

then and can be observed busily feeding along the entire length of the trail. Most winters a few American Tree and White-crowned Sparrows can be found among the many Dark-eyed Juncos and White-throated Sparrows. You'll see lovely Eastern Bluebirds year-round. Eventually, the trail leads to the Middle Patuxent River floodplain, the first of two ponds, and some wetlands. In summer this area has Willow Flycatchers, Eastern Kingbirds, and Red-winged Blackbirds all attending to breeding activities. Wild Turkeys are sometimes seen along the river in winter, while Rusty Blackbirds stop by in spring and fall. Leaving the wetlands brings one to the second pond which sometimes hosts Wood Ducks and Great Blue Herons. Follow the trail uphill to connect with the entrance road; then continue north to the amphitheater parking lot.

Amenities: One port-a-pot is available by the barn behind the Hebb House. Benches are scattered throughout the park.

Handicapped Access: Paths are not suitable for wheelchairs; all are mown grass, gravel, and dirt with some inclines. The more than half mile long paved entrance road, however, provides excellent views of the sky, open grasslands, and tree-lined fencerows. Multiple paved pulloffs allow for viewing without leaving one's vehicle or blocking the road.

Operation and Hours: Dawn to dusk or as posted. **Please note: the gate is not controlled by Howard County Recreation and Parks.** Visitors should park in the Hebb House or amphitheater parking lots (unless a special event directs otherwise). All trails can all be accessed from the two regular lots.

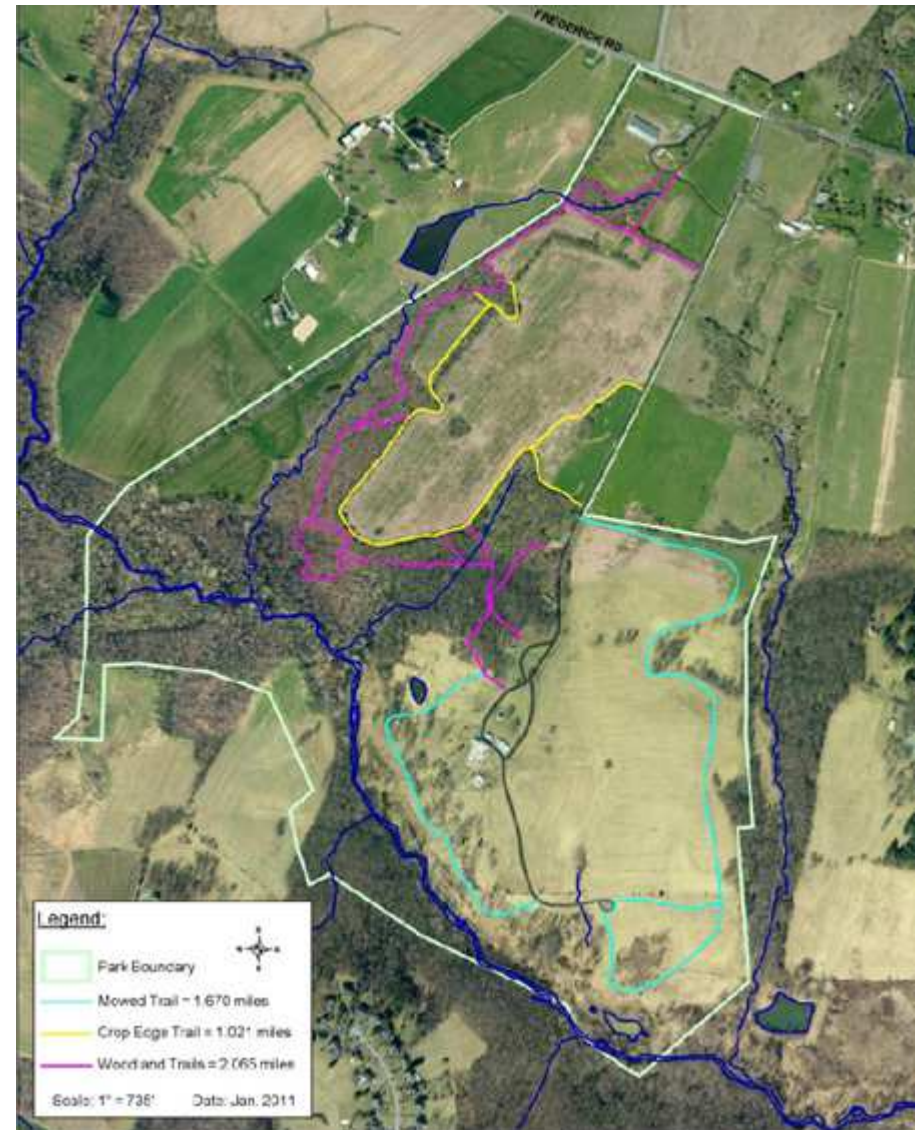
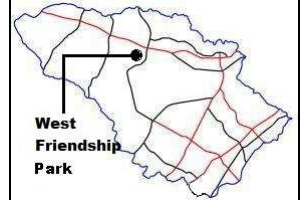
Special Attractions: Many unique and historic pieces of farm machinery can be found along the entrance road. A restored one-room schoolhouse, a home before electricity, and a milking barn all combine to give the visitor a feel for a way of life "once upon a time" in Howard County.

