



# Friends of Sligo Creek

Newsletter March 2018



*Ellen X. Silverberg photo*

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## Learn about Bats and Helping Sligo at "Inspiration Works" April 10

Find out how bats are being conserved in the face of habitat loss, human encroachment, and disease when Nina Fascione, former director of Bat

Conservation International, speaks at our annual "Inspiration Works" event on Tuesday, April 10, at the Silver Spring Civic Building.

Her talk begins at 7:30. Come at 7:00 to enjoy complementary pizza and a chance to find out how you can contribute to our efforts in Sligo's stormwater management, invasives control, water quality monitoring, natural history, and advocacy.

Key volunteers from each of these areas will be on hand, and we'll have some displays where you can learn more about this work and how you can get involved.



*Nina Fascione was director of Bat Conservation International from 2010 to 2012.*



*The Tricolored Bat (Eastern Pipistrelle) probably lives in Sligo. (Michael Durham photo via Flickr)*

In the featured talk, Nina will discuss the plight of bats, their functions in our environment, and how we can help them recover. The Sligo Creek watershed is home to about eight species of bats, although no formal survey has been conducted. Check our website's [bat list for Sligo](#) to see which species are likely to live here.

At Bat Conservation International from 2010 to 2012, Nina guided the organization's efforts to protect bats and their habitats around the world. She previously served as co-chair of the Bat Taxon Advisory Group of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums from 1991 to 1997.

She is currently vice president for development at Defenders of

Wildlife, where she previously served as vice president for field conservation programs.

She has also held positions with the Wildlife Habitat Council (which certifies the meadow management project in Sligo's Pepco corridor) and the Zoological Society of Philadelphia. Nina currently serves on the board of Ewaso Lions (a conservation organization in Kenya) and is co-editor of *People and Predators: From Conflict to Coexistence* (Island Press, 2004).

For more information on this event, contact [stormwater@fosc.org](mailto:stormwater@fosc.org).

## Spring "Sweep the Creek" April 21-22

Our annual spring litter cleanup, "Sweep the Creek," takes place on Saturday, April 21, from 9 to 11 am, and Sunday, April 22, from 1 to 3 pm.

We welcome individuals, groups, families, and students, who can receive service-learning credit for their work (we provide the forms and signatures).

With help from Montgomery Parks, we provide gloves, bags, water, and guidance on what kind of help is most needed in each section (such as invasive plants along with litter removal).



*Daisy Troop 34024 at our "Sweep the Creek" in spring 2017*

All you need to bring is your community spirit and a willingness to get a little wet and dirty! If you are bringing a group or have questions, please contact the Sweep Coordinator ahead of time at [litter@fosc.org](mailto:litter@fosc.org).

Everyone is advised to wear long sleeve shirts, long pants, socks, and shoes to avoid contact with poison ivy and barbed plants such as greenbrier.

We look forward to sharing the honor of stewardship with you during this Spring's Sweep the Creek, and we thank you in advance for your partnership in this wonderful community effort. For further information, contact our Sweep coordinator at [litter@fosc.org](mailto:litter@fosc.org).

## New Restoration Plantings in March





*Shrubs and trees will be planted at this stormwater swale across from the south end of the soccer fields. (Wilpers photo)*

Eight new stream and wetland projects will be planted with 200 trees and shrubs in March and April by Montgomery Parks. The woody plants will complement hundreds of wildflowers, grasses, rushes, and sedges planted at these sites in 2017.

Among the more prominent locations are between Forest Glen Road and the Beltway (on either side of the Parkway), along the paved trail from Ladd Street to the main trail in Kemp Mill, and in the bioswale near Crosby Road (across the creek from the south end of the soccer fields).

The native tree species will include American Sycamore, Tulip-tree, Red Maple, Pin Oak, Northern Red Oak, Black Willow, and Ironwood (*Carpinus*). Among the shrubs will be Spicebush, Silky Dogwood, Buttonbush, Winterberry, Smooth Alder, and Black Haw Viburnum.

Two other areas for planting are adjacent to stream restoration projects along the Parkway at Breewood Tributary (near Tenbrook Court) and Inwood Tributary (near Rocky Mount

Way). Two more areas are along the Parkway just upstream from New Hampshire Avenue and at the west corner of the ballfields at Brunet Avenue.

Parks staff will do work in four of these areas to help control non-native invasive plants, including the project near Ladd Street.

Our thanks for this effort and update to Erin McArdle in the Environmental Engineering section of Montgomery Parks and to Carole Bergmann, forest ecologist with Parks, for advising them on the best plant species to use.

## Share Your Nature Sightings

Spring is a great time to share your nature sightings in Sligo through the "Sightings" page on our website here: <http://fosc.org/sightings.htm>.

If you take any photos of your sightings, send them to [webmaster@fosc.org](mailto:webmaster@fosc.org), and they will be posted along with the description of what you saw and where.

Recent cool sightings have included Bald Eagle, Flying Squirrel, Red Fox, and Northern Dusky Salamander. Plants in flower are always of interest, as well.

## The Invisible Flowers of Sligo



*Female (left) and male flowers of American Hazelnut, a native birch found in Sligo (photo from bobklips.com)*

High overhead in late winter and early spring, every large oak tree in Sligo produces thousands of inconspicuous female flowers ready to capture the wind-blown pollen grains released in great profusion by obvious male flowers hanging in strings called catkins.

Most of Sligo's tree species are wind-pollinated and produce tiny, rarely seen female flowers, including oaks, hickories, elms, birches, mulberries, Black Walnut, Sweetgum, and Sycamore.

Among the few species in Sligo that are insect-pollinated (and develop more familiar-looking flowers) are the native Tulip-tree, Black Cherry, serviceberries,

Flowering Dogwood, and Blackgum; naturalized Sweet Cherry; and non-native invasive pear trees.

Unlike those, the flowers of oaks and other wind-pollinated trees offer no colorful petals, tasty nectar, or alluring aromas to attract the bees, butterflies, and moths that insect-pollinated flowers need to carry their pollen from plant to plant.

Instead, wind-pollinated trees devote their energies to making many more flowers and designing them only to release male pollen grains and capture them as they waft by on the breeze.

An additional difference is that the flowers of insect-pollinated trees combine the male parts (anthers) and female parts (pistils) in the same flower, while wind-pollinated species



divide them into separate flowers,  
with male and female flowers looking  
very different.

*Female flowers of Black Oak on a fallen branch  
after windstorm in Sligo in March 2012  
(Wilpers photo)*

Remarkably, the primitive-looking female flowers of wind-pollinated trees evolved from the more complex structures of insect-pollinated flowers (rather than vice-versa). Natural selection has often favored wind pollination because it is not affected when an insect goes extinct, declines due to disease or predators, or abandons the plant's range for another. Use of wind pollination also allows a plant to send its seeds great distances to populate areas outside the habitat of any one insect.

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## Need to Reach Us?

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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.*

