



## **Testimony of *Friends of Sligo Creek* to the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission concerning acquiring the campus of the School of Art and Design at Montgomery College through the Legacy Open Space program**

**Presented on November 15, 2007 by Bruce Sidwell,  
President of *Friends of Sligo Creek***

On behalf of the Board and Members of the Friends of Sligo Creek, I wish to say how much we appreciate the opportunity to address Park & Planning about acquisition of the property at 10500 Georgia Ave. (known as the School of Art and Design at Montgomery College) through the Legacy Open Space program.

As you may know, the Friends of Sligo Creek is an all-volunteer citizen group dedicated to protecting, enhancing, and enjoying Sligo Creek Park. Despite damage from heavy urbanization in the watershed, thanks to County, Park & Planning, and citizen efforts, the creek is beginning to rebound in terms of beauty, water quality, forest cover, and wildlife habitat.

Citizens in the surrounding neighborhood have nominated the school site for inclusion in Montgomery County's Legacy Open Space program to become a park. Friends of Sligo Creek supports this nomination because green open space is needed in the down-County area, and the opportunity to save this property for its benefits to recreation and the environment should not be lost. Although we appreciate the benefits of concentrating growth near mass transit and close to where people work, at some point a balance must be struck between the benefits of increased density and the value of parks and other open space for recreation and protection of the ecology of local streams and the larger watershed of the Anacostia River. The Georgia Avenue corridor from Wheaton to Silver Spring has been and will continue to be heavily built-up and paved over. At this point, opportunities to protect well-located open spaces must be acted on.

The campus is one of the few remaining undeveloped green open spaces in the Sligo Creek watershed. As a park property, this space could continue to offer recreation for County residents, as well as habitat for birds and other animals. In addition, protecting the existing woods, fields, and ephemeral stream on the site help intercept and clean stormwater headed towards Sligo Creek. At a low point in the neighborhood, the site collects and slows water-flow. This water helps feed a naturally functioning tributary that flows under Georgia Avenue to course through Evans Parkway Park and eventually to Sligo Creek.

We strongly urge the Commission to help see that this property and feeder stream to Sligo Creek are protected under the Legacy Open Space program. We look forward to working with you to protect and enhance our parkland. Thank you for your attention. I invite you to look over our website () for more information about our group.

Bruce A. Sidwell  
President, Friends of Sligo Creek