenance operations.

BCRP maintains ongoing communication with neighborhood groups, including Friends of Gwynns Falls/Leakin Park, and provides regular briefings and advance notice of seasonal restoration activities. The Forestry Division also leads environmental review and oversight for utility and infrastructure projects within the park. Its management of the 2018 BGE Granite Pipeline corridor established the City's first planned pollinator meadow and informed BCRP's environmental policy framework, now used to guide all external projects affecting park natural areas. The Division continues to advise on DPW sanitary sewer upgrades, stream restoration work, and other projects to minimize ecological impacts.

In addition to its restoration and regulatory functions, BCRP supports community stewardship through programs such as the Baltimore City Weed Warriors and helps coordinate annual events like the GFLP BioBlitz. A recently added wildlife conservation analyst is advancing deer-management work that directly supports forest regeneration.

These efforts reflect deep institutional knowledge of GFLP's ecological conditions. Should park ownership or management responsibilities change, sustaining—and strengthening—these existing restoration and environmental oversight programs will be essential to protecting forest health and critical natural resources.

The full Forest Management Plan summary is included in Appendix E of this report.

Baltimore City's Deer Management Program (DMP) was established in January 2025 to strike a balance between the needs of the environment, deer herds, and Baltimore residents. Deer-related issues, including property damage, deer-vehicle accidents, disease concerns, forest degradation, and public safety, have been a growing concern since 2014. In response to these challenges, the program aims to minimize conflicts between deer and humans, reduce costs associated with deer-related damage, address social concerns, and maximize the health of the environment.

To achieve these goals, the DMP has implemented a peer-reviewed, structured decision-making framework. This framework identified professional sharpshooting as the most effective strategy for reducing deer-related issues, a solution that has been accepted by both residents and City officials. Over the course of 2025, the program team, led by Wildlife Conservation Analyst Shane Boehne, has gathered extensive input from Mayor Brandon Scott, City Council members, city agencies, residents, experts, and community leaders. The program also conducted internal deer counts, analyzed biological data, and engaged in community outreach to identify optimal management strategies.

As part of its broader strategy, the DMP is also addressing the environmental impacts of deer overpopulation in Leakin Park. Forestry is currently working on a contract solicitation to install a 15-acre Deer Exclosure Fence in the park, generously funded by the Baltimore City Office of Sustainability. This enclosure will serve as a demonstration site to showcase the negative effects of heavy deer browsing on forest vegetation, while allowing park managers to monitor recovery in a controlled environment. This effort will complement ongoing wildlife management activities and further support the park's ecological restoration goals.



Image of Shane Boehne from BCRP sharing details about Baltimore City's first-ever deer management program.

In addition to the exclosure fence, future stages of the program will include continued outreach, data collection, and the implementation of sharpshooting strategies to

maintain a balanced deer population, reduce forest damage, and improve public safety in Baltimore's parks.

Gwynns Falls Leakin Park is entering a pivotal moment. After years of uneven investment and persistent operational challenges, the commitments made by Baltimore City Recreation & Parks, the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, and community partners represent a meaningful shift in how the park is valued and supported. Recent improvements, paired with clearer communication structures, expanded maintenance and ranger capacity, and renewed attention to public safety, demonstrate what coordinated action can achieve.

The path forward relies on sustaining and deepening these partnerships. By aligning resources, sharing responsibilities, and approaching the park as a jointly managed asset, City and State agencies can address long-standing issues. Collaboration will help allow Gwynns Falls Leakin Park to reach its full potential as a protected natural sanctuary, a welcoming community space, and a vibrant connector between neighborhoods.

With partnership at its core, the possibilities for the park's future are expansive. The foundation is now in place for Gwynns Falls Leakin Park to thrive for generations and reflect not only the beauty of its landscape, but the strength of the commitment shared by those who care for it.

