



# Friends of Sligo Creek

Newsletter July-August 2018



*Ellen X. Silverberg photo*

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## Drama and Intrigue of Stormwater Fight Discussed August 28

Join three local advocates for stormwater management on Tuesday, August 28, to learn about the recent drama, intrigue, and interventions in the struggle to maintain effective stormwater management in Montgomery County.

Among the many twists and turns was the first veto of a capital improvement budget in 25 years (by County Executive Ike Leggett), for reasons that remain murky, causing dispute and confusion among the County Council and the Department of Environmental Protection as to the reasons for, and implications of, his veto and how it might be overcome.

Meanwhile, local activists, including all three panelists for our event, provided expert analysis to the Council and county staff, worked to strengthen their negotiating position with the Executive, and strategized almost daily for months.



*Caitlin Wall of Potomac Conservancy  
(Environmental Leadership Program  
photo)*



*Eliza Cava of the Audubon  
Naturalist Society (ANS photo)*

Our speakers will review the steps taken by Executive Leggett to reduce stormwater programs, the Council's eventual response, as well as the most up-to-date state of affairs.

The program takes place at the Silver Spring Civic Building at the intersection of Fenton and Ellsworth in downtown Silver Spring. The presentation begins at 7:30, but come at 7:15 for refreshments and conviviality.

Our panel brings together Eliza Cava from Audubon Naturalist Society, Caitlin Wall from the Potomac Conservancy, and Kit Gage, FOSC's director of advocacy and long time member of our stormwater committee.

Eliza Cava is Audubon Naturalist Society's director of conservation, where she leads advocacy on local and federal policy issues and conservation outreach work and supervises citizen science programs. Eliza was previously an environmental and outdoor educator in Maryland, Massachusetts, Tennessee, and Oregon.

Caitlin Wall is director of policy at Potomac Conservancy, focusing on efforts in Maryland, the District of Columbia, and occasionally Virginia. Caitlin leads the Conservancy's local and state-level policy and advocacy campaigns to encourage elected officials to enact river-friendly land use policies and appropriations and pollution reduction programs. She is also chair of the Stormwater Partners Network, on which Eliza Cava and Kit Gage also serve.

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

# "Happy Trails" to Founding Board Member Ann Hoffnar

This summer, we bid a bittersweet "Happy Trails" to Ann Hoffnar, who has been a stalwart member of Friends of Sligo Creek from its very beginnings in 2001.

She served on the interim steering committee that preceded even the founding board of directors, on which body she also served as it crafted bylaws and signed articles of incorporation in 2002.

For seven years, Ann was an active and essential part of the board, leaving in 2009. In the early years (2002-2004), she devoted lots of energy to the creation of strategic plans, which helped clarify options and directions for our young community nonprofit.

She and Jim Baird served as co-presidents from 2004 to 2006, succeeding the first president, Sally Gagne. Sally says, "Ann's contributions were vital to the success of Friends of Sligo Creek -- from arranging for our handsome logo to providing refreshments for programs at which we would present a logo-adorned mug to the speaker. She was so generous with her time, and we send with her our warm wishes for a great 'real' retirement."

As early as 2003, Ann was discovering community outreach as her personal passion. Countless are the festivals, street fairs, and other big events for which she staffed the FOSC table and recruited others to join her.



*Ann Hoffnar with her signature "fishing pond" at one of many events where she promoted Sligo*

Fellow board member Bruce Sidwell recalls that Ann created the ever-popular "fishing pond" in a blue box, with a fishing "pole" whose hook was a magnet that "hooked" little photos of minnows and other fish species that are native to Sligo. Kids loved it, and





*Ann with girl scouts during rain garden installation at Forest Park*

tracking who was doing what -- nudging more than nagging, given her style -- reminding, cajoling, covering what was missing so many times. She "held the center" for years in scheduling talks and outings and seeing that information was flowing among planners and members.

She not only helped create our history, she kept track of it. Every year from 2004 to 2013, she elicited summaries of our work and wove together the components of an annual list of accomplishments, not stopping until they were posted on our website.

