

## Trail Notes for Greenbelt Park

Description: This park boasts of being an "Urban Oasis" and rightly so. This 1,100 acre plot maintained by the National Park Service is only 12 miles from downtown Washington D.C. and 23 miles from Baltimore, MD. It offers hiking, picnicking and camping. The trail system is well maintained, signed and blazed. Most of the deciduous woods are quite mature. (The park was created in 1950.) Some areas are constantly shaded by white pine. There are 4 loop trails. The largest is the Perimeter Trail at 5.3 miles. There are three "interior loops" ranging from 1 to 1.4 miles. They all tie in with the Perimeter trail. Described here is a 8.8 mile easy hike over flat and/or rolling terrain that combines them all. Add and subtract trails as best fits your needs.

Note: A large section of the Eastern Perimeter trail parallels I-495 and the Baltimore-Washington Parkway. At first it will be noisy but if you allow yourself to become engrossed in your surroundings the sounds will soon fade away.

Upon entering the park make the first left into the Park Headquarters parking lot (not right into the Park Police Office).

Trail Notes: From the Park Headquarters walk back down the road toward the entrance. Turn right onto the yellow blazed Perimeter Trail. You'll walk behind the park maintenance building before a slight climb into the woods. You'll hear the beltway to your left. At 0.8 miles come to an unsigned spur trail on the right. If you want to include the Azalea Trail in your hike turn right and cross a park road. Follow the access road for the Laurel Picnic Area directly across from the spur trail for just a few yards and turn left onto the white blazed Azalea Trail. The blazes will be faint but the gravel trail is easy to follow. Turn right on the access road to the Sweetgum picnic area at 0.5 Miles from the Laurel picnic area access road. Walk through the playground and follow the edge of a lawn until you reach the continuation of the Azalea Trail. Turn left onto it. In a short distance pass spur trails that lead to the Holly picnic area. Ignore these. Arrive back at the Laurel picnic area access road just a few yards down from where you started on the Azalea Trail. Turn left and retrace your steps to the Perimeter trail.

Turn right onto the Perimeter Trail. Initially the trail will turn away from the highway. At 0.38 miles from the Azalea Trail Spur 2 other spurs will come in straight ahead and to the right. These lead to the Dogwood Trail. You might be hiking that later but from the other side of the park. For now turn left and head back toward the Parkway. Here the trail parallels it, closely at times for about 1.03 miles. You'll cross two streams with bridges along the way. The trail then veers sharply to the right, leaving the parkway behind, and crosses the park road. You'll find yourself on an old woods road but only for a few steps (I believe it provides access to the trail from the campground.). It then makes a hard left and descends for 0.54 miles to and crosses Deep Run where it turns right and parallels the stream for 0.58 more miles. Turn right, crossing the stream on a culvert then right again. As you walk pass a kiosk the trail splits. Straight ahead leads to the campground. Bear left here to stay on the Perimeter Trail. You'll encounter a slight incline at this point.

In 0.72 miles cross a fire road with an empty kiosk (as of this posting) to the right. In 0.09 more miles come to one of the junctions of the blue blazed Blueberry trail. To add this trail to your hiking itinerary turn right onto it. You will soon find yourself walking under pines with a thick understory of blueberries. Near the mid-way point

of this trail pass a spur on the right that leads to the campground. In 0.63 miles from first getting onto the Blueberry trail turn right back onto the Perimeter trail. Note that you will still have some nice blueberry thickets around you. Shortly after this you'll cross Still Run on a bridge. In 0.77 miles from the Blueberry trail miles arrive at the Dogwood Trail. (You may have noticed an unsigned shortcut trail just before this.) Need more hiking? Turn right here and follow the red blazes. It doesn't matter which way you go. You'll still end up here. There is a long version to this loop and a slightly shorter version. Take your pick. The northern section of the trail is composed of boardwalks as you traverse a perpetually wet area of the park. Regardless of which loop you choose you will pass a spur that leads to a parking area on the park road. After completing this loop turn right onto the Perimeter Trail again. (You've now completed all of the "interior loops" in the park.) In about 0.30 miles cross a drainage on a wooden bridge. Immediately to your right is the park road. You want to turn left away from the road. If you don't see it now in a few steps you'll be staring at an immense high rise building. Now you remember where you are! Turn right and climb a very short hill. Over the next 0.57 miles you'll cross a couple of more bridges and skirt the back of the Park Police office before returning to the main park road. Turn right and follow it back to Park Headquarters and your vehicle.