Appendices

Appendix A - Bill Language & Fiscal Note

HOUSE BILL 1358

M1

4lr2169
CF SB 1183

By: **Delegates Ruff, Attar, Addison, Amprey, Boyce, Clippinger, Conaway, Edelson, Embry, R. Lewis, J. Long, Rosenberg, Smith, and Young**

Introduced and read first time: February 9, 2024

Assigned to: Environment and Transportation and Appropriations

Committee Report: Favorable with amendments

House action: Adopted

Read second time: March 8, 2024

CHAPTER _____

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Natural Resources – ~~Establishment of Gwynns Falls State Park – Focus Group,~~**
3 **Advisory Committee, and Report**

4 FOR the purpose of ~~requiring the Department of Natural Resources to establish Gwynns~~
5 ~~Falls State Park as a partnership park between the Department and Baltimore City,~~
6 ~~requiring that Gwynns Falls State Park consist of certain properties in Baltimore~~
7 ~~City and include certain landscapes and facilities;~~ requiring the Department of
8 Natural Resources and Baltimore City to ~~take certain surveys,~~ convene certain focus
9 group meetings on certain subjects, ~~and~~ establish a certain advisory committee, and
10 develop a list of priority needs and associated costs for park improvements; and
11 generally relating to the ~~establishment of~~ Gwynns Falls State Park.

12 BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,
13 Article – Natural Resources
14 Section 5–1012(a) and (b)
15 Annotated Code of Maryland
16 (2023 Replacement Volume and 2023 Supplement)

17 BY adding to
18 Article – Natural Resources
19 Section 5–1012(f–1)
20 Annotated Code of Maryland
21 (2023 Replacement Volume and 2023 Supplement)

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.

Underlining indicates amendments to bill.

~~Strike out~~ indicates matter stricken from the bill by amendment or deleted from the law by amendment.



SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

Article – Natural Resources

5–1012.

(a) In this section, “partnership park” means a unit of the State park system managed by the Department in partnership with a local government, a bicounty agency, or a nonprofit organization.

(b) The Department may enter into:

(1) A memorandum of understanding with a local government, bicounty agency, or nonprofit organization to establish a partnership park in the State; or

(2) A partnership agreement with a local government, bicounty agency, or nonprofit organization to manage a partnership park in the State.

~~(F-1) (1) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL ESTABLISH GWYNNS FALLS STATE PARK AS A PARTNERSHIP PARK BETWEEN THE DEPARTMENT AND BALTIMORE CITY THAT SEEKS TO PROVIDE VISITORS WITH ACCESSIBLE OUTDOOR, NATURE BASED RECREATION AND LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES.~~

~~(2) GWYNNS FALLS STATE PARK SHALL BE HELD BY THE STATE AS A STATE PARK UNDER THE PROTECTION AND ADMINISTRATION OF THE DEPARTMENT.~~

~~(3) (I) GWYNNS FALLS STATE PARK SHALL CONSIST OF PROPERTIES THAT ARE:~~

~~1. OWNED BY THE STATE AND DESIGNATED BY THE DEPARTMENT TO BE ADMINISTERED AS PART OF THE STATE PARK; OR~~

~~2. A. OWNED BY BALTIMORE CITY OR A NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION; AND~~

~~B. DESIGNATED AS PART OF THE PARK BY A PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE OWNER OF THE PROPERTY AND THE DEPARTMENT.~~

~~(II) GWYNNS FALLS STATE PARK SHALL, AT A MINIMUM, INCLUDE:~~

~~1. LEAKIN PARK;~~

~~2. THE GWYNNS FALLS TRAIL;~~

~~3. WINANS MEADOW/CARDIN PAVILION; AND~~

~~4. THE CRIMEA SECTION.~~

~~(4) THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING ESTABLISHING THE
GWYNNS FALLS STATE PARK SHALL DEFINE:~~

~~(i) THE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES, INCLUDING FINANCIAL
RESPONSIBILITIES, OF THE DEPARTMENT AND BALTIMORE CITY IN MAINTAINING
AND OPERATING THE STATE PARK; AND~~