As she readies her move from Hodges Lane in Takoma Park to Riderwood, in the Paint Branch watershed, Ann is handing over valuable archives that she has built and maintained: CDs full of photos, files documenting important events, and a two-volume set of binders with every magazine and newspaper article about Friends of Sligo Creek from the last 18 years. It's a huge legacy and we're grateful beyond measure.

Laura Mol  
(also a member of the founding board)  
[naturalhistory@fosc.org](mailto:naturalhistory@fosc.org)

the activity naturally drew in the parents. At one Takoma Park Arbor Day event, Bruce remembers, "Ann donned an owl costume and stood by the street waving at cars. Unfortunately, the costume was very hot and we had to insist she sit down in the shade to cool off."

Of its many iterations over the years, was there ever an outreach committee function without Ann's presence and experience? Many have been the board meetings and outreach committee meetings around Ann's dining-room table. For really big meetings, it was her living room. Ann's thoughtful, careful, and cheerful hospitality added so much!

All along, Ann offered a dogged if gentle persistence in maintaining progress toward agreed-upon goals,



*Ann at the rain garden she helped install at Forest Park (Takoma Park) in 2006  
(Ed Murtagh photos)*

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## New Kiosk Team Gets Started



*Two grandchildren of Katherine Payne with  
their kiosk posting July 3.*

recent birthday celebration! Both of them, and their brother, also helped plant the new meadow across from the golf course. Thanks to our new kiosk team for informing and inspiring so many visitors to Sligo Creek Park!

Our new kiosk team got started this spring with Rosanne Rushing and her son Joaquin putting up an important reminder about the dangers of releasing pet fish and other animals into the Park.

For the next posting, Katherine Payne selected an inspiring poem by Edgar A. Guest and photos of Sligo and Long Branch by Ellen X. Silverberg and Michael Wilpers.

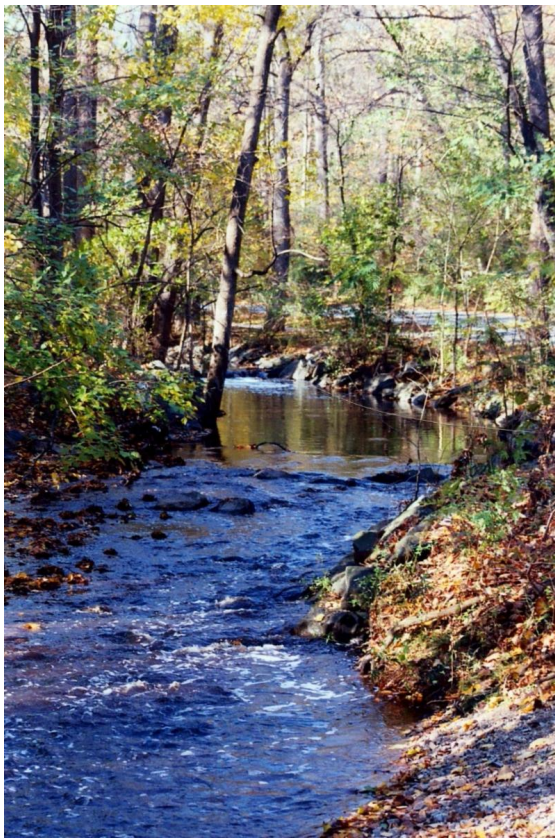
Katherine was ably assisted in the layout and posting by granddaughters Lucia and Maya Rada, who braved high heat and humidity to complete the task on July 3. Lucia will be at Silver Spring International Middle School this fall, while Maya will be at Highland View Elementary.

Lucia made use of extra copies of the photos as party favors at her

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## Sligo Gets Water Quality Grant





Congratulations to our Water Quality Committee for winning a grant from the Maryland Environmental Trust and the Maryland Department of Transportation to expand the number of sites we monitor for water quality and to enhance our Water WatchDog program for reporting visible pollution by park users.

Our current efforts in monitoring water quality began in 2012 and measure temperature, acidity, salinity (salt content), ammonia and *Coliform* bacteria (which reflect animal waste), chlorine, and surfactants (soaps and detergents). The program even tracks noise levels and air quality.

