



Friends of Sligo Creek

Newsletter June 2016



Ellen X. Silverberg photo

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New Sligo Data Reveal 97 Bee Species & Two County Firsts

Sligo is home to nearly a fourth of all 421 bee species known in Maryland, including two documented for the first time in Prince George's County,



The most abundant species collected was this member of the sweat bee family, Agopostemon viriscens. Its many hairs help it collect and spread pollen. (J. Nanze photo)

according to data tabulated by Sligo ecologist Rhonda Kranz just in time for National Pollinator Week (June 20-26).

She and her team of volunteers collected 2,084 bees in 2014 in the half-mile stretch of the powerline corridor that crosses Sligo between East West Highway and 16th Place. A total of 97 species bees were identified at the USGS Patuxent Wildlife Research Center's Native Bee Inventory and Monitoring Lab by staff and volunteers under the guidance of entomologist Sam Droege. The results are now posted [here](#) on our website, including newly revised data and analysis from the 2013 survey.

Rhonda's team of field workers included Carolyn Frank, Dean Tousley, Deanna Anderson, Jim

Anderson, Sally Taber, Brian Brown, and Timothy McMahon. Timothy also helped at the lab to identify species.

The two-year study documented 97 species in 27 genera and five families. At least two of the species (and perhaps as many as six) had not been documented before in Prince George's County, where the powerline site is located. One is a species in the sweat bee family and the other in the family of leaf-cutting and mining bees.

FOSC has been working with Pepco since 2008 to reduce mowing in this stretch of the powerline and allow a shrubby meadow-grassland to emerge. Even though no planting has been done, the seed bank had yielded 120 species of flowering plants by 2013 and thus rich pollen and nectar resources for bees.

The single most abundant bee species was a kind of sweat bee called *Agopostemon viriscens* (photo above), which accounted for nearly one in five individuals collected in 2014. Unlike many bees that are active only a few weeks each year, this species was found throughout the sampling period, from mid-April to early-November.



Only one individual was found for 16 of the species, including this member of the polyester bee family, Colletes inaequalis. (J. Rapp photo)

Overall, the majority of bees came from the sweat bee family, including nearly two-thirds in 2014. Four of the five most abundant genera in 2014 were also from the sweat bee family. (The fifth was a genus in the family of bumblebees, carpenter bees, and related species.) One sweat bee genus, *Lasioglossum*, was the most diverse, with 26 species in the two years.

Fortunately for us, these tiny sweat bees rarely sting, as they don't defend their nests like the highly social insects and are rarely disturbed when foraging for nectar and pollen. Easily overlooked, these bees nest mostly in small holes they dig in the ground.

For more information about the bee study, contact Rhonda at rhonda2@kranzcons.com.

-- Michael Wilpers



One of Sligo's few parasitic species is Sphecodes atlantis, whose minimal body hair reflects its inability to collect pollen on its own. (L. Packer photo)

Outing at Sligo and NW Branch Confluence June 18



Take a guided tour of restored meadows and woodlands at the confluence of Sligo Creek and Northwest Branch with naturalist Jorge Montero on Saturday, June 18.

The group will gather at 9 am on Nicholson St., in Hyattsville, where it meets a street called The Mall, not far from Ager Road. This is about 700 feet north from the confluence of Sligo Creek and the Northwest Branch. (Apartment buildings are right across the street.)

Jorge Montero leads outing at Sligo's confluence with NW Branch in 2015. (Ann Hoffnar photo)

The easy, three-hour walk will traverse parkland that has undergone considerable

restoration work since 2012, led by the Anacostia Watershed Society (AWS), including removal of non-native invasive plants and planting natives, and allowing native trees, shrubs, and herbaceous plants to return, along with the many animals that depend on them.

The first stop will be a major kudzu removal project and native plant restoration. From there, we'll head to the confluence and a riparian forest along the NW Branch. The final destination will be Heurich Park to observe another reforestation project and an old stormwater pond constructed some years ago by Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, which owns the park.

It's best to wear long pants and closed-toe shoes and bring insect repellent and drinking water. Poison ivy is common in the park. Binoculars are always handy, if you have them, plus any field guides that might be helpful. A hand lens will allow you to get better views of the flora and fauna.

Jorge is a natural resources specialist with AWS and a certified arborist. This is the second event he has led for Friends of Sligo Creek.

For more information, contact outreach@fosc.org.

Bike Tour of Sligo June 12

A few spots still remain open for an inspiring bike ride along Sligo Creek to the Anacostia River on Sunday, June 12.

Registration is open until 10 pm on Friday evening, June 10, by emailing avorce@aol.com.

The ride starts at 8:30 am at the Channing Drive entrance to Sligo Creek Park (just above Kemp Mill). Bikers will traverse several trails along the Anacostia Trail Tributary System, arriving at Bladensburg Waterfront Park, on the Anacostia, at 10:30.

Riders will then watch a presentation on factors that affect water quality in the creek, after which they can take a one-hour pontoon boat ride on the Anacostia. At noon, bikers will depart the Boat House to arrive back in Kemp Mill at about 1:30.



Participants in the bike tour get a free pontoon-boat ride at Bladensburg Park. (AWS photo)

Registrants will receive a route map and guide, further event details, and priority sign-up for the pontoon boat ride. In case of rain, the event will be moved to Sunday, June 19.

The bike tour, titled "The First Community Bike Ride for Clean Water: The Sligo Headwaters to the Anacostia," is supported by a grant to Friends of Sligo Creek from the Chesapeake Bay Trust, through the Water Quality Protection Charge Program of Montgomery County's Department of Environmental Protection.

For more information, email avorce@aol.com.