Compiler: Jeff Culler

This is a digest taken from the more complete site guide. More than 40 sites are described on the Howard County Bird Club website (howardbirds.org).

Howard County Bird Club

A Chapter of the Maryland Ornithological Society (MOS)
West Friendship Park Site Guide



Address: 12985 Frederick Road, West Friendship, MD 21794

Size: Approximately 375 acres including two ponds.

Layout: West Friendship Park is unique among Howard County Parks as it is a park that doesn't have a sign identifying it as such. Instead it has a sign for the *Howard County Living Farm Heritage Museum*. The Howard County Antique Farm Machinery Club and its members serve as the custodians and curators of the *Howard County Living Farm Heritage Museum* located on park grounds. All Howard County Recreation and Parks rules apply.

Parking: There are two convenient parking lots, both prior to the main gate. The first is the *Hebb House* parking lot that is located 500 feet down the entrance road. This parking area is bordered by a wooden fence with 12 sign posts. The second is the amphitheater parking lot that is located a half mile farther south along the entrance road and is easily recognized by the five silver antique harvesters parked there. The main gate is a short distance farther south and is usually locked. All trails can be accessed from the two parking lots.

Habitat: While some of the park is dedicated to the Living Farm Heritage Museum, the majority of the park is agricultural land, deciduous woods, fields, fence hedgerows, wetlands, and floodplain habitat. The Middle Patuxent River flows for a mile through the southern portion of the park. These diverse areas and habitats are all accessible using the three trails maintained by Howard County Antique Farm Machinery Club volunteers.

Best Months: April and May; September through November.

Coverage Time: At the peak of spring and fall migration, one can easily spend more than a half day exploring this park. Even in winter or when walking for exercise, it would take two to three hours to cover most of the trails.

Trails/Paths: Trails are predominately mown grass with some packed earth, and crushed gravel. The Map of West Friendship Park shows the three trails in color.

Woodland Trails (Red): These trails are the longest and with various side trails easily cover two miles or more. The Woodland Trails can be accessed from the Hebb House parking lot or the amphitheater parking lot. From the Hebb

House parking lot, the trail follows a small stream that flows into a large farm pond on private property adjacent to the park. In winter, waterfowl can be observed on that pond, flying about, or in the park's agricultural fields. Both Ross's and Snow Goose have visited the pond along with Cackling Goose and Ring-necked Ducks. The first part of this trail is mostly wooded edge, but eventually it leads into a dense woods with a beautiful stream bottom where the trail turns from grass to packed earth. Expect a wide variety of warblers and sparrows in spring and fall along this trail. In the forest, Wood Thrushes and Hermit Thrushes can be found in season; occasionally, a vocalizing Barred Owl will delight the ears. Prior to entering the deeper woods, this trail has two paths that lead to the Yellow Trail for a different habitat and nature experience while returning to the parking area. Continuing along the Woodlands Trail will take you through a mature deciduous forest with multiple offshoot paths that lead to the Yellow Trail. Following the Woodlands Trail to its completion will bring one to the amphitheater parking lot.

Crop Edge Trail (Yellow): This trail takes one along the agricultural fields and is approximately one mile long. This trail can be accessed from the Woodlands Trail using the Hebb House parking lot, directly from the amphitheater parking lot, or from several paved pulloffs along the entrance road. Please be respectful of crops and stay out of planted fields. This is the shortest trail in the park yet it provides excellent opportunities for skywatching and grassland birds. In winter, Savannah Sparrows and White-crowned Sparrows are found here, while summer brings breeding Grasshopper Sparrows. Other species seen yearly are Eastern Meadowlark, Horned Lark, American Pipit, Vesper Sparrow, and Bobolink. Keep an eye on the fence and pole lines that parallel the entrance road as they can provide excellent views of perched Eastern Bluebirds, Northern Mockingbirds, Red-shouldered Hawks, and American Kestrels.

Mowed Trail (Teal): This trail is approximately two miles long and is accessed from the amphitheater parking lot. The amphitheater area is a great place to spot spring and fall migrant warblers. The mowed trail is good anytime but is probably best in late fall and winter. Sparrows are abundant