~~(ii) A PARTNERSHIP ROLE FOR THE FRIENDS OF GWYNNS
FALLS/LEAKIN PARK IN SUPPORT OF THE STATE PARK'S MISSION AND
VOLUNTEERS.~~

~~(5) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL ESTABLISH A SUMMER CONSERVATION
JOBS CORPS PROGRAM FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS AT GWYNNS FALLS STATE
PARK.~~

~~(6) (F-1) (1) THE DEPARTMENT AND BALTIMORE CITY SHALL:~~

~~(i) 1. TAKE A COMPREHENSIVE SURVEY OF BALTIMORE
CITY RESIDENTS REGARDING THEIR ATTITUDES TOWARD:~~

~~A. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF GWYNNS FALLS STATE
PARK; AND~~

~~B. OUTDOOR RECREATION IN GENERAL, INCLUDING
THEIR INTERESTS IN AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR OUTDOOR RECREATION AND
BARRIERS TO OUTDOOR RECREATION; AND~~

~~2. (I) CONVENE FOCUS GROUP MEETINGS ON THE
ESTABLISHMENT OF THE GWYNNS FALLS STATE PARK PARK WITH COMMUNITY
MEMBERS AND STAKEHOLDERS THAT RESIDE OR OPERATE IN THE VICINITY OF THE
PROPOSED STATE PARK;~~

~~(II) DEVELOP A LIST OF PRIORITY NEEDS AND ASSOCIATED
COST ASSESSMENTS FOR PARK OPERATIONS AND IMPROVEMENTS, INCLUDING:~~

~~1. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS;~~

2. CRITICAL MAINTENANCE;

3. ENHANCED NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND RESTORATION, INCLUDING IMPLEMENTATION OF A BIOHABITATS STUDY;

4. HISTORIC SITE RESTORATION;

5. ENHANCED OUTDOOR RECREATION AMENITIES, INCLUDING TRAIL IMPROVEMENTS; ~~AND~~

6. ADDING PARK STAFF AND PROCURING EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES; AND

7. LAW ENFORCEMENT AND PUBLIC SAFETY; AND

(III) ESTABLISH A STAKEHOLDER ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO ADVISE THE DEPARTMENT AND BALTIMORE CITY ON THE SCOPE AND MANAGEMENT OF GWYNNS FALLS STATE PARK THAT CONSISTS OF:

~~1. A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE FRIENDS OF GWYNNS FALLS/LEAKIN PARK;~~

~~2. AT LEAST THREE REPRESENTATIVES OF NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATIONS FROM NEIGHBORHOODS THAT BORDER THE STATE PARK;~~

~~3. AT LEAST TWO REPRESENTATIVES OF ENVIRONMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS IN BALTIMORE CITY;~~

~~4. AT LEAST ONE REPRESENTATIVE OF A HISTORIC PRESERVATION ORGANIZATION IN BALTIMORE CITY; AND~~

~~5. ANY OTHER MEMBERS AS DETERMINED BY THE DEPARTMENT.~~

1. AT LEAST ONE MEMBER OF THE FRIENDS OF GWYNNS FALLS/LEAKIN PARK;

2. AT LEAST SIX MEMBERS REPRESENTING LOCAL PARK ADVOCACY ORGANIZATIONS, LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS, LOCAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION ORGANIZATIONS, NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATIONS FROM NEIGHBORHOODS THAT BORDER THE FUTURE GWYNNS FALLS STATE PARK SITE; AND

1 **3. ANY ADDITIONAL MEMBERS AS DETERMINED BY THE**
2 **DEPARTMENT AND BALTIMORE CITY.**

3 ~~(7) (2)~~ **ON OR BEFORE ~~DECEMBER 1, 2024~~ DECEMBER 1, 2025, THE**
4 **DEPARTMENT SHALL SUBMIT A REPORT TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, IN**
5 **ACCORDANCE WITH § 2-1257 OF THE STATE GOVERNMENT ARTICLE, ON:**