Three Schools Help Pull Garlic Mustard

More than 100 students from three local schools joined in pulling invasive garlic mustard from Sligo Creek Park this spring.

On April 20, 80 sophomores and faculty from Stone Ridge pulled some 40 bags of garlic mustard in section 6, just inside the Beltway. Weed Warrior Supervisors Rita and Paul Marth and Kathy Treat helped make this successful.

On April 21, 31 students and three faculty members from Landon Middle School worked to pull garlic mustard in section 7, just south of Dennis Avenue. We filled all ten bags and had to put the rest in a large pile to be picked up later.

On April 30, nine students and one professor from Montgomery College came out and helped Barbara and me harvest 14 bags of garlic mustard on Long Branch creek by the county swimming pool.

Thanks to all of these students and teachers for helping Friends of Sligo Creek with this invasive plant!

-- Jim Anderson, Chair of RIP (Remove Invasive Plants)

Third Water WatchDog Training Focuses on Sligo Headwaters

The third Water WatchDogs training took place in May, with a focus on the headwaters area of Sligo Creek Park and surrounding development. As with the prior two workshops, water-quality expert Lori Lilly introduced the participants to easy methods for identifying different types of water pollution and their sources.

Then Water WatchDogs founders Anne Vorce and Kathleen Samiy explained the easy email method of reporting pollution to county authorities.



During the outdoor field portion of the workshop, Kathy Michels (above, under umbrella) described what she calls a "man-made waterfall" where stormwater flowing off the parking lot of Kemp Mill Shopping Center heads directly toward the creek without any intervening treatment.



Water-quality expert Lori Lilly (above) explained the importance and sensitivity of Sligo's headwaters. She showed the group this deeply incised stream channel, caused by a high volume of stormwater rushing down the creek from impervious surfaces in the surrounding area during heavy rains.

This workshop was made possible, in part, by a grant from the Chesapeake Bay Trust, through the Water Quality Protection Charge Program of Montgomery County's Department of Environmental Protection.

For more information, contact Anne Vorce at avorce@aol.com.

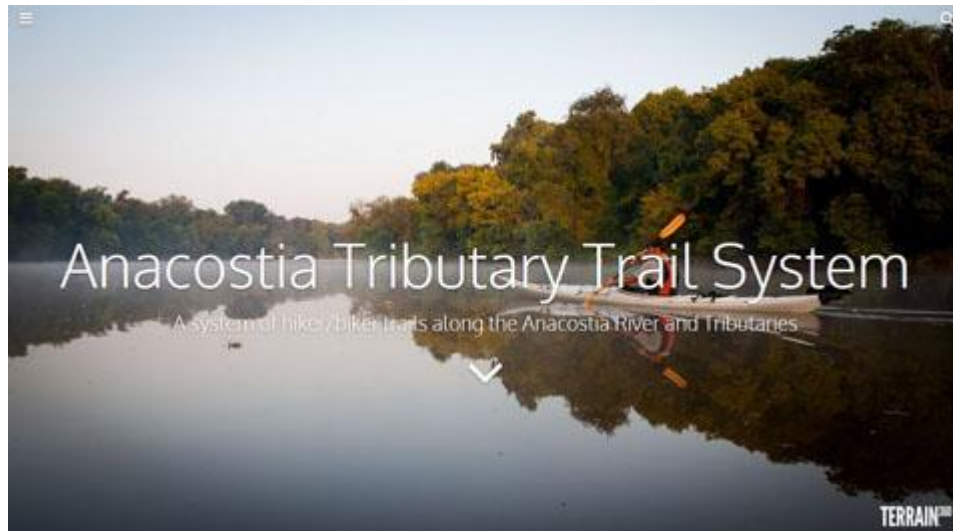
New App Unveiled with 360-Degree Views of Sligo

You can now take a virtual trip along the Sligo Creek trail, thanks to a new app that provides 360-degree views from anywhere along the path.

Visit the new site on your laptop, desktop, or mobile device at http://www.anacostia.net/maps/trail_map.html or search the web under "Anacostia Tributary Trail System."

The virtual trail covers not only the Sligo Creek but ten other trails, including the Rachel Carson Greenway (Montgomery County), Indian Creek (PG County), and the Anacostia Riverwalk (DC). The app is a project of the Anacostia River Restoration Partnership, led by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG), to promote the Anacostia Tributary Trail System.

In addition to panoramic images at all points along each trail, the app provides information on the length of the trails and their topographic contours, to judge ease of biking, for example.



The Sligo Creek hiker-biker trail is one of ten in the Anacostia Tributary Trail System. (TERRAIN photo)

The maps also identify points of interest, such as Wheaton Regional Park, Bladensburg Waterfront Park, and the Aquatic Resources Education Center. Capital Bikeshare docking stations are pinpointed, and trail-goers can also tell when a part of the system is under construction.

Friends of Sligo Creek will be working with COG to add more points of interest to the map of Sligo, such as special nature sites, invasives removal projects, stormwater control installations, and places of historical significance.

The panoramic images were captured by the contractor Terrain360 using cameras mounted on a backpack and bikes. Terrain360 has created virtual tours of other trails, waterways, and landscapes, such as the Shenandoah Valley and the James River.

Additional imagery will be added when the Anacostia Riverwalk Trail is complete in October 2016, when the Anacostia Tributary Trail System will become one of the most extensive urban trails in the country.

The interactive map is a project of the Anacostia Watershed Restoration Partnership (AWRP), a regional effort supported by the District of Columbia, Montgomery and Prince George's Counties, and state and federal partners, and led by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) to coordinate the restoration and protection of the Anacostia River watershed.

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Friends of Sligo Creek is a nonprofit community organization dedicated to protecting, improving, and appreciating the ecological health of Sligo Creek Park and its surrounding watershed.

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