



# Friends of Sligo Creek

Newsletter February 2016



*Ellen X. Silverberg photo*

## Contents

- New Board Member Delia Aguilar
- More Progress on McLaughlin Woods
- Our Annual Open House Mar. 22
- A 1940 Survey of Sligo Plants
- Need to Reach Us?

## Meet New Board Member Delia Aguilar

We are very pleased to introduce our newest board member, Delia Aguilar, who has worked the last ten years for CASA, the immigrant services and advocacy organization based in suburban Maryland.

Delia started at CASA as a community organizer working for its program on housing



*Delia Aguilar (right) is the newest board member of Friends of Sligo Creek.*

and tenants rights. From there, she became a coordinator for CASA's vocational training program. In that capacity, she coordinated with community colleges to offer vocational training classes for CASA members. These classes enabled members to increase their job skills and qualify them for better jobs at higher pay.

After two years in this position, she became manager of workforce development, which has given her the opportunity to see first-hand the economic impact of the workers who arrive daily at each of the centers.

Delia has known about Friends of Sligo Creek since she first moved to Silver Spring. She writes, "I appreciate the effort that is done to inform the community of ways to preserve what we have in Sligo Creek. I enjoy taking my son to Sligo Creek and showing him how important it is to preserve the green areas of our community."

Welcome, Delia!

-- Kit Gage, President

## McLaughlin Woods Makeover Progresses

About 20 volunteers of all ages turned out on Martin Luther King Day to help remove trash and invasive vines from McLaughlin Woods, the newest addition of preserved woodland in the Sligo watershed.

Local residents and others braved a cold, 18-degree morning on January 16 to help clean up the Woods, a 2.68-acre parcel located between Woodland and Gude Avenues that the City of Takoma Park acquired last year.



*Volunteers gather harvest of Kudzu vines from McLaughlin Woods on Jan. 16. (Cindy Dyballa photo)*

"These warm-hearted people

made really good progress,"

reported Jim Anderson, who helped with the event as invasives chair for Friends of Sligo Creek.

"They hauled out all the prior-cut vines and cut more English Ivy and Kudzu," Jim added. "They also took out lots of trash, including a drive train, a tail pipe, a shopping cart, plant pots, and lots of bottles, cans, and other trash. Thank you!"

The event was the latest of the neighborhood's monthly clean-up and invasives pulls since the City gained clear title last summer to the land it purchased in January 2015.

"Because we removed so much Kudzu all at once, it made sense to haul it out and not let it decompose in place, as you normally would. This way, we can see what comes up there in spring," reported Cindy Dyballa. "We accomplished one of our year's management goals, which was cutting the English Ivy on virtually all the mature trees."

The MLK Day event was one of three service activities in Takoma Park that day, followed by a potluck dinner and celebration at the middle school attended by some 250 people.



*Invasive vines were prevalent in McLaughlin Woods in this January 2015 photo from the Takoma Voice. (Eric Bond photo)*

McLaughlin Woods is also known among neighbors as Dorothy's Woods, in honor of 90-plus year old senior who has lived virtually all her life bordering the woodland.

The property sits adjacent to a former school now used for low-income senior housing. When it came up for auction through the IRS, the Takoma Park City Council passed a resolution to preserve the woods and authorized the City to bid at the auction. To support the city's effort, neighbors raised more than \$100,000 to increase the amount the city could offer. The city won the auction at \$253,000.

# "Inspiration Works": Our Annual Open House on March 22

Meet Sligo neighbors, enjoy refreshments (sandwiches, veggies, cookies), learn about our many projects, and hear how new stormwater initiatives are appearing in the watershed at our annual "Inspiration Works" open house on Tuesday, March 22, from 7-9 pm. The event takes place at the Sligo-Dennis Community Building.

Our very active committees will staff informative displays showing their recent work, including tables on invasives, water quality, stormwater, and natural history. Get answers to your questions from the organizers at each table.

Our guest speaker is Pamela Rowe, the RainScapes planner with Montgomery County Watershed Management Division (part of the Department of Environmental Protection). She'll provide an update on the latest stormwater projects in Sligo and on opportunities for citizen involvement, including the rebate program that provides up to \$2,500 to homeowners for stormwater improvements.

She'll describe the new Neighbor to Neighbor (N2N) process now being used as well as opportunities with Geocaching and pet-waste management.