6 **(I) PROPERTY OWNED BY THE STATE IN BALTIMORE CITY**
7 **THAT IS SUITABLE FOR INCLUSION IN GWYNNS FALLS STATE PARK;**

8 **(II) PROPERTY OWNED BY BALTIMORE CITY OR A NONPROFIT**
9 **ORGANIZATION IN BALTIMORE CITY THAT IS SUITABLE FOR INCLUSION IN GWYNNS**
10 **FALLS STATE PARK AND FOR WHICH THE LANDOWNERS ARE WILLING TO ENTER**
11 **INTO A PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT; AND**

12 **(III) THE FUNDING NEEDED TO ESTABLISH AND PROMOTE**
13 **GWYNNS FALLS STATE PARK.**

14 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect June
15 1, 2024.

Approved:

Governor.

Speaker of the House of Delegates.

President of the Senate.

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2024 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Third Reader - Revised

House Bill 1358 (Delegate Ruff, *et al.*)
Environment and Transportation and Appropriations Education, Energy, and the Environment

Natural Resources - Gwynns Falls State Park - Focus Group, Advisory Committee, and Report

This bill requires the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and Baltimore City to (1) convene focus group meetings on the establishment of the Gwynn Falls State Park with community members and stakeholders that reside or operate in the vicinity of the proposed State park; (2) develop a list of priority needs and associated cost assessments for park operations and improvements, as specified; and (3) establish a specified stakeholder advisory committee to advise DNR and Baltimore City on the scope and management of the park. A related reporting requirement is established. **The bill takes effect June 1, 2024.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: No effect in FY 2024. General/special fund expenditures increase by as much as \$70,000 in FY 2025 and by as much as \$30,000 in FY 2026, as discussed below. Revenues are not directly affected.

(in dollars)	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028
Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
GF/SF Exp.	0	70,000	30,000	0	0
Net Effect	\$0	(\$70,000)	(\$30,000)	\$0	\$0

Note:() = decrease; GF = general funds; FF = federal funds; SF = special funds; - = indeterminate increase; (-) = indeterminate decrease

Local Effect: Baltimore City did not respond to repeated requests for information regarding this fiscal and policy note. However, it is assumed that Baltimore City can work with DNR to implement the bill using existing budgeted resources. Revenues are not directly affected.

Small Business Effect: Minimal or none.

Analysis

Bill Summary: The list of priority needs and associated cost assessments for park operations and improvements must include (1) capital improvements; (2) critical maintenance; (3) enhanced natural resource management and restoration, including the implementation of a biohabitats study; (4) historic site restoration; (5) enhanced outdoor recreation amenities, including trail improvements; (6) adding park staff and procuring equipment and supplies; and (7) law enforcement and public safety.

By December 1, 2025, DNR must submit a report to the General Assembly on (1) property owned by the State in Baltimore City that is suitable for inclusion in the park; (2) property owned by Baltimore City or a nonprofit organization in Baltimore City that is suitable for inclusion in the park and for which the landowners are willing to enter into a partnership agreement; and (3) the funding needed to establish and promote Gwynns Falls State Park.

Current Law: Pursuant to DNR regulations, the State park system is administered under the jurisdiction of the Maryland Park Service to preserve and protect the best of Maryland's natural and historic places for the enjoyment and appreciation of its citizens. The parks are managed to provide public benefits, including (1) natural resource conservation; (2) cultural and historic preservation; (3) watershed protection; (4) education and interpretation; and (5) nature-based outdoor recreation, including trails, picnicking, boating, camping, cabins, hunting, fishing, and swimming.

DNR is authorized to enter into a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with a local government, bicounty agency, or nonprofit organization to establish a "partnership park" in the State and to enter into a partnership agreement with a local government, bicounty agency, or nonprofit organization to manage a partnership park in the State. "Partnership park" means a unit of the State park system managed by DNR in partnership with a local government, a bicounty agency, or a nonprofit organization.

