

Memo

August 31, 2018

TO: Takoma Park City Council

FROM: Kit Gage, Advocacy Director, Friends of Sligo Creek [www.fosc.org](http://www.fosc.org)  
**Kit Gage**

Please Save Dorothy's Woods

On behalf of Friends of Sligo Creek (FOSC), I want to update you on our assessment of and involvement with Dorothy's Woods. I understand there is upcoming a hearing and possible foreclosure action that includes the Dorothy's Woods forest. We urge you to preserve the woods.

Some history: early on, I was called in to advise on the acquisition and then evaluation of and conceptualization for what the Woods could become. As well, Jim Anderson, RIP (removing invasive species) chair for FOSC and I have been ongoing supervisors for the removal of kudzu, multiflora rose, and other invasive and destructive species in Dorothy's Woods. A number of other members of Friends of Sligo Creek, from Takoma Park and beyond have participated in invasives removal. In the process, we have been looking at the many species of native trees, shrubs, vines and perennials in the forest – a very good diversity for that size plot with no intentional plantings in decades.

Dorothy's Woods is a special area, and not just in Takoma Park. Sure, the City of Takoma Park and surrounding area have lots of trees. Of course Sligo Creek Park, partly in the City of Takoma Park, has lots of trees and some forested areas. But Dorothy's Woods is unusual in its size as a forest. It's not just that it has trees – it is a biome that is home for birds and other mammals, and other living creatures that require the multi-level presence of a forest and the relative lack of disturbance that comes with a unit like Dorothy's Woods. There are no other areas in Takoma Park that I know of which have these characteristics. There are very few areas even in Sligo Creek Park that fit that description, and those probably only in the headwaters part near Wheaton Park.

This forest is a sponge – absorbing stormwater well. The possible wetland, or at least the vernal stream are special features that show its position as the base of a sizable watershed. I would hate to lose this big a chunk of forest that so well slows and treats stormwater in the Sligo watershed. If the land was sold and developed, there would not be a similarly excellent infiltration area. Given the high priority of stormwater mitigation, this is an important feature.

The property is no longer a mess of invasive vines and plants. To get rid of the worst of them has been a multi-year staged process, not yet complete but well along. Ivy will be nearly the last to remove as it requires care to keep the forest floor from eroding. This process of invasives removal has been done by a dedicated group of people from Takoma Park, including some City employees, and beyond, not just from the adjoining neighborhood, who have been guided to know what they're removing and how best to do it.

It seems to me Dorothy's Woods is on the cusp of being a gem, and no longer one hidden by kudzu and etc. It would be a waste and a significant loss if it was sold off and developed. I, on behalf of Friends of Sligo Creek, urge you to do what is possible to save it.

Friends of Sligo Creek is a nonprofit community environmental organization dedicated to protecting, improving and appreciating Sligo Creek, the park and its watershed. Dorothy's Woods