

Gwynns Falls-Leakin Park Forest Management Plan

Baltimore, Maryland



Baltimore’s Gwynns Falls–Leakin Park (GFLP) is one of the largest urban forested parks in the eastern U.S. Though it began in 1901 as a small pocket park for residents of the city’s west side, it has since grown to span nearly 1000 acres. It is now home to an abundance of natural, cultural, and historical features and a number of outdoor education facilities.

As in many urban parks, human and natural disturbances have hindered native forest regeneration, resulting not only in habitat and biodiversity loss, but also in changes to forest succession, soil microbiology, plant-animal relationships, and hydrologic and fire regimes.

A holistic approach to planning will result in a blueprint for the protection and restoration of one of the nation’s largest urban forested parks.

As part of its mission to safeguard Baltimore’s tree canopy, and in an effort to chart a course for a resilient forest park system, the City’s Department of Recreation and Parks turned to Biohabitats for help in crafting a plan to guide future forest management actions.

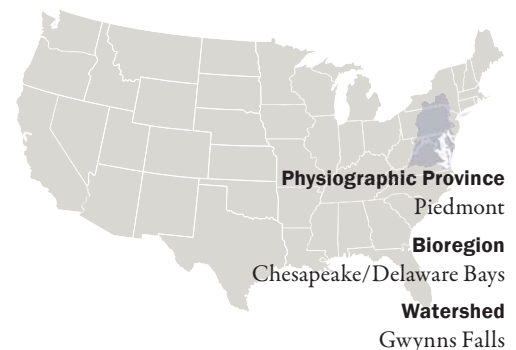
After reviewing all existing information related to the biology and landscape ecology of GFLP, Biohabitats began by conducting a forest assessment to determine forest composition/diversity, forest regeneration, invasive species presence and soil impacts. This involved using the US Forest Service’s NED-3 forest ecosystem decision support software to collect forest stand data from over 200 sampling locations. The Biohabitats team then mapped and analyzed the data to help determine forest conditions, both

quantity and quality, and identify associated management needs. Based on the analysis, Biohabitats will recommend restoration and management strategies and techniques to improve species diversity, reduce negative impacts, and improve overall forest health and resiliency.

The Gwynns Falls-Leakin Park Forest Management Plan will not only provide the City with an assessment of current conditions and a plan for long-term sustainability to support abundant species/age diversity and ecological services; it will also strengthen GFLP’s resilience to human disturbances and natural phenomena long into the future.

SERVICES

- Inventory & Assessments
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*conservation planning
ecological restoration
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