State Expenditures: DNR advises that it can work with Baltimore City to implement most of the bill's requirements using existing budgeted resources; however, if a significant level of detail is required for the list of priority needs and associated cost assessments that DNR and Baltimore City are required to develop, DNR may need to hire a consultant to assist with that effort. If a consultant is needed, DNR advises that related costs are estimated to total no more than \$100,000.

This analysis assumes that there is no effect in fiscal 2024 (despite the bill's June 1, 2024 effective date). Based on the information provided by DNR regarding the potential need to hire a consultant, it is assumed that, due to the December 1, 2025 reporting deadline, general/special fund expenditures increase by as much as \$70,000 in fiscal 2025 and by as much as \$30,000 in fiscal 2026.

Even though the bill does not terminate, there are no ongoing requirements once the report has been submitted. Therefore, it is assumed that the bill does not directly affect State expenditures beyond fiscal 2026.

Additional Comments: To the extent DNR enters into an MOU to establish the park as a partnership park (and any partnership agreement to manage the partnership park) – as it is authorized to do under current law – State and local finances are further affected. Any such effects are not addressed in this analysis.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

Designated Cross File: SB 1183 (Senator Carter)(By Request - Baltimore City Administration) - Education, Energy, and the Environment.

Information Source(s): Department of Natural Resources; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 4, 2024
km/lgc Third Reader - April 1, 2024
Revised - Amendment(s) - April 1, 2024

Analysis by: Richard L. Duncan

Direct Inquiries to:
(410) 946-5510
(301) 970-5510

Appendix B - Gwynns Falls State Park Stakeholder Advisory Committee Membership

HB 1358 required at least one member to be from the Friends of Gwynns Falls/Leakin Park and at least six members representing local park advocacy organizations, local environmental organizations, local historic preservation organizations, and neighborhood organizations from neighborhoods that border the future Gwynns Falls State Park Site. Additionally, the legislation authorized additional members as determined by the Department and Baltimore City.

1. Erica Lewis (as of June 12, 2025 - formerly Mike Cross-Barnet) The Friends of Gwynns Falls/Leakin Park (FOGFLP)
2. Ela-Site Carpenter - Baltimore resident and FOGFLP member (*with a background in urban ecology*)
3. Erik Dihle - Baltimore City Forestry Board
4. Michael Martin - Stillmeadow Community Fellowship
5. Jim Brown - Policy Director, Audubon Mid-Atlantic
6. Kristen Komlosy - Chesapeake Bay Outward Bound School
7. Natalie Haney - Chesapeake Bay Outward Bound School
8. Bridget Nugent - Trail Committee Chair, Windsor Hills Neighbors, Inc
9. Jack Lattimore - Forest Park Community Council
10. Monique Washington - Edmondson Village Community Association
11. Gina Martin Hall - Vice President, West Hills Community Association
12. Gale Fletcher - Community Member
13. Steven Lee - Community member
14. Otis Merritt - Community Member
15. Rev. Dr. Alfred Bailey II - Community member
16. Reverend Ojeda Hall - Community member
17. Rev. Elaine Edge - Community member
18. Dr. Sandra Hairston - Community member
19. Wanda Wallace -Community member

Appendix C - Capital Fiscal Estimates - Gwynn's Falls/Leakin Park State Partnership Park

Area	Project	Low Estimate	High Estimate	Notes
Existing	Ben Cardin Pavilion - painting and repairs	\$100,000.00	\$200,000.00	Facility in fair condition
Existing	Trails and Trail Bridges - resurfacing, stormwater management, stabilization, ADA grading	\$2,000,000.00	\$8,000,000.00	Bridge costs are highly variable and will depend on structural analyses
New	New parking area	\$1,000,000.00	\$2,000,000.00	Potential siting issues given the topography
New	Comfort station, including family restroom with adult changing table	\$1,225,000.00	\$2,500,000.00	Access to water and sewer is unclear
New	2 Electric Charging Stations	\$50,000.00	\$100,000.00	Additional analysis of existing utilities is needed.
New	Park Visitor's Center / Park Office at Winan's Meadows	\$1,500,000.00	\$3,000,000.00	Similar footprint to BCRP's planned Winans Meadow Nature Center
New	New Shop Building/Garage/Fenced and Paved Shop Yard/Security Lighting	\$1,000,000.00	\$2,000,000.00	Costs vary due to siting
New	New Entrance Gate, Automated Entrance Fee Collection Equipment	\$75,000.00	\$125,000.00	
New	Security Camera System	\$50,000.00	\$100,000.00	
Total		\$7,000,000.00	\$18,025,000.00	