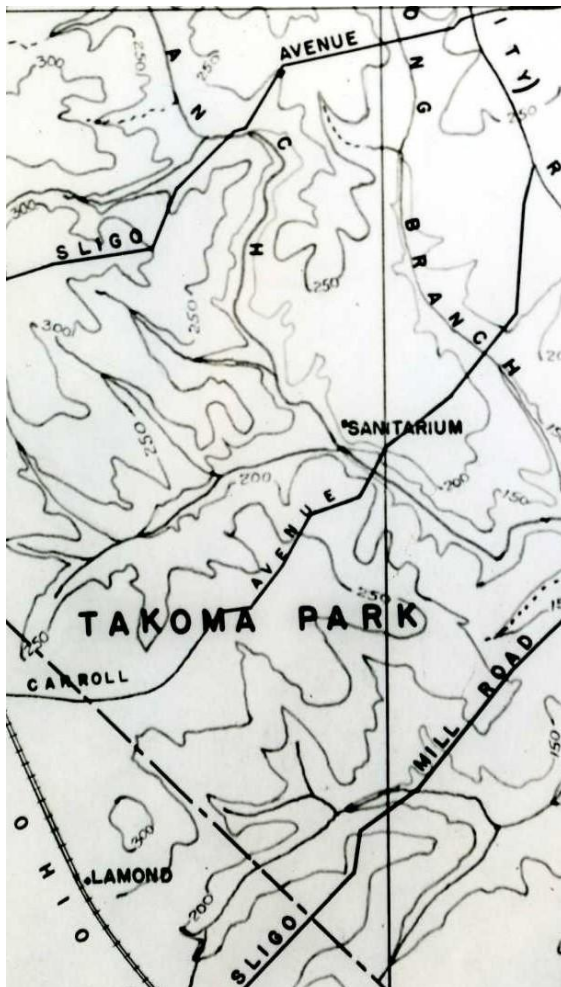
*Guests enjoy our natural history display at a previous open house for Friends of Sligo.*



Pamela Rowe is the RainScapes Neighborhoods planner with Montgomery County. She has worked for nearly 20 years to protect and restore local watersheds, including work with the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission and with the county on watershed studies and stream protection strategies. She now works with residents and watershed groups on innovative approaches for managing stormwater. She spends as much time as she can paddling or sailing the regions many beautiful rivers and the Chesapeake Bay.

Don't miss this great annual event!

## A Survey of Sligo's Plants from 1940



*Detail from Boyd's topographic map in his 1940 "Flora of the Sligo Valley"*

Imagine Sligo Creek Park 100 years ago and you may not envision bogs and swamps adorned with orchids, a floodplain instead of a Parkway, or a complete absence of English Ivy but Japanese honeysuckle that was "common everywhere."

These are among many features of an earlier Sligo you can glean from "A Flora of the Sligo Valley," completed in 1940 by local botanist Charles Lester Boyd as part of his master's degree at Catholic University in DC.

His 90-page list documents 600-plus native and introduced species from his own observations and from historical collections dating back to the 1870s.

Natural History chair Michael Wilpers stumbled across this resource at the Takoma Park Library. It's now on our website [here](#) (thanks to webmaster Clair Garman) with indexes to the plant families and hot links to the

relevant sections of the Flora. Boyd's 1940 survey nicely complements two

others on our website, one completed in 1971 by Dorothy Salisbury for the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission, and another completed in 2003 by John Parrish specifically for Friends of Sligo Creek. Both are on our website [here](#).

Before he pursued formal training at Catholic, Boyd explored Sligo for 31 years, calling it his "favorite resort." In 1938 and 1939, he conducted a systematic survey of the watershed, complementing his own observations with historical specimens collected in Sligo by earlier botanists and deposited in local herbaria at the Smithsonian, Catholic University, and the University of Maryland. He added these herbarium species because "in so limited a time [two years], it has not been possible to locate anything like the total number of species which can almost certainly still be found within the area."

Many thanks to our webmaster, Clair Garman, for his resourceful, persistent, and rapid work in making this invaluable resource so readily available on our website.

-- Michael Wilpers  
Natural History Committee



*Sharp-fruit Rush collected along Takoma Branch in 1939 by contemporaries of Boyd (UMCP photo)*

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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.*