The new grant covers the costs of more chemical reagents (which react with pollutants to indicate their levels). Our increased capacity will allow for

twelve months of monitoring at a new site in the Sligo headwaters (Kemp Mill), other locations labelled as "hotspots" by the county Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), and locations popular among families and other users of the park.

The funds will also enable the Water WatchDog program to present more expert speakers and print additional literature to raise awareness of water pollution in Sligo and ways to report it to DEP and FOSC.

Credit for the successful grant application goes to Pat Ratkowski (chair of the water quality committee), Anne Vorce (Water WatchDogs), Corinne Stephens (president), Sherrell Goggin (treasurer), Kit Gage (board member and director of advocacy), and Elaine Lamirande (chair of the stormwater committee).

The grant is officially titled a Margaret Rosch Jones Award/Keep Maryland Beautiful Grant. For more information, contact [waterquality@fosc.org](mailto:waterquality@fosc.org).

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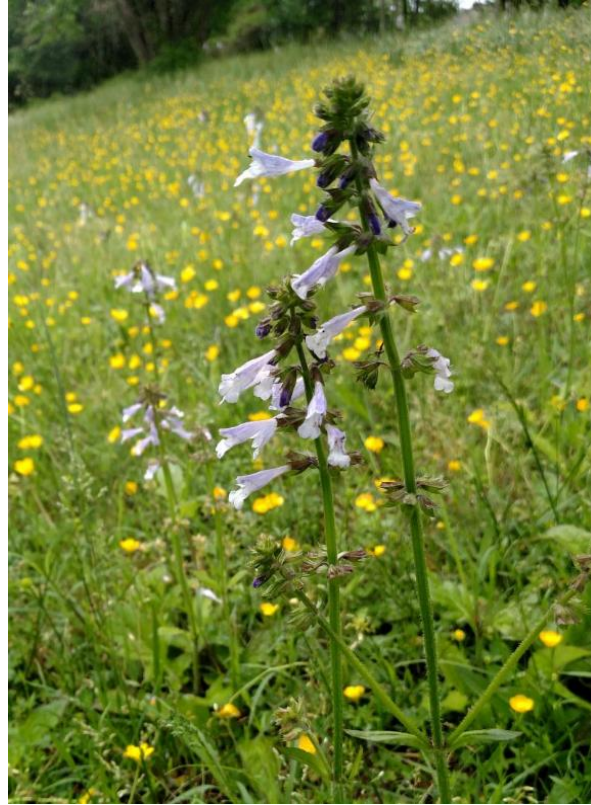
## Less Mowing Serves Pollinators along the Parkway

If you notice higher grasses and more wildflowers along Sligo Creek Parkway this summer, it's because Montgomery Parks is experimenting with reduced

mowing to promote meadow and pollinator habitat.

A half-dozen sites are being allowed to grow out except for a six-foot swath adjacent to the road shoulder that will be mowed frequently for safety and aesthetic reasons. The rest of each site will be mowed in late fall or winter. None of the areas adjoin the hiker-biker trail, picnic sites, or playgrounds. All are located between Forest Glen Road and University Boulevard.

Conservation organizations across the country have encouraged local, state, and federal road managers to reduce mowing during the growing season as an easy and cost-effective way to increase wildflower growth and pollinator habitat. The Xerxes Society recently developed a handbook for road managers on ways to provide wildlife value through a winter-only mowing schedule ([here](#)).



*Lyre-leaf Sage along the Parkway in May 2017*



In Maryland, the State Highway Administration is funding a three-year study by entomologists at the University of Maryland to evaluate less frequent roadside mowing as a means to enhance habitat for bees. The study is taking place along state roads in Frederick, Carroll, and Talbot counties and is measuring bee abundance and diversity, nesting opportunities, and the quality and quantity of nectar and pollen. More information on the study is [here](#).

Internationally, the British organization Plantlife launched a campaign in May of this year to promote roadside management for meadows ([here](#)).

For more information, email [naturalhistory@fosc.org](mailto:naturalhistory@fosc.org).

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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.*