Appendix D - Preliminary Staff and Park Operations Budget - Gwynn's Falls/Leakin Park State Partnership Park

Number	Item	Description	Cost
1	Planning		
	Develop Master Plan	Planning Consultant	\$ 280,000.00
		Subtotal	\$ 280,000.00
2	Staffing (see the staffing tab for more details)		
	Park Rangers, Administration, and Maintenance Staff (full-time and seasonal)		\$ 1,021,354.00
	Uniforms (Dress and Work)		\$ 50,000.00
		Subtotal	\$ 1,071,354.00
3	Vehicles (quoted on 11/24/2025 via State Contract)		
	Trucks	Electric crew cab 1 /2 ton Chevy (1) and 3/4 ton Chevy (2)	\$ 142,000.00
	Heavy Trucks	Diesel dump truck with full package	\$ 110,000.00
	Vans	Chevy Express 12 passengers (2)	\$ 88,000.00
	Manager Vehicle	Electric Chevy Equinox	\$ 34,000.00
		Subtotal	\$ 374,000.00
4	Utilities		
	Water, sewer, electric		\$ 50,000.00
	Internet		\$ 100,000.00
	EV Charging Facilities		\$ 100,000.00
	Fuel		\$ 70,000.00
		Subtotal	\$ 320,000.00
5	Trail Development and Infrastructure		
	Directional and Entry Signage	Entrance signs, waysides, trail signage	\$ 40,000.00
	Trail Design	Design a trail system that connects to the City's Trails	\$ 10,000.00
	Trail Construction	Construct a trail system that connects to the City's Trails	\$ 50,000.00
		Subtotal	\$ 100,000.00

6	Equipment and Tools		
	Tools	Table saws, planer, router, hand tools, etc	\$ 15,000.00
	Grounds Equipment	Mowers, saws, chippers, blowers, plows, etc	\$ 300,000.00
	Miscellaneous	Hoes, rakes, trimmers, etc	\$ 100,000.00
		Subtotal	\$ 415,000.00
7	Radios, Communications, and Office Supplies		
	Computers and cell phones	Computers (7), phones (4), printer/scanner	\$ 15,000.00
	Office Furniture	Desks, Filing Cabinets, Shelves, Safe	\$ 15,000.00
	Office Supplies	Pens, paper, staplers, printer ink, etc	\$ 5,000.00
	Radios	Motorola APX (8)	\$ 80,000.00
		Subtotal	\$ 115,000.00
8	Programming		
	Signage, Maps, Fliers, Publications	Signage, maps, promotional materials for partners	\$ 50,000.00
	Interpretive Waysides	Develop content, produce panels, and install panels	\$ 30,000.00
	Supporting References	Books, resource materials relevant to the site	\$ 10,000.00
		Subtotal	\$ 90,000.00
9	Grand Total		
		Grand Total	\$ 2,765,354.00

Breakdown of Staffing for Gwynns Falls State Park

Number	Title	Grade	Yearly Salary
1	State Park Ranger Manager II	20	\$ 90,000.00
2	State Park Ranger Assistant Park Manager	18	\$ 80,000.00
3	Park Ranger Steward I	15	\$ 65,000.00
4	Park Ranger Steward II	16	\$ 70,000.00
5	Park Maintenance Program Supervisor	16	\$ 75,000.00
6	Park Technician Lead	13	\$ 60,000.00
7	Park Technician II	11	\$ 50,000.00
8	Administrative Officer I	13	\$ 60,000.00
9	Seasonal Trail Technician	Seasonal/hourly	\$ 50,000.00
10	Seasonal Trail Technician	Seasonal/hourly	\$ 50,000.00
11	Seasonal Park Ranger Steward	Seasonal/hourly	\$ 50,000.00
12	Seasonal Park Ranger Steward	Seasonal/hourly	\$ 50,000.00
	Total Salary and Wages		\$ 750,000.00
	Fringe Benefits		\$ 98,000.00
	401(a) Plan		\$ 5,520.00
	Health Insurance		\$ 167,834.00
	Subtotal		\$ 1,021,354.00

