

Take a hike: Park features lake, picnic spots and beauty

Posted by [TBN_Charles](#) On 05/13/2016

Charlotte Hall, MD - Gilbert Run is one of the most popular parks in Charles County, and there's a good reason for that.

It's a beautiful place with 180 rolling acres that affords amenities no other county park offers: picnic pavilions that can accommodate large gatherings, wildlife including bald eagles and beavers, floral fauna unique to the region and a 60-acre lake where citizens can canoe, paddleboat or, as in most cases, fish.

Some, including this writer, mistakenly thought that Gilbert Run Park came about after Hurricane Agnes dumped 12 inches of rain on the region in 1972, causing a surge of fresh water to gush from the run into the Wicomico River, silting over oyster beds.

Charles County Parks Manager John Snow, who was park manager at Gilbert Run from 1990-2008, said the project was in development way before Hurricane Agnes' torrential dumping. The storm was a powerful indicator that such a project was needed.

"Gilbert Run was in the works as far back as 1968 as a three-lake storm water and sediment control project," Snow explained. "We were in the process of acquiring land when Agnes came along."

The park is used seven days a week, but Snow admitted, "It becomes a different world on the weekends.

"It's one of our busiest casual parks," he added.

"It's the one park in the county where you can reserve a pavilion," Snow said. "They can accommodate groups of 50 to 350."

He noted that the pavilions are usually all rented during the summer months (the pavilion can only be rented and reserved by calling the park at 301-932-1083).

Alcohol is not allowed at the park except at some of the larger pavilions and that by permit only, which must be obtained at the park office.

There's another feature that makes Gilbert Run unique, Snow pointed out. In addition to the 60-acre freshwater lake, the park has a 2.5 mile hiking trail around the lake.

"It's one of the few places where you can still find old-growth forests," he said. "Most of the older forests were timbered out long ago. There are some old trees in the park."

Many local residents were fond of going to the park later in the day and walking just before dark. That practice was curtailed late last year when vandals broke into the park after hours and did some damage.

"There aren't a lot of those incidents," Snow admitted. "There was a time last year where we had a surge of people going into the park after hours. The rule has always been that the park closes at dusk. It was a small group. It's not really an issue."

He said the enforcement of afterhours trespassing is still in effect.

"That's for the safety of our citizens as well," said Charles County Public Information Specialist Donna Fuqua.

Fuqua said an estimated 28,000 people visited Gilbert Run last year.

So what are you waiting for?

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