



Since this week's *Perk* focuses on the trees of the U.S. capital region, we're sharing a cherry blossom **Peak Bloom** update for our beltway readers. Although the National Park Service and Washington Post's Capital Weather Gang have different range predictions, one date is common to both:

**Saturday, March 23rd**

## FEATURED PARK



Photos and facts of  
your favorite parks,  
one issue at a time

### Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge Nevada

**FACT 1:** Preserving an extremely rare desert oasis ecosystem, Ash Meadows is home to at least 26 species found *nowhere else*, including the critically-endangered Devil's Hole pupfish. As one of the Mojave Desert's largest oases, the park is believed to contain the **greatest local concentration of endemic species in the United States**.



**FACT 2:** Ash Meadows' 50 or so springs and seeps are fed mostly by underground "fossil water" aquifers thousands of years old. Remnants of a much wetter ecosystem that existed around 10,000 years ago, its unique species were isolated from other waterways when the climate warmed and wetlands receded.

Nominate *your* favorite local, state, or national park [here](#) so our subscribers can learn about it.

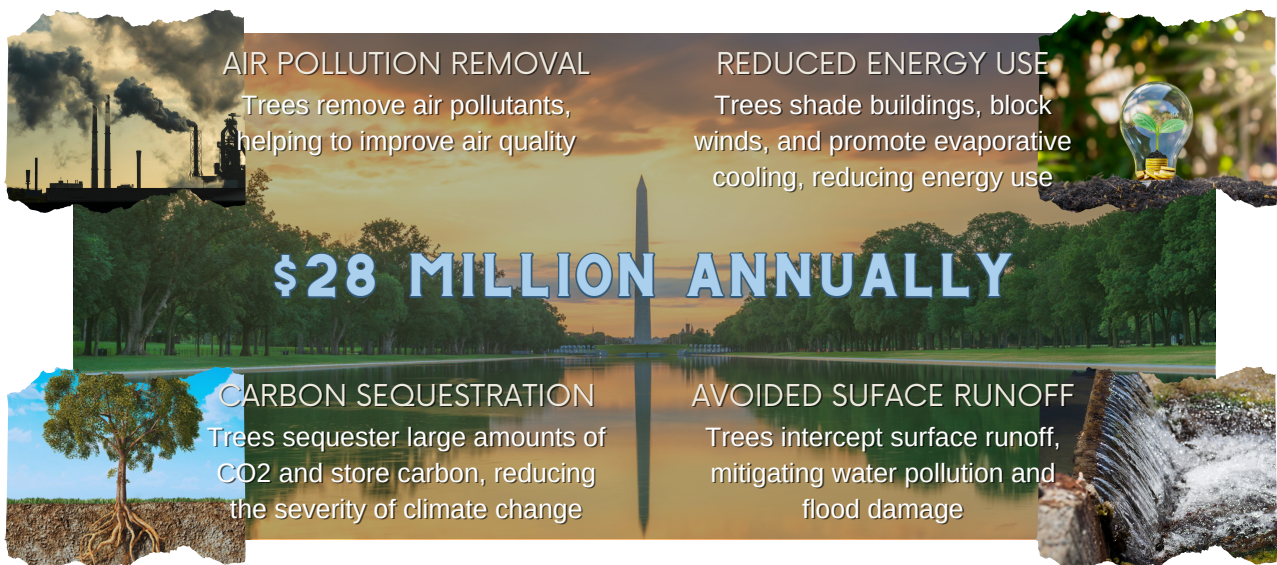
# PARK PERKS



Visualizing key research to show why parks matter

Although development threatens to reduce their extent, forests remain a major feature of many urban landscapes, providing significant value for local residents. The National Park Service even created a [StoryMap](#) highlighting how the national capital region's trees and forests provide precisely these often overlooked benefits. The StoryMap incorporates a 2015 [analysis](#) by the non-profit organization Casey Trees that captured data on tree diameter, quantity, and density from 201 field plots in the Washington, DC area. Then using a tool developed by the USDA Forest Service called [iTree Eco](#), the organization estimated and monetized the ecological benefits of the area's urban forest.

## Functional Value of National Capital Region Trees



The analysis suggests that Washington, DC's urban forest provides significant benefits to the surrounding area. Annually, local trees are estimated to offer more than *\$28 million* in functional value through ecosystem services. Their structural value - the cost of replacing the trees themselves - is estimated at **more than \$4.28 billion**. While urban forests may be less pristine than their rural counterparts, this research suggests that the services they provide are similarly important and should be taken into consideration in urban park management. Utilizing innovative tools such as [iTree Eco](#) may make it easier for park managers to quantify and communicate urban forest benefits to the public, increasing support for vital conservation measures.

## PLAY GROUND

**What happened to the two palm trees used in an artificial reef?**

they went from best of fronds to worst of anemones