Appendix E - Background on Forest Management Plan for Gwynn's Falls Leakin Park

Protecting Gwynn's Falls Leakin Park The Forestry Division's Commitment, Investment, and Impact

In 2017, BCRP Forestry finalized its Forest Management Plan for Gwynn's Falls Leakin Park. At the time, and up until recently, it was the only FMP – BCRP Forestry has since developed several additional FMPs for other large forested parkland. Soon after, the Division contracted with an ecological restoration team to implement the plan. Priority forest stands were immediately targeted for invasive plant management, and additional stands have been added each season. Once treated, stands enter a long-term rotation with biannual inspections. Since 2019, the Forestry Division's Natural Areas Unit has adopted roughly 320 acres (40%) of GFLP's natural areas into active Integrated Vegetation Management. The remaining areas are categorized as lowest priority due to severe degradation, but IVM operations continue to expand each year. Stand F, near Windsor Hills, became the city's first interior forest restoration site—clearing acres of

honeysuckle, kudzu, and porcelainberry and replanting native vegetation.



Ideal Edge Conditions of Forest Transitional Zone (photograph by Ashley Bowers, BCRP - Urban Forestry Division)

Community groups and residents have been consistently informed of restoration activities. Outreach meetings precede work near neighborhoods, and FOGFLP and community leaders receive advance notice of seasonal treatment schedules. Forestry regularly presents at Friends of Gwynn's Falls/Leakin Park meetings.

All restoration work has been tracked since program launch, and the Natural Areas Unit now uses land-management software to geospatially store and monitor its operations.

Forestry also led environmental oversight for the 2018 BGE Granite Pipeline project, which created a permanent 50-foot-wide right-of-way across two miles of the park. Forestry managed environmental reviews, communications, species selection and placement, and restoration maintenance to minimize impacts. The corridor now hosts the city's first planned pollinator meadow atop a natural gas pipeline—potentially the first of its kind nationwide—and displays as an exemplary transitional forest-edge habitat (see below). Forestry also continues to provide review and oversight of planned projects in the park, including multiple sanitary sewer and stream construction projects by DPW.

Lessons learned during the BGE project in GFLP informed BCRP's first environmental policy and procedures framework (2018). Forestry then hired a Plans and Inspections Coordinator to oversee all external projects affecting park natural areas and enforcing environmental and engineering best practices. Most recently, Forestry secured relocation of the next BGE pipeline segment from interior forest to the mown park edge, allowing two long-fragmented forest stands to be reconnected.

Forestry helped launch the park's annual BioBlitz and continues to guide environmental protections for stormwater outfalls, stream projects, and construction activities. BCRP also secured a DNR grant to hire a wildlife conservation analyst, whose deer-management program will focus heavily on restoring GFLP's over-browsed understory.

The Natural Areas Unit also runs Baltimore City Weed Warriors, training about 70 stewards per year in urban restoration ecology and providing ongoing support for habitat work across the city. GFLP hosts one of the program's most active long-standing stewardship networks and were featured in the FOGFLP Fall 2024 Newsletter (Linked below).

The Forestry Division has built deep knowledge of GFLP's landscape, infrastructure, and restoration needs. If ownership or management changes, we recommend strengthening—not removing—existing programs by providing resources for a park-dedicated restoration crew, intensive forest-edge restoration, deer-management support, updated FMP data collection, and reforestation supplies such as plant materials and deer-exclosures.